

BHUTAN AND TIBET IN EUROPEAN CARTOGRAPHY (1597-1800)

ROMOLO GANDOLFO

"This country, which I shall distinguish by the name of Boutan..."

George Bogle to the Hon. Warren Hastings, 1775

When did Bhutan first appear on a European map? When, to put it differently, did Europe become aware of Bhutan's existence? So aware, I mean, as to register it under a specific name on a geographical map. Two years ago, while in London on a journalistic assignment, I decided to start looking for an answer to this question by visiting a famous map shop that advertises itself as the best stocked in the world.

Despite the fact that I have no specific academic training in the history of cartography, I thought I knew enough about Bhutan's history as to be able to recognize the country even if disguised under a different name. As a matter of fact, I did not expect to find it under its present Western name of Bhutan. Ralph Fitch, the English merchant often quoted as the first European to have 'sighted' Bhutan around 1585, had written about a country 'four days' to the north of Cooch Bihar, in Bengal, called *Bottanter*.¹ Estevao Cacella and Joao Cabral, the Portuguese Jesuits who in 1627 were the first Europeans to actually visit the country, had referred to it in their reports with as many as three different names: 'the first kingdom of *Potente*', *Cambirasi*, and *Mon*.² If at all lucky, I thought, I would find a mention of Bhutan under one of those four ancient names.

After going through hundreds of maps of India and Central Asia stacked in the map shop's drawers, I found myself staring in disbelief at a 1683 map of northern India drawn by an Italian cartographer called Giacomo Cantelli da Vignola.³ There, in splendid isolation and exactly where one would expect to find it, stands the 'Regno di *Boutan*' or 'Kingdom of *Boutan*'!

¹ Richard Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation, Made by Sea and Overland*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (London: 1598-1600), see vol. 2, part 1, pp. 250-65. For a more accessible edition, see J. Horton Ryley, *Ralph Fitch, England's Pioneer to India and Burma* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899).

² The original in Portuguese in C. Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia, 1603-1721* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1924). For an English language translation see Michael Aris, *Sources for the History of Bhutan* (Wien: 1986). Also Luiza Maria Baille, "Father Estevao Cacella's Report of Bhutan in 1627," *Journal of Bhutan Studies* 1, 1 (1999).

³ Giacomo Cantelli, "L' India di qua e di la dal Gange ove sono li Stati del G. Mogol e parte del Imperio del fu prete Ianni..." (Rome: 1683). On the cartographer, see Alessandra Bonazzi, ed., *Giacomo Cantelli: Geografo del Serenissimo* (Bologna: Grafis Edizione, 1995).



Located north of the Gulf of Bengal, at first sight the kingdom displays the same contour Bhutan has in today's maps. Actually, it looks as if the Kingdom of *Boutan* is the only country beyond the borders of the Grand Mogol state to be correctly located, since Tibet and Lhasa are obviously out of place, plotted as they are to the east, rather than to the north, of the Empire of the Grand Mogol. Rejoicing at my good luck, I bought the map and left the shop convinced I had possibly dug out the oldest European map of Bhutan. The search, I thought, had come to an end much sooner than expected. But had it really?

The more I looked at the map, the more intrigued and baffled I was. To begin with, I was struck by the bold reference, mentioned even in the map's title, to "the kingdoms of Thebet, formerly part of the Tangut Empire of the late Prester John". A powerful priest-king who, according to European medieval lore, lived somewhere in the heart of Asia, Prester John and his successors were thought to have kept the Christian faith alive among their people through the centuries.⁴ That as late as 1683 a European map would still mention a tradition which had originated before Marco Polo's trip to China, was a significant discovery in itself.⁵ At

⁴ The literature on Prester John is vast. See among others: Charles F. Beckingham and Bernard Hamilton, eds., *Prester John, the Mongols, and the Ten Lost Tribes* (Aldershot, Hampshire - Brookfield, VT: Variorum, 1996); Lev Nikolaevich Gumilev, *Searches for an imaginary kingdom: The legend of the kingdom of Prester John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Igor de Rachewiltz, *Prester John and Europe's Discovery of East Asia* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1972); Robert Silverberg, *The Realm of Prester John* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1972).

⁵ I am not aware of any later European map locating Prester John in Asia. In the early sixteenth century, Europeans had come across a forgotten Christian kingdom in Abyssinia, and most had

the same time, though, knowing that Cacella and Cabral had penetrated into Bhutan precisely in search of the hidden Christian country of Cathai, I took this mention of Prester John as a clue that the Italian cartographer might indeed have read a copy of the reports sent by the two Jesuit missionaries some fifty years earlier to Europe (but never published till the twentieth century). After all, Cantelli himself prominently acknowledges the “letters of the fathers of the Company of Jesus” as one of the map’s main sources.

Yet, if indeed the map had been drawn using Cacella’s and Cabral’s reports, why is the capital city of the kingdom simply designated as *Boutan*? Why doesn’t Cantelli mention the town of *Pargão* [Paro], which the two fathers described so vividly? More surprisingly, why does Cantelli place the kingdom of *Boutan* above, rather than below, the Mount Caucasus, as the Himalayas were usually referred to in seventeenth century European cartography? And finally, why doesn’t Cantelli use one of the three names mentioned by the Jesuit missionaries in their reports? Where does he get the name of *Boutan* from, since the missionaries had never used it? Cantelli, I realized, must have relied on sources other than the reports by Cacella and Cabral to identify *Boutan*. Obviously, the search was not over yet.

‘The King of Boutan’

The answer to all these questions was to be found in one of the most successful travel books of the seventeenth century: *The Six Voyages...into Persia and the East-Indies*, written by Jean Baptiste Tavernier (1605-1689), arguably the richest and most famous European merchant in the Orient. Published in French in 1676 and soon translated into several Western European languages, *The Six Voyages* contains a most intriguing section by the title: “Concerning the Kingdom of Boutan, from whence comes musk, good rhubarb, and some furs”.⁶

It was in Patna — “the largest town in Bengal and the most famous for trade” — that Tavernier first learned about the kingdom of *Boutan*. The country, he writes, is huge and it takes caravans three months to get there. The route from Patna to *Boutan*, he explains, is through Goorochepour (Gorakhpur) and the territories of the Raja of Nupal. Merchants of different nationalities come to trade in *Boutan* from cities as far away as Smyrna and Constantinople in the Ottoman Empire and

identified its ruler as the mythical Prester John. Some sixteenth century maps of the Horn of Africa openly portrayed Abyssinia as the country of Prester John.

⁶ Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *The Six Voyages of John Baptista Tavernier, A Noble Man of France now living, Through Turkey [sic] into Persia and the East-Indies, finished in the year 1670*, trans. John Philips (London: 1678). A more accessible edition is Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India, translated and annotated by V. Ball* (London: 1889). Later reprints in 1923 and 1995.

Danzig on the Baltic Sea; as for its people, they have long since acquired the use of the musket, iron cannon and gunpowder.

By far the best-known passage in this chapter—and an archetypal image of Europe's early Orientalism—is the one in which Tavernier describes *Boutan*'s ruler. "There is no king in the world—he says—who is more feared and more respected by his subjects than the King of *Boutan*, and he is even worshipped by them." Around his house, he adds with a keen eye for catchy details, "there are always fifty elephants [...] for his guard, and twenty or twenty-five camels, which carry in the saddle a small piece of artillery, with a ball of about half a pound in weight."

By no stretch of the imagination, even forgetting the elephants and the camels, does this description of *Boutan* fit into our knowledge of seventeenth-century Bhutanese history or, for that matter, of Himalayan geography. Rather than Bhutan and its first ruler (known as the *Shabdrung*), Tavernier is here describing Tibet and the Dalai Lama. Why didn't Cantelli immediately identify Tavernier's *Boutan* with Tibet? Two things in Tavernier's description made such identification problematic. First of all the fact that nowhere does Tavernier mention the name of any of the country's towns, including its capital city of *Lassa* [Lhasa] or *Barantola*, which by the late 1660s had become well known place names across Europe. Second, the fact that elsewhere in the same book Tavernier very briefly mentions 'Thibet' as a different country, locating it vaguely beyond the Kingdom of Kashmir and saying that it is identical with the Caucasus of the ancients, 'where gold, grenat and lapis are to be found'.

In the seventeenth century, European cartographers rarely traveled overseas and normally had to rely on information that was incomplete, unconfirmed and contradictory. One way for them to cope with uncertainty was to forego consistency, and just combine different sources for different parts of the same map. In other words, they were forced to create 'composite maps'. This is exactly what Cantelli did in this map: he literally followed Tavernier as far as the positioning of the Kingdom of *Boutan* and the Raja Nupal is concerned, while, when it came to placing *Lassa*, capital of the "Kingdom di Barantola", or the "Kingdom of *Necbal*" and *Moranga* (Morung⁷ or the Terai region of today's eastern Nepal), he relied on a map included in *China Monumentis...Illustrata*, another exceedingly influential seventeenth-century book on Asia, published in Latin in 1667 by the Jesuit father Athanasius Kircher.⁸

⁷ See Tapash K. Roy Choudhury, "The Eastern Morung: A Disputed Territory in Anglo-Nepalese Relations (1770-1816)," *Indian Historical Review* 17, 1-2 (1990-91).

⁸ In Athanasius Kircher, *China Monumentis, qua Sacris, qua Profanis, nec non variis Naturae et Artis Spectaculis aliarumque rerum memorabilium Argumentis illustrata* (Amstelodami [Amsterdam]: 1667).

In that unusual map, Kircher had attempted to trace the steps of several European travelers who had explored portions of Central Asia, and in particular of Johannes Grueber and Albert d'Orville, two Jesuit missionaries who just a few years earlier (in 1661) had achieved an extraordinary feat: they had traveled overland from Peking to Agra across Tibet, being the first Europeans to reach Lhasa and to bring back to Europe a view of the Dalai Lama's newly built palace, the Potala. As the two fathers were coming from the east, Kircher had them enter the state of the Grand Mogol straight from that direction—a mistake that persisted for a few more decades on European maps.⁹

Yet Cantelli knew that something did not square with this newly found Kingdom of *Boutan*. When I was finally able to consult a copy of *Mercurio Geografico*,¹⁰ the atlas from where the map of India I bought had been taken, I discovered that he had produced two more maps of the same region, in which he hedged his bets by placing the 'Kingdom of *Boutan*' each time in different positions.

