

The First British Book about Bhutan: A Publishing History of Turner's *Account of an Embassy*

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Abstract

British political (and other) missions to Bhutan spawned scholarly publications. These included addresses delivered to the meetings of learned societies and subsequently printed in scholarly journals, or else published as books. Such publications conjured up an image of Bhutan that fit the aims and interests of the expanding British Empire, and there was a broad audience for such works, whether scholarly or popular. This article explores the publication history of the first British book concerning Bhutan, Captain Samuel Turner's *Account of an Embassy to the court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet containing a narrative of a journey through Bootan and part of Tibet*, which appeared in 1800.

Introduction

British media portray Bhutan as a Romantic place. One book title, for example, refers to the country as the “Kingdom of the Peaceful Dragon”.¹ Bhutan is known as well for being the only Buddhist kingdom and for emphasis on Gross National Happiness². It is not necessarily the case, however, that those aspects of life in Bhutan that capture the British imagination are viewed in the same way by the Bhutanese. Indeed, as Françoise Pommeret has argued convincingly³, the advent of

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¹ Hickman, Katie (1987), *Dreams of the Peaceful Dragon: A Journey through Bhutan*, London: Victor Gollanz, Ltd. 1987.

² See, for example, The Guardian (2012) “Gross national happiness in Bhutan: the big idea from a tiny state that could change the world”. Retrieved June 13, 2016 from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/dec/01/bhutan-wealth-happiness-counts>

³ Pommeret, Françoise (2000). “Recent Bhutanese Scholarship in

young Bhutanese scholars trained in current historiographical methods will naturally result in exploration of different questions and problems in the historical and political development of Bhutan from those that western scholars deem important. With the rise of the Bhutanese publishing industry, marked by the approval of a Bhutanese ISBN prefix, and which enables the worldwide dissemination of knowledge beyond its borders⁴, these are exciting times for the intellectual exploration of the social and cultural history of Bhutan.

The idea that the British and Bhutanese have different views on the country is nothing new. Samuel Turner's book *Account of an Embassy to the court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet containing a narrative of a journey through Bootan and part of Tibet* was only the first of many British books to discuss Bhutan. These publications, often stemming from first-person accounts to travels in the mountain kingdom, were published successfully in Britain and achieved a broad audience throughout the long nineteenth century (almost co-terminus with a study by Sarkar and Ray⁵, which was an era of British near-hegemony in the region. British interests at the time, reflected in these publications, were the people, places, plants and animals in Bhutan - but also the furtherance of British interests, whether commercial or military. As the translator's preface to the French edition states, "The English, whose daring genius led them to almost every part of the globe for commerce and to increase riches, have been careful not to neglect Tibet."

Travel books are an immensely popular literary genre. Indeed, when Gervais Clouzier and Claude Barbin published in Paris *Les Six Voyages de Jean Baptiste Tavernier, Ecuyer Baron d'Aubonne, qu'il a fait en Turquie, en Perse, et aux Indes* in 1676, that same year summaries of the book were published in English by the

History and Anthropology," *Journal of Bhutan Studies* 2(2).

⁴ Kinga, Sonam (2001). "Publications in Bhutan since the Establishment of the ISBN Agency." *Journal of Bhutan Studies* Vol 5, pp.78-93.

⁵ Sarkar, Ratna and Ray, Indrajit (2007) "Political Scenario in Bhutan during 1774-1906: An Impact Analysis on Trade and Commerce" *Journal of Bhutan Studies* Volume 17, pp. 1-21.

Royal Society.⁶ An English edition translated by John Phillips, *The Six Voyages of John Baptista Tavernier*, was printed in 1677 by William Godbidd and sold by Robert Littlebury⁷ and Moses Pitt, the latter operating out of the traditional place in London for booksellers, St. Paul's Churchyard. Godbidd (sometimes Godbid) was best known as a printer of music; he was successful as a printer, for a survey of 1688 reports that he operated three presses, employing five workmen, and two apprentices.⁸ The success of the book—other printings were made in 1678, 1680, and 1684⁹—must have whetted the appetite of publishers for more such tales of overseas adventures.

To cement the relations established after the visit of George Bogle to Tibet in 1774, Warren Hastings—Governor of the Presidency of Fort William—proposed a new mission to the country soon after receiving news of the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama. Samuel Turner, a Lieutenant in the Honourable East India Company and a relative of Hastings¹⁰, was chosen to

⁶ Royal Society (1676) "Observations concerning some of the most considerable parts of Asia" *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, November. 711–715, and (1676) "More observations of Monsieur Tavernier's Voyages" *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* December pp.751–758. The latter may contain the first Western usage of the word Boutan.

