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Contact	eastasianhistory@anu.edu.au
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ON THE (PAPER) TRAIL OF LORD MACARTNEY

 Robert Swanson

A significant strand in any history of China under the Qing dynasty must be the development of the relations between the Celestial Empire and the 'outside world' from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries. Particularly important for the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are the contacts with Europe, contacts which had a major impact on China, and have often left their mark, and their scars, on the history and fabric of the imperial palaces. In the broad sweep, for the dynasty and for the Chinese people, Europeans began as mere barbarians, and became foreign devils; for the Europeans, the evolving contacts smashed romantic notions of distant 'Cathay', and China came to be dealt with as just another piece on the world's political chessboard.¹

The mission of Lord Macartney in 1793 as ambassador from King George III of Great Britain traditionally holds a pivotal place in analysis of these evolutions. Macartney's visit to the court of the Qianlong emperor is rightly seen as a turning point in the political relationships not merely between China and Britain, but more broadly between China and Europe. The lack of understanding on both sides is often seen as a 'collision of two civilisations',² it should more correctly be considered a clash of fundamental political views and world pictures, which were almost impossible to reconcile.³

Macartney's visit occurred at the end of a long period of gradually increasing Western awareness of China, and it is important to recall that trading contacts between Europe and Qing China had been growing throughout the eighteenth century, as the English East India Company built up its power in India and sought to expand its activities more widely.⁴ Indeed, it is perhaps odd that Lord Macartney's mission occurred at so late a date, given that English fashion (together with that of mainland Europe) had been stimulating imports of increasing amounts of Chinese consumer goods for decades. If anything, the mission comes towards the end of a period of English fascination with China,

A shortened version of this paper was presented at a conference in Beijing in August 2005. I wish to thank Prof. Chong Cheng-de and Prof. Xu Hao of Renmin University of China for giving me the opportunity to attend the meeting at Beijing, and Dr Frances Wood, of the British Library, for her generous assistance in the research. A Chinese text of the paper appeared in the proceedings of the conference: *The Symposium on the 80th Anniversary of the Palace Museum and the International Forum of Qing History* (Beijing: Forbidden City Publishing House, 2006), pp.662-70. Many of the manuscript references given here have had to be checked by email, and I am grateful to all of the archivists and librarians who have kindly responded to queries, and provided information about their holdings.

1 Mildred Archer, 'From Cathay to China: The Drawings of William Alexander, 1792-4,' *History Today* 12(1964): 864-71.

2 As in the title of the English translation of Alain Peyrefitte's book, *The Collision of Two Civilisations: The British Expedition to China 1792-4* (London: Harvill Press, 1993).

3 See especially James L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (London: Duke University Press, 1995), pp.25-26, 28, 222-23. For the difficulties of assessing the embassy, see Robert A. Bickers, 'Introduction,' in ed. Robert A. Bickers, *Ritual and Diplomacy: The Macartney Mission to China, 1792-1794. Papers presented at*

the 1992 Conference of the British Association for Chinese Studies marking the Bicentenary of the Macartney Mission to China (London: British Association for Chinese Studies, 1993), p.8. For an attempt to see the mission as reflecting a clash of 'globalisations', see Liu Haibo, 'Rethinking on Macartney's Embassy to China' (M.Phil. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2000), pp.53–55.

4 For this background, see Earl H. Pritchard, *Anglo-Chinese Relations during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. University of Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences, 17/i-ii (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1929).

5 Although the pagoda had originally been accompanied by an 'Alhambra' and a 'mosque', so the cultural interest was not focused solely on China.

6 Hevia, *Cherishing Men*, pp.68–73. On the fashion for Chinese products (and other Oriental goods) in eighteenth-century Britain, see also Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), ch.2. One reason for the late date of the embassy is, of course, the failure of previous attempts to organise one, notably the aborted mission under Charles Cathcart of 1787–88, on which see E.H. Pritchard, *The Crucial Years of early Anglo-Chinese Relations, 1750–1800*. Research Studies of the State College of Washington, 4/iii-iv (1936), ch.VI. (The whole text is reproduced in facsimile, with the same pagination, as Vol.6 of P. Tuck, *Britain and the China Trade, 1635–1842*, 10 vols, London: Routledge, 2000.)

