

# The Canton-Macao Dagregisters

## Dag-Register

Van 't geen inhoudt de Directie over den Handel der  
Generaale Neederlandsche geestroyde  
Oost-Indische Maatschappij  
over de Schepen

A schat, Admiraal de Ruyter & Vrouwe Joh. M.  
geuzende denzelver Verblif in 't Kijzer-rijk van China,  
in A 1762 te Canton is voorgevallen

Beginnende met de komst van 't eerst en 't laast genoemde Schip in 't haven  
der Chinase wal, op 5 Ura by Goelo Babij of c. 20 mylen bewesten Mac  
tot op den dag der afsche van de drie gacete Schepen & reizen tot het vertrek  
na Patria benoemde Campieren rijdt de factory na South Southam, zij

1762



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Translation and Annotation by  
Paul A. Van Dyke

Revisions by  
Cynthia Viallé



澳門特別行政區政府文化局  
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Paul A. Van Dyke

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Cynthia Viallé

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## The Canton-Macao Dagregisters – 1762

## ABBREVIATIONS USED FOR COLLECTIONS

ANW	Aanwinsten Collection in the National Archives, The Hague
Ask	Danish Asiatic Company Collection in the National Archives, Copenhagen
VOC	Dutch East India Company Collection in the National Archives, The Hague
F17	Godegårdsarkivet Collection in the Nordic Museum Archive, Stockholm

## OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

DAC	Danish Asiatic Company
EIC	English East India Company
JFB	James Ford Bell Library, University of Minnesota
GIC	Ostend General India Company, Belgium
GUB	Göteborg Universitetsbibliotek (University Library)
KBS	Kungliga Biblioteket (Royal Library), Stockholm
LAG	Landsarkivet (Provincial Archives), Göteborg
MMR	Maritiem Museum Rotterdam
NA	National Archives, The Hague
NM	Nordic Museum Archive, Godgårdsarkivet
OIO	Oriental India Office Library, London
RAC	Rigsarkivet (National Archives), Copenhagen
SAA	Stadsarchief (Municipal Archive), Antwerp
SOIC	Swedish East India Company
UBG	Universiteits Bibliotheek (University Library), Ghent
UUB	Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek (University Library), Sweden
VOC	Dutch East India Company



## *Acknowledgements*

This initial volume of the *Canton-Macao Dagregisters* translation project, consisting of the records for 1762, has been over two years in the making. As it goes to press, annotated translations of the 1763 and 1764 *dagregisters* are being prepared to follow in the series.

As is often the case of works of this nature, many people have been involved behind the scenes in preparing this volume, and their contribution is acknowledged with gratitude.

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Cultural Affairs Bureau of the  
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## *Introduction*

On the morning of 18 October 1727, a small 70-ton sloop made its way up the Pearl River flying a flag from the coast of Malabar. It anchored next to the two Ostend General India Company (GIC) Ships *Marquis de Prié* and *Concordia*. A rumor quickly began circulating that it was being freighted by the Chinese in Batavia. The captain and first mate, however, were both Dutchmen from Batavia, which was a dead giveaway. Despite their disguise, everyone in Canton knew this was a scout ship sent by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) to try out the China trade.<sup>i</sup>

In 1729, the first VOC Ship *Coxhorn* arrived in China, which began a new era of a direct Dutch-China trade that continued into the nineteenth century. From this year to the end of the VOC in 1794, the Company commissioned 231 voyages to Canton.<sup>ii</sup> Even after the VOC collapsed, however, Dutch supercargoes continued to stay in China conducting trade to Batavia via Portuguese ships, Chinese junks, private vessels, or other Dutch companies' ships.

