The Qianlong Emperor's Letter to George III and the Early Twentieth-Century Origins of Ideas about Traditional China's Foreign Relations[1]

> Swaying the wide world, I have but one aim in view, namely, to maintain a perfect governance and to fulfil the duties of the state: strange and costly objects do not interest me. If I have commanded that the tribute offerings sent by you, O King, are to be accepted, this was solely in consideration for the spirit which prompted you to dispatch them from afar. Our dynasty's majestic virtue has penetrated unto every country under Heaven, and Kings of all nations have offered their costly tribute by land and sea. As your Ambassador can see for himself, we possess all things. I set no value on objects strange or ingenious, and have no use for your country's manufactures.[2]

This quotation and especially the final sentence will be familiar to almost any European or American reader who has taken a course in Chinese history and to many who have not.[3] It comes from the edict in which the Qianlong emperor (1711-1799) responded to an embassy sent by Britain under the leadership of Lord Macartney (1737-1806). Since the 1920s historians, scholars of international relations, journalists and teachers have used it to illustrate the failure of traditional China to acknowledge the rising power of the West. The Qianlong emperor, ignorant of rising British power, foolishly imagines that George III is paying tribute to him, while his deprecation of the British gifts is interpreted as a rejection of Western science and even the industrial revolution. China's foreign relations, associated with the giving of tribute and embodied in the ritual of the kowtow, are thus contrasted with the egalitarian diplomatic practices of the rising European powers. The wider interpretation of Qing political culture implied by such conclusions has been the subject of much criticism by specialists over many years. This paper goes back to the embassy to look at how the popular interpretation came into being and examines the reasons for its enduring power. I argue that the quotation does not reflect the Qianlong emperor's response to the British embassy, which was primarily to see it as a security threat, but rather eighteenth-century British concerns with protocol and their influence on Chinese and Western scholars in the early twentieth century, when the letter first began to circulate widely. Looking at how the letter has been

interpreted illustrates both the power of the processes through which archives are made available to historians and the extent to which many of our ideas about Qing history are still shaped by the tumultuous politics of China's early twentieth century.

Critiques of the ideas about premodern China's foreign relations embodied in the quotation have existed for many years and fall into two main categories: studies of the influence of Western science on the Qing court, and studies that focus on the Qing as a Manchu conquest dynasty. Scholars who work on the history of the Jesuits in China have pointed up the interest in Western astronomy and mathematics at the Qing court. The Kangxi emperor (1654-1722) worked through Euclid and other mathematical texts with Jesuit tutors, while his grandson the Qianlong emperor had a huge collection of European-made clockwork, automata and astronomical instruments.[4] In an influential study of the early Qing emperors' interest in the European military technology provided by the Jesuits, Joanna Waley-Cohen attributes the famous quotation to the emperor's need to stress China's cultural superiority and self-sufficiency for the purposes of domestic politics.[5] Another group of scholars has made use of sources in Manchu and other Inner Asian languages to argue that while the Qing emperors employed Confucian institutions and philosophy to govern their Han Chinese subjects they did not necessarily impose these ideas on other parts of their empire, but structured their relations with their Mongol, Tibetan and Turkic speaking subjects according to the institutions and ideas of those cultures.[6] Laura Newby has shown that this also applied to their external relations in Central Asia, which were not necessarily determined by the Confucian ideals of the tribute system.[7] More recently Matthew Mosca has argued that Qing officials in the eighteenth century were aware that they were part of a global trading system in which Britain and Russia were major players, and that the idea of handling each country's foreign relations through a single frontier where its envoys came to pay tribute was maintained because it was embedded in the dynasty's institutional structures.[8]

However despite all this scholarship, the familiar version of the Macartney embassy remains influential. The most recent studies by James Hevia and Alain Peyrefitte both place culture and ritual at the heart of their interpretations even though, in every other respect, they are entirely different in approach and argument.[9] Moreover, the Qianlong emperor's letter continues to be a familiar part of public understanding of China. Students in high schools and colleges continue to analyse it

and journalists continue to quote it. It is also now being taken up by scholars of international relations interested in historical alternatives to contemporary ideas of global international society. The idea that China today hopes to regain a China-centered world order that existed until the arrival of European international relations in Asia lies at the basis of important new interpretations of Asia's contemporary international relations.[10]

Much of the quotation's power comes from its status as the authentic voice of the emperor expressed in a major diplomatic document. However, there have been repeated calls in recent years for historians to think critically about the political processes through which such archival documents are presented to historians.[11] This began with historians working on topics that were at odds with the mindset of those who wrote and structured the archives they were using. Social historians looking for the lives of the voiceless hoped to read against the grain of the archival documents.[12] Further thought led to Ann Laura Stoler's insight that the structure of an archive could shape political power as well as documenting it.[13] Since then Kirsten Weld has looked at how the structure of an archive compiled to implement but also to conceal violence can resist the efforts of those hoping to use it to seek redress.[14] However, thinking about how we use archival materials is not only valuable in understanding the voiceless and assisting the powerless, it also matters for studies of high politics and diplomacy, particularly in the aftermath of major political transitions which demand that the past should be reconstituted to justify the present.[15]

After the fall of the Qing in the 1911 revolution the dynasty's archives came to be understood not as a collection of documents that would inform decision making and glorify the emperor, but as sources for a critical history that would legitimate the dynasty's fall. Central to this process was the work of a group of Chinese scholars who published the first sets of documents in the 1920s. The political context of the time shaped the selection of documents they made for their publication, documents which were then interpreted as the authentic voice of the Qing. In particular, they chose documents that would illustrate the dynasty's formalistic concern with ceremony and ritual, while ommitting those relating to its military response. This narrative was passed on to English readers through the work of John K. Fairbank (1907-1991), who was committed to using Chinese archival documents to balance familiar Western perspectives on China's diplomatic history. However, this very

commitment to archival research meant that his work was heavily influenced by the selection of documents that were being released to historians by the scholars in charge of the archives.

Terry Cook has called on historians to consider seriously the role of archivists as "co-creators" of history in the choices they make choices about what to keep and what to exclude from the archive.[16] In the case of the Macartney embassy, it happens that the choices that archivists made about what to publish in the 1920s were superseded by a much larger collection of documents released in the 1990s. Moreover archivists in early twentieth-century China were significant intellectual figures and a wide range of sources and studies are available which make it possible to study their attitudes and role in the shaping of the archive. A careful examination of the two sets of documents of the Macartney embassy not only transforms the story from one about ceremony and ritual to one about a military response to a perceived threat, but also shows the power of selection and exclusion in the presentation of the archives to shape the stories we tell ourselves and others about the past.

