

CAMBRIDGE LIBRARY COLLECTION

Books of enduring scholarly value

Travel and Exploration

The history of travel writing dates back to the Bible, Caesar, the Vikings and the Crusaders, and its many themes include war, trade, science and recreation. Explorers from Columbus to Cook charted lands not previously visited by Western travellers, and were followed by merchants, missionaries, and colonists, who wrote accounts of their experiences. The development of steam power in the nineteenth century provided opportunities for increasing numbers of 'ordinary' people to travel further, more economically, and more safely, and resulted in great enthusiasm for travel writing among the reading public. Works included in this series range from first-hand descriptions of previously unrecorded places, to literary accounts of the strange habits of foreigners, to examples of the burgeoning numbers of guidebooks produced to satisfy the needs of a new kind of traveller - the tourist.

An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants

John Davy (1790–1868), the younger brother of the chemist Sir Humphry Davy, published this account of Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka) in 1821. An army surgeon and later Fellow of the Royal Society, he also wrote books on the Ionian Islands and the West Indies (also reissued in this series) and edited his brother's collected works. This book is a detailed study based on interviews with the islanders and Davy's own observations during his four-year visit. Part I is an overview of the natural history of the island – including its geography, geology, zoology and climate – as well as its people, demography, political system and culture, including architecture, craftwork and languages. Part II details Davy's travels within the country. With a number of beautiful reproductions of native drawings, as well as Davy's own, the work remains a rich resource for the insights of a Victorian polymath into early nineteenth-century Ceylon.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-04669-5 - An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants: With Travels in that Island

John Davy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press has long been a pioneer in the reissuing of out-of-print titles from its own backlist, producing digital reprints of books that are still sought after by scholars and students but could not be reprinted economically using traditional technology. The Cambridge Library Collection extends this activity to a wider range of books which are still of importance to researchers and professionals, either for the source material they contain, or as landmarks in the history of their academic discipline.

Drawing from the world-renowned collections in the Cambridge University Library and other partner libraries, and guided by the advice of experts in each subject area, Cambridge University Press is using state-of-the-art scanning machines in its own Printing House to capture the content of each book selected for inclusion. The files are processed to give a consistently clear, crisp image, and the books finished to the high quality standard for which the Press is recognised around the world. The latest print-on-demand technology ensures that the books will remain available indefinitely, and that orders for single or multiple copies can quickly be supplied.

The Cambridge Library Collection brings back to life books of enduring scholarly value (including out-of-copyright works originally issued by other publishers) across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and in science and technology.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-04669-5 - An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants: With Travels in that Island

John Davy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants

With Travels in that Island

JOHN DAVY



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-04669-5 - An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants: With Travels in that Island

John Davy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108046695

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2012

This edition first published 1821

This digitally printed version 2012

ISBN 978-1-108-04669-5 Paperback

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

Cambridge University Press wishes to make clear that the book, unless originally published by Cambridge, is not being republished by, in association or collaboration with, or with the endorsement or approval of, the original publisher or its successors in title.

The original edition of this book contains a number of colour plates, which have been reproduced in black and white. Colour versions of these images can be found online at www.cambridge.org/9781108046695

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-04669-5 - An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants: With Travels in that Island

John Davy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-04669-5 - An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants: With Travels in that Island

John Davy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)



A Kandyan Divace and Priest of Boddhoo.

London. Published by Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, & Brown, 1821.

AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

INTERIOR OF CEYLON,

AND OF

ITS INHABITANTS.

WITH

TRAVELS IN THAT ISLAND.

BY

JOHN DAVY, M.D. F.R.S.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER-RROW.

1821.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-04669-5 - An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants: With Travels in that Island

John Davy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

LONDON :
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-04669-5 - An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants: With Travels in that Island

John Davy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

TO

GENERAL

SIR ROBERT BROWNRIGG, BART. G.C.B.

&c. &c. &c.