7 It is published in John R. Watt, 'Qianlong meets Macartney: Collision of Two World Views,' *Education about Asia* 5 (2000):6–18.

8 Peyrefitte, *Collision*, pp.xxi–xxiv, at p.xxiv). The published and unpublished primary material is listed at pp.597–602.

9 For instance, Macartney records in his journal, under 25 December 1793, 'My dispatches for England are sent on board the *Bombay Castle*, the duplicates on the *Brunswick*': J.L. Cranmer-Byng, ed., *An Embassy to China. Being the Journal Kept by Lord Macartney during his Embassy to the Emperor Ch'ien Lung 1793–1794* (London: Longmans, 1962); reproduced as Vol.8 of Tuck, *Britain and the China Trade*, p.207.

10 The preparations for the embassy have also left scattered archival traces elsewhere. See, for example, note 28.

11 For a sense of this Chinese administrative response, see Hevia, *Cherishing Men*, ch.6–8.

12 Michael Fry, *The Dundas Despotism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), p.199.

13 For these tensions, Pritchard, *Crucial Years*, pp.269–311.

when tea had become a major import, stately homes were decorated with imported Chinese wallpaper, and Chinese porcelain was widely used (even if adapted for Western tastes). The fashion for Chinese goods even led English eighteenth-century culture to develop its own versions of Chinese style, with 'Chinese' gardens, the appearance of the so-called 'willow pattern' for crockery, and the creation of 'Chinese Chippendale' furniture; while in 1761 a Chinese pagoda had been built in the grounds of Kew Palace — and still survives among the landmarks of Kew Botanical Gardens.⁵ However, there are suggestions that in some quarters this fascination with China may already have been past its peak in the 1780s.⁶

Even so, it is hardly surprising that Lord Macartney's embassy had a cultural as well as a political impact when he returned to England in 1794. Reports of the embassy soon appeared in print. Publications included both an authorised account and several diaries compiled by members of the party; while the sketches of William Alexander were soon transformed into engravings and extensively printed. Fascination with the mission has proved long-lasting: the tale of the visit as a meeting of closed minds is regularly retold; the mission has even become the subject of an American play for school-children.⁷

As a major international embassy, the mission generated extensive records, from conception to completion. These included administrative documents, personal letters and diaries, and official correspondence. This material is now widely scattered, and has never been systematically collated. The only attempt at a survey is a brief discussion offered by Alain Peyrefitte in his book on the embassy. He recounts his attempts to collect up all the available evidence, calculating that 'The published and unpublished texts I was able to assemble came to about twelve thousand pages'.⁸ This paper attempts to go further in assessing the documentary survival, and the reasons for the current worldwide dispersal of the material. Nevertheless it remains incomplete, dealing primarily with preliminary records produced by the British, or created or retained by the members of the mission. In particular, no attempt has yet been made to search for ancillary material that may lurk in continental European archives or libraries.

While the surviving documentation is extensive, there is a good deal of duplication in the total archive. As well as the surviving original documents, many also exist in contemporary copies made for official purposes, or as duplicates to ensure that at least one copy reached its intended destination.⁹

The documents as a whole can probably be divided into three separate categories, two of them 'official', the third 'private' — although this distinction is based more on provenances and current locations than the actual nature of the records. 'Official' papers would be those preserved by the British government or with the East India Company, the two main sponsors of the mission. The material considered here as 'personal' or 'private' is that retained by the members of the embassy, of which the great collection gathered and kept by Macartney himself is clearly most significant.¹⁰ Many of these documents were 'official' in origin and purpose, but given the uncertainties of the definition of 'official papers' in the late eighteenth century, perhaps especially in the contexts of the East India Company and general diplomatic business, the documents produced during an individual's term in office or period of state employment were, in fact, treated and considered as being personal

property, and, therefore, did not pass into the state archives. Consequently, Macartney's papers, like those of many other officials, remained among his own possessions, and had their own complicated later history.

