

The backbone of this book on books is a history of a most unusual concept of the book that developed in South Asia with reference to the Veda. By the 19 century, regional cultures of print showed an uneven and spatially discontinuous development across the Indian subcontinent. They variously fed on regional patterns of communication, configurations of power, patronage, and a new economic regime. Their development formed part of tremendous transformations in the structures of power, statecraft, authority, and communication that the subcontinent was going through while being gradually absorbed into the globalizing orbit of the emerging British Empire. The period witnessed a general shift of knowledge-production sites and relocation of distribution and text-circulation networks towards new urban centres. This book tries to understand how the emerging regional cultures of print created conditions for, inspired, and accommodated differently configured projects of bringing out printed editions of Vedic texts while leaving distinct traces of their respective nature on their editorial principles, book format, typographic form, and publishing ideology.