Mark E. Balmforth

*Curriculum Vitae*

80 Claremont Avenue, Room 103 MC 9610, New York, NY 10027, USA

meb2212@columbia.edu | markebalmforth.com

**CITIZENSHIP:** United States and United Kingdom

**RESEARCH INTERESTS:** South Asian Religions and Modern History; Sri Lanka; India; 18th and 19th Century Tamil Social History; Christianity in South Asia; Caste; Slavery

**EDUCATION**

Columbia University, New York, NY Ph.D. in Religion, Expected October 2019

M.Phil. in Religion, 2016

M.A. in Religion, 2015

M.A. in South Asian Studies, 2015

University of Washington, Seattle, WA B.A. in Comparative History of Ideas, 2010

**LANGUAGES**

Tamil Columbia University. 2012–2013, 2014–2015

American Institute of Indian Studies, Madurai. 2013–2014

University of Wisconsin, Madison. June 2011–August 2011

Sinhala Columbia University. 2015–2016

University of Wisconsin, Madison. June 2015–August 2015

German Columbia University. July 2014–August 2014

French University of Washington. Summer 2006, 2007–2008

Arabic American University in Cairo. January 2007–May 2007

**PUBLICATIONS**

“Riotous Needlework: Gendered Pedagogy and a Negotiated Christian Aesthetic in the American Ceylon Mission.” *Review of Development & Change* Vol. XXIII, No. 2 (2018): 60–88.

“Nyla Ali Khan’s *Islam, Women & Violence in Kashmir: Between India and Pakistan*.” Book Review for *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*. Vol. 13(2). 2011.

**FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS**

“South Asian Film.” In *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*. 30 vols. Berlin: De Gruyter. Forthcoming 2020.

“Blood Red: Slavery, Aesthetics, and Textile Production in Colonial Jaffna.” In T. Shanaathanan and Ayesha Abdur-Rahman (eds.), *Tradition or Trans/formation? Craft, Practice and Discourse*. Colombo: Kumaran Book House. Forthcoming 2019.

“kalakattaṉamāṉa alaṅkārattaiyal: amerikkaṉ cilōṉ miṣaṉ pālnilaip pōtaṉāmuṟaiyum kiristava aḻakiyalum.” [Riotous Needlework: Gendered Pedagogy and a Negotiated Christian Aesthetic in the American Ceylon Mission.] In T. Shanaathanan and Ayesha Abdur-Rahman (eds.), Tradition or Trans/formation? Craft, Practice and Discourse. Colombo: Kumaran Book House, Forthcoming 2019.

“*irattac civappu: kālaṉiya yāḻppāṇattil aṭimaittaṉamum aḻakiyalum tuṇi uṟpattiyum*.” [Blood Red: Slavery, Aesthetics, and Textile Production in Colonial Jaffna.] In *paṉuval: samūka, paṇpāṭṭu, vicāraṇai*. Colombo: *koḻumpu niṟuvaṉam*. Forthcoming 2019.

**TEACHING / TEACHING ASSISTANCE**

RELI V3974 – Hindu Goddesses. Columbia University. Professor Rachel McDermott. Teaching Assistant. January 2016–May 2016.

ASME V2357x – Introduction to Indian Civilizations. Professor Rachel McDermott. Columbia University. Teaching Assistant. September 2015–December 2015.

RELI V2205 – Introduction to Hinduism. Professor John Stratton Hawley. Columbia University. Teaching Assistant. January 2015–May 2015.

RELST-UA 832 – Introduction to Buddhism. Adjunct Professor Robert Chang. New York University. Teaching Assistant. September 2014–December 2014.

RELI V2008 – East Asian Buddhism. Professor Michael Como. Columbia University. Teaching Assistant. September 2014–December 2014.

CHID 498B – States of Violence: Gender, Nationalism and Identity in Contemporary Sri Lanka. Comparative History of Ideas Program, University of Washington, Seattle. Course Co-Designer and Moderator. January 2009–March 2009.

**DIGITAL HUMANITIES**

Manager, Jaffna Protestant Digital Library (jaffnapdl.org), 2016–Current.

Co-Applicant and Programme Manager, EAP971: Jaffna Protestant Digital Archive Project, funded by the Endangered Archives Programme of the British Library and Arcadia, September 2017–August 2018.

