

IMAGES OF THE CANTON FACTORIES

1760–1822

READING HISTORY IN ART

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CONTENTS

List of Tables	vi
List of Abbreviations	vii
Preface	ix
Acknowledgements	xiii
Introduction	xv
Chapter 1: The Years of the Co-hong 1760–1770	1
Chapter 2: The Opening of Trade and the Debt Crisis 1771–1781	9
Chapter 3: Problems with Porcelain	23
Chapter 4: Ups and Downs of Trade 1782–1789	29
Chapter 5: Vantage Points, Perspectives and Artistic Presentation	43
Chapter 6: Rise of the Private Traders 1790–1799	57
Chapter 7: American Entrepreneurs and the Brief Return of the French 1800–1814	67
Chapter 8: New British Factories, Return of the Danes, and the Great Fire 1815–1822	77
Chapter 9: The Shopping Streets in the Foreign Quarter	83
Conclusion	101
Appendix: Foreign Movements between Canton and Macao 1760–1769	105
Bibliography	113
Index	121

TABLES

Table 1: SOIC Costs of Renovating the Swedish Factory in 1769 (in Chinese taels)	5
Table 2: EIC Factory Expenses Charged to the Year 1779 (in Chinese taels)	15
Table 3: ‘References to the Sketch of Canton’ in the British Library (for Plate P59)	86
Table 4: Morrison’s Plan: ‘The European Factories’ (from west to east)	90
Table 5: Davis’s Plan: ‘Names of the Factories or Honges, beginning at the west end’	91
Table 6: Post-1822 Plan: According to Wood (1829), Morrison (1832) and Ljungstedt (1833)	98

PREFACE

WITH ALL OF THE STUDIES OF THE CANTON FACTORY paintings that have been carried out in the past twenty years, one might rightfully ask what the authors of this present study can offer that is new and informative. In recent years, we have found much new data about the factories in the archives of the European East India companies, as well as in the American China trade records, that have enabled us to date many of the factory scenes more precisely. Scholars in the past have made quite extensive use of English (British and American) and Chinese language sources. There have also been many studies done on the other East India companies, such as the French, Dutch, Danish and Swedish. However, the objective of most of these studies has not been to date the factory scenes or extract information about the buildings. They have been rather more focused on trade. Consequently, much information about changes to the factories, and who occupied them, has remained untouched and buried in the archives.

With the new data that has emerged, we have been able to show more clearly: when factories were rebuilt; when buildings were occupied and had a flag flying out front; when new façades, balconies, and fencing were added; when foreigners, such as the French and Americans, moved to other buildings; and when parts of the quay were extended further into the river. This information has helped to document changes that appear in paintings. Because our data are primarily for the period before the fire of 1822, we have ended our study with that event. We begin the study in 1760 because that is when China Street was established and the date at which precise information begins to emerge about changes to the factory area. From that year onward, most of the foreign East India companies occupied the same buildings each year, which makes it easier to document where they were staying. In the 1760s, some of the Canton factories began to take on foreign appearances. Those changes were partially paid for by the foreign companies themselves, which resulted in entries being written into their account

books. The 1760s and 1770s is also the period when scenes of the Canton factories became fashionable and Chinese artists began producing them for sale. The combination of all these factors made it clear that we needed to focus on the period from 1760 to 1822.

In the past, it has been questionable whether any of the factory paintings could be seen as reliable representations. Even though scholars like Carl Crossman, Patrick Conner and Kee Il Choi Jr. have been instrumental in advancing the work, many questions have remained unanswered. Most of the paintings have previously been dated by the flags they display. For example, a white French flag indicates the painting is before 1791, an Imperial flag indicates the painting is from about 1779 to 1785, a post-revolutionary French flag indicates 1791 or 1792, an American flag indicates 1784 or later, a Spanish flag indicates late 1780s or after, and a British flag with Saint Patrick's red cross added to it indicates 1801 or later. These are all very important markers that art historians have been using for decades. But what about the other national flags in those paintings? Were other foreigners also present in those years? In 1791 and 1792, for example, besides the post-revolutionary French flag, the paintings also show a Danish, Spanish, Swedish, British and Dutch flag. In order to confirm whether these years are accurately represented in the paintings, we need to know whether these other foreigners were in port at the same time and whether they had a flag displayed. The only way to answer these questions is to examine information about foreign arrivals and departures in Canton, and the raising and lowering of flags, all of which has not been available until recently.

Choi's article on 'Carl Gustav Ekeberg and the Invention of Chinese Export Painting' (1998) is very nicely written, and has raised interesting questions about how and why export paintings became fashionable.¹ Previously, no one has been able to prove

1 Kee Il Choi Jr., 'Carl Gustav Ekeberg and the Invention of Chinese Export Painting', *The Magazine Antiques* 153, no. 3 (Mar 1998), 426–37.

what year Ekeberg's drawing actually represented, or even if it was accurate. We will show in Chapter 1 that it is probably from 1770, the last year Ekeberg was in Canton. The content of the drawing seems to be more or less reliable. As for Ekeberg being the father of export painting, as Choi has suggested, this does not seem logical or plausible. As we will show, there were other scenes of the factories painted before 1770. For example, we present below a couple of scenes that we can clearly date to the 1760s. We will show other factory scenes from 1771 and 1772. The Hong Kong Museum of Art has also recently acquired a factory scene that we can date to early 1771.² All of these paintings depict the factories before Ekeberg's book was published in 1773. If anything, Ekeberg was probably influenced by these earlier depictions of the factories, rather than the other way around. The reason for this confusion is simply because we have not had sufficient data in the past to accurately date these images. Moreover, there are many privately held paintings that are not available to the public, making it difficult to know whether or not there were paintings earlier than Ekeberg's.

Previous studies have shown some of the architectural changes made to the factories over time. The establishment of the American factory in 1800 and the rebuilding of the British buildings in 1815 are well documented events.³ Many other architectural features, however, have remained ambiguous. The adding of a balcony to the Dutch factory; the widening of the British verandah; the rebuilding of the Danish, Spanish, and French factories; the adding of an upper storey; the reclaiming of ground in front of the buildings; and the removal and adding of a wall to the west of the Danish factory are changes that appear regularly in paintings. Information about these alterations has not been available in the past, which has meant scholars could only guess at the approximate years the

paintings represented. To play it safe, it has often been the case that factory paintings have only been approximately dated to within a decade, such as the 1760s or 1770s.

Because of a lack of data, there has been no way to prove whether changes to the landscape or the display of national flags in front of the buildings were accurately represented. To complicate matters, some factory scenes, such as those presented on a few punchbowls (also called 'hong bowls'), are not representative of a single year. They are rather a combination of architectural features and flags from different years. Those scenes have added to the confusion. It has happened numerous times in putting this study together that we have assigned an approximate date to a painting—based on its flags and architecture—only to later discover a hong bowl with an entirely different combination of architecture and flags for that period. After we had analyzed about seventy different paintings, we came to realize that some hong bowls represent several years, rather than a single year. In contrast, the scenes in most of the two-dimensional paintings that we analyzed tend to represent one specific year.

The objective of this study has been to pull together as much archival material as possible, so that some of these gaps in our historical understanding could be filled. Over the course of several years, we extracted everything we could find on changes to the factories and the quay from the Belgian, Dutch, Danish, French and Swedish China trade records. We also went through many of the English East India Company (EIC) and American China trade records. Most of the information in these latter sources had already been collected and used by scholars in the past but we were fortunate to find a few new entries. We have also searched the Chinese language sources using the new electronic databases now available.⁴ Except for a Chinese map that we found in the British Library, which showed the extent of the fire of 1822, those documents did not reveal anything new about the factories or the quay for the period in question. Therefore, all other data presented below comes from non-Chinese sources.

In addition to information about the buildings and quay, we also collected as much data as we could about the movements of foreigners between Canton and Macao. This latter information

See also Kee Il Choi Jr., 'Hong Bowls and the Landscape of the China Trade', *The Magazine Antiques* 156, no. 4 (Oct 1999): 500–509.

2 Maria Kar-wing Mok, 'Excellent Errors—Meaningful Information on Export Painting', forthcoming in 2015.

3 Hosea Ballou Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China, 1635–1834*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926; reprint, Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Publishing Co., 1966), 3:225; Patrick Conner, *The Hongs of Canton: Western Merchants in South China 1700–1900, as Seen in Chinese Export Paintings* (London: English Art Books, 2009), 73; Jacques M. Downs, *The Golden Ghetto: The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784–1844* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 1997), 39–41, 148; and Jacques M. Downs, 'A Study in Failure—Hon. Samuel Snow', *Rhode Island History* 25, no.1 (January 1966): 1–8.

4 We searched the following Chinese databases: *Zhongguo fangzhi ku* 中國方志庫, *Ming Qing shilu* 明清實錄, and *Zhongguo leishu ku* 中國類書庫.

enabled us to document which foreigners were in Canton each year and the dates of their arrival and departure. That knowledge enabled us to match the flags shown in paintings with what actually happened.

The Dutch documents have been among the most important for this research. They are full of details about foreigners in China. Beginning in 1762 and extending up to the late 1820s, the Dutch maintained a continual, year-round residence in China. From September 1762 to January 1816, they kept daily diaries (called *dagregisters*) for the entire year. The *dagregisters* contain information about major events, the comings and goings of ships, the activities and problems that foreigners were involved with, and foreign movements between Canton and Macao. The *dagregisters* are the equivalent of the EIC Consultations, but the Dutch records contain an enormous amount of information that cannot be found in the British archives.

From the early 1770s to the early 1790s, the British also kept a fairly good record of foreign movements between the two cities. However, after about 1794—for whatever reasons—this information was no longer systematically recorded. The British officers continued to mention ‘foreign residents in China’ each year but those lists do not usually specify whether the persons were in Canton or Macao, or when they arrived or departed.⁵ Consequently, after 1794 the EIC records are not much help in matching flags in paintings to residents in Canton.

From 1774 to 1792, and a few other years, Danish officers remained year-round in China as well. They recorded all major events and departures and arrivals of foreign traders and ships. We extracted everything we could find in those records. Many of the Swedish records are missing, but we examined what was available. The Jean Abraham Grill papers were perhaps the most helpful, because they cover the years from the early 1760s to the early 1770s and are fairly complete. The changes to the Swedish factory in the late 1760s, for example, are well documented in those papers.

We also went through the French China trade records and French consular papers from Canton. They provide some crucial evidence about the factories from the 1770s to the early 1790s. They contain information about the French consuls and the Imperialists who were resident in China each year. Susan Schopp

has added to our understanding of the French presence and influence in Canton, and changes to the French factory, in her recent study of the architecture.⁶

In addition to the European and Chinese sources, we also examined many American China trade records held in the New England area. Those sources helped us to document more precisely how and when the construction of the American factory was completed (1800) and the changes that took place thereafter. We consulted the American consular dispatches from the 1790s to the 1830s, but there was not much useful information in those documents.

In the past two hundred years, many journals of voyages to China have been published. Some of these sources have been used extensively by previous scholars, but others have not. Paul Van Dyke has put together a more complete list of these published journals, in book and article form, and organized them according to the year the writers were in Canton. They include journals and memoirs from Lord Macartney’s Embassy between 1792 and 1794 and from Isaac Titsingh’s Embassy between 1794 and 1796. For the years covering 1760 to 1822 there exist more than 100 published journals of this nature—all of which we consulted for this present study.⁷

All of these materials are shown in the bibliography. It should be noted, however, that we have only included documents and published materials that are quoted in the text. We went through many more texts than are shown in the bibliography, but documents were excluded if no useful information was found.⁸

With all of this new data, we now have a fairly complete picture of the movements of foreigners between Canton and

5 For an example, see the 1802 resident list in British Library (BL): India Office Records (IOR) G/12/139, p. 5.

6 Susan E. Schopp, ‘The French as Architectural Trendsetters in Canton, 1767–1820’, *Review of Culture*, International Edition, no. 45 (2014): 79–87.

7 Paul A. Van Dyke, ‘Western Sources of the China Trade from the 18th and Early 19th Century’, *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences* 4, no. 2 (June 2011): 45–60. This article shows more than 180 published journals and memoirs, in various languages, all of which we consulted for this study. The publications are listed chronologically according to the year the authors were in Canton and cover the period from the 1690s to the 1850s. Since the publication of this article, we have added quite a few more published sources to the list.

8 For a more complete list of all the documents that were consulted for this study, see the bibliographies in Paul A. Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao*, Vols. 1 and 2 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011 and 2016).

Macao for the years between 1760 and 1815. For many years, the data is complete and we can show exactly when each of the various Europeans arrived in Canton and departed for Macao. This means that we can document fairly clearly when their flags would have been raised. It was the custom of everyone, including the Americans, to hoist their flag each morning at sunrise and lower it each evening at sunset.

We have uncovered information about foreign residents after 1815 as well but, because the Dutch *dagregisters* cease in early 1816, the data for the movements of foreigners between the two cities from 1816 to 1830 are less complete. We were, however, able to fill in some of the gaps by using other Dutch China trade records.⁹

Before we begin, it is perhaps important to point out that we are not dating the paintings, or the hong bowls. We are merely dating the scenes they depict. Who, when, where, and how the paintings were created, or the type of material they were painted on, are not the main concerns of this study. We may mention some of those factors in passing, but our objective is to document whether a factory scene is reliable, and if so, what year it might represent. Once that is established, readers can decide for themselves to what extent those scenes can be used as historical sources in their own right.

⁹ Dutch records that cover the years from 1816 to 1830 include National Archives, The Hague (NAH): Canton 102, 189–90, 273–74, 362, 378 and 388.

INTRODUCTION

CANTON PLAYED A VERY SPECIAL ROLE IN EARLY modern commerce, of which we are only now beginning to understand and appreciate. Foreign traders came from faraway places and China maintained the policy that, if they made the long journey to her shores, the men would be allowed to trade and return with cargos full of merchandise. In fact, the customs superintendents in Canton (Hoppos 戶部, also called *jiandu* 監督 in Chinese) often insisted on ships being completely full before granting them exit permits (Grand Chop 大船牌).

China had a special set of rules that governed such commerce. Ships must have some saleable cargo to trade in order to be allowed upriver. No foreign women were allowed at Canton and foreign officers were restricted to a small area outside of the city in the western suburbs. This area was located along the river and was fronted on the north by the Thirteen Hong Street (十三行街). In fact, the district and the buildings were also called the Thirteen Hong (十三行), even though there were actually more than thirteen of them.

The word *hong* (行) is a Cantonese pronunciation.¹ The term simply meant a licensed firm, and could refer to the buildings in which they were located or the merchants who owned them. From the late 1760s to the fire of 1 November 1822, there were actually seventeen distinct buildings in this district that foreigners could rent. These buildings were referred to as ‘factories’, a common eighteenth-century word for godown, trading station or warehouse. The factories were also called ‘hongs’. The British factory, for example, might also be called the British hong. In Canton these words were interchangeable.

