

China and the American Revolution

Historians are aware that imperial China had ties to the American Revolution. Indeed, James Fichter wrote that ‘tea, though an Asian commodity, helped bring about American independence.’ Tea, which was shipped from China into Britain and then re-exported to Britain’s American colonies, formed part of Britain’s controversial taxation agenda for the said colonies during the 1760s and 1770s. Therefore, this commodity was often ridiculed by the colonists. Fichter also commented on how post-1783 the newly independent United States developed trading relations with China (beforehand they had been largely prevented from doing so by Britain’s regulatory Navigation Acts).¹ In due course, these American merchants proved formidable commercial rivals to their European counterparts trading in the East. The impact of the American War (1775-1783) upon British commerce at the Chinese port of Canton has also been studied.²

Yet rarely has this knowledge been brought together into one piece, and therefore this article synthesises such work. Moreover, despite being aware of China’s ties to the American Revolution and War of Independence, this topic often remains over-looked in many textbooks and popular histories of the subject. These publications obviously refer to key events such as the 1776 Declaration of Independence. Textbooks also mention how the war gradually escalated between 1777 and 1780 to include the French, Spanish and Dutch as belligerents against Britain. Henceforth, this clash of European empires generated a ‘war beyond America’ reaching the West Indies, Africa and India.³ Yet China – one of the most powerful nations during the eighteenth century - is rarely incorporated into these texts. This article goes some way towards correcting this oversight. Thus, by highlight China’s ties to the origins of the American Revolution, analysing how the war affected British trade at Canton, and determining what the consequences were for the Eastern trades after 1783, this article further develops the view that the American Revolution had global implications.

Chinese Tea: A Contributor to Revolution

The English (later British) East India Company had traded with China since the seventeenth century, and enjoyed the monopoly of British trading interests with the East. By the eighteenth century Bengal in India was the Company’s primary trading destination, and, because of their relative geographical proximities, the southern Chinese port of Canton and Bengal became economically aligned. Canton also became the only Chinese port open to European commerce by the 1760s. Hence East India Company (EIC) ships sailed between both destinations, and the Company also chartered private vessels under special licenses between India and China (the country trade). Goods and manufactures from British vessels sent to China were used to purchase Chinese silk and tea, which in turn were exported back to Britain. From the Chinese perspective, thirteen commercial firms (Hong) were the sole legitimate agents of trade with the Western nations transacting business at Canton. At various times these Hong had formed a guild (Cohong) to strengthen their positions. This guild had been disbanded in 1771, but was later resurrected in 1782 and lasted until 1842.⁴

By the 1760s the EIC was facing mounting financial difficulties. This was partially caused by the organisation’s gradual transformation from being a trading company to a military-territorial power with considerable interests in India. Henceforth, Westminster passed several pieces of legislation designed to improve the Company’s affairs – admittedly with mixed results.⁵ In the words of one historian, ‘Tea lay at the heart of all these problems’. Goods that the Company exported from Bengal were rarely in sufficient demand in China. This prevented the profits from these sales in China from being used to purchase larger

amounts of tea. To counteract this, the Company shipped bullion to China - which succeeded in increasing the amount of Chinese tea being imported into Britain between 1768 and 1772. Regardless, this strategy would only prove effective in increasing EIC revenues if British domestic consumption of 'legal' tea was boosted. Yet teas shipped into Britain on EIC vessels were subject to high duties, which in turn encouraged the smuggling of cheaper 'illegal' tea from Mainland Europe into the UK (Mainland European nations imported Chinese tea, and this was not subject to high duties). Henceforth, in a bid to increase EIC revenues, some British duties on legal teas were removed during the late-1760s. Whilst British tea consumption grew between 1767 and 1768, the longer-term results were less promising. Between 1768 and 1772 there was no great increase in the amount of tea sold by the Company, and hence this commodity stockpiled in warehouses. The inability of the EIC to solve this predicament was due to continued importation of tea from Canton, smuggling of illegal teas, and problems in America.⁶