⁷ The offices of Littlebury and Pitt were located in Little Britain, an area of London dominated by booksellers. Pitt was "one of the most important booksellers in the second half of the seventeenth century." Plomer, Henry R. (1907) *Dictionary of Booksellers and Printers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1641 to 1667*, London: Bibliographical Society, p. 147.

⁸ Plomer, Henry R (1907) *Dictionary of Booksellers and Printers who were at work in England, Scotland, and Ireland from 1641 to 1667*. London: Bibliographical Society, p. 83.

⁹ This may have been a case of copyright violation. The book was entered into the register of the Stationer's Guild on April 13, 1677 by William Godbidd, so the other editions may have been published without permission. In The Stationer's Company (1914) *Transcript of the Register of the Worshipful Company of Stationers from 1604–1718 A.D.* (Volume 3), only the one Godbidd printing is listed, p. 34.

¹⁰ Lee, Sydney (1899), *Dictionary of National Biography Vol. LVII Tom — Tyler* London: Smith, Elder, and Co., New York: McMillan Company, p.

lead the mission and was given his instructions on January 9, 1783¹¹. After completing the mission, in 1799, he was promoted to Captain. In addition, Turner was awarded a small pension and - in January 1801, a few months after publication of *Account of an Embassy*— he was elected a fellow of the oldest and most prestigious scientific organization in the world, The Royal Society.

Turner's book, though, was not the first information that the Anglophone world had about Bhutan. John Stewart, FRS, communicated an early account of his travels to the Himalayan region in a major scholarly journal in 1777¹². British geographer Major James Rennell FRS, who was seriously wounded during fighting at the Bhutan border, published a description of the region in 1781¹³. And one can speculate that those who had returned from the travels with George Bogle and with Samuel Turner recounted their tales in the coffee houses of eighteenth century London. By 1800, a published account of travels to the region might have seemed an extremely interesting venture to a publishing house. The expedition of Turner was a natural one to bring into book form, since several incidents of the Embassy had already been published by Turner in the journal *Asiatick Researches*.¹⁴ The time was right to publish Turner's *Account of*

354. Pemberton (see below) states Turner was a member of the Bengal Military Service.

¹¹ See Captain Robert Boileau Pemberton's "Report on Bootan", p.5 contained in Eden, Ashley (1865), *Political Missions to Bootan*, Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Offices.

¹² Stewart, John (1777) "An Account of the Kingdom of Thibet in a letter from John Stewart Esquire FRS to Sir John Pringle, Bart. FRS." *Phil Trans Roy Soc.* vol. 67 465–492.

¹³ Rennell, James (1781) "Account of the Ganges and Burrampooter Rivers". *Phil. Trans. Roy. Soc.* vol 71, pp 87–114.

¹⁴ *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1800 (mis)states that "Mr. T's account was first published in vol. I of the *Asiatic Miscellany*, 1789. In fact, it first appeared as Turner, Samuel (1788) "Copy of an Account given by Mr. Turner, of his Interview with Teeshoo Lama at the Monastery of Terpaling, enclosed in Mr. Turner's Letter to the Honourable the Governor General, dated Patna, 2nd March 1784" *Asiatick Researches* Vol 1 pp. 199–205 and, in the same volume, "An Account of a Journey

an Embassy¹⁵.

Typesetting and printing

In 1800¹⁶, W. Bulmer and Co. printed Turner's immensely successful *Account of an Embassy to the court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet containing a narrative of a journey through Bootan and part of Tibet: To which are added views taken on the spot, by Lieutenant Samuel Davis; and observations botanical, mineralogical, and medical by Mr. Robert Saunders*. The author dedicated the book to the chairman, deputy chairman, and directors of the Honourable East India Company. Lieutenant Samuel Davis (1760–1819) of the Bengal Engineer Corps, whom Hastings appointed as surveyor for the Turner mission, eventually became a director of the same East India Company and, on June 28, 1792, was also elected a Fellow of the Royal Society¹⁷. Robert Saunders was a surgeon and botanist. Both Saunders and Davis had scientific papers published on their Bhutan-related work^{18,19} by the Royal Society, the former before

to Tibet", pp. 207–220, while in Volume 4 (1795) he published "Description of the Yak of Tartary, Called Soora-Goy, or the Bushy-Tailed Bull of Tibet". pp. 349–352.

¹⁵ For a more detailed account of the author, the contributors, and the contents of the book itself, see the Introduction of Aris, Michael (1982) *Views of Medieval Bhutan: The Diary and Drawings of Samuel Davis 1783* London: Serindia Publications and Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, pp. 10–40.

¹⁶ The dedication page is dated May 1, 1800, so publication must have taken place after that time.

¹⁷ Davis had published several papers on Hindu astronomy, and it was on the strength of these that he appears to have been elected to the Royal Society.

