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Cover illustration Qian Binghe, “Saochu zhang'ai” 掃除障礙 [Removing Obstacles], subtitled “New drama of the Republic.” A sweeper in Republican army uniform clears away all that is connected to the Qing dynasty. *Theater Illustrated*, 18 November 1912

Errata In the previous issue of *East Asian History* (No.27) an incorrect character was given on p.57 for Wen-hsin Yeh. The characters should read:  
叶文心

## DRURY'S OCCUPATION OF MACAU AND CHINA'S RESPONSE TO EARLY MODERN IMPERIALISM

 *Frederic Wakeman, Jr*

Most histories of Sino-foreign relations have depicted what the late John King Fairbank called “the Chinese world order” in terms of tributary diplomacy.<sup>1</sup> Even critics of Western historians’ depiction of Qing 清 China as an “immobile empire,” too culturally arrogant to come to terms with the European “family of nations” during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, have focused their primary attention on Lord Macartney’s embassy to Rehe 热河 in 1793 and on Lord Amherst’s mission to Beijing 北京 in 1816.<sup>2</sup> Yet it is precisely the twenty-odd years in between these two ‘tributary’ visits to the royal court that saw, in Macao (Aomen 澳門) and Canton (Guangzhou 廣州), far to the south on the margins of the realm, the development of a new sense of imperial diplomacy that largely erased the lines between realistic statecraft and ritualistic culturalism long before the British imposed the unequal treaty system upon the Chinese in 1842.<sup>3</sup>

This novel sense of a foreign threat to Chinese territorial sovereignty was certainly presaged by the Qianlong 乾隆 Emperor’s (r. 1736–96) concerns about English naval power at the time of the Macartney mission itself. Indeed, once-secret Qing documents now reveal that the emperor’s pretentious autarky expressed in his famous letter to King George III (“We have never valued ingenious articles, nor do we have the slightest need of your Country’s manufactures”) masked an uneasy recognition of Britain’s imperial ambition and its advanced military technology.<sup>4</sup> But the most acute example of those concerns prior to the Napier mission of 1834 was represented by Admiral William Drury’s occupation of Macao during the Napoleonic wars. As Fei Chengkang 費成康 has pointed out, the British had had their eyes on Macao twenty-one years before Drury landed his soldiers in Macao in 1808. In 1787, Charles Cathcart was instructed to ask the Qianlong Emperor for

<sup>1</sup> See for example, John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968).

<sup>2</sup> James L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995). See also Alain Peyrefitte, *The Immobile Empire*, trans. J. Rothschild (New York: Knopf, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> For an excellent account of this historiography, see Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar*, pp.225–48.

<sup>4</sup> See the documents translated by P-H. Durand, et al., especially pp.262–347, in Alain Peyrefitte, *Un Choc de cultures: la vision des Chinois* (Paris: Fayard, 1992). The letter itself was not fully translated into English until 1896. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar*, p.238.

<sup>5</sup> Fei Chengkang, *Macao 400 Years*, trans. Wang Yintong (Shanghai: Academy of Social Sciences, 1996), pp.178–9; Zhongguo Diyi Lishi Dang'anguan [Number One Historical Archives of China], Aomen Jijinhui [Macao Fund], and Ji'nan Daxue Guji Yanjiusuo [Ji'nan University Ancient Books Research Institute], eds., *Ming Qing shiqi Aomen wenti dang'an wenxian buibian* [Compilation of Archival Documents on the Macao question during the Ming and Qing periods] (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1999), vol.1, pp.535–6, 542–5, 588–90.

<sup>6</sup> Fei, *Macao 400 Years*, p.179; Andrew Ljungstedt, *An Historical Sketch of the Portuguese Settlements in China and of the Roman Catholic Church and Mission in China* (Boston, Mass.: James Monroe & Co., 1836), vol.2.

<sup>7</sup> Fei, *Macao 400 Years*, pp.179–80; M.C.B. Maybon, “Les Anglais à Macao en 1802 et en 1808,” *Bulletin de l'école française d'extrême-orient* (Hanoi: F.H. Schneider, 1906), vol.6, p.302. The only country that conveyed its merchant ships were the English. H.B. Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1926–1929), vol.3, p.9.