Although duties on tea had been reduced in Britain in 1767, an import duty was levied upon all tea shipped into Britain's North American colonies. This proved to be a contentious decision. In 1765 Westminster had introduced the Stamp Act, which levied duties on printed goods in America (London regarded this as a necessary step to ease budgetary pressures caused by the Seven Years War of 1756-1763. Since the American colonists had benefited from British military protection, London believed that they too should contribute money). However, the colonists opposed the Stamp Act claiming that it was 'taxation without representation' - the settlers were not directly represented at Westminster. In due course Britain repealed these stamp duties, but the issue of raising revenue to fill Britain's financial black-hole did not disappear. During the later-1760s the Townshend programme introduced additional revenue-raising schemes in the colonies, and again this was not well received by the settlers. Thus, in 1770, these newer duties were repealed except for the one on tea (Britain sought to retain a symbolic statement of Parliamentary authority over America). The 1773 Tea Act also changed the way that this commodity was sold in the colonies, attempting to under-cut middlemen and thus making tea cheaper in America. Ironically, this re-opened the vexed question of taxation without representation. Tea was disliked by many (though not all) colonists due to what it supposedly represented - taxation without representation and the corruption of monopoly, both of which were viewed as threats to political and economic freedom. The Sons of Liberty famously demonstrated their opposition to tea by dumping this commodity into Boston Harbour in 1773. In response, London closed Boston until compensation for the destroyed merchandise had been paid. Tea encouraged further polarisation of opinions. Because of their criticism of the EIC, monopoly, and tea, many American Patriots were drawn towards free trade. Conversely, drinking tea in the colonies symbolised one's loyalty to Britain.⁷ Combined, these factors accelerated the deterioration of Anglo-American relations - resulting in warfare in 1775. Thus, whilst the American Revolution was caused by several factors, disputes over what Chinese tea represented also played a part.⁸

The War beyond America

Initially, this military conflict was confined primarily to North America and the Caribbean, and therefore did not spill over to Asia. However, circumstances changed after 1777. That year British troops were defeated at Saratoga in upstate New York, which encouraged France to ally itself with the American Rebels (Paris sought to avenge its defeat at the hands of Britain during the Seven Years War). Then in 1779 and 1780, respectively, the Spanish and Dutch empires began fighting the British. Madrid hoped to regain Gibraltar from Britain. Equally, London believed that the Netherlands was supplying the US and France with military

equipment, and the Dutch were upset by British seizures of their ships. This helped precipitate the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War. Consequently, a conflict that had begun in North America now escalated around the globe.

India – a territory long subject to European imperial rivalry - was the first Asian country to be affected by such escalations. When conflict erupted between Britain and France (America's ally) in 1777/1778, the British EIC sought to take advantage of the situation on the Subcontinent. The Company's troops occupied French possessions in India, such as Pondicherry. Circumstances intensified in 1780 when Haidar Ali of Mysore (a French ally) attacked his pro-British rival the Nawab of Carnatic. Haidar subsequently forced the British into embarrassing retreats. Then in 1781 news of the Anglo-Dutch War reached India, and several Dutch possessions (including Negapatam in India and Trincomalee in Ceylon) fell to the British. Still, in 1782 the French managed to re-take Trincomalee.

This expansion of the war affected maritime trading routes in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea. EIC vessels sailing between Atlantic and Eastern destinations (including Canton) had to traverse these war-zones. Shipping patterns necessarily changed as a result. If word spread that an enemy vessel was cruising near an intended destination, then other vessels altered course.⁹ Inevitably, British shipping was captured. By 1781 the Dutch were posting vessels at the Cape of Good Hope (South Africa) to intercept British shipping returning from India and China. Any British vessels that were captured were conveyed to Dutch Batavia.¹⁰ The British also went on the offensive, which included sending vessels on scouting missions into Asia waters, and unleashing privateers (private ships of war).¹¹

