

THE PREHISTORY OF ORIENTALISM: COLONIALISM AND THE TEXTUAL BASIS FOR BARTHOLOMÄUS ZIEGENBALG'S ACCOUNT OF HINDUISM

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In the last years of the twentieth century, few topics were more widely discussed among scholars of Hinduism than the early history of their subject, and in particular the role of colonialism in motivating and shaping the study of Hinduism, or indeed in constituting the very object of that study. In 1988 the English translation of Wilhelm Halbfass's magisterial *Indien und Europa* appeared, having first been published in German in 1981. The following year saw the publication of *Hinduism Reconsidered*, an edited collection of papers, mostly arising from the IXth European Conference on Modern Asian Studies in Heidelberg in 1986. The 1990s began with the publication of Ronald Inden's *Imagining India*, and closed with Richard King's *Orientalism and Religion*. In between appeared two further important edited collections, *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, edited by Carol Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer, and *Representing Hinduism*, edited by Vasudha Dalmia and Heinrich von Stietencron, as well as S.N. Balagangadhara's '*The Heathen in his Blindness...*', Thomas Trautmann's *Aryans and British India*, an expanded second edition of *Hinduism Reconsidered* and numerous other articles addressing the topic. While there is of course much disagreement concerning the nature and significance of the continuing effect on the study

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of Hinduism of the colonial context in which it much of it was carried out, it is nevertheless possible to identify some areas in which there is substantial, if not universal, agreement that colonialism influenced the study of Hinduism even if, again, the degree of such influence is debated.

The first such area is the concern of early European Orientalists, many of them shaped by a Protestant culture, to establish a textual basis for Hinduism. Many of the first direct translations from Sanskrit to modern European languages were published by those connected with the British East India Company's establishment in Bengal. Among these are Charles Wilkins's translation of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (1785), William Jones's translations of the *Gītāgovinda*, the *Īśa Upaniṣad*, some works of Kālidāsā and, most pertinently for Jones's role as a judge, his translation of the *Manusmṛti* under the title *Institutes of Hindu Law: or, the Ordinances of Menu* (1794). While philological scholarship on Hinduism quickly transcended its origins in British Orientalism in Bengal, the Company continued, directly or indirectly, to support the publication of much of this scholarship, including the Max Müller's iconic critical edition of the Ṛg Veda Saṃhitā. While the concern to establish a textual basis for Hinduism is attributable in part to the classical education and Protestant formation of most of the Company's servants, it seems clear that this was also driven by the colonial state's preference for written rather than oral authority.

Closely connected with this 'textualization of Indian tradition' was the predominance in European constructions of Hinduism of the perspectives of those who preserved and provided access to the texts whose authority was both drawn upon and enhanced in this process.² At some significant points the interests and the perspectives of the literate *brāhmaṇa* castes coincided with those of European Orientalists, perhaps most obviously in the perception of a general decline from an originally pure religion to which both the deist inclinations of several early Orientalists and the *purāṇic yuga* theory contributed. While the privileging of brahmanic perspectives is by no means only a feature of the colonial era, recent scholarship has identified colonialism as a significant factor in the reinforcement of their position and the acceleration of the 'brahmanization' of Hindu society.

A third area in which European constructions of Hinduism have been seen to be influenced by colonialism is in the identification of Vedānta, more specifically Advaita Vedānta, as 'the paradigmatic example of the mystical nature of the Hindu religion'.³ Richard King reports the argument of Niranjana Dhar that the reason for the choice of Vedānta as the 'central philosophy of the Hindus' is to be found in fears of the spread of French influence in British India and hopes that the supposed quietist and conservative nature of Vedāntic thought would prevent the development of revolutionary sentiment in the newly-established College of Fort William. While King points to a range of other factors in Vedānta's appeal — the

² King 1999: 101.

³ King 1999: 128.

predominance of idealism in nineteenth century European philosophy, the amenability of Vedāntic thought to both Christian and Hindu critics of ‘idolatry’ in other forms of Hinduism — and argues that ‘[i]t seems more appropriate... to point to a *confluence of interests* which allowed the “discovery” of Vedānta to come to the fore and remain largely uncontested until well into the twentieth century’, he concludes: ‘It would be preposterous to suggest that the pioneering work of British Orientalists such as Colebrooke and Wilkins remained unaffected by British fears about the wider impact of the French Revolution at home and abroad.’⁴ Inden argues that both the choice of Advaita Vedānta and the construction of it as an ‘illusionist pantheism’ reinforced other stereotypes of colonial discourse which represented ‘a Hindu mysticism indifferent to ethics and life-negating’, the product of ‘a feminine imagination’.⁵

The influence of colonialism upon European constructions of caste has been widely discussed, perhaps most influentially by Nicholas Dirks in a series of articles published from the late 1980s and his 2001 book, *Castes of Mind*.⁶ Dirks goes beyond other writers⁷ who have examined changes in caste during the colonial period to argue that ‘Paradoxically, colonialism seems to have created much of what is now accepted as Indian ‘tradition’, including an autonomous caste structure with the Brahman clearly and unambiguously at the head’.⁸ Caste, writes Dirks

was refigured as a religious system, organizing society in a context where politics and religion had never before been distinct domains of social action. The religious confinement of caste enabled colonial procedures of rule through the characterization of India as essentially about spiritual harmony and liberation; when the state had existed in India, it was despotic and epiphenomenal, extractive but fundamentally irrelevant.⁹

The colonial diagnosis of India as a place where, in Dumont’s terms, the religious ‘encompassed’ the political, has for Dirks the character of a self-fulfilling prophecy because it was precisely the conditions of colonialism that produced “traditional”, i.e. caste, society by removing genuine political power from Indian states and thus exaggerating the importance of other signs of status, such as ritual honours.¹⁰ When disputes over ritual honours turned violent, they became a sign of India’s essential religiosity and backwardness, and of the necessity for the benevolent, paternalistic rule by a more ‘advanced’ nation, with better developed forms of civil society. Extending Cohn’s analysis of the function of ceremonial display in the indirectly ruled

⁴ King 1999: 132.

⁵ Inden 1990: 105, cf. Patil 2003.

⁶ Dirks 1989a, Dirks 1989b, Dirks 1992, Dirks 2001.

⁷ For example, Bayly 1999.

⁸ Dirks 1992: 61, cf. Dirks 1989b: 63.

⁹ Dirks 1993: xxvii.

