

Appendix 11.1: Fires aboard the Ships

Note: Unless otherwise stated, all of the fires mentioned below took place at Whampoa.

- 1) 1704: upon giving the Hoppo the traditional salute, one of the Hoppo's boats caught fire and 'very much burnt the boatman's face' (BL: IOR G/12/7).
- 2) 1724, Sep 20: GIC ship St Elisabeth had the misfortune of catching fire at 7 a.m. In the lazarette between decks, where the liquor is stored, a full bottle of brandy wine exploded and sprayed its contents toward a candle lantern, which erupted in flames. With liquor fuelling the flames, the fire spread very quickly below deck from the rear of the foremast to the front of the mainmast. The water pumps were immediately put to work by the lascars spraying water on the fire. Captain Carpentier of the GIC ship Arent and officers of the neighbouring French ship St Joseph immediately went aboard with more men and water pumps. The two English ships in port at the time followed suit, with men and twelve more water pumps. The flames were finally extinguished, mostly by the bravery of the lascars, and all of the smouldering liquor chests and equipage were thrown overboard. One sailor had his legs burned, and a lot of equipage and ropes were destroyed, but the ship and crew were saved (SAA: GIC 5655 Perrenot Journal, p. 25, GIC 5689^{bis}).
- 3) 1725, Oct 11: EIC ship Oxford caught fire in the morning and the flames quickly reached the magazine which then blew up. By 2 p.m. the entire ship was on fire. The cables were cut and the ship was towed downriver by all of the neighbouring service boats in order to get it away from the other ships. The ship burned down to the water's edge, and the only things that were saved were the metal objects, such as anchors, guns, and presumably, the chests of silver. The ship had arrived at Whampoa on 2 October so the entire import cargo was destroyed, but no export cargo had been loaded yet so it was not affected (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/36C; SAA: GIC 5655 Clerck Journal, p. 46).
- 4) 1763, Jan 8: EIC ship Elizabeth caught fire just before midnight on January 8 and then blew up a short time thereafter and burned down to the water's edge while at anchor below Bocca Tigris. There are many accounts of this fire and they all add a few details to the story. The accounts do not all agree with each other and differ somewhat as to the sequence or cause of the fire. They also differ somewhat in their storyline and the number of people who perished. I reproduce all of the entries below.
Jan 8: 'At 1/4 past 11 PM the Elizabeth, about 1 1/2 mile from us SbE^t [South by East] fired 3 guns & was immediately in a Blaze of Fire, mann'd the Pinnacle & haul and sent them to save what people we could, at midnight she blew up' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/558D).
Jan 8: 'at 1/2 past 11 we ware alarmd by the Elizabeth who ware [*sic*] at an anchor ab^t 1/2 a mile a starne [astern] of us firing a gun which ware soon after followed by another we at first apprehend she had been in shoal water and had been a ground we ware going to heave a cast of ye lead but befoe we had time the melancholy prospect of seeing Fire burst from all her hatchways and being a fresh of wind in a quarter of an houer [hour] she ware all in flames fore and aft also her lower mast tops rigging &c. being all in a blaze, we hoist. out ouer pinnacle the instent the alarm ware gave but before the boat could come to her her gun beginning to go off and thay being shottd deterd the boat from boarding her till aftere she blue up which ware half an hour after 12 oClock something moore then 3/4 of an houer from the first appearance of the fire when she blue up all her mast went except the main mast she filling forward and went down but her upper works remaining above water and continuead burning' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/556A).
Jan 9: 'at 12 at Night perceived the Elizabeth to be on Fire, sent our Boats to her Assistance, at 1/2 past one AM she Blew up. At 5 AM the Wreck bore S^o having nothing standing but the stump

of her main mast. At 6 our Boats returnd with an Act. [account] of 62 of her people being saved, but ##### more are taken up by ye Chinese Boats, most of the People are on Board the *Royal Captain*. At 10 AM I went on Board the *Royl. Captain* where all the People that was saved were Found that the Capt. second & fith mates & abt [about] 30 men were missing. The Fire was occasiond by 2 French prisoners & the sailmaker smoaking in ye Cable Tier, where they drop'd their Candle & said nothing of it till all the Cables was on Fire, which soon made it impossible to save her' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/150A).