Co-Applicant and Programme Manager, EAP835: Jaffna Protestant Digital Archive Project, funded by the Endangered Archives Programme of the British Library and Arcadia, September 2016–July 2017.

**CONFERENCE PAPERS / WORKSHOPS / INVITED LECTURES / PUBLIC TALKS**

“The Aesthetics of Slavery: Religion, Textiles, and Caste in the Indian Ocean, 1660-1960.” Accepted for Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Diego, California, 23–26 November, 2019.

“*Ñāṉa*, *Bhakti*, *Varṇa*: Notes on a Śaiva-Christian Collaboration in Eighteenth-Century Ceylon.” Accepted for Presentation at “Writing Sri Lanka: Futures Past” Pre-Conference Symposium, The Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison. 17 October, 2019.

“Postcolonial Challenges of a Minority Religious Archive in South Asia” with Henria Aton. Accepted for Presentation at the Archival Education and Research Institute (AERI). Liverpool University, UK, 8–12 July, 2019.

“Nāki’s Death: Breaking Caste and Negotiating Accommodation in the American Ceylon Mission.” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Denver, Colorado, 17 November, 2018. Also presented at the Yale Modern South Asia Workshop, New Delhi, India, 10 July, 2018.

“Printing Tamil Modernity: Pedagogy and Publishing in the American Ceylon Mission.” Tamil Studies Symposium 2018, York University, Toronto, 16 November, 2018.

“Trusteeship without Trust?: Postcolonialism and Memory in a South Asian Christian Archive” with Henria Aton. Tamil Studies Symposium 2018. York University, Toronto. 16 November, 2018.

“Kūlaṅkai Tampirāṉ’s *tiṇṇai paḷḷikkūṭam*: A Dialogue Between Texts and Bodies, Memory and Domination.” Sri Lanka Graduate Student Conference: “Borders: Real and Imagined.” Cornell University. November 10, 2018.

“Riotous Needlework: Gendered Pedagogy and a Negotiated Christian Aesthetic in the American Ceylon Mission.” Tradition or Trans/formation? Craft, Practice and Discourse Conference. University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. 12 May, 2018.

“Surveying Lankan Chintz: Slavery, Aesthetics, and Textile Production in Colonial Jaffna.” Tradition or Trans/formation? Craft, Practice and Discourse Conference, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. 11 May, 2018. Also delivered as an invited lecture at the Sri Lanka Archive of Contemporary Art, Architecture & Design, Jaffna, Sri Lanka. 2 July, 2017.

“A Nation of Ink and Paint: Cartography, Pedagogy, and Evangelism in 19th Century Ceylon.” Mapping Asia: Cartographic Encounters between East and West, Leiden University, Netherlands, 15 September, 2017. Also delivered at the South and Central Asia Fulbright Conference, Kolkata, India, 6 March, 2017, and Religion Graduate Student Symposium: “Divine Maps, Sacred Stories: Cartography and History in Religious Imaginations.” University of Toronto. 17 April, 2015.

“Creating a Slave Caste: Collapsing Tamil Agrestic Servitude and Codifying Lanka’s Aṭimakaḷ.” International Conference on Caste, Social Justice and Democracy in Sri Lanka, International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo, Sri Lanka. 19 November, 2016.

“The Politics of Language: Conflict in Sri Lanka.” Invited guest lecture for ASME V2357x – Introduction to Indian Civilizations. Barnard College, New York. 2 December, 2015.

“*Sāyavēr* Red and Slavery in Jaffna: A Social History of Commodity, Caste and Colonialism.” Tamil Studies Symposium: “Beyond Refuge: Shaping Tamil Studies in the Present.” York University, York, Canada. 1 May, 2015.

“Sri Lanka is Not an Island: Notes on John C. Holt's *The Sri Lanka Reader*” with Mariyahl Hoole. Sri Lanka Graduate Student Conference: “Sri Lanka Otherwise? Resituating Topography and Temporality.” Stanford University. 11 November, 2014.

“Between *Tiṇṇai Paḷḷikkūṭam* and Boarding School: Rev. Christian David and the Transmission of Syncretic Tamil Education to Early Nineteenth-Century Jaffna.” The Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison. 17 October, 2014.

“Ceylon's Dye Root Diggers.” Invited guest lecture for Introduction to Anthropology. College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA. 10 October, 2014.

“Text/Power/Sanskrit.” Invited guest lecture for RELI V2008 – East Asian Buddhism. Columbia University, New York. 17 September, 2014.