By 5 June 1779, news of these developments had reached the British supercargoes - representatives responsible for overseeing cargo and its sale - at Canton. On that day they entered the fall of Pondicherry into their records.¹² Furthermore, by December these residents received a letter confirming the 'commotions in Europe and America.' Most significantly, the British at Canton realised that these escalations would directly threaten their business prospects. In 1779 the supercargoes wrote that the enemy had sent cruisers 'chiefly into the tract of Chinese and eastern traders...for the capture of ships returning from China'.¹³ Unsurprisingly, Britons at Canton were much relieved to hear of the eventual restoration of peace. In summer 1783 Canton received 'important intelligence' that the peace preliminaries between Britain, France, Spain and USA had been signed at Versailles.¹⁴ Amidst this backdrop, there is little evidence in surviving EIC records that the US was directly involved in the eastern war. There is only a brief reference to American cargoes being found on a Spanish vessel that had been captured near Macao.¹⁵ But certainly, a war that had originated in America catalysed other conflicts around the globe.

British Trade at Canton

The arrival of war in eastern waters affected the long-standing trading relationship between Britain and China. Measurement of this economic activity is made challenging by considering a wide range of factors, including the number of vessels sailing to Canton, as well as the value of imports, exports, and profits. Figures annually fluctuated depending upon which criteria were being measured. Nevertheless, there were four general phases to British trade at Canton during the period of the American War. Firstly, there was a period of relative calm – one might even say growth. Secondly, whilst business continued there were emerging problems (including warfare). The result was both good and bad trading years. Thirdly, there was a clear decline in commerce towards the end of the war. Finally, in the post-war years British trade with Canton still oscillated but gradually recovered.

A range of figures illustrates this broad quadruple pattern, including the total value of exports from China by the EIC. This figure initially rose from 625,257 Taels (Chinese currency) to 1,486,677 Taels between 1774-75 and 1777-78, respectively. The second phase of mixed trade was demonstrated with a reduction to 1,031,278 Taels in 1779-80, and a good year with 2,026,042 Taels in 1780-81. The third phase of highly disrupted trade registered in 1782-83, with a much reduced value of 796,371 Taels. Finally, in the post-war period the total value of EIC exports from China improved to reach over 1 million Taels in 1783-84. Figures in Pound Sterling confirm the broad quadruple structure. The net profit of the EIC upon its China trade (above 4 per cent interest) was valued at £241,646 in 1775-76. The following year it had risen to £282,850. The second phase of mixed trade showed profits of over £344,000 in 1779-80, reducing to £130,074 profit for 1780-81. Profits then dropped significantly in 1781-82 to under £100,000. Figures from the post-war period varied, but reached a clear high of over £1,000,000 profit in 1784-85.¹⁶ In terms of the number of EIC vessels arriving in China per year, it rose from 5 in 1775 to 9 in 1777. A second phase of mixed figures witnessed a reduction back down to 5 arrivals in 1779, but also an increase to 12 in 1780. 1782 heralded the start of the third phase with a major reduction back down to 5 vessels. Finally, in the post-war years there was a recovery to reach a new high of 19 sailings in 1785.¹⁷

Qualitative evidence suggests a relatively benign trading environment in Canton at the start of the conflict. Indeed, when the American War commenced in 1775 it had little impact in Asia. Granted, at that time the British expressed some trepidation at the rumoured reintroduction of the Cohong – but this did not materialise until 1782. Henceforth, the British supercargoes at Canton essentially went about their business as usual. This involved dealing with matters such as tracking cargoes and preventing damage to merchandise. British records for China in 1776 also noted that the ‘books [were] being balanced’.¹⁸