THE FIRST GOVERNOR OF THE WHOLE ISLAND OF CEYLON;

THIS WORK

ON THE KANDYAN PROVINCES,

WHICH HE RESCUED FROM OPPRESSION, AND,

WITH THE CONSENT OF THE PEOPLE,

MADE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE BRITISH DOMINIONS,

IS DEDICATED,

WITH GREAT RESPECT,

BY HIS OBLIGED

AND OBEDIENT HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-04669-5 - An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants: With Travels in that Island

John Davy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

THIS work is formed from original materials, which I collected in Ceylon, during a residence on that station, on the Medical Staff of the Army, from August, 1816, to February, 1820.

The substance of the three first chapters, on the physical state of the Island in general, and on some particular branches of natural history, is the result of my own enquiries, enriched by the contributions of some medical friends.

The information contained in the fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters, on the Political Condition of the Interior, and on its Old Form of Government, was obtained from native sources; principally from Kandyan chiefs high in office, and conversant with business, and who were constantly in attendance at the court of the dethroned monarch.

The account of the Religion of the Singalese, and of the Boodhaical System, which forms the seventh chapter, was collected chiefly in Kandy, in conversations held with the most enlightened and learned of the priests, and after a good deal of laborious enquiry to ascertain the truth and avoid error, on a subject particularly liable to misconception.

The information contained in the eighth chapter, on the Literature and Arts of the Singalese, was also drawn from the fountain-

head: what relates to the former, from the most intelligent natives; and what to the latter, from the artists themselves, and the inspection of their operations.

In writing the ninth chapter, on the Domestic Manners and Habits, and the Character of the Natives, I strived to lay aside prejudice, turn a deaf ear to idle stories, and do justice to a race hitherto under-rated, perhaps, and certainly often calumniated; bearing in mind what a great philosopher said of his brethren and their doctrines, — “Non ex singulis vocibus spectandi sunt, sed ex perpetuitate atque constantiâ.”

The historical sketch which forms the Tenth chapter, and concludes the First Part of the work, was drawn up chiefly from information which I was so fortunate as to extract from the late Dissave of Welassey, Malawa, an old man of shrewd intellect, a poet, historian, and astrologer, and generally allowed by his countrymen to be the most able and learned of all the Kandyan chiefs. Part of the information which he communicated was given from a very retentive memory, and part was drawn from an old chronicle, or rather historical romance of Ceylon, which he had by him, and to which he referred when his memory failed him. As this chief's interest was closely connected with that of the late King, of whom he was a favourite, and in several instances the agent of his nefarious designs, the particulars given of this monstrous reign, were collected in general from more unbiassed authorities.

The other parts of this work, from their nature, do not require to be noticed very particularly in a preface. It is sufficient to mention, that the narrative of Travels, which constitutes the Second Part, is introduced with the design of illustrating the preceding topics, and for the purpose of describing the scenery of the

PREFACE.

vii

country; and that the medical sketch relative to the climate and its diseases, and the preservation of health, which concludes the work, is not offered to the professional so much as to the general reader.

It is with great pleasure that I avail myself of this opportunity to express my grateful acknowledgments to Governor General Sir Robert Brownrigg, and to Lady Brownrigg, for many favours conferred on me during my residence in Ceylon. I have to return thanks in particular for the kind manner in which the Governor encouraged and promoted my pursuits, afforded me every facility of obtaining information, and allowed me the use of many curious documents. To him I am indebted for the views of the palace in Kandy, and of the scenery of Ouva, from the pencils of Lieuts. Lyttleton and Auber; and also for the materials from which, with a little alteration, the new map attached to this work has been formed, and which, without hesitation, may be pronounced the best that has ever yet appeared of Ceylon.

My thanks are due to many other individuals with whom it was my good fortune to come in contact in Ceylon; and, more especially, to my friends, Dr. Farrell, Deputy Inspector of Hospitals, and Lieut. Colonel Hardy, Deputy Quartermaster General, for the aid and information which, on every occasion, each most willingly gave in his respective department.

I should be ungrateful were I to conceal the obligations I am under to my friend, Mr. De Saram, (the second Maha Modeliar,) a native of a cultivated and enlightened mind, equally conversant with English and Singalese, and perfectly qualified to act as an interpreter on any subject of enquiry,—an office in which

at all times, he kindly volunteered, and gave me his assistance merely from the desire of obliging and being useful.

