Monopolizing Knowledge

In the nineteenth century, an ambitious new library and museum for Asian arts, sciences and natural history was established in the City of London, within the corporate headquarters of the East India Company. Funded with taxes from British India and run by the East India Company, this library-museum was located thousands of miles away from the taxpayers who supported it and the land from which it grew. Jessica Ratcliff documents how the growth of science at the Company depended upon its sweeping monopoly privileges and its ability to act as a sovereign state in British India. She explores how "Company science" became part of the cultural fabric of science in Britain and examines how it fed into Britain's dominance of science production within its empire, as well as Britain's rising preeminence on the scientific world stage. This title is part of the Flip it Open program and may also be available open access. Check our website Cambridge Core for details.

Jessica Ratcliff is a historian in the Department of Science and Technology Studies at Cornell University. She is the author of *The Transit of Venus Enterprise in Victorian Britain* (2008).

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 18:29:50, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009379526

Science in History

Series Editors

Lissa Roberts, University of Twente
Simon J. Schaffer, University of Cambridge
James A. Secord, University of Cambridge

Science in History is a major series of ambitious books on the history of the sciences from the mid eighteenth century through the mid twentieth century, highlighting work that interprets the sciences from perspectives drawn from across the discipline of history. The focus on the major epoch of global economic, industrial and social transformations is intended to encourage the use of sophisticated historical models to make sense of the ways in which the sciences have developed and changed. The series encourages the exploration of a wide range of scientific traditions and the interrelations between them. It particularly welcomes work that takes seriously the material practices of the sciences and is broad in geographical scope.

A full list of titles in the series can be found at: www.cambridge.org/sciencehistory

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 18:29:50, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009379526

Monopolizing Knowledge

The East India Company and Britain's Second Scientific Revolution

Jessica Ratcliff
Cornell University

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 18:29:50, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009379526

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009379496

DOI: 10.1017/9781009379526

© Jessica Ratcliff 2025

This work is in copyright. It is subject to statutory exceptions and to the provisions
of relevant licensing agreements; with the exception of the Creative Commons version
the link for which is provided below, no reproduction of any part of this work may take
place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

An online version of this work is published at doi.org/10.1017/9781009379526
under a Creative Commons Open Access license CC-BY-NC 4.0 which permits
re-use, distribution and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial purposes
providing appropriate credit to the original work is given. You may not
distribute derivative works without permission. To view a copy of this license, visit
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0

All versions of this work may contain content reproduced under license from third
parties. Permission to reproduce this third-party content must be obtained from these
third-parties directly.

When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI 10.1017/9781009379526

First published 2025

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

*A Cataloging-in-Publication data record for this book is available from the Library
of Congress*

ISBN 978-1-009-37949-6 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-009-37950-2 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence or
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this
publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,
accurate or appropriate.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 18:29:50, subject to the
Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009379526