<sup>8</sup> Angela Guimaraes, *Uma Relacao especial: Macau e las relacoes Luso-Chinesas (1780–1844)* (Lisbon: Edicao CIES, 1996), pp.78–7.

<sup>9</sup> Maybon, “Les Anglais à Macao,” pp.302, 305–6; Fei, *Macao 400 Years*, p.180. But see also: *Ming Qing shiqi Aomen wenti dang'an wenxian buibian*, vol.1, p.623. At the time of the Macartney embassy, the English share of foreign trade accounted for about 75% of the annual foreign customs receipts of the Qing empire, that is, 1.2 to 1.6 million taels. Arthur W. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644–1912)* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1944), vol.2, p.967.

<sup>10</sup> Palace Museum, comps., *Qing dai waijiao shuliao, Jiaqing chao* [Historical materials on foreign regulations during the Qing, Jiaqing reign] (Taipei: Chengwen Chubanshe, 1968), p.33.

<sup>11</sup> Maybon, “Les Anglais à Macao,” pp.30–5.

permission to use Macao or Amoy (Xiamen 廈門) as an entrepôt for British traders, but Cathcart died *en route* to China and the mission was never accomplished. In 1793, Macartney made a similar request to use the Zhoushan 舟山 (Dinghai 定海) islands but English merchants were restricted by the Qianlong Emperor to residence in Macao instead.<sup>5</sup> That same year, when Portugal and England declared war against France after the execution of Louis XVI, the Macaonese tried to seize a French merchantman that had sought refuge in the port's inner harbor. The Chinese authorities, however, forbade them to make war on China's territory, thereby reminding the Portuguese that they had never acquired the rights of sovereignty over Macao despite possessing it for nearly three centuries.<sup>6</sup>

In succeeding years, and especially in 1799, the Macaonese began to turn to the Qing authorities for help in resisting the British use of their harbor as a military anchorage.<sup>7</sup> The British, meanwhile, began to concern themselves more and more with defending Portuguese colonies in Asia against French and Spanish forces. Macao was seen as particularly vulnerable, and in 1802, the year after the Portuguese lost a battle in the Alentejo region against French and Spanish armies, the Marquis of Wellesley, governor-general of British India, sent six naval vessels with troops to ‘help’ the Portuguese defend Macao against a possible French invasion.<sup>8</sup> The Senate of Macao protested, both to the governor of Macao and to the viceroy (*zongdu* 總督) of the Liang-Guang 兩廣, Ji Qing 吉慶, who decided not to report the matter to Beijing—no doubt to protect the foreign trade at Canton that was such an important source of local revenue.<sup>9</sup> However, the Macao Senate also reported England's plan to invade Macao to the Portuguese bishop in the capital, Dm Pr. Alexander de Bouveza, who together with Father Jose Bernardo de Almeida conveyed the news to the Jiaqing 嘉慶 Emperor.<sup>10</sup>

The emperor responded resolutely. According to the *Rou yuan ji* 柔遠記 [Record of dealing with the foreign]:

Seventh year of Jiaqing (1802). Spring, third month. The English plan to take over Macao. During this period, English ships of war, numbering six, moored at Jigang [雞港] where they passed several months. They had the intention of taking over Macao ... Here are the explanations [the English chief] gave. “France wishes to take over Macao, and if I have brought soldiers it is to protect the town.” He said other lying words. We do not have to lend any credence to these comments because the intention of the English was no more than to dissemble their project to take the town ... The emperor, having been brought up to date about this communication, orders Ji Qing to make certain that the English set their sails.<sup>11</sup>

Ji Qing promptly ordered the British naval vessels to leave Chinese waters and when they refused to comply and remained at anchor, he cut off their food supplies.<sup>12</sup> A confrontation was averted, however, when news of the signing of the Treaty of Amiens, temporarily ending hostilities between France and England, reached the English off Macao in July 1808.<sup>13</sup> They promptly set out to sea, allowing Ji Qing and his emperor to proclaim a victory though the British officers themselves appeared not to have realized how close they had come to an actual military engagement.<sup>14</sup>