What is curious about the popular interpretation of the Qianlong emperor's letter is how little resemblence it seems to bear to the Qing dynasty's response at the time as seen in the documents on the embassy that were published by the First Historical Archives in Beijing in 1996.[17] Since the Qing archives were far from completely preserved this is not every document that was written at the time. Nor does it include every remaining document relevant for a study of the embassy, since only documents that actually refer to the embassy were selected. Nevertheless the volume includes more than 600 documents ranging from the emperor's edict quoted above to a letter of thanks for a gift of English woollen cloth to make a jacket.[18] It is arranged by archival fonds but has a useful index which makes it possible to read the documents in date order. Anyone familiar with the popular idea of the embassy who makes this experiment will be surprised.

The narrative of the embassy that emerges begins in October 1792 with a letter from the East India Company announcing that the King of England intends to send an embassy to congratulate the emperor on his birthday.[19] This is followed by much correspondence as the governors of the coastal provinces wait for the British ships to be sighted. In July 1793 the embassy arrived near Tianjin and there is a considerable amount of correspondence written as its members travelled by boat towards Beijing

and then on beyond the Great Wall to the summer palace at Rehe, where Macartney and his immediate entourage were received by the emperor. Most of the letters concern the travel arrangements and there is also a great deal of discussion of the British gifts: getting a list of them, how they are to be transported, set up, and displayed. There is also some discussion of protocol for the imperial audience, though only a few letters mention the issue of the kowtow and of those that do several merely scold the official Zhengrui (1734-1815) for self importance in imagining that the ambassador should kowtow to *him*.[20]

A turning point occurs at the end of September 1793 when two crucial events took place. Firstly, the embassy returned from Rehe to Beijing and Qing officials began arranging for their journey south to Guangzhou. Secondly, the list of British trading demands which Macartney had presented to the emperor at the audience was translated into Chinese.[21] When the emperor read them he found them most unpalatable: the British not only wanted to keep a permanent ambassador in Beijing (to bypass the provincial government in Guangdong), but also to trade at ports along the coast and in Beijing, to receive tax reductions, and to be given one of the Zhoushan islands off the coast near the port of Ningbo as well as territory near Guangzhou. These requests had significant political and fiscal implications, which the emperor was not slow to grasp. A formulaic letter to the English king previously drafted in response to the embassy was thrown out and a new version was written based on the emperor's personal instructions.[22] The letter goes through each of the British requests and rejects them all. Although many readers have assumed that this rejection was caused by the emperor's anger at Macartney's refusal to kowtow, there is no mention of the kowtow or other protocol issues and the focus is on a detailed rejection of the substantive British demands.[23] This letter is the source of the famous quotation, which is taken from the preamble where the emperor lays out his general response, while emphasizing his own generosity and playing down the value of the British gifts. The letter was formally presented to Macartney and the embassy was hurried out of Beijing.

Thereafter the surviving correspondence is extensive and is primarily concerned with avoiding the possible military consequences of having rejected the British demands. A key letter was sent out by the Grand Council to the governors of coastal provinces just before the embassy left Beijing. In it the emperor warned the governors about what had happened and that "England is stronger and fiercer than the

other countries in the Western Ocean. Since things have not gone according to their wishes, it may cause them to stir up trouble."[24] He then urges the governors to strengthen their defences and instructs the authorities in Guangzhou not to give the British any excuse for military action:

> Now that country speaks of wanting us to give them a place near the sea for their trade, so the forts along the coast should not only organise a show of military force but also make defensive preparations. So, for example, you should consider and estimate the situations of each of the islands of Zhoushan and the surrounding area and islands of any size near Macao, and make advance plans so as not to let the English foreigners infiltrate and occupy them… Next, the Guangdong Customs Superintendant who takes the taxes on the foreign merchants should in any case levy them according to the rules, and should firmly ban his clerks from extorting money. The English trading ships that come to Guangdong are more than those from other countries, so in future when their goods ships come and go it will certainly not be convenient to suddenly reduce the duty on them, but you should also not make the smallest increase that would give the foreign merchants an excuse.[25]

This instruction from the emperor is followed by much correspondence as his officials report the various actions they have taken to comply.[26] There are also a great many letters about how to get rid of the five British ships, especially the heavily armed warship HMS Lion, which had come with the embassy and was now anchored at Zhoushan.[27] The island provided a deep water anchorage, which was one of the reasons that the British hoped to get a base there, and Macartney had explained that many of the sailors were sick and needed to rest on land, which was indeed the case as the ship had had a major outbreak of dysentery and many deaths.[28] The emperor accepted this, but was urgent with his officials to get the ships to leave.[29] (Captain Ernest Gower recorded in his log being pursued by Chinese ships as he sailed down the coast, local people were throwing filth in their wells so his ships could not water, the gun salutes he fired, and Chinese ships in the harbour firing their guns both in response and at other times.[30]) There are also a number of letters reporting to the emperor military displays intended to impress the British as the embassy journeyed south. (These too appear in the British accounts which note the large numbers of

soldiers on parade while commenting critically on the artillery they displayed.[31]) Intermingled with these orders are a series of letters from Songyun, who was accompanying the embassy, and Changlin (?-1811), a member of the emperor's clan travelling to take up the position of Governor General of Guangdong and Guangxi, who took over from Songyun in Zhejiang. Their responsibility was to conduct trade negotiations that would dissuade the embassy from causing trouble but nevertheless not give way on any of the British demands. Their reports to the emperor and Macartney's to the British Home Secretary Henry Dundas (1742-1811) both suggest that this endeavour was remarkably successful.[32] The overall impression given by the archives is that the need for an effective military and diplomatic response to the British demands loomed much larger in the mind of the Qianlong emperor than the kowtow and other protocol issues discussed before the embassy arrived in Beijing.

Chinese accounts of the embassy throughout the nineteenth century conveyed a similar story. The *Veritable Records* (*Qing shilu*) compiled in the next reign as a record for future emperors and based on documents available to the Outer Court lacked some of the military detail that can be found in the emperor's private correspondence. Nevertheless the editors took a broad view of the embassy including both the emperor's letter to the English king and his instructions for a military response.[33] The *Veritable Records* were only available to a very small number of readers before the 1930s, however several works published in the context of the Opium War also emphasized British demands for territory and the Qing military response. The *Survey of Guangdong Maritime Defence* (*Guangdong haifang huilan*, 1838) included the formal letter to the English king, but also a much tougher version of Qianlong's response to the English demands written for internal consumption, and his instructions to Songyun and Changlin on the military and commercial response.[34] Meanwhile the *Guangdong Maritime Customs Gazetteer* (*Yue haiguan zhi*, 1839) includes an additional stern letter from the emperor stressing the importance of not allowing the English to seize an island, and ends with an order to build up coastal defences.[35] The same themes can be found in a history of Qing foreign relations published in the 1890s, which sets the embassy in the context of Qing strength: victories against the Gurkhas and successful border negotiations with the Russians.[36] In all these accounts written during the Qing dynasty the embassy is seen as a defense issue and the emphasis is on military preparations and the administration of the British trade in Guangdong.