¹⁸ Saunders, Robert (1789) "Some Account of the Vegetable and Mineral Productions of Boutan and Thibet. By Mr. Robert Saunders, Surgeon at Boglepoor in Bengal [i.e. Baghalpur in Bihar]" communicated by Sir Joseph Banks, Bart., PRS. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* vol. 79, pp. 79–111.

¹⁹ Davis, Samuel (1829) "Remarks on the Religious and Social Institutions of the Bouteas, or inhabitants of Boutan, from the Unpublished Journal of the late Samuel Davis Esq, FRS. *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2(1) pp. 491–517.

book publication and the latter posthumously. Saunders observations were incorporated as part IV four of *Account of an Embassy*.

The book was published in a quarto edition (xxviii + 473pp) that was priced at two guineas. This had a calf cover and gold stamping; on the inside, the book had marbled end papers, and was printed in eight-page signatures.²⁰ Furthermore, the spine had raised bands, which —although a mark of high-quality bookbinding - were becoming unfashionable in late eighteenth century Britain.

A deluxe edition was available in an Imperial quarto size with a tan calf cover and a red morocco spine label bearing the short title “Embassy to Tibet” stamped in gold. (“Morocco leather... is the finest of all leathers and most suitable for elaborately gold-tooled books.”²¹) The price of this edition was four guineas.²² One copy recently available for auction had the coat of arms of Sir Simon Richard Brisett Taylor, second baronet of Lysson Hall, set in gilt on the front cover and printed in the front end papers,²³ suggesting that the book had a wealthy clientele and that bookbinding could be carried out to order. The deluxe and regular editions were printed with the same type; the covers and the quality of paper used in printing were the only differences. As with classical typography—“a good, readable type is an invisible type, invisible in the sense that it never conspicuously makes its presence known”²⁴ - the book is set with the same

²⁰ Signatures in the front matter are marked with lower-case letters, the text proper has signatures with capitals. As usual, various letters, such as W, are missing. After Z, Bulmer marks the signatures Aa and so forth.

²¹ Diehl, Edith (1946) *Bookbinding: Its Background and Techniques volume I*, New York: Rinehart and Company, p. 37.

²² Inflation calculators indicate that four guineas in 1800 is the equivalent of £450 at current prices, close to 40,000 BTN.

²³ Heald, Donald (2016) <http://www.donaldheald.com/pages/books/29380/samuel-turner-samuel-davis-illustrator/an-account-of-an-embassy-to-the-court-of-the-teshoo-lama-in-tibet-containing-a-narrative-of-a-journey> Retrieved August 30, 2016.

²⁴ Conkright, P.J. (1974), “Types and Times” *Journal of Scholarly*

display type throughout, with emphasis being achieved by variations within the font itself, such as a large bold initial at every chapter opening and the use of italics for subheadings. Bulmer also made extensive use of thick and thin rules, rather than swelled or “English” rules that were becoming popular in British book printing at that time. The hallmark of Bulmer’s volumes was the clearness of type, rather than any type of printer’s ornamentation²⁵. One of the reasons for this clarity was, having been disappointed earlier in his career by the poor quality of ink obtained from outside sources, Bulmer eventually came to produce his own ink to high standards.²⁶

William Bulmer had earlier established the Shakespeare Press with George Nicol and developed, with William Martin, the Bulmer typeface especially for use in those books; their famous edition of Shakespeare was printed over the years from 1790–1805, and were thus still being produced when *Account of an Embassy* was published. Bulmer was highly regarded, “As a printer of sumptuous books...William Bulmer is generally accorded first place.”²⁷ *An Account* was one of five books printed that year by Bulmer for G. and W. Nicol²⁸. George Nicol wrote, albeit in relation to the Shakespeare Press, that “I will venture to say that the specimens of typography which will soon appear ...will convince all Europe that Mr. Bulmer is second to no man in his profession.”²⁹ Indeed, under the influence of its President, Joseph Banks, the Fellows of the Royal Society had decided on December 22, 1791, that Bulmer should be the printer for its publications, because of the “avowed superiority of Mr. Bulmer’s

Publishing 5(2), p.126

²⁵ Plomer, Henry R. (1924), *English Printers’ Ornaments* London: Grafton & Co., p. 103

²⁶ S.n. (1830), “Memoir of W. Bulmer, Esq.” *The Gentleman’s Magazine* vol. 148 p. 309.

²⁷ Plomer, Henry R. (1927) *A Short History of English Printing 1476–1900*. London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., p. 228.

²⁸ Isaac, Peter (1993) *William Bulmer: The Fine Printer in Context, 1757–1830* London: Bain and Williams, Table 1, p. 97.

²⁹ Advertisement to the Boydell Shakspeare [sic], Pall-Mall, June 4th, 1791.

printing.”³⁰

Bulmer began work with George Nicol by or before Lady Day (March 25), 1790, on which date Bulmer was living in Cleveland Row³¹. Bulmer’s printing shop was in his own house. The front matter gives the address of Bulmer and Co. as “Cleveland Row, St. James” and the printer’s mark indicates it was printed at Russell Court. William Bulmer, though, lived at Number 3, Russell Court, which opens onto Cleveland Row itself³².