¹⁰ Cf. Dirks 2001: 80, Dirks 1989b: 63.

princely states,¹¹ Dirks argues that the construction of caste as the centrepiece of Indian society enabled what he takes to be the ‘very particular form of indirect rule’ which characterized the British Raj even in areas under direct rule: ‘Because of caste, and the colonial ethnology that constructed it as the centerpiece of Indian society, the British could rule *all* of India indirectly, as it were’.¹²

This transformation of caste depended upon a denial of its political salience, and an insistence upon its essentially religious character. For Dirks then, necessarily, ‘caste was configured as an encompassing Indian social system in direct relationship to the constitution of “Hinduism” as a systematic, confessional, all-embracing religious identity.’¹³ This brings us to perhaps the most radical of all the claimed impacts of western scholarship upon Hinduism. Gauri Viswanathan writes:

One of the most striking advances in modern scholarship is the view that there is no such thing as an unbroken tradition of Hinduism, only a set of discrete traditions and practices reorganized into a larger entity called “Hinduism”. If there is any disagreement at all in this scholarship, it centers on whether Hinduism is exclusively a construct of western scholars studying India or of anticolonial Hindus looking toward the systematization of disparate practices as a means of recovering a precolonial, national identity.¹⁴

The recognition that Hinduism, understood as ‘a systematic, confessional, all-embracing religious entity’ was constituted, at least in part, by the scholarship that took it as an object of knowledge, is part of a wider rethinking of the taxonomy of religions which emerged in the early modern period.¹⁵ The emphasis of many studies in which this argument has been elaborated has been on the construction of Hinduism in the image of Christianity.¹⁶ Among those who have attended to the role of colonialism in the construction of Hinduism we may distinguish between those who examine the emergence of Hinduism primarily in works of European scholarship, and those who examine the institutionalization of Hinduism in India as the result of acts of policy of the colonial state. Following Frykenberg we might label these ‘the ideological and the institutional reification of “Hinduism”’.¹⁷ The distinction is not to be overplayed; many of those producing scholarly works on Hinduism were also significant agents in

¹¹ Cohn 1983.

¹² Dirks 2001: 80.

¹³ Dirks 2001: 7.

¹⁴ Viswanathan 2003: 26.

¹⁵ Wilfred Cantwell Smith’s 1962 work, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, was seminal in this regard.

¹⁶ Balagangadhara 1994, Fitzgerald 1997, Stietencron 1988.

¹⁷ Frykenberg 2000: 3.

the political processes associated with the Company, and it is arguable that the same presuppositions drove developments in both spheres. Nevertheless the distinction is important, not least because the latter process was necessarily constrained by interaction with Indians to a much greater degree than was the former.

With few exceptions, the scholarship to which Viswanathan refers dates the construction of Hinduism by western scholars, or by western scholars and anticolonial Hindus, to the nineteenth or, at the earliest, the late-eighteenth century.¹⁸ There is also a strong reliance on evidence from the nineteenth, or late-eighteenth, century in many of the works whose conclusions relating to the textualization and brahmanization of Hinduism, the privileging of Vedānta and the construction of caste as a religious system I have summarized above. There are some good reasons for concentrating on material from the late-eighteenth century onwards: writers who wrote at length about Hinduism on the basis of a good knowledge of Indian languages are rare during what Sanjay Subrahmanyam has called ‘the pre-history of “Orientalism”’.¹⁹ Nevertheless as Subrahmanyam argues this

is a ‘pre-history’ that we can ill-afford to ignore, if we wish to make any argument on the long-term relationship between politics, power and European perceptions of India. For unless we can demonstrate how changes in any one of these are related to changes in any other, we cannot even begin to credibly establish any causal links, let alone assert that this or that aspect of nineteenth-century Orientalism is the result of this or that political phenomenon.²⁰

This article seeks to make a contribution to the writing of this pre-history of Orientalism by examining, in the light of four²¹ of the five generalizations about later European Orientalism summarized above, the works on Hinduism of one of the few earlier Europeans to have had a good knowledge of an Indian language. The author in question is Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg (1682-1719), a German Lutheran who spent thirteen years as a missionary based in

¹⁸ E.g. Inden 1990: 86; King 1999: 100; Frykenberg 2000: 3. One often-cited, but misleading, piece of evidence for this is the dating by the *Oxford English Dictionary* of the first use of the term ‘Hinduism’ itself to 1829. In fact, as Geoffrey Oddie has shown, the term was already in use more than four decades earlier (Oddie 2003: 156-7). Cf. Sweetman 2001: 219.

¹⁹ Subrahmanyam 1995: 381.

²⁰ Subrahmanyam 1995: 382. Sheldon Pollock has likewise criticized, as a matter of methodology, the neglect of ‘Pre-Orientalist “Orientalism”’, arguing that it is not possible ‘to survey the constructions of colonial domination without a detailed topography of precolonial domination’ (Pollock 1993: 104).

²¹ I leave aside here the question of the ideological reification of Hinduism. I have argued elsewhere that the idea of a single, pan-Indian Hindu religion is already apparent in the writings of Jesuit missionaries in the early decades of the eighteenth century (Sweetman 2001, Sweetman 2003).

the Danish enclave of Tranquebar on the coast of Tamil Nadu.²²

Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg

Ziegenbalg was a prolific writer, composing works in German, Tamil, Portuguese and Latin which include dictionaries, hymnbooks, translations both into and out of Tamil, school textbooks, catechisms, sermons, and book catalogues. Many of these works are extant, in print or manuscript; a significant number are known only from the titles and brief descriptions of them in Ziegenbalg's other works. To this must be added his extensive correspondence, much of which was published in German and some of which also appeared in English. It is impossible to give anything like a complete account of his works here; I want instead to give only an outline of his writings on Hinduism, and even here the thrust of my comments will be limited to suggesting first, that the characteristic emphases of Ziegenbalg's view of Hinduism remain remarkably consistent in all his writing on Hinduism and, second, that the essentials of that view were not suppressed but rather very widely disseminated by the *spiritus rector* of the mission, August Hermann Francke.

Ziegenbalg's writing on Hinduism begins within months of his arrival in India in July 1706 and comes to an end, somewhat abruptly perhaps, just before his return to Europe in October 1714. Although he continued to write during his voyage to Europe, and after returning to India in 1716, he wrote nothing substantial on Hinduism after September 1714. While a number of possible reasons for this suggest themselves, none is compelling enough to be regarded as a complete explanation. Whatever the reason, the consequence is that effectively all his writing on Hinduism is produced during a period of only eight years. Although he learned an enormous amount about Hinduism during that period, reading hundreds of Tamil texts in the process, the characteristic emphases of his view of Hinduism are already apparent in two of his earliest statements on Hinduism. The first is a letter dated 2nd September 1706, just under two months after his arrival in India, and only the third of his letters known to have been written from Tranquebar. The manuscript is not extant,²³ but an abbreviated version of the letter was published in the 1708 in the second edition of Ziegenbalg's early letters edited by Joachim Lange under the title *Merckwürdige Nachricht*,²⁴ and an English translation by Anton Wilhelm Böhme of this version was published in the following year, under the title *Propagation of the Gospel in the East*. A much fuller version of the letter had already appeared in German in 1708 in a kind of unofficial third edition of the *Merckwürdige Nachricht* edited by

²² For Ziegenbalg's biography see Germann 1868.