The 1802 crisis at Macao thus had a differential impact. The British went about their business, and when war resumed between France and England, King George III sent a long letter together with tribute to the Jiaqing Emperor, accusing the French of regicide, perfidy, and military aggression. The Chinese, on the other hand, used the crisis to reassert their sovereignty over Macao, convinced that the emperor's steadfastness and resolve had sent the English on the run.<sup>15</sup> The crisis also heightened Chinese imperial concerns about British naval ambitions along the China coast, although the Cantonese Cohong merchants tried to dampen the Jiaqing court's alarms by playing down the threat posed to the empire by European navies.<sup>16</sup>

The court responded ambivalently, partly because of the Annamese pirate raids then terrorizing the southeastern coast.<sup>17</sup> On the one hand, the Jiaqing Emperor responded to George III's 1805 letter by assuring him the English-Chinese *entente* still perdured, and praising British negotiators for being so respectful.<sup>18</sup> On the other, the emperor strictly forbade the new Cantonese viceroy, Na Yancheng 那彦成, from permitting English warships on convoy to attack Vietnamese pirates.<sup>19</sup> The Liang-Guang viceroy also sternly intervened when H M S *Harrier* tried to recover a captured Spanish brig from Haerlem Bay, east of Macao, and ran athwart the Cantonese officials' determination to prevent British warships from entering Chinese waters.<sup>20</sup>

Piracy continued to flourish in the Canton delta during 1807–08. The Xiangshan 香山 magistrate actually requested the head of the East India Company (EIC) Select Committee, Mr Roberts, who was then at Macao, to assign two British cruisers to cooperate in piracy suppression.<sup>21</sup> This request was echoed on 23 July 1808, by the Hoppo 戶部 in Canton. The English responded by asking for a formal request. Given the Jiaqing Emperor's strong stance against military cooperation with the British, the Liang-Guang viceroy was unable to send a written plea, but indicated verbally that he would be pleased if English cruisers could act in conjunction with his own fleet.<sup>22</sup>

Nonetheless, the impression had already been conveyed to the governor general's office in Calcutta that the Chinese would not officially accept an intervention, even though the pirate threat continued to mount. Viceroy G.H. Barlow told the Select Committee that the "jealous and suspicious nature of the Chinese Government leads us to doubt whether the arrival of an English

<sup>12</sup> *Da Qing Renzong Rui (Jiaqing) Huangdi shilu* (Taipei: Hualian Chubanshe, c. 1964), *juan* (hereafter *j.*) 202, 22a.

<sup>13</sup> *Ming Qing shiqi Aomen wenti dang'an wenxian huibian*, vol.1, pp.624–5.

<sup>14</sup> Palace Museum, *Qing dai waijian shiliao, Jiaqing chao*, pp.36–8; *Ming Qing shiqi Aomen wenti dang'an wenxian huibian*, vol.1, pp.626–7.

<sup>15</sup> Maybon, "Les Anglais à Macao," pp.307–9. The Chinese reaction to the murder of a Chinese interpreter on 15 July 1806 by a Siamese sailor on a Portuguese ship in the Taipa 葵澳 Anchorage (the Portuguese were forced to execute the sailor) reinforced this renewed sense of Chinese jurisdiction. *Ming Qing shiqi Aomen wenti dang'an wenxian huibian*, vol.1, pp.629–30; Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company*, pp.15–16.

<sup>16</sup> In 1805, the hong merchants advised Qing authorities that: "England and France, which are situated far away in the nonetheless [*sic*] of China, across the oceans, mount a very long voyage in order to come and trade in Canton. There is no reason to be filled with anxiety about the conduct of the French and English in China. They will certainly not cause trouble." Trans. Maybon, "Les Anglais à Macao," p.310.

<sup>17</sup> Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company*, p.8. In March 1805 the EIC Select Committee reported that there were 600–700 freebooters in the Canton estuary and along island anchorages from Hainan 海南 to Fujian 福建. *Ibid.*, p.7. See also, *Ming Qing shiqi Aomen wenti dang'an wenxian huibian*, vol.1, pp.639–40.

<sup>18</sup> Maybon, "Les Anglais à Macao," pp.309–10.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.310–11.

<sup>20</sup> Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company*, pp.9–13.

<sup>21</sup> At that time, the Chinese recognized only one British authority in China: the president of the Select Committee. *Ibid.*, p.88.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.85.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.85–6.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p.86.