The distinction between 'official' and 'private' records has further significance in the particular context of the mission. Once he left England, it was extremely difficult for Macartney to maintain contact and communication with London. This also meant that his party did not create administrative documents like those which were produced at the Chinese imperial court, where ministers and agents had to deal immediately with the difficulties and problems that developed during the mission.¹¹ Although Macartney clearly did produce documents whilst in China, most of the formally 'official' material had to be created either before the mission set out, or on its return. Once Macartney left England, it was effectively impossible for him to receive further instructions or guidance; he had to deal with developments on his own initiative. This only heightens the significance of the journals (and particularly Macartney's own) as records of what actually happened in China.

The mission was sent with the approval of the British government, as part of a grand scheme whereby 'through diplomacy rather than force of arms, British commercial and strategic power would be extended over the whole Indian Ocean and Pacific'.¹² Indeed, the government was more enthusiastic for the embassy than was the East India Company, even though it was the Company which had to cover the costs.¹³ Yet, despite this governmental support, there are disappointingly few traces of the mission in the British National Archives. Indeed, its holdings contain only one slim file specifically identified as relating to the embassy, and which actually turns out to contain little of value.¹⁴ There are occasional relevant documents elsewhere in the National Archives, including logbooks from officers of the *Lion*, the naval vessel assigned to the mission, but seemingly no significant deposit of records.¹⁵

The second and larger collection of 'official' records is found among the archives of the East India Company, which are now preserved in the British Library in London (relocated from the India Office Library in 1982). Material directly relevant to the embassy now comprises three volumes of correspondence and background papers.¹⁶ Some of this consists of original documents; there are also several duplicates and copies. The holdings were once more extensive, with some material now missing.¹⁷ These India Office papers include material specifically about Macartney's mission, notably copies of the correspondence, and contain considerable evidence for the background in the trading activities of the English in Canton. The continuity of the more extensive East India Company archive is important for setting Macartney's mission in the longer context of the evolution of trading relations between Britain and China. It also, perhaps oddly, highlights the status of the mission as a distinct and self-contained event, one which makes little visible impact on the records actually generated and maintained at Canton in 1793–94.¹⁸

To turn to the private or personal documents is to turn chiefly to the great accumulation of material that Macartney retained among his own papers. The tale of their fate is almost as interesting in itself as the story of the 1793 mission.

In this regard, it must be noted that while Macartney is probably now chiefly remembered for his role in the Chinese embassy of 1792–94, that was

¹⁴National Archives, London, CO77/29. This is a volume of only 37 folios, of which ff.11–16 are letters and documents sent from members of the party from China: three letters from Sir Erasmus Gower, a Latin text of a Chinese decree issued at Canton, and (at ff.17–36) a transcript of Macartney's letter of 4 January 1794 from Canton with copies of translations (in Latin and English) of decrees issued by Chinese officials.

¹⁵Logbooks survive as National Archives, ADM 51/1154, ADM 52/3163, 3221 (I have not been able to consult these: for other similar records see below, note 40); for other documents see, for example, FO1048/1; FO233/189 no.20. A few documents in Chinese survive in the Royal Archives at Windsor, including the list of gifts sent to England by the Qianlong emperor: Windsor, Royal Archives, GEO Add 31/21A–D. (I am grateful to Pamela Clark for supplying these references.)

¹⁶British Library, London (hereafter BL), IOR/G/12/91–93. Vol.93 was originally two volumes, which have been combined.

¹⁷Pritchard, *Crucial Years*, p.274 n.6. See also the note to BL, IOR/G/12/91, f.215, recording a destruction in 1888 — but in this case of a duplicate record.

¹⁸See, for example, the brief references in BL, IOR/G/12/105 (Canton consultations, 1793), at pp.16–17, 52, 54–56, 130, 132.

¹⁹There is no adequate modern biography of Macartney, the closest approximation being the volume of essays, Peter Roebuck, ed., *Macartney of Lisanoure, 1717–1806: Essays in Biography*. Ulster Historical Foundation Historical Series, 6 (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1983), reprinted in 1989 as *Public Service and Private Fortune: The Life of Lord Macartney, 1737–1806*. This includes J.L. Cranmer-Byng, 'China, 1792–94,' pp.216–43. The most recent single-author work remains Helen M. Robbins, *Our First Ambassador to China* (London: John Murray, 1908).