²³ Of the letters printed in Lange and Bergen only one is extant in manuscript.

²⁴ The first edition, which appeared already in 1706, contained only one letter, written from the Cape of Good Hope.

Christian Gustav Bergen.²⁵ The letter is roughly twice as long in Bergen's edition which, together with other material included in Bergen's edition but not available elsewhere, suggests he had access to the letters in manuscript. Already in this letter some characteristic emphases of Ziegenbalg's view of the religion of the Indians appear. The most significant is his insistence on the essentially monotheistic character of their religion: 'They have many hundred gods, but recognize only a single divine being as the origin of all gods and other things'.²⁶ Another is his orientation toward Śaivite forms of Hinduism: Ziegenbalg notes that of the three great gods which take their origin from the single divine being, it is Īśvara, i.e. Siva, who most of the Malabarians take to be the greatest, and worship.²⁷

A more detailed but still early statement of Ziegenbalg's view of Hinduism appears in the foreword to his translation of three Tamil ethical treatises, which is dated 30 August 1708.²⁸ In July 1710, Franz Julius Lützens (1650-1712) wrote to Francke that the Danish king, Friedrich IV, to whom the work was dedicated, had commanded him to have it published. In November of the same year, Lützens wrote further that while he had not been able to have it printed in Denmark, he thought it would be very good to have it published and he would send the manuscript to Francke for publication as soon as he saw the slightest possibility to do so, adding that it should be made clear on the title page that it was published 'at the most gracious command of his majesty'.²⁹ Despite this, for reasons which are not documented,³⁰ the translation itself was not published by Francke, but almost the whole of the foreword, amounting to almost 7,000 words and omitting only last section (which describes the first of the translated texts), appeared with only minor alterations in the first 'Continuation' of the *Hallesche Berichte*, published in 1710.³¹ A full English translation appeared in the same year in the

²⁵ The second edition edited by Lange appeared in 1708. A further edition by Lange in 1709 was described as a third edition on the title page although Bergen's edition, also described as the third on the title page, had already appeared in 1708.

²⁶ 'Sie haben viel hundert Götter, erkennen aber nur ein einziges Göttliches Wesen für den Ursprung aller Götter und andrer Dinge' (Bergen 1708: 19); Lange's version differs only slightly, although the substitution of 'einig' (unified) for 'eintzig' (single, unique) is perhaps significant: 'Denn sie haben viel hundert Götter; erkennen aber doch nur ein einiges Göttliches Wesen für den Ursprung aller Götter und aller andern Dinge' (Lange 1708: 11).

²⁷ Bergen 1708: 20.

²⁸ Caland 1930: 26.

²⁹ Germann 1868, II: 72-3.

³⁰ But see the reservations expressed by Christian Michaelis about the publication of the treatises (Germann 1868, I: 280).

³¹ The series usually referred to as the *Hallesche Berichte* began with the publication, in 1710, of a single letter, to which further instalments ('*Continuationen*') were subsequently added at irregular intervals. Ziegenbalg's letters are contained in the first two of the eventual nine volumes (consisting of 108 instalments in all), later given the title *Der königlich dänischen Missionarien aus Ost-Indien eingesandte ausführliche Berichte von dem Werck ihres Amts unter den Heyden*. (Halle, 1710-1772). The first volume, edited by

Propagation of the Gospel in the East, with a second edition in 1711, and a somewhat altered third edition in 1718. The foreword again emphasizes the monotheistic core of Hindu belief, and praises the subtlety of Hindu philosophical thought about the divine. Other characteristic emphases of Ziegenbalg's view of Hinduism are also here, particularly his stress on the high moral standards of the Hindus, which he invariably contrasts with the degenerate lifestyle of the supposedly Christian Europeans in Tranquebar, which causes the greatest resistance to conversion on the part of the Hindus.

The foreword to the translation also introduces for the first time in Ziegenbalg's writings the idea of a genealogy ['Geschlechts-Register'³²] of the gods, which becomes the title and organizing principle of his final major work on Hinduism, the *Genealogie der malabarischen Götter* of 1713. The idea may well have been suggested to him by his reading of a Tamil work he names as Dirigála Sákkaram (i.e. *Tirikālacakkaram*) and attributes to Tirumūlar, the first Tamil *cittar* (*siddha*). In his *Bibliotheca Malabarica*, a catalogue of 119 Tamil manuscripts in his possession,³³ written in the same year and sent to Europe with his translation of the ethical treatises, Ziegenbalg describes the work in question as follows:

This book shows the genealogy ['Geschlechts-Register'] of their great gods, how all gods are derived from the Being of all Beings, the Highest God, what offices they hold, where their places of residence are, how long they will live, how many incarnations they have, etc... This book is the basis of all other Malabari books since it lays down the principles on which they are based. Once I had it in mind to translate this work into German but I could not help wondering whether this was really advisable. It would cause a lot of unnecessary speculation and only distract people from more important things. But I am still keeping my mind open whether or not I should do this translation; so far I am not sure about it myself.³⁴

August Hermann Francke, containing 12 continuously paginated instalments was complete by 1717 (Francke 1710-1717), and is abbreviated here as HB I.

³² 'Geschlechts-register' also appears in the *Bibliotheca Malabarica*, composed in the same year (see below). The word 'genealogy' itself appears in 1711 in an English translation of some sections of the foreword published by Böhme (Ziegenbalg 1711: 20).

³³ A short extract from the catalogue was published in the Halle Berichte (HB I: 23-34) but the fourth section, entitled 'Verzeichnis der Malabarischen Bücher' and dealing with Tamil Hindu texts was not published until 1880 (Germann 1880). A translation of another, slightly shorter, version of this section of the catalogue describing 112 Tamil works, from a manuscript in the British Library was published by Albertine Gaur (1967), who does not appear to have been aware of Germann's edition. Kamil Veith Zvelebil describes the *Bibliotheca Malabarica* as 'a relatively complete account of Tamil literature' (Zvelebil 1974: 2).