“A Colour of Tragedy and Opportunity: Red Textile Dye and the Story of Ceylon's Dye Root Diggers.” Invited lecture at Apparao Galleries, Chennai, India. 9 May, 2014.

“The Politics of Disaster Aid: Intersections of Politics, Ethnicity, Religion, and Disaster Relief in Post-Tsunami Sri Lanka.” Invited guest lecture for *A&S 500* *NGOs and the Politics of Aid.* University of Kentucky. 4 February, 2013.

“Christian David’s Boarding School and the Origins of Education in Ceylon.” Sri Lanka Graduate Student Conference: “Intersections.” Stanford University, California. 9 November, 2012.

“The Myth of Exile: Samuel Newell and the Origins of the American Ceylon Mission, 1813-1814.” Tamil Studies Conference: “Traces of the Past.” University of Toronto, Canada. 11 May, 2012.

“Façades of Pluralism: Use and Misuse of Myth vis-à-vis “Realism” Surrounding Chandrasiri’s *Dutugemunu*.” South Asian Literary Association Conference: “The Transnational Realisms and Post Realisms in South Asian Literature and Culture.” Los Angeles, California. 7 January, 2011.

“Contextualizing Selvadurai’s Funny Boy.” Invited guest lecture for *Humanities and Sciences 100:* *Social Identities and the Arts*. Cornish College of the Arts. Seattle, WA. 10 February, 2010. Invited guest lecture for *English 170:* *Literature in Context: South Asian Canadian*. University of the Frasier Valley, British Columbia, Canada. 28 January, 2010.

“Struggling to Abide by Sri Lanka: An Attempt to Engage in Responsible International Youth Activism.” South Asian Literary Association Conference: “The Sacred and the Secular in South Asian Literature and Culture.” Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. 26 December, 2009.

“Incorporating Jaffna: Identity and Sustainable Development in a (Post-)Conflict Era.” Invited guest lecture for Applied Sociology, Department of Sociology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. 19 November, 2009.

“The Lady and the Tiger: Diasporic Tamil Nationalism as (Re)Produced and (Re)Positioned by M.I.A.” Program in the Comparative History of Ideas and Clowes Center for the Study of Conflict and Dialogue Conference: “States of Violence: Representations of Conflict in Film, Fiction and Media of South Asia.” University of Washington. 21 February, 2009.

“Introducing Jean Arasanayagam and Sri Lanka 101.” Invited guest lecture for Comparative History of Ideas (CHID) 110: *The Question of Human Nature*. University of Washington. 1 December, 2008.

**CONFERENCE ORGANIZING**

Co-Coordinator, “Teaching Religion: Transmission, Pedagogy, and Technology." Department of Religion Graduate Student Conference, Columbia University. 27 March, 2015.

Committee Member, “Sri Lanka: Remaking Society: The 2011 Sri Lanka Graduate Student Conference.” New School for Social Research, New York. 25 and 26 March, 2011.

Committee Member, “States of Violence: Representations of Conflict in the Film, Fiction, and Media of South Asia.” University of Washington, Seattle. 20 and 21 February, 2008.

**SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS**

British Library and Arcadia's Endangered Archives Programme Major Grant 971, 2017

Fulbright U.S. Student Award, Sri Lanka, 2016–2017

Houghton Library Visiting Fellowship, Harvard University, 2016

British Library and Arcadia's Endangered Archives Programme Pilot Grant 835, 2015

Summer Foreign Language and Area Studies Scholarship (FLAS), Sinhala, 2015

Hart Fellowship for Tamil Studies, UC Berkeley, Research Travel Award, 2015

American Institute of Sri Lankan Studies Conference Travel Grant, 2014

Academic Year Foreign Language and Area Studies Scholarship (FLAS), Tamil, 2013

Dean’s Fellowship, Columbia University, 2012–Present

Summer Foreign Language and Area Studies Scholarship (FLAS), Tamil, 2011

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies

American Academy of Religion

**REFERENCES**

Professor Rachel McDermott

Professor of Asian and Middle Eastern Cultures

Barnard College

321B Milbank

New York, NY 10027

(212) 854-5416

rfm17@columbia.edu

Professor John Stratton Hawley

Claire Tow Professor of Religion

Barnard College

219A Milbank

New York, NY 10027

(212) 854-5292

jsh3@columbia.edu