

Abraham Roger: 'A Door Open'd to the Knowledge of Occult Paganism'

The single most important seventeenth-century contribution to European knowledge of Indian religions is *De Open-Deure tot het Verborgene Heydendom* (*The Open Door to hitherto concealed Heathenism*) of the Dutch Calvinist minister Abraham Roger, published posthumously at Leiden in 1651.¹ The book is important not only for its detailed grasp of South Indian religious beliefs and practices, which has earned it the praise of writers from Anquetil-Duperron to Friedrich Max Müller and beyond,² and for its inclusion of the first Sanskrit text translated into and published in a European language³ but, above all, for the way in which it lays the foundations for the emergence of the concept of a pan-Indian religion.

The work was translated into German (1663) and French (1670).⁴ Much of the substance of Roger's observations appeared, without acknowledgement, in Olfert Dapper's *Asia, of Naukeurige Beschryving van Het*

¹ The full title of Roger's work is *De Open-Deure tot het Verborgene Heydendom Ofte Waerachtigh vertoogh van het Leven ende Zeden; mitsgaders de Religie, ende Godsdiens der Bramines, op de Cust Chormandel, ende de Landen daar ontrent*. The modern critical edition is by Willem Caland (*Werken Uitgegeven door De Linschoten-Vereeniging*, X. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1915). I have used the 1670 French translation of Thomas de La Grue, checking all translations against Caland's edition. Rubiés notes that 'The French edition was prepared in Holland, and is a reliable translation of the Dutch original' albeit augmented with 'numerous annotations of an antiquarian nature' (Rubiés 2001: 242; cf. Lach and Van Kley 1993: 1030). I have also commented on the changes which are made in the versions which appear in Picart (1723 and 1731), in order to illustrate how Roger's information was integrated with what was known of Indian religions from other sources.

² Anquetil-Duperron noted that Roger's work 'est le meilleur corps de mythologie Indienne qui ait paru en Europe' (*Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, XLIX: 682 cited in Zachariae 1916: 561). A. C. Burnell described it as 'Still perhaps the most complete account of South Indian Hinduism, though by far the earliest' (Burnell 1879: 98). 'For modern students of Hindu society and religion, this book is indispensable for the detail that Roger gives about conditions on the Coromandel Coast in the mid-seventeenth century with respect to caste, to social practices, and to the religious beliefs and rites then prevailing.' (Lach and Van Kley 1993: 1057).

³ The *Nīti- and Vairāgya-śatakas* of Bhartṛhari.

⁴ *Abraham Rogers Offne Thüür zu dem verborgeney Heydenthum*, Nuremberg, 1663. *Le theatre de l'idolatrie, ou la porte ouverte, Pour parvenir à la cognoissance du paganisme caché*, Amsterdam, 1670. For further details see the bibliographical appendix to Caland's critical edition.

Rijk des Grooten Mogols, En een groot gedeelte van Indien (1672).⁵ This work was translated into English in 1673 by John Ogilby.⁶ Parts of Roger's work also appeared in Baldaeus's posthumously published *Beschrijving der Oost-Indische Kusten Malabar en Coromandel benevens het eiland Ceilon* (1672).⁷ An edited version of the French translation of Thomas de La Grue appeared in both the French and the English versions of Picart's collection.⁸ Thus Roger's work was widely disseminated in Europe in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.⁹ Thomas Burnet, in the 'Appendix of the Brachmins [*sic*] Religion' to his *Archaeologiae philosophicae* (1692) which was reprinted in English translation in the deist Charles Blount's *Oracles of Reason* (1693), commented that 'the Kingdom of *Choromandel*, on the Southren [*sic*] Coast of the *Indies*, has its *Brachmins*: whose Manners and Doctrine have been with no small Diligence enquired into by *Abraham Rogers*, who wrote the Book called – *Janua aperta ad Arcana Gentilismi*. Having Himself lived many years there.'¹⁰ Diderot made use of Roger's work for

⁵ *Asia, an exact description of the kingdom of the Great Mogul, and of a great part of the Indies*. Amsterdam: Jakob van Meurs, 1672.

⁶ *Asia, the First Part: being an Accurate Description of Persia, and the several provinces thereof: the Vast Empire of the Great Mogul, and other parts of India ... Collected and translated ... by John Ogilby*. London: Printed by the author, 1673. The material from Roger and other writers including Terry and Della Valle appears in the section entitled 'Of the Several Religions profest in Asia', pp.103–152.

⁷ The section entitled 'Afgoderye der oost-indische Heydenen' ('Idolatry of the East-Indian Heathens') was almost entirely derived from other works, particularly the *Livro da Seita dos Indios Orientais* (Fenicio 1933) of Jacobo Fenicio SJ, who was in India from about 1584 to his death in 1632. Neill concludes that 'Baldaeus has no claim to be regarded as an independent investigator' (Neill 1984: 382–83, 421–423). Baldaeus's work appeared in English in the Churchills' *Collection of Voyages and Travels*. London: Printed by assignment from Messrs. [A. and J.] Churchill, 1704–1752. Volume II (1752): 509–793.