During their stay in China, the Dutch supercargoes kept a *dagregister* or daily record of events concerning the trade. From 1729 to 1761, these records were written primarily in Canton and they cover the trading season from the arrival of the ships in August or September to their departure in December or January. Beginning in 1762, the Dutch maintained a continual presence in China, when the supercargoes began to remain behind every year after the ships left for Europe. They stayed in Canton several months ordering goods for the next season, and then removed to

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<sup>i</sup> The captain was Jacobus van den Beake (Stadsarchief, Antwerp (SAA): IC 5705; Universiteits Bibliotheek, Ghent (UBG): Ms 1849, 1925; Oriental India Office Library, London (OIO): G/12/26). One source states that the sloop had an "Armeniaense Vlagghe" (Armenian flag) (SAA: IC 5704).

<sup>ii</sup> A number of VOC voyages to China were not completed due to foundering and/or enemy capture (C.J.A Jörg, *Porcelain and the Dutch China Trade* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), Appendix 1).

Macao during the off-season (usually March or April to August or September).

The *dagregisters* that have survived span a period of about 87 years (1729 to 1816), but there are a number of them missing, especially from the early decades. From 1762 to 1816, most of the *dagregisters* are extant, and cover the entire year in China so 1762 was a good year to begin translating. In 1763 and 1764, the Dutch were in Canton for most of the year, and in Macao only a couple of months. From 1765, however, the entries cover about seven to nine months in Canton and three to five months in Macao. Regardless of which city the supercargoes were in, they kept track of events in both places.

The VOC often sent three or four ships each year to China, but in some years there were more and in a few years there were none. When no ships arrived, the supercargoes continued to remain in China keeping track of the trade and preparing for the arrival of the next fleet. Aside from all the major events that took place, they recorded many of the details about the trade and about the ships that were arriving and departing from the delta.

The 1762 *dagregister* begins with the arrival of two VOC ships in early September. The supercargoes are greeted by their old friend and associate, Tsja Hunqua, when they arrive at Canton. The Dutch had a very long relationship with Hunqua, dating back as far as possibly the early 1730s (see note 16). By the time we meet up with him in 1762, he was the spokesman for the three merchant consortium that handled much of the VOC trade. The other two partners were Swetia and Chetqua, and they generally bowed to the requests of Hunqua. Hunqua used his influence over the others to his advantage, by getting them to accept Dutch demands, but then secretly arranging better terms for himself. The Dutch preferred to deal with three merchants, because if one fell ill, died, or was for some reason not able to fulfill his contracts, the other two could step in to keep things moving so the ships would leave on time.

The third Dutch ship to arrive this year, the *Admiraal de Ruyter*, had considerable trouble reaching Macao. The winds had blown them to the west of the delta, and because the currents along the coast generally flow to the west, the ship was held up for almost a month. This was a very difficult situation for China-bound ships, because there was almost nothing that could be done if they fell to the west and they continued to have contrary winds.

As a result, there are now many ships (including several Dutch) and junks lying at the bottom of the sea between Macao and Hainan Island. Hundreds of sailors lost their lives when those vessels went down so this was indeed a life-threatening situation for the *Admiraal de Ruyter*. Not being familiar with the waters, meant that they did not know which way to navigate to avoid hazards. This is why, when the Dutch first arrived in China, they were considering capturing a Chinese pilot to guide them into Macao. There are examples of other foreigners doing the same, which is a reflection of how serious this situation actually was for them.<sup>iii</sup>

There were several significant events that happened in 1762. Shortly after the Dutch arrive at Macao, they find out that the French Jesuits had been arrested by order of the King of Portugal. Their possessions were confiscated and publicly sold, and the Jesuits themselves were to be sent back to Europe. This was the result of a big shakeup in the Catholic Church that changed the shape of not only the church in Europe, but the mission in China as well. The Society of Jesus, which had been active in Macao since its founding, was now anathema.

Traveling aboard the *Admiraal de Ruyter* was the ex-governor of Timor and his wife. She disembarked and went to Macao shortly after the ship arrived. Her husband, however, was suspected of having been involved in the murders of two of his council members in Timor so the Dutch were reluctant to hand him over to the Portuguese. He had apparently offered to sell the Island of Timor to the Dutch, which may account for them giving him passage and protecting him. But the writer of the *dagregister*, Supercargo Hulle, was concerned that his presence would cause them considerable trouble with the Macao government. He did not want the ex-governor to take passage again aboard a Company ship so something needed to be done with him in China.