The second phase of mixed trade with profits and losses emerged during the later-1770s, and continued into the early-1780s. In 1777 a correspondence from Madras, India, to the supercargoes in Canton was optimistic: you ‘do not tell us you will be in want of any further assistance at present we trust the supplies now sent to you will be sufficient’.¹⁹ Additionally, there seems to have been positive shipping news. By October 1780 12 British ships had already arrived at Canton, and more were expected that season. The same good fortune extended to private vessels: ‘The number of Ships from China belonging to the Country trade exceeded this year what they were...last...It has indeed been the good fortune of the merchants that they have suffered but little since the commencement of the war.’²⁰ However, there were some problems during these years. In September 1779 the Canton supercargoes recorded that there were challenges in India (presumably the spread of warfare), and therefore Madras could not send supplies to Canton.²¹ Consequently, there was less money for the British supercargoes at Canton to purchase Chinese goods for export. The most pressing problem for the British in China during the late-1770s and early-1780s was the outstanding debts owed to them by the Hong. The British attributed this partially to the end of the Cohong in 1771. Indeed, the termination of this association had encouraged individuals not previously involved in overseas trade to engage in this line of business, hence creating ‘several bad debts’.²² British residents also blamed these problems upon the ‘folly and vanity’ of several Hong merchants, as well as to the ‘oppression’ of the officials who sought revenue for their Emperor. Hence in late-1779 the British frigate *Sea Horse* arrived at Canton, for the first of two occasions, with orders to recover these bad debts. The British supercargoes were horrified by this, fearing that Chinese officials would either not receive the ship’s captain or that they would not answer favourably. Therefore, the supercargoes tried to prevent the *Sea Horses’* captain from delivering a letter of intent to the Hoppo (superintendent of maritime

customs).²³ Ultimately, Beijing ruled that the property of the offending Hong be auctioned off with surpluses being forwarded to the British as compensation.²⁴

By the 1780s, a third phase associated with declining trade manifested itself. One factor behind this downturn was the eventual restoration of the Cohong guild in 1782. The British supercargoes now complained that 'Prices are very low comparatively to those which might be obtained if it were not for...monopoly...this shows us as in what a far worse Situation the Trade is at present than in the time of any former monopoly'.²⁵ But there were other factors at work too - namely the expansion of the war. One of the fronts was the 'War on the two coasts' in India, involving British troops against Mysore and the Marathas (the EIC had been engaged in conflict with the latter since 1775). This situation adversely affected the British in China, as British troops in India were consuming supplies originally intended for Canton.²⁶ Hence the supercargoes in China had to endure a 'want of funds', which meant that they could not purchase goods and 'the Company's Trade [was] in danger of great Embarrassment'.²⁷ Nor was the Dutch war well-received. Some British vessels were sailing home from the East 'totally unacquainted' with the outbreak of these particular hostilities. Unsurprisingly, this 'greatly alarmed...English merchants'.²⁸ At Canton itself there was a decrease in the country trade, occasioned by the 'great Expense and risk which attends Navigation'. This was a reference to the increased cost of maritime insurance during wartime. Equally, the British supercargoes at Canton faced stiff competition from European powers that were neutral during the American War. British supercargoes angrily noted that the Danes and Swedes 'will not fix Terms until we declare ours, that they may take the advantage of offering a penny more, or four or six months shorter period in their Bills'.²⁹

The British response to this potentially disastrous situation was varied. One approach was to request additional convoy provision for vessels sailing to Canton. But in late-1781 British Admiral Hughes refused to send his vessels to convoy Britain's China ships through the Straits of Malacca, fearing the risks of separating his squadron whilst confronting both the French and Dutch fleets.³⁰ The supercargoes also sought renewed financial assistance from India, but on 2 November 1782 the supercargoes acknowledged that virtually 'no assistance can be expected from' India due to the war. So, the British supercargoes purchased Chinese items in bulk - but due to the absence of shipping these cargoes were 'laying on hand to their great detriment'. An indication of how precarious the situation had become was that the British were prepared to sell Opium in China. Granted, British China merchants had sold this substance since the 1750s - but it was frowned upon by Chinese authorities.³¹

The fourth and final stage marked a gradual recovery in British trade with China during the post-war years. Granted, this did not happen smoothly. In 1784 British supercargoes lamented that the 'situation [in Canton] is intolerable...The management of the European trade lies entirely in the mercenary hands of a company called the Con-hang. It is composed of ten interlopers'.³² There were also fears that the price of Chinese tea would fall due to the large stockpiles of the commodity in British and European warehouses. Therefore, the British Parliament passed the 1784 Commutation Act - which slashed duties on tea, and helped boost tea sales in Britain over the next few years.³³