³⁴ Gaur 1967: 88-89; cf. Germann 1880: 90. Thus even if, as Jeyaraj (2003: 278) suggests, Ziegenbalg's 1713 *Genealogie* was influenced by a 1709 German work of Benjamin Hederich which defined what a genealogy should contain, the idea of a

Having established that the best Malabarian thinking is monotheistic, Ziegenbalg goes on in the foreword to describe ‘the origin of their great Gods and the beginning of all creatures’ from ‘the being of all beings, the supreme God,’ here called Arianaden (*ariyanādan*).³⁵ The same theogony and cosmogony appears in his first major work on Hinduism, the *Malabarische Heidenthum*, written three years later in 1711, in which Ziegenbalg names the source of this theogony as again the *Tirikālaccakkaram*. Although Ziegenbalg cites dozens of other works in his writings on Hinduism, the importance of this work, which does not appear in any of the standard accounts of Tamil literature, in structuring his understanding of Hinduism, and particularly his final work, the *Genealogie*, has not been sufficiently appreciated.³⁶ A more detailed case for this claim must await another occasion, for our present purposes it will suffice to note that already in 1708, just two years after Ziegenbalg’s arrival in India, this work is shaping his understanding of Hinduism, which reaches its final expression five years later in the *Genealogie*, a work whose structure appears also to have been derived from the *Tirikālaccakkaram*.

Not only is Ziegenbalg’s account of the central ideas of the *Tirikālaccakkaram* already in print in the *Hallesche Berichte* by 1710, but the passage in which he describes them served as the main source for another more popular work, *Ost-Indisches Gespräch in dem Reiche der Todten*, published in 1731. The work is a ‘dialogue of the dead’, between Ziegenbalg and Johannes Coccejus (1603-1669), a renowned Dutch reformed theologian, presented here as a ship’s chaplain, drowned when his ship sank en route to Bengal. It is a curious work, and one that has not, to my knowledge, been reported in the literature on Ziegenbalg. The dialogue of the dead is a classical form which continued to be used during the middle ages and the Renaissance, when translations of many of the classical models appeared. The genre was also popular at the time of the Reformation, but its greatest flowering was in Germany from 1680-1810. John Rutledge counts more than 500 dialogues of the dead published in eighteenth-century Germany and notes that dialogues ‘concerned with religious subjects were especially prominent during the 1720’s and 1730’s’, although the setting remained the underworld of Greek mythology and not the Christian afterlife.³⁷ The work draws on the *Hallesche Berichte* to describe through a rather stilted dialogue the development and tribulations of the mission. The last fifth of the work

genealogy of the gods predates any knowledge he might have had of this book. Jeyaraj cites no direct evidence that Ziegenbalg knew Hederich’s work, suggesting only that Gründler could have taken a copy with him on his voyage to India in 1709. Hederich’s work does not, however, appear in a catalogue of books in the mission’s library published in 1721.

³⁵ Caland 1930: 13.

³⁶ Jeyaraj (2003: 286) notes that this is one of three Tamil works Ziegenbalg studied particularly closely, but does not discuss his use of it.

³⁷ Rutledge 1974: 32.

describes the religion of the Hindus, and begins with a gentle long-hop of a question on their conception of the divine which allows Ziegenbalg to launch into his description of the monotheistic character of their belief. The source is again the foreword to his translation of the ethical treatises as it appears in the *Hallesche Berichte*, and thus again we find the theogony taken from the *Tirikālacakkaram*, the account of the great gods and so on. Apart from being placed into dialogue form very few changes are made to the wording or organization of the text; only short, helpfully leading, questions from Coccejus interrupt the flow. The *Ost-Indisches Gespräch* thus adds little to what was already available elsewhere, nevertheless it supports the claim that the essentials of Ziegenbalg's account of Hinduism, which remain largely consistent over the short period in which he was active in writing on Hinduism, were very quickly made available to a wide audience in the *Hallesche Berichte*, and in its English translation in the various editions of the *Propagation of the Gospel in the East* as well as in the *Ost-Indisches Gespräch*. In these works Ziegenbalg's view of Hinduism appears, albeit in brief, largely without editing and in his own words. The situation is somewhat different with respect to his larger works, the *Malabarische Heidenthum* of 1711 and the *Genealogie* of 1713.

Ziegenbalg, Francke and the question of censorship

A.H. Francke... wrote back to Tranquebar that the printing of the "Genealogy of the South-Indian Gods" was not to be thought of, inasmuch [*sic*] as the Missionaries were sent out to extirpate heathenism, and not to spread heathenish nonsense in Europe.³⁸

This dramatic statement, quoted by Wilhelm Germann in the preface to his 1867 edition of the *Genealogie*, and cited also in the 1869 English translation, has contributed to the impression that Francke suppressed Ziegenbalg's works on Hinduism. Daniel Jeyaraj also quotes this statement in his edition of the *Genealogie* noting, however, that this quotation has not yet been identified in Francke's extant writings.³⁹ Germann also published the full text of a work by Francke entitled *Zufällige Gedanken über die königlich-danische Missions-Affaire zu Tranquebar in Ostindien*, written at Ziegenbalg's request on his final departure from Halle on 2 December 1715. Germann reports that he found the manuscript, dated at Halle on the 20th of December 1715, in India.⁴⁰ In this work Francke expresses a much more positive opinion of the *Genealogie*, and Ziegenbalg's efforts in composing it. He writes:

³⁸ Metzger 1869: xv. Cf. Germann 1867: vii.

³⁹ Jeyaraj 2003: 316.

⁴⁰ Germann 1868, I: 264. The text of the *Zufällige Gedanken* is printed in Germann 1868, II: 127-167. Cf. AFSst/M: II A 1: 2.

If, indeed, I... did not consider it necessary to publish this book—because in printing new and strange things we have to look not to idle curiosity but rather to the glorification of God’s name and the real benefit of the Church, which I cannot hope to achieve through the publication of the writing in question—nevertheless I could not by any means find fault with the great efforts which you for your part have expended on the accurate study of the heathen theology...⁴¹

Kurt Liebau acknowledges that there was censorship of the missionaries’ writings, but suggests that both the extent of censorship and the reasons for it have not yet fully been investigated:

All writers appear to regard the question of censorship in Halle as settled. It is not asked, whether a particular text was censored, and if so, what was censored, when, by whom, and for what reason... censorship there was, but not everything was censored. Sometimes ideological considerations prevailed. Mostly, however, a complex of political, theological and not least economic interests played a role in the publication of a work in Halle.⁴²

While neither the *Genealogie* nor the *Heidenthum* was published by Francke, as has long been known and as Germann himself points out, he made Ziegenbalg’s manuscripts available to Mathurin Veyssière de La Croze, who used them for the account of Hinduism in his *Histoire du christianisme des Indes*.⁴³ La Croze, the Librarian Royal at the Prussian court, was an ex-Benedictine who had converted to Protestantism in 1696,⁴⁴ and his *Histoire* is a sustained polemical assault on his former confession, and in particular the Jesuits, to whose domination of the French Catholic church one biographer attributes, at least in part, La Croze’s conversion.⁴⁵ Much of the *Histoire* consists of an account of the Thomas Christians, who emerge in La Croze’s account as virtual Protestants, until corrupted by the Portuguese following their arrival in India. The final two books, however, contain an account of ‘The idolatry of the Indies’ (Book VI) and of the Protestant, that is the Danish-Halle, mission (Book VII). If the essentials of Ziegenbalg’s view of Hinduism were already available, in La Croze’s widely-read *Histoire* they became known in more detail to a still wider audience.⁴⁶

There is much more that could be said on Ziegenbalg’s account of Hinduism, but I wish here to focus on the first four of the five areas identified

⁴¹ Germann 1868, II: 152-3.

