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**The triggers of transformation: some remarks on extraordinary “salts” in selected medico-
alchemical texts of Siddha Yākōpu**

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Abstract

Yākōpu alias Irāmtēvar (ca. 17th-18th century) is one of the prominent authors of the Tamil Siddha medico-alchemical literature. His works are still very much revered by the contemporary Siddha practitioners, especially in regard to the recipes for metallic preparations. My presentation will be based on the study of the selected medico-alchemical texts of Yākōpu. Researched literature contains practical prescriptions for certain preparations, addressed to the alchemists (vāti). In the consulted works of the Siddha recipes for the numerous preparations are usually ordered in the sequences accordingly to the increasing complexity, i.e. often the successive recipes require the use of preparations described in the preceding sections in the text. Thus the whole alchemical system may be seen as a network of the chains of operations based on certain fundamental preparations, which may be therefore considered to be the crucial ingredients in the alchemical process. In my presentation I will explore such substances central in the alchemical procedures, as described in the texts of Yākōpu, which are often associated with “the salt” (uppu) and credited with extraordinary character. I will investigate the portions of the texts relating to the salty substances such as pūnīru, cavukkāram, ātiyuppu, muppu, exploring the ambiguities in the terminology used by the Siddha. I will also reflect upon the role of the salt-based preparations in the medicine and alchemy presented in the texts of Yākōpu.