In 1682, a few months before producing his map of northern India, Cantelli had drawn a map of China in whose lower western corner Lassa appeared as the capital city of the 'Kingdom of Barantola or *Boutan*'.¹¹

In 1683, probably after drawing his map of the Grand Mogul, he finally focused on "*Great Tartary*", that is on central and northern Asia. In this beautiful map, Cantelli leaves Lassa and Barantola on the east of the Grand Mogol, and keeps the 'Kingdom of *Boutan*' to the north of India and the Raja of Nupal.¹²



Beruan, which, according to twentieth-century Swedish explorer Sven Hedin, could be one of the very earliest occurrences on a European map of Manasarowar – Tibet's holy lake.¹³

In sum, these three maps by Giacomo Cantelli, all based on Jean Baptiste Tavernier's account, mark the appearance on European maps not of present-day Bhutan, as I had initially thought, but of *Boutan* as a 'double' or 'alias' for Tibet. Before proceeding to explore the history of this alias in European cartography, and to account for the way in which it eventually became attached to present-day Bhutan, it is necessary to take a few steps back and examine where the term *Boutan* comes from.¹⁴

Europe 'rediscovers' Tibet, 1582-1661

The first references in Europe to a country to the north of India under a name which closely resembles Tavernier's *Boutan* date back to the 1580s. These references come in two clusters. The first is centered on the Western Himalayas north of Kashmir, and originates from a small group of Jesuit missionaries who were then trying to convert the Mughal king Akbar to Christianity. The second one comes from hundreds of miles away, at the foot of the eastern Himalayas, and originates from an English trader who was trying to break the Portuguese monopoly on trade with the Indies. Let's have a closer look. In 1582, the Jesuit father Rodolfo Acquaviva wrote back to Rome about a mountain nation called *Bottan*.¹⁵ Around 1585 or 1586, Ralph Fitch, the adventurous merchant regarded as a sort of Marco Polo by his fellow countrymen in England, spotted, as we have said, a country called *Bottanter* just north of *Couche* (Cooch Bihar), a principality in Bengal not far from the border of today's western Bhutan.

¹³ Sven Hedin, *Southern Tibet: Discoveries in Former Times Compared with My Own Observations in 1906-1908*, 9 vols. (Stockholm: 1917-1922), vol. 1, pp. 61-2.

¹⁴ My main references regarding the history of the European cartography of Tibet and Northern India are: Susan Gole, *India within the Ganges* (New Dehli: Jayaprints, 1983); Susan Gole, *A Series of Early Printed Maps of India in Facsimile. Collected by Susan Gole*, Rev. ed. (New Dehli: Jayaprints, 1984); Hedin, *Southern Tibet*; Braham Norwick, "Locating Tibet--The Maps," in *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 4th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Schloss Hohenkammer, Munich, 1985*, ed. Helga Uebach and Jampa L. Panglung (Munich: Kommission für Zentralasiatische Studien, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988); Braham Norwick, "Why Tibet Disappeared from 'Scientific' 16th -17th Century European Maps," in *Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Narita 1989*, ed. Ihara Shoren and Ysamaguchi Zuiho (Narita: Naritasan Shinshoji, 1992); Joseph E. Schwartzberg, "Maps of Greater Tibet," in *Cartography in the Traditional East and Southeast Asian Societies*, ed. David Woodward and J. Brian Harley, *The History of Cartography* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994).

¹⁵ Hugues Didier, *Les Portugais au Tibet: Les premières relations jésuites (1624-1635)*, 2nd revised ed. (Paris: Chandeigne, 2002); Edward Douglas MacLagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul* (London: 1932; reprint, New York, 1972).

Fitch's description of *Bottanter* is brief and vague, but nevertheless fits well with Tavernier's description of *Boutan* some 80 years later: *Bottanter*, says Fitch, is huge—three months long; and it is frequented by merchants from China, Muscovy and Tartary, who come to buy musk, agate, silk, pepper and saffron; its king is called *Dermain* and its capital *Bottia*. Published in 1599, Fitch's short report had a huge success. Yet *Bottanter* never made it onto any European map. More interesting is the short but detailed report painstakingly pieced together over some years by the Catalan Jesuit Antoni Monserrate while following the court of Akbar in the 1580s. His description of a 'white and pious people' living amid the huge Kumaon mountains was published in Italy by Giovanni Battista Peruschi in 1597.¹⁶ This was the first substantial information about Tibetan populations to be printed in Europe, and the book was immediately translated into several languages.¹⁷ On the basis of Monserrate's report,¹⁸ Peruschi was able to include in his book a map of northern India in which the Tibetans appear for the first time as "Botthanti populi"—a Latin-language adaptation of the Sanscrit term by which the Tibetan peoples were referred to in both Western and Eastern India.

¹⁶ Giovanni Battista Peruschi, *Informatione del regno et stato del Gran Rè di Mogor, della sua persona, qualità & costumi, & congetture della sua conversione alla nostra santa fede*, 2nd revised and authorized ed. (Brescia: 1597).

¹⁷ The book was translated in French at Besançon (1597) and Paris (1598); and in 1598 at Mainz in German and in Latin.

¹⁸ The text of Monserrate's original report was rediscovered and published only in the twentieth century by Henry Hosten, "Mongolicae legationis commentarius on the First Jesuit Mission to Akbar by Fr. Antony Monserrate," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1914). The article contains as well a reproduction in facsimile of a manuscript map by Monserrate, in which he has the *Bothi* or *Bothanti* people around the Manasorowar lake.



Peruschi's book was very influential in reviving throughout Europe the medieval belief in the existence of Cathai, a "lost Christian kingdom" hidden somewhere in the mountains and deserts extending between India and China.¹⁹ For the following sixty years the Jesuits tried to find Cathai, and in this attempt they 'discovered' Western Tibet (Ladak, Guge), Central Tibet (Utsang), Nepal, as well as the country we now call Bhutan. The story of these extraordinary missionary explorations has been admirably told elsewhere, and needs not be recounted here.²⁰ Only a few points are relevant to our argument. First of all, the missionaries very rarely refer to Tibet as Tibet, preferring instead names closely linked to *Bottan/Bottanter*, on a wide spectrum going from *Botenti* to *Pettent*. These variations can easily be explained away as spelling inconsistencies, compounded by the fact that, while at the time most Jesuit fathers in the region were Portuguese, others belonged to a variety of linguistic communities of origin (Spanish, Catalan, French, Italian, German) and naturally tended to render unusual foreign sounds according to the phonetic rules imbedded in their native tongues.

¹⁹ Henry Yule and Henri Cordier, *Cathai and the Way Thither, Being a Collection of Medieval Notices of China* (London: 1916).

²⁰ Hugues Didier, "Antonio de Andrade à l'origine de la tibétophilie européenne," *Portugiesische Forschungen der Görresgesellschaft* 20 (1988-92); Didier, *Les Portugais au Tibet*; Giuseppe M. Toscano, *Alla scoperta del Tibet. Relazioni dei missionari del sec. XVII* (Bologna: E.M.I., 1977); Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers*.

By all accounts, however, the name most commonly used during this period for Tibet—*Potente*—is not simply a case of misspelling, or bizarre phonetic transcription.²¹ In Portuguese, Spanish and Italian, the word *Potente* means ‘powerful’, and, whether the missionaries intended it or not, it certainly conveyed with it a strong subliminal message: the idea that the kingdom the missionaries were looking for was a very powerful one, a true ‘potentate’ ruled over by an all-powerful ruler, like the priest/king Prester John was thought to have been. By choosing, among many, the spelling *Potente*, the Jesuits of the 1620s were probably trying to rally support in Europe for their venture by touching a religious chord whose emotional resonance is nowadays hard to fathom.²² The publication in 1627 in Lisbon of the report announcing the ‘rediscovery of Tibet or Cathai’ provoked a wave of true commotion throughout Catholic Europe and led to almost instant translations into several other languages. While the catchwords in the title are Tibet and Cathai (terms made famous by Marco Polo), in the text Andrade uses almost exclusively the name *Potente*. Not surprisingly, the translators for the French and German editions opted to make the subliminal reference to Prester John fully explicit, and literally translated *Potente* as ‘*Le Puissant*’ and ‘*Das Maechtige*’.

It is this powerful kingdom of *Potente* which Cacella and Cabral thought they were entering, when they crossed into the western districts of present-day Bhutan in the spring of 1627. The only country they were really interested in discovering was Cathai, about which they asked everybody without much success. In the process, they learned that the country they had penetrated was called *Cambirasi* in Cooch Behar, and *Mon* in Shigatse (Central Tibet). None of these names, however, ever appeared on seventeenth century European maps. Most likely this is because, unlike Andrade’s, their reports (which for some time must have circulated in Europe in several copies) were never printed and disappeared in the archives of the Society of Jesus till the beginning of the twentieth century.

More surprising, however, is that until *China Illustrata* (1667) no cartographer used Andrade’s best-seller as a reliable source for updating

²¹ Father Francisco de Azevedo, writing about the Kingdom of Chaparangue, says “This kingdom is one of those which are classed together under the name of Pot [=Bod], and it is not the smallest but one of the largest and richest.” According to Azevedo, *Pot* means “land of snow”. See Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers*, p. 99.

²² Umberto Eco has done so in his latest novel, *Baudolino* (New York, 2002), which is largely centred on the legend of Prester John. It is also possible, however, that while in Chaparangue Azevedo heard from the Tibetans about the ancient *yarlung* kingdom of *Tupö* or *Thu-pod*, a name possibly meaning ‘the powerful one’. On this etymology of *Tupö* see Andreas Gruschke, *Miti e leggende del Tibet*, trans. Franz Reinders (Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 1999), p. 154.

maps of northern India and Central Asia. And this despite the fact that Andrade had provided accurate descriptions not only of the route he followed to reach Chaparangue in Western Tibet, but also of the whole country of *Potente*, such as the following: "The kingdom of *Potente* or Tibet, comprises the kingdom of Gogue [Guge] [...], those of Ladac, Mariul [an old name of the southern district of Ladakh], Rudoc, Utsang and two others more to the east. Together with the great empire of Sopo [Mongolia], which borders on China on the one side and on Moscovia on the other, they form great Tartary."²³

Why didn't mapmakers immediately seize upon this wealth of new information? Apparently because, as quickly as it sparked religious enthusiasm across Europe, Andrade's book also aroused strong doubts and suspicions. At a time of growing rationalism, his narrative (which in the title misleadingly identified Tibet with Cathai), must have appeared to mapmakers as fundamentally flawed.²⁴ Not even the map in Kircher's *China Illustrata*, the first to heavily rely on the information contained in the published reports by the Jesuit fathers who visited Tibet, did mention the name of *Potente*.²⁵

To the extent that it lent new credibility to Andrade's account and encouraged other cartographers to chart on their maps some of the Kingdoms of *Potente*, Kircher's map represented a major improvement in the history of European cartography of central Asia.²⁶ Kircher's map is also important in that it helped popularize among mapmakers the notion, first introduced by the Jesuit missionaries in their letters and reports, that Tibet is actually made up of three large sub-units, which they identified as Little, Great and Greater Tibet. This, of course, immediately begs another question: Was *Boutan* an alias for the whole of Tibet, from Ladak to Kham? Or just for one of its large sub-units? As we have seen, Giacomo Cantelli had faced the same problem as early as 1682-3.

