Chap. 1

SOURCES
"The East and the West have influenced one another in a very real and not yet thoroughly understood way from the earliest times." remarks Dr. G. U. Pope in his introduction to "the 'Sacred' Kṟal"¹ One of the most striking phases of this age long encounter is the West-born Tamil poet and scholar Fr. Constantinus Beschi. This thesis endeavours to illustrate the contribution of Beschi in this bringing of East and West together. A limited study of Beschi's poetical or grammatical contribution would have sufficed to illustrate this. But as it was the desire of the late Dr. R. P. Sethupillai under whose supervision this study was begun that a first comprehensive view of the whole contribution of Beschi should be undertaken, the candidate accepted this rather general topic; 'The contribution of Fr. Beschi to Tamil'.

The first step in the preparation was to collect the printed books of Fr. Beschi in their different editions. With regard to Tōmbāvāṇi the fourth and the third editions from Mission Press, Pondicherry were easily available; the first edition of 1828 was obtained later from the Tamil Literature Society of Tuticorin. The preface of this edition mentions the fact that it was printed from the manuscript copy possessed by Mr. Walter Elliot. The new edition of Tōmbāvāṇi with the explanatory notes by Vidwan
R.L. Arokiam Pillai, Tamil Literature Society, Tuticorin, in which the poems are scanned and therefore easily readable has also been made use of. The summary of Tēmēvāṇi (Tēmēvāṇi-c-Churukkam) with the notes by Mr.V.Maria Antony, published by the same Tamil Literature Society was also used. The two booklets of Fr.R.Gnanapragasam, S.J., on the first two Kāndams of Tēmēvāṇi (De Nobili Press, Madurai) have also been consulted.

With regard to minor poetical works, the Kittiērammāl Ammānāi has been edited in 1849, 1876 and 1927; the one edited in 1947 by Fr.R.Gnanapragasam, S.J. (De Nobili Press, Madurai) contains clear explanations. The other minor poems like Beschi's Kālambakam etc. are found in the collection of Beschi's work by A.Muthusamy Pillai, printed in 1843 in the collection called Tiruppāvāṇi printed in Mādhā Kōil Press, Pondicherry in 1856 and in that of 1929 of the same press. There is also another collection called Tēmēbāmālai, which along with Beschi's minor poems contains also selections from Tēmēvāṇi; of this the edition of 1929 (Mission Press, Pondicherry) was available and later an earlier one without any year marked, perhaps of 1856 (like the Tiruppāvāṇi) printed in the Mādhā Kōil Press, Pondicherry. Mr.Arunappa Mudaliar has brought out an edition of Beschi's Tirukkāvalūr-k- Kālambakam in 1872 (Tattuva Botini Press, Madras). As these possess a detailed and deep explanation of Beschi's
Kalambakam, they were useful in the preparation of a new edition by the present candidate at the request of the Beschi Writers' Association of Dindigul. This new edition contains all of Beschi's minor poems excepting Kitteriammal Ammanai.

Concerning the prose works, it was possible to go through the edition of Veda Vilakkam printed in 1918 (Mission Press, Pondicherry) and later the one printed in 1842 in the same press; the latter has been used here. As Vediar Olukkam has been more useful even to Protestants, it has seen six editions, the last being that of 1934 (Mission Press, Pondicherry); but the earliest edition of 1844 (American Mission Press) has been used here. The smaller prose works Petaka Maruttal and Lutherinattiyalbu are found in the same editions as Veda Vilakkam. The short story book, Paramartha Guruvin Kathai has seen very many editions with many changes in the text. The candidate has been fortunate to have found a very early edition, with no year printed, with Beschi's introduction and translation of the text in Latin. It has been a privilege to consult the longer introduction to the manuscript form of this story kept in the Jesuit Mission archives of Shembaganur. The other prose book Vaman Carittiram is found in the collection of Beschi's works by A.Muthusamy Pillai, already referred to. The two epistles and Tirucchabai-k-Kanitam are still in manuscript form in the Jesuit archives at Shembaganur and
and custodian, Fr. A. Sauliere S.J., must be thanked for having allowed the candidate to make full use of them.