Font-matching software suggests *An Account of an Embassy* was composed using the Bulmer typeface, which was originally cut in 1792 by William Martin, who had trained under master typefounder John Baskerville and who had joined Nicol in 1786. The typeface resembles Bodoni and is a transitional typeface, characterized in part by ball terminals to its letters. It is through Martin that Nicol and Bulmer were able to publish many travel-related books, as one of their institutional customers was the East India Company. Martin was connected to Sir Charles Wilkins - the Librarian to the Honourable East India Company and who had studied Bengali, Persian, and Sanskrit. Warren Hastings, who was to send Turner on the embassy, commissioned Wilkins to produce a font suitable for printing Bengali texts, to aid British workers in India in learning the language. After Wilkins returned to England, Martins approached the Honourable East India Company with a request. At their meeting of February 2, 1803, the Court of the company, after having received a letter of recommendation from Wilkins, voted that Martin could “assume the title of Oriental Type Founder and printer to the Company, with the privilege of using their armorial bearings in the title pages of such works as he may be employed to print under their authority”.

³⁰ Isaac, *William Bulmer*, p.41.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21. He paid £1.3s.4d per quarter to rent the premises.

³² ‘Cleveland Row’, in Sheppard F.H.W. (ed.) (1960) *Survey of London: Volumes 29 and 30, St James Westminster, Part 1*, pp. 487–509. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vols29-30/pt1/pp487-509> Retrieved July, 18 2016].

Thus Martin and Bulmer began to publish a number of works for the Company and to publish works in Asian languages, such as a Persian grammar³³ and a polyglot dictionary.³⁴ Martin, and consequently Bulmer, showed great expertise in typography, typesetting, and printing given that two of the most difficult types of books for British publishers to produce are those that involve mathematics (and they published the *Transactions of the Royal Society*) and those involving non-Roman alphabets. On Martin's death, it was observed that "his Greek and Orientals formed perhaps the most valuable of his collection."³⁵

Booksellers

The booksellers were George Nicol and his son, William. George Nicol, too, was well-established in their trade, as he was the official bookseller to King George III and held the title of "Bookseller to the Great Wardrobe" from 1789 to its abolition in 1792³⁶. An intriguing character, George Nicol's second wife Mary Boydell—part of the influential Boydell publishing family—was the subject of an attempted murder by one of her jilted suitors, Dr. John Elliot.³⁷ *Account of an Embassy* must have been one of the first books published by G. &W. Nicol, as they began the business together in 1800; prior to that, from 1791–1799,

³³ Jones, William (1809), *A Grammar of the Persian Language* was typeset by Martins and printed by Bulmer in its seventh edition; the first edition of 1771 was published elsewhere.

³⁴ Richardson, John (1806–1810), *A Dictionary, Persian, Arabic, and English*.

³⁵ Nichols, John Bowyer FSA (1858), *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. viii, London: J.B. Nichols and Son, p. 485.

³⁶ For an account of the royal library, see Brooke, John (1977) "The Library of King George III", *Yale University Library Gazette* 52(1), pp. 33–45.

³⁷ *Narrative of the Life and Death of John Elliot, M.D. Containing an account of the rise progress and catastrophe of his unhappy passion for Miss Mary Boydell, a review of his writings together with an apology written by himself under the pressure of expected condemnation after his commitment for attempting to assassinate Miss Boydell*. London, 1787

George Nichol had traded as G. Nicol³⁸ and it was as G. Nicol, in 1795, that he had partnered with Bulmer to print and sell the related volume *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China*.³⁹ George Nicol and Bulmer worked closely on many volumes over the course of the careers, and their close relationship is reflected in the naming of George Nicol's grandson as William Bulmer Nicol (to whom William Bulmer left money in his will, as he did to George Nicol's widow). William Martin, the typefounder, also was closely linked with Nicol. In the Advertisement for the Shakspeare Press, Nicol writes that for three years "he has constantly lived at my house."⁴⁰ In many senses, then, *Account of an Embassy* was published by a close-knit family—by George and William Nicol, William Martin, and William Bulmer. Indeed, given that each member cared so deeply for the fine art of printing, one might say that their professional lives were an attempt to increase gross national happiness by the publication of high-quality books, of which Turner's was one.

George Nicol not only advised the King on his book purchases, but also the Duke of Roxburghe. Upon the hugely successful auction of books upon the death of the Duke, money was used to found a club for those who were interested in all matters related to books—the Roxburghe Club. Nicol was thus extremely well-connected to wealthy influential bibliophiles in eighteenth-

³⁸ Maxted, Ian *Exeter Working Papers in British Book Trade History* "The London book trades 1775–1800: a preliminary checklist of members, Names N–O."

