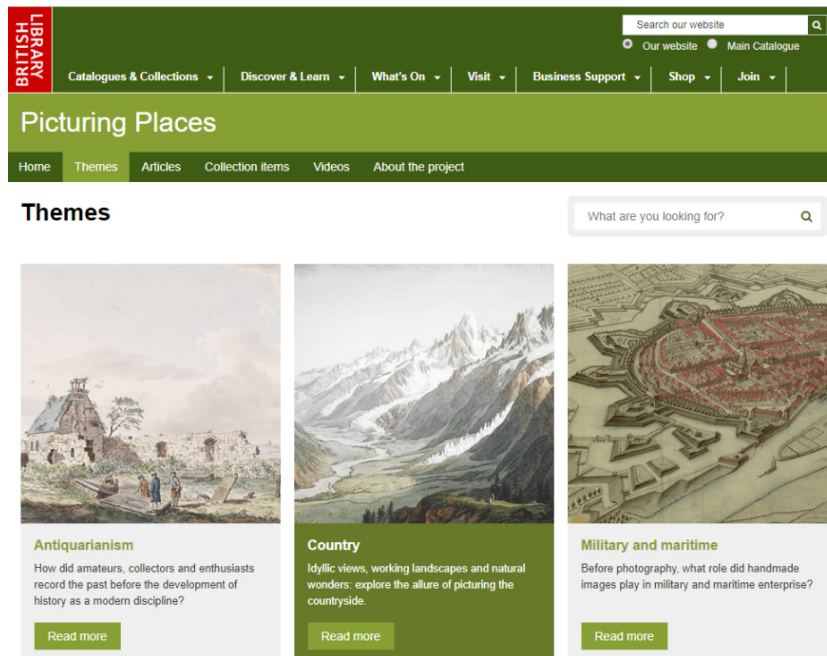


Picturing Places

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Picturing Places is a free educational resource, which was created by the British Library. As noted in the “About the project” section, the site is an outcome of the library’s research project entitled Transforming Topography which started in 2013 and it continues to grow. Picturing Places features the Library’s topographical materials and those held by twenty institutions, including private collections across Europe. It highlights a selection of

items, including prints, drawings, paintings, books, maps, letters, notes, and ephemera. Currently, there are 674 collection items and 119 articles.

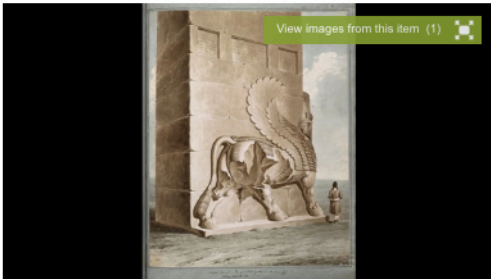
The site is intuitive and user-friendly with highly accessible navigation in both desktop and mobile devices. The organization of six key pages – Home, Themes, Articles, Collection Items, Videos, and About the Project – provides easy access points for non-academics and scholars. The deliberate placement of these pages on the toolbar suggests the hierarchy of information but also offers ease of use. The first tab after Home is Themes, which features six big ideas or guiding question for users’ further investigation. The Themes section also provides users with concise historical frameworks through a list of relevant articles, which naturally leads to the next page, Articles. This section contains works by seventy-six contributors that constitute a compelling anthology. Each article is short and generally gears toward academics. In Collection Items, users can see thoroughly descriptive metadata, including themes, creator, date, publisher, literary period, format, language, and current holdings. The page seamlessly cross-references other related materials and helps contextualize individual items. Wherever the user lands on the site, one is presented with a great balance of the images and texts. Users can also

easily conduct a search in the “What are you looking for?” field, which is very handy with its prominent location on the site.

Collection items
 All Picturing Places collection items

WATERCOLOUR / VIEW

A winged bull at Persepolis



The propylaea, built by Xerxes I (518–465 BCE), was the monumental entrance to the palatial city of Persepolis. Its western entrance was flanked by two huge bulls, whereas the eastern side was protected by two lamassu, shown in this view looking northeast. These creatures, part-bull or lion, part-bird and part-human, are one of the most enduring symbols of the Assyrian Empire. For Porter they were ‘monstrous’ and unfamiliar; ‘but whatever be the real intention, in the bull-man, which is here planted in the ancient seat of the earliest monarchs of the East, in the gate of his palace, his attributes fully answer the general idea of an emblematic reference to a just sovereignty’ (*Travels*, p. 593).

Full title: A winged bull at Persepolis
 Created: June 1818
 Format: Watercolour / View
 Creator: Porter Sir Robert Ker
 Copyright: © British Library
 Usage terms: Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercial licence
 Held by: British Library
 Shelfmark: Add. MS 14758, f.81
[Full catalogue details](#)

This item is featured in:
 Picturing Places

The layout and aesthetic appeal of the site live up to its name – Picturing Places. It is saturated with pictures of cities, towns, landscapes, maps, and more. The site shares abundant high-resolution images in thumbnail style, along with a title and some with a short description to prompt users for further study. With its approachability, Picturing Places can serve as strong instructional and interpretative tools and is adaptable by users of all

knowledge levels in the subject. Another valuable aspect of the site is the interconnectivity within the microsite as well as to the British Library’s parent site if the user would like to explore beyond the scope of topography.

However, users may encounter some limitations on Picturing Places. First, while users can examine high-resolution digitized images, they cannot zoom flexibly like the Harvard Library Scanned Maps Digital Collections and may find it too restrictive to observe the artwork details. Second, unlike the Articles and Collection Items pages which are relatively coherent in their formatting, the Videos page does not share the same structure. Additionally, there are only seven videos available to view which is low in proportion compared to other material on the site. However,

Picturing Places

Home Themes Articles Collection items Videos About the project

Accumulating London

Matthew explores how topographical print series of the late 18th and early 19th century depicted a rapidly-expanding and multi-faceted London. At this time, advances in print technologies, growing audiences and the interventions of clever entrepreneurs led to an unprecedented burgeoning of prints of the city. Matthew’s talk considers the contrasting ways in which these works organised and represented the city, by employing digital methods and historical plans to display the geographical and cultural patterns that they trace.

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such shortcomings are supplemented by the references of related videos, articles, and themes. Third, while Picturing Places contains vast collections of European history up until 1859, there is a lack of representations of non-western worlds as the site has limited items from China, Mexico, the Middle East, and the Pacific.

Overall, Picturing Places offers users of all kinds a subject-focused and unparalleled platform on the exploration of the story and perceptions of topography. It serves as a magnificent resource for personal enjoyment, cultural enrichment, and critical learning.