

Institution: Liverpool Hope University
Unit of Assessment: Theology and Religious Studies
Title of case study: Reclaiming cultural memories of the Tamils in European missionary writings
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The research, on early 18th century South India through the writings of German missionary scholars, has expanded knowledge of the Tamil people, languages and cultures; identified more than 160 Tamil and Telugu texts engraved on palm leaves; and recovered numerous paper manuscripts that were considered lost. The work on manuscript recovery has contributed to the professional practice and discourse of professional archivists and librarians and, through examining these manuscripts in Tamil, German, Latin, Portuguese, and English, a new picture about the Tamil emerges. This has important implications for Tamil cultural identity, heritage and pride, currently a matter of social and political emphasis in the Indian public sphere. It also contributes to government initiatives for the revival and celebration of the Tamil language.</p> <p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Professor Daniel Jeyaraj joined Liverpool Hope in 2008 to direct the Andrew F. Walls Centre for the Study of Asian and African Christianity. In the context of the dynamics of Christian engagement with peoples of other cultures and religion, Jeyaraj has sought to recover cultural history and memory in relation to reciprocal interactions and impacts between German Lutheran missionaries and the Tamils. He has deployed techniques of manuscript recovery and preservation and historical-critical methods of textual analysis, translation and social studies. In particular, he has studied the formation of an indigenous Christian worshipping community in Southern India and the life and works of the first ever Protestant Lutheran missionary to arrive in South India, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, who settled at the Danish port of Tranquebar after his arrival in 1706. Ziegenbalg's pioneering work was profoundly significant to Indian cultural and religious history and identity in a number of ways: he learned the Tamil language, imported India's first printing presses for Tamil literature, designed a prose form of the vernacular language (now used in popular Tamil newspapers and magazines), created the first schools in India for girls, translated and taught the Bible to Tamils, and was instrumental in the founding of the first indigenous Protestant church. Remarkably, however, his contribution has been largely neglected and overlooked in the English- and German-speaking worlds.</p> <p>The background to the ongoing research on which this case study rests dates to 1991 and includes the recovery and identification of numerous paper and palm leaf manuscripts written in Tamil, Telugu, German, Latin, Danish, Portuguese, and English. These manuscripts contain important first-hand information on the South Indian church, society, spoken language and culture, and include the discovery of a vast collection of hitherto unknown Tamil manuscripts engraved in palm leaves (1709-1741) in the Mission Archives of the Francke Foundations, Halle (Salle), Germany, the Royal Library in Copenhagen, and in the British Library. Jeyaraj developed a particular method to prepare a trilingual catalogue for all Tamil palm leaf manuscripts in Halle and prepared a summary of the texts (book-wise and chapter-wise) in Tamil, German and English. The discovery of new original documents for the study of Tamils and Tamil culture continues, as does Jeyaraj's work in recovery, preservation, cataloguing and dissemination.</p> <p>Within this ongoing research trajectory, Jeyaraj has produced the first English translation, with annotation, of Ziegenbalg's <i>Grammatica Damulica</i> ([1716] 2010). Ziegenbalg composed this, the first Tamil grammar printed outside of India, in order to teach Tamil to his contemporaries in Europe. This, and other such grammars produced by Christian missionaries, represent rare attempts on the part of Europeans to learn Tamil and build a cross-cultural bridge between Europe and South India. In this context, Ziegenbalg's <i>Grammatica</i> is an important piece of Tamil cultural history, never fully studied. The translation from Latin to English was in the interests of making this significant text more widely available both within and beyond academia.</p> <p>The next major research initiative was, with Richard Fox Young, the production of an English translation and critical edition of all 99 <i>Tamil Letters</i> gathered and translated into German by Ziegenbalg and his colleague Gründler (the 'Malabarian Correspondence'). These letters are indispensable for our knowledge of intercultural interactions on the Tamil littoral in early 18th century South India. They represent reciprocal Hindu-Christian self-disclosure between the two</p>

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missionaries and members of the Tamil people, and mark the former's commitment to engaging Europeans with the Tamil, not simply bringing Christianity to India. Besides offering a new translation, this edition differs substantially from the existing corpus of scholarship on the *Tamil Letters* because, in drawing upon a wide variety of original source materials both in German and Tamil, it not only clarifies their origin and meaning but also situates and evaluates them within a broad framework of contexts: socio- historical, linguistic, religious, and theological. This brings to light indigenous voices not heard in European contexts and also offers a model for Hindu-Christian dialogue.