³⁹ Stanton, Sir George (1795). *An authentic account of an embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China : including cursory observations made, and information obtained in travelling through that ancient empire, and a small part of Chinese Tartary ; together with a relation of the voyage undertaken on the occasion of His Majesty's ship the Lion, and the ship Hindostan, in the East India company's service, to the Yellow Sea and Gulf of Peking, as well as of their return to Europe ; taken chiefly from the papers of His Excellency the Earl of Macartney, Sir Erasmus Gower, and of other gentlemen in the several departments of the embassy.*" Printed by William Bulmer for G. Nicol, bookseller to His Majesty, London.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Isaac, *William Bulmer*, p.29.

century London. In Bulmer and Martin he had a typefounder and printer who cherished the same attention to details as Nicol and his clientele did. Turner's *Account of an Embassy* additionally had fascinating subject matter and beautiful captivating illustrations, which meant that a finely printed edition of the book could command the high prices for the deluxe edition that Bulmer and Nicol produced. It is not surprising, then, that the book was immediately successful.

Publication success

The book was excerpted immediately upon publication (what is now known as second serial rights) by *The Monthly Epitome*⁴¹ and was reviewed soon after publication in October 1800 by *The Gentleman's Magazine*, which describes the author as providing the reader with "an ample, candid, and interesting detail of his progress and proceedings."⁴² In 1805, writing his memoir of the philologist Sir William Jones⁴³, John Shore (an officer in the Honourable East India Company and the first Baron Teignmouth) quotes from a letter from Jones to Warren Hastings in which Jones had clearly read from Turner's letters to Hastings about the embassy. In a footnote, Teignmouth describes Turner's book as "exceedingly curious and interesting" and goes on to state that Turner "whose amiable manners and good qualities had endeared him to his friends, was seized with an apoplexy as he was walking the streets of London and died within two days."⁴⁴ And John Pinkerton, who had major arguments with the bookseller George Nicol, described *Account of an Embassy* as "without comparison, the most valuable work that has yet appeared on Thibet [sic]."⁴⁵ Beyond the favorable critical

⁴¹ *The Monthly Epitome for May, 1800* Vol. IV No. XXXV, pp. 161–167.

⁴² *The Gentleman's Magazine* vol. lxxv (October, 1800) "Review of New Publications" pp.965–968. The review is unsigned.

⁴³ Jones is best known for his suggestion that Indo-European languages have a common root.

⁴⁴ Lord Teignmouth fn (1805), p.243 *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Correspondence of Sir William Jones*. Philadelphia: Wm. Poyntell & Co.

⁴⁵ Pinkerton, John (1814), "A Catalog of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels in all parts of the world" Volume XVII page 156, London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown.

reception marked by book reviews, *Account of an Embassy* also performed well commercially: Messrs. G. and W. Nicol reprinted it in 1806⁴⁶, which implies the first printing had sold out (which usually means that a publisher has made a profit from the book) and that, after six years, sales were sufficiently strong to warrant a new printing.

The success of the book was international. Even though many European countries were readying for the Napoleonic Wars, translations of the book were carried out rapidly after its initial English publication. A French edition was published in 1800 by François Buisson (1753–1814) of Paris, a prominent publisher specialising in travel books.⁴⁷ The front matter for the French edition includes a list of other travel books that they had available for sale. Jean-Henri Castéra produced the French text⁴⁸. He was an accomplished translator who also rendered the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin into French as well as other travel books. Turner's book was specially adapted

⁴⁶ A copy of this second edition recently sold for \$1,098. <http://www.bonhams.com/auctions/18244/lot/3060/> Retrieved August 26, 2016.

⁴⁷ Five years earlier, for example, Buisson published Meares, John (1795) *Voyages de la Chine à la côte Nord-Ouest d'Amérique, faits dans les années 1788 et 1789; précédés de la relation d'un autre voyage exécuté en 1786 sur le vaisseau le Nootka, parti du Bengale*. Meares' book was originally published in English in 1791 under the title *Voyages Made in the Years 1788 and 1789, from China to the North West Coast of America*. It was sold by John Walter and printed at his Logographic Press (a printing technology that never became popular but in which syllables and words were used in the printing process, rather than individual letters). Walter was the founder of *The Times* newspaper of London. Buisson had published several journals during the French Revolution but was arrested after publishing, in 1796, a book by le Citoyen de la Croix (Jacques Vincent Delacroix) *Le Spectateur Française avant le Révolution*.