⁴² Liebau 1998: 28.

⁴³ Germann 1867: vii. A list of the manuscripts sent to La Croze appears in a letter from Michaelis to the missionaries in Tranquebar dated 1.12.1717 (AFSt/M: I C 10: 43).

⁴⁴ Wiegand 1902: 89.

⁴⁵ Wiegand 1902: 89-90.

⁴⁶ Wiegand 1902: 97; on La Croze’s use of Ziegenbalg see further Sweetman 2004.

above where ‘politics and power’ have been seen to have influenced European perceptions of Hinduism (the textualization and brahmanization of Hinduism, the privileging of Vedānta, and the construction of caste as a religious system).

Textual sources and Ziegenbalg’s account of Hinduism

There can be little doubt of the value that Ziegenbalg placed on knowledge of Hindu texts. The titles of both his extant major works on Hinduism make the claim to be taken ‘from these heathens’ own writings’.⁴⁷ Moreover in the foreword to his translation of the ethical treatises, published in the *Hallesche Berichte*, Ziegenbalg describes the impact of being able to read the texts of the ‘Malabarians’ upon his view of them, and his subsequent intensive study of their texts:

When finally I was completely able to read their own books, and became aware, that among them are taught, in an entirely regular manner, the very same philosophical disciplines as, for instance, are dealt with by scholars in Europe; and also that they have a regular written law from which all theological matters must be derived and demonstrated; then this astonished me greatly, and I developed a very great desire to be thoroughly instructed in their heathenism from their own writings. I therefore obtained for myself ever more books, one after the other, and spared neither effort nor expense until I have now — through diligent reading of their books and through constant debating with their Bramans or priests — reached the point where I have a sure knowledge of them, and am able to give an account.⁴⁸

In the foreword Ziegenbalg refers also to his *Bibliotheca Malabarica*, written in the same year and sent to Europe with the translated ethical treatises. This catalogue of Tamil texts has 119 entries and bears witness to his engagement with Tamil works in his first two years in India.⁴⁹ It ends with Ziegenbalg expressing the hope that he would be able to buy or to copy many more Tamil works.⁵⁰ It seems that he was able to do so, for in a letter written in the following year he notes that his library contains 300 Malabarian books.⁵¹ He

⁴⁷ Caland 1926: 8; cf. Jeyaraj 2003: 22.

⁴⁸ Caland 1930: 11. Cf. HB I: 44-45.

⁴⁹ Not every entry represents a different work, some describe multiple copies of a single work (e.g. the *Civavakkiam*, see further below) and some describe parts of larger works.

⁵⁰ Germann 1880: 94.

⁵¹ Letter 7.10.1709 (Lehmann 1957: 120). A catalogue composed by the missionary C.T. Walther and dated 1731 lists an additional 33 Tamil Hindu works said to have been purchased by Ziegenbalg (Walther 1731). It is likely that these do not represent the whole of his purchases during the years he was in India after 1708, but rather only those works

notes that while the books are not expensive, they are hard to get hold of and the ‘great efforts’ he was put to in order to obtain them is further evidence of the importance he laid upon texts. Not all of these dealt with Hinduism,⁵² and Ziegenbalg may not indeed have managed to read all of those that did, but on the evidence of the works referred to or quoted from in the *Malabarischen Heidenthum* and the *Genealogie* it seems that he read many of them.

Apart from reading Tamil works, Ziegenbalg wrote numerous works in Tamil, for dissemination among Hindus, and his prose style and establishment of a printing press in Tranquebar have won for him a minor place in the history of Tamil literature.⁵³ He was fully conscious of the importance of print in the history of the Protestant Church.⁵⁴ In a letter dated 7.4.1713 to George Lewis, the Anglican chaplain at Madras, and first printed, in Portuguese, on the press the mission had recently received from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Ziegenbalg writes:

We may remember on this Occasion, how much the Art of *Printing* contributed to the Manifestation of divine Truths, and the spreading of Books for that End, at the Time of the happy Reformation, which we read of in History, with Thanksgiving to Almighty God.⁵⁵

He continues with ‘an Account of such Books as have been written by us in both languages [i.e. Tamil and Portuguese] these Six Years last past’ in order ‘[t]hat it may be known likewise how we have here, on all Occasions, employ’d our Care and Time, in order to bring in the Use of Books’.⁵⁶ He lists 32⁵⁷ books written or translated into Tamil, beginning with the New Testament, and ten in Portuguese, four of which had already been printed by the mission.

The Orientalist concern with texts is often taken to be connected with a tendency to denigrate, or to distrust, the living representatives of the tradition.

that were still in mission’s library in 1731. Walther (1731:3) states that many of the works purchased by Ziegenbalg, including many of those described in his own catalogues, had been lost, destroyed or damaged.

⁵² A letter written in 1713 to George Lewis (see below) mentions that the library contains only ‘*An Hundred fifty six Books of Malabarick Theology, Physick, and Philosophy*’ (Ziegenbalg 1718: 107).

⁵³ On this see Blackburn 2003: 43-59.

⁵⁴ Cf. HB I: 638.

⁵⁵ Ziegenbalg 1718: 105. The letter was subsequently translated into English (by Lewis) and printed at London in 1715, and reprinted in the expanded edition of the third part of the *Propagation of the Gospel in the East* in 1718, from where it is quoted here. A German translation was sent to Halle (HB I: 630).

⁵⁶ Ziegenbalg 1718: 105-6.

⁵⁷ The first printed edition, the Portuguese translation, lists 33 Tamil books (Ziegenbalg and Gründler 1713: 15). Two works, whose titles are translated into Portuguese as ‘*A Ordem da salvação*’ and ‘*O Caminho da salvação*’, appear to have been listed as one ‘*The Method (or Way) of Salvation*’ in the English translation.

