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The British engagement with India was an intensely visual one. Images of the subcontinent, produced by artists and travellers in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century heyday of the East India Company, reflect the increasingly important role played by the Company in Indian life. And they mirror significant shifts in British policy and attitudes towards India. The Company’s story is one of wealth, power, and the pursuit of profit. It changed what people in Europe ate, what they drank, and how they dressed. Ultimately, it laid the foundations of the British Raj.

Considers the visual sources that survive and what they tell us about the link between images and empire, pictures and power – a feat few historians have attempted.

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Draws on the unparalleled riches of the British Library and composes the story of images, their creators, and the people and events they depict.

John McAleer is Lecturer in History at the University of Southampton. His research focuses on the British encounter and engagement with the wider world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, situating the history of empire in its global and maritime contexts. He is previously Curator of Imperial and Maritime History at the National maritime Museum, Greenwich. He is the author of Britain’s Maritime Empire: Southern Africa, the South Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, 1763-1820.