So if the Qing perceived the embassy in terms of a British military threat, what is the source of the familiar interpretation of the embassy focussed on the issue of the kowtow? To understand this we must first look at the contemporary British sources. The Qianlong emperor was both completely clear about the expected protocol for foreign envoys, and sufficiently flexible not to require his officials to enforce the kowtow for a somewhat informal meeting with Lord Macartney held in his summer residence beyond the Great Wall and far from the Chinese court in Beijing.[37] Lord Macartney, by contrast, came from a European context where the relationships between rulers were undergoing great changes and alterations in diplomatic protocol were central to how those changes were negotiated.

Historians of early modern Europe have noted that although the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 is conventionally seen as marking the start of the diplomatic equality of sovereign states, in fact ideas of sovereignty developed gradually and as late as the eighteenth century were still in interaction with the older hierarchical system of relations between princely courts.[38] As D.B. Horn commented in his classic study of British diplomacy, "the importance attached in the eighteenth century to questions of ceremonial and ettiquette seems disproportionate to present-day writers."[39] He noted that the European great powers in this period would not have accepted an ambassador except from their equals, and provided a lengthy description of the difficulties posed by issues of ceremonies and privileges. Among these was the fact that the Hapsburgs, as rulers of the Holy Roman Empire, refused to give the English king the title of His Majesty since he was only a king not an emperor, making it difficult at times for the British to send ambassadors to Vienna.[40] The American and French revolutions exacerbated such problems by creating powerful new states that were republics, traditionally among the lowest ranking entities in the hierarchy of princes. They also brought to political prominence Enlightenment ideas of equality, which began to be applied to states as well as individuals. However, such ideas were still heavily contested in the 1790s. Shortly after the embassy's return to England Thomas James Mathias (1753-1835) published a poem which he claimed was a translation of the Qianlong emperor's letter to George III. In it the emperor condemns the revolutionary leaders of France who,

"O'er th'astonished world
The flag of dire EQUALITY unfurl'd,

Drizzling with blood of millions streams in air,

The scroll, FRATERNAL FREEDOM, DEATH, DESPAIR!"[41]

Mathias was a member of the Queen's household and a prolific satirist whose anonymous attacks on the literary celebrities of the day as well as on French philosophy had a broad appeal to conservatives.[42] As this suggests, equality was still far from being generally accepted even as an ideal. It was not until 1816 that the Congress of Vienna consecrated the equality of states as part of European diplomatic protocol, though this ideal has remained just as much unfulfilled as the ideals of the Chinese tribute system.

In this context where hierarchical diplomatic relations were still the accepted norm in Europe it is not surprising that concerns over the ceremonies with which the emperor of China would receive the envoy of an English king were a major issue for the British well before the embassy left London. Macartney in his correspondence with Henry Dundas anticipated trouble with "genuflexions, prostrations and other idle oriental ceremony" and said that he would handle the matter flexibly.[43] The well-known cartoon by James Gillray (1757-1815) called *The Reception of the Diplomatique and his Suite at the Court of Pekin*, in which Englishmen bow their heads to the ground before a reclining oriental monarch, has often been used to illustrate the importance of the kowtow to the reception of the embassy.[44] But this image was actually published before the embassy left London. Rather than suggesting Chinese concerns with ceremonial, it points to the intensity of popular British concern with the bodily posture of diplomats and the centrality of this issue in judging the success of the embassy.

The frequent references to protocol issues, and especially the kowtow, in Macartney's diary point to his own anxieties and are clearly intended as a record of how carefully he handled this issue.[45] John Barrow (1764-1848), who went on from the embassy to become Macartney's secretary, wrote an influential account that placed a strong emphasis on Macartney's refusal to kowtow. He claimed that it was in fact the Chinese who were excessively rigid on ceremonial issues.[46] Laurence Williams has recently argued that this reflected a broader process in which contemporary British satire influenced later depictions of the embassy through defensive writings that inverted the satirical critiques.[47]

These concerns were carried down through the nineteenth-century English-language literature on the embassy because diplomatic protocol continued to be an

issue for the European powers in China. The Westerners saw acceptable protocol as essential to their relations with China and their representatives refused to conform to standard forms of Qing court ettiquette on the grounds that they were not the representatives of tributary states. The Qing vacillated between an absolute refusal to allow the 1816 embassy led by Lord Amherst (1773-1857) to proceed unless its members performed the kowtow, and suggestions for alternative ceremonies that would avoid a formal reception.[48] The ongoing political importance of the issues is suggested by James Bromley Eames' (1872-1916) dedication of his influential general history *The English in China*, which criticized Macartney's flexibility over the kowtow, to one of the principal British military officers who fought against the Qing during the Boxer uprising.[49] Meanwhile William Woodville Rockhill (1854-1914), who published "Diplomatic Audiences at the Court of China: The Kowtow Question" in the 1897 edition of the new *American Historical Review*, was appointed as the United States plenipotentiary on the committee that imposed reformed ceremonials on the Qing court after the Boxer Uprising.[50] Thus up until the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 the focus on diplomatic protocol during the Macartney embassy was a primarily Western concern, while published Chinese accounts emphasized the British threat and the military measures taken to deal with it.

Meanwhile the Qianlong emperor's letter to George III was largely unknown until the twentieth century. The English translation lay forgotten in the archives of the East India Company, ignored even by the indefatigable Hosea Ballou Morse (1855-1934).[51] The Chinese original was available in works that dealt with Guangdong's maritime customs and defences, but it does not appear to have been noticed until it was reprinted in 1885 in a new set of the *Court Records of the Donghua Gate* (*Donghua lu*), a heavily abridged version of the *Veritable Records*.[52] The first modern translation into English was made from this text in 1896 by Edward Harper Parker (1849-1926), who was interested in using these newly available Qing records to examine the history of the Gurkha wars of the 1790s, but although he published his translation of the letter in a London journal it does not seem to have provoked any particular response.[53]

What brought the Qianlong emperor's letter to public prominence was the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 and the rise of Han Chinese nationalism. In 1914 it was included by Sir Edmund Backhouse (1873-1944) and John Otway Percy Bland (1863-

1945) in their scandalous new history of the Qing court.[54] It was from this source that it was picked up by Chinese scholars, for whom the Qianlong emperor's apparent ignorance and complacency fitted neatly with a revolutionary agenda. The letter was one of a number of well-known documents for the study of Qing history that emerged and circulated widely in the years before and after the 1911 revolution. Another, also published by Bland and Backhouse, is the *Record of Ten Days at Yangzhou* (*Yangzhou shiri ji*) a vivid and emotive description of the brutality of the Qing armies in the seventeenth-century conquest in China that has also frequently been published in translation.[55] The dynasty's archives became available to historians through this same process, a fact that has made aspects of the revolutionary narrative particularly effective and longlasting.