Jan 9: 'At 12 AM we were alarmd by seeing a ship on fire, immediately hoist'd out the boat & sent to her assistance, but being at such great distance from us, that before the boat reach'd her she was quite demolish'd for within the space of an hour after we perceiv'd the accident the magazine took fire, which entirely reduc'd her to the water's edge; at 6 AM our boat returnd which informd us it was the *Elizabeth* & that the Cap. his 2^d & 5th Mates perishd also 23 of the crew & one Prisoner of War, the Chief Mate & 3 other officers were Miracoulously sav'd by having recourse to go on Hen Coops & other Rafts, &ca. most of the people made their escape in the boats, tho[ugh] several was found & taken off the wreck after the explosion, in the morning sent the boats in shore where we thought the mostly likely to find any of those that are missing . . . in the Evening the Boats return'd without sucess' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/473A).

Jan 9: 'at 2 o'clock in the morning ouer boat returned from the *Elizabeth* having saved Mr. Gardiner the purser and 8 or 10 petty officers and seamen and soon after her pinnace came on board having in her Mr. Mathews Chief mate the boatswain carpenter 6 French officers and 26 seamen 15 ware taken up by the *Harcourts* boat and 11 or 12 saved them selves in the Jolly boat among which ware Mr. Beasley third mate Mr. Morgan 6th D^o [Ditto] and Mr. Manning surgon, the 4 mate Mr. Voice ware all night on a Hen coop and one man with him and ware taken up the near morning by a sampan and brought on board the *Harcourt* and the sailmaker carpenter mate and one man came on board in the Pilots sampan the whole that ware saved 68 and 28 perished among which ware the Capt. Steward Mr. Ayrees Second Mr. Gillo 5th Mate the surgoen mate 1 French officer and two young gentlmen under the Captns. care and 21 pettey officers and seamen at 8 in the morning made a sig. [signal] for all commanders to consult what to do with the ships company. When it was agreed to devide them among the Fleet we kept the purser carpenter and his mate sailmaker one midship man one Qua[rter]. master the carpenters boy armorer and 17 men the Boatswain one midshipmen 8 seamen went up to Canton in the *Elizabeth's* pinnace with Mr. Mathis the French officer at their Req. [Request] as having lost all thir cloaths &c. permitted to et. [?] to Canton all the morning the boats belonging to the Fleet ware employd in cruzing about among sundrys of drefts belonging to the wreck to see if they could see aneything of the Captain Mr. Ayres or any body Else the Chines had made a large Fire on shore out of the parts of the wreck that had driften on shore in order to get out the iron ouer pinnace tok up two butts of arrack one of them being stoue ware damaged with salt water the *Charlott* boats also took up one 1/3 of a Leag. of arrack and put it on board of us, in the evening we ware emplyd in sending the men on boad their respectif [ships] at 2 in the morning Mr. Mathis went to Canton in the *Elizabeths* pinnace with the people above mentioned taken with him 4 French officers' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/556A).

Jan 9: 'At 3 AM our Pinnace returnd having happily saved 8 People, at 4 d^o [ditto] the yaul returnd but not so lucky as to find any, but brout [brought] some of the unfortunate Persons from the *Royal Captain* who lay much nearer. At daylight sent ye yaul about to look if she could find any of the wreck'd People, found none' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/558D).

Jan 9: 'at ½ past 8 being near the ships the *Royal Captain* made a signal for all the captains which with having seen a large fire the night before, and missing one of the ships, alarmed us greatly. Soon after Capt. Clemens came aboard us and informed us that the *Elizabeth* had at 12 at night by some accident taken fire, and intirely destroyed the Captain, Second Mate and about 28 more perished, immediately came too with the best bower in ¼ less 5 fathom. the Body of Lintin Island

EbS [East by South] about 3 leagues. The Captains all went on board the *Royal Capt.* to consult on the above melancholy occasion' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/0297D).