⁴⁸ Turner, Samuel (1800) *Ambassade au Thibet et au Boutan: contenant des détails très curieux sur les moeurs, la religion, les productions et le commerce du Thibet, du Boutan et des Etats voisins, et une notice sur les événemens qui s'y sont passés jusqu'en 1793*. Paris: F. Buisson. Translated by Jean-Henri Castéra. This French edition has a strongly worded notice about violations of copyright from La Convention Nationale.

for the French market: For example, the French title differs substantially from a literal rendering of the English title and illustrations were added to the French text by the Parisian engraver Jean-Baptiste Pierre Tardieu (1746–1816).

The French edition of Turner's book may well have been commercially successful, for it established close ties between the two publishing houses. In 1797, George Nicol had published *An Authentic Account of the Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China* that was also translated by Castéra and published by Buisson in 1804, again with engravings added by Jean-Baptiste Pierre Tardieu⁴⁹.

Other translations soon followed. In 1801, a German edition was published in Hamburg and Berlin by Benjamin Gottlob Hoffmann (1748–1818)⁵⁰, who had a highly regarded series of travel books, in which Turner's account was included⁵¹. The German text was provided by Matthias Christian Sprengel, an accomplished translator and author, who produced German editions of other travel-related titles⁵². A copy of the German edition, rather than the French translation or the English original, was included in Belgian book sale of 1835⁵³.

⁴⁹ Sir George Staunton, Bart. (1797), *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China...* was published in French as (1804) *Voyage dans l'Interieur de la Chine, et en Tartarie fait dans les années 1792, 1793, et 1794*.

⁵⁰ Hoffmann soon after joined with August Campe and the publishing company thus formed, Verlag Hoffmann-Campe still exists.

⁵¹ Turner, Samuel (1801): *Gesandtschaftsreise an den Hof des Teshoo Lama durch Bootan und einen Teil von Tibet* : Samuel Turners, *Capitains in Diensten der ostind. Compagnie, Gesandtschaftsreise an den Hof des Teshoo Lama durch Bootan und einen Teil von Tibet. Aus dem Englischen übersetzt ; mit 1 Karte und 4 Kupfern* Berlin/Hamburg: Benjamin Gottlob Hoffmann. Translated by Matthias Christian Sprengel.

⁵² Such as Mackenzie, Alexander (1802) *Alexander Mackenzie's Reise nach dem Nordlichen Eismeere vom 3. Jun. bis 12 September 1798, aus dem Englischen u bersetzt und mit Anmerkungen versehen* Weimar : Verlag des Landes, Industrie, Comptoirs.

⁵³ S.n. *Catalogue d'une belle Collection de Livres dans tous les genres* (Gand, Duvivier, 1835) p.3.

A Dutch edition was released in Amsterdam the same year, by the printing house of Willem Holtrop (1751–1835), which interestingly included the notes by Castéra used in the French edition.⁵⁴ Holtrop's father John came from England and published *A New English and Dutch Dictionary* with Willem's publishing house in Amsterdam in 1789⁵⁵; extent copies of the Dutch edition of *Account of an Embassy* give no translator's name, so it may be that Willem Holtrop translated it himself. As with the French edition, the Dutch publisher commissioned their own illustrations, this time from the engraver William Cornelis van Baarsel (1791–1854). A distinctive feature of the Dutch edition is the use of catchwords at the bottom of each page of the printed text, a practice that was dying out elsewhere in the printing industry.

An Italian edition appeared in 1817⁵⁶, translated by Vincenzo Ferrario (1768–1844). It was published by Sonzogno, a book publisher based in Milan founded by Giovan Battista Sonzogno (1760–1822) and which had only recently been transformed, in 1804, from being merely a printer. A pattern emerges, perhaps naturally, for Ferrario translated other travel narratives for the same publisher, most notably those of the British explorer Mungo Park's second published account of a journey to Africa⁵⁷. (The first book had been published in English by Bulmer and

⁵⁴ Turner, Samuel (1801). *Turner's Gezantschaps-Reis naar Thibet en Boutan: behelzende zeer merkwaardige bijzonderheden deezer landen, tot in 1793* Amsterdam: W. Holtrop

⁵⁵ It was physically printed in Dordrecht, from where Holtrop came, by A. Blussé en Zoon. For the history of Blussé en Zoon, see Arianne Baggerman (2014) *Publishing Policies and Family Strategies The Fortunes of a Dutch Publishing House in the 18th and early 19th Centuries*, Leiden: Brill.

⁵⁶ Turner, Samuel (1817). *Ambasceria al Tibet e al Butan in cui si danno esatte e curiosissime notizie intorno ai costumi, alla religione, alle produzioni ed al commercio del Tibet, del Butan, e degli stati limitrofi, e sugli avvenimenti che si sono succeduti sino al 1793 di Samuele Turner incaricato di quest'ambasceria* Milan: Sonzogno e Comp. Translated by Vincenzo Ferrario.