Boutan finds its way on early eighteenth-century maps

Given Tavernier's *The Six Voyages's* extreme popularity across Europe, it is surprising that no other cartographer besides Cantelli

²³ Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers*, pp. 70-1.

²⁴ In "Why Tibet Disappeared", Brahman Norwick argues that Andrade's work and its numerous European translations failed to influence mapmakers because the book equated Tibet with Great Cathay, while Father Goes had already proved that Cathay and China were the same. He says the mention of Cathay was added to Andrade's more accurate title by Jesuit editors in Europe.

²⁵ The map ("Tabula Geodoborica Itinerum a variis in Cataium susceptorium rationem exhibens.") has no reference to Cacella and Cabral's travel through western Bhutan and Central Tibet.

²⁶ According to Hedin, the first cartographer to have made use of Grueber's discoveries is Nicolaus Visscher, in his [undated] "*Atlas Minor sive totius orbis terrarum contracta delineatio, ex conatibus Nic. Visscher*". All locality places mentioned in Grueber, and related by Kircher in *China Illustrata*, appear on his map, even with his peculiar spelling.

seemingly located *Boutan* till the turn of the century.²⁷ Once again the question is: Why such reluctance? The fact is that *Boutan* appeared in Europe precisely at a time (the last third of the seventeenth century) when Tibet, after a long period of near-absence, was finally making its comeback on European maps.²⁸ To introduce a new name for an old country must have seemed unnecessary, if not confusing. But if *Boutan* did not immediately find its place on European maps, it was also because of its larger-than-life 'sponsor'. Rich, famous and Protestant, Jean Baptiste Tavernier was (not unlike d'Andrade) a very controversial figure, having not only enthusiastic supporters, but also relentless denigrators. The notion that, laced with reliable facts, Tavernier's books also contained lies and fantasies from which serious cartographers should stay well away, apparently enjoyed wide currency. Could *Boutan* be just a figment of Tavernier's fantasy? Why had no one else ever written about it? Why not a single word about *Boutan* in the book published in 1670 by Francois Bernier, personal physician to the Grand Mogol, famous explorer of Cashmere, and good friend of Tavernier?²⁹ These must have been the doubts of many a European cartographer.

Of course, Tavernier was not the only European in India to have learned that the vast country to the north was known as *Boutan*, or by a name sounding very much like that. The English merchant John Marshall, for instance, who lived in India between 1668 and 1772, often wrote in his diary about a vast country called *Botton* or *Button*. Like Tavernier, Marshall too never identified *Button* with Tibet, but estimated that the country started above Kashmir and extended all the way to the north of *Neopal* and Morung. (As he was not familiar with eastern Bengal, Marshall does not say whether the country to the north of Cooch Behar and Rangamatti was also referred to by this name. Yet, based on Ralph Fitch's account, we know it was.)

Even though not published at the time, mentions of *Botton* of the kind we find in Marshall's diary must have reached Europe by different channels. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that, around the turn of the century, the names *Botton* and *Boutan* made a sudden appearance on at least a couple of unattributed maps, which were reprinted several times. In both cases, however, *Botton* and *Boutan* appear not as aliases of a large country such as Tibet, but as a small, mysterious place of uncertain boundaries, tucked away in the heart of Asia, somewhere beyond the

²⁷ Norwick (in "Locating Tibet") does mention a map dated 1682 by Johannes Nieuhof, but despite my efforts I have not been able to locate it.

²⁸ Norwick, "Why Tibet Disappeared."

²⁹ Francois Bernier, *Histoire de la dernière révolution des Etats du Grand Mogol, Dédiée au Roy, par le Sieur F. Bernier médecin de la faculté de Montpellier* (Paris: 1670).

great mountain chain. In Francisco de Afferden's *Atlas abreviado* (1696), *Boutan* appears as a small kingdom squeezed into the map's upper frame, north of Patna.³⁰

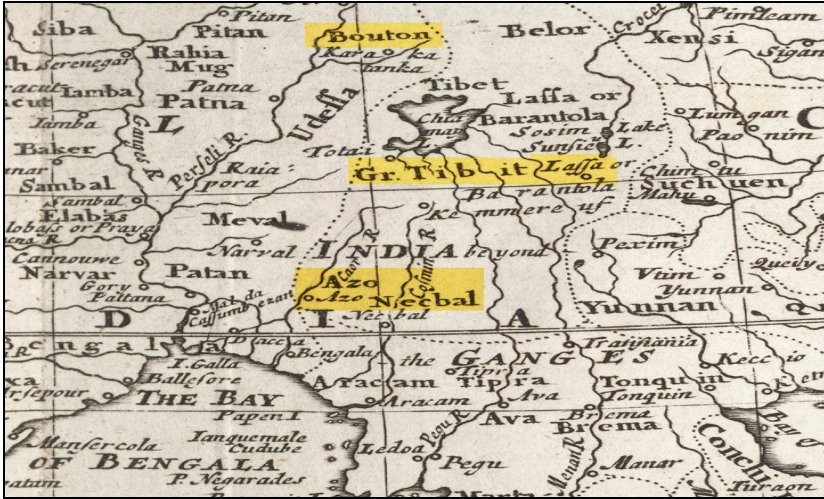


Botton appears in a general map of Asia, used to illustrate Heylin's *Cosmography* (edition of 1701)—a remarkable seventeenth-century travel collection on Asia;³¹ and then again in John Harris' *Navigantium atque itinerantium bibliotheca* (1705).³²

³⁰ Francisco de Afferden, *El atlas abreviado, ò compendiosa geografia del mundo antiguo, y nuevo, ilustrada con cuarenta y dos mapas* (Amberes: Juan Duren, 1696). Actually, the maps of this pocket-sized atlas, including the one showing *Boutan*, had been drawn at least five years earlier and published in Jacques Peeters, *L'atlas en abrégé; ou, Nouvelle description du monde, tirée des meilleurs auteurs de ce siècle* (Anvers: Chez l'auteur aux quatre parties du monde, 1692).

³¹ Peter Heylin, *Cosmography, The Third Book, Containing the Geography and History of the Lesser and Greater Asia, and all The Principal Kingdoms, Provinces, Seas, and Isles thereof*. By Peter Heylin, Corrected, Continued and Enlarged, By Edmond Bohun, Esq. (London: 1701). Earlier editions of this important book (1669-77; 1682) contain different maps of Asia, in which *Bouton* does not appear.

³² John Harris, *Navigantium atque itinerantium bibliotheca, or, A compleat collection of voyages and travels: consisting of above four hundred of the most authentick writers, beginning with Hackluit....* (London: Printed for Thomas Bennet, John Nicholson, and Daniel Midwinter, 1705).



The term *Bouton* made an impressive return on European maps in 1705 with Guillaume Delisle's *Carte des Indes et de la Chine*.³³



Widely regarded today as the father of modern European cartography, Delisle became famous in his time for the rigorous way he systematically compared available sources as well as for his mathematical

³³ Guillaume Delisle, "Carte des Indes et de la Chine," (1705).

skills at measuring distances.³⁴ In *Carte des Indes et de la Chine*, Delisle once again identifies *Boutan* with the 'Kingdom of Lassa', as Cantelli had done in his 1682 map of China. He also redressed major mistakes found on seventeenth century maps: Lhasa, until then located to the east of India, now moved to its correct position, north of it. 'Necbal' too found its correct placement, to the southwest of Lhasa, and so too did the kingdom of *Morang*. Delisle identified, but misplaced, all the kingdoms of *Potente* mentioned by d'Andrade, and added to the list the 'Kingdom of Lassa or *Boutan*'. Within this last kingdom, he identified for the first time the important monastic complex of *Tache Linbou* [Tashilhunpo]. South of *Boutan*, he placed a huge Kingdom of *Asem* [Assam]; but there was still no trace of present-day Bhutan.

A few years later, *Boutan* appeared in an important English atlas by Herman Moll.³⁵ What is remarkable here is that, while Moll includes a map of Tartary in which he correctly places (following Delisle) the 'Lassa or *Boutan* K.[ingdom]' to the north of India, in the text accompanying the atlas he fails to mention *Boutan* among the kingdoms of Tartary and lists it instead among the countries of the Indo-Chinese peninsula, together with the ancient kingdoms of Assam, Tipoura, Ava, Pegu, Arracan, and Siam. Like Tavernier, Moll never says that the Kingdom of Lassa is also called the kingdom of *Boutan*. But this is what his map indicates! This uncertainty about the real whereabouts of *Boutan* is a baffling feature present in many important English books about the region till the late 1760s. Because of Tavernier's failure to openly identify *Boutan* with Tibet, in many geographical books his account of the Kingdom of *Boutan* is reprinted not in the section about Tartary, but in the one about Indo-China. This however is an aspect of my subject which, for lack of space, I cannot adequately develop in this paper.

Unquestionably, the best map of the region to be published in the first three decades of the eighteenth century is Delisle's 1723 *Carte d'Asie*.³⁶

³⁴ C. Daniel, "La Géographie dans les collèges des Jésuites aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles," *Etudes* 3 (1879).

³⁵ Herman Moll, *Atlas Geographicus: or, A Compleat System of Geography, Ancient and Modern...* 5 vols., vol. 3 (London: John Nutt, 1711-17).

³⁶ Guillaume Delisle, "Carte d'Asie / dressée pour l'Usage du Roy. / Sur les mémoires envoyez / par le Czar à l'Académie Royale de Sciences / Sur ce que les Arabes nous ont laissé de plus exact des pays orientaux / Sur un grand nombre de Routiers de terre et de mer / et de Cartes manuscrites détaillées. / Le tout assujéti aux observations del'Académie / et à Celles des R.R. P.P. Jesuites et autres Mathématiciens / Par Guillaume Delisle Premier Géographe de Sa Majesté / de l'Académie Royale des Sciences / A Paris chez l'Auteur sur le Quay del Horloge / Avec Privilège du Roy / Juin 1723," (Paris: 1723). This map exists as well in a slightly different Russian edition.



In this map, Delisle introduces much new information: he indicates the correct course of the Tsanpo, the great river of Tibet which crosses the Himalayas and flows into the Bengal Gulf; he replaces *Tache Linbou* with the more important nearby town of *Gegace* [Shigatse]; and identifies several new ‘countries,’ such as the kingdom of *Tacpo*, east of Lhasa, and those of *Bramson* [Sikkim] and *Pary* [Phari] to the south. To be able to provide so many original details, Delisle must have had access to information originating from the Jesuit and Capuchin missionaries who had in the meanwhile taken up residence in Tibet.