For British writers the failure of the Macartney embassy to achieve its goals was a longstanding part of the justification for British power in China.[56] For this purpose the demands presented by Macartney were summarized as being for diplomatic relations and free trade (rather than tax reductions and territorial bases). Morse called them a "modest Charter of Rights for the English trade put forward in 1793 and won by force of arms in 1842."[57] By beginning their narratives of Sino-British relations with the embassy authors told a story of two failed British attempts to use diplomacy to achieve the rightful equality of nations, which then justified the use of force. A side-effect of ommitting the more substantive demands was to make it appear that the Qing were responding primarily to cultural affronts.[58]

Then, shortly after the 1911 revolution, Bland and Backhouse published their history, which included a complete translation of the Qianlong letter.[59] The book was light-hearted, racy, and a best seller. It brought the letter to a wide public, some of whom took it as evidence of just the kind of culpable Chinese arrogance that justified British power in China.[60] However, this was not the line that Bland and Backhouse took in their text, which leant towards a romantic conservatism. Instead they presented the letter as evidence of the greatness of the Qianlong emperor in comparison with China's subsequent decline: "How swift and complete has been the process of the Great Celestial Empire's decline and humiliation, since its sovereign could describe himself in all sincerity as 'swaying the wide world.'"[61]

The letter quickly became well known to Western readers. Confident in their own cultural superiority, their immediate response to the Qianlong emperor's words was usually laughter. The philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), who toured

China lecturing, also read Bland and Backhouse and included a lengthy quotation from the letter in *The Problem of China* (1922), commenting that "no one understands China until this document has ceased to seem absurd."[62] Arnold Toynbee, who quoted the letter in the 1930s, thought that "the best cure for such insanity is ridicule" (though his point was the folly of similar attitudes in the contemporary West).[63] He, like Bland, saw the piquancy of the joke in the contrast between China's eighteenth-century arrogance and its contemporary weakness. The complicity of the reader in the joke and the resulting potential for an author to expound some reality that lies behind the emperor's words is undoubtedly part of the staying power of the quotation in Western sources. However, in these early years the point most often made was the size and power of the Qing empire under Qianlong.

Bland and Backhouse's writing was also a good fit for the complex mix of conservatism, national pride, and republicanism shared by many Chinese elites and the book was translated into Chinese within a year.[64] Combining stories of Qing depravity and corruption with a critique of the Westernised elite who formed the new political establishment, the Chinese translation was a hit and went through four editions between 1915 and 1931. To a Chinese reader there is nothing particularly amusing about the Qianlong emperor's grand words, which come from familiar classical sources and were simply part of the diplomatic boilerplate of traditional China, so the letter was merely absorbed into the book's general romantic and tragic narrative of the Qing past. Liu Bannong (1891-1934) was inspired to translate Macartney's diary of the embassy, which had recently been published in English. His preface presents both Macartney and the Qianlong emperor as impressively flexible in their negotiations and a model for China's future foreign relations.[65] This new Chinese view of the embassy was populist rather than scholarly: Liu Bannong was a novelist not a historian and the translator of Bland and Backhouse's work felt duty bound to note how unreliable it was.[66]

It was this popular narrative that brought the English sources on the Macartney embassy to the attention of historians and archivists.[67] In 1924 the remnants of the court were expelled from the palace, the National Palace Museum was established and the archives of the Grand Council, which had been inherited by the Department of State, were transferred to it. The museum also took over the archives that had remained in the palace including the original copies of the emperors' correspondence with provincial officials.[68] The version of the embassy that we know today was part

of the broader project to reinterpret Qing history becoming rooted in how the archives were made available.

However, the reinterpretation of the content of the Qing archives has been overshadowed by stories of the struggle to rescue and reassemble the documents themselves. Many documents had long been lost to poor maintenance, efforts to save space, and on two occasions destruction by foreign armies. Then the republican government that came to power after the 1911 revolution got rid of material its officials considered useless.[69] Decisions not to preserve documents, although naturally dismaying to historians, are an inevitable part of running a state archive.[70] However by the 1920s in addition to the political transition, Rankean historiography had influenced Chinese studying abroad, who came to see the use of archives as part of a Western scientific approach to history. These ideas fitted well with the dominant Qing tradition of evidential learning, which encouraged detailed studies of the precise meaning of texts. Thus when scholars found sackloads of Qing archival documents for sale as waste paper in the Beijing markets, their shocked reports in the press reinvested those documents with scholarly (and also monetary) value.[71]

However, the struggle to rescue the Qing archives, was part of a wider politically-motivated project to use them to discover the truth of China's modern history, in other words to create a new critical history of the Qing. Two senior scholars were put in charge of the archive section of the National Palace Museum: the historian Chen Yuan (1880-1971) and Shen Jianshi (1887-1947), a prominent scholar perhaps best known for his work as an archivist. They invited an official who had served in both the Qing and Republican administrations, Xu Baoheng (1875-1961), to manage the archive. These men came from the transitional generation that had lived through the 1911 revolution and been active members of the Republican government that followed. Chen had been a member of Sun Yatsen's revolutionary Chinese League, and was elected to the National Assembly after the revolution, from which he moved on to a series of positions in the government in Beijing. Meanwhile he was also a leading expert on the early history of foreigners in China, and was employed by the Institute of Sinology at Beijing University. He was also a member of the new Academia Sinica's Institute of History and Philology which was headed by Shen Jianshi.[72] Xu Baoheng was a career bureaucrat who moved in the same social circles: he and Chen Yuan were both members of the Society for Considering Errors (*siwushe*), a group which met twice a month to edit texts and discuss scholarship.[73]

Another member of this society was the historian Meng Sen (1868-1938), best known for his interest in one of the great scandals of the Qing dynasty, the murky circumstances through which the Yongzheng emperor came to the throne. Dan Shiyuan, who as Xu's assistant selected and transcribed many of the documents, was Meng's student.[74] The new archivists' background and the circles within which they moved made it almost inevitable that they would privilege documents that contributed to a revisionist narrative of the Qing.

Xu Baoheng made his first visit in December 1927. Like many people who visit an archive he was inspired by the idea of uncovering secrets, especially when those back up their own political opinions. He spotted a box labelled "Imperial Edicts of a certain year of the Yongzheng reign. Reading forbidden without prior permission from the emperor under penalty of immediate execution."[75] Naturally he opened the box. Inside he found lots of small packets of documents from the cases of Chinese scholars accused of writing material hostile to the Manchus. He decided then and there to begin publishing material from the archives.[76] A few days later he found a set of letters written by the Kangxi emperor while he travelling to one of his eunuchs back in Beijing. Xu was excited by these personal documents which were "like ordinary people's family letters."[77] He would put them at the beginning of his new volume.