⁸ A 'Dissertation sur les Mœurs et sur la Religion des Bramines, Dressée sur les Memoires du Sieur Roger Hollandois' by Antoine-Augustin Bruzen de La Martinière (1683–1743), appeared in Picart 1723. La Martinière omitted what he considered 'verbiage' and 'remarques inutiles', including most of the references to Padmanābha and all of the paraphrase of Bhartṛhari. He added other material, mostly comments intended to show that the 'Brachmans, so famous in antiquity ... who were surnam'd Gymnosophists ... were a colony of the Egyptians, whose posterity subsists to this day.' An English translation of La Martinière's version appeared in Picart 1731.

⁹ Thus although, as Neill notes, Roger's work never appeared in a full English translation (Neill 1984: 419), versions of the work appeared at least three times in English: the English version of Picart, Ogilby's translation of Dapper, and the English translation of Baldaeus, which was reprinted in the Churchills' collection.

¹⁰ Thomas Burnet, 'Appendix of the Brachmins Religion', *Archaeologiae philosophicae: sive doctrina antiqua de rerum originibus* (1692), in Blount 1693: 82–83. Burnet's reference to Roger may be the source of the apparently groundless idea that Roger's work first appeared in Latin. Caland traces the idea to a later reference to Roger's work under

his article on the 'Philosophie des Malabares' in the *Encyclopédie*, and *De Open-Deure* was a source for both Goethe and Herder.¹¹ There was a copy of the 1663 German translation in the library of the University of Halle, to which Ziegenbalg would have had access before going to Tranquebar.¹²

Roger's life and Indian career

The date of Roger's birth is not known. He studied under Antonius Walaeus (1573–1639) at the *Seminarium Indicum*, founded at Leiden in 1623, and described by Stephen Neill as 'the first missionary training centre of the western world ... Walaeus took into his own home a number of theological students, never more than six at a time, and undertook to give them a measure of special preparation for work in the Eastern regions.'¹³ Here Roger would have received 'two years of instruction in Malay and some knowledge about Islam and other religions.'¹⁴ In 1630 he was sent by the Amsterdam *classis* to be chaplain to the Dutch East India company, arriving in Batavia (Jakarta) on the 5th of June 1631. Shortly afterwards he was transferred to Pulicat (Pāliacatta), where he remained for just over a decade (17th of September 1632 to the 3rd of November 1642). He spent a further five years in Batavia, returning to the Netherlands in September 1647 and dying at Gouda two years later. His widow, Emmerentia Pools, arranged publication of his book, possibly with the help of those who contributed the dedicatory epistle (the preacher Jacob Sceper d.1678) and the preface (signed 'A. W. JC^{ms}', identified in Jöcher's 1751 *Lexicon* as Andreas Wissowatius, Jurisconsultus.)¹⁵

De Open-Deure: sources

Roger's primary source, acknowledged throughout the *Open-Deure*, was a Smārta Brahman named Padmanābha. Roger introduces him as 'the Brahman Padmanaba (from whose mouth I have all the mysteries of

the title *Gentilismus Reseratus* in C. G. Jöchen, *Allgemeine Gelehrten Lexikon*. Leipzig, 1751 (Roger 1915: xxvii).

¹¹ Roger 1915: 125, n.2.

¹² Roger 1915: 218. Ziegenbalg's knowledge of Roger's work is discussed below, p.109.

¹³ Neill 1984: 377–8.

¹⁴ Furber 1976: 327. The College was closed in 1633, having 'sent out to the East twelve preachers of more than ordinary devotion and competence' (Neill 1984: 378).

¹⁵ For further biographical details see Roger 1915: xxvi.

heathenism which will be discovered in this book)'.¹⁶ Padmanābha had taken refuge in a Dutch fort and there Roger had been of some service to him, as a result of which they became friends and Padmanābha served as Roger's informant and translator, through the medium of Portuguese.¹⁷ On occasion Roger mentions discussions with a group of 'Bramines',¹⁸ and he also names a second Brahman, Damersa, whose opinion is given where it differs from that of Padmanābha. 'Damersa', whose name Caland suggests may be Dharmarāja, is said by Roger to be a Tattvavādin Vaiṣṇava. Although Roger is reported to have learnt enough Tamil to preach in that language, Lach and Van Kley state that 'generally their conversations seem to have been in Portuguese, the *lingua franca* of trade on the Coromandel coast.'¹⁹ Roger's knowledge of Indian texts will be discussed below although, like Lord, his knowledge of these seems to have come via his informants rather than from his own reading. Although he occasionally mentions classical authors, Roger does not appear to have relied substantially on any earlier European accounts. Theodor Zachariae suggests that Roger knew, and used, Diogo do Couto's account of the Vedas in his *Decada quinta da historia da India* published in 1612;²⁰ note however, the same writer's comment elsewhere that 'Was wir aus der Zeit vor Roger besitzen, kann sich mit seinem Buch nicht vergleichen.'²¹ Roger's final source was his own observation of temple worship and other practices; a significant part of his text is made up from these observations, and he appears to have had greater access to temples than did some later European observers.²²

De Open-Deure: *structure*

Roger's work is divided into two sections: the first deals with the 'Life and Manners' ('het Leven en Zeden') of the 'Bramines', the second with their 'Beliefs and Divine-Service' ('het Geloove, ende den Gods-dienst'). Lach and Van Kley comment that '[t]his division of life into secular and

¹⁶ 'Den Bramine Padmanaba (uyt wiens mont ick hebbe alle de verborgentheden van 't Heydendom die in dit Boeck ontdeckt werden)'. Roger 1915: 1.

¹⁷ Neill 1984: 379.