The *locus classicus* for this tendency is a letter of William Jones where he writes that he ‘can no longer bear to be at the mercy of our pundits, who deal out Hindu law as they please, and make it at reasonable rates, when they cannot find it ready made’.⁵⁸ This in turn is connected with the perception that Hinduism has declined or degraded from a glorious or pristine past.⁵⁹ Many—but by no means all — earlier European writers on Hinduism were unable to read Indian languages, and in particular Sanskrit, and were therefore entirely dependent on informants, often through the medium of Portuguese as a *lingua franca* in which neither party was fluent.⁶⁰ They were not, then, able independently to compare the present condition of Hinduism with supposedly normative textual sources. Despite his ability to read Tamil, and his emphasis on the importance of having access to Hindu texts, Ziegenbalg displays no comparable tendency to discount oral testimony. Although on occasion he remarks that a particular text is not understood by most Hindus, this is presented as an indication of the difficult or specialized nature of the text, rather than the declined or degraded state of contemporary Hinduism. Moreover there is an almost equally strong emphasis in Ziegenbalg’s works on the testimony of contemporary Hindus. The title of the *Genealogie* states that the work is ‘composed from these heathen’s own writings *and letters*’,⁶¹ and Jeyaraj notes that in the *Genealogie* Ziegenbalg refers at least as often to contemporary letters as to other texts.⁶² Here and elsewhere, there is no indication that Ziegenbalg regards letters as less authoritative than the texts he cites. From the point of view of the dissemination of Hindu writings in Europe, Ziegenbalg was markedly more successful with contemporary perspectives than ancient texts. While he translated three Tamil texts, and considered translating other works,⁶³ the only translations from Tamil texts that he succeeded in having published were two collections of letters — the so-called *Malabarische Correspondenz* — written by Tamil Hindus in answer to questions about their religion and a host of other matters.⁶⁴ Ziegenbalg also recorded and sent to Halle records of his discussions with Hindus on religious questions, usually during his journeys outside of Tranquebar. Many of these were published in the

⁵⁸ Jones, Letter to Charles Chapman 28 September 1785 (Cannon 1970: 683-4). The letter is widely cited, most recently in Sugirtharajah 2003: 29.

⁵⁹ Buddhism was similarly perceived to have degenerated from a pristine condition represented in the Pali canon. It would not have been difficult to find ‘insider’ perspectives to confirm these perceptions in either case.

⁶⁰ Cf. Anquetil-Duperron’s scathing comments on this method (Anquetil-Duperron 1771: 87-88).

⁶¹ Ziegenbalg 1713: 1r, emphasis added.

⁶² Jeyaraj 2003: 299.

⁶³ In addition to the *Tirikālacakkaram*, mentioned above, Ziegenbalg also reports in his *Bibliotheca Malabarica* that he considered translating a philosophical work he names as ‘Udelkurudadduwam’, but decided to postpone this until he had a better understanding of philosophical terminology in Tamil (Germann 1880: 84-5).

⁶⁴ Liebau 1998. Cf. Liebau 1997.

Hallesche Berichte, and a selection of those were also published in English translation.⁶⁵

To the question of how far Ziegenbalg's view of Hinduism was based on textual sources, must be added the question of the nature of the texts he draws on, and the consequent effect upon his account of Hinduism. King writes:

certain élitist communities within India (notably the scholarly *brāhmaṇa* castes) exerted a certain degree of influence upon the Western Orientalists, thereby contributing to the construction of the modern, Western conception of 'Hinduism'. The high social, economic and, to some degree, political status of the *brāhmaṇa* castes has, no doubt, contributed to the elision between brahmanical forms of religion and 'Hinduism'. This is most notable, for instance, in the tendency to emphasize Vedic and brahmanical texts and beliefs as central and foundational to the 'essence' of Hinduism, and in the modern association of 'Hindu doctrine' with the various brahmanical schools of the Vedānta (in particular, Advaita Vedānta...)⁶⁶

Writing of British Orientalism in the later eighteenth century, Rocher likewise notes 'the privileging of the *Gītā* and of *Vedānta* by the British',⁶⁷ and the consequent impact on the Hindus' own understanding of their textual traditions. Given the privileged place that the Veda, especially the Upaniṣads, and the *Gītā*, came to occupy in later Orientalist constructions of Hinduism, it is notable that none of these texts plays an important role in Ziegenbalg's understanding of Hinduism. Ziegenbalg does mention the names of the four Vedas, describing them as 'four small law books', but his account of them is drawn from a Śaiva Siddhānta source in which they are correlated with the four 'feet' (*pāda*) or portions of a Śaiva Siddhānta *āgama*, namely *caryā* (proper conduct), *kriyā* (ritual action), *yoga* (discipline) and *jñāna* (knowledge).⁶⁸ He shows none of the fascination with the Vedas or obsession with obtaining them that was to characterize later European Orientalism. Ziegenbalg's perspective on Hindu texts is of course profoundly shaped by the fact that he only had access to them in Tamil. While Ziegenbalg was aware of Sanskrit,⁶⁹ there is no evidence to suggest that he was able to read it, nor indeed that he thought it important to be able

⁶⁵ Ziegenbalg 1719.

⁶⁶ King 1999: 102-3.

⁶⁷ Rocher 1993: 228.

⁶⁸ Caland 1926: 34.

⁶⁹ In his description of the *Kantapurā ṇam*, a Tamil version of *Skandapurā ṇa*, and again a work based on Śaiva Siddhānta thought, he mentions that the work was first written in 'the Malabarian Latin' (Germann 1880: 66), which he elsewhere identifies with *Kirendum* [*kirantam*, i.e. Grantha].

to do so.⁷⁰ An annotation to one of the Tamil letters published in the *Malabarische Correspondenz* which mentions the four Vedas in answer to a question about the ‘Law-books’ of the Malabarian religion notes that while the Brahmans make much of these books, among the ‘common people’ the *purāṇas*, *āgamas* and *śāstras* are ‘the fundamental books... according to which the whole Malabarian idolatrous worship is arranged’.⁷¹ In answer to the next question, concerning which books are in widespread use, we find a list of 29 works, including the *Kural*, Tamil versions of the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*, and several *purāṇic* texts but beginning with two canonical texts of South Indian Śaivism, the *Tēvāram* and the *Tiruvācakam*, and dominated by Śaiva works. While this list reflects the perspective of Ziegenbalg’s correspondent, the texts cited in his own works reveal a similar preference for Śaiva works.