²⁰The history of the papers is summarised in Brian Hutton, 'The Creation, Dispersal and Re-Discovery of the Papers of George, 1st Earl Macartney,' *Familia* 2 (1989), pp.81–86, although this is not a full survey, and the author acknowledges that 'The complete story ... may never be told' (p.81). This has to be complemented by the entry in Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Private Papers of British Diplomats, 1782–1900* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1985), pp.41–43.

²¹The Chinese material is sometimes noted as amounting to 60 volumes. I suspect that that misrepresents reality. In Phillipps' catalogue of his collection, only MSS 13392–13414 were listed as exclusively about China, but there were several other volumes — which might well take the total to 60 — that contained material either completely or at least partially relevant. Phillipps amassed a total

of about 60,000 manuscripts, 'the greatest collection of manuscripts ever put together by one man': A.N.L. Munby, *The Catalogues of Manuscripts and Printed Books of Sir Thomas Phillipps, their Composition and Distribution*, Phillipps Studies 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), p.2. The history of Phillipps and his collection is outlined in the five volumes of Phillipps Studies by Munby (1951–60), but, unfortunately, the Macartney documents are barely mentioned.

22 They are all grouped under the call number MS DS M116. For a basic list, see Pritchard, *Crucial Years*, p.409. I am most grateful to Prof. Thomas H. Hahn for providing information about the material in the Wason Collection.

23 Cornell University Library, MS DS M120; MS DS M118 is Macartney's commonplace book; MS DS 119 a 'collection of receipts and accounting slips, bound in one volume'.

24 Tōyō Bunko (Oriental Library), Tokyo, MS 33. The Library also contains a volume of pictorial sketches (MS 27), two volumes of copies of Macartney's correspondence from 1792–94 (MSS 40–41; from the catalogue descriptions the contents differ), a collection of background papers for the mission (MS 42), and a logbook of the *Lion* maintained by George Trollope (MS 44). I am grateful to Sayuri Sakawa for supplying information about the holdings at the Tōyō Bunko.

25 Wellcome Library, London, MS 3352. For the transmission and relationship of the volumes of the journal, Cranmer-Byng, *Embassy*, pp.332–33 (although written in ignorance of the existence of the copy at Yale, for which see following note).

26 Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, MSS fd 12/1–2.

27 Now in ten volumes, all under call number MS DS M117. For brief comment, see Pritchard, *Crucial Years*, pp.408–09. Vol.1 contains a selective list of contents for this material, with some background material; Vol.2 (documents 1–27) contains records dating from 1694–1791; Vols.8–10 also include some documents which both pre- and post-date the embassy.

28 The preliminary material is used extensively by Pritchard, *Crucial Years*, ch.VII. If a search for relevant documents is to be extended to include other background material, the potential range extends considerably, although reflecting more on the context within Britain than precisely on the embassy. It would, for example, include the notes prepared by Sir Joseph Banks as guidance for the collection of botanical specimens (London, Linnean