Over the next few months, working together with assistants and under the direction of Chen Yuan and Shen Jianshi, Xu Baoheng edited what was to become the first volume in the series known as *Collected Historical Documents* (*Zhanggu congbian*). The 47 documents on the Macartney embassy included in this volume were the main Chinese source for the embassy until the 1990s, and were partially translated into English by John Launcelot Cranmer-Byng, who published them as "Lord Macartney's Embassy to Peking in 1793 from Official Chinese Documents."[78] Cranmer-Byng thought that these documents were a "very full record" of the embassy but in fact they were a tiny proportion of the more than six hundred documents that existed in the archive, and their selection was influenced both by the structure of the archive itself and by the editors' preoccupations and the political context of the day.[79]

Like other archivists dealing with a situation of political transition Chen and Shen were faced with a situation in which the bureaucracy that had originally created the archive gave rise to certain types of narratives which they could work against only with difficulty.[80] They had brought in Xu Baoheng because they hoped his inside

knowledge, which came from having been a staff member of the Grand Secretariat and later the Grand Council, would given him a better understanding of the structure of the archive.[81] However, sheer volume of material combined with the limits of Xu's own experiences also limited them. Many of the documents about the military response to the embassy were in the palace archives, which contained the powerful Qianlong emperor's personal correspondence, but these had not been opened. The documents were there precisely because these defense issues were both important and secret, unlike the questions of ceremony and ritual which, as Joanna Waley Cohen has argued, were part of the public presentation of Qing diplomacy.[82] However, it was the Grand Council that was the most powerful state institution in the late Qing when the emperors were weak and Xu was working in the administration, and its archives had been sufficiently important to be handed over to its Republican successor. The decision was taken to begin by opening those archives.

The choice of materials for publication was also shaped by political considerations. At a basic level the editors' general view of Qing history was shaped by the Chinese nationalist and anti-Manchu ideas of their generation. Shen Jianshi, who instructed the graduate students who did much of the actual work of selecting and transcribing the documents, wrote that subjects such as the fall of the Ming and the cases of Chinese accused of anti-Manchu writings were naturally important; other documents could be used to compile statistics.[83] There was also a more immediate political context: in the early months of 1928, when the volume was being compiled, Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Party was marching north to seize power from the Beijing government. This created a precarious situation for the Palace Museum. Conservatives in the Beijing government were already unhappy that the museum had displaced the former emperor in the palace and Chen Yuan who was both Cantonese and a former supporter of Sun Yatsen was arrested in a crackdown on prominent supporters of the Nationalists.[84] At the same time the museum was also under threat from radical elements within the Nationalist Party: as its troops moved north, the party passed a proposal to sell off the entire palace and its contents as rebel property.[85] Under such circumstances the editors of *Collected Historical Documents* could scarcely avoid thinking about how to make their work acceptable to the new government which not only saw itself as the successor to Sun Yat-sen and the revolutionaries who had overthrown the Qing but as an anti-imperialist force that was moving to take back foreign concessions from the British.

The first volume of *Collected Historical Documents* is the product of this political context and its choice of documents combines the editors' revolutionary nationalism and with the Nationalist Party's emphasis on anti-imperialism in its view of Qing history. The volume begins with photographs and the personal letters from the Kangxi emperor that Xu Baoheng had found so exciting. [86] These give the reader a feeling that the archives are a way of getting behind the formal exterior of the Qing dynasty into a real, backstage story. Then follow the documents from the Macartney embassy. The remainder of the volume threads together personal documents that bring the emperors to life with cases relating to anti-Manchu Han nationalism (documents on the seventeenth-century edict requiring Chinese to adopt the Manchu queue); the defence of China's borders (reports from a famous Han Chinese general who campaigned in Tibet and was executed in the power struggles that accompanied the Yongzheng emperor's rise to the throne); and Qing control of Chinese thought and culture (the cases which have become known in English as the literary inquisitions). The volume was not state-directed propaganda, but it was driven by its editors' interests and the circumstances of its production. Drawn from the Qing's own records, the documents are not explicitly hostile to the dynasty, but taken together they contribute to the anti-Qing narratives of the day. The prominence of these topics in this and other archival collections of the period would shape scholarship inside China and beyond for years to come.

The choice of documents about the Macartney embassy was made in light of these same concerns. In a brief introductory paragraph Xu Baoheng explained that his aim was to provide new material not available in the *Court Records of the Donghua Gate* and that the embassy was the start of China's international relations. The documents that follow begin with Francis Baring's letter announcing the embassy. The bulk of the letters cover the period of the journey to Beijing and the reception in Rehe. The collection ends with the embassy's departure from Beijing. The effect is to foreground the period when the gifts and protocol were discussed, omit all the archives relating to the military response, and make the the emperor's letter to George III the culmination of the narrative. This was partly an effect of using the Grand Council archives, which dealt with the journey from Tianjin to Beijing and the embassy's residence in Beijing and Rehe, while much of the emperor's personal correspondence with Songyun, Changlin, and the provincial governors responsible for coastal defence arrangements, was in the Palace Archives. However, Xu chose to end

with the emperor's letter to George III and not his letter to provincial governors a few days later ordering a military response. Both documents were available in the Grand Council archives and both had already been published.

Xu also chose to publish three of the total of eight documents about the kowtow.[87] This gave the issue a prominence quite unrelated to its position in the archives as a whole and was directly affected by the longstanding British scholarship that emphasized protocol and ritual. His diary records that he visited the British-educated Malaysian Chinese Gu Hongming (1857-1928) to get a translation of Francis Baring's letter. Afterwards he went out, presumably at Gu's suggestion, and bought the Chinese translation of Macartney's diary and the Japanese Inaba Kunzan's *Complete History of the Qing* (*Qingchao quanshi*) (1914). Macartney's diary repeatedly referred to ceremonial issues, while Inaba framed the embassy as a contest between servile and equal diplomatic rituals and ended his account with the Qianlong emperor's letter to George III.[88]

As a whole the selection of archives published in *Collected Historical Documents* had the effect of depicting the Qing as ignorant and passive in the face of the rising power of the West. Qing officials appear excessively concerned with ritual details and unaware of the military threat they are facing. What we have here is an argument about the causes of China's military weakness in the nineteenth century. It fits with the standard early-twentieth century critique of Confucian culture, often associated with the May 4th Movement, and also with a wider interest in using cultural differences to explain disparities of power. Both calls for increased Westernisation and historical research by scholars such as Chen Yuan into Sinicization (the process by which peoples on China's frontiers had adopted Chinese culture) were politically resonant components of this debate. Aspects of this critique remain convincing to many scholars today; the problem with *Collected Historical Documents* is that, as so often with exclusion from archival sources, the editorial process with all its historical and political context disappeared in the final publication. After a few sentences of introduction, with no hint as to the quantity of documents that have been ommitted, the reader is immersed in what appear to be the unmediated voices of eighteenth-century Qing officials.

This reading of the Macartney embassy reached the Western public through the works of John K. Fairbank and his emphasis on using the Chinese archives, an ideal

that he then conveyed to his graduate students who went on to dominate Chinese studies in the United States. Fairbank used the embassy and especially the Qianlong emperor's letter as a symbol of the conflict between Western egalitarian diplomatic relations and China's claims to universal rule, a conflict which he saw as the driving force behind China's modern history. By making use of the archival sources that were being published he was able to present aspects of this argument as the authentic voice of Qing officials, but because his access to the archives was shaped by those who selected the archival documents he read the results could be misleading.