⁵⁷ Park, Mungo (1817) *Viaggio all'interno dell'Affrica* Milan: Sonzogno. Translated by Vincenzo Ferrario.

George Nicol in 1799, but Park turned to John Murray to publish his book of 1815). Sonzogno published *Account of an Embassy* as volume XLI of its series *Raccolta de' Viaggi*; it was dedicated to the philanthropist, the Marchesa Matilde Solari de Loreto.

The extensive number of translations demonstrates the importance of the work internationally. Sales figures are no longer extant, but certainly the book sold worldwide. An advertisement appeared for the book in the *New York Herald* on January 2, 1802⁵⁸. The book also appealed to members of learned societies: A copy was donated to the library of the American Philosophical Society in 1825⁵⁹, and one was added “to the library and cabinet” of the American Oriental Society as late as 1866⁶⁰. A copy of the German edition was acquired from the bookstore of F.A. Brockhaus in Leipzig by the German Oriental Society in 1850⁶¹. Curiously, a satirical political poem based on Turner’s account was published in 1839 to criticize the Tory party in England⁶².

One mark of book’s success is that related volumes are drawn from it. In 1813, a collection of drawings, *Views in Bootan* was published.⁶³ This book, printed in an oblong octavo format and

⁵⁸ The New York Times (Saturday, January 2, 1802), page 4. The advertisement was placed by “H. Caritat”, whose bookstore was at 153 Broadway and who described the book as “ornamented by 13 engravings.” In addition to being a bookseller, Louis Alexis Hocquet de Caritat also operated a rental library and reading room. His library contained more than 3,000 volumes and he had over 30,000 volumes for sale. [George Gates Raddin, *Hocquet Caritat and the Early New York Literary Scene* (Dover, NJ: Dover Advance Press, 1953) pp. 30–34.]

⁵⁹ S.n., (1825) Transactions of the American Philosophical Society vol. 2 p. 499. The book was a gift of John Vaughan.

⁶⁰ S.n., (1866) Journal of the American Oriental Society vol. 8, p. lxxiv.

⁶¹ S.n., (1850) *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* Vol. 4, No. 3, p. 411

⁶² Anon (1839). “Fable” *The Odd Fellow* Issue 3, p.9. London.

⁶³ Davis, Samuel (1813). *Views in Bootan from the Drawings by Mr. Davis, Respectfully Inscribed to Warren Hastings Esqr. late Governor General of India by Willm. Daniell*. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown. A copy realized over \$12,000 at auction by Christies

bound in red morocco and stamped with a gilt edging, took the illustrations by Samuel Davis that appeared in the original publication as a basis for a series of six aquatints. These were composed by Thomas Daniell and subsequently engraved and printed by his nephew William Daniell, R.A., both of whom had spent time with Davis in India.⁶⁴ When *A Biographical Dictionary of Living Authors* was published in 1816, *Views in Bootan* was one of the three works of William Daniell mentioned in that volume.⁶⁵

Further publications

With Turner's *Account of an Embassy*, the literary society of Britain was presented with a beautifully designed and printed book on an exciting topic. The bookseller was extremely well connected with the upper echelons of British society, and this no doubt helped with sales of the deluxe edition and, consequently, of the standard edition as well. The success of the book, marked by the favorable reviews, the need for a second printing, and the many translations it spawned, would have demonstrated to other publishers and potential authors that there was a good market for travel-related volumes.

Throughout the remainder of the long nineteenth century, a succession of books would appear on matters related to Bhutan, which also reflected western ideas about the Himalayan kingdom. These would include a volume of 1824 edited by Frederic Shoberl

of London in 2009. The physical description is taken from Christies (2016) <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/prints-multiples/william-daniell-ra-after-samuel-davis-5250655-details.aspx> , Retrieved June 15, 2016. A copy resides in the Royal Collection of Great Britain.

⁶⁴ <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/indiaofficelect/OIOCSHOWDESCS.asp?CollID=305498> Retrieved August 29, 2016.

⁶⁵ Watkins, John (ed.)(1814) *A Biographical Dictionary of the Living Authors of Great Britain and Ireland; comprising literary memoirs and anecdotes of their lives* London: Henry Colburn, printed by A.J. Valpy, p. 86. The same text for Daniell is printed in (1823) *Public Characters of All Nations; consisting of biographical accounts of nearly three thousand eminent contemporaries, alphabetically arranged*. London: Sir Richard Phillips and Co. Printed by Plummer and Brewis and sold by W. Sams in Pall Mall, and John Cumming, Dublin.