The Italian missionaries in Tibet (1707-1745)

At the same time that Delisle was collecting old Jesuit sources for his 1705 map of Asia, another Frenchman, the Capuchin father François Marie de Tours, was trying to re-open a mission in Tibet. In 1703 he submitted to the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* in Rome a memorandum requesting authorization for the Capuchin order to preach, as he wrote, in *Thibet*. In his request, de Tours said nothing about the seventeenth-century Jesuit missions to *Potente*, as if these had never existed. But as the Jesuits had done almost a century before, he too justified his project with the desire to bring the ‘true faith’ back to “peoples who once were Christians, but no longer know what they are because of lack of priests”.³⁷

The hope of redeeming a people supposedly ruled in former times by Prester John proved once again a winning argument with the Pope and, as early as 1707, a group of Italian fathers from the Marches region

³⁷ Luciano Petech, ed., *I missionari italiani nel Tibet e nel Nepal* (1952-55), part 1, pp. xxxv-xxxvi.

was already in Lhasa. Not surprisingly, the first Capuchin mission (1707-1711) immediately rekindled the interest of the Jesuits, who regarded Tibet as their own missionary territory for reason of precedence. Already by 1713, the Jesuit father Ippolito Desideri was on his way to Tibet. On and off, Capuchin or Jesuit fathers were to live (and quarrel) in Lhasa between 1707 and 1745. Some of these missionaries, and in particular Desideri, were the first Europeans to gain an intimate knowledge not only of Tibet's language, history and religion, but also of its geography.

Despite the fact that the missionaries wrote hundreds of detailed letters and reports from Tibet, only a tiny fraction of that precious material was published in Europe at the time and thus had an impact on European mapmaking. In 1718, an anonymous "New Description of the Kingdom of *Boutan*", purportedly written by "a traveler who has long lived there" (but in reality prepared by the Capuchin Father Domenico da Fano) appeared in the influential *Mercure de France*.³⁸ In 1722, a letter sent by Ippolito Desideri from Lhasa in April 1716 was published, again in Paris, in an important collection of Jesuit writings.³⁹ Both documents state that *Boutan* (or *Buton*, in Desideri's letter) was the only name under which the whole of Tibet (excluding Little Tibet, that is, Muslim Baltistan) was known in India.

It must have been on the basis of these (and other similar) documents that Delisle was able to identify for the first time in 1723 the Kingdom of *Tacpo*, which all missionaries to Tibet, beginning with Cacella and Cabral, mentioned in their letters as the only region from where grapes could be obtained for producing wine—and thus for celebrating the Holy Communion. In these same documents Delisle must have found references to the 'kingdoms' of *Bramson* [Sikkim], and *Pary* [Phari]. No other European mapmaker had ever arrived so close to identifying present-day Bhutan. But once again, the country did not make it onto the map. Why? Hadn't it achieved enough visibility in the eyes of the missionaries?

The missionaries' surviving documents (published only in the 1950s by Luciano Petech in a masterful annotated edition) leave little doubt in this respect. Despite the fact that they never set foot on it, the Italian fathers knew of the existence of present-day Bhutan. In their writings, the country is often called *Bruckpa* [*Druk-pa*]—a clear reference to its 'un-

³⁸ Anonymous [Father Domenico da Fano], "Nouvelle Description du Royaume de Boutan, faite par un voyageur qui y a demeuré fort long-temps," *Mercure de France*, Juillet-Août (1718).

³⁹ Ippolito Desideri, "Lettre au Père Ildebrando Grassi, Lhasa 10 avril 1716," in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, d'écrits des missions étrangères, par quelques missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Paris: 1722). Between 1726 and 1755, the letter was republished several times in French, German, English and Spanish travel books.

reformed' politico-religious identity which, by the first third of the eighteenth century, had replaced older names such as *Mon* (mentioned by Cabral in 1630). This new identity was well recognized not only throughout the Tibetan world but also in the Moghul empire to the point that, as the Capuchin Father Francesco Orazio della Penna tells us, 'in the Hindustani language' *Bruckpa* was known as *Laltopivala*, that is, the country of the 'red hat sect'.⁴⁰

Admittedly, the missionaries never learned much about *Bruckpa*. Despite traveling back and forth between Bengal and Tibet for almost forty years along different routes, they all seem to concur that the route through *Bruckpa* was closed not only to Europeans but, as they heard, to Tibetan and Indian traders as well. Actually, they simply wrote about "a Raja who lives between *Butant* and Hindustan", well known across the region for allowing no foreigners through his country. Despite correctly locating this shorter but forbidden route to the north of the Indian town of Rangamatti, the missionaries never explicitly connected this 'Raja' with the *Bruckpa* country. But the identification is obvious, and Petech confirms it. By contrast, the missionaries regularly traveled to and from Tibet across Sikkim (variously called *Bregion*, *Bramashon* etc.), often preferring this more impervious route to the one going through Nepal. For this reason, even though the fathers left no detailed reports about it, Sikkim found its way on European printed maps well before Bhutan.

Samuel van Putte and the first manuscript map of present-day Bhutan

What about manuscript maps, though? If Bhutan does not appear yet in engraved, printed maps of that period, is it perhaps mentioned under any name on any manuscript maps? The missionary themselves, despite writing so many detailed geographical reports, apparently left no map of Tibet and the Himalayas. But Samuel van Putte—one of the most extraordinary, if little known, European travelers of the eighteenth century—did.⁴¹

Born in Holland in 1690 the son of a sea captain, van Putte took a degree in Law at Leiden, and one in Medicine at the University of Padua. A veritable linguistic genius, while in padua van Putte learned Italian so well that he adopted it as his second mother tongue. In 1721 he left Europe for the East and in 1725 he reached Patna where he met Desideri, back from his long stay in Tibet. Disguising himself as a Muslim trader

⁴⁰ Orazio di Billi Della Penna, "Brief Account of the Kingdom of Tibet [1730]," in *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet, and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa*, ed. Clements R. Markham (London: Truebner and Co., 1876), p. 311.

⁴¹ Petech, ed., *I missionari italiani*, Part IV, Appendix II, pp. 237-41. See also Bernard Le Calloc'h, "The Voyages of Samuel van de Putte," *Acta Geographica (Paris)* 3, 107 (1996); F. Lequin and A. Meijer, *Samuel van Putte, een Mandarijn uit Vlissingen* (Middleburg: 1989).

and quickly picking up several local languages, van Putte traveled widely across the Moghul empire and southern India. When he decided to visit Tibet, he followed the Nepal route recommended to him by Desideri. In Lhasa, he lived in the same house with the Capuchin fathers, with whom he became good friends. In 1731, he left Lhasa for Peking, which he reached, following the northern route through Kokonor and Hsi-ning, four years later, in 1735. From Peking, van Putte returned to Lhasa following a southern route ("across mountain countries", he says, "whose names are not reported on our maps"). Almost certainly, he was the first European to travel across Kham and the provinces of Southern Tibet (*Lhoka*). By mid 1736 he was back in Lhasa, where he stayed one more year, living in the house vacated during his absence by the Capuchin fathers. Instead of returning to India through Nepal, he chose the much longer and strenuous route across Western Tibet and Kashmir, which Desideri had taken 'by mistake' when he first set out for Lhasa in 1713.

Unquestionably, no other European ever gained such an intimate, first-hand knowledge of Tibet's geography as Samuel van Putte. In his overland round-trip from India to China, he crossed virtually all regions of Tibet, where he came to be regarded as a 'holy man'. His command of the Tibetan language allowed him to gather plenty of detailed information, which he scrupulously entered in his diary, notes, and draft maps. Unfortunately, however, as he grew older his commitment to truth and 'high scientific standards' grew into a veritable obsession. Unable or unwilling to return to Holland, he died in Batavia, the capital of the Dutch Indies, in 1745. Judging his papers unworthy to be published, his last will was that they be destroyed.

Very few scattered notes of his survived. Among them were a couple of undated manuscript maps: one was a map of Tibet in which local names appeared in Tibetan characters, with explanatory notes in Italian;⁴² the other was a map of the eastern Himalayan countries, in which Bhutan appears for the first time, under the name of *Bruckpa*.

⁴² Petech, ed., *I missionari italiani*, part IV, p. 253.

during bombing in World War Two. We must thank Clement Markham for publishing it in his 1876 book on George Bogle's mission to Tibet.⁴³ No trace is left of the other sketch map of Tibet.

The Jesuit Atlas of China and the Country of Pouronké

While Capuchin and Jesuit missionaries were preaching in Lhasa and van Putte was restlessly criss-crossing Tibet, a major revolution was taking place in the cartography of Tibet as the first scientific atlas of the region was produced in China between 1708 and 1718, and then translated and published in Europe during the 1730s.

Jesuit missionaries residing in Peking had been entrusted by the Kangxi emperor with the production of an atlas of the whole of China and its 'dependent' lands on the western periphery. The project was much more than a scientific exercise. It betrayed an 'early modern' imperial vision in the making, an attempt at defining China's position on the world stage by resorting to the same cartographic language used by those European powers which—Russia at the forefront—were then claiming stakes across Asia. Thus, if the cartographic know-how behind the China Atlas was largely of European origin, the geo-political rationale behind the whole operation must be seen as essentially Chinese.⁴⁴

A very short summary of events leading up to the publication of Tibet's map in Europe will here suffice.⁴⁵ In 1708, the Chinese emperor Kangxi decided to have a map drawn of his country and ordered the Jesuit missionaries to undertake the work. Tibet was initially not included in the work plan. In 1711, however, Father Jean-Baptiste Regis, the French Jesuit in charge of coordinating the project, was given a map of Tibet drawn by a special Chinese embassy recently returned from Lhasa. As the map was very rudimentary, Father Regis rejected it as unfit for inclusion in the atlas. The Emperor thus ordered 'two lamas' who had studied geometry and arithmetic in a Chinese Academy to travel as west as the distant sources of the Ganges and draw a new map of the whole of Tibet. The survey was carried out in the mid 1710s, at a time when Capuchin and Jesuit fathers were already in Tibet. The new map was delivered to the Jesuits in 1717. Despite the fact that the quality of their

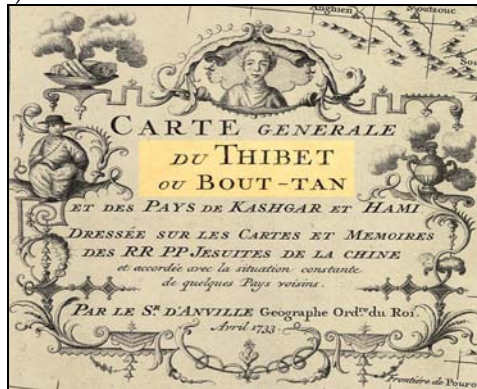
⁴³ Clements R. Markham, *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet, and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa* (London: Truebner and Co., 1876; reprint, New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 1999), between pp. lxiv and lxx.