Fairbank began by studying with Morse, the great expert on the British archives, but he was determined to find the Chinese side of the story.[89] In 1935 he travelled to Beijing to look for materials. As an American graduate student with limited language skills and few connections, he had little opportunity to meet the senior scholars who controlled the archives in the Palace Museum. His access to this material was mediated through Jiang Tingfu (1895-1965), who was only a few years older, spoke excellent English, and had written a doctorate on British Labour Party foreign policy at Columbia University. Jiang was by then head of the Qinghua University history department, though he was also politically active in the new Nationalist Party government and is probably best known for his later role as the Republic of China's representative to the United Nations in the 1950s. He had just completed work on his own influential compilation of archive materials: *A Collection of Major Historical Documents on Modern China's Foreign Relations (Jindai Zhongguo waijiaoshi ziliao jiyao,* 1932-34*).*[90]

Jiang was working out an analysis of China's modern history that combined on the one hand his generation's fascination with the differences between Chinese and Western culture and on the other the claim made in the English-language literature that the European countries were pursuing the ideal of equality between states. He argued that China's early experience with northern barbarians had led to it having tributary relations rather than international relations.[91] However, he was just as critical of the idea that European states were motivated by ideals of equality in their foreign relations.[92] In his 1938 survey of modern Chinese history, he remarked ironically, "Sino-Western relations are peculiar. Before the Opium War we were not prepared to treat the foreigners with equality; and afterwards they were not prepared to treat us with equality."[93] He wrote at the outbreak of war with Japan and in his crisis-struck vision there was only one important question: "Can the Chinese

modernise? Can they catch up with Westerners? Can they use science and machinery? Can they get rid of our family and native-place thinking and organise a modern nation state?"[94]

Fairbank engaged directly with Jiang Tingfu's ideas about the tribute system in a series of articles he published on the Qing archives between 1939 and 1941 with his contemporary Deng Siyu (S.Y. Teng, 1906-1988).[95] Backed up by Deng's detailed research on the Qing text the *Collected Statutes of the Great Qing* (*Da Qing huidian*), an encyclopedic work that abstracts diplomatic ideals and rituals from the practice of of diplomacy, Fairbank and Deng argued that the tribute system was primarily a matter of trade and that ceremonial was more important in it than the realities of power. Unlike Jiang they accepted the idea that Western nations were seeking equality, seeing this as a cultural characteristic.[96] But like Jiang, Fairbank used these topics to address the question of whether or not China was capable of modernising. A few years later, shortly after the Communist victory, he argued that "more than any other mature non-Western state, China has seemed inadaptable to the conditions of modern life."[97] The aspects of modern life he suggested were incompatible with China's traditions included nationalism, industrialisation, the scientific method, rule of law, entrepreneurship, and invention. However his own research was focussed on issues of foreign relations, and located the problem in the tributary system.[98]

These ideas about China's foreign relations reached the broader English-reading public as a result of the massive success of Deng and Fairbank's 1954 textbook *China's Response to the West*.[99] This was an edited sourcebook that combined texts "chosen and in some cases condensed for the greatest possible significance" with a strong underlying narrative.[100] The book's outline was originally created by Deng following the standard frame of Chinese revolutionary history, beginning with anti-Manchu Chinese nationalism in the early Qing and ending with the Communist revolution.[101] However, the plan was cut back by Fairbank, who created a first chapter titled "The problem and its background." The problem remained the same issue that had perplexed Jiang Tingfu and many others of his and Fairbank's generation: Can China modernise? However Fairbank reformulated the question so that it would also answer the question of how the Communists came to power. He framed the answer in terms of a transition from the traditional tributary system to the system of modern international relations, with the tensions imposed by this being the driving force for other changes. The chapter ends with a heavily abridged version of

the Qianlong emperor's letter: it omits any reference to the main British demands, and ends with the famous sentence "We have never set much store on strange or ingenious objects, nor do we need any more of your country's manufactures."[102] Fairbank then points up the effect by adding: "In such terms the Englishmen and Scotsmen who were about to batter down the gates and destroy the Middle Kingdom's ancient superiority over all other peoples were still categorized as uncultured barbarians outside the pale of civilisation."[103] Deng had originally intended to publish the letter and several other documents on the embassy from the set in the *Collected Historical Archives*. Fairbank reduced this to the single letter, which he introduced as the most famous example of the Qing court's effort to fit Western nations into the "traditional and outmoded tributary framework."[104]

At the beginning of the Cold War, when it was compiled, *China's Response to the West* addressed a major political problem. As Fairbank phrased it the rise to power of Chinese Communism was the most portentous event "in the whole history of American foreign policy in Asia, every intelligent American must strive to understand its significance."[105] He then proposed a solution to this problem: understanding history. Fairbank wrote in the prospectus for the volume that without knowledge of China's modern history "our diplomacy is blindfolded and our own subjective assumptions may well lead us to diaster."[106] In depicting the disasters that befell Qing China when its officials failed to understand a foreign culture, Fairbank was also making an argument about what would happen to Americans if they did not apply themselves to learning about China. As one reviewer wrote, "The Chinese are not the only people to suffer from the reluctance of their leaders to accept unpalatable truths. But certainly they have paid a heavy price, from which we might all take a warning."[107] Thus the volume was both a critique of United States foreign policy and a plea for the expansion of area studies, arguments with which many university teachers would find themselves in sympathy for several decades.

China's Response to the West was to be the textbook for generations of American and British undergraduates. Not only is it still in use, but it has continued to influence later source compilations.[108] The effect of using the Qianlong emperor's letter to George III to frame an argument about the United States' foreign policy towards China was that, as James Hevia has noted, the letter came to stand for China's culturalism, isolationism and sense of self-sufficiency in the 1960s.[109] As a result throughout the Cold War a generation of textbooks, used the quotation (quite

implausibly given the extensive trade that gave rise to the embassy) to illustrate traditional China's isolation from the rest of the world.[110] From these the letter spread to textbooks in world history and in the last twenty years to international relations where it is primarily used to help the reader understand contemporary China's attitudes towards Southeast Asia.[111] Here, for the first time, the joke embedded in the quotation is no longer mentioned: China's rising power means that scholars of international relations are prepared to take the normative statements of the Qianlong emperor on their own terms. It is hard not to sympathise with the aims of a new generation of scholars who use the Macartney embassy to challenge the Eurocentrism of much scholarship in international relations and to argue that until the quite recent past non-Westerners often set the terms of engagement for diplomatic relations.[112] However, doing so they too easily fall back on a vision of European egalitarianism and Chinese hierarchy in international relations that originated in the tensions of the transition to rituals of equality in relations between European states and was written into history by Chinese scholars who accused the dynasty they had overthrown of confounding ritual with reality.

