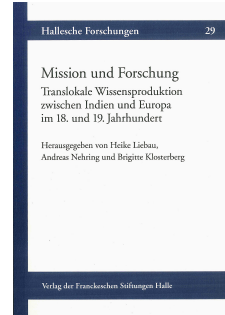


*Mission und Forschung: Translokale Wissensproduktion zwischen Indien und Europa im 18. & 19. Jahrhundert*, edited by Heike Liebau, Andreas Nehring, and Brigitte Klosterberg

Hallesche Forschungen 29 | Halle: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen zu Halle, 2010 | xv + 303 pages | ISBN: 978-3-447-06392-0 (softback) €48.00



This volume emerges from a conference held in 2006 to mark the tercentenary of the first Protestant mission in India. The conference saw the release of a major three-volume work on the history of the mission,<sup>1</sup> and an exhibition catalogue,<sup>2</sup> both of which include the work of a number of the contributors here. Brigitte Klosterberg (“Forschungen zur Dänisch-Halleschen Mission: Schwerpunkte und Perspektiven”), in her contribution to this volume, provides a concise and useful survey of these and other works published to mark the anniversary, and of other recent scholarship on the mission. The emphasis of the volume under review is on the contributions of missionaries and their Tamil interlocutors to the development of science and scholarship in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and to a shift in European views of the non-European world. It seeks thereby also to contribute to the debate over whether the modern missionary enterprise is better thought of as a child of, or a reaction to, the Enlightenment. For the editors, however, the Enlightenment is not to be seen as a European event, brought by missionaries and colonial administrators to other continents, but rather a multidimensional process of exchange between (here) India and Europe, in which missionaries played a key role as intermediaries for information flows in both directions.

The first section of the book, “Aneignen, Ordnen, Speichern,” opens with Wolfgang Reinhard’s survey of the mutual perceptions of Europeans and Asians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (“Bornierter Blick? Gegenseitige Wahrnehmung von Europäern und Asiaten im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert”). The evidence offered for Asian views of Europeans is lim-

<sup>1</sup> Andreas Gross, Y. Vincent Kumaradoss, and Heike Liebau, eds., *Halle and the Beginning of Protestant Christianity in India*, 3 vols. (Halle: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen zu Halle, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Heike Liebau, ed., *Geliebtes Europa // Ostindische Welt: 300 Jahre Interkultureller Dialog Im Spiegel Der Dänisch-Hallesche Mission* (Halle: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen, 2006).

ited to some comments on Christianity from the letters published early in the mission's history as the "Malabarian Correspondence." The survey of European views of Asia draws on a much wider range of sources. While acknowledging that missionary views of Asian religions were restricted by their western intellectual heritage, Reinhard argues that missionaries—whose vocation forced them into an intensive engagement with Asian cultures—were far less blinkered than the European elites who made use of their reports (15), and no more blinkered than Asians themselves (19).

Andreas Nehring ("Missionsstrategie und Forschungsdrang. Anmerkungen zu Mission und Wissenschaft in Südindien im 19. Jahrhundert") provides some fascinating examples of exchanges between learned Tamils and missionaries in the late eighteenth century. The missionary Christoph Samuel John describes discussing astronomy with Tamils familiar with the most recent European discoveries, but also recounts agreeing with Tamils about the inadequacy of their representation in Pierre Sonnerat's *Voyage aux Indes orientales et à la Chine* (1782). Nehring laments that contemporary mission history has a much more restricted view of its subject matter—too heavily focussed on individual biography and the life of Christians whose conversion in some sense removes them from their original cultural context. He argues that mission history must seek to recover the kind of "border-crossing" interests which drove missionary research in the eighteenth century.

The primary sources for most of the research reported in this volume are the mission archives at the Francke Foundations in Halle. In the final essay of the first part, "Die Erschließung der Quellen zur Dänisch-Halleschen Mission im Studienzentrum August Hermann Francke der Franckeschen Stiftungen," Jürgen Gröschl briefly outlines the history of the archives, to which the much smaller archive of the Leipzig Mission was added in 2006. In preparation for the mission's tercentenary, the entire archive—consisting of some 35,000 documents—was systematically recatalogued. In the process, a number of "lost" manuscripts were recovered, among them a text on Tamil medicine, summarized and discussed here in a short chapter by Josef N. Neumann ("Malabarischer Medicus—eine ethnomedizinisch-historische Quelle des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts"),<sup>3</sup> and a manuscript of Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg's *Genealogy of the Malabarian Gods* (1713). Two other complete manu-

<sup>3</sup> *Pace* Neumann (195), the author of the Tamil text on which this work was based cannot have been the mission's early translator, Alakappaṇ ("Aleppa"). The missionaries ascribe the text to a Brahmin, but Alakappaṇ was not a Brahmin.

scripts of the latter text are extant, one in Copenhagen and one—now also in Halle—from the Leipzig Mission archive. In his second contribution to the volume under review, “*Die Genealogie der Malabarischen Götter—Handschriften und Drucke des religionsgeschichtlichen Hauptwerks von Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg*,” Gröschl meticulously reviews what is known of the transmission and circulation of the manuscripts of this text, which was not published until 1867, and concludes that the recovered, third manuscript is most likely the original version sent by Ziegenbalg to Halle in 1713.