A solution was finally found in handing him over to the Armenians. This is an important example of the role the Armenians played in China in the latter half of the eighteenth century. From this time forward, they become very influential in the trade, forming links between Catholics,

<sup>iii</sup> A Chinese sailor was captured and forced to go aboard a GIC ship in 1726 as well, because the officers were unable to find a pilot to guide them into Macao. In this case, however, the Chinese sailor jumped over board and drowned (SAA: IC 5757).

Protestants, Muslims, Chinese merchants, junk traders, contraband traders, and various other private merchants. Already by 1762, they were good friends with the ex-governor's relative, Simão Vicente Rosa. Rosa was one of the prominent officials and merchants in Macao so if anyone could help the ex-governor, it would be him. These Armenian-Portuguese connections formed an important link in the Canton-Macao-Manila-India trade, which until recently, have been given very little attention in the historical literature.<sup>iv</sup>

In November, the English interpreter, Mr. James Flint, was released by the Chinese government after three years imprisonment. In 1759, he had conducted a mission to Ningpo and Chusan on behalf of the English East India Company (EIC), which was contrary to the emperor's orders, and this was his punishment. His release was a very touchy ordeal for the English supercargoes, because the last thing they wanted was to reignite the ill-feelings they had generated over this matter three years earlier. Flint was thus escorted directly to Whampoa and placed aboard the first English ship to leave China, never to return.

Also in November, the Dutch learn of the English attack and occupation of Manila, which began on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September. The war with Spain and France drained the silver supplies of the EIC, which gave the Dutch an advantage in the capital market this year. They were able to get their merchants to agree to a higher interest rate for their silver, because there was no other good source to which they could turn. This was the result of several years of war that drained the resources of the other companies.

The war was expected to have an adverse effect on the Swedish East India Company (SOIC) as well, because of the English blockade at Cadiz. SOIC ships regularly stopped in that port to pick up silver so they could purchase China cargos. If those ships were delayed, then the Hong merchant Poankeequa would have also been greatly inconvenienced, because he conducted much of the Swedish trade and depended on their silver to make his purchases.

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<sup>iv</sup> Carl T. Smith, "An Eighteenth-Century Macao Armenian Merchant Prince," *Review of Culture*, International Edition 6 (April 2003), 120-129; Carl T. Smith and Paul A. Van Dyke, "Armenian Footprints in Macau," *Review of Culture*, International Edition 8 (October 2003), 20-39; and Carl T. Smith and Paul A. Van Dyke, "Four Armenian Families," *Review of Culture*, International Edition 8 (October 2003), 40-50.

In this way, war between the Europeans could have a huge impact on the Canton market, causing a lack of silver and a glut of merchandise. If fewer ships arrived than were expected, then trade was reduced, which could lead to several merchants going broke. The English attack and occupation of Manila only added hurt to injury, as Poankeequa and others were closely connected to the Spanish there, and even financed some of their voyages to Canton. The news of war was thus not something the Hong merchants would have wanted to hear.<sup>v</sup>

The diary mentions a number of crimes this year in Canton, which are indicative of how extremely difficult it could be for the Hoppo and governor-generals to maintain harmony at times. On November 13, “one of the coolie-cooks was caught stealing two-hands-full of cloves” out of the Dutch factory. The Dutch supercargoes did not harm him, but handed him over to the Chinese authorities. He was to be punished according to his own laws and customs and made an example to discourage others from doing the same.

On December 12, a row developed between an Englishman and a tollhouse inspector, resulting in the latter becoming injured. The trade was temporarily stopped, and all the Mandarins were summoned into the city to investigate the incident. These spats with the tollhouse keepers were common occurrences, and were often the result of foreigners trying to sneak goods past the officers without paying the duties. In this case, however, the Dutch do not tell us what the dispute was about.<sup>vi</sup>

A few days later, a Dutch deserter, who had runaway to the English, passed by the factory and harassed the Dutch by hooting at them. This embarrassment creates a problem for the English captain who now has a crew of angry men who are unhappy with the Dutch capturing this fellow. This rivalry between the English and the Dutch in Canton was an ongoing problem throughout the eighteenth century, for not only those two nations, but for all of the Chinese associating with them.