⁴⁴ Laura Hostetler, "Quin Connections to the Early Modern World: Ethnography and Cartography in Eighteenth-Century China," *Modern Asian Studies* 34, 3 (2000).

⁴⁵ On the history of this map see Theodore N. Foss, "A Western Interpretation of China: Jesuit Cartography," in *East Meets West: The Jesuits in China, 1582-1773*, ed. Charles E. Ronan and S. J. and Bonnie B. C. Oh (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1988). Also Hedin, *Southern Tibet*, Chapter XXVII.

work was inevitably uneven, the set of maps they produced contained an unprecedented amount of detail, plotted according to principles as 'scientific' as technical means and historical circumstances allowed. In 1718, the great map of China was ready and the Jesuit presented it to the Emperor. Access to it was restricted to a very small circle of high-ranking officers at the imperial court in Peking, yet the Jesuits were able to send a few copies to Europe.⁴⁶ The task of producing a French-language engraved atlas based on this large map was entrusted to a promising young cartographer, Jean-Baptiste Burguignon d'Anville. The Atlas was meant to accompany and illustrate an encyclopaedic work on China, written by one of Europe's greatest authorities on China, the Jesuit father Jean-Baptiste Du Halde.⁴⁷

The section of the China Atlas devoted to Tibet consists of one double-page map of the whole country, dated April 1733, plus several one-page enlarged maps of different regions. The double-page map is remarkable, among other things, because for the first time the term *Boutan* appears as an alias of Tibet in the title itself (*Carte Generale du Thibet ou Bout-tan...*).



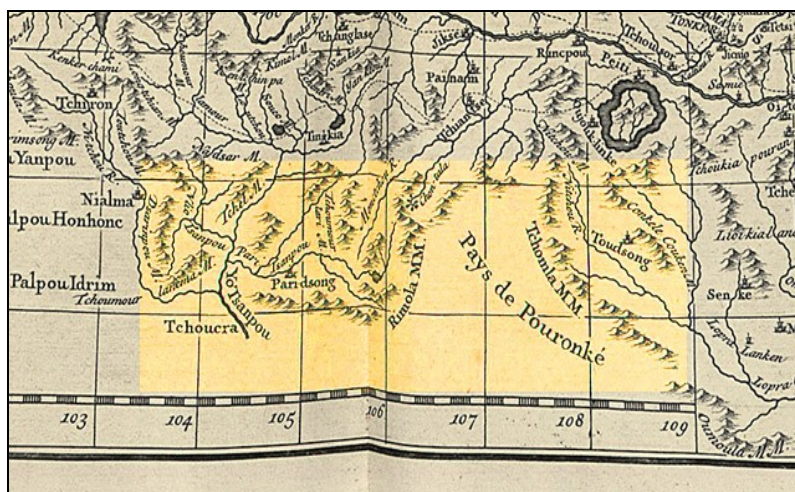
Actually, distinguishing as it does two constituent parts of the name (*Bout-tan*), d'Anville seems to make an implicit reference to an accepted Indian etymology for this alias ('the country of *Bhot'*?). Unfortunately,

⁴⁶ One copy was sent to the king of France. Another appears to have been sent to the French cartographers in Saint Petersburg, Russia. A third one is to be found today in Naples. On this last map see Luciano Petech, "Una carta cinese del secolo XVIII," *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale* (1954).

⁴⁷ Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, S.J., *Description géographique, historique, chronologique et physique de l'empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie Chinoise*, 4 vols. (Paris: P. G. Lemercier, 1735). Du Halde took much of his geographical information from Father Jean-Baptiste Regis manuscript, which is now housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS. fr 17242, fols. 5v-11v.

however, Du Halde's encyclopedic treatise does not illuminate us on this point.⁴⁸

Du Halde also fails to shed any light on the name under which the territory roughly corresponding to present-day Bhutan appears on d'Anville's map: *Pays de Pouronké*.



This Country of *Pouronké* is shown as a large, uncharted realm beyond the borders of Tibet proper, alongside other 'foreign' trans-Himalayan countries. It begins south of Phari and roughly extends up to the eastern border of present-day Bhutan. As the Himalayan chain is still poorly marked in this map, *Pouronké's* northern border runs much higher than it should and forms like an edge extending into southern Tibet. The physical and political geography of *Pouronké* is extremely sketchy: the mountains separating it from Phari are called *Rimola*, while to the east we find another massif called *Tchomla*. No towns or fortresses appear within *Pouronké*, with the possible exception of two place names in the far east. Overall, the impression one gets is that *Pouronké* was a separate polity beyond the limits of Tibet proper – a country about which the 'lamas' had not tried to learn anything while on their surveying mission.

South-west of Phari and bordering on *Pouronké* we find *Tchoukra*, perhaps the *Bramascjon* [Sikkim] drawn by van Putte in his sketch map and often quoted by the missionaries residing in Lhasa. Further to the

⁴⁸ Du Halde simply restates that "the inhabitants of Cachemire and of the Cities beyond the Gange, gave it the name of Bouton or Boutan."

west, in present-day Nepal and beyond, we find a number of 'foreign countries' whose composite names contain the term *Palpou* and *Mompa*.⁴⁹

But where does the name *Pouronké* come from? And what does it mean? Despite much research, I have so far been unable to find any explanation or, for that matter, mention of this name in the literature.⁵⁰ All we know is that *Pouronké* is not one of the eighteenth-century Tibetan names used to refer to present-day Bhutan.⁵¹ However, given that *Palpou* is the name under which Nepal was known to the Chinese, I believe it is safe to assume that *Pouronké* too must have been a Chinese name. In his classic study of Tibetan political history in the eighteenth century, Luciano Petech mentions in passing that the Chinese equivalent of the Tibetan '*Brug-pa* is *Pu-lu-k'o-pa*, a word which, allowing for the usual outrages during the transcription process, might have been rendered as *Pouronké* by a French speaker.⁵² This interpretation, though admittedly tentative, is buttressed by the fact that, in their dealings with Tibet, eighteenth-century Chinese sources regularly emphasized the difference between the reformed, 'yellow hat' school, and the unreformed, 'red hat' ones. If my interpretation is correct, *Pouronké* would then be the Chinese equivalent of the Hindustani *Laltopivala*.

D'Anville's maps of Tibet had a wide circulation and a noticeable impact on European cartography. This, however, does not mean that after the mid 1730s all (or even most) maps of Asia, Tartaria, Northern India or China immediately and faithfully incorporated d'Anville's new data. Older representations survived unscathed and were to be found on a great number of maps for decades. Nevertheless, d'Anville's atlas was soon translated in other languages, and then repeatedly pirated by many. It is worth remarking that in the 1734 English edition of the Atlas, the Indian name *Bout-tan* disappeared from the title, while the *Pays de*

⁴⁹ From East to West, D'Anville marks *Palpou* Idrim, *Palpou* Honhonc, *Palpou* Yonpou, *Mompa* Couké, *Mompa* Nou, *Mompa* Dsomlangui, *Mompa* Mouma, *Mompa* Niontai, *Mompa* Pitai ou Piti (west of Latac, that is, Ladak). It is worth noting that only *Pouronké* is called 'Country' (*Pays*).

⁵⁰ Actually, the only mention I found is in Julius von Klaproth, *Description du Tübet, traduite partiellement du Chinois en Russe par le P. Hyacinthe Bitchourin, et du Russe en Français par M***, soigneusement revue et corrigée sur l'original chinois, complétée et accompagnée de notes par M. Klaproth, membre des Sociétés Asiatiques de Paris, de Londres et de Bombay* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1831). He says that in d'Anville's map *Broukpa* appears as *Pouronké* "by mistake", but he does not elaborate.

⁵¹ See lists of such names in Michael Aris, *Bhutan, the Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom* (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1979), p. xxiv; Alexander Csoma de Koros, "Geographical Notice of Tibet," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 1, 4 (1832) p. 121. Also George van Driem, *Languages of the Himalayas: An Ethnolinguistic Handbook of the Greater Himalayan Region*, 2 vols. (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2001), vol. 2, p. 857.

⁵² E. H. Parker, "China, Nepaul, Bhutan, and Sikkim: their mutual relations as set forth in Chinese official documents," *Journal of the Manchester Oriental Society* 1 (1911) p. 142; Luciano Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early XVIIIth Century: History of the Establishment of Chinese Protectorate in Tibet*, 2nd revised ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), p. 66.

Pouronké became simply *Puronka*. The form *Puronka* also appears in the maps of Great Tibet by Bellin (1749);⁵³ de Hondt (1749);⁵⁴ Bowen (1752);⁵⁵ and Child (1756.)⁵⁶

The British replace the French as the driving force in the mapping of Tibet

Up to 1765, the cartography of Tibet and of the Himalayan region was largely dominated by the French. As we have seen, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, who first wrote about the kingdom of *Boutan*, was French; Guillaume Delisle, the cartographer who really established the name *Boutan* as an alias for Tibet, was French; so too the Jesuit Fathers Jean-Baptiste Regis and Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, who respectively oversaw the making of the first scientific map of Tibet and arranged to have it translated and printed in Europe; and Jean-Baptiste d'Anville, the cartographer who engraved the first European edition of the China Atlas and popularized the name *Boutan* by using it in the Tibet map's title, was also French.

So widespread across France was the knowledge of *Boutan* as an alias for Tibet that Voltaire, in his philosophical and historical writings, repeatedly used it for his own political purposes as an allegorical paradigm of human nature—to the point of even entitling one of his famous 'Moral Tales' *The King of Boutan*.⁵⁷ Diderot and d'Alambert, for their part, included in their *Encyclopaédie* a separate entry for *Boutan*, if only for the purpose of redirecting their readers to the main entry for *Thibet*.⁵⁸

By 1765, however, France had lost much of her standing across Asia. The once influential French Jesuit Mission in Peking had been marginalized and would disappear in a few years with the suppression of the order (1773); more importantly, French troops had been defeated in the Anglo-French Third Carnatic War (1756-63), thus forever dashing

⁵³ Jean Nicholas Bellin, "Carte du Grand Thibet, Pour servir à l'Histoire Universelle, d'une Société de Gens de Lettres, Par M. Bellin, Ingénieur de la Marine," (1749). Reproduced in Didier, *Les Portugais au Tibet*.

⁵⁴ de Hondt, "Carte de Grand Thibet pour servir à l' Histoire Générale des Voyages, Tirée des Auters Anglois," (The Hague: 1749).

⁵⁵ Emanuel Bowen, "A New and Accurate Map of the Empire of the Great Mogul, together with India on both sides of the Ganges, and the Adjacent Countries. Drawn from the most approved modern Maps and Charts: The whole being regulated by Astronomical Observations, By Eman. Bowen," (London: 1752).

⁵⁶ G. Child, "A Map of Great Tibet, drawn from that made by Lama Mathematicians in 1717, engraved by G. Child," (London: 1756).