Chinese merchants (called Hong merchants) were the owners and landlords of these buildings. These businessmen were licensed to trade with foreigners. During the time of this study

(1760–1822) there were usually around eight to twelve Hong merchants in operation each year. They competed with each other for a share of the foreign trade. Only about half of them—usually the more affluent—rented apartments to foreigners. Hong merchants were responsible for all of the fees and duties that were owed by each ship that they secured. They were also responsible for the good conduct of foreigners under their charge.

The foreign traders who did business in Canton were called ‘supercargos’ (*daban* 大班).² This term was actually an official post within the ranks of the various East India companies, but the term was also applied to private traders from India, the Americas and elsewhere. These men were in charge of the buying and selling of the cargos. Sometimes the captains of privately owned ships served in dual posts as both the master of the ship and supercargo. The large East India companies’ ships often had three to six supercargos assigned to each of them, whereas small ships might only have one or two. The chief supercargo was in charge, and then the 2nd and 3rd supercargo, and so on. As supercargos gained experience, they gradually moved up the ranks, which earned them more privileges and pay. Some of these men made many voyages to China, and spent several years in Canton and Macao taking care of their company’s affairs. Supercargos and their assistants were the main occupants of the factories in Canton.

Each supercargo was given responsibility for one part of the trade. For example, supercargos No. 1, No. 2 and their assistants might be put in charge of purchasing and packing all of the tea; supercargo No. 3 might be put in charge of receiving and selling all of the imports; supercargo No. 4 might be responsible for purchasing and packing all of the silks; and supercargo No. 5 might handle

1 In Mandarin the character 行 would be pronounced *hang* but everyone in Canton used *hong* so that is what we call them today.

2 The Cantonese pronunciation for *daban* 大班 is Taipan. Sometimes supercargos were called Taipans, but that term did not become widely used until after the East India companies ceased sending their ships to China in 1833.

all the chinaware, and so on. If there was only one supercargo to a ship then he and his assistants did everything. Companies that had many ships in China each year, and kept supercargos in residence, might assign officers to specific ships, rather than to specific cargos. For example, supercargos No. 5, No. 6 and their assistants might be assigned to handle the cargos of the first two ships that arrived, which included selling all imports and purchasing all exports. Supercargos No. 3 and No. 4 might be assigned to the third and fourth ships that arrived and so on.

The workload was distributed out between the supercargos and their assistants, but the way in which this was done varied between companies and from one year to the next. The directors in Europe might assign the posts and duties of every man before the ships left for China. Or, in the case of the private traders, those decisions might be made by the sponsors of the voyage and/or the owners of the ships. In some cases, the chief supercargo of a ship or company might hand out the assignments himself. In others, the supercargos of one company in China might meet together as a committee and decide as a group who should do what work.

The supercargos and their assistants received all the cargos and oversaw their proper handling and packaging. The writers (secretaries) kept the books and recorded all of the transactions. Sometimes companies required that documents be kept in duplicate or triplicate. Writers might serve as scribes as well and make hand written copies of those documents. In addition to these men, there were often pursers (treasurers) assigned to each ship. They made sure that each ship's account books were balanced. For example, the value of the imported cargo (according to the selling price) and money (usually Spanish dollars), minus expenses incurred in China, must equal the prime cost (purchase price) of the export cargo. The purser and captain were often the last persons to board the ships before they departed on their passage home. Sometimes writers or other officers doubled as pursers. The supercargo and/or captain of a small ship might do all of these duties himself.

All of these officers stayed in the factories in the foreigner quarter. The companies usually assigned eight to twelve men to stand guard, which they would do 24 hours a day. The factory doors were closed every evening around 10 o'clock and no one was admitted after hours. The guards were in charge of the raising and lowering of the flag each day and making sure no one entered the

factory who was not supposed to be there (such as Chinese women or other foreigners).

A Chinese comprador (*maiban* 買辦) was assigned to each factory and provided all the food and other necessities. He hired Chinese servants to help take care of the foreign guests. Supercargos, captains, assistants, writers, pursers and other officers did not clean or cook themselves. They depended on their house servants to provide for all their needs. Chinese cooks prepared the meals. Chinese servants served the meals, and did all the washing and cleaning—which included emptying out the chamber pots each morning. They also cleaned the spittoons, scrubbed the floors, delivered fresh drinking and washing water to the rooms, and anything else that was needed. Senior supercargos often had their own servants and/or slaves who attended to them as well, so these men were usually very well taken care of. In fact, at times when the trade was stopped and the Chinese servants were ordered to leave the factories, the supercargos often complained of not knowing how to cook or handle all of the other daily duties.

Foreign ships were required to anchor 20 kilometres downriver at Whampoa (Huangpu 黃埔). The three-masted square-sailed ships that went to Asia were called East Indiamen (regardless of whether they were company or privately owned). Each ship had a Chinese linguist and a ship comprador assigned to it. The linguists took care of ordering all of the permits for the vessel and corresponding with Chinese officials. The compradores supplied all of the daily provisions needed for the crew. The East India companies' ships usually had 100 to 150 seamen aboard whereas small ships might only have a few dozen men. All of these sailors needed food every day, which the ship compradores provided. The washing of clothes at Whampoa was taken care of by the myriad of sampan ladies who hovered about the ships every day.

Captains went back and forth regularly between Whampoa and Canton, monitoring the movement of cargos and ensuring that peace and harmony was maintained aboard the ships. It took upwards of four or five months to unload and load the large East India companies' vessels. During this time, the supercargos, assistants and writers spent most of their time at the factories in Canton. The ships of private traders from India and the United States were usually much smaller and might be unloaded and loaded within a few weeks.

After the imports were unloaded, supercargos would inspect the ships to ensure they were in good enough condition to receive their return cargos. If repairs were needed, this was the time to do it. Supercargos also went to Whampoa to inspect the ships after they were loaded to ensure everything was stowed properly. The captains and chief officers of the ships would, of course, monitor the receiving of cargo constantly, so everyone had a hand in its proper stowage.

In the early decades of the eighteenth century, supercargos often came and left with the ships each year. This meant that they only occupied the factories in Canton for four or five months, while their ships were in port. By the 1760s, most of the East India companies were keeping a few supercargos and assistants in China year-round. They were allowed to stay in Canton a few weeks after their last ship departed in order to purchase cargos for the upcoming season. They were then required to remove themselves to Macao, until their next ship arrived. It was typical for supercargos to spend six to eight months in Canton each year and four to six months in Macao. The summers were actually much more bearable in Macao than in Canton (which is still true today). Even if a company had ships in port during the off-season, senior supercargos would usually go to Macao to pass the summer and leave the loading of those vessels to junior supercargos. By the 1760s, the East India companies were renting apartments in both cities for the entire year, so that there was no fear of others occupying the buildings before they returned.³

When the chief officers arrived at Canton each year, they raised their national flag in front of their factory each morning at sunrise. They lowered the flag each evening at sunset. If one of the chief officers should happen to die in Canton, then the flag would be lowered to half mast, until the body was interred. Even though many chief officers died in Canton, no paintings of the factories showing a flag at half-mast have been found.

Most of the ships arrived and departed with the change of the monsoon winds each year. They arrived between June and September and departed between November and February. As time went on, however, more and more ships began sailing to

China by going east of the Philippines. This route enabled them to arrive and depart at any time of the year.⁴ This meant that some foreigners, such as the British and Americans, often had ships at Whampoa year-round. Beginning in the 1780s, Spanish ships from Manila began making several voyages to China each year, when previously they had only made one voyage. As long as they had a ship in port, supercargos were free to stay in Canton and did not need to move to Macao.

Foreign sailors at Whampoa were responsible for manning the boats that carried all the supercargos, captains, assistants, writers, pursers and other officers to and from Canton. They were responsible for delivering all the imports, including all the money chests (stocked with Spanish silver dollars). The Hong merchants might also transport imports in their own lighters called 'chop boats'. Exports were usually shipped to Whampoa in the chop boats at the expense of the sellers. A couple of foreign guards would be assigned to accompany the shipments to ensure no pilferage or damage occurred en route. These seamen spent most of their nights aboard the ships at Whampoa, but sometimes they stayed overnight in the factories, where there was special accommodation for them.

A couple of weeks before the ships were ready to depart the crews were given their salaries and allowed a few days for shore leave in Canton. Shore leave was usually divided out so that only about a dozen to twenty or so men went at a time. However, it was not uncommon to assign half the crew (upwards of 50 or more men) to go on shore leave together. One or more of the ship's officers were assigned to each batch of men on leave to ensure that they behaved themselves. While the seamen were at Canton, they stayed in the factories. The small alley between the buildings called Hog Lane (Plates P1b and P1d) was home to dozens of small Chinese shopkeepers who catered to the common seaman. James Johnson was in Canton in 1804 and described Hog Lane as follows:

Hog-lane, the general rendezvous of sailors, and the *Wapping* [a district in London known for its drinking establishments that catered to seamen] of

³ For a summary of how the trade operated on a daily basis, see Paul A. Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast, 1700–1845* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005; reprint, 2007).

⁴ Paul A. Van Dyke, 'New Sea Routes to Canton in the 18th Century and the Decline of China's Control over Trade', in *Studies of Maritime History* 海洋史研究, ed. Li Qingxin 李慶新, Vol. 1 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2010), 57–108.

Canton, open at the corner of the British factory; and here *Jack* [a common term for seamen] gets eased of his dollars, and drunk into the bargain, very soon after his arrival.⁵

The origin of the name ‘Hog Lane’ is unknown. Foreign sailors often congregated in this alley where they could find food, drink, clothing, and about any type of small souvenir or trinket they could dream of. By the late eighteenth century, there were upwards of 50 or more ships at Whampoa each year. Considering that some ships were large and others were small we might estimate there being an average of about 80 men about each one. This comes to about 4,000 men—from various nations—who spent two or three days at Hog Lane each year. At the close of the season (November to January) there might be hundreds of seamen frequenting the narrow alley at the same time. As might be expected, Hog Lane was a place acquainted with frequent quarrels and disputes. Chinese guards, stationed at each end of the alley, did their best to maintain order.

In addition to Hong merchants, there were a hundred or so smaller ‘outside merchants’ who also sold goods to foreigners. The larger portion of these men were porcelain and silk dealers, but there were dozens of other traders, including picture painters, glass blowers, sculptors, calligraphers, sign board and lantern makers, limners, weavers, embroiderers, silk fabric painters, herb and tea specialists, hatters, furniture makers, furriers, tailors, shoemakers, fishmongers, moneychangers, copper smiths and silver smiths. Shops selling dried fruits and meats, fans, lacquer ware, rattan mats, baskets, pewter and tin ware, fragrant woods, incense, bamboo blinds, jewellery, carvings (ivory, wood, bone, etc.) and numerous others could be found in the Thirteen Hong district. There were also chow chow shops (novelty stores) where one could find a little bit of everything.⁶ Charles Tyng was in Canton in the 1810s, and gave the following description:

The shops in China Street were large, and almost everything the country produces was to be found for sale there. The stores were apparently all open on

the street, so that one could see in, what was for sale. There was always one standing at the door beckoning us to come in and buy. The first thing in the trade was a “kumshaw,” that is a gift, a silk handkerchief, or something of the kind, and if you accepted the gift and did not buy anything, and went on to another store, you would not receive a kumshaw, as notice would be given that you already had one.⁷

Before 1760, these shops were scattered throughout the western suburbs. In Chinese fashion, they tended to congregate in one location. For example, one street had silk weavers, another street housed porcelain dealers, and another street had furniture makers, and so on. Foreigners wandered around to all these different shops picking out the things they wanted. Many of these transactions were done privately, and were not part of the companies’ trade. Companies also purchased items from these outside men. Some Americans actually bought a good part of their cargos from them, rather than from the Hong merchants.⁸

In order to bring the shopkeepers under tighter control, a new street was established in the factory area in 1760. Because this street appears in almost all of the paintings discussed in this book, it is perhaps appropriate to point out its basic features. The porcelain dealers were relocated to this new street, which foreigners logically called ‘New Street’, ‘Porcelain Street’, or ‘China Street’ (‘China’ being a reference to chinaware). In Chinese, it was given the auspicious name of ‘profoundly tranquil street’ (Jingyuan Jie 靖遠街 or 靜遠街 or Qingyuan Jie 清遠街, Plates P1b and P1c). By the early nineteenth century, this new avenue was often referred to by foreigners as China Street (see Chapter 9).

From 1760 to the fire of 1 November 1822, Hog Lane and China Street were the two main shopping avenues in the Thirteen Hong district. However, there were also many shops located on Thirteen Hong Street, which connected these two streets and ran parallel to the river at the north end of the factories. A popular U-shaped jaunt was to go up China Street to the end, turn right

5 James Johnson, *An Account of a Voyage to India, China, &c. in His Majesty’s Ship Caroline, Performed in the Years 1803–4–5, Interspersed with Descriptive Sketches and Cursory Remarks* (London: J. G. Barnard, 1806), 71.

6 For a nice catalogue of all the different shops in Canton, see the three albums of Chinese trades in the British Museum, 1877.0714.401–818.

7 Susan Fels, ed., *Before the Wind: The Memoir of an American Sea Captain, 1808–1833*, by Charles Tyng (New York: Viking Penguin, 1999), 34.

8 Paul A. Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Politics and Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, Vol. 1 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), 10–12 (hereafter this book will be referred to as MCM 1).

onto Thirteen Hong Street, and then return to the quay via Hog Lane (see Chapter 9 for details).

It is commonly believed by historians, curators, collectors, and China trade buffs that there was a third street in the factory area called 'New China Street'. In fact, almost any book or article about the China trade, that includes a description of the foreign quarter, will likely mention that there were three streets, New China Street, Old China Street and Hog Lane. We will not go into detail about these streets here, but because this idea is so commonly accepted, it is perhaps appropriate to mention that the new data presented in Chapter 9 clearly show that New China Street (which was called Tongwen Jie 同文街 in Chinese) was created in 1823. This avenue did not exist before that year.

The large East India companies primarily dealt with the licensed Hong merchants. It was, in fact, a requirement of Chinese customs that they do business only through those men. However, owing to the smaller volumes of the private traders, Hoppo often turned a blind-eye to them purchasing cargos from outside men. This tolerance varied from one year to the next, but in general, there were many private traders who dealt with these small shopkeepers. The sales were supposed to be channelled through one of the Hong merchants, who then became guarantors for the export duties. If the small shopkeepers failed to pay the duties, then the assigned Hong merchant had to pay them. The latter received a commission for this service. Hoppo and Hong merchants were quite diligent in insisting that the larger East Indiamen purchase the majority of their cargos from the licensed houses.