In the process of negotiating the deserter’s release, a murder was committed in the Dutch factory. This complication quickly leads the

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<sup>v</sup> For a brief look at some of the factors affecting the capital market in Canton and the solvency of the Hong merchants, see Paul A. Van Dyke, “Port Canton and the Pearl River Delta, 1690-1845,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 2002), Chapter Five.

<sup>vi</sup> For a discussion of the reasons behind these skirmishes and a couple of examples of incidents at the tollhouses, see Van Dyke, “Port Canton,” Chapter One.

English captain to change his mind, and allow the Dutch to keep the man. The captain undoubtedly feared that this fellow might somehow become entangled with the murder investigation, which would bring him many new problems. The murderer was arrested and the Chinese authorities were notified. In all of the commotion, however, the audacious deserter manages to escape and disappear, which brings further embarrassment to the Dutch.

The Dutch were allowed to punish the murderer according to their own laws, but the Mandarins insisted that justice be carried out before the VOC ships left Canton. This is a good example of how accommodating the Chinese authorities could be in such matters. The Mandarins did not interfere with the Dutch form of justice, but monitored the criminal investigation from a distance. They witnessed the hanging of the criminal in Whampoa to ensure that justice was carried out.

On December 18, a French baker was released from Chinese prison after being held for six years. The Chinese government had prosecuted him, because he had beaten a Chinese to death. After the baker's release, he was given "50 lashes with the bamboo on his buttocks" and was then repatriated aboard a Danish ship. These crimes where both Chinese and foreigners were involved were very difficult situations for everyone concerned. Neither side wanted to discourage the other from the trade so somehow justice had to be carried out without that happening. With that in mind, we would have to say that all of these crimes this year were handled successfully as trade moved along with little interruption.

The diary also reveals some interesting points about the trade this year. The discourse over the mixing of Bohea and Ankay teas gives us an insight into the European market, and shows how different the European tastes were compared to the Chinese. The Dutch supercargoes were trying very hard to get a mixture that was equal or superior to the taste of the SOIC tea, because they would have to compete with that product in Europe.

The discourse over shipping silk is quite informative as well. The Dutch accused the English of trying to limit the other foreigners' trade in silk fabrics, by sending a petition to the Tsjonton that only mentioned the export of *raw* silk. The English received permission from the court in Peking to export 80 piculs per ship, which was granted to all foreigners alike. But because manufactured silk had not been included in the petition,

there was also no mention of it in the answer from Peking. By exclusion, the export of silk fabrics was disallowed.

The Dutch felt that it was the intention of the English to limit the other foreigners in silk fabrics. The Chinese merchants were constantly using this rivalry between the Europeans to their advantage, which we see in the example of Poankeequa this year. He approached the Dutch privately about this silk matter, and promised to get an exception for them from the Tsjonton to entice the VOC to contract fabrics with him. The Dutch, on the other hand, were doing the same type of manipulating with Tsja Hunqua, by trying to use his hatred against Poankeequa for the benefit of the Company.

These examples show that the organization of the Co-hong was far from being a united and all-empowering monopoly that controlled all aspects of the trade. There was on-going rivalry between several of the merchants and as a result, they were constantly looking for ways to secretly woo the foreign traders away from an adversary by offering incentives to them that were out of the purview of the Co-hong. Kickbacks, preferential loans, reduced advances and secret agreements to supply illegal gold or silk all show up in the records from time to time. These were methods used by merchants to both woo foreigners and privately compensate them for less preferential terms, such as high prices set by the Co-hong or the delivery of a less desirable product. Thus, the fact that the Co-hong could set prices and determine the rules of the trade each year in the 1760s, does not mean that competition ceased.