⁵⁷ See "The King of Boutan; or, How far Should we Impose upon the People" in Voltaire, *The Complete Tales of Voltaire*, translated by William Walton (New York: Howard Fertig, 1990), vol. 1, pp. 335-40.

⁵⁸ *La Grande Encyclopedie. Inventaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Lettres et des Arts. Nouvelle Edition*, (Genève: 1778-79).

French colonial ambitions in India. Following its victory at Plessy (1757), the East India Company (and thus, by gradual extension, the British Crown) became the unchallenged power throughout the Indian sub-continent. As the Company took over control of Bengal, the mapping of Tibet and present-day Bhutan became an eminently British affair. Two central figures stand out in this respect: James Rennell, the first surveyor general to the East India Company; and George Bogle, the first British envoy to Tibet.

James Rennell and the Survey of Bengal, 1765-1777

What was radically new after 1765 is that a major European power had taken control of a rich Indian region—Bengal—which bordered on culturally Tibetan lands and polities. Gaining a better knowledge of Himalayan geography ceased being a religious or intellectual pursuit. Now, it was the need to establish a militarily secure frontier, as well as the desire to find new markets for British goods, which demanded a better understanding of the physical and political geography of the Himalayan region.

The task of surveying Bengal with a view to establishing a defensible 'natural frontier' was entrusted to James Rennell.⁵⁹ His approach to mapmaking was straightforward. Instead of relying on existing maps of uneven and untested quality, he set out to survey from scratch the whole region in person. Lands lying beyond the reach of his surveying party were simply left blank. The resulting maps—to be published in 1780 in *A Bengal Atlas*—offer us a stark contrast between large portions of territory controlled by the East India Company, about which extremely detailed information was suddenly available, and vast expanses of uncharted 'foreign' territory, about which nothing was apparently known.⁶⁰

The uncharted territories to the north were known to the East India Company's administrators in both Calcutta and London under the name of *Boutan* (or, occasionally, *Bouton*). While they knew that Tibet and *Boutan* were two names for the same country, they normally preferred to use *Boutan*. Rennell was no exception. His first mention of *Boutan* appears

⁵⁹ Andrew S. Cook, "Major James Rennell and *A Bengal Atlas* (1780 and 1781)," in *India Office Library and Record Reports for the Year 1976* (London: British Library, 1978); Matthew H. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997); G. F. Heaney, "Rennell and the Surveyors of India," *Geographical Journal* 134 (1968); F.C. Hirst, *The Surveys of Bengal by J. Rennell, F.R.S., 1764-1777* (Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat book depôt, 1917); Clements R. Markham, *Major James Rennell and the Rise of Modern English Geography* (New York: MacMillan & Co., 1895).

⁶⁰ James Rennell, *A Bengal atlas, containing maps of the theatre of war and commerce on that side of Hindoostan, compiled from the original surveys; and published by order of the honourable the Court of Directors for the Affairs of the East India Co.* (London: 1780).

as early as February 1766 in conjunction with a violent incident which took place south of present-day western Bhutan. As he recorded in his diary, a group of *fakirs* attacked his surveying detachment in the forested lowlands "near the Frontiers of *Boutan* or Tibet (the Southern Part—as he felt the need to explain—of great Tartary)".⁶¹ In the battle that followed, Rennell himself narrowly escaped death, suffering a deep wound in his shoulder which left him partially impaired in his movements for the rest of his life.⁶²

Geographical knowledge of the region north and east of the town of Rangamatti was still extremely sketchy, and the Company was interested in gaining a better understanding of what was where. During September of the following year, Rennell was apparently charged with reaching the western frontier of the Chinese empire by traveling South-East of Bengal. Instead, for reasons that remain unclear, he headed North-East. In his diary, we come across a short passage that has been interpreted as evidence that he might have been the first Englishman to penetrate into the territories of present-day Bhutan. "I am now—he writes—in midst of my Journey to Thibet being got into a more northern Climate and in the neighborhood of the Mountains. I breath a cool and healthy air."⁶³ What was Rennell doing there? Was he on a secret mission of military reconnaissance? Apparently he was trying to reach Wangdue Phodrang ("Aandypour, the Thibet Raja's Residence, two days from Sering"). That he penetrated deeply into the mountains of today's Bhutan, however, is not sure. If he did cross at all into the hills, he must have climbed only a few miles before deciding (or being forced) to retreat. As far as I know, he deemed it safer not to report this 'excursion' to his superiors in Calcutta.

Be that as it may, by 1772 Rennell had already successfully gathered much valuable information about the lowland region extending between the Brahmaputra River and the unknown hill country to the north. He was particularly impressed with a small principality in the forests in the Assam *Duars* called *Bisnee* (*Bijnee*), part of which was ostensibly under the suzerainty of a powerful ruler living in the mountains.⁶⁴ Who exactly this ruler might have been, Rennell did not know at the time. For him, the

⁶¹ Quoted in A. L. Field, "A Note Concerning Early Anglo-Bhutanese Relations," *East and West* 13 (1962).

⁶² For a brief comment on the relationship between the Company on the one hand, and the fakirs and Sannyasis on the other, see A. B. Majumdar, *Britain and the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhotan* (Patna: Bharati Bhawan, 1984). More in depth studies are Atis K. Dasgupta, *The Fakir and Sannyasi Uprisings* (Calcutta: 1992); Rai Sahib Jamini Mohan Ghosh, *Sannyasi and Fakir Raiders in Bengal* (Calcutta: 1930).

⁶³ Field, "A Note Concerning Early Anglo-Bhutanese Relations," p. 342.

⁶⁴ On *Bisnee* see Arabinda Deb, *Bhutan and India: A Study in Frontier Political Relations (1772-1865)* (Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Limited, 1976), pp. 48-52.

seems to me, has adequately remarked that it was Bogle who gave this newly identified country the ancient name of *Boutan*.

The country had come to the East India Company's attention in 1772, when its ruler (known as the Deb Raja) occupied Cooch Behar, a principality south of the *duars*, and bordering on Bengal. One of the ousted factions within the court of Cooch Behar requested the help of the Company, and the request was promptly satisfied. The troops of the Deb Raja were defeated and pushed back into the hills. As it appears, it was only because of the intercession by the Teshoo Lama in Tashilhumpo that the Company refrained itself from seizing more lowland territory belonging to the Deb Raja and from penetrating into the hill region. As often happens with wars, one important collateral effect of this conflict was to make the two sides—the two worlds—suddenly aware of each other's existence. Suspicion blended with curiosity, initial amazement with a desire to explore new opportunities.

After defeating the Deb Raja and his *Boutanners*, the Company's Governor General, Warren Hastings, grew increasingly concerned about the fact that, with the military unification of Nepal in the 1760s under a strong-willed Gorkha king, the vital Nepal route between Bengal and Tibet had been effectively closed to British goods, and trans-Himalayan trade had come to a near halt. By dispatching Bogle to Lhasa, Hastings was hoping to secure a free trade agreement with *Boutan* (that is Tibet) and to redirect much of this trade through the 'Deb Raja's country' (that is today's Bhutan).

What did Bogle know about the geography of the Deb Raja's country and Tibet when he set out in the spring of 1774? Apparently, not much. Clements Markham, who in 1876 edited Bogle's papers into a book narrative, says that Hastings had provided his envoy with a copy of d'Anville's map of Tibet, to serve him as a rough guide during his journey to Lhasa. In his published writings, however, Bogle never openly mentions having any map of Tibet with him, nor does he identify, even in passing, the country of the Deb Raja with d'Anville's *Pays de Pouronké*. Why? Most probably because he thought that any explicit reference to maps and surveying would have endangered his trade mission.

As a matter of fact, already by 1774 the rulers of the Himalayan states had grown suspicious of the surveying activities of the British, regarding them (not without reason) as a prelude to intrusion and conquest. Given Bogle's constant fear that his correspondence with Hastings may fall into hostile hands, it is not surprising that he was so reticent on the touchy subject of maps and surveying. Bogle openly wrote about maps of Tibet only when the Teshoo Lama himself raised the issue at Tashilhumpo. At some point, Bogle reports, the Lama "said he

understood the Governor [Hastings] had a map of his country with the names of the places."⁶⁷ Bogle remained silent, neither confirming nor denying this remark. A few days later, however, it became clear to him that the authorities in Lhasa were afraid he may be intent on gathering topographical information in view of a possible military expedition, and that for this reason the Tibetans were not willing to let him travel forward to the capital city. To dispel this suspicion, he protested he "knew nothing about surveying or war", and explained how Warren Hastings already "had plans of [Tibet], and knew the names and situations of the principal places, Lhasa, Chamnamring, Shigatse, Janglache, Gyantse, Painam etc". So concerned was he about reassuring the Tibetans that he had not come to pry on their country that, feigning the upmost indifference, he even refused to accept from Teshoo Lama a detailed native "map of Tibet from Ladakh to the frontier of China, with the name places and their distances." The map, he wrote, was 'a beautiful object', which would have made him famous across Europe, but accepting it would surely have put his whole trade mission in jeopardy.⁶⁸

Whether or not he actually had d'Anville's maps with him, he must have found them of no use during the first leg of his trip across the country of the Deb Raja since, as we have seen, these maps provided no details about *Pouronké*, the country south-east of Phari. Surprisingly enough, given the official nature of his mission, Bogle appears to have had no access to Rennell's manuscript maps of North-Eastern Bengal, in which the Deb Raja's outposts and possessions in the southern lowlands were, by 1773, already well mapped out.⁶⁹ According to initial plans, Bogle was supposed to quickly travel through the country of the Deb Raja in order to reach Tashilhunpo and Lhasa. As we know, things turned out quite differently, and Bogle was delayed for four months at the court of the Deb Raja. This long delay, however, offered Bogle a unique opportunity to familiarize himself with the specific features of the Deb Raja's country—its government as well as its people. When he was eventually allowed to continue his trip to Tashilhunpo, Bogle was deeply struck by the stark contrast in physical landscape upon crossing the border near Phari Dzong. Despite obvious similarities in culture, language and religion, he had no doubts that the high country he was now discovering was quite different from the Deb Raja's. If anything, Bogle's warm friendship with the Teshoo Lama and his family helped

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 215.

⁶⁸ Bogle writes: "[a]lthough a matter of great curiosity and extremely interesting to geographers and map sellers, [the map] was of no use to my constituents, or indeed to mankind in general". Ibid., pp. 239-40.

⁶⁹ Hirst, *The Surveys of Bengal by J. Rennell, F.R.S., 1764-1777*.

crystallize this initial impression, lending it an important emotional dimension.

