

## The Origins of the British Empire in Asia, 1600–1750

This is an important, revisionist account of the origins of the British Empire in Asia in the early modern period. David Veevers uncovers a hidden world of transcultural interactions between servants of the English East India Company and the Asian communities and states they came into contact with, revealing how it was this integration of Europeans into non-European economies, states and societies that was central to British imperial and commercial success, rather than national or mercantilist enterprise. As their servants skilfully adapted to this rich and complex environment, the East India Company became enfranchised by the eighteenth century with a breadth of privileges and rights – from governing sprawling metropolises to trading customs-free. In emphasising the Asian genesis of the British Empire, this book sheds new light on the foreign frameworks of power which fuelled the expansion of Global Britain in the early modern world.

DAVID VEEVERS is a Leverhulme Early Career fellow at Queen Mary, University of London. He has published articles in the *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* and the *Journal of Global History*, and won the Royal Historical Society's Alexander Prize in 2014. He is co-editor of *The Corporation as a Protagonist in Global History, c.1550 to 1750* (2018).

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David Veevers  
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David Veevers

*Queen Mary, University of London*



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For MJ

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## Acknowledgements

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The writing of a first book is both an end and a beginning. It is the end of a personal journey from student to academic but also the beginning of a new professional journey. For both achieving the end and in starting a new beginning, I have many people to thank. I had the immense satisfaction to pursue all three of my degrees in the School of History at the University of Kent, where I benefitted from a generous community of students and scholars. In particular, I'd like to thank Oliver Carpenter, Neil Calver and Don Leggett for providing a lively postgraduate community over the years, and Kenneth Fincham, Emily Manktelow, Pratik Chakrabarti and William Pettigrew for their time and support in developing my research interests. Kent provided full funding throughout the postgraduate period which allowed me to pursue my research even whilst raising a young family, for which I will be forever grateful.

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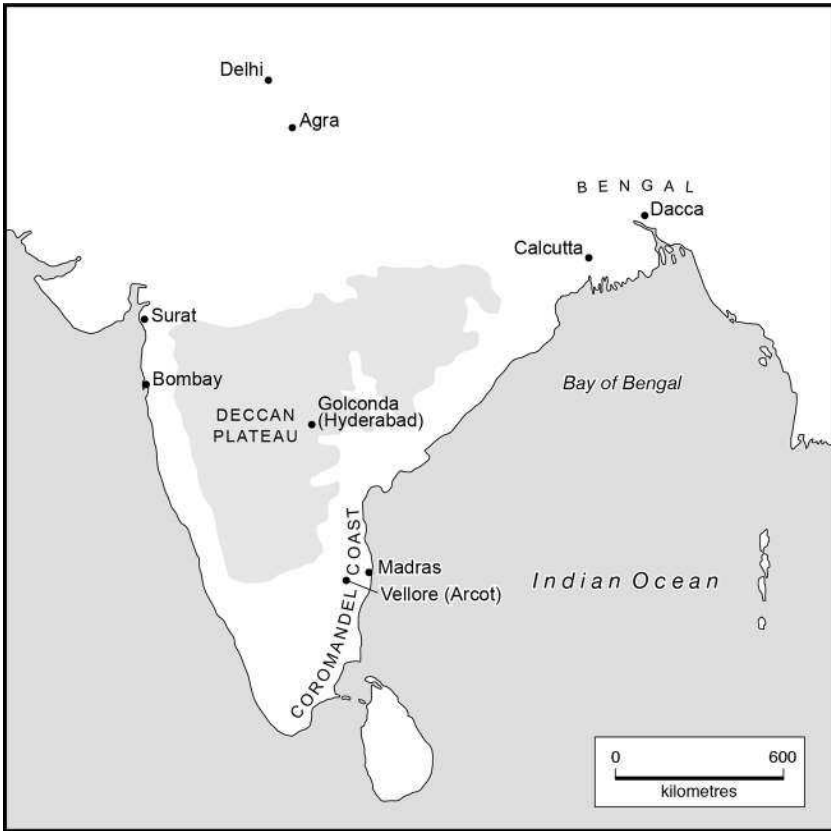
but inspiring friends. To Edmond Smith, Aske Brock, Liam Haydon, Emily Mann, Misha Ewan and Peter Good, thank you for widening my intellectual curiosity, but more importantly for indulging my Malbec habit, accommodating my fascination with monkeys, entertaining my bad puns, listening to endless stories about my children and sweating with me through various tropical conferences and speaking engagements. Their own research has left its mark on various parts of this book, and it is undoubtedly much richer for it. The Leverhulme Trust has been an amazing source of funding throughout my postdoctoral research, first as part of a £1m project on the role of England's overseas trading companies in shaping the English constitution, and then in awarding me an Early Career Fellowship at Queen Mary, University of London. Needless to say, this book would not have been possible without such generous grants. At Queen Mary, I have been fortunate enough to settle in amongst a welcoming community of scholars, and I must thank Andrew Mandelson, Miri Rubin and Simon Layton in particular for their support. Finally, I would also like to acknowledge the patience and professionalism of my editor at Cambridge University Press, Michael Watson, as well as Emily Sharp, and of the anonymous reviewers whose insightful feedback made this a much better book.