So what can we conclude from this story of the ways in which Lord Macartney's embassy has been interpreted? At one level we have here the historian's familiar cautionary tale about the importance of context in interpreting archival documents and the potentially misleading nature of isolated quotations. How records are made available affects how historians can use them. A story about published archives may seem irrelevant in an age of massive digitisation projects, but the very size of digitisation pojects can mean that the process through which some items have been selected and others excluded is invisible to users, and an approach to reading driven by searches for particular terms exacerbates the problem.[113] When we begin to examine these issues of archival exclusion we see that while the Qianlong emperor operated within the formal framework of Qing claims to universal rule, he also took action to deal with the embassy as a military threat while avoiding potential economic losses. He correctly perceived that by pacifying Lord Macartney with vague promises of future trade negotiations he would be able to avert immediate trouble, but he remained extremely cautious. While the Qing court's knowledge of the details of British expansion was extremely limited, the emperor and his advisors were clearly clever and competent political operators. Looking beyond the immediate details of

the embassy, we should also remember that the frames we use to interpret Qing history were shaped in the early twentieth century and reflect its concerns and that these may have been written into the way in which the archives are presented. There has been a great deal of argument about whether these frames reflect Chinese or Western views of Chinese history.[114] In fact, as we have seen, there was much interchange between scholars writing in English and those writing in Chinese. What is more important to understand is that the political context of the early twentieth century posed particular questions. "Can China modernise?" was at the core of scholarly enquiry for both Chinese and Westerners. The Qianlong emperor's letter was used to pose the question of whether or not China could accept equal diplomatic relations, science and industrialisation. Today such questions seem simply anachronistic and China's growing power on the world stage is contributing to a new rewriting of the history of the Qing.

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[2] *Yingshi Magaerni fang Hua dang'an shiliao huibian* 英使馬嘎爾尼訪華檔案史料匯編 [Collected archival materials on the English envoy Macartney's visit to China] (ed. Zhongguo di yi lishi dang'anguan 中國第一歷史檔案館. Beijing: Guoji wenhua chuban gongsi 北京: 國際 文化出版公司, 1996), 56. This translation is from Edmund Trelawney Backhouse and John Otway Percy Bland, *Annals and Memoires of the Court in Peking* (London: W. Heinemann, 1914), 324-5. The translation in Ssu-yü Teng and John K. Fairbank, *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), p 19 is equally familiar though slightly less exotic in flavour.

[3] It has even entered *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (ed Elizabeth Knowles; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[4] Catherine Jami, *The Emperor's New Mathematics: Western Learning and Imperial Authority in China during the Kangxi Reign (1662-1722)* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012); Catherine

Pagani, *Eastern Magnificence and European Ingenuity: Clocks of Late Imperial China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Gugong bowuyuan 故宫博物院 [National Palace Museum], Beijing (http://www.dpm.org.cn).

[5] Joanna Waley-Cohen, "China and Western Technology in the Late Eighteenth Century" *American Historical Review* 98.5 (1993):1525-44. See also Zheng Yangwen, *China on the Sea: How the Maritime World Shaped Modern China* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 190.

[6] For a survey of this literature see Joanna Waley Cohen, "The New Qing History" *Radical History Review* 88 (2004).

[7] Laura J. Newby, *The Empire and the Khanate: A Political History of Qing Relations with Khokand, c. 1760-1860* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 6-10.

[8] Matthew Mosca, "The Qing State and its Awareness of Eurasian Interconnections 1789-1805" *Eighteenth Century Studies* 47.2 (2014).

[9] James L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); Alain Peyrefitte, *The Immobile Empire* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

[10] E.g. David C. Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Shogo Suzuki, Yongjin Zhang and Joel Quirk eds, *International Orders in the Early Modern World before the Rise of the West* (London: Routledge, 2014). CONSULT Baylis et al. Globalization of World Politics Pembroke Q3.4 BAY.

[11] Ann Blair and Jennifer Milligan, "Toward a Cultural History of Archives: Introduction" *Archival Science* 7.4 (2007): 289-96; Farina Mir, "AHR Roundtable: The Archives of Decolonisation: Introduction" *American Historical Review* 120.3 (2015): 844-51.

[12] Harriet Bradley, "The Seduction of the Archive: Voices Lost and Found" *History of the Human Sciences* 12.2 (1999):107-22.

[13] Anne Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

[14] Kirsten Weld, *Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala* (Duke University Press, 2014). Another recent example in this vein is Caroline Elkins, "Looking beyond Mau Mau: Archiving Violence in the Era of Decolonization" *American Historical Review* 120.3 (2015): 852-68.

[15] Todd Shepard, "'Of Sovereignty': Disputed Archives, 'Wholly Modern' Archives, and the Post-Decolonization French and Algerian Republics, 1962-2012" *American Historical Review* 120.3 (2015): 869- ; Jennifer S. Milligan, "The problem of *publicité* in the archives of Second Empire France" in Francis X Blouin Jr and William G Rosenberg eds. *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essyas from the Sawyer Seminar* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan), 2009.

[16] Terry Cook, "The Archive(s) is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists, and the Changing Archival Landscape" *Canadian Historical Review* 90.3 (2009):497-534.

[17] *Yingshi Magaerni fang Hua dang'an shiliao huibian*. As stated in this the publication was promoted and financially supported by Peyrefitte and grew out of the research for his book.

[18] *Yingshi Magaerni fang Hua dang'an shiliao huibian*, 451.

[19] *Yingshi Magaerni fang Hua dang'an shiliao huibian*, 216-7.

[20] *Yingshi Magaerni fang Hua dang'an shiliao huibian*, 38.

[21] *Yingshi Magaerni fang Hua dang'an shiliao huibian*, 536.

[22] *Yingshi Magaerni fang Hua dang'an shiliao huibian*, 126-7, 536.

[23] Hevia, 181; Zhao Gang 趙剛, "Shi shenme zhebizi shijia de yanjing? 18 shiji shijie shiyezhong de Magaerni shituan lai Hua shijian" 是什麼遮蔽子史家的眼睛? – 18 世紀世界視野中的馬嘎爾尼使團來華事件 [What is it that has blindfolded the historian? Revisiting the Macartney Embassy in the world of the 18th century] in Li Tuo 李陀 and Chen Yangu 陳燕谷 eds, Shijie 視界 [Horizons] vol 9. Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002, 2-28. Zhao Gang argues that British demands for free trade had the ultimate aim of political domination.

[24] *Yingshi Magaerni fang Hua dang'an shiliao huibian*, 176-77.

[25] *Yingshi Magaerni fang Hua dang'an shiliao huibian*, 176-77.

[26] *Yingshi Magaerni fang Hua dang'an shiliao huibian*, 411, 418-21, 427-8, 441, 446.

[27] *Yingshi Magaerni fang Hua dang'an shiliao huibian*, 171-2. Also 393-7, 402-4, 434-5.

[28] *Yingshi Magaerni fang Hua dang'an shiliao huibian*, 389-90; Ernest Gower, A Journal of His Majesty's Ship Lion beginning the 1st October 1792 and ending the 7th September 1794 (British Library Add. MS 21,106), 62, 70, 85.