Given that the Deb Raja's country was so different from the Teshoo Lama country, how should these two countries be referred to? For several months, Bogle wavered over the issue, speaking about the two countries in vague terms (i.e. 'the country where I am' versus "the country where I was", "the country of the Deb Raja" versus the "country of the Lama"). Gradually, however, and not without inconsistencies, he started using the name *Boutan* for the Country of the Deb Raja, and Tibet for the Country of the Teshoo Lama. Pinpointing the exact moment when the Deb Raja Country became *Boutan* is made difficult by the fact that, before being published, several hands edited Bogle's papers according to criteria which so far have not been 'philologically' examined.⁷⁰ Yet returning the following year to Bengal through the same route definitively convinced Bogle that he had traveled to two different countries. It was only at this point, in his final report to Warren Hastings in 1775, that Bogle explicitly proposed to reserve the name *Boutan* for the Deb Raja's country. ("This country—he writes—which I shall distinguish by the name of *Boutan*...").⁷¹

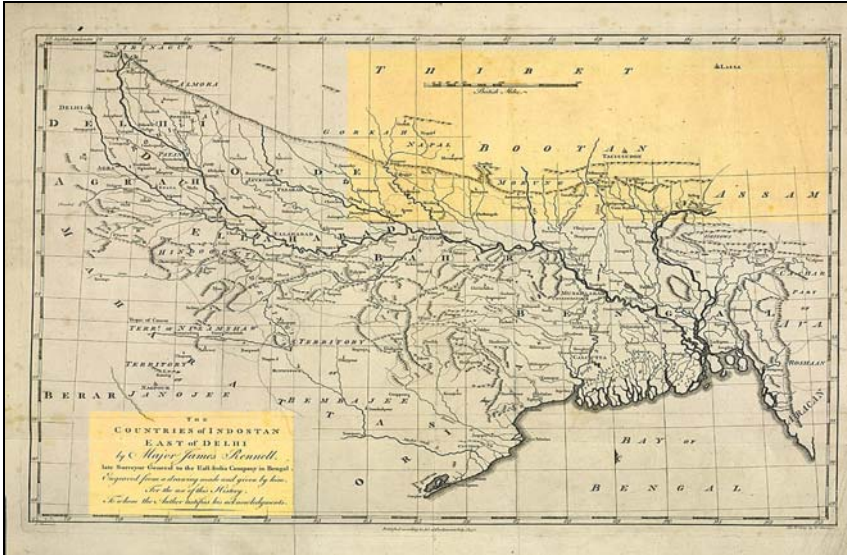
The news that *Boutan* and Tibet were in fact two different countries soon reached the European public. As early as 1777, the English merchant John Stewart published a report of Bogle's journey in the influential *Philosophical Transactions* of London. "Mr. Bogle—explains Stewart—divides the territories of the Delai [sic] Lama into two different parts. That which lies immediately contiguous to Bengal, and which is called by the inhabitants Docpo [*Druk-pa* or *Bruckpa*], he distinguishes by the name of *Boutan*; and the other, which extends to the northward as far as the frontiers of Tartary, called by the natives *Pû*, he styles Thibet."⁷² Translated into Italian (1779) and then French (1789),⁷³ this report was widely circulated across Europe.

⁷⁰ We do not have for Bogle's papers the equivalent of Petech's seven-volume work on the Italian missionaries to Tibet. Such work is perhaps impossible today, given that Bogle's papers have gone through so many different hands.

⁷¹ Markham, *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle*, p. 191.

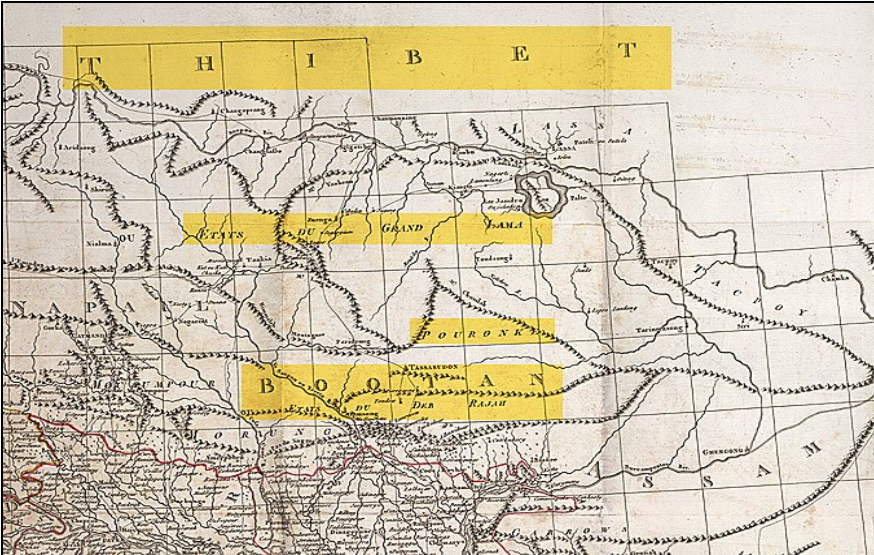
⁷² John Stewart, "An Account of the Kingdom of Thibet. In a letter from *John Stuart*, Esquire, F.R.S. to Sir *John Pringle*, Bart. P.R.S. (letter dated London, March 20, 1777, and read April 17, 1777)," *Philosophical Transactions* LXVII, 2 (1777) p. 470.

⁷³ "Relation du Royaume de Thibet par M. Bogle, envoyée par M. Stewart, écuyer, à M. Pringle, baronet, président de la Société Royale," in *Roman historique, philosophique et politique de Bryltophend...Suivi de trois relations, la première sur le royaume du Thibet, en 1774, par M. Bogle; la deuxième sur le Japon, en 1776, par M. Thunberg; et la troisième sur l'île de Sumatra, par M. Miller, fils, traduit de l'anglois par Bryltophend* [pseud.] (Paris: Royez, 1789); John Stewart, "Ragguaglio intorno al regno del Thibet in una lettera del Sig. Gio. Stewart al Sig. Gio. Pringle," in *Opuscoli scelti sulle scienze e sulle arti*, ed. C. Amoretti and F. Soave (1779).



Another major cartographic development following Bogle's mission was that *Bootan's* capital, spelled *Tassisudon* [*Trashī Chhoe Dzong*], became a prominent feature on all maps of Northern India and Tibet. Even small access points to *Bootan*, such as the fortified villages of Dellamcotta or Buxaduar, suddenly gained a place on maps depicting the whole Indian subcontinent. Without question, however, is was Rennell's famous map of *Indoostan* (1782) which made *Bootan* known to the whole Western World.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ James Rennell, "Hindoostan," (1782); James Rennell, *Memoir of a Map of Indostan; or the Mogul Empire: With an Examination of some Positions in the Former System of Indian Geography; and some Illustrations of the present one: And a Complete Index of Names to the Map* (London: M. Brown, for the author, 1783); James Rennell, "Vue générale des Principales Routes et Divisions de l'Indostan," (Paris: in Recueil de Cartes Geographiques, 1784).



Following this large-size map and Rennell's accompanying memoir, more and more maps were published in which the newly discovered country appeared under names other than *Boutan/Bootan*. In some maps, we find 'Country of the Deb Raja' or even 'States of the Deb Raja'. In others, we find d'Anville name of *Pouronké/Puronka*, which had been used sporadically for some 50 years without anyone ever knowing exactly what country it was. Around 1790, there was a veritable rush to cram old and new names alike into a single map. Neck-to-neck with *Bootan*, we thus find *Pouronké* and *Country of the Deb Raja*, the whole mixed up with *Cooch Behar*, *Bootan Bisnee* and the many different names used in older maps to designate what eventually was to become known as Sikkim: *Tchoukra*, *Bremejong*, *Bramsong*, etc.⁷⁵ If maps used to suffer from a lack of names, they now surely suffered from a plethora of names.

Despite the fact that Bogle's papers were not published until much later, the impact of Rennel's work was such that, as early as in the 1790s, *Bootan* made its debut even on world maps.⁷⁶

A detailed survey of all these maps goes beyond the scope of this paper. Our overview of European cartography of the region ends with

⁷⁵ A remarkable example is to be found in Sven Hedin, *Southern Tibet*, vol VII, Plate n. XIII: "Carte von Tibet nach den neusten Nachrichten entworfen," (1790).

⁷⁶ One of the earliest mentions of Bootan is to be found in "A Map of the World According to Mercator's Projection, Shewing [sic] the Latest Discoveries of Capt. Cook" in Mathew Carey, *Carey's General Atlas* (Philadelphia: 1796). Also: William Faden, *General Atlas* (London: 1797). After 1815, both Bootan and its capital Tassisudon were being featured on most newly drawn world maps.

the first published map of present-day Bhutan based on an actual, if partial, survey of the newly discovered country: “A Survey of the Road from Buxadewar to Tassisudon in Bootan, and from Tassisudon to Teshoo Loomboo in Tibet”, drawn by Samuel Davies ‘and others’, and included in the first published book on *Bootan*—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...* (London, 1800).⁷⁷

Lingering doubts, before forgetting

By 1830, *Bootan* had replaced *Boutan* as the standard spelling used in British books and maps to refer to the newly discovered Himalayan country. Memory of *Boutan* as an alias of Tibet, however, did not disappear overnight. Writing in 1811 about his 1793 mission to Nepal, Colonel Kirkpatrick noticed that “we have exclusively, though improperly, appropriated the appellation of Bhoot or Bhootan” to the ‘possessions’ of the Deb Raja.⁷⁸ In 1819, Francis Hamilton reminded his readers “that the inhabitants of both Thibet, and of what we call Bhotan or Bootan, are by the natives of India called Bhotiyas, and their countries called Bhotan or Bhot.”⁷⁹ Very similar comments appeared in 1820 in a *Description of Hindostan and the Adjacent countries*. And in 1826, *A Dictionary of the Bhotanta, or Boutan language* was published in Serampore by Frederic Schroeter in which *Boutan* and *Bhotanta* are still used with the older meaning of Tibet.

⁷⁷ The book was soon translated into several European languages. The name of the country was spelled according to local phonetic rules: in French it retained Tavernier’s original spelling ‘Boutan’, while in German and Italian it was rendered as ‘Butan’.

⁷⁸ Col. William Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal, being the substance of observations made during a mission to that country in the year 1793* (London: William Miller, 1811). The book contains a 1793 “Memorandum respecting the Commerce of Nepal: Delivered to the Governor General” in which Kirkpatrick seems aware of Bogle’s recent act of naming, and feels the need to clarify that the Deb Raja country is “the country called by us Boutan”, *ibid.* p. 372. Kirkpatrick also says that the term ‘upper Boutan’ was used to refer to Tibet, i. e. the area to the north beyond the ‘Himma-leh chain’, whereas ‘Kuchar, or lower Boutan’ was used to refer to the ‘Lower Alps’ or ‘hither Alps’, i. e. the Mahabarat Lekh and sub-Himalayas [p. 58,127]. Similar doubts continued to surface during the first decades of the nineteenth century as explorers and scholars struggled to understand the morphology of the Himalayas and to determine how many mountain chains were there.