¹⁸ See, for example, Roger 1915: 193. Although Roger gives an account of the four *varṇas*, he uses 'Bramine' as his most general term for all those he describes, this usage has been retained except where it is clear that he refers specifically to Brahmins.

¹⁹ Lach and Van Kley 1993: 1029.

²⁰ Zachariae 1921: 151.

²¹ Zachariae 1916: 562.

²² Roger mentions that during the ten years he was in Pāliacatta he went into the temples of Viṣṇu and Śiva many times (Roger 1915: 124). He also mentions specific occasions on which he went into the temples with Padmanābha (e. g. Roger 1915: 120).

religious spheres, so natural to Western ways of thinking, does violence to the unity of Hinduism and imposes upon it a separation foreign to its doctrine and practices. This organization also produces repetitions, particularly of Indian terms and names, which tend to confuse and irritate the reader.²³ The separation of religion from other spheres of life was, as we have seen, far from natural at this period even for Western ways of thinking, and the contents of the two sections of Roger's book belie Lach and Van Kley's description of it.

Although the term appears in the title of his work, Roger rarely uses 'Religie' or its derivative 'religieus', using rather 'Gods-dienst' and 'Godsdienstigh'.²⁴ In the first half of the seventeenth century, 'Gods-dienst' was to some extent synonymous with 'Religie', but 'Religie' itself had not yet fully acquired the meaning 'religion' and its equivalents have today. While the *De Veritate Religionis Christianae* (1627) of Grotius, had appeared in an earlier, poetic, form as *Bewys van den Waren Gods-dienst is ses Boecken gestelt* (1622), Wilfred Cantwell Smith comments that even in the prose, Latin version, 'the transition is not yet complete: Grotius's position set forth under that title is about three-quarters of the way or more along a road leading from "the genuineness of Christian religiousness" to "the truth of the Christian religion"'.²⁵ In the 1670 French version of Roger's work, 'Gods-dienst' is most often translated as 'religion', but also as 'service divin'²⁶ and as 'ceremonies'.²⁷ Thus when Roger speaks of 'den Gods-dienst der Bramines', we should not read into his work a sense of 'religion' which may indeed now be 'natural to

²³ Lach and Van Kley 1993: 1029.

²⁴ 'Religie' appears four times in the body of Roger's work: once in the opening paragraph of the first part (cited below), twice more in the first part (in chapter IX, where he notes that 'as the Bramines not only teach their children to read, to write and to count, but also instruct them in the points of their religion, it would be appropriate to recount here, what are the points of their religion ... but as this matter will be spoken of in the second part, we will defer it to there' Roger 1915: 30), and only once in the second part of the work (in chapter II, where he notes that 'the Bramines, according to their religion, believe that Wistnou and Eswara, procreate with their wives' Roger 1915: 93.) The adjective 'religieus' appears twice in the first part (70, 71) and once in the second (123). 'Gods-dienst' (or the plural 'Gods-diensten') appears six times in part one, and seventeen times in part two; the adjective 'Gods-dienstigh' ('devout', 'religious') once in each part. 'Gods-dienst' is used of both the Bramines and the Eleusians, in contrast for Christianity we have 'het Christelijcke ghelooove' (the Christian faith, 14). In chapter V of part one the phrase 'de Leere der Bramines' (the doctrine of the Bramines) is used twice (23). Roger's editors, especially Wissowatius, use 'Religie' much more frequently than Roger himself, and may be responsible for its appearance in the title of his work. See below, p.99.

²⁵ Smith 1991: 39.

²⁶ e. g. Roger 1670: 38.

²⁷ e. g. Roger 1670: 196. The 1663 German translation uses 'Gottesdienst', using 'Religion' only where 'Religie' appears in the Dutch original.

Western ways of thinking', but was yet to become so at the time Roger wrote.²⁸

While there appear to be no grounds for doubting that the content of Roger's work is substantially original, rather than derived from other European works, there is no way to be certain of the extent to which the book owes its organization to those who brought it to publication after Roger's death (Pools, Sceper, Wissowatius and possibly also the publisher, F. Hackes). There is, as Lach and Van Kley note, a significant amount of repetition, and the division into chapters seems somewhat arbitrary.²⁹ However, the work begins with an explicit statement of the rationale for the overall division of the book into two sections:

Our intention is not only to represent, in this treatise, the life and manners of the Bramines, but also to discover their faith and their religion. For this subject, we will divide this work into two parts; in the first we will set out the life and the way of life of the Bramines, and all that on which it depends, and in the second we will speak of their religion, and their opinions touching the divine, and also the practices and the exercises which they observe in this encounter.³⁰

In the first part we find a detailed account of the life of the 'Bramines', *including* religious practices, while in the second their religious beliefs ('Geloove') and practices ('Gods-dienst') are isolated for more detailed attention. Thus Dharampal describes the first part of Roger's work as

²⁸ So Balagangadhara translates Roger's statement 'Ende Overmits daer een Godt is, oock een God-dienst moet zijn; soo sullen wy ons gaen begheven tot het ondersoek' (Roger 1915: 112) as follows 'Because where there is a God, a religion *must exist* too; it is thus that we shall approach our investigation'. (Balagangadhara's emphasis.) Balagangadhara suggests that this is how 'this missionary [found] out whether religion existed among the Brahmins of Coromandel' and suggests that rather than being based upon empirical research, the conclusion of Roger and those who followed him 'was based upon non-empirical considerations in Augustine and Calvin', that is, their certainty that there was no nation without a religion. (Balagangadhara 1994: 66–67). Roger's statement might better be translated as 'Where there is a God, there must also be worship of God'. See below, p.97, for further discussion of the passage in which this statement occurs.