3. References to the research

- Jeyaraj, Daniel: "Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg's perceptions of Indian society and religions," *Indien: Schmelztiegel der Religionen oder Konkurrenz der Missionen? Protestantische Mission in Indien seit ihren Anfängen in Tranquebar (1706) und die Sendung anderer Konfessionen und Religionen*, ed. Hennig Worgemann, Berlin: Lit Verlag Dr. W. Kopf, 2008, 9–30.
- Jeyaraj, Daniel: "Mission Reports from South India and Their Impact on the Western Mind: Tranquebar Mission of the Eighteenth Century," *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706–1914*, ed. Dana L. Robert, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, 21–42.
- Jeyaraj, Daniel (transl. & ed.): *Tamil Language for Europeans: Ziegenbalg's Grammatica Damulica (1716): Translated from Latin and Tamil, Annotated and Commented by Daniel Jeyaraj (With the assistance of Sister Dr. Rachel Harrington SND)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010, Pp. xv+175 (ISBN 978-3-447-06236-7), http://www.harrassowitz-verlag.de/title_4005.ahtml
- Jeyaraj, Daniel: "Gegenwärtige Fragen und Konsequenzen religiöser Bekehrungen in Indien: Eine missionswissenschaftliche Analyse," *Konversion zwischen empirischer Forschung und theologischer Reflexion* (Vol. 18 of the series Beiträge zu Evangelisation und Gemeindeentwicklung, University of Greifswald), ed. Martin Reppenhausen, Neukirchen-Vluyn, Göttingen: Neukirchner Verlagsgesellschaft, 2012, 109–125.
- Jeyaraj, Daniel and Richard Fox Young (transl. & eds.): *Hindu-Christian Epistolary Self-Disclosures: 'Malabarian Correspondence' between German Pietist missionaries and South Indian Hindus (1712–1714)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013, Pp. xv+349 (ISBN 978-3-447-06844-4). http://www.harrassowitz-verlag.de/title_4350.ahtml.
- Jeyaraj, Daniel (ed.): *Ōlaic covaṭikaḷil toṭakkāla tamiḷ kiristava iraineṛi pāṭaḷkaḷ (1714): mūlamum viḷakkamum [in Tamil: Theological worship songs of the earliest Tamils from a palm leaf manuscript, 1714: Original text with an explanation]*, Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies, 2014.

The body of scholarship was subject to editorial and peer review processes.

4. Details of the impact

The research has expanded knowledge of the Tamil people's languages and cultures in early 18th century South India, and their reciprocal interactions with German missionary scholars. It emerges from a conviction that archival research acts to reclaim cultural memory, which is essential to community self-understanding, identity, and positive pride. There are three primary spheres in which this work has had benefit and impact. Firstly, the work on manuscript recovery has contributed to academic practice and discourse among professional archivists and librarians, particularly in relation to palm leaf manuscripts. Secondly, it has contributed to public discourse on the Tamil language: its development, literary heritage, and reception and representation by European (particularly Germans, Danes, and the Portuguese). It also brings to light a very significant aspect of Indic studies: the dominance of Sanskrit study has minimized the importance of Tamil Studies in Europe, where, however Tamil was the first Indian language to be taught. Thirdly, this research highlights the contributions of a minority community, namely Protestant Christians, to nation building: Christians have introduced new patterns of thinking and living that have caused redefinition of inherited beliefs, customs, and practices. The prominent position of the Tamil vernacular in the activities of the Tamil Christians stirred up a new Tamil consciousness; their indigenous Christian communities provided alternative ways of being Indians and Christians at the same time. The research brings new insights and awareness regarding this into the international public sphere. The specific impacts are described below under four headings: 1) Manuscript Recovery; 2) Translation of Ziegenbalg's *Grammatica Damulica*; 3) Documentary Video *Beyond Empires*; 4) Public Speaking in Christian Contexts.

Manuscript Recovery. The Francke Foundations in Halle arranged for special protection of the palm leaf manuscripts discovered by Jeyaraj because their linguistic and cultural value is unique

and irreplaceable. Jeyaraj chose key palm leaf manuscripts for microfilming and the microfilm reels are kept in the Lutheran Heritage Archives in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, available free of charge to the general public and to scholars. This represents a significant widening of access, as those interested do not need to travel or obtain the Schengen Visa. Jeyaraj was further invited to the National Library of MÜNICH for the first week of July 2013, in order to identify hitherto unidentified palm leaf documents.