Hong merchants had warehouses throughout the western suburbs and across the river on Honam (Henan 河南) Island, where they kept their merchandise. They also had a main factory in the Thirteen Hong area, where they had living quarters and where foreigners could go to examine their wares. Sometimes Hong merchants lived in the same buildings with their foreign customers. Most of the Portuguese supercargos, for example, anchored their ships at Macao, but went to Canton to obtain their cargos. The Hong merchants provided them with accommodation, which meant that they did not usually have their own factory or flag flying.⁹ Prior to 1788, this situation was true of Spanish

supercargos as well. However, in that year the Spaniards established a permanent factory in Canton and then began to display their flag out front.

The factories were actually much deeper than they were wide, with a sequence of four, five, six or more blocks. Each block was in fact a separate unit with a separate roof, but the blocks of each factory were all connected together and might share a common wall with another block. The renting of one block was usually deemed sufficient to service the officers of one large East Indiaman, but one block could service several small ships, depending on the size of their crews.

The rents were based on the number of blocks occupied, and whether the block was in the front facing the river or at the rear near Thirteen Hong Street. By the 1760s, the French, English, Dutch, Swedish and Danish companies tended to rent all of the blocks in their hong. If they had extra apartments that they did not need, then they might sublet those rooms to private supercargos or captains. The owners of the buildings paid no attention to this subletting. In fact, they seemed to have preferred that foreigners provide accommodations for these private individuals, so they would not have to deal with them. Gradually, this subletting gave rise to foreigners actually taking control of certain buildings and opening inns and taverns. By the early 1800s, there were several of these establishments in operation. All of this activity was illegal but tolerated by Chinese officials. These foreign-run hotels helped to accommodate trade by meeting the needs of the small private traders.

There is some confusion in the usage of the terms factory or hong which should be clarified. If the blocks of a factory were rented out to different persons, then each block could also be called a hong. We will present examples of several Americans running inns and taverns in the Danish factory. In the 1810s,

showing a Portuguese flag displayed on the quay, but it is possible. Most of the Portuguese traders stayed in apartments provided by the Hong merchants and did not maintain their own factory. The Portuguese ships anchored at Macao and the merchandise was sent downriver to them. There were, however, a few Portuguese ships that went upriver and loaded at Whampoa. They displayed a Portuguese flag. The years in which we can confirm that there was a Portuguese ship at Whampoa include: 1720, 1725 and 1780. British Library (BL): India Office Records (IOR) G/12/71, p. 78, L/MAR/B/42A, L/MAR/B/36C, L/MAR/B/285LL, L/MAR/B/408A, L/MAR/B/490C, L/MAR/B/469G, L/MAR/B/172G.

⁹ The Portuguese sometimes rented a building in Canton. The Swedish map from 1748 that is reproduced in Figure F27 shows the location of the Portuguese factory (葡國商館). We have found no paintings

this building consisted of four blocks, and each one might be run by different persons. One block might be called Megee's hong, another block Dobell's hong, and so on, but they were all located within the Danish hong or factory. In the 1810s, there were no Danish company supercargos in Canton doing business, so the name of the building had no connection to its occupants.

The Chinese names for these hong were usually different from those the foreigners used. The Danish factory, for example, was called the 'Yellow Flag Factory' (Huang Qi Hong 黃旗行) and the Danes were known as the 'Yellow Flag People'. This is a bit confusing because in later years, the Danes always displayed a red flag with a white cross. The 'Yellow Flag' distinction could have originated from the first encounter with the Danes in 1731, when they may have displayed a flag with a yellow background.¹⁰

The Present Study

In recent years, the dating of Canton factory paintings has become more accurate. Carl Crossman, in his monumental study *The China Trade* (1972), provided one of the earliest chronologies of the factory scenes. While knowledge of the factories was still very premature at the time of his writing, Crossman nonetheless began to make efforts to carry out dating with more precision.¹¹ More recently, Kee Il Choi Jr. (1998), William Shang (2001), Johnathan Farris (2004), Jiang Yinghe (2007) and Susan Schopp (2014) have advanced the work significantly.¹² Together, these new studies have

assembled an enormous amount of new data about the factories, especially relating to the period between the early and mid-nineteenth century.

As far as the dating of the factory scenes is concerned, no one has contributed more to this research than Patrick Conner. Conner's studies have advanced this work far beyond anything previously written. His many references in the Martyn Gregory Gallery catalogues and, more recently, his book *The Hong of Canton* (2009), have provided the foundation upon which this present study is based. From his research into British, French and American sources, Conner has successfully narrowed the dating windows from as much as a couple decades for some paintings, to within a couple of years.¹³ Without his help and guidance, both personally and through his published books and articles, it would have been very difficult to establish a foundation upon which to begin this study.

We focus specifically in this study on drawings and paintings of the factories made between the 1760s and the great fire of 1822. The closing of other Chinese ports to foreign trade in the late 1750s and the establishment of the Co-hong (公行) in 1760 laid the foundation for the development of the Canton factories. In the late 1760s, inland production had expanded to keep up with the growing foreign demand for more Chinese wares. By this time, most of the foreign companies were maintaining year-round residency in Canton and Macao. Private traders were also staying in China year-round.¹⁴

With the increase in long-term foreign residents in China came a parallel increase in demand for more spacious and comfortable apartments. By the late 1760s, there was an extreme shortage of apartments in the foreign quarter, which led to many more rooms being added. By 1769 (and possibly earlier), there were

10 The first Danish ship in China in 1731 was the *Cron Printz Christian*. It was a small warship under royal commission to try out the China trade. Erik Gøbel, 'Asiatisk Kompagnis Kinafart, 1732–1833. Besejling af Bemanding' (PhD diss., University of Copenhagen, 1978), 3–5; and Kaptajn J. H. Schultz, ed., 'En Dagbog ført paa en Kinafarer 1730–32 af Kadet Tobias Wigandt', in *Tidsskrift for Søvesen*, by G. L. Grove (Copenhagen: Hovedkommissionær Vilhelm Tryde, Thieles Bogtrykkeri, 1900), 183–211. These men may have displayed the Danish National Coat of Arms on the ship and/or at the factory. It showed three blue lions on a golden background. If this is true, it would account for why the Chinese called the Danes the 'Yellow Flag People'.

11 Carl L. Crossman, *The China Trade: Export Paintings, Furniture, Silver and Other Objects* (Princeton: The Pyne Press, 1972); and Carl L. Crossman, *The Decorative Arts of the China Trade: Paintings, Furnishings and Exotic Curiosities* (Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, 1991).

12 Kee Il Choi Jr., 'Carl Gustav Ekeberg and the Invention of Chinese Export Painting', *The Magazine Antiques* 153, no. 3 (Mar 1998): 426–37; William Shang, *Historical Pictures of Qing Period China: Western Perspectives* (Tokyo: Taishukan Shoten, 2001); Johnathan Andrew

Farris, 'Dwelling on the Edge of Empires: Foreigners and Architecture in Guangzhou (Canton), China' (PhD diss., Cornell University, 2004); Jiang Yinghe 江滢河, *Qingdai yang hua yu Guangzhou kouan* 清代洋畫與廣州口岸 [Western painting and Canton port during the Qing period] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007); and Susan E. Schopp, 'The French as Architectural Trendsetters in Canton, 1767–1820', *Review of Culture*, International Edition, no. 45 (2014): 79–87.

13 Patrick Conner, *The Hong of Canton: Western Merchants in South China 1700–1900, as Seen in Chinese Export Paintings* (London: English Art Books, 2009).

14 For background information about the trade and how it operated, see Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade*.

seventeen distinct buildings in the Thirteen Hong district. These seventeen buildings made up the foreign quarter of Canton up to the fire of 1822.

As the reputation of the China trade became more renowned worldwide, a parallel demand for souvenirs and memorabilia emerged. Foreign merchants and travellers were eager to carry home artefacts from the great Cathay. They proudly displayed these items in their homes as reminders of their involvement in that commerce, and as conversation pieces to show to and discuss with friends and relatives.

Before we delve into the data, we might first rightfully ask why even bother with all of this? If these Chinese export art objects were merely meant to be displayed as items of adoration, interest and conversation, then their historical accuracy could be questionable. Undoubtedly there are many artistic objects that were produced in Canton of this nature. But after many years of collecting data about the factories, and matching that data with views in export paintings and other art works, we would argue that these paintings of the foreign quarter are a very different type of commodity. Factory scenes need to be identified and acknowledged as a genre apart from other more generic export art, such as Chinese life scenes, landscapes, daily activities and images of plants and animals.

Many examples will be presented below to show that paintings of the factories are, with some reservations, rather reliable historical records. A painting might display small inaccuracies, such as a building with incorrect architecture for that year or a wrong flag. Small historical inaccuracies such as these did not seem to matter a lot to some buyers, so long as the parts of the painting that represented them (such as the building that they had lived in or their national flag being displayed) were correct. However, if two or more buildings depicted were out of date, or if it was obvious that the land reclamations on the quay no longer corresponded to the current year, then the artist might find it more difficult to sell his works.

Considering that an item might not sell if it was too out of date, it probably made good business sense for an artist to be careful with all the changes on the quay. Most of the additions to the foreign quarter were done during the off-season (spring and summer). Artists could update their templates, if these were used, to correspond with the alterations that had been made, and then

have accurate paintings to sell while most of the ships were in port during the trading season (August to January). If some paintings were left unsold during any given year, then the artists ran the risk of not being able to sell those items at all if significant changes to the architecture and landscape were carried out during the following off-season.

Selling paintings was the artists' livelihood. It is doubtful that they would want to keep stock from one season to the next. Apart from the rebuilding of the factories, fires had the potential of altering the landscape which could immediately render all stock unsalable. Not only did fires change the buildings, but the quay as well. Rubble from burnt out buildings was pushed into the water and used to extend the shore further into the river. Paintings that were pre-produced and did not show such changes ran the risk of sitting forever in a showroom without a buyer. And the longer they sat, the more outdated they became. Considering that fires occurred quite regularly both in the city and suburbs almost every year, it is very doubtful that any artist would intentionally produce more factory scenes than he could sell that same year.¹⁵

Export artists did not have to worry about more generic pictures, such as life scenes and depictions of plants and animals, becoming outdated. Factory paintings, however, were a type of historical record that buyers wanted to display in their homes to represent their experience in China. If the factory scene in a painting did not accurately show the quay as it looked when the potential buyer was in China, then he might be less inclined to purchase it. Because our interest is on accuracy, we are focusing our discussions on two types of export ware: export paintings and export porcelain punchbowls decorated with factory scenes. It should be said that there are other export art, such as wall paper, lacquer panels and fans which use the factories as subject matter. Paintings and punchbowls, however, are more accessible and also offer a large number of extant examples, which is why they were chosen for study.

As we will show in subsequent chapters, most of the factory scenes analyzed in this study are fairly reliable representations of

15 Paul A. Van Dyke, 'Fires and the Risks of Trade in Canton 1730s–1840s,' in *Canton and Nagasaki Compared 1730–1830: Dutch Chinese, Japanese Relations*, eds. Evert Groenendijk, Cynthia Viallé, and Leonard Blussé, *Intercontinenta* No. 26 (Leiden: Institute for the History of European Expansion, 2009), 171–202; and Patrick Conner, 'The Fires of Canton in "Export" Paintings,' *Arts of Asia* 38, no. 6 (Nov–Dec 2008): 110–23.

the year they were intended to represent. Sometimes a change took place in a certain year, such as an extension of the quay or an addition to a building, which did not get drawn into a painting. Occasionally, we find templates from a previous decade being used, but were then updated to correspond with changes that had taken place.

In general, we show that the factories were indeed fairly accurately represented in export paintings. The boats that are displayed on the river in paintings are a different matter. They were often just added randomly to liven up a painting, and were not even necessarily in the water at the time. In contrast, factory buildings match fairly closely with what we find written in the historical records.

Structure of This Study

We have divided our discussion of the factories into nine chapters. In principle, the chapters are arranged chronologically. Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of the Co-hong (1760–1770) and the changes that took place during those years. This was the period when things became more stable for trade, when foreigners began investing in their buildings and when we start to see Western architecture being introduced. Chapter 2 covers the period following the disbanding of the Co-hong and the opening of trade from 1771 to 1781. There is discussion of the resultant debt crisis that emerged in the late 1770s that had an impact on the owners of the factories.

Chapters 3 and 5 are different from the others in that they are not a chronological survey of the factory buildings. We have inserted these chapters within the chronology in order to clarify some issues raised in other chapters. We explain such things as flawed porcelain, the effects different vantage points had on paintings, onsite observations and multiple perspectives—all of which help to show why factory scenes were made the way they were.

Chapter 4 discusses the ups and downs of the trade in the 1780s. Downturns in the volume of trade might result in changes and alterations to the factories being postponed, which helps explain why the buildings might remain unchanged in the paintings of those periods. Chapter 6 introduces changes that took place in the 1790s—especially the large influx of private traders. Those individuals had a significant impact on the architecture and management of the buildings. Chapter 7 covers the years from 1800 to 1814. This was the period when American entrepreneurs

began taking over parts of the factories and also when the French briefly returned to Canton. Chapter 8 covers the years from 1815 to the fire of November 1822 when all of the factories were burned down. This was the period when the British rebuilt their factories and when the Danes returned to Canton. Chapter 9 is a bit different from all the other chapters. It is a discussion of the establishment of the shopping streets in the foreigner quarter. The Conclusion summarizes the main issues raised in the book and discusses what the scenes of the factories can tell us about the history of Canton in general.

Our study contains two sets of images. One set are Plates and the other set are Figures. Plates are images of the factories placed in chronological order. They are numbered from P1 to P72. We kept all of the Plates confined to one section because that seemed the easiest way to compare and analyze them while also allowing easy reference when following the relevant discussion in the text. The Figures are numbered from F1 to F31. They include a few factory paintings but are mostly images that are discussed in Chapters 3, 5 and 9. Some of the Figures appear only because the supplying museums required that un-cropped and unaltered views of the paintings must be included. In those cases, the full image appears as a Figure and a detail of the image appears in the Plate section. In order to avoid confusion between Plates and Figures the prefixes ‘P’ and ‘F’ are given before their respective numbers.

For some of the Figures and most of the Plates we have inserted dates—in italics—directly beneath each image, which are the dates that we have assigned to the images. Many of the captions also show approximate dates, which do not always correspond with our italicized dates. The dates mentioned in the captions are those that were given in the owner’s records.

Unless otherwise indicated, all of the plates only show partial details of the art work. This allows the architecture to be seen more clearly and to allow for easier comparisons between factory scenes. In a few cases, where cropping is not necessary or where the owners of the items have not allowed cropping, the original photos have been retained. All of the hong bowls, or punch bowls, are Chinese export porcelain decorated in enamels, and all are painted with images of the Canton factories. We will therefore not repeat this information on every caption, unless at the request of the copyright owner. Some plates have had text and/or numbers added to them by the authors to allow important architecture to be more easily identified.