No work is cited more often in Ziegenbalg’s *Malabarische Heidenthum* than *Civavākkiam* (‘Śiva’s utterance’), of the Śaiva *cittar* and poet, Civavākkiam.⁷² The reasons are not far to seek: the author condemns idol worship, denies the authority of the Vedas, and rejects many of the practices of Brahmanical Hinduism, including caste. Ziegenbalg’s insistence that Hinduism is basically monotheistic derives from *cittar* conceptions of the unity of the divine as *civam*, ‘an abstract noun meaning ‘goodness’, ‘auspiciousness’ and the highest state of God, in which he exists as pure intelligence’.⁷³ It is this conception of the divine which opens Ziegenbalg’s *Genealogie*:

Barābarawāstu, which is the *Ens Supremum*, or the supreme, divine being, which is there considered: first, as an immaterial being, which is formless and cannot be compared with anything, which has neither beginning nor end, and is the origin of all things, out of which everything has flowed and into which everything will again flow, on which the gods depend, and which is all in all and the unified God.⁷⁴

This conception of the divine is, as Kailasapathy notes, ‘an abstract idea of the Godhead rather than a personal God’ and is contrasted with *Civan* (Śiva).⁷⁵ While there was much about the *cittar* conception of the divine that was not to Ziegenbalg’s taste, especially the depiction of the undifferentiated

⁷⁰ This is of a piece with Ziegenbalg’s general approach, focussed on reaching the mass of people rather than the elite.

⁷¹ Liebau 1998: 94.

⁷² This is all the more remarkable since Ziegenbalg appears, at least in 1708, only to have had portions of *Civavākkiam*. There are three separate entries for *Civavākkiam* in the *Bibliotheca Malabarica*, the first a text containing 48 stanzas, the second 103 stanzas and the last 65. The *Civavākkiam* consists, however, of 520, or 527 stanzas (Zvelebil 1995: 179).

⁷³ Kailasapathy 1987: 393.

⁷⁴ Ziegenbalg 1713: 9r.

⁷⁵ Kailasapathy 1987: 393.

unity of the divine in the sexual union of a divine couple, he nevertheless regarded this as evidence that the knowledge of the truth that there is one God is implanted by conscience and the light of nature, and that the heathen did not have to be instructed in this by Christians.⁷⁶ Ziegenbalg even comments that on first reading *Civavākkiam* and similar works he thought that ‘their authors were perhaps Christians, because they not only condemned the plurality of gods and adduce the one God but they also criticize all other heathen elements and call them blindness.’⁷⁷ While he later learnt that they were not Christians, he suggests that their expressions for the divine are finer than those found among the ‘Greek and Latin heathens’.⁷⁸

We have noted above that one element in the attraction of Advaita Vedānta for both European Orientalists and Hindu reformers of the nineteenth century was that it provided ‘an indigenous source for the critique of Hindu polytheism and idolatry’.⁷⁹ King writes that ‘for Christian missionaries the *Upaniṣads* could also be used as evidence of an incipient monotheism within the Hindu tradition’ and adds that even Max Müller ‘became increasingly preoccupied by the possibilities of a “Christian Vedānta” in his later years’.⁸⁰ While we might therefore expect Vedānta to occupy an important place in Ziegenbalg’s account of Hinduism in fact we find that although he knew at least some works in the Advaita Vedāntic tradition, there is no sense in which for him Advaita is ‘the central theology of Hinduism’.⁸¹ Ziegenbalg’s catalogue of Tamil texts includes the *Tattuvaviḷakkam* of Tattuvarāyar, whom Zvelebil describes as holding a unique place in Tamil theological writing as the greatest exponent of Śaṅkara’s Vedānta, albeit best characterized as Śiva Advaita rather than absolute *advaita*.⁸² Ziegenbalg describes the work as follows:

a book on philosophy. It discusses the nature of the human body and the human soul, the essence of all connected with it, and also the capacity for perception mainly in relation to God. It is a very difficult book in its content as well as in its verse form. Such

⁷⁶ Ziegenbalg 1713: 11r.

⁷⁷ Caland 1926: 42.

⁷⁸ The morality of the Hindus, both as expressed orally and in their texts, led Ziegenbalg to similar conclusions. Describing *Mūturai* (‘ancient utterance’), one of four works by the poetess Auvaiyār listed together in his *Bibliotheca Malabarica*, Ziegenbalg writes that: ‘As can be proven quite clearly from this and similar books, even after the wretched Fall into sin the Law, which reveals itself in these writings, is still written in the hearts of the heathen. And I can truly testify, that I have read in their books and heard from their own mouths, a far better morality than even the Greek and Latin heathens once wrote’ (Germann 1880: 86; cf. Gaur 1967: 85). The other works of Auvaiyār mentioned by Ziegenbalg are *Ātticūṭi*, *Nalvali* and *Koṅraivāntaṅ*, the last being one of the ethical treatises he translated.

⁷⁹ King 1999: 123.

⁸⁰ King 1999: 122.

⁸¹ King 1999: 118.

⁸² Zvelebil 1995: 654.

books are no longer written by the Malabarīs, they were all composed in ancient days by those whom they call prophets. Altogether the Malabarīs have ninety-six such philosophical sciences, but so far I have not been able to learn more about them.⁸³

While the *Bibliotheca Malabarica*, written in 1708, represents a relatively early stage in Ziegenbalg's engagement with Hinduism, Vedānta plays no significant role in his account of Hindu monotheism.⁸⁴ If Ziegenbalg, like later Christian missionaries, was looking for 'incipient monotheism' in the Hindu tradition, it appears that he found it rather in the works of the *cittar* writers like Civavākkīyar than in Advaita Vedānta.

Like other *cittar* writers, Civavākkīyar's iconoclasm is expressed in his use of everyday Tamil in preference to the high Tamil more usual in Tamil literature. Ziegenbalg also used the colloquial form of Tamil in his Tamil writings, notably his translation of the New Testament. For this he was ridiculed by his contemporary, the Jesuit Constant Joseph Beschi, whose own reputation as a Tamil stylist earned him the title *Vīramāmuṇivar Cuvāmi*. In a 1728 polemic work in Tamil entitled *Veda Viḷakkam*, Beschi describes the Tranquebar Bible as 'like a gem thrown in the mud, like poison mixed with ambrosia, like black ink spilt on a beautifully drawn picture'.⁸⁵ In another work, *Lutterinattiyalpu*, ('The Essence of Lutheranism'), Beschi described the effect of reading the Lutherans' Tamil:

Already in reading the first line the reader's eyes burn, his tongue dries up and his ears must burst; one looks around and bursts into loud laughter.⁸⁶

In a study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European accounts of the Venkateśvara temple at Tirumala, Subrahmanyam confronts what he calls two 'opposed, and somewhat gross, myths... concerning the contrast between Catholic and Protestant views of Hinduism and Hindu institutions'. The first is that Catholicism was inherently more sympathetic to Hinduism, the second that Protestantism's supposed rationalism rendered it more tolerant of Hinduism. He dismisses both, concluding: 'It seems to me impossible to speak of two streams, or simply of "Catholic" and "Protestant" discourse, in the materials we have examined.'⁸⁷ While broad generalizations of the sort Subrahmanyam describes are perhaps unsustainable, it does seem that in relation to the question of brahmanical perspectives it is possible to draw a

⁸³ Gaur 1967: 59.