The palm leaf collections have inspired technical initiatives for the safe-keeping of similar documents, e.g. using modern technology to protect from pests. As part of the Germany-India Year 2011–2012, the Foreign Office, Federal Republic of Germany, sponsored a workshop entitled “Science Transfer as Cultural Dialogue” (23–24.2.12)¹ directly inspired by Jeyaraj’s continuing work with the palm leaf manuscripts. The workshop aimed to analyse sources of common cultural history preserved in Indian and German archives and to explore avenues for closer cooperation between Indian institutions and the Francke foundations. The Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin, the Roja Muthaiah Research Library, the Francke Foundations, and archivists of leading libraries in India participated in this workshop. Jeyaraj was invited to give the only public lecture (“Introducing Indian Teachings and Ways of Life to Europeans: Exchange of Ideas between Tamil Pundits and European Missionaries in pre-colonial India”). This lecture stressed the importance of recovering, preserving and spreading memories of people in cross-cultural contexts to deepen awareness of interdependence and learn best practices from one another. Public interest in these palm leaf manuscripts persists in the UK and in Halle; the Francke Foundations will host a further workshop entitled *Palm-leaf Manuscripts in Europe and India* (7–8.9.13). Jeyaraj was invited (April 2013) to speak about the palm leaf collections and their preservation.²

Translation of Ziegenbalg’s *Grammatica Damulica*. This has attracted significant attention beyond academia. A reviewer for the Berlin Society for Mission History (March 2013) commented that the book recovered “a forgotten aspect of the Tamil cultural heritage,” and offered a valuable case study for practitioners of mission and ecumenism (as well as scholars) of the “transcontinental role of a grammar in communicating and simultaneously preserving Tamil language, culture and memories.”³ Of particular note is the interest that arose from the organizers of the *First World Classical Tamil Conference* (June 2010) in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. The Government of Tamil Nadu initiated and sponsored this mega-conference, with 913 papers and 2605 delegates, to celebrate the classical status of the Tamil language and to evolve strategies for the future in accordance with policies of the Government of India. Jeyaraj was one of two representatives invited from the United Kingdom, in order to speak on the *Grammatica Damulica*. The conference itself and a personal interview with Jeyaraj were featured in *FRONTLINE* (30.7.10),⁴ the leading bi-monthly national magazine of India with an average issue readership of 152, 000. The conference itself was said to be “surcharged with Tamil pride”, and included “euphoria caused by the cultural programmes got up to ensure public participation on a large scale”. The plenary chair emphasized the importance to the Tamil diaspora of highlighting the “antiquity and greatness of the Tamil language in all UNESCO-recognised languages.” The personal interview with Jeyaraj, “Of the German who took Tamil to Europeans”, brought Jeyaraj’s research on Ziegenbalg to the attention of the broader Indian public, and thereby brought into greater prominence a significant figure in Indian cultural history. Jeyaraj continues to receive public enquires and feedback in response to this article.

Documentary Video *Beyond Empires*. Jeyaraj’s research also led to a request from an independent producer and director in the USA, Christopher Gilbert (of LampPost Media), to act as research consultant for a documentary video on Ziegenbalg, *Beyond Empires*—itself inspired by reading Jeyaraj’s work. The film is now complete and release is planned for December 2013, first on ACCTV in Australia and then in other countries. Gilbert commented that “when just some of [Ziegenbalg’s] achievements and the celebration of them by an emerging global power like India is known, his invisibility in the west seems an incomprehensible injustice”.⁵ Jeyaraj’s research is, then, instrumental in addressing this “incomprehensible injustice” and bringing Ziegenbalg’s life and works to a broader audience. As Gilbert says: “There are few experts on Ziegenbalg’s life, the foremost, Dr. Daniel Jeyaraj... has agreed to be the primary expert witness on this project on location in India. Scottish national Andrew Walls [Liverpool Hope Adjunct Professor since 2004], acknowledged as the foremost living scholar on Christian Missionary History, is also willing to participate further”.⁵ The collaboration extended over four years; Jeyaraj provided expert advice and helped the director to shoot the film in India in 2010. Gilbert attests that the film crew received

significant attention from Indian newspapers and from Reuter's television news, Indian division. Stories also appeared in *The New Indian Express*, *the Deccan Chronicle*, *The Statesman* and a Tamil language newspaper.⁶