<sup>25</sup> Extract from the Select Committee's report to the Secret Committee of the EIC, dated 30 March 1809, in *ibid.*, p.96. See also p.94.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.86. The value of this trade can be gleaned from the figures given by Esteban, who argues that the EIC transfers financed British land warfare during the French wars. Between 1757 and 1815 (Plassey and Waterloo), the minimum transfers from India to Britain amounted to 30.2 million sterling. Javier Cuenca Esteban, "The British Balance of Payments, 1772–1820: India Transfers and War Finance," *Economic History Review* 54 (2001): 56. See also, John F. Richards, "Imperial Finance under the East India Company, 1762–1859," unpublished paper, p.16.

<sup>27</sup> Consequently, the Select Committee sought in the summer of 1808 to sway public opinion in Macao to favor the English. The committee actually employed Goqua 中國, a cohong linguist who was a native of Macao, to try to influence public opinion—apparently to no avail. *Ibid.*, p.87. In 1810, revenue from direct taxes and agricultural income amounted to 20% of the British government's tax receipts; customs revenue and net retained imports equaled 36%. Patrick K. O'Brien, "The Political Economy of British Taxation, 1660–1815," *Economic History Review*, New Series, 41.1 (Feb., 1988), Table 6 on p.15.

<sup>28</sup> Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company*, p.87.

<sup>29</sup> Roberts, head of the EIC Select Committee in Canton, had already tried by peaceful means to effect this goal; but the Annamese court, influenced by its French military advisors, had rejected the overture. Maybon, "Les Anglais à Macao," pp.313–14.

<sup>30</sup> According to the *Rou yuan ji*, the first contained 700 men, the second 200, and the third 100. Maybon, "Les Anglais à Macao," p.314.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p.314.

Naval Armament without the previous consent of the Chinese Government would not be highly offensive to that Government."<sup>23</sup> This understandable skepticism, however, did not extend to British concerns about French invasion plans for Macao, which of course led to the fundamental miscalculation behind the despatch of the Drury mission in 1808.<sup>24</sup>

The French threat was certainly a distinct danger to the EIC in Canton, especially if the Portuguese wavered in Macao. The Select Committee noted, a few months after the Drury expedition, that "from the successes of the French in Europe, the exertions of their newly arrived capital Force in Java, and possessing the control [*sic*] in Manilla [*sic*], it did not appear improbable, that the report mentioned in our Secret Proceedings of the 27th January ... might shortly be verified, especially as this was to be accomplished with facility by the introduction of either Officers or a garrison from Portugal."<sup>25</sup>

More to the point, the EIC sent a confidential intelligence memo from their Secret Department on 17 January 1808, reporting that the government of France had intimated to Portugal the need to place Macao in a more respectable state of defense. The Select Committee viewed this quite simply as a threat to "harass our valuable trade," and declared that "should it appear expedient to counteract any intentions of the Enemy, by anticipating them in the possession of or in protecting Macao for Portuguese, should the Government of Portugal be induced to sanction either of these measures ... in our opinion, neither embarrassment to our affairs or any serious opposition are to be apprehended on the part of the Chinese Government."<sup>26</sup>

In short, from the perspective of the EIC factors, both the vacillation of the Portuguese and the corruption and weakness of the Chinese government rendered Macao exceptionally vulnerable to a French incursion that would fundamentally threaten the English tea-and-opium trade that provided up to one-sixth of the income of the British crown.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the Select Committee was of the opinion, as late as 16 August 1808, that "we have no reason to apprehend any opposition on the part of the Portuguese Government, but have every reason to believe that any objections or impediments on the part of the Chinese would be of a temporary nature."<sup>28</sup>

Lord Minto, the Governor-General of the Indies, was of the same mind: in July 1808, he offered the viceroy of Goa the opportunity of placing an English garrison in Macao. The Portuguese viceroy dared not oppose Minto, but neither did he authorize such an intervention. Goa's misgivings notwithstanding, Lord Minto sent an English squadron into East Asian waters under the command of Vice-Admiral Drury, whose first mission was to try to force the Gialong Emperor of Annam to open Hanoi to English trade.<sup>29</sup> He failed to do so after Annamite junks burned and destroyed several of Drury's ships sent up the Red River, forcing the main body of the squadron (now consisting of a ship of the line, a frigate, and a sloop) to sail on to Macao.<sup>30</sup> This botched military effort in Indochina was not lost upon the Chinese, who believed that Drury was intent upon taking Macao precisely because he had failed in Hanoi.<sup>31</sup>