²⁹ The overlapping contents of the different chapters will be discussed below. The arbitrary nature of the division into chapters is most noticeable in those in the second part dealing with temples; in La Martinière's version of Roger, ('Dissertation sur les Mœurs et sur la Religion des Bramines, Dressée sur les Memoires du Sieur Roger Hollandois') three of these (VIII–X) are combined into one chapter (VII. Of the Pagods, and Religious Worship).

³⁰ 'Ons voornemen is niet alleen in dit Tractaat te verthoonen het Leven ende de Zeden der *Bramines*; maer oock te ontdekken haer Geloove ende Godsdienst. Wij sullen derhalven dit werck in twee deelen verdeelen, ende in 't eerste voorstellen het Leven ende Manieren der *Bramines*, ende het ghene daer toe behoort: ende in 't weede hare Religie ende gevoelen vande Goddelijcke saken, midsgaders de practijcke, ende oeffeninghe der selver.' Roger 1915: 1.

'une description détaillée de la vie socio-religieuse des brahmanes', while the second 'traite de la religion proprement dite.'³¹

So in the first section, an account of the four *varṇas* ('Stammen') is followed by an account of the families ('Geslachten') and sects ('Secten') into which they are divided,³² (Chaps. I–III) and of those groups distinguished by their renunciatory life: 'Wanaprastas', 'San-jasijis', and 'Avadoutas' (IV). In addition to what Dharampal calls 'pratiques socio-rituelles' (ceremonies at the birth of children [VII], at *upanayana* [VIII], at weddings [XI–XII] and at funerals [XIX]) we find described also the daily practices of the 'Bramines' including ritual washing, the worship of the 'idol called Salagrama'³³ (XVI–XVII), and their diet and fasting (XVIII). Roger discusses the status and office of the Brahmins (V–VI), their knowledge of philosophy (X) and the instruction of their children (IX). A chapter is devoted to polygamy (XIII) and two to divination (XIV–XV). Finally, illness and death, including *satī*, are discussed (XIX–XXI).

It is important to note that there was no consensus among European authors regarding how some of the practices dealt with in the first part of Roger's book were to be classified; the dispute over whether they were 'religious' or merely 'civil', was already underway between Nobili and his accusers. There can be no doubt that for Roger some of these are, or include, religious acts. Describing the weddings of the 'Bramines' he mentions the '*taly* [*tāli*] ... a little cord, on which there is a golden head of an idol',³⁴ noting that it is by tying the *tāli* around the neck of the wife that the marriage is sealed and assured, and that until this is done, the

³¹ Dharampal 1982a: 209–210.

³² Roger lists six main divisions among the Bramines: 'de Weistnouwa; de Seivia; de Smaerta; de Schaerwaeck; de Pasenda; ende de Tschectea' (Vaiṣṇavas, Śaivas, Smārtas, Cārvākas, Pāṣaṇḍas and Śāktas. Roger 1915: 10). The Vaiṣṇavas he further subdivides into the 'Tadwadi' (Tattvavādin) or 'Madwa Weistnouwa', founded by Madwa Atsjaria (Madhvācārya) and the 'Ramanouja Weistnouwa' founded by Ramanouja Atsjaria (Rāmānujācārya). The Śaivas, or 'Aradh-ihā' (Ārādhyā, Liṅgāyat priests) 'carry around their neck a certain stone, or idol' which they call a Lingam' (Roger 1915: 13). The Smārtas acknowledge 'Sanra Atsjaria' (Śaṅkarācārya) as their founder, and regard Viṣṇu and Śiva as one, who may be worshipped under different images. The remaining groups are 'heretical', and are followed by very few, because of their evil beliefs. The Cārvākas are 'of the family of Epicureans, who believe that this life is the end of humankind, and that after this life no other follows' (Roger 1915: 14). The Pāṣaṇḍas (a general name for 'heretics') agree with the Cārvākas that there is no afterlife, but are distinguished from them by their immoral lives. The Śāktas are those who 'say that neither Wistnou nor Eswara are the supreme God, but only Tschecti, and that Wistnou, Eswara and Bramma have arisen from him, and exist only by his power, and that the world and all that is within it exists only through him.' Like the preceding groups, they will not be subject to the Veda, and believe only that which they can see or touch.

³³ 'Afgodt, noemen sy Salagramma' i. e. Śālagrāma. Roger 1915: 60.

³⁴ 'een snoerken, daer een gouden hooft ven een Afgodt geregen is'. Roger 1915: 36.

marriage remains imperfect, even though all other ceremonies have been performed. Likewise, his account of daily ablutions includes reference to offerings and invocations directed to the gods.³⁵ Also in his first section he discusses the worship of *śālagrāma* images.³⁶ There are, therefore, no grounds for thinking that in Roger's work the 'religion' of the 'Bramines' is arbitrarily and exclusively separated from their 'manners', still less that this treatment 'does violence' to the supposed 'unity of Hinduism'.