only one episode in a lengthy political, military, and diplomatic career that also took him to India, the West Indies, South Africa, and on diplomatic postings in Russia and elsewhere in Europe.¹⁹ The documents for the China mission therefore formed only part of his extensive personal archive, which, as well as the diplomatic material, also included records of his landholding in Ireland, and considerable other correspondence. As private papers, these were not under state control, and could be disposed of at will. They were.²⁰ After his death in 1806, the papers seem to have been divided among members of his family, with the main collection (including most of the Chinese material) passing to his niece and her heirs. In 1854, most of these documents were sold. As a result, a significant quantity of material produced in relation to the China mission passed into the hands of Sir Thomas Phillipps, a collector whose almost obsessive and indiscriminate acquisitions of manuscripts have made him legendary in the history of European bibliography.²¹ Unfortunately, after his death Phillipps's collection was, in turn, divided up, and mainly sold at auction, with the final sale of manuscripts occurring as late as 1947. The main dispersal of material concerning Macartney's China mission took place in 1913, but subsequent sales may well have included relevant documents, without their being specifically identified. The 1913 sale included a run of twenty-one volumes of background papers recording activities of the East India Company between 1622 and 1791, which are now in the Wason Collection of Cornell University Library.²² Other volumes sold on that occasion have also joined the Wason Collection, including one of many logbooks produced on the *Lion*.²³ A major prize that has not ended up in the Wason Collection is Macartney's own journal of the journey to China and the events of the mission, with notes and appendices. The overall history of these manuscripts is not yet clear. Three volumes — the journal of events in China, and two copies of the notes and appendices — were sold from the Phillipps collection in 1913 and, after intermediary transactions, acquired by the Tōyō Bunko Library in Tokyo, together with a number of other relevant records. Unfortunately, only one of the original volumes, of appendices, now remains there, the other two having disappeared in the 1990s — luckily, after photocopies had been taken of all three volumes.²⁴ A companion volume, in which Macartney recorded events on the voyage before reaching China, went a separate route, and in 1930 was acquired by the Wellcome Library in London.²⁵ These were the only volumes known to J.L. Cranmer-Byng when he published his edition of Macartney's journal in 1962. However, a further copy of the journal, in two volumes which from the covering dates deal with the journey out and events in China, exists in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University, and has, so far, escaped scholarly notice and attention.²⁶ The history of these two volumes has not yet been clarified, but it can be suggested (subject to possible revision when the Yale volumes are examined) that Macartney prepared at least two sets of 'journal' volumes (one volume recording the voyage to China, a second detailing his experiences there, and the third of notes and appendices) that became separated and mixed up in the sales after his death.

While Macartney's heirs disposed of a great quantity of papers in 1854, not everything had been sold. The next major dispersal by the family occurred in 1915, when a collection of 448 documents relating to the China mission was sold to Charles Wason, to be reunited at Cornell with the volumes acquired from the earlier Phillipps sale. These acquisitions included a large amount of correspondence, as well as other documents.²⁷ Overall, the Wason Collection

contains the largest accumulation of material associated with the mission. Much of it, however, relates to the preliminaries of the mission rather than to the embassy itself.²⁸

A further batch of papers was sold by Macartney's heirs in 1947, including '7 volumes of correspondence when Earl Macartney was in China and Madras', but details of the contents are obscure. At that sale, some 2,250 letters were bought for the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland in Belfast, but very few of these seem to relate to the China mission. Similarly, while the Northern Ireland Public Record Office now holds a large collection of records relating to Macartney's estates in Ireland (he was born in Ireland, and most of his noble titles were in the Irish peerage), it catalogues only three other documents as deriving from the embassy of 1792–94.²⁹

The successive sales in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries mean that the papers Macartney had preserved together as a complete record of his whole career were scattered across the globe — for Indian, South African, and other documents were also sold, and can now be found in archives and libraries in those countries and elsewhere. The overall fate of the collection has still not been fully determined: as late as 1985 it was said that 'many of the items in the 1913 and 1915 sales [from the Philipps collection, and by Macartney's heirs] have not been traced'.³⁰ In some cases, the parcels from the original sales may have been divided into smaller lots as they passed onto the market; in 1931, one small packet of unrecorded provenance was bought from a London bookseller by the historian Earl H. Pritchard, containing thirty-four documents given to Macartney in September 1792, and including what is, apparently, the only complete copy of his original instructions from the East India Company. This small collection is now deposited in America in the library of Washington State University.³¹ Other small caches and individual stray documents also appear in scattered locations. The Bodleian Library in Oxford acquired two commonplace books that include notes on China as part of a much larger deposit made in the late 1950s.³² A few further papers were among material purchased in 1979–80, being described in the catalogue only as 'papers relating to China, 1793–5'.³³ Somehow or other, a copy of the instructions given by Henry Dundas to Macartney just before the mission departed in September 1792 was acquired by an alumnus of Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, and was subsequently donated to the library there.³⁴