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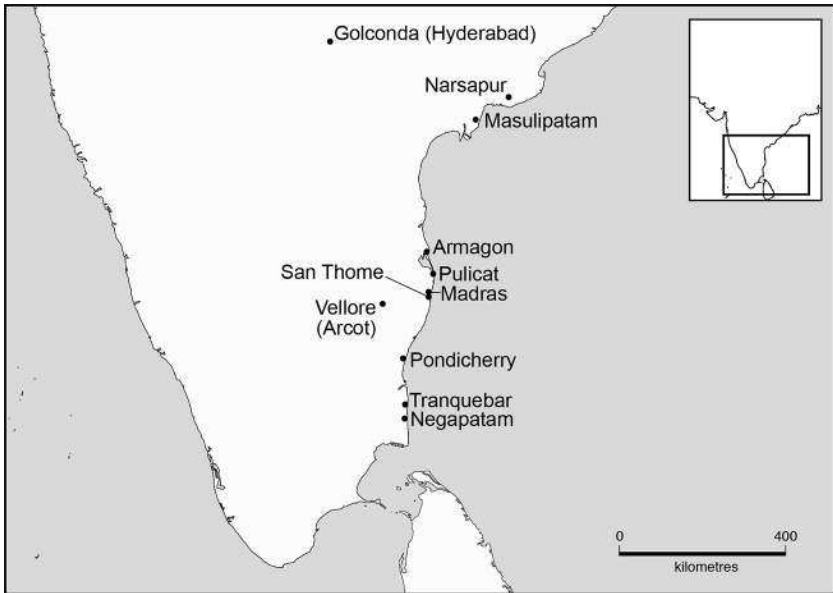
The last words must go to MJ, however. Not only this book, but my entire academic career would have been inconceivable without the love and blind faith (or in retrospect, utter naivety) of my wife, Jessica. Ever since I committed to becoming a historian at a pay-phone on a sun-baked street in Tenerife fifteen years ago, she has never wavered in her support, even when she discovered that,

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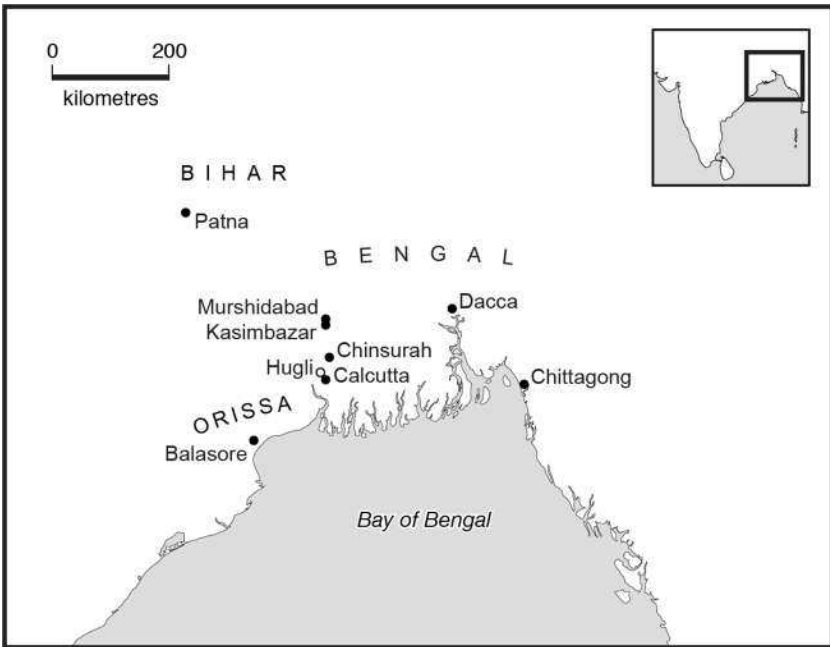
no, royalties on academic books will not make me rich. Despite pursuing her own challenging career in law and raising our family, she has kindly feigned interest in my obscure research findings and put up with my frequent globetrotting. She is not only an inspiration to our children but remains a constant inspiration to me every day. I dedicate this book entirely to her.



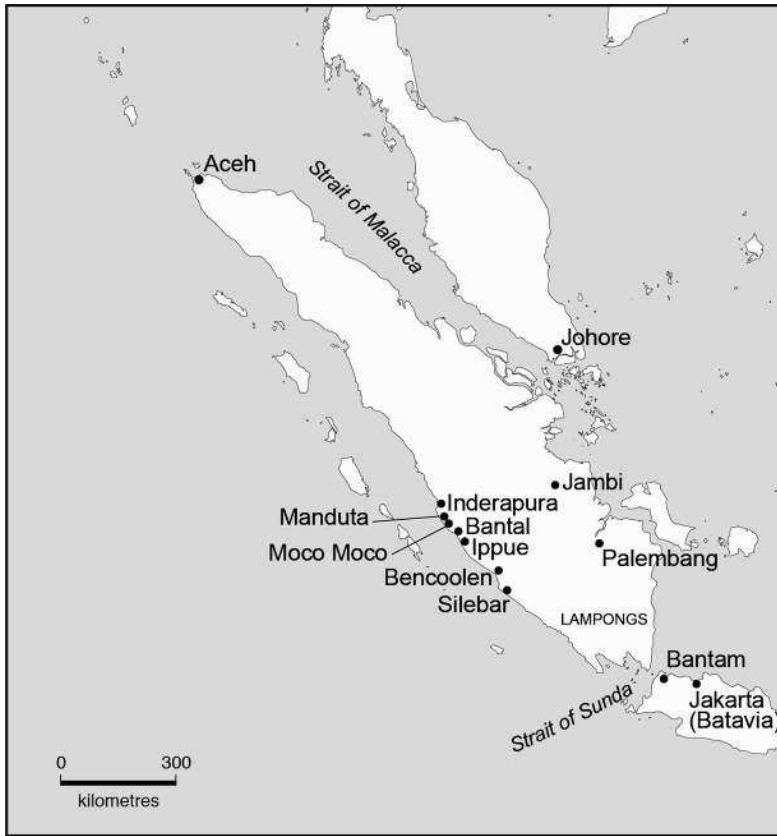
1 India



2 Coromandel Coast



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4 Sumatra