The English squadron appeared in Macao Road on 11 September 1808.<sup>32</sup> Drury had sent no officer ahead to prepare the way, and he had no instructions to deliver from the Captain General at Goa.<sup>33</sup> Instead, he simply sent Governor Bernardo Aleixo de Lemos Faria a letter declaring his intention of occupying Macao in order to defend it from the French.<sup>34</sup> After repeated negotiations, Lemos Faria announced that he had no choice but to appeal to the Chinese for help against this numerically superior British force, whereupon Drury announced that he would get in touch with the Liang-Guang viceroy himself.<sup>35</sup>

On 21 September, brushing aside Governor-General Wu Xiongguang's [吳熊光] commands to depart with the observation that nothing in his instructions prevented him from going to war with China, Drury disembarked 300 marines and sepoy to take over and defend Macao's citadels.<sup>36</sup> Although the Select Committee later praised the discipline and order of the troops, there were several incidents involving the local population (most Chinese fled the city) and a few sepoy were killed.<sup>37</sup> The Chinese viceroy thereupon ordered that all commerce with the English be suspended and refused to meet with Drury on any terms whatsoever.<sup>38</sup> In the face of what they took to be Chinese intransigence, the English brought more troop transports into the environs of Macao, carrying up to 700 men, to further reinforce their defenses along the Xiangshan county coast.<sup>39</sup>

Reports of these activities only served to fortify the Jiaqing Emperor's resolve to resist Drury's force:

The fact is that there have arrived more than several times, nine ships abundantly provided with arms and munitions which have had the audacity to go so far as to moor at Jigang, in the Su [肅] prefecture of Xiangshan. On the other hand, 300 men were openly landed and barracked in the city of Macao at Sanbasi [三巴寺] and Longsongmiao [龍嵩廟]. They took over the guard of the batteries of the east and of the west. Without doubt such acts reveal a temerity and affrontery we must energetically oppose ... . In the presence of these deeds, the envoys of the viceroy [Wu Xiongguang 吳熊光] have given the order to suspend all commercial operations and the English have been vividly exhorted to take their troops out of Macao immediately because the interdiction imposed upon business will not be lifted without this condition [of removal]. Wu Xiongguang consequently advised them that if they were to be slow in obeying he would create an obstacle to allowing the ships to return to Macao and would oppose all refurbishing [of food] for the settlement.<sup>40</sup>

After these orders arrived from Beijing, the Chinese gathered an army of 80,000 men at Canton. A double line of junks interdicted all navigation on the Pearl River, and the forts at the Bogue (Boca Tigris, *humen* 虎門) were fully stocked with ammunition and supplies.<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, the emperor soon learned that on the first day of the ninth lunar month, three British warships had penetrated the Bogue and anchored at Huangpu 黃埔 (Whampoa).<sup>42</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Da Qing Renzong Rui (Jiaqing) Huangdi shilu*, j.201, pp.22–5a.

<sup>33</sup> This, of course, was Drury's Achilles' heel. Select Committee's report to the Secret Committee, dated 30 March 1809, in Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company*, pp.96–7.

<sup>34</sup> *Ming Qing shiqi Aomen wenti dang'an wenxian huibian*, vol.1, pp.667–70; Guimaraes, *Uma relacao especial*, pp.91–108.

<sup>35</sup> Maybon, "Les Anglais à Macao," p.312.

<sup>36</sup> The Chinese claimed that 600 men landed. *Ibid.*, pp.314–15; *Ming Qing shiqi Aomen wenti dang'an wenxian huibian*, vol.1, pp.673–5; Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company*, p.87.

<sup>37</sup> Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company*, p.97.

<sup>38</sup> *Da Qing Renzong Rui (Jiaqing) Huangdi shilu*, j.202, pp.687–8a.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p.89; Maybon, "Les Anglais à Macao," p.315.