Tibet and India across the Ganges, which appeared as volume 1 of a series “The World in Miniature” printed by C. Green in Leceister Square for Rudolph Ackermann, an emigré from Saxony working in London. Other political missions to Bhutan also saw publication, including R. Boileau Pemberton’s *Report on Bootan*, which appeared in 1839 and was published by G. Huttmann at the Bengal Military Orphan Press. Huttmann was the first superintendent of the Press, which sought to teach orphans of British soldiers a trade, and used money from sales of the books to help fund the orphanage⁶⁶. Pemberton had published two years earlier in a journal on a related topic. Several reports would be published as a compendium in 1865, for *Political Missions to Bootan*, published by the Bengal Secretariat Office, not only republished Pemberton’s report and that of the Honourable Ashley Eden, but also republished the *Journal of the Mission that visited Bootan in 1837–1838 under Captain R. Boileau Pemberton* by the Surgeon-Botanist William Griffith as well as *Some Account of the Country of Bhutan* by Kishen Kent Bose, both of which had originally been published in journals, the former in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*⁶⁷, the latter in *Asiatick Researches*⁶⁸.

With the Dooar War, publications focused more on military matters. In 1865, *The Truth About Bootan* was published anonymously in Calcutta at the Metropolitan Press, and was followed a year later by a book from David Field Rennie, *Bhotan and the Story of the Dooar War*. Subsequently, in 1868 Lieutenant R.E. Collins wrote *Experience of a Small War*, which was published for the author by the Savoy Press. What followed, eventually, was Charles Metcalfe MacGregor’s 1873 *Military*

⁶⁶ A report of April 30, 1866 states the profits of the Press at a yearly average of 16,000 Rupees. Brown, Samuel FSS (1873) *Report on the Military Orphan Society and Valuation* London: Charles and Edwin Layton.

⁶⁷ Griffith, W. (1840) “Journal of the Mission which visited Bootan, in 1837–38, under Capt. R. Boileau Pemberton” *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* vol. 8, part I 251–291.

⁶⁸ Bose, Kishen Kent (1825) “Some Account of the Country of Bhutan” *Asiatick Researches* vol. 15 128–156.

Report on the Country of Bhutan, published in Calcuatta by the Bengal Secretariat Press. For a fuller account of the hostilities, see the article in this journal by Wangyal⁶⁹. These events might have garnered some level of public interest in Britain, for question eight of Examination Two of the 1870 Examinations for the Prize Medals of the Royal Geographical Society was topical, asking students to “Describe the position and general physical features of Bootan, Cashmere, Sinda, and Malabar.”⁷⁰

While British involvement in Bhutan may have spread war, there was also an attempt to spread religion. Earlier there had been Jesuits (members of the Catholic religious order, the Society of Jesus) who had come to Bhutan with the intention of converting the population to Catholicism, and they sent reports back to their superiors.⁷¹ There were other Catholic religious orders in the region, including the Capuchins, whose mission to Tibet resulted in an early dictionary⁷². The Baptist Missionary Society also sought converts in the Himalayan region, and consequently in 1799 they sent to Serampore a printer, William Ward, which led to the eventual publication in 1829 of the *Dictionary of the Bhotanta or Boutan Language*.⁷³ It was part of a larger drive to translate Christian holy books into the Himalayan languages.

Conclusion

The first British book dealing with Bhutan, Captain Samuel Turner’s *Account of an Embassy* was a success, both

⁶⁹ Wangyal, Sonam B. (2006). “A Cheerless Change: Bhutan Dooars to British Dooars” *Journal of Bhutan Studies*, pp.40–55. vol. 15.

⁷⁰ S.n., (1869–70) *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 14(3) 251–9

⁷¹ Baillie, Luiza Maria Baillie (1999) “Father Estevao Cacella’s Report on Bhutan in 1627” *Journal of Bhutan Studies* vol. 1, pp. 1–34.

⁷² Bray, John (2008), “Missionaries, officials, and the making of the 1626 *Dictionary of the Bhotanta or Boutan Language*.” *Zentralasiatische Studien des Seminars für Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft Zentralasiens der Universität Bonn* vol. 37, pp. 33–75.

⁷³ Schroeter, Frederic Christian Gotthelf (1826) *Dictionary of the Bhotanta or Boutan Language*, Serampore. It was based on an Italian manuscript owned by Schroeter and which was translated into English by John Marshman. It was edited by a Baptist minister, William Carey.

commercially and critically. It formed part of a growing sector of the publishing industry dealing with travelogues and adventures. The book benefited from being published by one of the world's leading typesetters, printers, and booksellers. Interest in Bhutan in Britain continued to grow, and there were many more books published during the long-eighteenth century, whether books that taught British civil servants the various Himalayan languages, gave accounts of political missions to the region, or detailed the events of local wars. These subsequent books, for the most part, came from presses not based in London but in India, reflecting the growth of the publishing industry overseas in the Victorian period. But what Turner's book shows admirably is that if a book has captivating subject matter, expert marketing, and high-quality printing, it is more than likely to be a great success, one that other publishers worldwide will be keen to emulate.