British interactions with their European Rivals and the Chinese

Like the British, mainland European powers had traded with China prior to the American War. Thus, how did these nations interact with their commercial and military rivals at Canton during the war years? There were examples of cordial behaviour, such as the British supercargoes meeting their Danish, Swedish and Dutch counterparts to discuss debts.³⁴ But

equally there were several instances of controversial behaviour. For example, in 1779 drunken British sailors insulted the French flag at Canton by cutting it down from the mast.³⁵ The British also clashed with the Dutch. After the commencement of the Anglo-Dutch War, in September 1781 the crew of a British country ship seized a Dutch vessel near Canton. A boarding party of 15 men lowered the Dutch colours, and hoisted up the Union Jack.³⁶ Rarely did these events escalate much further, as the Chinese simply did not allow it to. During the above incident of September 1781, the local authorities deployed troops to prevent the captured vessel from departing the port. The Chinese also warned that their ‘Emperor [Qianlong] will not suffer...bring[ing] war into his Dominions – and that whoever does so in future shall be treated as an enemy.’ Often, the British supercargoes regarded these Chinese proclamations as empty threats.³⁷ After all, the Hong still needed to trade with foreign nations to supply gifts to the Emperor. Yet the British knew that they should not cross a certain line. If an incident involved the loss of life then the supercargoes feared a far harsher Chinese response. During another altercation between British and Dutch sailors in 1781, the former cut down a flag stand that almost fell into a factory, which might have resulted in several deaths. Fortunately, this did not happen and the British realised that they had been very lucky: ‘extremely bad consequences might have happened had any lives been lost’.³⁸

The Long-Term Impact of the American War in the East

By 1783 peace was restored, and the United States achieved its independence. Henceforth, American citizens were now free to openly trade with Asia. The following year the *Empress of China* became the first US vessel to reach Canton. As Fichter has pointed out, this ‘new U.S. commercial presence was greater, more sustained, and spread across more of the Indies than anything that had emanated from North America before’. Yet, ironically, part of the reason for this successful American commercial expansion was that the former colonists worked with their former colonial masters. British and American traders in Asia were obviously competitors, but they also transacted business together.³⁹

As for the British, despite the loss of the thirteen colonies their global empire remained largely intact in 1783. In some respects their Canton trade would improve during the post-war environment. The reduction of duties as part of the 1784 Commutation Act increased British consumption of tea. Nevertheless, several problems remained. In reducing duties on tea, the Westminster government’s revenue from the tea trade declined. Nor had the EIC’s dire financial position improved during the hard-fought years of global warfare. Moreover, British traders in China faced several challenges as a result of the Versailles Treaty. The British were clearly concerned by the arrival of the Americans in Chinese waters: ‘several articles that are the products of their country [the US]...sell for as much, if not more, than they will require for their returning cargoes...make no doubt that in seven or eight years hence they may send as many more, without draining their country of silver.’⁴⁰ Nor was it just the emerging American presence in China that worried British traders. Writing of the Portuguese in Macao (who had been effectively neutral during the war): ‘The Trade of Macao is...greatly improved from the unavoidable advantages thrown their way by the Dutch War...[they are] the most happy for a lucrative commerce they have now purchased three large country ships for the Trade to Batavia and the Malay Ports from which the English ships must now be excluded.’⁴¹ Yet another problem for the British supercargoes at Canton was that they had not controlled all Britons in Chinese waters during the war. One such individual was Captain John McClary of the country vessel *Dadaloy*. In May 1781 he seized an allegedly Spanish vessel that had departed Macao (this coincided with the war against Madrid). Then the owners of the captured vessel claimed that it was Portuguese, and hence ineligible as a prize. The Portuguese governor of Macao also demanded its return. This

incident created a serious problem for the British supercargoes. On the one hand they sent their apologies to the Portuguese, but on the other they stressed that because the *Dadaloy* was a country vessel 'we do not Pretend any Power over Captain McClary.' McClary continued to prowl Chinese waters, capturing a Dutch vessel later in the year. Predictably, the Dutch claimed that this was an illegal act in a neutral port such as Canton. The Chinese also wanted McClary restrained. Eventually, the vessel was returned to the Dutch (although McClary did not return all of the ship's contents).⁴²