THE YEARS OF THE CO-HONG

1760–1770

FROM 1760 TO FEBRUARY 1771, THE FOREIGN TRADE was administered by a regulatory body called the Co-hong (*gong-hang* 公行). The Co-hong restricted the foreign trade to ten licensed houses. Just before 1760, there were 17 houses in operation. Seven of these men were not included in the new organization. Of the ten licensed houses, four held offices in the Co-hong and dictated the terms of trade to the six smaller houses. The officers decided each year, at the start of the season (July to September), what prices they would pay for imports and what prices they would charge for certain exports. They also regulated the amount of advances that had to be paid on each export, the exchange rate for foreign silver coins, the standard weights that would be used, interest rates on advances, and other factors. After the top four officers decided on the terms, they passed them to government officials for approval. Sometimes the officials requested changes to be made, such as a higher or lower price on certain commodities. Once all the terms were agreed upon, then trade could begin.¹

Even though the foreign East India companies were monopolies in their own right, setting prices on their imports and restricting others from trading in certain commodities, they were very much against the Chinese having similar control over trade. The foreign records are filled with complaints about this new society. They claimed that the Co-hong would be the end of the China trade, and that no one would want to return to China when profits declined. None of what they said actually happened, but all of the East India companies were much relieved when the Co-hong was abolished in early 1771.

If we look at the positive things that the Co-hong accomplished, some of which are exemplified in factory paintings, then

we see the logic behind it. The Co-hong provided some protection to Chinese merchants by guaranteeing a certain profit margin. But government officials insisted that market prices be maintained and that the Hong merchants within the Co-hong must compete with each other for a share of the foreign trade. Officials were well aware that if prices were set too low for imports or too high for exports then it would hinder growth, which is why they insisted on setting the prices according to the market each year.

The Co-hong helped inland producers increase output by demanding that all foreigners pay advances on certain products and that everyone pay the same amount. This policy gave inland producers money to expand and a guarantee that they would be able to sell the extra products they grew and manufactured. In turn, foreigners were guaranteed that they would be able to obtain sufficient quantities of goods, so that their ships could leave on time each year.

Prior to the 1760s, there were many ships that were delayed for months, or even an entire year, owing to insufficient merchandise being available. But after the Co-hong was established, inland production caught up with demand, so that ships departed on schedule. In short, the Co-hong effectively evened out the many ups and downs of the trade, so that it was not only more predictable for the Chinese, but also more stable for foreigners.

The factors above, together with the emperor's decree of 1757 that closed all other Chinese ports to foreign trade, worked together to have a very significant impact on the landscape in Canton. By the 1760s, all of the foreign companies were keeping supercargos in China year-round. The increase in foreign residents gradually led to a demand for more familiar and comfortable accommodation. A more stable environment led to more foreigners engaging in the trade, which increased demand for apartments.

All of this activity mentioned can be seen clearly in scenes depicting the factories. We begin our study by looking at two

¹ For a more detailed discussion of the reasons for the establishment of the Co-hong and its operation, see Paul A. Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Politics and Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), Chapter 3 (hereafter this book will be referred to as MCM 1).

factory scenes from the 1760s and one from 1770. Plates P1a–d offer a view of the Canton factories on a punchbowl (also called a ‘hong bowl’) from the mid-1760s. It shows China Street shortly after it was created in 1760 and a walkway in front of the factories, both of which were a product of the Co-hong.² Each of the ten members of that society was required to pay an entrance fee in order to be admitted into the organization. The Co-hong also collected a tax on certain commodities. The entrance fees that were collected amounted to 100,000 Spanish dollars (74,000 taels). Some of this money was used to finance the new construction on the quay. China Street was built at this time and a walkway was added in front of the factories. A large ‘Consoo Hall’ (*gongsuo* 公所) was also constructed on the north end of China Street where the Co-hong held its meetings (see Plate P19).³

Before 1760, the Chinese shops and merchants were scattered throughout the western suburbs, on a dozen or so streets. Figure F27 is a Swedish map from 1748. It shows the porcelain shops (瓷器店) on an east west street and the silk shops (絲綢店) on a north south street located a couple blocks north of the quay. In 1760 many of these outside merchants were required to move to China Street so that they could be monitored more closely. The by-product of this regulation was the gradual emergence of a very tight knit community, where Chinese merchants, officials and foreign traders all lived together in the same location. Foreigners could find anything they wanted on China Street or Hog Lane without having to wander about the western suburbs, as they had done in the past. It was a concept very much like the modern shopping mall, one place where shoppers might find everything they desired.

In Plate P1b we see two flags shown, the white French national flag and what seems to be a corruption of the British Union Jack. Note that the French factory has taken on a western façade, which the French would have undoubtedly paid for partially themselves. As the factory area became more permanent and familiar to foreigners, there arose a parallel demand for souvenirs and

memorabilia to take home such as paintings and hong bowls that depicted the factories.

There are only eight factories visible in Plates P1a–b. The French factory is the only one that seems to have Western-style architecture. Plate P1a shows three factories to the far left. The Danish factory was on the west end of the quay, but it is not visible. This bowl was obviously not made for them. To the east of these three buildings is the entrance to China Street. The name *jingyuan* 靖遠 is shown at the top of the entrance (Plate P1c). The entrance is a simple wall with an opening, and the shops are single-storey structures, open to the street.

Having the French and British flags and factories central in the bowl suggests that people of those nationalities may have been the intended buyers. One might ask if foreigners would have wanted the bowl if it had no familiarity. For example, if there was no Western architecture, no Europeans wandering about on the quay, and no flags displayed, would Westerners want to purchase it? Perhaps they would, but the demand would undoubtedly decline in proportion to the omissions. As we will see below, the French remodelled their building again in 1767, adding columns to the upper floor and a pediment above the lower front door. The absence of these features in Plate P1b suggests that this scene is pre-1767.

Plate P1b shows the buildings from China Street to the New British factory (the building on the far right). The entrance to Hog Lane is visible just to the left of the British factory. There were several buildings to the right (east) of that building, including the Dutch factory, but they are not included. This bowl was obviously not made for the Dutch. In later scenes we will see that there were actually seven buildings between China Street and Hog Lane, but this bowl only shows four.

The name Doulan 豆欄 is shown above the entrance to Hog Lane, which is the Chinese name for the street (Plate P1d). There is a short wall on the west side of the entrance extending out towards the river, with a walkthrough opening (Plate P1b). This wall appears in Ekeberg’s drawing in 1770 (Plate P3) as well, but was removed sometime thereafter.

If the other flag in P1b is indeed a corruption of the Union Jack, then it appears to be displayed in front of the Old British factory. It is unclear when the English took possession of this building but it seems that the English East India Company (EIC)

2 The owner of the Dutch factory in 1760 was Swequa. Owing to the addition of the walkway in front, he was asking 3,000 reals of eight for annual rent. The Dutch offered him 1,500 reals. They finally settled on 1,800 reals for one year’s rent. At the Dutch exchange rate of one real to 0.74 taels this came to 1,332 taels. National Archives, The Hague (NAH): VOC 4386, *dagregister*, 1760.08.01, p. 3.

3 MCM 1: Chapter 3.



Figure F1
 Guangzhou
 Godowns, Pearl
 River. Early
 19th century.
 Anonymous
 artist. Gouache
 on silk. Acc. No.
 AH1964.0162.002.
 Courtesy of
 the Hong Kong
 Museum of Art.

moved in at some point in the 1750s. Later factory scenes show the British flag displayed in front of the New British Factory. Unfortunately, the British records do not mention where their flagstaff was positioned at this time.

The New British factory shows an enclosed hallway extending out towards the river. These enclosed appendages appear in scenes before 1771. Plate P2b (ca. 1769) also shows a single enclosure extending out from that building (No. 14). Plate P3 (ca. 1770) shows two enclosed hallways on No. 14.

These types of enclosed appendages were very common Cantonese structures and could be seen all along the river. Figure F1, for example, is a view of the river just east of the foreign factories. Most of the buildings in this area were owned by the Hong merchants, where they carried on trade and outfitted junks for their voyages to Southeast Asia. Figure F1 shows almost every building having one or more of these sheds or hallways attached to them. This was probably a way to load and unload merchandise to and from sampans in any weather without the fear of the goods getting wet. Note how the structures protrude out to the river's edge. As we will see below, in early 1771, the covered extensions

on the New British factory were removed and replaced with an open verandah.

The Swedes at this time occupied the building between the French factory and the Old British factory. In Plate P1b we see some foreigners standing outside of the entrance to this building. The absence of a Swedish flag in this scene is curious. The arrival data (see Appendix) show that the scene in Plates 1a–d could not be 1762, 1765, 1767, 1768 or 1769. In each of those years the Swedes arrived in Canton ahead of the French or English and would have had their flag displayed. For reasons discussed above, we know that this factory scene falls somewhere between 1760 and 1767. In 1763, 1764 and 1766 the Swedes arrived in Canton after the French and English. In those years there would have been a period when only the two latter flags were raised, and not the Swedes.

If we take other factors into consideration such as the trees in the background, some of which seem to have lost their leaves, and the extra clothing on the people, then this would appear to be winter time. Foreigners usually left Canton sometime between January and May. If there was a year that the Swedes left before

the French and English then that would also be a possibility. Unfortunately, the departure data for these three nationalities in the 1760s is incomplete. Early 1763 would be possible because the Swedes left Canton on 19 April and the English and French stayed in Canton for another month or so. Early 1765, 1767 and 1768 are not possible because either the English or the French left before the Swedes. The departure data for early 1761, 1762, 1764 and 1766 are incomplete.

The best we can conclude from this discussion is that the scene in Plates P1a–b cannot be from 1765, 1767, 1768 or later. According to the available data, the years 1761, 1763, 1764 and 1766 are possibilities. If more information emerges on the arrivals and departures of these nationalities, then we can probably narrow this down to within a couple of years. We have thus dated this bowl as early to mid-1760s.

Plates P2a–b show another hong bowl from a later year and the detail on this bowl matches the written records incredibly closely. It is the earliest scene we have that shows seventeen distinct hongs in the factory area. The buildings are a bit out of proportion owing to the convex curvature of the bowl's surface. But if one examines the doorways to the buildings, it is clear that there are indeed seventeen. Except for Plate P3 and a couple other images discussed below, most of the paintings that fall between 1769 and 1822 show these seventeen buildings.

Plate P2a shows the Danish factory under construction. The windows on the first floor of the building have not yet been installed, and the outer facing of the wall is missing. The factories shown on this bowl are most likely from late 1769 or early 1770. Since at least 1766, the Danes had been trying to convince their landlord, Poankeequa (Pan Qiguan 潘啟官), to make repairs and changes to their building.⁴ In August 1767, they agreed to rent the factory for three years, provided that repairs were done and two rooms and a balcony added. The Danes specifically noted that rooms would be added to the front to extend the building out to the river's edge, as shown in Plate P2a. A balcony was constructed on top of these new rooms.⁵

The cost of remodelling the Danish factory was estimated at 3,000 taels. The Danes agreed to pay one-third of the repairs (1,000 taels). Some of these additions were probably not what the owner Poankeequa would have done on his own account. But if the Danes were willing to pay part of the cost, then he was more willing to go along with their demands. This is all part of the greater sense of permanency that the Co-hong had created and that foreigners were now feeling. It is thus not a coincidence that these changes began to take place after 1760.

Poankeequa requested that the Danish portion of the costs be given to him in August 1768, when the first Danish ship arrived with more silver bullion.⁶ The Danish records do not specify clearly when the renovations were actually carried out and completed but the Swedish records provide us with a clue. As will be discussed more thoroughly below, the Swedish factory (No. 11 in P2b) underwent major changes to the front of the building in 1768 and 1769. The Swedish records suggest that those repairs may have been completed by April 1769. Plate P2b shows that the construction of the front of that building had already been completed by the time this scene was painted, which means it is probably late 1769 or early 1770.

Taking these factors into consideration, and considering that the persons shown on the hong bowl are wearing winter clothing, a probable date would be sometime between December 1769 and February 1770. The foreign companies displayed on the bowl, according to the flags, were the Danes, French, Swedes, British and Dutch. All of these foreigners were in Canton from 26 July 1769 (when the French arrived) to 18 March 1770 (when the Danes left).⁷

The building on the far right (east) in Plate P2a is the French factory. It does not appear to be under construction, and there is a man standing in the front doorway. The Dutch mentioned in April 1767 that the French were rebuilding their factory. Most of the French officers left for Macao in late April of that year. Charles-Henry de Vigny (the Dutch called him Vignien) remained behind to oversee the final construction.⁸

⁴ National Archives (Rigsarkivet), Copenhagen (RAC): Ask 1156a, 1766.07.23–4, pp. 71–72.

⁵ RAC: Ask 1156a, 1767.07.24, p. 72r, Ask 1157, 1767.08.10, p. 67r, Ask 1160, 1767.08.11, pp. 45v–46r, 1767.08.18, pp. 47v–48r.

⁶ RAC: Ask 1162, 1768.08.09, pp. 64–65.

⁷ NAH: Canton 78, 1769.07.26 and Canton 79, 1770.03.18.

⁸ NAH: Canton 76, 1767.04.25; and Louis Dermigny, *La Chine et l'Occident. Le Commerce à Canton au XVIII^e Siècle 1719–1833*, 3 vols. and Album (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1964), 868–72.

We have not been able to find any specific references to these repairs in the French records. All that we have is a brief mention in a document from the early 1770s, talking about repairs that had been done earlier to the factory, without specifying the year. The Dutch sources, however, clearly state that this remodelling was done in early 1767.⁹ Neither the Dutch nor French records mention the costs or other details. Vigny did not arrive in Macao until 15 June that year, so he was apparently tied up with the renovations for a couple of months.¹⁰ Because we know that the Danish and Swedish renovations did not begin until after summer 1768, we can assume that the view of the French factory in Plate P2a is after the 1767 renovations were completed.

The doorway between buildings No. 6 and No. 7 in Plate P2a is the entrance to China Street. There are three characters above the doorway, but the first one (on the right) is illegible. The other two characters are *yuan jie* 遠街 (read right to left on the bowl), and correspond to the Chinese name Jingyuan Jie 靖遠街 (as shown in Plate P1c). The Peabody Essex Museum has a duplicate of this bowl and shows the same characters.¹¹

Plate P2b shows the Swedish factory (No. 11). The additions to the front of the building appear to have been completed. The Swedish officers John Chambers, Jean Abraham Grill, and Jacob Hahr arrived in Canton, from Macao, on 21 June 1768. They immediately went to work making the alterations to their factory, which was owned by the Canton merchant Chetqua (Chen Jieguan 陳捷官). On 23 June 1768, the Dutch mentioned that the Swedes were busy rebuilding their factory. They began by adding two rooms on the riverside.¹²

The repairs were estimated at 1,800 taels, and were charged to the newly chartered (for the third time) Swedish East India Company (SOIC). The Swedes agreed to pay 1,000 taels, and the

rest was apparently borne by the owner Chetqua. The final cost to the Swedes came to about 1,200 taels, but this amount included furnishings for the new rooms. The expenses were charged to each of the four SOIC ships that were in China in 1769 and 1770 (two ships each year). These costs were over and above the normal amount that each SOIC ship paid for their share of the annual factory rent and housekeeping expenses (at this time, those latter expenses amounted to about 2,000 taels per ship).¹³ Table 1 shows the SOIC's cost of the renovations, which was divided between four ships.