The LampPost Media site includes both a synopsis of the documentary project and three letters of testimony.⁵ Comments, underlining the contemporary public significance of research on Ziegenbalg, include: Kullberg (The Veritas Forum), "we have much to learn from this story right now, when most of us long for a circuit breaker on sectarian violence"; Martin (Lutheran World Federation), "the fruits of these initiatives need to be harvested not only to continue the memory of B. Ziegenbalg, but more so to participate and provide momentum to the social reform movements already taking place in India, vis-à-vis the Dalit liberation and education revolution."

The *Beyond Empires* team publicized the forthcoming documentary on YouTube;⁷ the site hosts eleven videos with total views exceeding 4110. One video, "A Reason to Tell the Story: Beyond Empires" is narrated by Jeyaraj himself, Andrew Walls and Theodore Bhaskaran; this feature, with 870 views, includes testimony from Christians, Hindus and Muslims about the significance of Ziegenbalg's contributions to Tamil culture (and hence, indirectly, about the significance of Jeyaraj's role in contributing both to knowledge of Ziegenbalg's life and work, and to assisting in bringing this knowledge to a wider audience). A further indicator of the significance and reach of this impact is that funding for the post-production phase of the documentary was crowdsourced via Kickstarter (a specialist fundraiser site for independent creative projects). In 2011, 103% of the target amount was reached within one month, with \$7688 raised from 57 backers.⁸

Public Speaking in Christian Contexts. Jeyaraj also delivers seminars and lectures for the interested public. As a consequence of the publication of 'The Malabarian Correspondence', the Madras Christian College invited Jeyaraj to give their annual Dr. Michael C. Lockwood Endowment Lecture (26 August 2011).⁹ He expounded the theme "Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg's explorations into South Indian Culture, Philosophy and Religion. This was featured in a *Times of India* article (27.8.11).¹⁰ On 20 April 2012, he gave a further seminar to the Madras Christian College on the subject of India-initiated churches, which brought together academics and clergy, as well as representatives of leading mission agencies. The Tiruvarambur Pastorate of the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church invited him to give four lectures in Tamil to a church in Trichy, India, on "Contributions of Ziegenbalg's Family to Indian Society" (20.8.12). TELC is a government-funded educational provider; as a consequence of these talks, the Secretary of the Church Council invited Jeyaraj to share his insights with the teachers of the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church during their retreat (24–27.8.12), commenting that his work on Ziegenbalg was "very useful" for school teachers in teaching their students about him.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact. All sources not online are available from the HEI.

1. "Science Transfer as Cultural Dialogue: an International Workshop in Chennai 2012 February 23-4". Conference Programme.
2. Letter of invitation from the Director, Francke Foundations in Halle, 24.4.13.
3. Review of *Grammatica Damulica*, Berlin Society for Mission History (March 2013)
4. Dorairaj, S., "Celebrating Tamil"; Dorairaj, S. (Interviewer), "Of the German who took Tamil to Europeans: Interview with Daniel Jeyaraj, Professor at Liverpool Hope University," *Frontline*, 30 July, 2010, pp. 40–45.
5. LampPost Media website on *Beyond Empires* (synopsis of project and endorsements). <http://www.lamppostmedia.net/ziegenbalg/index.html>.
6. Chris Gilbert's blog. <http://cgilbertlpmmedia.wordpress.com/2010/09/02/beyond-empires-film-project-a-two-week-odyssey-in-india/>.
7. YouTube *Beyond Empires* site, hosting eleven videos about the nature and significance of the project (including "A Reason to tell the Story: Beyond Empires", narrated by Daniel Jeyaraj, Andrew Walls and Theodore Bhaskaran). <http://www.youtube.com/user/BeyondEmpires/videos>.
8. Kickstarter, *Beyond Empires* project. <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/lamppostmedia/post-production-to-complete-beyond-empires>.
9. TELC leaflet pertaining to "Contributions of Ziegenbalg's Family to Indian Society" research seminar, 20.8.12.
10. Mani, C.D.S.: "A tribute to the men who decoded India for a German," *Times of India*, 27 August 2011, p. 2.
11. Letter of invitation from the Secretary, TELC Church Council, 13.08.12.