Evidently the British in Canton were dispirited: 'in no part of the world...are English subjects...left so devoid of protection.'⁴³ Thus, in attempt to resolve these difficulties the British supercargoes sought to establish greater control over country ships - an issue that made progress in 1786 by way of parliamentary statute.⁴⁴ Moreover, the supercargoes considered using greater force in Canton. Fearing for their personal safety, on 20 December 1781 they wrote: 'we are driven to Macao by the Chinese and cannot escape from it without mortification...should we...be imprisoned by the infatuation of the people of Macao & the Chinese refuse interfering; we know of no alternative but using the Force of our ships to release us: which is a predicament so highly unbecoming our situation, that we are extremely sorry...we should find ourselves in it.'⁴⁵ Of course, in the short-term there was no realistic prospect of the British successfully asserting more influence in China. In 1784 a gunner from the British vessel *Lady Hughes* fired a salute in Canton that accidentally killed some Chinese. The man went into hiding, and in a show of strength Chinese officials deployed troops and took a British hostage as leverage to force the supercargoes to hand over the gunner. These 'uncommonly hard measures' lasted for several days, and in the end the hostage was released unharmed.⁴⁶ The gunner was also handed over to the Chinese, but was subsequently executed. Beijing used this incident to 'discipline the foreigners'.⁴⁷ In an attempt to strengthen their position in China, Britain also sent delegations to Beijing to discuss the prospect of establishing a diplomatic dialogue between both nations. The most famous of these, the 1793 Macartney Mission, produced little of substance. Instead, China's Qianlong Emperor asserted that 'We [China] possess all things...and have no use for [Britain's] manufactures.'⁴⁸ Thus, it would not be until well after the American Revolutionary War that Britain could assert greater influence in China. Owing to advances in Britain's Industrial Revolution and gradual Chinese dynastic decline (although imperial China would endure until 1911), Britain would defeat China during the 1839-1842 Opium War, and thereafter open several Chinese ports to British commerce.⁴⁹

¹ James R. Fichter, *So Great a Proffit: How the East Indies Trade Transformed Anglo-American Capitalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 7.

² Patrick Tuck, ed., *Britain and the China Trade 1635-1842 Volume 2: The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China 1635-1834* by H.B Morse (London: Routledge, 2000), 1-93 and Earl Hampton Pritchard, *The Crucial Years of Early Anglo-Chinese Relations 1750-1800* (New York: Octagon, 1970), 147, 187, 190, 193, 212-30.

³ Francis D. Cogliano, *Revolutionary America 1763-1815: A Political History* (London: Routledge, 1999), 31-44, 46-8, 92 and Stephen Conway, *The War of American Independence 1775-1783* (London: Arnold, 1995), 133-58.

⁴ Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 139-63.

⁵ H.V. Bowen, 'British India 1765-1813: The Metropolitan Context', in *Oxford History of the British Empire Volume 2: The Eighteenth Century*, ed. P.J. Marshall (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1998), 530-50, H-

Cheung and L.H. Mui, 'Smuggling and the British Tea trade before 1784', *American Historical Review*, 74, 1 (1968), 44-73 and Philip Lawson, *The East India Company: A History* (London: Longman, 1993), 86-143.

⁶ H.V. Bowen, *Revenue and Reform: The Indian problem in British politics 1757-1773* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 107-10, 121-5.

⁷ Fichter, *So Great a Proffit*, 7-30.

⁸ See Gwenda Morgan, *The Debate on the American Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

⁹ Canton Consultations, 15 January 1782, British Library (hereafter BL), India Office Records (hereafter IOR), IOR/G/12/73.

¹⁰ *Whitehall Evening Post*, 28 July 1781.

¹¹ Canton Consultations, 15 August 1781, BL, IOR/G/12/72. Also see *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, 3 October 1778.

¹² Canton Consultations and Letter Book, 5 June 1779, BL, IOR/G/12/65.

¹³ Canton Consultations, 18 December 1779, BL, IOR/G/12/66.

