### Memorandum on the first printing in Ceylon, with a bibliography of ceylonese imprints of 1737-1760, by Douglas C. McMurtrie.

McMurtrie, Douglas C. (Douglas Crawford), 1888-1944. Chicago, Priv. print, 1931.

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

# Memorandum on the FIRST PRINTING IN CEYLON



This series of notes on typographic history are titled "Memoranda," because they are just that—and no more. They do not pretend to be complete essays on the subjects dealt with, but present material from authoritative sources appearing to be of value, which has come to the author in the course of his studies in the history of printing, and which might not otherwise be put on record. These memoranda concern early printing in localities in which it is unlikely that the compiler will have opportunity to make first-hand studies in the field.



### Memorandum on the

# FIRST PRINTING IN CEYLON

With a Bibliography of Ceylonese Imprints of 1737-1760

By Douglas C. McMurtrie

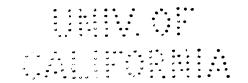


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Of this Memorandum on the First Printing in Ceylon there have been printed in August, 1931, two hundred and fifty copies only.





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## FIRST PRINTING IN CEYLON

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It was in 1737 that the first printing is known to have been done in the island of Ceylon—then under Dutch rule. The governor, Gustavus Wilhelmus, Baron Imhof, thought it would be advantageous to provide Christian literature for the Buddhist and Mohammedan population, so in 1736 he imported a press.

The first book printed on this press was a Sinhalese Prayer Book published in octavo format in 1737. This was followed by a Confession of Faith in 1738 and one volume containing a Catechism and Prayers and another containing the Four Gospels in 1739.

An exceedingly valuable list of books printed at this press, supplied me through the courtesy of the Honorary Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch), is appended hereto.

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These books are to be found either in the Colombo Museum or in the British Museum.

In the imprint of the New Testament in the Tamil language which was printed in 1759 we find the name of the printer at that time: Gedruckt te Colombo, in's Compagnies Gewoone Druckery door Pieter Bruwaart, anno M.DCC.LIX. This imprint is given by Deschamps (L'Imprimerie hors l'Europe).

The first periodical publication was the Ceylon Government Gazette, which was first issued in 1802. A newspaper, the Ceylon Observer, still published, was established in 1834. It became a daily in the 'sixties.

Printing was introduced at Mellore in 1818, and at Cotta, six miles southeast of Colombo, a press was established by the Church Missionary Society in 1822.



### Bibliography of Ceylonese Imprints

- A Collection of Prayers. 8vo. Translator unknown. In Sinhalese language. Colombo, 1737.
- Confession of Faith. 8vo. Translated by J. P. Wetzelius. In Sinhalese language. Colombo, 1738.
- Catechism and Prayers. 8vo. Translator unknown. In Tamil language. Colombo, 1739.
- The Four Gospels. 8vo. Translated by Rev. W. Conyn, Colombo. In Sinhalese language. Colombo, 1739.
- St. Matthew's Gospel. 4to. Translated by the Rev. A. Cramer, Jaffna. In Tamil language. Colombo, 1740.
- The Heidelberg Catechism. 8vo. Translated by the Rev. W. Conyn, Colombo. In Sinhalese language. Colombo, 1741.
- A Book containing five smaller Catechisms, etc. 8vo. Translator not known. In Sinhalese language. Colombo, c. 1741.
- The Gospels of St. Mark, Luke, and John. 4to. Translated by a Committee. In Tamil language. Colombo, 1742.
- Confession of Faith. (Second edition of text first printed in 1738.) 8vo. Translated by Rev. J. P. Wetzelius. In Sinhalese language. Colombo, 1742.

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- A Short Plan of the Doctrine of Faith. 8vo. Translated by Rev. J. P. Wetzelius. In Sinhalese language. Colombo, 1744.
- The Liturgy of the Dutch Reformed Church. 8vo. Translator not known. In Sinhalese language. Colombo, 1744.
- Four Sermons. 8vo. Translated by Rev. W. Conyn, Colombo. In Sinhalese language. Colombo, 1746.
- Sixteen Sermons. 8vo. Translated by the Rev. P. de Vriest, Colombo. In Tamil language. Colombo, 1747.
- A new edition of Sermons. 8vo. Translated by Rev. W. Conyn, Colombo. In Sinhalese language. Colombo, 1753.
- A History of the Old Testament. Translator and author not known. In Tamil language. Colombo, 1753.
- The Triumph of the Truth. 8vo. Translated by Rev. P. de Melho. In Tamil language. Colombo, 1753.
- Four Sermons on Love and Faith. 8vo. Translator and author not known. In Sinhalese language. Colombo, 1753.
- The Heidelberg Catechism. 8vo. Translated by Rev. S. A. Bronsveld. In Tamil language. Colombo, 1754.
- A Short Summary of the Christian Religion. 8vo. Translated by Rev. S. A. Bronsveld. In Tamil language. Colombo, 1754.

[8]



- A Metrical Version of the Psalms of David. 8vo. Translated by the Rev. P. de Melho, Jaffna. In Tamil language. Colombo, 1755.
- Borst's Compendium of the Christian Religion. 8vo. Translator not known. In Tamil language. Colombo, 1755.
- Bert's Short Questions on Religion. Translator not known. In Tamil language. Colombo, c. 1755.
- The Lord's Prayer, etc. 8vo. Translated in 1723, and edited by the Rev. M. Wermelskircher. In Sinhalese language. Colombo, 1755.
- Three Sermons, by the Rev. Dr. Wagerdus. Edited by the Rev. M. Wermelskircher. In Dutch language. Colombo, 1756.
- A Sermon. 8vo. Translated by Rev. S. A. Bronsveld. In Portuguese language. Colombo, 1756.
- Rudimenta Linguae Latinae. 8vo. Translated by Rev. Dr. Meyer. In Dutch language. Colombo, 1756.
- The Version of the whole of the New Testament. 4to. Translated by P. de Melho. In Tamil language. Colombo, 1759.
- A Dictionary of the Sinhalese Language. Author unknown. In Sinhalese language. Colombo, 1759.
- The Liturgy of the Dutch Reformed Church. 8vo. Translated by Rev. P. de Melho. In Tamil language. 1760.

[9]



An Historical and Doctrinal Catechism. 8vo. Translated by Rev. P. de Melho. In Portuguese language. Colombo, 1760.

Deschamps lists a few other imprints, as follows:

School books. 8vo. In Sinhalese language. Colombo, 1742.

Rituale Trangambaricum. 8vo. In Tamil language. Colombo, 1744.

Catechism. 8vo. In Sinhalese language. Colombo, 1744.

A Collection of Prayers. 8vo. In Sinhalese language. Colombo, 1744.

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