⁸⁴ Cf. Young 2002: 22.

⁸⁵ Blackburn 2003: 54.

⁸⁶ Lehmann 1956: 24, cited in Rajamanickam 1999: 55. Blackburn suggests that this is a mistranslation, because 'printed books at that time were primarily heard' (Blackburn 2003: 54, 202).

⁸⁷ Subrahmanyam 1995: 382.

distinction between on the one hand (minimally) one strand of thinking among Jesuit missionaries which stems from Roberto Nobili and is clearly apparent in Beschi and, on the other, a tendency among Protestant missionaries, stemming from Ziegenbalg, to prefer texts of an antibrahmanical cast. Stuart Blackburn cites a remarkable image used by Beschi in a third tract against the Tranquebar missionaries, *Petakamaruttal* ('Refutation of the Schism').

Is it possible for a washerwoman, a Panchama woman, picking over oysters in the paddy field, to explain the Chintamani or discuss the Tholkappiyam? Is it not proper that the Scriptures, like a tank of drinking water, should be guarded from the pollution of the unclean and the casteless, who shall, instead, be served with a potfull by the guardian brahmin?⁸⁸

It is difficult to imagine either Ziegenbalg or his Protestant successors comparing themselves to Brahmans in a way that Beschi does here. As Geoffrey Oddie suggests, most Protestant missionary writers thought Hinduism 'was created and maintained by Brahmans, primarily, if not wholly, for their own benefit'.⁸⁹

Civavākkīyar's antipathy to caste is notable in relation to the charge that European Orientalists contributed to the 'brahmanization' of Hinduism in the modern era. Another work repeatedly cited by Ziegenbalg in his *Malabarische Heidenthum* is Kapilar's *Akaval*, described by Zvelebil as a 'violent attack on [the] caste-system and the "establishment", almost unique in medieval Tamil literature except for some poetry of Cittar'.⁹⁰ At the end of the chapter on caste in the *Malabarische Heidenthum*, Ziegenbalg cites both Civavākkīyar and Kapilar:

One, however, called *Kāwiler*, held among them to be a great prophet, disapproved of such damaging differences, and wrote that *Bruma* himself had a *Bareier* [*paṟīayar*] woman as concubine. Other great prophets were also born from the lowest and most contemptible caste. Of this, he says: Thus too was I, *Kawiler*, initially born out of the body of a *Bareier* woman. What? Falls the rain only on some, or on all without discrimination? Does the wind blow only for some, or for all? Gives the sun its light only to some or to all without discrimination? Is the earth, upon which we walk, of one sort or many? When river water flows into the salt sea, is there still a difference to be seen, or is it indistinguishable from salt water? Men have for sure all the same form, one nature, and God is one God, *Agawel* [*Akaval*]... Thus the author of the book called *Tschiwawaikkium* [*Civavākkīyam*] writes: Although

⁸⁸ Blackburn 2003: 54, citing Srinivasan 1954: 303.

⁸⁹ Oddie 2003: 158.

⁹⁰ Zvelebil 1995: 332.

you mention many castes and kinds, do we not all have one body and one type of life? Were we not begotten in the same way through our parents' intercourse? Is the law not one law? Is language not one? Do we not eat and die like each other? Hence there is only one caste among men.⁹¹

Despite this, Ziegenbalg and his successors in the mission that he founded were unusual — but not unique — among Protestant missionaries in tolerating caste practices to a certain extent. I have reviewed the evidence for Ziegenbalg's attitude to caste at greater length elsewhere,⁹² and will only note here that while he acknowledges that caste practices are accompanied by what he calls 'superstitions', which converts to Christianity were required to give up, he relegated many related observances, concerning clothing, food and drink, to the realm of 'outward and physical things' of no essential significance for Christian faith. In relation to his textual sources, it is to be noted that it is not least because of his reliance on the works of Hindu writers such as Civavākkīyar and Kapilar, that Ziegenbalg does not construct caste as a fundamentally religious institution constitutive of Hinduism.

Like later European Orientalists, Ziegenbalg sought textual warrant for the statements he made about Hinduism; unlike many later writers he did not privilege ancient texts, and specifically the Veda, as the only authentic or even the primary textual source for Hinduism, nor did he regard Hinduism as degraded to the point where contemporary Hindus were not a reliable source of information about their religion. In selection of texts on which he relies, Ziegenbalg reveals no tendency to privilege Brahmanic perspectives, if anything the opposite is true. He does not construct Advaita Vedānta as the central theology of Hinduism, rather his account of Hinduism is strongly informed by South Indian Śaiva Siddhānta and *cittar* traditions.

Conclusion

Much work remains to be done on the history of European Orientalism before the nineteenth century, particularly in relation to India. This is particularly true of the Continental tradition⁹³

In the short space of time since this statement by Subrahmanyam, several significant studies of European writing on India prior to the establishment of colonial rule have appeared.⁹⁴ Nevertheless we are still a long way from

⁹¹ Caland 1926: 198-199.

⁹² Sweetman, forthcoming.

⁹³ Subrahmanyam 2000: 57.

⁹⁴ In addition to Subrahmanyam's own studies of Charles de Bussy and Dom António José de Noronha (Subrahmanyam 2002), the following recent works on continental Orientalism are noteworthy: David N. Lorenzen's studies of eighteenth-century Italian missionaries (Lorenzen 2002, Lorenzen 2003), Joan-Pau Rubiés's work on late medieval and early

being able to form the sort of conclusions about the nature of European depictions of Hinduism prior to the establishment of British colonial rule that would allow us to demonstrate causal connections between colonial power and the nature of European knowledge of Hinduism. My examination of Ziegenbalg's writings on Hinduism in the light of some of the generalizations which have emerged from recent research on later eighteenth and nineteenth century Orientalism suggests that such generalizations cannot simply be extended backwards into the early eighteenth century. To explain such discontinuities in European perceptions of Hinduism during the eighteenth-century transition to colonialism by reference to the establishment of colonial rule is of course a further step and one that raises one of the most vigorously debated questions in the historiography of eighteenth-century India: namely the extent to which the advent of Company rule in India itself represented a radical rupture with the past.⁹⁵

modern European accounts of South India (Rubiés 2000, Rubiés 2001), Daniel Jeyaraj's edition and analysis of Ziegenbalg's *Genealogie der malabarischen Götter* (Jeyaraj 2003) and Hanco Jürgen's study of late-eighteenth century German missionary writing (Jürgens 2004). In addition some earlier studies of eighteenth-century French Orientalism by Jean-Marie Lafont have recently appeared in English translation (Lafont 2000).

⁹⁵ For divergent views on this question, see Washbrook 2001 and the 'Coda' to Dirks 2001.

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