¹⁴ Canton Consultations, 16 July 1783 and 11 August 1783, BL, IOR/G/12/77. However, the Dutch did not reach a peace settlement until 1784.

¹⁵ Canton Consultations, 13 September 1780, BL, IOR/G/12/70.

¹⁶ Pritchard, *Crucial Years of Early Anglo-Chinese Relations*, 391-402.

¹⁷ Tuck, *Britain and the China Trade*, 436-9.

¹⁸ Canton Consultations, 14 June 1775, 4 July 1775, 10 July 1775, 19 August 1775 and 29 January 1776, BL, IOR/G/12/58.

¹⁹ Canton Letter Book, 25 July 1777, BL, IOR/G/12/60.

²⁰ Canton Consultations, 4 September 1780 and 29 October 1780, BL, IOR/G/12/70.

²¹ Canton Consultations, 19 September 1779, BL, IOR/G/12/65.

²² Canton Consultations, 3 May 1777, BL, IOR, G/12/60.

²³ Canton Letter Book, 19 September 1779 and 24 September 1779, BL, IOR/G/12/68.

²⁴ 'The English Demand Payment of Debts Owed their Merchants', March 1780, in *A Documentary Chronicle of Sino-Western Relations 1644-1820*, ed. Lo-Shu Fu (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1966), 291-2.

²⁵ Canton Consultations, 20 October 1781, BL, IOR/G/12/72.

²⁶ Canton Consultations, 18 May 1783, BL, IOR/G/12/77.

²⁷ Canton Consultations, 31 October 1781, BL, IOR/G/12/72.

²⁸ *London Courant Westminster Chronicle and Daily Advertiser*, 27 October 1781.

²⁹ Canton Consultations, 24 October 1781, BL, IOR/G/12/72.

³⁰ Canton Consultations, 1 October 1781, BL, IOR/G/12/72.

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- ³¹ Canton Consultations, 2 November 1782 and 25 November 1782, BL, IOR/G/12/76. Also Paul Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast 1700-1845* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007), 121.
- ³² *Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser*, 10 November 1784.
- ³³ H-Cheung and L.H. Mui, 'William Pitt and the Enforcement of the Commutation Act 1784-1788', *English Historical Review*, 76, 300 (1961), 447-65. Also Pritchard, *Crucial Years of Early Anglo-Chinese Relations*, 146-51.
- ³⁴ Canton Diary of the Chinese Debts, 16 February 1780, BL, IOR/G/12/68.
- ³⁵ *St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post*, 4 September 1779.
- ³⁶ Canton Consultations, 8-28 September 1781, BL, IOR/G/12/72.
- ³⁷ Canton Consultations, 28 September 1781 and 21 August 1781, BL, IOR/G/12/72.
- ³⁸ Canton Consultations, 29 December 1781, BL, IOR/G/12/73.
- ³⁹ Fichter, *So Great a Proffit*, 2-4.
- ⁴⁰ *Whitehall Evening Post*, 7 December 1784.
- ⁴¹ Canton Consultations, 20 December 1781, BL, IOR/G/12/73.
- ⁴² Canton Consultations, 20 May-1 June 1781, 21-29 August 1781, BL, IOR/G/12/72.
- ⁴³ Canton Consultations, 22 January 1782, BL, IOR/G/12/73.
- ⁴⁴ Pritchard, *Crucial Years of Early Anglo-Chinese Relations*, 224.
- ⁴⁵ Canton Consultations, 20 December 1781, BL, IOR/G/12/73.
- ⁴⁶ Canton Consultations, 9 December 1784, BL, IOR/G/12/79.
- ⁴⁷ 'Two Chinese Killed by an English Gunner', 23 December 1784 in *A Documentary Chronicle of Sino-Western Relations 1644-1820*, ed. Lo-Shu Fu (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1966), 297-8.
- ⁴⁸ See Robert Bickers, ed., *Ritual and Diplomacy: The Macartney Mission to China 1792-1794* (London: Wellsweep, 1993).
- ⁴⁹ Peter Lowe, *Britain in the Far East: A Survey from 1819 to the Present* (London: Longmans, 1984), 8-18.