Of the grammars of Beschi, his Koduntamil and Sentamil have had translations in English by G.W. Mahon, M.A. (The Christian Knowledge Society's Press, Vepery, 1848) and by B.G. Baginton (second edition, St. Joseph's Industrial School Press, Trichy, 1917) respectively. But as these translations did not seem to be exact in some places, the candidate preferred to use the original Latin texts. For Koduntamil there is the edition of Pondicherry, 1843, and an earlier one of the College of Madras, 1813, which have been used. The Sentamil grammar has only one edition, the one of St. Joseph's Industrial School Press, Trichy, 1917.

For Tonnül Vilakkam, the candidate was able to get the third edition, (Madras, 1891) from Dr. Kamil Zvelebil, and the first one edited by Vedagiri Mudaliar (Pondicherry, 1838) from the Jesuit archives at Shembaganur. Clavis has only one edition, printed in Tranquebar, in 1856.

With regard to the dictionaries, of the different edition of Caturakarati it was lucky to be able to get first the one of 1928, edited by Krishnasamy Naidu (Madurai) and later the one of 1835, edited by J. Ismattiyaer (Madras), which was the text used here. The less known Tamil-Latin dictionary of common Tamil has only one edition, printed in the 'South India Times' Press, Trichy, 1882. The third and smallest dictionary, the Protaguese-Latin-Tamil dictionary
is still in manuscript form. These last two were obtained from the Jesuit archives of Shembanur.

Beschi's Latin Commentary of Kural is found in "The Sacred Kural" of Dr. G. U. Pope, edition of 1886, London. With regard to the life of Beschi and his works in general, the book of Fr. Besse S.J., on Beschi (St. Joseph's Industrial School Press, Trichy, 1917) has been of great service.

According to the direction of the supervisor, Dr. M. Rajamanikkam, the candidate went to different places connected with the life of Beschi. He visited Elakkurichi (= Tirukkaivalur) in June 1961, Kōnānkuppam in October 1961, Malaiyadippatti and Āvūr and other places near Tiruchy in May 1962 and Manapād and Tuticorin, in May 1963 in the company of Dr. Rajamanikkam. These visits were very helpful in gathering the oral traditions about Beschi and his works; though mixed with incredible stories, these informations were however valuable in showing that the memory of that great Vērāmānīnūrivar, as he is called, is still alive. By this visit to Pondicherry the candidate was able to get besides the oral tradition, some facts about the French translation of Beschi's Tamil-Latin dictionary of common Tamil, from Dr. Filiosmart and his assistant in the French Institute of Indology.

As Beschi was specially connected with the Lutheran Missionaries of Tranquebar, the candidate felt his duty to go there; and in his two visits he was privileged to get the
kind help of Dr. Winkler who patiently went through the passages relating to Beschi in the mission report of Tranquebar missionaries, in German and translated them into English. For the informations not available there the candidate was directed to write to Dr. Arno Lehman of the University of Halle, East Germany. The latter sent him film strips of the relevant passages from the mission reports kept at the archives of Halle-Saale University; they were turned into photostat copies which Dr. Winkler translated into English. These reports contain precious and new informations about the books of Catholic missionaries in general, about the key position of Beschi in those days and about the quality of his dictionaries.

Besides, the late Fr. E. Gathier, S.J., Librarian and Professor of Gregorian University in Rome kindly supplied film strips of Beschi’s letters to the Head of the Jesuit Order in Rome, and photostat copies of the list of Beschi’s works kept in the Vatican Library. The candidate was also helped by another list of Beschi’s books kept in the British Museum, London, kindly sent to him by Dr. Ascher who also gave him some valuable suggestions.

In this attempt in which both the Eastern and the Western scholars have helped, the candidate hopes to show that Beschi contributed much to Tamil by bringing all the wealth
of his Western classical erudition and Jesuit cultural formation adopted to the service of the culture of the land of his love, the Tamilnad he adopted.

**N.B.:** The footnotes are found at the end of their respective sections.

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**Notes.**


2. The candidate has made use of these informations in the articles he wrote to "Caritas", a Mission Magazine of the Madurai Jesuit Province.