Another aspect of the trade that comes out in the diary is the Canton junk trade to Southeast Asia. Until recently, it was not known that the Hong merchant houses were managing and controlling most of the junks. The Dutch mention, for example, that the Co-hongist Tān Tsjooqua had trouble with his small Batavia junk this year, and had to send ten sampans out to help it. The junk cargos in 1762 had a prominent influence on the markets in Canton, especially in the sale of tin, which was imported by junks from Palembang.

From these examples and others that have recently come forth, we now know that the Canton junk trade was very closely connected to the foreign export trade. These additional insights that the Dutch give us in the diaries help to show the complexity of the factors that were involved in the commerce. It was not enough just to keep track of the other foreign competitors, because the Dutch were also competing intensely with the

junks and the Portuguese in Macao. It is thus very important that we consider these other aspects when analysing the Canton trade, which has not been done in many histories of the past.<sup>vii</sup>

We also get a glimpse this year of one of the Hoppos's methods for controlling smuggling between Canton and Whampoa. He limited the number of sampans going to each ship every day to two, in order to keep a closer watch over them. When the Dutch asked for four sampans per day, they were flatly refused despite offering the Mandarins a bribe of "double their daily table allowance." There were a number of measures that were introduced in the 1760s and 1770s to control smuggling, and this close monitoring of the transport-sampans was one of the most important.<sup>viii</sup>

But that did not mean the Hoppo's necessarily had good control over the lower echelons in the administrative structures. On the contrary, the Dutch accused the Mandarins this year of using the crimes that were committed as excuses to extract more money from the merchants and other Chinese who were working with the foreigners. The fishermen who helped tow the *Admiraal de Ruyter* into Macao were also being harassed and threatened by the Mandarins in their home for not giving them a share of the towing fees. These are signs of the level of corruption that had worked into the system already by 1762, which the Hoppo's did not or could not prevent, despite their initiatives to curb smuggling.<sup>ix</sup>

The 1760s were important years for the VOC in general, because the China Committee, which was appointed to administer the Dutch-China trade in 1756, was still experimenting with ways to maximize profits. This factor comes across clearly when Supercargo Hulle expresses his satisfaction that the Ship *Vrouwe Petronella Maria* would "load almost as much as the *Aschat*, while the *Admiraal de Ruyter* will sail home with more than what a Company ship has ever done" (Dec 25). This was a great accomplishment for the supercargoes this year, and is an example of how intensely focussed the China Committee was on maximizing their return cargos.

<sup>vii</sup> For an analysis of the Canton junk trade and the Macao trade, see Van Dyke, "Port Canton," Chapter Five; Paul A. Van Dyke, "A Reassessment of the China Trade: The Canton Junk Trade as Revealed in Dutch and Swedish Records of the 1750s to the 1770s, in *Maritime China in Transition 1750-1850*, eds Wang Gungwu and Ng Chin-keong (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, forthcoming in 2004); and Paul A. Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade*, (Hong Kong University Press, forthcoming in 2005).

<sup>viii</sup> Van Dyke, "Port Canton," Chapter One.

<sup>ix</sup> Van Dyke, "Port Canton," Chapter One.



The diary ends this year with the departure of the supercargoes and assistants to the ships, which were ready to sail for Europe. Some of the Dutch supercargoes and assistants would remain behind in Canton to clear the accounts this season and make the preparations for the next season. According to Chinese policy, the supercargoes were then supposed to remove to Macao.\* The Dutch supercargoes, however, were optimistic that they would be able to “excuse this voyage entirely” (Dec 25).

The next diary will show the long ordeal the foreigners go through with the Chinese authorities, the merchants, the linguists and the compradors to get them to leave Canton.

PAUL A. VAN DYKE

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\* It became mandatory for foreigners to remove to Macao in the off-season in 1740/1741. This stipulation was enforced with more vigour after the Flint Affair in 1758/1759 (Paul A. Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade*, forthcoming; and Hosea Ballou Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China, 1635-1834*, 5 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926; reprint, Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Publishing Co., 1966), 5:76-80).