While Macartney's papers dominate the surviving sources, they are by no means the only private records. Macartney's original intention had been that all of the major participants in the voyage should contribute to a collective work on the mission, rather than produce their own personal accounts. An 'approved' record was produced shortly after the embassy returned to England, under the authorship of Sir George Staunton. However, Macartney's wish 'was ignored on a grand scale' by some of the less prominent members of the mission,³⁵ several of whom published their own 'unauthorised' versions of events, based on their own diaries.³⁶ Perhaps, suprisingly, the full publication of Macartney's own journal of the mission was delayed until 1962.³⁷ How much more unprinted personal material is available is not clear. The papers of the two Stauntons who were on the mission — father and son — are now deposited in the Perkins Library at Duke University, North Carolina, and include the two volumes of diaries maintained by the young George Thomas Staunton. He became the only member of the party to learn Chinese, and his record combines the insights derived from his linguistic abilities with the directness of a schoolboy's comment.³⁸

Society, MS 115), and might also extend to paperwork associated with the collection of the British products taken to China among the gifts, which has sometimes left traces in the papers of contemporary industrialists. See, for example, the carton of material among the papers of Matthew Boulton, the Birmingham industrialist who provided some of the presents and samples taken to China by Macartney: Birmingham, Birmingham City Archives, formerly MBP/324, now in MS 3782/12/93 (I am grateful to Prof. Peter Jones for assistance in tracing these papers). It would also be necessary to include contemporary comment on the embassy, such as the verses composed by 'Peter Pindar' (in reality John Wolcot), *A Pair of Lyric Epistles to Lord Macartney & His Ship* (London: H.D. Symonds, 1792), and *Odes to Kien Lung, the Present Emperor of China; with the Quakers, a Tale; [etc.]* (London: H.D. Symonds, 1792), and the satirical cartoon of Macartney's audience with the emperor issued by James Gillray.

²⁹Belfast, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland: information about the holdings of Macartney papers is accessible at <http://www.proni.gov.uk/introduction__macartney_papers.pdf>. This acknowledges only one letter relating to the China mission, in fact dating from the return voyage in 1794, at D903, with other documents in class D2731 and at D2225/5/1. There may be further letters which can be considered as relevant to the history of the mission: see Cranmer-Byng, *Embassy*, pp.318–19 and note*.

³⁰*Papers of British Diplomats*, p.41. For the known distribution of Macartney's papers at that time, see pp.41–43.

³¹Washington State University Library, Cage 1697 (a typescript copy is at Cage 4583). The packet had been acquired by the historian E.H. Pritchard, and was donated by him to the library. He published some of the documents — including the instructions — in 'The Instructions of the East India Company to Lord Macartney on His Embassy to China and His Reports to the Company, 1792–4,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1938):201–30, 375–96, 493–509 (reproduced in facsimile, with the same pagination, in Tuck, *Britain and the China Trade*, Vol.VII).

³²Bodleian Library, MSS Eng. Misc. f.533–34. The larger deposit included material relating to Macartney's time as Governor of Madras, and correspondence of himself and his widow. Odd letters may also relate to China. The donors had inherited the papers as heirs to Lord Macartney's widow. Another commonplace book is among the material at Cornell University Library, MS DS M118.

³³Bodleian Library, MS. Eng. hist. c. 1123, ff.163–75.

34Trinity College, Watkinson Library, Jerome P. Webster collection (there is no individual call number for this document).

35Frances Wood, 'Closely Observed China: From William Alexander's Sketches to His Published Work,' *British Library Journal* 24 (1998): 98–121, at p.98.

36For comments on these printed and unprinted records, Cranmer-Byng, *Embassy*, pp.342–47, 350–52. An incomplete list of the early editions is in H. Cordier, *Bibliotheca Sinica*, 2nd edn, 4 vols (Paris: E. Guilmoto, 1904–08), 2382–93. This omits, for instance, the edition of Staunton's 'official' account published in Philadelphia in 1799.

37Cranmer-Byng, *Embassy*. This edition is based on the manuscript volumes which passed to the Tōyō Bunko collection (above, at note 24), but with some modernisations in the editing (see pp.xii–xiii), and omitting several appendices. The Tokyo manuscript was not an autograph, and the Journal appears to have been written up from earlier notes, rather than being an actual day-to-day record (see pp.43–46). A new edition was produced for the Folio Society in 2004, reprinting Cranmer-Byng's text and using pictures by William Alexander as illustrations.