To conclude this preface, I beg leave to remark, that the only book that has preceded this, expressly on the same subject, and written from personal knowledge, is “The History of Ceylon,” by Captain Robert Knox, published a hundred and forty years ago, which I have read with great pleasure, though I am not aware that I have borrowed from it. Knox’s history has ever been popular, and must be so always, from its simplicity of style and narrative, and the good sense and good feelings of the author; and, it may still be consulted with advantage for information on ordinary matters, that came within the sphere of his own observation.

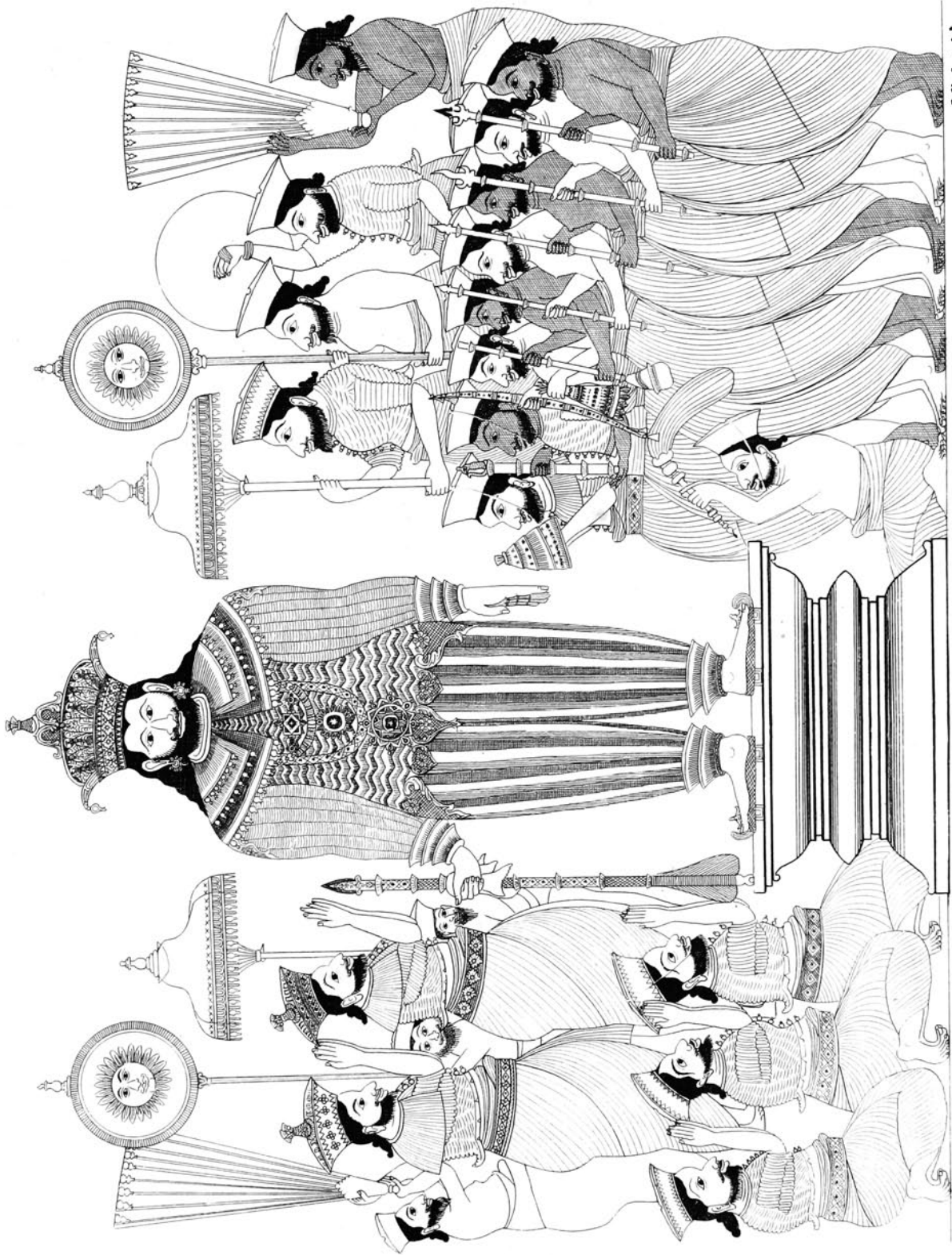
Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-04669-5 - An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants: With Travels in that Island

John Davy

Frontmatter

[More information](#)



The late King of Candy, from a drawing by a Native.

