

Henry Prinsep's Empire: Framing a distant colony

Henry Prinsep's Empire: Framing a distant colony

Malcolm Allbrook



Australian
National
University

PRESS



Published by ANU Press
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200, Australia
Email: anupress@anu.edu.au
This title is also available online at <http://press.anu.edu.au>

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Author: Allbrook, Malcolm, author.

Title: Henry Prinsep's empire : framing a distant colony / Malcolm Allbrook.

ISBN: 9781925021608 (paperback) 9781925021615 (ebook)

Subjects: Prinsep, Henry Charles 1844-1922.
East India Company.
Artists--Western Australia--Biography.
Civil service--Officials and employees--Biography.
Western Australia--Social life and customs--19th century.
India--Social life and customs--19th century.

Dewey Number: 759.994

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Cover design by Nic Welbourn and layout by ANU Press

Printed by Griffin Press

This edition © 2014 ANU Press

Contents

Dedication	vii
Acknowledgments.	ix
Biographical Sketches of the Family of Henry Charles Prinsep (1844-1922).	xi
1. Introduction—An Imperial Man and His Archive.	1
Henry Prinsep's colonial life	1
Histories across space, place and time	8
Accessing the Prinsep archive	13
2. Images of an Imperial Family.	27
A novelised and memorialised India	27
Governing the others	35
Scholarliness and saintliness	42
A place to make a fortune	48
Military might: The limits of violence	54
A period of imperial transformation	57
3. An Anglo-Indian Community in Britain	81
Influence and patronage: Indian government in the metropole	85
Family narratives on mid-century India	89
Popular narratives of Indian difference	92
Departure for a colonial outpost	96
Encounters with the others: 'Sights most curious'	99
4. Indian Ocean Connections	117
Outposts of a subimperial empire.	119
'Fate has been against you'	125
5. Meeting Aboriginal people	145
'Fatigue, fear and anxiety'	148
'This strange young Englishman'	154
George Coobul and Henry Prinsep	159
Fanny Balbuk and Ngilgie	162
Almost one of the family	164
6. 'Stationed but not sedentary'	183
Letters from around the world.	188

7. 'Received into the very best society'	199
Politics laid bare	206
John Gribble and the Church of England	
Mission Committee	209
A colonial bull market	214
8. Chief Protector of Aborigines	237
'Complete separation from their savage life'	242
'Like tribes of Arabs'	248
A 'firm course of action'	251
9. 'Move slowly in a difficult matter'	271
Calling 'Aboriginal expertise'	274
'The dire necessity of a suffering race'	277
'Neck-chaining has not a pleasant sound'	283
10. A 'southern home'	287
'A Christian gentleman of the old school'	290
Bibliography	299
Index	339