38Durham, Duke University, Perkins Library, in Collection 5038. The comment in Cranmer-Byng, *Embassy*, pp.351–52, is slightly misleading, as it deals only with the second volume, which contains the entries relating to the time in China. The first volume covers 15 September 1792 to 16 May 1793; a gap from then until 30 August 1793 is caused by the loss of pp.1–96 of the second volume. The Staunton papers include five letters on the China mission, dating from 1792–94. The holdings of Macartney papers in Duke University Library (Collection 3315) include 'four letters ... that relate to foreign relations between China and Great Britain'. I am grateful to Janie Morris for providing information on these holdings.

39Cornell University Library, Wason Collection, MS DS M120; British Library, MS Add.21106; Belfast, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, MIC/598/1 (microfilm of a log currently in private possession); National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, MS GOW/3 (Sir Erasmus Gower's log; GOW/1–2 are two volumes of 'Nautical Observations' which appear to be an expanded version of GOW/3, possibly written up with a view to publication); National Archives, ADM 51/1154, ADM 52/3163, 3221; Tōyō Bunko, MS 44; National Maritime Museum, MS CAR/101/1–3 (Silvester's log). For comment on the texts associated with Sir Erasmus Gower, see Cranmer-Byng, *Embassy*, pp.345–46. Another crew-member, John Macdonald, included a few paragraphs on the China voyage in his own 'Autobiographical

While most accounts of the mission quite naturally concentrate attention on the experiences of those members of the party who journeyed from Tianjin to the imperial court, and then to Canton, there were several others who remained with the vessels that had transported the embassy, and who have left their own notes of events. Each of the officers of the *Lion* would have been required to maintain his own logbook to provide a record of the voyage, and several of these have survived. The compilers range from Sir Erasmus Gower, the ship's commander, down to young Philip Carteret Silvester, a midshipman just a few years older than the younger Staunton, who compiled his log as part of his naval training.³⁹ Silvester also wrote letters home during the journey, which are preserved at Britain's National Maritime Museum in Greenwich.⁴⁰

Besides the range of written material, one of the most striking aspects of the Macartney mission is its extensive pictorial record, covering the entire period from leaving England through to the return. The pictures of China are, obviously, most important for immediate purposes, providing a significant and appealing record of scenes and events. Indeed, in some respects the pictures are as important as the words — in some ways, possibly more so, for they seem to offer less opportunity for misunderstanding, even if there is still the danger of misrepresentation.

Misrepresentation is, indeed, a real danger, and the illustrations certainly cannot always be taken as a true record of what was actually seen. The pictures were clearly produced for Western eyes, and, in some cases, are imaginary rather than eyewitness records. One such is the picture produced by William Alexander of the audience with the emperor: Alexander was not among the people present on that occasion, although he did base his pictures on the reports of those who were. Alexander's original pictures were created as part of a narrative for the English, which could not be generally checked, and which, in the process, would create English perceptions of the nature of the mission, and of China. Alexander is the most widely known and most prolific of the illustrators of the voyage; his pictures to some extent provide a pictorial diary.⁴¹ Indeed, although many of Alexander's sketches 'offer a unique view of ordinary life in China at the time', catching details apparently absent from the Chinese artistic tradition;⁴² he used them very much as raw material, later worked up and recombined into different pictures. The material actually produced in China may be treated for the most part — but not totally — as a reliable record, but the compositions produced in England are more questionable. While they may be correct in their physical details, to the degree that they were based on the sketches made in China (a dependence that may have decreased as time passed and either memories faded or the demands and expectations of the English market affected the composition), the details were sometimes copied in new combinations to construct scenes which were more or less fictional.⁴³ Most of the material produced in China in 1793 is held in the British Library;⁴⁴ but some pictures, especially the later derivative works, are now widely scattered in art galleries and private collections.⁴⁵ These later productions 'involved considerable invention and helped to create a penny-dreadful image of China',⁴⁶ so it is hardly surprising that Alexander's pictures should have provided some of the decorative sources for King George IV's Royal Pavilion at Brighton, built between 1815 and 1822.⁴⁷

While Alexander is the best known of the artists on the mission, he was not the only person to contribute to the pictorial record. Some of his works draw explicitly on the work of others, notably sketches by Lieutenant Henry Parish. Other members of the party also produced sketches and drawings, which survive in the album of pictures presented to King George III when the embassy returned to Britain, and elsewhere.⁴⁸