[29] *Yingshi Magaerni fang Hua dang'an shiliao huibian*, 171-2, 179.

[30] Ernest Gower, A Journal of His Majesty's Ship Lion, 90-2.

[31] George Macartney, *An Embassy to China: Being the Journal kept by Lord Macartney during his Embassy to the Emperor Ch'ien-lung 1793-1794*. ed J.L. Cranmer-Byng (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1962), 179-80, 218; J.C. Hüttner, *Voyage a la Chine* (Paris: J.J. Fuchs, 1798), 139; Aeneas Anderson, *A Narrative of the Embassy to China, in the years 1792, 1793, and 1794* (London: J. Debrett, 1795), 254; George Thomas Staunton, *Journal of a Voyage to China, second part,* MS. Duke University Library, 20 October 1793, 2 December 1793 and passim.

[32] *Yingshi Magaerni fang Hua dang'an shiliao huibian*, 57, 65-68, 78, 401-2, 405-7, 413-7, 429-33. 437-40, 442-4; Macartney to Henry Dundas 9 November 1793 IOR/G/12/92, 95-105; 23 November 1793, 399-401.

[33] *Yingshi Magaerni fang Hua dang'an shiliao huibian,* 27-88; *Qing Gaozong Chun huangdi shilu* 清高宗純皇帝實錄 [Veritable records of the Qianlong emperor] (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, n.d.).

[34] Lu Kun 盧坤 and Deng Tingzhen 鄧廷楨, *Guangdong haifang huilan* 廣東海防彙覽 [Overview of Guangdong maritime defences] (Wang Hongbin 王宏斌 ed) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 2009) (compiled 1838), 893-99.

[35] Liang Tingnan 梁廷枏, *Yue haiguan zhi* 粵海關志 [Guangdong maritime customs gazetteer] (1839), 22:2-12.

[36] Wang Zhichun 王之春, *Guochao rouyuan ji* 國朝柔遠記 [A record of the dynasty's kindness to those who come from afar] (1891), 6:1-9.

[37] For the issue of whether or not Macartney performed the kowtow see Earl H. Pritchard, "The kowtow in the Macartney Embassy to China in 1793" *Far Eastern Quarterly* 2.2 (1943).

[38] Christian Windler, *La diplomatie come éxperience de l'autre: Consuls français au Maghreb (1700-1840)* (Genève: Librairie Droz S.A., 2002), 86-91; Christian Windler personal communication based on his "Symbolische Kommunikation und diplomatische Praxis in der Frühen Neuzei. Erträge neuer Forschungen" in Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger et al. eds, *Alles nur symbolisch? Bilanz und Erträge der Erforschung symbolischer Kommunikation* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2013): 165-9.

[39] D.B. Horn, *The British Diplomatic Service 1689-1789* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 204.

[40] D.B. Horn, *The British Diplomatic Service*, 22, 204-8.

[41] Thomas James Mathias, *The Imperial Epistle from Kien Long, emperor of China, to George the Third, king of Great Britain* (London: R. White, 1796), 30.

[42] Paul Baines, 'Mathias, Thomas James (1753/4–1835)' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2004).

[43] Macartney to Henry Dundas, 17 March 1792, IOR/G/12/91, p 85.

[44] James Gillray The Reception of the Diplomatique and his Suite at the Court of Pekin, 1792. National Portrait Gallery (http://www.npg.org.uk/collections).

[45] Macartney, *An Embassy to China*. The diary was not published until the twentieth century but is a major source for George Staunton, *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China* (London: W. Bulmer, 1796) and John Barrow, *Travels in China: Containing Descriptions, Observations, and Comparisons, Made and Collected in the course of a Short Residence at the Imperial Palace of Yuen-min-yuen, and on a subsequent journey through the country from Pekin to Canton* (London: T. Cadell & W. Davies, 1804).

[46] John Barrow, *Travels in China*.

[47] Laurence Williams, "British Government under the Qianlong Emperor's Gaze: Satire, Imperialism, and the Macartney Embassy to China, 1792-1804" *Lumen* 32 (2013).

[48] Tseng-Tsai Wang, "The Audience Question: Foreign Representatives and the Emperor of China, 1858-1873" *The Historical Journal* 14.3 (1971).

[49] James Bromley Eames, *The English in China* (London: Curzon Press, 1974; 1st ed. 1909).

[50] William Woodville Rockhill, "Diplomatic Audiences at the Court of China: The Kowtow Question" *American Historical Review* 2.3-4.

[51] Hosea Ballou Morse, *International Relations of the Chinese Empire* (London: Longmans, Green, 1910).

[52] Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Donghua xulu* 東華續錄 [Additional Court Records of the Donghua Gate]. 1884, Qianlong 116: 26, 118: 3-8.

[53] E.H. Parker "From the Emperor of China to King George the Third" *The Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review* 40 (1896): 45-55. For Parker's research interests see E.H.Parker, *32 Pamphlets on Chinese History Etc.* (Bodleian Library 24631 d 16).

[54] Backhouse and Bland, 322-31.

[55] Wang Xiuchu 王秀楚, *Yangzhou shiri ji* 揚州十日記 [Record of ten days in Yangzhou] in Liuyunjushi 留雲居士 ed, *Ming ji baishi huibian* 明季稗史彙編 [Collected minor histories of the late Ming] (Shanghai, 1896); Peter Zarrow, "Historical Trauma: Anti-Manchuism and Memories of Atrocity in Late Qing China" *History and Memory* 16.2 (2004); Zhu Xinwu 朱新屋, "*Yangzhou shiri ji* yu xinhai geming – ge shujishi he yuedushi de fenxi" "《扬州十日记》与辛亥革命-- 个书籍史和阅读史的分析" [The *Record of Ten Days at Yangzhou* and the 1911 revolution – an analysis from the perspective of book history and reading history] *Jindaishi xuekan* 近代史学刊 [Journal of Modern History] 13 (2015).

[56] For this historiography see Robert Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire 1832-1914* (London: Penguin, 2011).

[57] Hosea Ballou Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China, 1635-1834* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), 2: 225.

[58] Eames, *The English in China*, 152.

[59] It seems likely that Backhouse found the letter in the *Donghua xulu*, since he bought the 100 volume set for the Bodleian Library at about this time (Bodleian Library Backhouse 218).

[60] Harley Farnsworth Macnair, *Modern Chinese History: Selected Readings* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1927); Hosea Ballou Morse and Harley Farnsworth Macnair, *Far Eastern International Relations* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1931), viii.

[61] Backhouse and Bland, 322. See also Hugh Trevor Roper, *Hermit of Peking: The Hidden Life of Sir Edmund Backhouse* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), 46-9.

[62] Bertrand Russell, *The Problem of China* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1922), 51.

[63] Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), 1:160.

[64] Backhouse and Bland, *Qing shi wai ji* 清室外記 [The story of the Qing court] (trans Chen Yixian 陳詒先, Chen Lengtai 陳冷太; Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1915).

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