The second section, “Berichten, Kommunizieren, Vernetzen,” examines the networks in India and in Europe through which information was collected and disseminated. Ulrike Gleixner (“Expansive Frömmigkeit. Das hallische Netzwerk der Indienmission im 18. Jahrhundert”) provides a preliminary report on a project examining the subscriber lists to the mission’s primary publication, the periodical known as the *Hallesche Berichte*.<sup>4</sup> Gleixner argues that although August Hermann Francke established the periodical, it was his son Gotthilf August who was the true networker, systematically cultivating the subscribers on whose support the mission depended. She suggests also that what she calls the “chiliastic” nature of the Halle institutions—“In Halle hatte das Reich Gottes schon begonnen und sollte sich von hier aus über die ganze Welt verbreiten” (61)—played an important role in gaining support for the mission.

Rekha Kamath Rajan (“Der Beitrag der Dänisch-Halleschen Missionare zum europäischen Wissen über Indien im 18. Jahrhundertgerman”) provides a similarly preliminary survey of the information in the *Hallesche Berichte* pertaining to the religion, sciences, culture, languages, and customs of the Tamils. While Rajan goes on to give a valuable account of the networks in India and in Europe through which this information was solicited and disseminated, it was inevitable—given the extent of the *Hallesche Berichte*—that her survey of the kind of information thus disseminated would be limited to a few examples, and even these few cannot be given the attention they deserve. The account, provided in 1737, of the supposed content of the Yajur Veda<sup>5</sup> is an interesting example of the missionaries responding to requests for information from “learned men in Europe” (96). The Vedas had been

<sup>4</sup> The first series was published in 108 irregular installments from 1710 to 1772. A second series, the *Neue Hallesche Berichte*, appeared in 95 installments from 1776 to 1748.

<sup>5</sup> The text “hat in der That mit dem Yajurveda nicht das Geringste zu thun.” Albrecht Weber, “Ein angebliche Bearbeitung des Yajurveda,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 7 (1853): 236.

the object of learned speculation in Europe during the previous century, but this particular request may well have been prompted by the publication in 1734, in the Jesuit *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, of Jean Calmette's report that the Jesuits had supplied copies of the four Vedas to the royal library in Paris.<sup>6</sup> The letters from India in the *Lettres édifiantes* provide a direct counterpart to the *Hallesche Berichte*. Although fewer in number, the letters were written from the same region of India, by men with the same purpose, and were published in Europe for much the same reasons and over much the same period as those in the first series of the *Hallesche Berichte*. Both Rajan and Gleixner mention the *Lettres édifiantes*, but neither has the space to carry out any detailed comparison of the impact of the two periodicals on European knowledge of India. Both Gleixner (58) and Reinhard (14) make the fascinating, but unsubstantiated, claim that Francke borrowed from the *Lettres édifiantes* when establishing the *Hallesche Berichte*.

The remaining essay in the second section is Robert Eric Frykenberg's study of the missionaries' *dubashis* ("go-betweens") adapted from two chapters of his recent monumental history of Christianity in India. Frykenberg stresses, against the grain of much missionary hagiography, the importance of Indian agency in the development of Christianity in India ("Pietist Missionary *Dubashis* and their *Sishyas*: Conduits of Cross-Cultural Communication"). It is unfortunate that (perhaps because of the original format) references are not provided for many of the details described in the essay.

The articles in the third section of the volume ("Kartographie, Naturwissenschaften, Medizin") demonstrate that Nehring's challenge to contemporary mission historians to recover the breadth of early missionary scholarship is being taken up in some quarters. In addition to the article by Neumann on medicinal texts, already mentioned, there are further articles dealing with geography and cartography (Michael Mann, "Geografie in Wissenschaft und Unterricht: Die Glauchaer Anstalten zu Halle, die Missionare in Tranquebar und die Kartografie Indiens im 18. Jahrhundert"), and natural history (Brigitte Hoppe, "Von der Naturgeschichte zu den Naturwissenschaften—die Dänisch-Halleschen Missionare als Naturforscher in Indien vom 18. bis 19. Jahrhundert," and Hannelore Landsberg, "Eine Fischsammlung aus Tranquebar, die Berliner Gesellschaft Naturforschender Freunde und deren Mitglied Marcus Elieser Bloch"). Here too, the contributors underline the flow

<sup>6</sup> *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* 21 (1734): 455–57. The manuscripts appear in the catalogue of the royal library prepared by Étienne Fourmont, published in 1739.

of information in both directions. While, for example, the Halle missionaries (and their Jesuit rivals) provided the best early maps of south India, they also pressed Halle to print maps of the world with names in Tamil and Telugu characters for use in the mission schools. Although this enterprise foundered (on technical and financial grounds), the missions did put globes and maps in Roman script into use, and translated European geographical texts into Indian languages.