With its extensive records in words and pictures, Lord Macartney's mission is extremely well documented, although the fact that the papers are now scattered across the world makes it hard to collate information, or to be sure that the embassy's full archive has been identified and recorded. Nevertheless, the events of 1792–94 are still probably the best-known episode in Macartney's active and eventful career. That the embassy failed in its aims (at least from the points of view of the East India Company and the British government) is secondary to its longer term significance for British and European — and perhaps American — appreciations of China. The now-scattered documents of the Macartney mission record a significant point in the history of the Qing dynasty — a meeting that, even if it did not have an immediate effect in or on the palace, did set off a lengthy chain of events with significant repercussions for China during the nineteenth century, and through to the fall of the empire.

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memoir', published as *Autobiographical Journal of John Macdonald, Schoolmaster and Soldier, 1770–1830: With Introduction, Illustrations, and Notes by the Rev. Angus Mackay* (Edinburgh: Norman Macleod, 1906). I have not seen this, having used the transcription available on the internet at <www.electricscotland.com/books/madonald.htm>. The relevant paragraphs are in Parts III and IV. I am grateful to Andrew Davis, of the National Maritime Museum, for clarifying how and why so many versions of the *Lion* logbook would have been produced.

40 National Maritime Museum, MS CAR/8A.

41 Alexander did actually maintain an illustrated diary, in which the pictures predominate over the text: BL MS Add. 35174. See comment in Wood, 'Closely Observed China,' 98–99; Cranmer-Byng, *Embassy*, pp.342–43.

Robert Swanson

Professor of Medieval Studies
Department of History
University of Birmingham
r.n.swanson@bham.ac.uk

42 Wood, 'Closely observed China,' pp.99–100.

43 Wood, 'Closely Observed China,' pp.99–116. The scale of Alexander's embellishments is especially striking if his view of the park at Chengde, based on a sketch by Parish, is compared with the original, BL, MS Add. 33931, ff.9–10. Alexander added boats, people, and even buildings that were absent from Parish's sketch, and also changed the shape of a foreground tree to make the whole thing much more 'willow pattern' in conception.

44 The main collection of his drawings, 870 in total, is now British Library, India Office Collections WD 959–61; for others, see note 48.

45 See, for example, Patrick Conner and Susan Legouix Sloman, *William Alexander: An English Artist in Imperial China* (Brighton, Royal Pavilion, Art Gallery and Museums. 1981), for reproductions of some of these scattered later products. Several of Alexander's sketches were also worked up as engravings, which gave them a wide distribution as published prints.

46 Wood, 'Closely Observed China,' p.118 n.20. A 'penny-dreadful' was a cheap popular novel, usually a crime story, with a strongly emotional or sensational and melodramatic plot and characters.

47 Conner and Sloman, *William Alexander*, pp.15–16. Several of Alexander's pictures are reproduced in Alain Peyrefitte, *Images de l'empire immobile par William Alexander* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), but without making appropriate distinction between the reliable and unreliable depictions.

48 BL, Maps 8. Tab.c.8.; MSS Add. 19822 (drawings by Parish), 33931 (Barrow, Parish and Alexander — only a few of these are actually of the Chinese segment of the voyage); IOR/G/12/92, ff. 21–6, IOR/G/12/93, pp.90–102 (Barrow). Cornell University Library, RMC archives 4467, contains two volumes of watercolours from the voyage made by 'T.H.' and 'W.H.P.'. These volumes cover the journey out to China and the return trip: it seems likely that there was a third volume, now lost (or, at least, unlocated) which fitted in between them, of sketches actually made in China. 'T.H.' must be Thomas Hickey, the official artist for the mission, but the existence of these sketches seems to have been unknown to those who have commented on his work (see Cranmer-Byng, *Embassy*, pp.314–15; Wood, 'Closely Observed China,' pp.102–103 and notes). 'W.H.P.' is presumably Parish, although his forenames are usually given as Henry William (Cranmer-Byng, *Embassy*, p.313). The volume of sketches in Tōyō Bunko, MS 27, awaits analysis.

