



Folio (370 by 215 mm), three folding maps, pp. 147, Appendix and Addendum pp. 33. Traces of previous binding, leaves still attached with some loose. Addendum presents traces of having been separately bound, three small holes on left edge.

## **ENTERING THE SECOND OPIUM WAR**

**Papers relating to the proceedings of Her Majesty's Naval Forces at Canton. Papers relating to the proceedings of Her Majesty's Naval Forces at Canton. With Appendix. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.**

### **Author**

[THE ADMIRALTY]

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Printed by Harrison and Sons and presented to the Houses of Parliament in 1857,

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### **Physical description**

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### **Dimensions**

### **Notes**

This volume, presented to the Houses of Parliament by royal decree in 1857, compiles the documents issued by the British Navy during the first weeks of the Second Opium War against China, including one of the earliest detailed surveys of the Pearl River Delta, from Canton to Hong Kong and Macau.

It includes the correspondence produced between Sir John Bowring and the Earl of Clarendon from October 13 1856 to January 31 1857 as well as an Appendix with a number of additional documents connected to the First Opium War (1839-1842), such as the correspondence between Sir George Bonham and Viscount Palmerston as well as a copy of the Treaty of Nanking. It is accompanied by an addendum with further documents issued during the period January-March 1857 relating to the fire of the Foreign Factories in Canton.

The papers give an account of how the events leading to the outbreak of the Second Opium War were seen by the British Forces residing in China. Hostilities between both parties had been present since before the First Opium War but dramatically increased in October 1856 when, according to the sources compiled in this volume, a number of Chinese officials boarded the British-registered ship Arrow while it was docked at Canton, arrested several crew members and allegedly lowered the British flag. The event, having been seen as an insult of very grave character, was immediately communicated and a 'reparation' plan was soon put in action by the British and French forces. This resulted in the attack and invasion of the city of Canton in January 1857 and the signing of the Treaty of Tianjin in 1858, which helped to weaken and ultimately overthrow the Qing dynasty in favour of the Republican China in the early twentieth century.

List of maps

1. PARKES, [Harry S.], [Sketch of the Battle of the Barrier Forts area], London, 1857, 290 by 440mm.
2. Hydrographic Office of the Admiralty, 'Chu-Kiang or Canton River from Boca Tigris to Canton'/ 'Chu-Kiang or Canton River from Macao & Hong Kong to Boca Tigris', London, 29 January 1857, 540 by 570mm.
3. BATE, Thornton W[illiam], RN Commander, 'Site of the foreign factories, Canton', London, 1857, 440 by 580mm.

Of particular note is the rare survey of the Pearl River Delta from Canton to Hong Kong. It is divided in two sections: on the right side it shows the city of Canton in the north to the Pearl River mouth; on the left and at a smaller scale, it shows from Boca Tigris to the islands of Hong Kong, Landau and Macau.

The Pearl River or Zhu Jiang, also known as Canton River (or River Tigris in the past) served as one of the main trade arteries of China throughout the centuries. The extensive network of streams and harbours facilitated the movement and exchange of goods, favouring the establishment of trading routes by local and foreign merchants.

European interest in charts of the area can be traced back to the mid-seventeenth century with the incorporation of the Selden Map of China, a Chinese chart dated c1618-1623, into the Bodleian Library in Oxford in 1659 from the estate of the London lawyer John Selden, who probably acquired it from an East India Company trader.

Maps, sea charts and views of the area were usually connected to trade interests, and some of the earliest European charts of this region can be found amongst the documents produced by Portuguese merchants after the colonisation of Macau. With the arrival of other European nations in the late seventeenth century, a number of ports in the region were open for trade but in 1757 this was rescinded and Canton became the only port allowed for foreigners to trade. The reduction of trading rights for foreigners contributed to the growth of hostilities between European nations and Chinese rulers, leading to a series of confrontations which resulted in the outbreak of the Opium Wars 1839-1842, 1856-1860 and the Treaty of Nanking, by means of which Hong Kong was ceded to Britain in 1842.

The contributions made by the British Admiralty in charting the area are especially relevant, in particular the data collected by hydrographer Alexander Dalrymple, who worked for the East India

Company from 1779 and for the British Admiralty from 1795, as well as Captain Daniel Ross, Captain Sir Richard Collinson and Captain Sir Edward Belcher, who surveyed the waters surrounding Hong Kong in 1841 and whose data was probably used in the production of this map. This is probably one of the first charts to show a complete view of the delta, including the river stretch from Canton to Boca Tigris. The emblem of the Hydrographic office of the Admiralty and price is included on top of the title and information about the publisher can be found at the bottom of the sheet.

In red are marked the main battles occurred during the First Opium War as well as those that took place during the second conflict up until the year 1857. The left section of the chart includes a detailed survey of the water depth measured in fathoms and a compass rose. Information about the waters and coastline is given through nautical symbology, showing elements such as deep waters, reefs, sand-bars and the quality of the shore.

Particularly significant in the context of this publication is the inclusion of the location of the Battle of the Barrier Forts fought between American and Chinese troops. This was considered crucial in capturing Canton and is thoroughly discussed in this volume. Map 1 shows a sketch produced by Consul Parkes representing the site where the battle took place, resulting in the capture of the four Barrier Forts by the American troops. The sketch, later printed in order to be included in this volume, was originally attached to a letter wrote by Consul Parkes to Sir J. Bowring on November 24th 1856.

The third map shows the area of Canton affected by the fire of the Foreign Factories. It is signed by W Thornton Bate Navy Commander and was attached into the addendum of this volume in order to accompany a letter wrote by Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour in which he gives a detailed account of the events.

The map offers a view of the area after the fire, showing the destroyed buildings as well as the positions of the British Navy on the River, including HMS Encounter and Niger, from which Admiral Seymour wrote the letter.

We have been able to trace only a few examples of this volume in university libraries, and no complete copies of it -including the three maps inside- have been available on the market since 1977.

## **Bibliography**

## **Provenance**

## **Price:**

**Inventory reference:** 15212