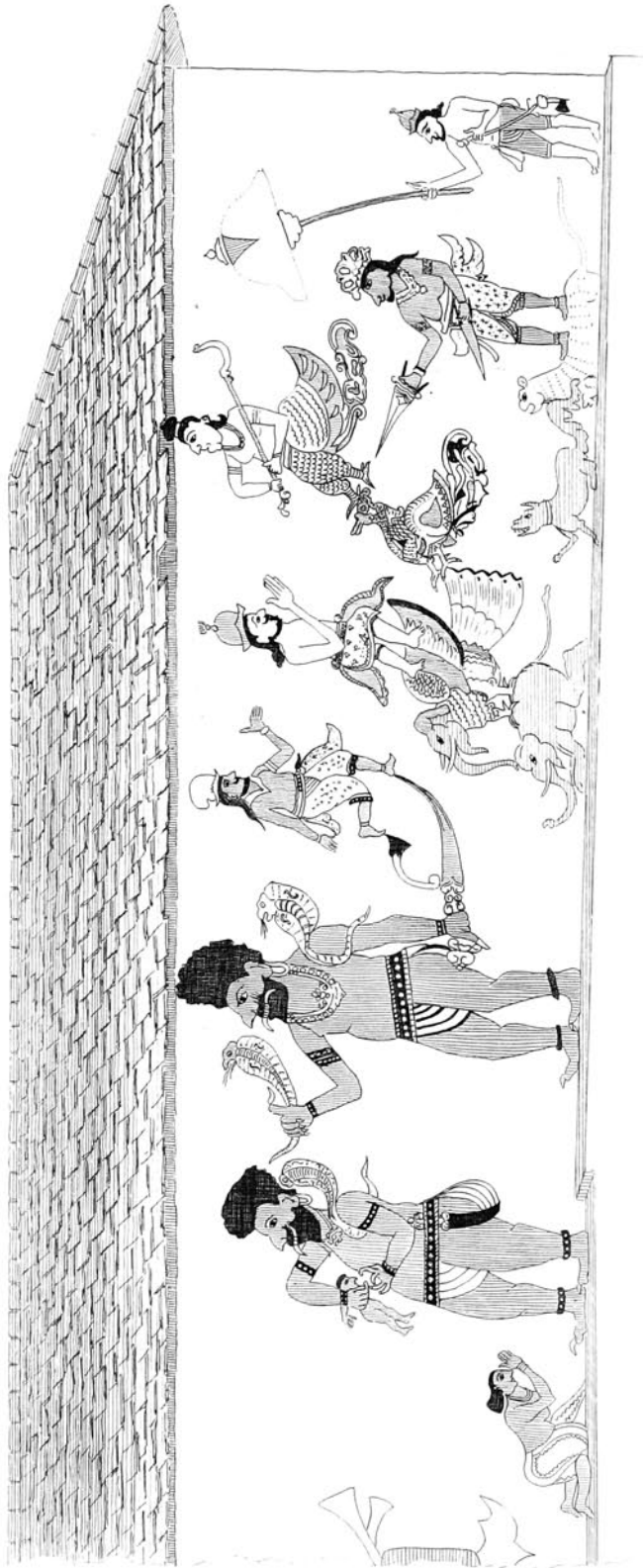
Pl. 5.



From a Drawing by a Native Artist.

London. Published by Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, & Browne. 1821.