Devotion to scholarship as the means, and not merely a complement, to the evangelization of India is most closely associated with the missionary Christoph Samuel John and his collaborator Johann Peter Rottler. Karsten Hommel (“»Für solche [Theologen] wolle Gott seine Ost-Indische Kirche in Gnaden bewahren!« Physikotheologie und Dänisch-Englisch-Hallesche Mission”), outlines the “physico-theology” which underpinned their scientific and missionary work, and discusses their contemporary critics in the mission and the representation of their work in later mission historiography.<sup>7</sup>

The final section of the volume, “Gesellschaft, Religion, Sprache,” consists of three essays on early Halle missionaries and three which extend well beyond the frame of the Tranquebar mission, into the nineteenth century and beyond. Gita Dharampal-Frick’s essay (“Zur Frage des ‘Kastensystems’: Die Proto-Ethnografie Bartholomäus Ziegenbalgs und der vorkoloniale Diskurs über Indien”) updating her earlier analyses of Ziegenbalg’s writings on caste is followed by Gröschl’s study of the manuscripts of his *magnum opus*, the *Genealogia der malabarischen Götter*. Adapa Satyanarayana (“Benjamin Schultze (1689–1760): The Foremost Telugu Linguist”) surveys the work of Schultze, a missionary in Madras, who produced the first European grammar of Telugu, a translation of the Bible into Telugu, and an English-Telugu-Tamil-Latin vocabulary of the Hebrew Bible. He notes criticisms of Schultze’s work by later European scholars of Telugu, but suggests that these may reflect the Madrasi dialect of Telugu in which Schultze worked rather than his competence in the language. Y. Vincent Kumaradoss and Elizabeth Susan Alexander (“Ethnology and Philology in Missionary Literature: Notes on the Scholar-Missionary Robert Caldwell (1819–1891)”) highlight what is undoubtedly the most significant achievement of missionary linguistics in India, Caldwell’s *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages* (1856).

<sup>7</sup> For the most part, this essay is the German original of an article which appeared earlier in English translation (“Physico-Theology as Mission Strategy: Missionary Christoph Samuel John’s (1746–1813) Understanding of Nature,” in Gross, Kumaradoss, and Liebau, *Halle and the Beginning of Protestant Christianity in India*, 1113–33).

Although, as Caldwell himself somewhat grudgingly acknowledged, Francis Whyte Ellis had demonstrated some forty years earlier the existence of a family of South Indian languages distinct from the Indo-European, Caldwell's work had vastly greater impact. Caldwell's proof provided the intellectual foundation for the non-Brahmin Dravidian movement which transformed Tamil politics during the late colonial period and beyond. Kumaradoss and Alexander link the "virulent anti-Brahminism" (269) which made Caldwell such a hero for the Dravidian movement, with his earlier ethnographic work on the religion of the *The Tinevelly Shanars* (1849), and his rejection of what Geoffrey Oddie has called the "dominant paradigm" for nineteenth-century British constructions of Hinduism as a Brahminical religion.<sup>8</sup> In the next essay, "Protestant Missionary Formulations of 'Hinduism': Tranquebar Accounts and the British Missionary Discovery of Saiva Siddhanta," Oddie himself demonstrates that a number of British missionaries in South India shared and developed Caldwell's claim that south Indian Śaiva Siddhānta was quite different from the pantheistic and Brahmin-dominated traditions reported by their colleagues in the north. In stressing the independence of British Protestant ideas of Hinduism from those of the Tranquebar missionaries in the first part of the nineteenth century (271), Oddie underplays the subsequent influence of the earlier missionary works in the critique of the "dominant paradigm." Caldwell himself reports that he learnt German in the 1840s in order that he might "make use of the vast stores of Indian learning accumulated by Indian scholars,"<sup>9</sup> and was the first to review Ziegenbalg's *Genealogia* when it was finally published in Madras in 1867.

The final essay, "300 years of cultural counter concepts at work in South India," by Esther Fihl, returns us to Tranquebar but brings us into the twenty-first century with the impact of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami. An anthropologist who has worked in Tranquebar over a thirty-year period, Fihl examines parallels in the "long term Western mental structures" (287) represented in three opposed pairs: "tsunami victim versus compassionate giver," "primitive versus civilized," and "heathen versus Christian." While Indians, as the missionaries never ceased to complain, rarely accepted the first term of the latter two pairs as accurate descriptions, Fihl's suggests that the concept of victim has been accepted by the fisherman who were most severely affected.

<sup>8</sup> Geoffrey A. Oddie, *Imagined Hinduism: British Protestant Missionary Constructions of Hinduism, 1793–1900* (New Delhi: Sage, 2006), ch. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Cited here by Kumaradoss and Alexander (260).

She argues, however, that the term has come to have a life of its own, and that they did not accept the connotations of passivity and helplessness which the term carried for those who identified themselves as the compassionate givers on the other pole of the opposition.

*Mission und Forschung* is an important contribution to the scholarship on the Danish-Halle mission and will be indispensable for anyone with an interest in mission history of the eighteenth century. If it is probably too diverse in content to make a decisive intervention on some of the major questions the editors set out in their introduction regarding shifts in the organisation of knowledge and the relationship between mission and Enlightenment, it nevertheless succeeds in demonstrating the significance of information flows—in both directions—between India and Europe.

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