However, it is true that the topics which are isolated for separate treatment in the second part of the work are chosen because they are thought to be necessary in providing an account of 'their religion and their opinions touching the divine, and also the practices and the exercises which they observe in this encounter'. So we find an account of the gods (I–IV), the ages of the world (V), 'angels and devils', i. e. *devatās* and *rākṣasas* (VI), the soul (VII), religious ceremonies and temples (VIII–XI), festivals (XII–XIII), the worship of minor gods and *devatās* (XIV), the worship of 'devils' (i. e. the terrible forms of the divine) (XV), reward and punishment in a future life (XVI), means for obtaining the remission of sin, namely religious austerities, remembrance of holy places, ritual washing, and pilgrimage (XVII, XVIII, XX), the myths relating to the Ganges (XIX), and the after-life (XXI). While close attention to the character and contents of the second part of Roger's work will show that it is best characterized as an account of the beliefs and, especially, the ceremonies of the 'Bramines', without any attempt to give a systematic account of a 'religion of the Bramines', these chapters were nevertheless to play a role in the construction of the idea of such a religion.

De Open-Deure: 'The second part, concerning the beliefs, and the ceremonies of the Bramines, of the Coromandel Coast and the surrounding Lands'

The second part of Roger's work begins with these words:

No-one should think that these people are simply like beasts, and that they have no knowledge of God, and divine service [Gods-dienst]. We should rather testify to the contrary. Navigation has taught us, that there is no people so bestial, and so bereft of all reason, or judgment, that they do not know there is a God, and that there should also be divine service. Likewise, these Heathens also acknowledge a God.³⁷

³⁵ Roger 1915: 58f.

³⁶ Roger 1915: 60.

³⁷ 'Niemant en heeft te dencken dat dese Luyden t'eenmal den Beesten ghelijck zijn, ende van gheen Godt, ofte Gods-dienst en weten. Ter contrarie moeten wy van haer ghetuygen. De Zee-vaert heeft oock den onsen gheleert, datter gheen Volck soo

Although Roger had given an account of the six different groups among the 'Bramines', and sub-groups among them, his account of religious beliefs and practices includes only the three orthodox³⁸ groups, and especially the Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas. His account is not monolithic; apart from distinguishing between the beliefs and practices of the Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, and Smārta Brahmins,³⁹ he makes the familiar distinction between the beliefs and practices of the common people and of the learned,⁴⁰ and he notes other differences in belief (among his Brahmin informants) and practice (from his own observations).⁴¹ While he does occasionally make distinctions based on caste,⁴² overwhelmingly his account purports to describe the beliefs and practices of 'the Bramines'. Like Lord, therefore, Roger's description is limited to a very specific subset of the inhabitants of a particular area.⁴³

The first seven chapters might be considered to give an account of the opinions of the 'Bramines' concerning the divine, in particular relating to the major gods, their 'wives', the lesser gods, the ages of the world, the *devatās* and *rākṣasas* and the soul. However, two-thirds of the second part of Roger's book is devoted to 'the practices and the exercises' of the 'Bramines'. The first group of four chapters deals with the temple worship, beginning with chapter VIII: 'Of the Bramines' worship, and the construction of Pagodas'.⁴⁴ Where there is a God, Roger writes, there must be worship ('Gods-dienst') and we should examine how these heathens behave in their worship, noticing who and how they worship, and through what exterior signs. On their own account, Roger writes, we know that they worship the supreme God, lesser Gods, and the Devil. However, he begins with the outward ceremonies ('uytwendighe Gods-diensten'), with which they worship Viṣṇu and Śiva.⁴⁵

Beestachtigh, ende van alle vernuft berooft, en leeft, of het weet datter eenen Godt is; het heeft oock eenen Gods-dienst.' Roger 1915: 85.

³⁸ Roger does not use the term 'orthodox', but notes that the Cārvākas, Pāṣaṇḍas and Śāktas are taken to be 'heretics' by the majority of the heathens: 'Dese drie laetste Secten worden vande Heydenen voor Kettens ghehouden' (Roger 1915: 15).

³⁹ For example, in relation to funerary practices (Roger 1915: 75).

⁴⁰ For example, he notes differences in beliefs concerning 'heaven' (Roger 1915: 147).

⁴¹ See, for example, Chapter XVII 'Van eenighe eyghen-willighe dwase Gods-diensten'.

⁴² For example, he notes that mainly lower castes participate in the worship of the terrible forms of the divine (Roger 1915: 146).

⁴³ There are occasional references to people of other regions as, for example, when Roger mentions two festivals of the 'Malabars' [Malabaren], noting that he does not know the reason for them (Roger 1915: 136), or when he mentions the practice among the inhabitants of 'Bengala' of immersing the sick in the Ganges (Roger 1915: 156).

⁴⁴ 'Van den Gods-dienst der Bramines; ende het op-rechten der Pagoden'.

⁴⁵ 'Ende overmits daer een Godt is, oock een Gods-dienst moet zijn; soo sullen wy ons gaen begheven tot het ondersoock, hoe dat sy haer ontrent den Gods-dienst draghen; ende aenmercken wie datse dienen, ende op wat wijze, ofte door hoedanighe uytwendigheden.