J. Clark sculp^t



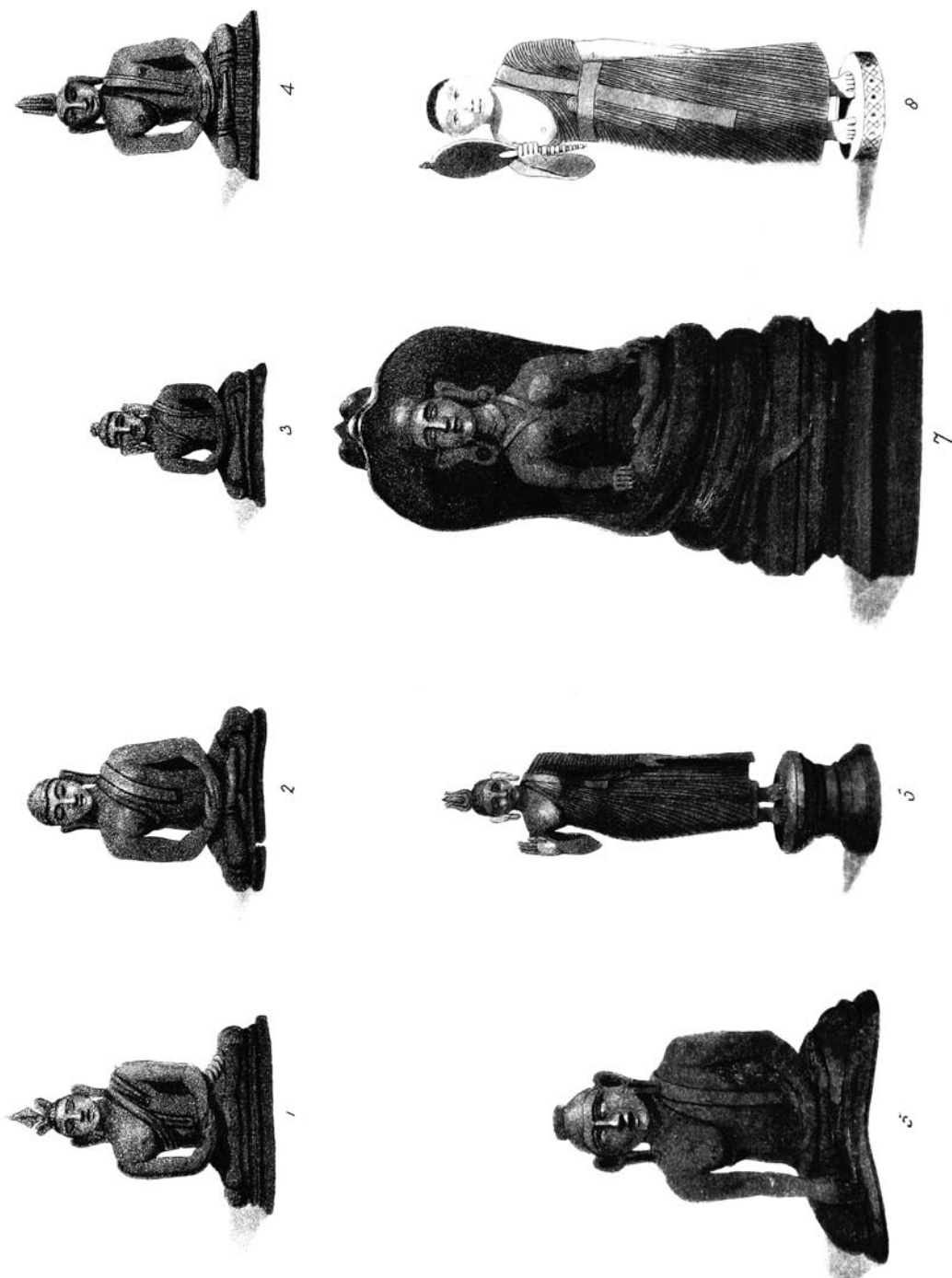
Pl. d.

J. Clark sculpt.

Figures on the outer wall of the Maha Vihara Dewale

London. Published by Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, & Brown, 1821.

Pl. 9.



J. Clark sculp.

London, Published by Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1821.



The material originally positioned here is too large for reproduction in this reissue. A PDF can be downloaded from the web address given on page iv of this book, by clicking on 'Resources Available'.