Table 1
SOIC Costs of Renovating the Swedish Factory in 1769 (in Chinese taels)

Date	Ships	For Factory Repairs and Furnishings
1769.12.12	<i>Adolph Fredrich</i>	484.932
1769.12.12	<i>Riksens Ständer</i>	484.932
1770.12.14	<i>Finland</i>	120.928
1770.12.14	<i>Cron Prinz Gustaf</i>	120.928
Total	Four Ships	Taels 1,211.720

Source: GUB: Svenska ostindiska kompaniets arkiv, H 22:13. Fakturor 1768–1786, Nos. 1307–10.

On 19 December 1768, Chambers, Grill, and Hahr, wrote a letter to the company director in Gothenburg stating that the two rooms facing the river were not yet completed. They did not want to begin on the other rooms until these two front rooms were done. In two other letters dated February and June 1769 they stated that these two rooms extended out from the building 5 or 6 covids (6–7 feet) towards the river. A colonnade and balustrade was constructed on top of these rooms (as paintings of the factories reveal). Three new officers' rooms were also added. All of the renovations were presumably done before the Swedes departed for Macao on 12 April 1769. According to one Swede, the factory now looked like a 'small palace'.¹⁴

⁹ Archives Nationales d'Outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence (ANOM): C.1.12, p. 117r–v; and Susan E. Schopp, 'The French as Architectural Trendsetters in Canton, 1767–1820', *Review of Culture*, International Edition, no. 45 (2014): 79–87. See p. 81.

¹⁰ NAH: Canton 76, 1767.06.15.

¹¹ For reference to the Peabody Essex Museum hong bowl, see William Sargent, *Treasures of Chinese Export Ceramics from the Peabody Essex Museum* (Salem: Peabody Essex Museum, 2012), fig. 238, p. 434.

¹² NAH: Canton 77, 1768.07.18 and 23; and Göteborg Universitets Bibliotek (Gothenburg University Library, GUB): Svenska ostindiska kompaniets arkiv, H 22:13. Fakturor 1768–1786, Nos. 1307–10. For Chetqua's story, see MCM 1: Chapter 5.

¹³ NAH: Canton 77, 1768.07.18 and 23.

¹⁴ Nordic Museum Archive, Stockholm (NM): Godegårdsarkivet. Ostindiska Handling. F17 (NM: F17). Letter to the Director in Gothenburg from John Chambers, Jean Abraham Grill, and Jacob Hahr in Canton, dated 1768.12.19, pp. T1_00179–81, letter to Joh. Abr. Grill in Gothenburg from John Chambers in Canton dated 1769.02.04, pp.

In the late 1760s, there was an extreme shortage of living quarters for foreign merchants and captains, so there were good reasons to expand the factories. Owing to the lack of available space, a number of English officers and passengers could not find accommodation. The Dutch mentioned on 18 September 1769 that Captain Richardson was offered space in one of the Co-hong's buildings.¹⁵ As Plate P2a shows, building No. 4 seems to have been owned by the Co-hong at this time (see the characters 行公 above the entrance, read right to left). This building may have been where Captain Richardson was lodged.

The Dutch mentioned that other buildings were undergoing additions to make more apartments available. The governor general, for example, gave the Hong merchant Cai Hunqua (Cai Huangguan 蔡煌官) permission to add more apartments in this year.¹⁶ This is probably why we see a number of other buildings under construction on the hong bowl. Plate P2a shows building Nos. 1, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 under construction and Plate P2b shows Nos. 12, 13 and possibly 14 under construction. As more foreigners arrived in Canton to trade, the demand for apartments grew in unison. As would be expected, strong demand and short supply led to an increase in rents over time.¹⁷ The extensive construction displayed in Plates P2a–b are testimony to the great success of the Co-hong in providing a more stable environment and encouraging trade to grow.¹⁸

Plate P2b also shows the English (No. 14) and Dutch (No. 16) factories. As will be shown below, this scene is probably before 1772, because the hong between these two buildings has not yet been rebuilt. The British factory is definitely pre-1771, because it does not yet have an open balcony, and the Dutch factory has its pre-1774 balcony (explained below). The English factory shows one hallway protruding out to the river's edge, similar to what is shown in Plate P1b.

Plate P3 shows two enclosed hallways on the British factory. This drawing was done by Captain Ekeberg, possibly in 1770. The artists of the hong bowls in Plates P1b and P2b may have simply omitted one hallway on No. 14 in order to squeeze everything in. An optimal date for the scene in Plates P2a–b might be late 1769 or early 1770.

Other important landmarks on this hong bowl are the three trees to the east of the Danish factory in Plate P2a. Ekeberg's drawing in Plate P3 also shows three trees. A drawing recently acquired by the Hong Kong Museum of Art from early 1771 also shows these three trees.¹⁹ Factory scenes from late 1771 onwards, however, have no trees in this location. Plates P2a–b show the walkway in front of the factories that was added in 1760. Prior to that year, foreigners entered their buildings directly from their service boats.²⁰

Because the scene in Plates 2a–b shows at least eight buildings under construction, it would have been outdated within months of its creation. It would likely have been difficult to sell this bowl to a foreign customer in 1770 or any year thereafter because it did not resemble what they saw when they arrived. Besides the buildings taking on a new appearance, other very significant changes were made in the immediate years that followed.

Plate P3 is a drawing of the factories that is included in Captain Carl Gustav Ekeberg's *Ostindiska Resa*, which was published in 1773.²¹ The accuracy of this drawing, and the year it represents, has often been questioned. New data presented here suggest that Ekeberg's drawing may be more reliable than previously thought. As Kee Il Choi Jr. has suggested, this drawing probably represents what Ekeberg actually saw and/or remembered in autumn 1770.²²

19 Hong Kong Museum of Art, Accession No. AH2013.0022. This factory scene is also reproduced in Martyn Gregory, *Revealing the East: Historical Pictures by Chinese and Western Artists 1750–1950*, Cat. 91 (London: Martyn Gregory Gallery, 2013–14), No. 40, pp. 34–35.

20 The owner of the Dutch factory in 1760 was Swequa (蔡瑞官). Owing to the addition of the walkway in front, he was asking 3,000 reals of eight for annual rent. The Dutch offered him 1,500 reals. They finally settled on 1,800 reals for one year's rent. At the Dutch exchange rate of one real to 0.74 taels this came to 1,332 taels. NAH: VOC 4386, *dagregister*, 1760.08.01, p. 3.

21 Carl Gustav Ekeberg, *Capitaine Carl Gustav Ekebergs Ostindiska Resa, Åren 1770 och 1771* (Stockholm: Henr. Foug, 1773; facsimile reprint, Stockholm: Rediviva, 1970).

22 Kee Il Choi Jr., 'Carl Gustav Ekeberg and the Invention of Chinese Export Painting', *The Magazine Antiques* 153, no. 3 (Mar 1998): 426–37.

T1_01335–7, and letter to Joh. Abr. Grill in Gothenburg from John Chambers in Macao dated 1769.06.21, pp. T1_01339–42; and NAH: Canton 78, 1769.04.12.

15 NAH: Canton 78, 1769.09.18.

16 NAH: Canton 78, 1769.09.18.

17 MCM 1: 145.

18 The Co-hong was established to ensure that competition prevailed and that growth was not hindered. This bowl is a visual example of its success. MCM 1: Chapter 3.

Plate P3 cannot be earlier than 1770, because it shows a completed Danish factory with new rooms extending out to the river's edge and a balcony above. There appears to be a more extensive quay in front of the building than there should be, but it clearly has an extension added in the front. The three trees to the east of the Danish factory are shown as they appear in Plate P2a. The large tree behind No. 6 and many of the other buildings on the quay are very similar to those shown in Plate P4. The customs house to the west of the Danish factory is in the approximate place it should be according to the written records and according to later paintings.

The first floor of the French factory (No. 10) in Plate P3 is similar to Plate P2a, which means it is probably after the renovations carried out in the off-season of 1767. The lower façade and upper balcony of the French factory are very similar to Plate P2a. Notice the triangular pediment above the front door and narrow archways on the upper level. As Susan Schopp has recently shown, over time many of the factories adopted features similar in style to the French building, which is representative of the cultural influence they had among other Europeans in Canton.²³ The Swedish factory (No. 11) in Plate P3 is also very similar to Plate P2b. The lower level has the doors and windows in the same location. The front door has the triangular pediment and the upper level has three large openings.

We have shown that the view in Plate P3 cannot be earlier than 1770 and information below will show that it cannot be later than January or February 1771. The Hong Kong Museum of Art painting from early 1771 mentioned above, for example, shows the enclosed hallways removed from No. 14 and a sketch of an incomplete new verandah.²⁴ That painting and P3 both show No. 12 in its pre-1773 state and the Dutch factory is in its pre-1774 state, with a very short open balcony protruding out from the second floor.

Not everything in Ekeberg's drawing fits well with other paintings. Building No. 15 in Plate P3 is very different from that which appears in Plate P2b and later scenes. This aberration suggests that Ekeberg may have seen (or remembered) this factory incorrectly. The windows on the second floor and the door and windows on

the first floor are indeed different from those seen in other scenes. But building No. 15 is shorter than No. 14 and No. 16, which is in agreement with other paintings—so not everything is incorrect.

According to other paintings, Ekeberg's quay extends further into the river than it should. He shows a walkway leading up to the Danish factory, but in Plates P2a and P4, the building extends right up to the river's edge.²⁵ Even though Ekeberg seems to have painted the three trees east of the Danish factory correctly, the buildings behind the trees are very different from those seen in Plates P1a, P2a, P4 and later.²⁶ There should be seventeen distinct buildings at this time, but Ekeberg has a couple missing. There should also be a couple buildings between the Danish factory and the customs house to the west, but those are not present.²⁷

Taking all of these factors into consideration, Ekeberg's drawing seems to be a mixture of accuracy and mistakes. He has some features that can clearly be documented, but other features do not come close to other paintings. These discrepancies suggest that he may have drawn this scene from memory or maybe he sketched out part of the scene on earlier visits to China, and then finished the rest later. He possibly did not have a painting to consult and just drew whatever he could remember or perhaps he filled in missing parts from what he remembered from previous voyages in the 1740s and 1750s. The area east of the Danish factory, behind the three trees, actually looks like it might be from before 1760. He shows no entrance to China Street; the buildings are small; they seem to only be one or two blocks in depth; a couple of them seem to be only one or one and a half storeys tall; and they are shaped differently from what appears in Plates P1a, P2a and P4. If this drawing were to be given a date based solely on the buildings between the Danish and French factories, it would be before 1760.

Based on the observations above, Plate P3 cannot be earlier than 1770 or later than early 1771. If the anomalies are eliminated, the other buildings fit nicely into the year 1770, which is when Ekeberg was in Canton.

23 Schopp, 'The French as Architectural Trendsetters in Canton, 1767–1820', 79–87.

24 Gregory, *Revealing the East*, No. 40, 34–35; and Hong Kong Museum of Art, Accession No. AH2013.0022.

25 The painting in the Hong Kong Museum of Art from early 1771 also shows the Danish factory extending out to the river's edge. Gregory, *Revealing the East*, No. 40, pp. 34–35.

26 See also Maria Kar-wing Mok, 'Excellent Errors—Meaningful Information on Export Painting,' forthcoming in 2015.

27 The Hong Kong Museum of Art painting from early 1771 shows seventeen distinct factories, and buildings west of the Danish factory, as they appear in later paintings. Gregory, *Revealing the East*, No. 40, pp. 34–35.

CONCLUSION

IT HAS BEEN SHOWN THAT MOST OF THE FACTORY paintings from 1760 to 1822 are fairly accurate and reliable representations. They match very closely with the written records. It has also been shown that many, if not most, of the two-dimensional paintings examined in this study were not entirely based on templates. Templates might have been used to produce a rough draft of a painting, but then onsite observation might have been employed to put the finishing touches on the scenes. For the most part, the Chinese artists' intense interest in retaining all of the details and their focus on accuracy dictated the final outcome of the factory paintings—not templates.

There is no doubt that templates were used on three-dimensional objects such as hong bowls; less attention was paid to maintaining accuracy on porcelain objects. The factory scenes on some bowls that were examined were fairly reliable and could be dated to one year. The scenes on other hong bowls, however, were a mixture of several years. They clearly had a different function in the homes of the buyers than was the case with paintings. Hong bowls were not intended to be appreciated and studied in quite the same way as paintings.

In these ways, the demand side of the market very much dictated the extent to which Chinese artists held to accuracy. As we have seen, with some items anything could be done if the buyer so desired. Flags could be moved or added randomly with no regard to concurrency. Boats could be randomly inserted along the river in scenes without any regard to correctness. Buyers on the whole, however, tended to prefer paintings that had architecture and flags that were accurate for the period. The demand for realism kept Chinese artists intensely focused on retaining details.

It was only after new data emerged about the factories that it became possible to show how correct these paintings actually were. Owing to insufficient information in the past, it was not possible to date many paintings with such precision. Moreover, art

historians are more familiar with dating items to a decade or two, rather than a year or two. With all the new material that is now available, it is possible to be much more precise. With some factory scenes it is now possible to date them to not only a specific year, but to a specific month or week.

Not every scene can be dated with precision. Some paintings have details that do not tally with the written records. The factory scenes examined in this discussion are basically composed of three types: those painted on hong bowls, those painted by Western hands, and those on Chinese export paintings. In the course of dating these scenes, it was discovered that the first two types are the most problematic.

Besides the personal interests of buyers and the demands of the market, there are other reasons for some factory scenes being less reliable than others. Mistakes are commonly found on hong bowls because porcelain decorators might not have been the finest draughtsmen. Some illustrators were not good at proportion, spacing and design, which explain missing details, distortions, mistakes or displacements on hong bowls. Perhaps the three-dimensional curvature of the bowl presented a difficult surface to paint on. The disparity in quality between scenes on hong bowls and those on canvas also proves that the artists who produced export porcelain were not necessarily the same group of craftsmen who painted export paintings.

As for factory scenes done by Western hands, the analysis shows that Western artists were often more concerned with aesthetic effects than accuracy. When their factory scenes are compared with those done by a Chinese hand, we find them less focused on detail and more concerned with the overall pictorial effect. Factory scenes done by Westerners tended to cater to a much smaller customer base than was the case with Chinese artists.