Roger lists nine points in which, according to 'the Brahman' (i. e. Padmanābha), consists the service, or worship ('dienst'), of Viṣṇu and Śiva. The first four concern the inward attitude the worshipper is to adopt, giving over his whole soul to God without pride (1), living as a servant and friend of God (2 & 3), thinking always of his greatness and glory (4). A further five points of outward service ('uytwendigen dienst') are required of the servant of Viṣṇu or Śiva. He should be willing to speak of God's majesty, to proclaim his name and his glory (5 & 6). The last three points concern the worship of images. These are explained by Padmanābha as being necessary for true knowledge of God (7), and the worshipper must decorate and give honour to the images (8 & 9). These nine points are the closest Roger comes to an attempt to sum up the 'Gods-dienst' of the 'Bramines', and it is noteworthy that this is not his own summary, but is rather attributed to Padmanābha.⁴⁶

Roger then proceeds to elaborate on the outward ceremonies by which service is offered to the gods. The remainder of the eighth chapter is taken up with a list of the major temples of South India, together with the myths which the 'Bramines' have made up about them in order to increase their fame and their wealth. In the next chapter, Roger gives a detailed account of the appearance of the temples and the major gods to be found within them, and in chapter X he describes the esteem in which the gods and their temples are held. He finds evidence for this esteem partly in customs such as removing shoes and keeping the temple to one's right, but above all in the wealth of the temples, which is derived from offerings and a duty on all goods bought and sold. Finally in his eleventh chapter he gives an account of the temple worship itself, noticing that in the ten years in which he was resident in Pāliacatta he never saw congregational worship. He describes both the daily worship before the images and the festival processions. He concludes the eleventh chapter by noting that he has now described what is enjoined by the last of Padmanābha's nine points.

The remaining chapters of the book continue to focus on religious practices. A detailed account of different festivals, the reasons for them and the myths associated with them, occupy the next two chapters. Roger then completes his account of religious worship by describing the worship of the minor deities and 'devils', i. e. the terrible forms of the

Als wy onse oogen slaen op hare Gods-diensten, soo bevinden wy dat sy dienen (oock selfs naer haer eygen voor-gheven) den oppersten Godt, de minder Goden, ende den Duyvel.

In dit Capittel hebben wy voor-ghenomen te vertoonē op wat wijze ende door hoedanighe uytwendighe Gods-diensten, datse Wistnou, ende Eswara, (welck yeder, volghens sijn Secte, voor-gheeft den oppersten Godt te zĳn) dienen.' Roger 1915: 112.

⁴⁶ Note also, however, that when Roger refers back to the nine points in chapter XI, he adds that Padmanābha has described them, 'according to the Vedam' (Roger 1915: 126)

divine. The next group of five chapters concern the means by which the 'Bramines' seek to purge themselves of sin, in order that they may obtain 'a good end' after their death. Here Roger describes various religiously-motivated austerities, remembrance of holy places, ritual washing, and pilgrimages. He devotes a chapter to the myths concerning the origin of the Ganges in order to account for the belief in its salvific efficacy. The penultimate chapter discusses those acts which may be carried out on behalf of the dead by their friends, in case their attempts to purge their sin during the time they were alive were not sufficient.

The final chapter of the second part is concerned with 'the state of man, after death'. While there is some description of the beliefs concerning transmigration, and the heavens and hells, these are mentioned in the context of the description of further practices undertaken by the friends of the deceased, which are explained by reference to the beliefs. Thus the focus of the previous chapter is continued and extended. With this the main body of the work comes to a somewhat abrupt end,⁴⁷ confirming that Roger makes no attempt to give a systematic summary of the religious beliefs and ceremonies of the 'Bramines', and again suggesting that his work may have been placed into its final form by other hands.⁴⁸

De Open-Deure and the 'religion of the Bramines'

The idea of 'a religion of the Bramines' remains to some degree inchoate in Roger's work, as evidenced by his preference for 'Gods-dienst' rather than 'Religie'. Even where Roger isolates certain elements of the way of life of the 'Bramines' in the second part of his book, he makes no attempt to give a systematic account of these as 'a religion'; rather he gives a detailed description of their beliefs relating to the divine and, especially, of their 'practices and exercises'. For Roger's editors and translators the idea of such a religion is much more distinct. Sceper refers to 'der Indianen Religie'⁴⁹; Wissowatius uses 'Religie' more than twice as often in his brief introduction as Roger does in the whole of his work, and it is

⁴⁷ The work continues with Roger's version of the *śatakas* of Bhartṛhari. Caland gives a modern translation of the first three strophes of the *Vairāgya-śataka* to illustrate how much was lost in the process of translation into Dutch via Padmanābha's Portuguese (Roger 1915: 209).

⁴⁸ This issue is considered in the unpublished dissertation of Jan Ouvry "*Open Deure tot het Verborgen Heydendom*": *Perceptie van de Indische Maatschappij en Religie in Engelse, Franse en Nederlandse Reisverhalen uit de 17de Eeuw* (Rijksuniversiteit, Gent 1979). Cf. Rubiés 2001: 242–3.

⁴⁹ Roger 1915: xxxvi.

notable that while Wissowatius refers to the Christian 'faith'⁵⁰ and to the 'Law' of the Jews, for the 'heathens', whether ancient Greek or contemporary Indian, he uses 'Religie'. La Grue, as noted, most often translates 'Gods-dienst' as 'religion', and the translator of Roger in the English version of Picart makes 'Religion' the first element in the title of his translation ('A dissertation on the Religion and Manners of the Bramins').