⁷⁹ “The term Bhote is applied by the Hindoos not only to the country named Bootan by Europeans, but also to the tract extending along and immediately adjoining both sides of the Himalayas, in which sense it is a very extensive region, occupying the whole mountainous space from Cashmere to China. In the present article, however, the word Bootan is restricted to the country of the Deb Raja, comprehended within the limits above specified, and the name Bootanners confined to his subjects, in order to distinguish them from the more expanded tribe of Bhoteas (Bhotiyas), although in aspect, manners and religion, there is so entire a resemblance as to leave little doubt of their being both sprung from the same origin.” Walter Hamilton, *A geographical, statistical, and historical description of Hindostan, and the adjacent Countries. Volume II, 2 vols.* (London: John Murray, 1820), p. 728.

In nineteenth-century maps, however, *Bootan/Boutan* was no longer used to refer to Tibet. The name was now attached, one way or another, to the Deb Raja country. The geography of the country's interior and eastern frontiers remained unknown till Captain R. B. Pemberton's exploration of 1837-8, which resulted in the first map of the whole country.⁸⁰

As generations of schoolchildren, both in Europe and in India, learned their geography from the new atlases published in the 1810s and 1820s,⁸¹ the memory of *Boutan* as an alias of Tibet quickly faded away. Apparently, by 1850 the name *Boutan* was no longer used in India to refer to Tibet. In the second half of the nineteenth century the process of forgetting was so complete that Himalayan scholars—a new professional figure in British India and Europe—set out to explain, on the basis of linguistics only, the etymology of the name Bhutan. In a positivist and nationalist climate, they assumed names to always carry ancient meanings related to their very 'essence', rather than register, as they often do, historical 'accidents'.⁸² Of the different etymologies put forward, the one that met with the greatest favor claimed that Bhutan (from *Bhotanta*) means "the end of *Bhot* or Tibet".⁸³ This interpretation, which today is to be found in dozens of books and hundreds of web sites, does not match the historical record, which, as we have seen, shows that *Boutan* was used since the sixteenth century to refer to the whole of Tibet and not to a specific territory on its southeastern fringes.

⁸⁰ "Map of the Eastern frontier of British India, with the adjacent Countries... by Captain R. Boileau Pemberton" [1838?]. Before Pemberton's map, the territory east of the Thimphu and Punakha valleys was usually left blank as "unknown country". See for instance Julius von Klaproth, "Carte du cours inférieur du Yarou Dzangbo Tchou," (1828).

⁸¹ Aaron Arrowsmith, *A New and Elegant General Atlas [...] containing Sixty-Five Maps Drawn by Arrowsmith and Lewis* (Philadelphia: John Conrad and Co., 1804); Aaron Arrowsmith, *A New General Atlas* (Edinburgh: A. Constable & Co., 1817); Mathew Carey, *Carey's General Atlas, improved and enlarged* (Philadelphia: M. Carey and Son, 1818); Eustace Hérissou, *Atlas Portatif, contenant la géographie Universelle Ancienne et Moderne [...] Nouvelle édition, rectifiée et considérablement augmentée* (Paris: Chez Desray, 1809); John Pinkerton, *A Modern Atlas from the Latest and Best Authorities....in Sixty Maps* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1815); James Wyld, *A General Atlas of Modern Geography* (London: James Wyld, 1824).

⁸² For an overview of the issue by one of the greatest students of toponymy, see George R. Stewart, *Names on the Globe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

⁸³ This interpretation, which fits so well with Bhutan's geographical position, was first advanced by B. H. Hodgson, "On the Origin, Location, Numbers, Creed, Customs, Character and Condition of the Kóch, Bodo and Dimál people, with a general description of the climate they dwell in," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* XXXI (1849) p. 703. It was proposed again more than 40 years later by L. A. Waddell, "Place and River-Names in the Darjeeling District and Sikkim," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* LX, 2 (1891) 56. And was later popularised in L. A. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism, with its mystic cults, symbolism and mythology, and in its relation to Indian Buddhism* (London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1895). After that, most scholarly works elaborated on this interpretation. See for instance N. V. Kuehner, *Opisanije Tibeta*, vol. 1 (the only published) (Vladivostok: 1907).

Forgetting breeds confusion

As the old meaning went into disuse during the nineteenth century, mentions of *Boutan* in the historical record began to be interpreted as early references to the country of the Deb Raja. More than that, virtually all occurrences in the historical record of the old term *Boutan* were edited into one of the supposedly more correct, that is more 'modern', forms — *Bootan*, *Bhotan*, or, after 1865, *Bhutan*. The practice continued throughout the twentieth century and unfortunately continues today.⁸⁴

Inevitably, this has caused some confusion. One can distinguish, if I may put it this way, two kinds of mix-up: the first is rather obvious, and thus should be easier to detect; the second is subtler, and at times admittedly difficult to sort out. Let me try and explain myself. All supposed references to 'Bhutan' based on western historical sources produced before 1765 should be understood as having nothing to do with present-day Bhutan: they refer instead to the whole of Tibet, or at least to that large portion of it which was called Greater Tibet and had Lhasa as its capital.⁸⁵ Such mistaken and misleading mentions of 'Bhutan' abound in translations of (or secondary works based on) Ralph Fitch, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, the seventeenth-century Portuguese Jesuits, and the eighteenth-century Italian Jesuits and Capuchins. To list them all would take up a full page of footnotes. Here it will suffice to say that while a few authors go to great pains in order to prove that the original documents do describe present-day Bhutan,⁸⁶ most are willing to concede that here and there (that is, when the original text too clearly clashes with reality)

⁸⁴ The pattern was arguably started by Pemberton, when he first suggested that Fitch's mention of *Bottanter*, back in 1599, should be regarded as an early sighting of Bhutan. See *Political Missions to Bootan; Comprising the Reports of the Hon'ble Ashley Eden, -1864; Capt. R. B. Pemberton, 1837, 1838 with Dr. W. Griffiths's Journal; and the account of Baboo Kishen Kant Bose, (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Office, 1865; reprint, Asian Educational Services. New Delhi-Madras, 2001).* Actually, Pemberton even 'misspelled' Fitch's original *Bottanter* as *Bootanter*, probably to make it look more like the ancient name of the country then known as *Bootan*! Things were made much worse when Tavernier's *Six Travels to India* were published again in 1889: by replacing Bhutan for Boutan, the editor V. Ball committed a great disservice to a whole generation of later historians who, often unable to consult the original 1676 edition, were misled into believing that the country described by the famous French merchant was indeed Bhutan. See Tavernier, *Travels in India, translated and annotated by V. Ball*. The book was republished in 1925 and 1995, always replacing Bhutan for Boutan, and seeding confusion in many minds.

⁸⁵ Shortly before sending this paper off for publication, I have become aware of one pre-1765 western source in which the term 'Boutan' is apparently used to refer to the Deb Raja Country, rather than to the whole of Tibet. More research is clearly needed to find out whether, along the Bengal and Assam *duars*, the term *Boutan* was already used in a sense different from the one still prevalent in the rest of India and in Europe. See J. Deloche, ed., *Les aventures de Jean-Baptiste Chevalier dans l'Inde orientale (1752-1765). Mémoire historique et Journal de Voyage à Assem*, vol. CXL (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1984).

⁸⁶ For instance, Blanche C. Olschak, *Ancient Bhutan: A Study on Early Buddhism in the Himalayas* (Zurich: Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research, 1979), pp. 145-49, and especially note 20.

the source may be 'wrong', and that perhaps Tibet is meant where the document has 'Bhutan' (which of course it doesn't: for it has *Boutan*!).⁸⁷ Worth of a separate mention are the authors of historical atlases of India who display 'Bhutan' [with modern spelling and within today's borders] as one of the countries already on the mental map of Europeans by the end of the sixteenth century.⁸⁸ Finally, we should dismiss supposedly 'early maps of Bhutan', which one can come across on the Internet, both in academic and commercial sites. As it turns out, these are maps by Cantelli, Delisle, d'Anville and others, in which *Boutan* is just another name for Tibet.

Things become somewhat more difficult when we encounter mentions of 'Bhutan' (modern spelling) based on documents produced by the East India Company after it obtained administrative and financial control of Bengal in 1765, for after this date the Company did start having some direct and indirect interaction not only with Tibet, but also with the country of the Deb Raja. What do mentions of *Boutan* refer to in the years up to 1774? And what about those in Bogle's published papers? Do they refer to the whole of Tibet, to central Tibet, or to the country of the Deb Raja? Giving an answer is not easy. And yet it is crucial for a number of important historical issues, such as the role played by the Deb Raja's country in trans-Himalayan trade.⁸⁹ In my opinion, the first step towards answering these tricky questions is to restore the original spelling of *Boutan* (*Botton* etc) in the sources and to acknowledge the potential ambivalence of the term. To acknowledge, that is, the same ambivalence which clearly transpires in Bogle's papers, from the day he crossed into the hills till the day he returned to Bengal.

For Bhutan to appear on western maps, a European had first to visualize this place as a separate country, to distinguish it with a name of its own, and to let the world know about it. For a variety of historical and accidental reasons, which I have tried to outline in this paper, neither the

⁸⁷ However, there are important exceptions. See for instance Aris, *Bhutan, the Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom*, p. xxiv.

⁸⁸ These maps are based exclusively on Fitch's early mention of *Bottanter* while in Cooch Behar. They appear in such authoritative works as Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire. Political and Economic Maps with Detailed Notes, Bibliography and Index* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), vol. 1, book 1, p. 357; Karl J. Schmidt, *Atlas and Survey of South Asian History: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan* (New Delhi: Vision Books, 1999), pp. 51, 53. However, there is no mention of Bhutan under this name before the 1770s in the most authoritative historical atlas of the region: Joseph E. Schwartzberg, ed., *A Historical Atlas of South Asia* (Chicago: 1978).

⁸⁹ The literature on this subject is large and still growing. We should be cautious in interpreting mentions of 'Boutan blankets', 'Boutan horses' 'Boutan gold, silver, etc' as references to products of the Deb Raja country, even when these reports originated close to the borders of today's Bhutan.

Portuguese Jesuits, nor the Italian missionaries, nor the Dutch traveller van Putte, succeeded in establishing 'Bhutan' on pre-1780 European maps. But while a region cannot become the specific subject of a map unless it is first conceived and named, there is no doubt that, once mapped, it does gain much prominence in the public eye.⁹⁰ This is what happened. If it was Bogle who named *Boutan*, it was Rennell most of all who, with his maps, gave the country a certain and long-lasting place in the minds of Europeans. His maps reshaped Europe's mental geographic images of the Himalayas, making it a region more diverse and complex than ever before.

⁹⁰ Edney, *Mapping an Empire*, p. 3.

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