Factory paintings by Chinese export artists are the most noteworthy from a historian's point of view. They are the largest

in number, and embody a minuteness, accuracy and historical concurrency that were unparalleled in other export art forms. For generations the export artists worked with astonishing fineness in all kinds of export painting. Port scenes are one of the showcases for their remarkable skills. In order to retain the details and ensure consistency, Western precepts and conventions that might affect accuracy were dismissed. Chinese artists readily adapted to Western media, the palette and some degree of chiaroscuro but, in general, they insisted on using their own perspective. They were careful to include the smallest detail so as to render an accurate pictorial record of their time. They tried their best not to blur any part of their scene and they resorted to Chinese rules in order to fulfil those goals.

Multiple perspectives were used in some paintings, which essentially invited the viewer to examine the scene inch by inch, close-up and in full detail. These paintings were not meant to be viewed from a distance, as a window to the real world. They were meant to be an exact record of what was there, at the time the buyer was present.

The paintings using multiple perspectives are the ones that contain the most information that can be matched almost perfectly with textual records. These paintings were expected to be more accurate than other forms of art. After all, hong bowls were by definition more functional objects than were paintings. It may be hard to admire the details of a hong bowl during a party, when it is placed at table height—their primary function was to serve punch and they were not meant to be raised higher than waist level. In contrast, a painting would have been mounted on a wall, and meant to be studied in admiration and induce conversation.

For art historians, this is significant because these works have long been thought to be copies from templates. They have generally been classified as careless and causal souvenir art. This outlook partially explains why scholars have set aside the dating of some scenes when discrepancies appear (such as the American flag). If these paintings were just commercial copies of each other, there is no point in trying to understand them within a historical perspective.

It is true that export paintings do look almost identical and were governed by a tight, conventional compositional vocabulary. They were certainly based on a stereotyped visual formula, which made them look alike. But throughout this study, it has been

astonishing to find that every single one of the seventy-plus factory scenes that we have examined is different. The changes are slight and often hard to make out but, because everything was so finely painted, the differences are there. The details were being altered year by year and month by month. It was important for artists to capture all of those changes.

In the end, it must have been simply uneconomical to copy or rely too much on templates. In some cases, it is obvious that a certain degree of observation or onsite checking took place. Different vantage points were used. This would not have occurred if the artists were only working in workshops and copying blindly from templates. Subsequently, each scene is a unique work in itself.

In this analysis, it has been shown that these paintings were not at all reckless, second-rate works, but were executed with utmost care and strenuous attention. They were so thoroughly executed that in some cases flagstaffs are not omitted when the flags were not raised. Inserting an empty flagstaff was not likely something that an artist would do for the sake of beautifying a painting. Nothing was sacrificed in the name of art. These scenes were acquired and regarded by customers as an accurate snapshot of the port. The factory area was the main stage of their personal adventures and these scenes provided the best record—at least before the invention and popularization of photography.

The discovery of the detachment from templates and the practise of copying is not a total denial of the use of templates in every genre of export art. There are hundreds and thousands of examples in museums around the world that serve as evidence of the use of templates and copying. Our discoveries set out here only show that export factory scenes did not always employ the same operation or routine. They had their own methods, making them a unique type of export art.

In the past, these special features connected to factory paintings have passed unknown, simply a result of the insufficiency of data available about them. Without the historical records to match to the dating, it was not possible to see how unique the factory scenes really are. Moreover, since documentary text to reveal the operation, methods, artists and workshops has been scarce, the study of export paintings has always been regarded as a void in art history.

The new material presented here has opened up more in-depth understanding of the nature and practices of export painting. It

is now certain that, although the Chinese export artists had been deliberately assimilating Western art and had been producing paintings in the Western style, they had also reverted to indigenous techniques. They renounced Western concepts and adhered to Chinese principles, such as multiple perspectives. They abandoned Western aerial perspectives to produce pieces that fulfilled the market's craving for explicit, minutely painted depictions.

We have also found that, in terms of accuracy, the export factory paintings are far superior to factory paintings by Western hands, and factory scenes on porcelain. These findings suggest that the Western market, customers and patrons, saw these art objects in a different light. These objects were appreciated and perhaps used in a very different context than previously understood. For export factory paintings, the accuracy of detail seems to have been of the highest priority. They are a unique type of work in the larger family of export painting and export art.

For historians, the result of this discovery is the new possibility to re-examine the historical value of these scenes. These paintings can now be seen as reliable sources that augment what the textual records do not retain. When the written records fail to safeguard history, we can count on the pictures to tell what happened. Gaps in the dates, discrepancies or doubtful details in the paintings will hopefully no longer be cast away as inexplicable mysteries left by an urge to be creative. They will serve as new clues to spur further research, or pointers that initiate a revisiting of the documents.

Finally, new information presented in this study shows that there were only two shopping streets open to foreigners from 1760 to 1822, China Street and Hog Lane. Hog Lane was already in existence by the 1740s and was a place where common seamen and other individuals could go for entertainment and to purchase keepsakes and souvenirs to take home. Before 1760, Chinese shops were spread out among several streets in the western suburb.

In 1760, porcelain dealers and other shopkeepers were required to move to the newly established China Street in order to keep better watch over them. This centralization of the trade, whereby surrounding shopkeepers from several blocks away were pulled together and concentrated into one area, had a significant impact on the Thirteen Hong district. The Co-hong effectively created a huge shopping mall, where anything could be found, in almost any quantity.

The tightening of the community created stability and a sense of permanency. Foreigners gradually began investing in their buildings and adding more Western features to them. As one by one of the buildings took on more familiar appearances to foreigners, the Thirteen Hong district emerged as a unique place in world commerce. In order to capture the essence of their experiences in China, foreigners became increasingly obsessed with wanting a factory scene to return with and display in their homes. Without the creation of the China Street shopping mall, and the subsequent moving of all the outside shopkeepers there, there would certainly have been a very different outcome. It is thus no small coincidence that the popularity of these export paintings emerged in the 1760s and 1770s. All of these factors were tied one to another.

Changes in the trade are also evident in the paintings. Wars upset the numbers of ships arriving in several years of the 1780s and 1790s. When overall volumes declined, Chinese officials and merchants were pressed to make up for shortfalls. These were years when there was a large influx of private traders. These were also years when there was a decline in the trade of the East India companies. The French ceased sending ships, and the Dutch, Danish and Swedish trade was much reduced from what it had been in former decades. The Chinese merchants who owned the factories naturally began to shift more and more of the costs of maintaining the buildings onto their foreign tenants. As foreigners began staying longer in China, they were eager to secure accommodation with which they were more familiar. The combination of Chinese pressuring foreigners to cover more of the expenses and foreigners more willing to pay for the changes they wanted resulted in a gradual Westernizing of the architecture.

If we look behind the Western architecture displayed in the paintings, we see another process taking shape. In cases such as the rebuilding of the American factory in 1800 and the British factories in 1815, foreigners paid for the reconstruction of the entire structures themselves. In other cases, such as the rebuilding of the French and Swedish factories in the 1760s, and the several reconstructions of the Danish factory, foreigners paid for part of the costs.

We have also seen where Chinese owners leased the buildings, or parts of the buildings, to foreign managers. These innkeepers would then sublet apartments to private traders and others, in hopes of making a profit. By the early 1800s, the American, French,

Danish, and Swedish factories were all being run like hotels under foreign management. Even though this practice was illegal, it was tolerated and relieved the Chinese owners of having to deal with all the private individuals who were arriving in China every year to trade. Other foreigners set up eating and drinking establishments within the factories that catered to private traders. Chinese owners left all of this activity for foreigners to manage. These services helped to keep the foreign community under control and peaceable, so it is understandable that Chinese officials tolerated them.

As foreigners gained more control over the buildings they were living in, they changed them to better suit their needs and tastes. In all cases where foreigners paid for some portion of the construction of the buildings, they gained the right to make some of the changes they wanted. In the past it has usually been thought that it was the Chinese owners who were Westernizing their buildings to make them more attractive to foreigners. This study suggests, however, that it was the foreigners who were behind many of those changes.

After the fire of 1822, New China Street was created between building No. 1 and No. 3 to better service the trade. Poankeequa III sacrificed his factory to make room for this street, which adopted the name Tongwen Jie in recognition of his contribution. After that addition there were two incredibly large and diverse shopping malls in the same small location servicing the foreign customers. Although the fire was very destructive and resulted in much loss to all parties involved, it created a unique opportunity to make the Canton trade even more attractive. Some foreigners, such as Mr. French, continued to invest in the buildings as they had done before the fire. The British, Dutch, Spanish, Americans, private traders from India and numerous others continued to go to China. Even the French returned again in the 1810s. By the 1830s the volume of trade and number of ships arriving in China each year were three times what they had been in the 1780s.¹ This outcome is testimony in itself to the great success of the Thirteen Hong shopping mall. The hundreds of factory paintings and millions of export art objects that have survived from the trade and that are now kept in museums and private collections throughout

the world are also testimony to the great success of the Chinese craftsmen of Canton.

It is common knowledge that there were serious disruptions and many problems with the way the trade was conducted before and after the fire of 1822. Many foreigners and Chinese were negatively affected by these destructive elements—some men were completely ruined and others lost their lives. The Canton trade eventually collapsed in the late 1830s with the outbreak of war. All of these factors are very important to understanding the trade and the difficulties faced by Chinese craftsmen, but they are another story for another time.

We began our study with the assumption that most factory paintings were simply assembly line reproductions. Discovering that every one of the seventy-plus scenes examined is unique was an incredible revelation for us and the discovery of the closeness with which the factory paintings corresponded with entries in the written records was equally enlightening. Although this marks the end of our study, it is really the beginning of an entirely new way of looking at the history of Canton and the history of factory paintings.

¹ Louis Dermigny, *La Chine et l'Occident: Le Commerce à Canton au XVIII^e Siècle 1719–1833*, 3 vols. and album (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1964), 2:521–25.

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4JJ Voyages en Chine. Journaux de bord, 1698–1788
129-41

Netherlands, The Hague: National Archives (NAH)

CANTON Documenten van de Nederlandse Factorij te Canton
1–390 1742–1826.

RAB Raad der Aziatische Bezettingen en Etablissements:
140–142 eisch, scheeps papieren, ladingen, cognoscement, factuur, notitie, missiven, en diverse

VOC Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie Archief:
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INDEX

- Adams, John Quincy, 75
Adams, President, 35
Adams, Rev. John, 84n9
Aggersborg, 59, 62
Agie, 61
Agote, 39, 58
Akau, comprador, 69
Alexander, William, 53, 54
Allom, Thomas, 54, 55
Americans, ix–xii, xvii–xx, xxii, 14, 16n32, 17n37, 20, 23, 29, 34–36, 36n41, 38, 38n58, 40n66, 41, 41n67, 54, 55, 57, 57n1, 65, 67, 67nn1–3, 67n6, 68, 70, 72, 73, 73n42, 74, 74n46, 75–78, 80n17, 81, 82, 84n11, 86, 88–91, 95, 96, 96n49, 97, 98, 100–102
Armenians, 29, 31, 34, 72, 78, appendix
Art Institute of Chicago, xiii
Assouw (Ou Yaxiu 歐亞修), comprador, 64, 68
Atack (Lü Yade 呂亞德), comprador, 64
Attay (Liang Diguan 梁帝官, Hong merchant), 83
Australia, 29
Austrians, 17, 97

Baboom, Armenian Gregory Marcar, 72
balcony, verandah, ix, 22, 36; Danish factory No. 01, 4, 7, 17, 18, 52, 55, 62, 68, 69, 71, 72; Dutch factory No. 16, x, 6, 7, 9–11, 14–16, 32, 34, 36, 39, 40, 49, 50, 52, 63, 68, 86; French factory No. 10, 7; New British factory No. 14, x, 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 15, 16, 18, 32, 34, 36, 39, 49, 50, 52, 63, 80, 86
Baohe Hang 保和行. *See* Poho
Baoshun Hang 寶順行. *See* Pow-shun
Barretto, 86
Barrow, John, 25
Batavia (Jakarta), 10, 11
Beale, Daniel, 37n47, 39
bell tower, 77, 80, 82
Blight, 86
Bourgnonje, 59
Bridge Street, 92, 92n40, 93

British, Britain, English, ix–xi, xv, xvii–xx, xxii, 2–4, 6, 9, 11–16, 16n30, 16n32, 17, 18, 26, 29, 29n4, 30, 32, 32n22, 34, 35, 35n36, 36, 36n41, 39, 43–46, 46n4, 47–50, 52–55, 58–60, 62, 63, 65, 67–75, 75n59, 76, 77, 77nn1–2, 78–80, 80n14, 80n17, 81, 85–87, 89, 92–95, 98, 101, 102, appendix

Cai Hunqua (Cai Huangguan 蔡煌官, Hong merchant), 6, 83
Campen, Jan van, xiii, 10
Canton Register, The, 69n19, 78, 81
Carrington, Edward, 68
chamber pots, xvi
Chambers, John, 5, 5n14
Chen family, 11
Chetqua (Chen Jieguan 陳捷官, Hong merchant), 5, 5n12, 38, 38n56
China Street (est. 1760, Xin Jie 新街, Jingyuan Jie 靖遠街, Jingyuan Jie 靜遠街, Qingyuan Jie 清遠街, or Xin Jingyuan Jie 新靖遠街 after 1822, also called Sun Kae, Sin-keae, Tsing-yuen-keae, New Street, Porcelain Street. Before 1823, it was sometimes called New China Street. After 1822, it was often called Old China Street), ix, xviii, xix, 2, 5, 7, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19n46, 21, 36, 40, 41, 48, 78, 83, 84, 84n6, 84n9, 84n11, 85–88, 88n24, 89, 89n30, 90–96, 96n53, 98, 98n56, 101
China Street, New (est. 1823, Tongwen Hang 同文行, also called Tungwan Kái. Morrison also referred to it as Old China Street in 1823, but most sources show it as New China Street), xix, 83, 85, 85n13, 85n15, 86, 87, 88n24, 92, 95, 96, 98, 98n56, 102
China Street, Old. *See* Thirteen Hong Street (before 1823) and China Street (after 1822)
chinaware. *See* porcelain
Chinese Repository, 97n54, 98
Chinnery, George, 46, 46n4
Choi, Kee Il, Jr., ix, x, xx, 6
Chonghe Hang 中和行. *See* Chung-ho Hong
Chowqua, Hong merchant, 17n36
Christie's, xiii
Chung-ho Hong (Chonghe Hang 中和行), 98. *See also* factory, No. 5
Chunqua, Hong merchant, 78, 81n22, 86, 91, 94, 97, 98
Cochin China, 11