For Roger, the 'Vedam', 'the Heathens' Law-book',⁵¹ is to some extent a signifier of religious unity among the 'Bramines', for while the 'heretical' groups do not submit themselves to it,⁵² it 'contains all that [the Bramines] must believe, and all the ceremonies which they must perform.'⁵³ Although he was thus aware of 'the foundational authority of the Vedas',⁵⁴ Roger does not appear to have had any real understanding of the Vedic texts.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, while the 'Bramines' must submit to the Veda, 'they have very great disputes among them according to the sense of it, one explaining a word thus, and another so' and thus they have recourse to the explanations or interpretations of the *śāstras*.⁵⁶ Roger was also aware of other classes of Hindu writings, specifically the 'Poranen', which he describes as 'ancient histories',⁵⁷ and of course of the *śatakas* of Bhartṛhari, of which he gives a Dutch translation from Padmanābha's Portuguese. Thus although different groups have recourse to different texts, or at least to different interpretations and explanations of one widely-revered collection of texts, nevertheless the Veda is acknowledged by all as an authoritative source.

The idea of a 'religion of the Bramines' is most strongly suggested by Roger's treatment of the different groups and sub-groups among the 'Bramines' and their compatriots as 'sects'. Despite being aware that for the Śaivas, 'Eswara is the supreme God, and that all the others are under him, and are thus lesser, even Wistnou, who the Wistnouwa say is the

⁵⁰ He mentions Giovanni Pietro Maffei's account of a Brahman who converted 'tot het Christen geloove' (Roger 1915: xxxviii).

⁵¹ Roger 1915: 2, 20.

⁵² Roger 1915: 15.

⁵³ Roger 1915: 20.

⁵⁴ See Smith 1987: 43.

⁵⁵ Burnell suggests that his account of the Vedas 'is, in reality, based upon the contents of the Tamil Vaishnava hymns which profess to give the contents of the *Vedas*' (Burnell 1879: 99).

⁵⁶ 'Doch staet te weten, dat over den sin desselven, onder haer seer heftige dispuuten voorvallen, d'een duyten een woort dus, d'ander so; doch tot wech-neminge van soodanige dispuuten, zijn gemaect de *Iastra*, 'twelck soo veel als verklaringhe, ofte uytlegginghe, beteyckent.' Roger 1915: 21.

⁵⁷ Roger 1915: 40.

supreme God',⁵⁸ Roger nevertheless refers to Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas, along with the Smārtas, as 'sects' ('Secten'). One reason for doing so was that Roger was aware that the Vaiṣṇavas acknowledge Madhva and Rāmānuja as founders of their respective subsects, just as the Smārtas acknowledge Śaṅkara. Given that the idea of a larger 'religion', of which the Vaiṣṇavas, Śaivas and the Smārtas are sects, remains undeveloped by Roger, the question arises why he uses the term 'sect' for these groups. For according to Roger, the 'Weistnouwaes' and the 'Seiviaes' and 'Smaertas' have different conceptions of the deity, acknowledge different founders, and possess different bodies of scriptures. On these criteria, as Stietenron and others have argued, he might have treated Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism as distinct religions.⁵⁹

However, while Roger characteristically glosses the terms 'Wistnouwaes' and 'Seiviaes' by adding that the Wistnouwaes are those who 'say that Wistnou is the supreme God',⁶⁰ and that the 'Seiviaes' are 'the Bramines who hold that Eswara is the supreme God',⁶¹ he nevertheless insists that the 'Bramines' are unanimous that there is one supreme God, who is unique and incomparable, and that 'Bramma' created the world. The followers of Śaṅkara argue that 'Wistnou and Eswara' are merely different images under which the same being is worshipped.⁶² Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas are also alike in thinking that the gods are like humans, and find the same things desirable. Thus Viṣṇu and Śiva both have consorts, namely Lakṣmī and Pārvatī, and despite being able to procreate 'alone, at their pleasure', the 'Bramines ... according to their religion, believe that Wistnou and Eswara pleasure themselves with their wives.'⁶³ Likewise, the 'Bramines' agree on the ages of the world and, with the exception of the Cārvākas and Pāṣaṅḍas, on the immortality of the soul.⁶⁴ Roger thus finds structural similarity in the beliefs of the 'Bramines', even where they differ on the identity of the supreme being. Moreover Roger evidently found similarity also in their forms of worship: 'each according

⁵⁸ 'Eswara den Oppersten Godt is, ende dat alle de andere onder him staen, ende minder zijn, ja selfs oock Wistnou, den welcken de Wistnouwa voorgeven dat den Oppersten Godt soude zijn.' Roger 1915: 13.

⁵⁹ Ziegenbalg explicitly suggests this possibility. See below, p.113.

⁶⁰ 'segghen sat Wistnou ... den oppersten Godt soude zijn.' Roger 1915: 85 *et passim*.

⁶¹ 'De Seiviaes, dat is, de Bramines, de welcke het daer voor houden, dat Eswara den oppersten Godt soude zijn.' Roger 1915: 90 *et passim*.

⁶² 'Dese seggen dat Wistnou, ende Eswara, een zijn, al-hoewel datse onder verscheyden Beeldenghedient werden, ende hebben een af-keer daer van, dat den eenen seght Wistnou is den Oppersten Godt, ende dat den anderen Eswara daer voor hout.' Roger 1915: 13–14.

⁶³ 'de Bramines, volgens hare Religie, ghevoelen, dat Wistnou, ende Eswara, haer met hare Vrouwen vermaken.' Roger 1915: 93.