<sup>40</sup> Imperial edict from the *Rou yuan ji*, in Maybon, "Les Anglais à Macao," p.316. See also, *Ming Qing shiqi Aomen wenti dang'an wenxian huibian*, vol.1, pp.676–7.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 682–4.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.312, 315.

<sup>43</sup> Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company*, p.89.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.90.

<sup>45</sup> Imperial edict, Maybon, "Les Anglais à Macao," p.317. See also *Da Qing Renzong Rui (Jiaqing) Huangdi shilu*, j.202, p.690.

<sup>46</sup> Imperial edict, *ibid.*, p.316. See also *Da Qing Renzong Rui (Jiaqing) Huangdi shilu*, j.202, pp.29b–30a.

<sup>47</sup> *Ming Qing shiqi Aomen wenti dang'an wenxian huibian*, vol.1, p.687.

This bellicose intervention on the part of the English created dissension between the Royal Navy and the East India Company ship captains. On 21 November 1808, Drury ordered all British shipping to withdraw from the Pearl River within forty-eight hours; these instructions were forwarded by the Select Committee to Captain Miliken Craig, the senior commander of the EIC merchantmen anchored at Huangpu. Craig and the other ship captains refused to withdraw their vessels on the basis of Drury's command alone, and requested the sanction of the Select Committee before complying. The Select Committee, meanwhile, had obeyed Drury's orders by leaving Canton sometime between 23 November and the 26th, while rumors circulated that the Chinese were going to destroy the shipping at Huangpu by fire.<sup>43</sup>

On 3 December, the president of the Select Committee received a round robin from twelve of the fourteen EIC ship commanders:

As the Chinese government have [*sic*] unexpectedly evinced every disposition to continue their first system of stopping the Trade, and systematically opposing every heretofore adopted, and now following them up by warlike preparations which may finally lead to Hostilities, place us in a most critical Situation and involve us in a serious War, and totally exclude all further amicable Negotiations. We therefore beg leave now to say that if any pacific Overture could be offered to the Chinese Government consistent with the British Character, it might lead to a speedy and amicable Adjustment of the present difficulties.<sup>44</sup>

But barring immediate withdrawal of the British forces from Macao, the Jiaqing Emperor was unwilling to negotiate. "The ministers of England, full of deference for the dynasty, ordinarily send ambassadors bringing tribute and their words are respectful. But in these actual circumstances they have no fear of offending us. In truth, they have exceeded the limits of permitted behavior. It is therefore extremely important to punish them."<sup>45</sup>

From Jiaqing's perspective:

"The fact of having disembarked troops on Chinese territory ... , of such a brutal eruption at Macao indicates an affrontery without limit. When the English pretend that their intention is to prevent a French attack against Macao, don't they know that the Portuguese have installed themselves on Chinese territory? How could France have the audacity to come and attack them? To invoke such a pretext is to freely insult the Chinese empire ... . It is important in any case to raise considerable troops, attack the foreigners, and exterminate them. In this way, they will understand that the seas of China are forbidden to them."<sup>46</sup>

In a peevish vermilion aside on Viceroy Wu's memorial, the emperor complained: "This is truly incomprehensible. You shouldn't be dilatory and impotent, ungrateful for imperial consideration and the task We have assigned you."<sup>47</sup>

On 4 December 1808, Mr Roberts was informed by Qing officials sent to Huangpu, where he had taken refuge afloat, “that it was the Emperor’s Order that the Troops should be withdrawn: that in case of refusal, they would be driven out by force, but if withdrawn that all former relations of Amity and Commerce should be renewed.”<sup>48</sup> Two weeks later, on 18 December, Drury apparently tried to break the barricade into Canton; but Qing artillery fire forced his men to retreat, thereby preventing them from “violating the ground of the Empire.”<sup>49</sup>

Drury, opposed by the Macaonese and EIC factors alike, yielded. On 20 December 1808, his troops embarked and the British fleet set sail for the Indies. Six days later trade recommenced, and shortly thereafter the Cantonese erected a pagoda in the provincial capital to celebrate Jiaqing’s victory.<sup>50</sup>

Both of the principals in the affair were disavowed by their superiors. Lord Minto, the Governor-General of India, wrote a little more than two months after the English withdrawal:

“We allude to the measure at one time in contemplation of endeavoring to intimidate the Viceroy of Canton into a compliance with the requisitions of Admiral Drury, by the advance of a Military Force, and by proceeding to bombard the Town. We can have no hesitation in stating that a measure of such extremity was inconsistent with the principles of our Instructions, and that it was never in our contemplation to suggest the prosecution of actual Hostilities, with a view either to obtain the object of the Expedition, or to resent the disappointment of it. We therefore highly approve the ultimate resolution to abandon the proposed measure.”<sup>51</sup>

The Jiaqing Emperor, on the other hand, faulted Wu Xiongguang for foot-dragging and myopia in the face of such a crucial affront to the empire: “The maritime frontiers are important parts of the territory. That is why foreigners dare to regard them with covetousness and try to mislead us with fine words. What does it mean therefore under such circumstances to publish a proclamation without force?” Why had the Governor-General not gone in person to Macao to “take extremely forceful and rigorous measures without permitting the least infraction?”<sup>52</sup> Wu should have assembled the entire Chinese army under his immediate command and deployed the force so as to fill the English with terror. In this way he could have demonstrated “the majesty of the Celestial Dynasty,” and might even have prevented Drury from landing at Macao altogether. Consequently, the emperor ordered the case submitted to the Grand Council and Board of Punishments, who judged that Wu Xiongguang be cashiered and exiled to Ili 伊犁 for dereliction of duty and for having failed to use force more promptly to expel the British from Macao.<sup>53</sup>

Just after the turn of the twentieth century, the French Sinologist M. C. B. Maybon noted that his carefully-wrought study of the Drury affair had established “that the China of Qianlong and the first years of Jiaqing was able, alongside its well-known arrogance, to demonstrate an energy of attitude, a will of resistance against

<sup>48</sup> Select Committee’s report to the Secret Committee, dated 30 March 1809, in Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company*, p.97. The EIC ships were still anchored at Huangpu on 8 December, when it was reported that there were orders to kill any English remaining in Canton. *Ibid.*, p.90.

<sup>49</sup> The artillery was commanded by General Huang Peifeng. Imperial edict exiling Wu Xiongguang, in Maybon, “Les Anglais à Macao,” pp.323–4. See also p.313. The Chinese claimed to have killed one English soldier and wounded three.

<sup>50</sup> Select Committee’s report to the Secret Committee, 30 March 1809, in Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company*, p.97; Maybon, “Les Anglais à Macao,” p.313.

<sup>51</sup> Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company*, p.88. See also *Da Qing Renzong Rui (Jiaqing) Huangdi shilu*, j.203, p.715a.1.

<sup>52</sup> Imperial edict, Maybon, “Les Anglais à Macao,” p.316. “In reality he has shown much weakness or softness [to the foreigners].” The Jiaqing Emperor enumerated the many favors Wu had received from Qianlong and his long career as a high official, including service as the viceroy of three provinces. How could Wu be so ungrateful, or was this merely a matter of incapacity? *Ibid.*, p.323.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p.324. Guangdong Governor Sun Yuting was also cashiered for failing to report against Wu. See Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch’ing Period*, p.684.

<sup>54</sup> Maybon, "Les Anglais à Macao," p.325.

foreign participation, a standpoint of opposition with the instruments of war capable to force a great European power to back down."<sup>54</sup>

This conclusion hardly needs to be modified except, perhaps, for the term "arrogance," which reflected the prevailing distinction, more than ninety years ago, between culturalism and statecraft. In the Drury affair we see how readily maintenance of the "majesty of the Celestial Dynasty" coincided with defense of Chinese territory. Early modern imperialism merged with colonialism as European wars were exported by maritime means to other continents during the eighteenth century. This was an utterly novel threat for the largely land-bound Qing empire, and it was almost entirely experienced on its maritime periphery. Yet, as the case of the Macao occupation demonstrates, the Jiaqing Emperor quickly identified that threat with an assault on the territorial sovereignty of China, which was both a very real danger to the empire's long-term strategic goals and an affront to its cultural integrity. Statecraft and culturalism did, in practice, coincide; and a new policy of Confucian realpolitik began to coalesce just as the Western powers returned more powerful than ever before, determined this time, and now in common cause, to jointly impose unequal treaties upon the late-imperial Chinese state.

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