- Coffin, Capt. Abel, 75
- Co-hong (*gonghang* 公行), xx, xxii, 1, 1n1, 2, 4, 6, 6n18, 9, 83, 101
- comprador (*maiban* 買辦), xvi, 15, 64, 68, 69
- Conner, Patrick, ix, xiii, xx, 33, 35–37, 54, 59, 60, 69, 69n19, 76, 78, 84, 92
- Conseequa (Pan Kunshui 潘崑水, Hong merchant), 72, 75, 81
- Consoo Hall (*gongsuo* 公所, also spelled Consu), 2, 12, 19n46, 21, 83, 85, 88n24, 96n53
- Constant, Charles de, 59, 84n11
- Consu. *See* Consoo Hall
- coral, 31
- Corne, Michele Felice, 63, 65
- Corning Museum of Glass, xiii
- Cox, John Henry, 32n19, 61n33
- Crossman, Carl, ix, xx, 21n52, 25, 69n19
- curiosities (luxury items), 31, 87
- customs houses, 7, 14, 79, 84n11, 86, 90, 91
- Dafeng Hang 達豐行, 11, 38
- Dalrymple, Alexander, 84
- Danes, Danish, ix–xi, xix, xx, xxn10, xxii, 2, 4–7, 7n25, 7n27, 11–17, 17n36, 17nn40–41, 18, 18n44, 21, 22, 30, 32, 32n22, 34–36, 36n43, 38, 38n58, 39–41, 52, 54, 55, 59–62, 62n37, 63, 68, 68n11, 69–72, 72n32, 73, 74, 74nn46–47, 75–77, 79, 80, 80n14, 80n17, 81, 81nn29–30, 82, 85–87, 89–91, 95, 96, 96n47, 97, 98, 101, 102, appendix
- Daniell, Thomas, 43, 46, 48, 54, 63
- Daniell, William, 33, 43, 46, 53, 54, 70
- Danish Børsen (stock exchange), 12
- Dannewelt, 62
- Davis, J. F., 89–92
- Delaware, 23
- Delaware Historical Society, 25
- Dexing Hang 德興行. *See* Tehing
- diamonds, 31, 34
- Dobell, Peter, xx, 74, 74n46, 75, 81
- Dobrée, Thomas, 80, 81
- Dong Paotai 東炮台. *See* French Folly Fort
- Dongsheng Hang 東生行. *See* Tung-sang
- Dorr, Sullivan, 67, 67n6, 67n8
- Doulan Jie 豆欄街, 荳欄街, or 新荳欄街. *See* Hog Lane
- Downing, Charles Toogood, 50, 51, 83n2
- Duncan, John, 52
- Dussumier, Jean-Jacques, 81
- Dutch Folly (Haizhu Paotai 海珠炮台), 45, 46
- Dutch, ix–xii, xiin9, xix, 2, 2n2, 4–6, 6n20, 7, 9–11, 13–16, 16n30, 17, 17n36, 17n41, 18–21, 23, 26, 29, 30, 31n17, 32, 32n19, 32n22, 34, 35, 35n37, 36, 36n43, 37, 38n56, 39, 40, 43, 45, 46, 48, 49, 52, 58, 59, 59n10, 59n16, 60, 61, 61n31, 63–65, 68, 68n11, 69, 69n19, 70, 75n59, 76, 77, 77nn1–2, 78, 79, 84, 84n8, 84n11, 86, 89–91, 98, 101, 102, appendix
- duties. *See* tolls
- East India Marine Society, 65
- Een-tze Chaou. *See* Yen-tsze-chaou
- E-ho or E-wo Hong (Yihe Hang 義和行), 90, 91, 98. *See also* factory, No. 17
- Ekeberg, Carl Gustav, ix, x, 2, 6, 7, 11
- Elsinore, 12
- England, 29, 44
- English. *See* British
- E-wo Hong. *See* E-ho
- Eyre, Benjamin G., 34n31
- façade, No. 01 (Danish factory), 18, 71, 79
- façade, No. 03 (Spanish factory), 36, 40, 52, 55, 62
- façade, No. 04 (French factory), 39–41, 62
- façade, No. 06, 78
- façade, No. 07, 60, 60n21; American factory, 67, 70, 77, 82
- façade, No. 09, 65
- façade, No. 10 (French factory), 2, 7
- façade, No. 12 (Old British factory), 12, 43, 78, 79, 80
- façade, No. 13, 65
- façade, Nos. 14–15 (New British factory), 79, 80
- façade, No. 15, 12, 59, 72
- façade, unspecified, ix, 52, 82
- factory, Attay's, 83
- factory, Austrian (Imperial), 97. *See also* factory, No. 10
- factory, Barretto's, 86
- factory, Blight's, 86. *See also* factory, No. 9
- factory, Chetqua's, 5, 38, 38n56
- factory, Chow Chow, 86, 90. *See also* factory, No. 13
- factory, Chunqua's, 78, 86, 91, 98. *See also* factory, No. 6
- factory, Fatqua's, 86, 91. *See also* factory, No. 8
- factory, Gnewqua's (Newqua), 35, 35n34, 68, 91
- factory, Manhops's, 86
- factory, Manila, 37
- factory, Minghwa's, 97, 98
- factory, Mowqua's (Guangli Hang 廣利行, also called Kwang-le-hang), 79, 86, 91
- factory, No. 01 (Danish factory), xix, xx, xxn10, 2, 4, 6, 7, 7n25, 7n27, 11–18, 21, 22, 32, 34–36, 39–41, 52, 54, 55, 62, 63, 68–74, 74nn46–47, 75, 77, 79–82, 85–87, 90–92, 94–96, 96n47, 97, 97n54, 98, 102
- factory, No. 02, 43, 74, 85, 86, 90–92, 94, 95, 95n44, 96, 98, 102

- factory, No. 03 (Spanish), xix, 36–41, 52, 54, 55, 58, 59, 62, 70, 85, 86, 90, 91, 98, 102
- factory, No. 04, 6, 32, 35, 40, 65, 69, 70; Co-hong owned, 83; French factory, 31, 32, 35–37, 39–41, 54, 59, 60, 62, 65, 69, 73, 75, 86, 90, 91, 98, 101, 102
- factory, No. 05, 41, 86, 90, 91, 98
- factory, No. 06, 5, 7, 12, 14, 15, 21, 43, 52, 77, 78, 80, 82, 83, 85, 86, 90, 91, 94, 96
- factory, No. 07, 5, 18, 21, 36, 39, 40, 43, 49, 60, 60n21, 63, 83, 85, 86, 90, 91, 94, 96n49; American factory, x, xi, 65, 67, 67nn1–3, 67n6, 68, 70, 73, 74n46, 75, 77, 82, 86, 90, 91, 95, 96, 96n49, 98, 101; French factory, 16n30, 21, 31–34, 37, 40
- factory, No. 08, 11, 37, 39–41, 86, 90, 91, 96
- factory, No. 09, 18, 36, 37, 39–41, 49, 63, 65, 86, 90, 91, 98
- factory, No. 10, 43–45, 49, 52; American flag in front, 41; French factory, xi, 2–5, 7, 11, 13, 16, 16n30, 16n33, 17, 18, 21, 31–33, 35, 43–45, 49, 101; Imperial factory, 16, 17, 17n37, 32–34, 38, 38n57, 40, 73, 86, 90, 91, 97, 98; Prussian factory, 37, 37n48, 39, 40
- factory, No. 11: British flag in front, 70; Swedish factory, xi, 3–5, 7, 11–14, 18, 40, 44, 73, 73n45, 75, 86, 90, 91, 98, 101, 102
- factory, No. 12, 39, 43–45, 49, 50, 52, 54; Old British factory, xxii, 2, 3, 7, 12–14, 39, 43, 54, 55, 69, 70, 76–80, 86, 89–91, 98; Swedish flag in front, 40
- factory, No. 13, 13–15, 63, 65, 70, 86, 90, 91, 94, 98
- factory, No. 14 (New British factory before it was joined with No. 15 in 1815), xv, xviii, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 13, 15, 16, 26, 39, 43–46, 48, 49, 52, 54, 55, 69, 70, 72, 73, 78, 87, 89, 94
- factory, Nos. 14–15 (New British factory after Nos. 14 and 15 were joined in 1815), xxii, 76–80, 86, 90, 91, 94, 98
- factory, No. 15 (before it was joined with No. 14 in 1815), 7, 11, 12, 14, 18, 59, 71, 72; Armenian factory, 72, 78; American flag in front, 34, 36, 40n66, 41; British took over, 72
- factory, No. 16 (Dutch), 2, 2n2, 6, 6n20, 7, 9, 10n3, 10n5, 15, 16, 26, 39, 43, 45, 46, 48, 49, 52, 64, 65, 68, 70, 86, 90, 91, 98
- factory, No. 17 (Creek), 18, 34, 39–41, 59, 62, 71, 86, 90, 91, 98
- factory, Parsee's, 90, 98. *See also* factory, No. 13
- factory, Poankeequa III's, 74, 85, 86, 90, 91, 95, 95n44, 102. *See also* factory, No. 2
- factory, Portuguese, xix, xixn9, 38, 38n56
- factory, Tantinquá's, 94, 94n42
- factory, Texia's, 83
- Farris, Johnathan, xx
- Fatqua, Hong merchant, 86, 91
- fees. *See* tolls
- fencing, lattice, ix, 18–22, 32, 36, 37, 39, 40, 68, 70–72
- Fengtai Hang 豐泰行. *See* Fung-taie
- Ferguson, Patricia, xiii, 34n31, 40n66, 41n68
- fire, ix, x, xv, xviii, xx–xxii, 12–14, 45, 68, 72, 75–78, 82, 85, 85nn15–16, 86, 88, 89, 91–96, 102
- fire engines, 68, 78
- Five Storeyed Pagoda (Wuceng Lou 五層樓 or Zhenhai Lou 鎮海樓), 21, 45, 46
- Flemings, 16, 17
- floods, 10, 18–20, 72, 73, 86, 88n24
- Flowery Pagoda (Huata 花塔), 21, 48
- Formosa, 38n58
- Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780–1784), 29
- France, 16, 35n37, 39, 60, 71, 80, 81n25
- French Folly Fort (Dong Paotai 東炮台), 21
- French Revolution, 30, 39, 59
- French, ix–xi, xix, xx, xxii, 2–5, 7, 11, 13, 14, 16, 16nn30–33, 17, 18, 18n45, 21, 22, 30–32, 32n22, 33–35, 35n37, 36, 36n43, 37, 39–41, 54, 59, 59nn10–11, 60, 60nn21–23, 61–63, 65, 67, 69, 69n19, 70, 71, 73, 75, 76, 78, 80, 80nn14–15, 80n17, 81, 81nn21–22, 81nn24–25, 84n11, 86, 89–91, 98, 101, 102, appendix
- French, William, 81, 82, 102
- Fung-taie or Fung-tae Hong (Fengtai Hang 豐泰行), 90, 91, 98. *See also* factory, No. 13
- Garden, 68
- Germans, 17, 17n37, 38n57
- Gnewqua, Newqua, Hong merchant, 35, 35n34, 68, 91
- Goa, 60
- Gothenburg, 5
- Gothenburg City Museum, 12
- governor, Guangdong Province, 94, 95
- governor, Spanish, 61
- Green, Capt., 35, 35n32
- Grill, Jean Abraham, xi, 5, 5n14
- Groninger Museum, xiii
- Guangcai* ware 廣彩, 22, 22n55, 23
- Guangyuan Hang 廣源行. *See* Kwong-yune
- Guanyin Shan 觀音山. *See* Magazine Hill
- Guignes, Chrétien-Louis-Joseph de, 35n37, 61
- Haas, Jonas, 12
- Hahr, Jacob, 5, 5n14
- Hartkam-Jonxis, Ebelte, xiii, 10
- Hay, 16
- Hickey, William, 17, 17n37, 23, 36n41
- Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 92
- Hog Lane (Doulan Jie 豆欄街, 荳欄街, or 新荳欄街 after 1822, also called Tow-lan Kae, San-Tow-lan-keae, Hoglam, and Rue du hog), xvii–xix, 2, 13–15, 49, 78, 82, 83, 83n2, 84–88, 88n24, 89–91, 93–96, 98, 98n56, 101