⁶⁴ Although they are divided on its origin, some taking it to be eternal, and others to depend on the will of God (Roger 1915: 110).

to their sect is diligent to give honour to his idol and to adorn it with the ornaments which best please the idol.⁶⁵ His account of religious practices, which occupies two-thirds of the second part of his book, offers parallel accounts of the worship of Viṣṇu, Śiva and the lesser gods. He also notes practices in use throughout the regions with which he was familiar.⁶⁶

Despite not giving an explicit account of a 'religion of the Bramines', by isolating for description in the second part of his book certain parts of the way of life of the 'Bramines', and by identifying similarities in their beliefs and practices underlying their different allegiances (to gods, founders and texts), Roger laid the foundations for the construction of the idea of such a religion. This idea was already more developed in the minds of Roger's first readers: his editors and translators. There is, however, no reason to think that Roger believed the 'Bramines' to have a common religion because he misunderstood a geographical term ('Hindu'), or because he was driven to think this by an inherited fourfold classification of the world's religions. What we see in Roger's work is the emerging concept of the religion of the 'Bramines' which, however, remains undeveloped, in part because, for Roger, 'religion' itself was still a partly undeveloped concept. Far from the religious beliefs and practices of India being forced into a preconceived mould of an objectified heathen 'religion', the concept 'religion', and the concept which will later be named 'Hinduism', are coeval. Works such as Roger's played a crucial role in the contemporaneous formation of *both* concepts.

We have seen that Roger's work was widely disseminated, through translation, borrowing and, not least, through the version of it which appeared, seventy years after its initial publication, in Picart's widely-known collection. The comments of the editor of Roger's work in this collection, Antoine-Augustin Bruzen de La Martinière (1683–1743), are worthy of notice for the insight that they give into the reception of Roger's work. Like Lord, La Martinière seeks to relate contemporary accounts of the 'Bramines' to the classical accounts of the 'Brachmans'. In his preface La Martinière tentatively suggests that 'It appears that exactness requires that we should call the whole nation "Brachmanes",

⁶⁵ 'Yder, na zijn Secte, is vlijtigh sijnen Afgodt eere aen te doen, ende versiet den selven met verciersels die den Afgodt wel ghevalen.' Roger 1915: 126.

⁶⁶ For example the practice of clasping one's hands above one's head in homage to the 'idol' in procession, which he remarks is 'in use throughout the whole land'. ('Dit is het gantsche Landt door een ghebruyck.' Roger 1915: 127). Likewise he notes that the income of the temples is a sign of how seriously the 'Bramines' take their divine service, and that if this is so in Pāliacatta, where he lived, it may be concluded that it is also thus throughout the land. ('Ende staet te besluyten, in dien dat het soo toe-gaet op Paliacatta, daer ick gheweest ben, dat het oock also door het gantsche Land gaet.' Roger 1915: 122–123).

and those of the first caste "Bramines". However, this distinction not having been established, we do not dare to hazard it.⁶⁷ La Martinière writes that 'just as a Tartar, who should undertake to give his countrymen an account of the dogmas and ceremonies of the Christians, would be obliged to distinguish between the Greek, Roman, and Anglican churches, and that of Geneva; so, in order not to attribute to all the Bramines, that which may perhaps relate to one particular sect only, I warn that those of whom I speak here, are those who inhabit the peninsula of India, particularly the coast of Coromandel.'⁶⁸ In Picart's collection, not only were there numerous different accounts of the 'customs and ceremonies' of the Indians (including Lord, Roger and Bouchet), but also of the different Christian 'sects', such as the Anglicans, Quakers and Anabaptists.⁶⁹ The hypothetical Tartar investigator into Christianity makes an interesting return in Anquetil-Duperron's *Zend-Avesta*,⁷⁰ and the idea is further developed in works such as Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*. What his appearance here suggests is an awareness of the limitations of the work of writers such as Roger, that the 'dogmas and ceremonies' (not the 'religion') he describes may not be part of some monolithic 'heathenism' but rather part of a complex of religious beliefs and practices at least as fragmented and disparate as those of Christendom.

⁶⁷ 'Il semble que l'exactitude demanderoit qu'on appellât *Brachmanes* toute la Nation, & *Bramines* ceux de la premiere caste. Dependent cette distinction n'étant pas établie, on n'oseroit la hazarder.' Picart 1723: 19.

⁶⁸ 'Mais de même qu'un Tartare, qui auroit entrepris de faire connoître à ceux de sa nation les dogmes & les Ceremonies des Chrétiens, seroit obligé de distinguer entre les Eglises Grecque, Romaine, Anglicane, & celle de Geneve; ainsi pour ne point attribuer à tous les Bramines, ce qui ne convient peut-être qu'à une Secte particuliere, j'avertis que ceux dont je parle ici, sont ceux qui habitent la Presqu'Isle de l'Inde & principalement la Côte de Coromandel.' Picart 1723: 20. Ephraim Pagitt's *Christianographie, or The Description of the Multitude and Sundry sorts of Christians in the World Not Subject to the Pope* (1635) gives some indication of what scope there would have been for the Tartar's work. Note that La Martinière refers to the 'dogmas and ceremonies' and not to the *religion* of the Christians.

⁶⁹ Picart, 1737.

⁷⁰ Anquetil 1771: 87–88. See below, p.149.