- Honam (Henan 河南), xix, 21, 27, 45–47, 52,
 Honam Temple (Haizhuangsi 海幢寺), 21
 hong. *See* factory
 hong bowl, x, xii, xxii, 2, 4, 5n11, 6, 12, 13, 18, 22, 26, 27, 34, 35, 35n32,
 36, 39, 40, 40n66, 41, 54, 99, 100
 Hong Kong Museum of Art, x, xiii, 3, 6, 6n19, 7, 7nn24–25, 7n27, 9,
 9n2, 48, 51, 51n15, 53–55, 98n56
 Hong merchant, xv, xvii–xix, xixn9, 1, 3, 6, 12, 13, 29, 34, 38, 57, 83, 84,
 88, 90, 91, 94, 95, 98
 Hong Paotai 紅炮台. *See* Red Fort
 Hoppo (Hubu 戶部 or Jiandu 監督, customs superintendent), xv, xix, 9,
 10, 14, 29, 30, 35n36, 38
 hotel, xix, 31, 73, 74, 74n46, 102
 Howqua, Hong merchant, 38n58
 Huaishengsi Guangta 懷聖寺光塔. *See* Mohammedan Tower
 Huangqi Hang 黃旗行. *See* Hwang-ke
 Huata 花塔. *See* Flowery Pagoda
 Hungarians. *See* Imperialists
 Hwang-ke or Wong-he Hong (Huangqi Hang 黃旗行), 90, 91. *See also*
 factory, No. 1
 Hwuy-lung Hong (Huiling Hang 會隆行), 91
- Imperialists, Imperial factory, Hungarians, ix, xi, 16, 16n30, 16n33, 17,
 17nn36–37, 18, 18n45, 21, 22, 32, 32n22, 33, 34, 35n34, 37, 38,
 38n57, 40, 54, 70, 73, 86, 90, 91, 98
 India, 29, 29n4, 31, 34, 46n4, 77, 94, 102
 innkeeper, 31, 101
 Italians, 29, 39, 59
- Jehol, 53
 Jemmy Young Tom, 89
 Jiang Yinghe 江滢河, xiii, xx
 Jingdezhen, 22, 22n55, 23
 Jingyuan Jie 靖遠街 or 靜遠街. *See* China Street
 Jiu Gong Hang 舊公行. *See* Kaw-kung
 Ji yi Hang 集義行. *See* Tseep-ee
 Johnson, James, xvii, 87
 Jörg, Christiaan, xiii, 10, 23
 Junk *Samkonghing* (*Sanguangxin* 三廣興), 11
 junks (Chinese vessels), 3, 11, 12n8, 19, 21, 43, 45, 68, 76, 91
- Kaw-kung or Kew-kung Hong (*jiugonghang* 舊公行, old Co-hong
 factory), 90, 91, 98. *See also* factory, No. 4
 Kewshaw, Hong merchant, 17n36
 kumshaw (a tip), xviii, 89
 Kwong-yune or Kwang-yuen Hong (Guangyuan Hang 廣源行), 90, 91,
 98. *See also* factory, No. 7
- Latimer, John Richardson, 23, 23n6
Leung hingkae (Lianxing Jie 聯興街), 96n47
 Lianxing Jie 聯興街. *See* *Leung hingkae*
 linguist, Chinese, xvi, 88
 Ljungstedt, Sir Anders, 75, 77, 77n1, 96, 98
 Longshun Hang 隆順行. *See* Lunsoon
 Löwenstern, 71
 Lunsoon or Lung-shun Hong (Longshun Hang 隆順行), 12, 78, 79, 90,
 91, 98. *See also* factory, No. 12
 Lüsung Hang 呂宋行. *See* Luzon
 Luzon, Luy-sung or Leu-sung Hong (Lüsung Hang 呂宋行), 90, 91, 98.
See also factory, No. 3
- Macao, x–xii, xv, xvii, xix, xixn9, xx, 4, 5, 5n14, 18n44, 29, 29n5, 31,
 31n17, 32–35, 35n37, 37, 37n45, 37n47, 38, 38n56, 38n58, 39,
 46n4, 58, 58n8, 59, 59n9, 60, 60nn22–23, 61, 61n31, 62, 62n35,
 64, 65, 68, 68n11, 70–74, 77, 77nn1–2, 78, 79n12, 80, 80n15, 81,
 81n18, 81n29, 84n11, 88, 91, appendix
 Macartney, Lord, xi, 25, 50, 51, 53, 60, 63
 Magazine Hill (Guanyin Shan 觀音山, Kum Yam Shan), 21, 45
 magistrate (Chinese), 95
 Mandarin's house. *See* customs houses
 Mandarins, 14, 34, 38, 74, 76, 84n11, 86, 90, 91
 Manhop, Hong merchant, 86
 Manila, xvii, 29, 37, 38, 61, 61n31, 71, 80, 80n14, 80n17
 Mantack Hong (Wende Hang 文德行), 12, 12n8
 Man-yune or Wan-yuen Hong (Wanyuan Hang 萬源行), 90, 91, 96n49,
 98. *See also* factory, No. 8
 Maritime Museum of Denmark, xiii, 12
 Martyn Gregory Gallery, xiii, xx, 44, 45, 47, 96, 97
 Matheson, 81, 81n29
 Maying Hang 孖鷹行. *See* Ma-ying
 Ma-ying or Shwang-ying Hong (Maying Hang 孖鷹行 or Shuangying
 Hang 雙鷹行), 90, 91, 98. *See also* factory, No. 10
 Megee, William Fairchild, xx, 67, 68, 74, 74n46, 74n50, 74n52, 75, 78,
 79, 81, 81n27
 Metropolitan Museum of Art, 34
 Milburn, William, 87
 Mingqua, Mingkwa, Hong merchant, 97, 98
 Mohammedan Tower/Mosque (Huaishengsi Guangta 懷聖寺光塔),
 21, 48
 Montigny, 37, 37n45
 Morrison, Robert, 87, 88n24, 89–92, 94, 96, 98
 Moulin, 37n45, 59, 59n16
 Mowqua, Hong merchant, 38n58, 79, 86, 91
 Mudge, Jean McClure, 26
 multiple perspectives, xxii, 49, 50, 100, 101
 Munqua, Hong merchant, 17n36

- Muslims, 29, 31
- Napoleonic Wars, 71
- National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, xiii
- National Museum of Denmark, xiii, 37n48
- New England, xi
- Newqua. *See* Gnewqua
- onsite observation, xxii, 45, 46, 49, 99, 100
- Opium Wars, 92
- Osbeck, Pehr, 48
- Paris, 81
- Parsees, 29, 31, 90
- Peabody Essex Museum, xiii, 5, 5n11, 19, 25, 33, 40, 40n65, 63, 64, 73
- Pearl River, 45, 94
- pearls, 31, 34
- pediment, 2, 7, 12, 72
- Penny Cyclopaedia, The*, 97
- Peron, Capt. Jean Baptiste, 59–61, 61n27, 61n31, 69, 69n19, 70, 71
- Pinqua, Hong merchant, 38n58
- Pitman, 75
- Poankeequa II, (Pan Youdu 潘有度, Hong merchant), 67, 69, 72
- Poankeequa III (Pan Zhengwei 潘正輝, Hong merchant), 74, 85, 95, 102
- Poankeequa, PuanKhequa (Pan Qiguan 潘啟官, Hong merchant), 4, 11, 11n7, 13, 15, 17, 17n36, 17n41, 38, 38n55, 83, 85n15
- Poel, Rosalien van der, 10
- Poho, Paou-ho or Pow-wo Hong (Baohé Hang 保和行), 78, 90, 91, 98.
See also factory, Nos. 14–15
- Polly Latham Asian Art, xiii
- Pope, John, 86
- Porcelain Street. *See* China Street
- porcelain, chinaware, xvi, xviii, xxi, xxii, 13, 22, 22n55, 23, 26, 27, 29n3, 41, 57, 84, 84n9, 99, 101; porcelain painters, 12, 23, 26, 27, 99; porcelain shops/dealers, xviii, 2, 29, 36, 41, 83, 84, 84n11, 101; Porcelain Street, xviii, 84, 84n8, 84n11, 89, 94
- Portuguese, xix, xixn9, 29, 29n5, 38, 39, 60, 60n23, 74, 74n52, appendix
- Pow-shun or Paou-shun Hong (Baoshun Hang 寶順行), 90, 91, 98. *See also* factory, No. 9
- Prussians, 29, 37, 37n47, 39, 40, 75
- Puqua, painter, 51n15
- Pwanting Street, 96n47
- Qianlong Emperor, 53
- Qingyuan Jie 清遠街. *See* China Street
- quay, ix, x, xix, xixn9, xxi, xxii, 2, 7, 9, 12–16, 16n30, 17–22, 32, 33, 35, 35n37, 36–38, 38n58, 39, 43, 44, 50, 52, 60, 61, 68–72, 76, 77, 79–85, 89, 90n33, 93, 94
- Red Fort (Hong Paotai 紅炮台), 21, 46
- Reeves, John, 72n38, 79, 79n12, 86
- Reid, David, 62, 62n37
- Reid, John, 33, 38, 39
- Remurat, Abel de, 81
- Richardson, Capt., 6
- Rijksmuseum, xiii, 10
- rubies, 31, 34
- Rui Hang 瑞行. *See* Suy Hong
- Ruschenberger, 96
- Russians, 74
- Saint Patrick's cross, ix, 69, 70, 72
- Sainte-Croix, Félix Renouard de, 71
- Salem, 65
- saloon. *See* tavern
- sampan, xvi, 3, 19, 21, 68
- Sargent, William, xiii, 65
- Satéles, Jean Alexandres, 71
- Schopp, Susan, xi, xx, 7, 35n37
- Scoles, John, 35
- Seunqua, Hong merchant, 17n36
- Shang, William, xiii, xx
- Shaw, Samuel, 12, 14, 20, 38, 38n58
- Ship *Adolph Fredrich* (Swedish), 5
- Ship *Alliance* (American), 34n31
- Ship *Alnwick Castle* (British), 79n12
- Ship *Ann & Hope* (American), 35
- Ship *Cron Printz Christian* (Danish), xxn10
- Ship *Cron Prinz Gustaf* (Swedish), 5
- Ship *Dorsetshire* (British), 80n15
- Ship *Drotningen* (Swedish), 77
- Ship *Empress of China* (American), 35
- Ship *Fils de France* (French), 80, 81n21
- Ship *Finland* (Swedish), 5
- Ship *General Kyd* (British), 98
- Ship *Grave Rosen* (Swedish), 77
- Ship *Hercules* (Spanish), 38
- Ship *HMS Lion* (British), 60
- Ship *Hoogly* (Danish), 80, 80n14
- Ship *Indienne* (French), 80n17
- Ship *John Jay* (American), 67
- Ship *l'Etrusco* (Italian), 59

- Ship *l'Eugenio* (French), 80n17
 Ship *La Cleopatra* (French frigate), 81
 Ship *Pitt* (British), 40n66
 Ship *Prince de Kaunitz* (Imperial), 16
 Ship *Riksans Ständer* (Swedish), 5
 Ship *Santa Florente* (Spanish), 37
 Shisan Hang Jie 十三行街. *See* Thirteen Hong Street
 Shisanhang 十三行, 92, 94
 Shuangying Hang 雙鷹行. *See* Shwang-ying
 Shuzhu Bridge 漱珠橋, 45
 Shwang-ying or Ma-ying Hong (Shuangying Hang 雙鷹行 or Maying Hang 孖鷹行), 90, 91, 98. *See also* factory, No. 10
 Shy Kingqua, Hong merchant, 17n36
 Shy Kinqua (Shi Mengjing 石夢鯨, Hong merchant), 13, 14, 17n36
 silk, xv, xviii, 29n3, 57, 89, 98; raw silk, 57; silk painters, xviii; silk shops/dealers, xviii, 2, 29, 83, 84, 84n11, 87; silk weavers, xviii
 singsongs, 34
 Snow, Samuel, x, 35, 35n34, 35n36, 67, 67n1, 67n3, 67n6, 67n8, 68
 Sonnerat, Pierre, 15, 15n26, 84
 Southeast Asia, 3, 77, 91
 souvenir, xviii, xxi, 2, 9, 21, 54, 100, 101
 Spanish, Spaniards, ix, x, xvii, xix, 29, 29n5, 36, 37, 37n53, 38, 38n58, 39–41, 54, 55, 58, 58n8, 59, 59n9, 60, 61, 63, 65, 68, 68n11, 70, 72, 78, 86, 90, 91, 98, 102, appendix
 Staunton, George, 25
 Sterrett, Malcolm M. B., xiii
 Sturgis, 73
 supercargo (*daban* 大班), xv, xv2, xvi, xvii, xix, xx, 1, 31, 36, 85; American, 84n11, 88, 89n29; British, 78; Danish, 62, 72, 81; French, 16, 17, 69; Portuguese, xix; Spanish, xix, 38; Swedish, 34, 61
 Suy Hong or Sew-ho (Rui Hang 瑞行 or Xiuhe Hang 修和行), 90, 91, 98. *See also* factory, No. 11
 Swedes, Swedish, ix–xi, xix, xixn9, 2–5, 7, 11–15, 17n36, 17n41, 18, 18n44, 30, 32, 32n22, 33, 34, 40, 44, 54, 59–61, 61n33, 62, 62n35, 63, 64, 70, 72, 73, 73n45, 75, 75n59, 75n61, 76, 77, 77n1, 78, 79, 83, 83n4, 84n11, 86, 89–91, 93, 98, 101, 102, appendix
 Swequa (Cai Ruiguan 蔡瑞官, Hong merchant), 2n2, 6n20
 Sydney, 29
 Taipan. *See* supercargo
 Tan-qua, painter, on China Street, 48
 tavern, saloon, xix, 31, 74, 74n46–47, 74n52, 75, 86
 tea, xv, xviii, 10, 13, 36, 57, 98
 Tehing Hong (Dexing Hang 德興行), 97, 98. *See also* factory, No. 1
 templates, xxi, xxii, 18, 22, 35, 36, 39–41, 44–46, 50–52, 63, 70, 99, 100
 Temple Newsam, Leeds Museum and Galleries, 40, 40nn65–66
 Textia. *See* Yan Textia
 Thirteen Hong Street (Shisan Hang Jie 十三行街, also called Shap-sam Hong Kae, Thirteen Factory Street and before 1823, it was also called Old China Street), xv, xviii, xix, 19n46, 78, 87, 88, 88n24, 89–96, 96n48, 96n53, 98
 Tilden, Bryant, 74, 74n50, 75, 88, 88n24, 89–91, 94, 96n53
 Tinkoa, Hong merchant, 16
 Titsingh, Isaac, xi, 60, 61
 Tituck (general of the military), 37
 tolls, fees, and import-export duties, xv, xix, 2
 Tongfu Hang 同孚行. *See* Tung-foo Hong
 Tongwen Hang 同文行, 38, 85n15
 Tongwen Jie 同文街. *See* China Street, New
 Tow-lan Kae (Doulan Jie 豆欄街 or 荳欄街). *See* Hog Lane
 Tranquebar, 80n14
 Tseep-ee or Tsëe-e-hang Hong (Jiyi Hang 集義行), 90, 91, 98. *See also* factory, No. 16
 Tsontock, viceroy (governor general), 6, 50, 51, 73, 94
 Tung-foo Hong (Tongfu Hang 同孚行), 85, 85n16, 90, 91. *See also* factory, No. 2
 Tung-sang Hong (Dongsheng Hang 東生行), 90, 91. *See also* factory, No. 5
 Tung-wan Kái (Tongwen Jie 同文街). *See* China Street, New
 Tyng, Charles, xviii, 89
 typhoon, 68
 Union Jack, 2, 69
 United States, xvi, 35, 36
 vantage points, xxii, 32, 39, 41, 43–46, 50, 52, 55, 71, 100
 Vauquelin, 31, 31n17, 32
 verandah. *See* balcony
 viceroy. *See* Tsontock
 Victoria and Albert Museum, 26, 51n15
 Vienne, Marie-Sybille de, 60, 60n21
 Vigny, Charles-Henry de, 4, 5
 walkway (in front of the factories), 2, 2n2, 6, 6n20, 7, 22, 83, 94
 Waln, Robert, 26, 57n1, 80n17, 92
 Wanyuan Hang 萬源行. *See* Man-yune
 Wan-yuen Hong. *See* Man-yune
 war, 29, 30, 33, 60, 71, 89, 92, 101, 102
 warship, xxn10, 61
 Washington and Lee University, xiii
 Wathen, James, 48, 74n46, 74n52, 87
 weeping willows, 86
 Wende Hang 文德行. *See* Mantack Hong
 West Fort (Xi Paotai 西炮台), 21

- Whampoa (Huangpu 黃埔), xvi–xviii, xixn9, 10, 29–32, 34n31, 37–39,
40n66, 41, 41n67, 58, 58n8, 61, 61n33, 70, 74, 77, 80, 80nn14–15,
80n17, 81, 81nn21–22, 88, appendix
- White Cloud Mountains (Baiyun Shan 白雲山), 21, 45
- Wilcocks, B. C., 75, 75n63
- Wilkinson, George, 87
- Williams, Samuel Wells, 48, 49
- Wong-he Hong. *See* Hwang-ke
- Wuceng Lou 五層樓. *See* Five Storeyed Pagoda
- Xi Paotai 西炮台. *See* West Fort
- Xin Jie 新街. *See* China Street
- Xiuhe Hang 修和行. *See* Suy Hong
- Yan Texia (Yan Deshe 顏德舍, Hong merchant), 83, 83n4
- Yen-tsze-chaou or Een-tze Chaou (Yanzi Chao 燕子巢), 90, 91. *See also*
factory, No. 6
- Yihe Hang 義和行. *See* E-ho
- Zhenhai Lou 鎮海樓. *See* Five Storeyed Pagoda