Jan 10: 'At 7 this morning weighed with a fresh breeze . . . the other ships not being able to purchase their anchors so soon, the *Elizabeths* officers and people that were saved, being 65 were divided among the ships, according as they wanted men, excepting the chief mate, boatswaine a midshipman and 8 men that went up to the residency at Canton, in the *Elizabeths* Pinnace, which was saved after she blew up, she sunk and her gunnells just above water, but gone all to peices as far aft as the forehatchway and her decks intirely burnt, she lays in about 4 ½ fathom water about 8 or 9 miles W ½ N [West ½ North] from the high peak of Lintin Island' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/0297D).

Mar 21: 'At 3 P.M. a Macao Pilot came on board. At 5 A.M. weigh'd at ½ past 11 pass'd by the wreck of the *Elizabeth*. At noon the Extr. [Extreme] Of Lantow [Island] . . . the body of Lintin [Island]' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/495A).

- 5) 1769, Dec. 31: EIC ship *Osterley* 'At 7 PM the *Osterly* caught Fire every ship sent their boats & Engines [water pumps] to her assistance it was soon extinguish'd & did no damage' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/541H).
- 6) 1771, Dec 9: EIC ship *York* 'in the evening the Dutch Cook['s] room [caught] fire, but by timely assistance was soon extinguish'd, with little damage' ([L/MAR/B/237J])
- 7) 1773, Sep 25: Private English ship *Fatty Shaw* caught fire at Whampoa at about 6:30 p.m. and shortly thereafter blew up. The accounts of the event vary so I will reproduce them below.
Sep 25: 'at ½ past 6 PM the *Fatty Shaw* Cuntry Ship Captain Maund blew up and was immediately all on Fire, sent all the Boats to assist in saving the People and to Tow her clear of the ships, as it was flood Tide and the Wind from the Soutward, towed her above the [Whampoa] Hoppo house without damaging any other ships, took on board two of their officers that were much hurt' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/150D).
Sep 25: [paraphrased from the Danish text] at ¾ to 7 p.m., heard a mediocre/strange cannon shot, and saw a heavy smoke coming from the English ship called *Fattichoÿ* from India, commanded by Captian Mavn, immediately thereafter two barrels of gunpowder exploded, and it erupted in fire. We sent our sloop and jolly boat, as did all of the vessels in the road, to help with the fire. Two officers of the ship's crew were lost in the fire, as was an upper mate from another ship was on board. A good part of the crew was either lost in the fire or drowned, some of whom could not swim. The water pumps were unable to extinguish the fire, then the wind and tide pushed the ship ashore and the mizzen fell overboard. At 8:30 the sloops and jolly boats went to the ship, and towed it upriver past the Whampoa tollhouse, and was finally put aground near the stairs of the tollhouse. Kept the water pumps going on the wreck while it was towed. At 9:30 the captain and Mate Ibsen went to Whampoa with the jolley boat. At 10 p.m. the main mast fell, which was followed by the foremast. At 10:45 the bowsprit fell (RAC: Ask 1055, p. 58v).
Sep 25: 'At 7 PM after an Explosion of gunpowder, the *Fatty Shaw*, a County ship Capt. Maund, burst out in Flames, & burnt to the Waters Edge, Notwithstanding every assistance of Engines &c. was given by all the ships in the Fleet. As she laid above all the shipping, & it being Flood tide, she was cut adrift & Towed up the River to prevent communicating the Fire to any of the other ships, upon the ebb tide' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/278F).
Sep 25: 'At 7 PM a terrible Accident happen'd the *Fatah Soya*, Country Ship belonging to Surat, took Fire and Immediately blew up. Got everything ready to Warp [out of our berth] if Occasion should require, & sent the Boats to Assist the Ship on Fire, who with ye Assistance of the Boats in Fleet cut her adrift, and dropt her up with the Flood about 1 Mile above Whampoa, then Haul'd her a shore at high water, where she Burnt to the Waters Edge' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/317K).

Sep 25: 'At 7 PM the Faty Soy a Country ship took fire & blowd up. Boats & Engines were directly sent to their assistance but could not prevent her from being entirely burnt' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/405E).

Sep 25: 'at 7 PM the Fatte shaw (Country Ship) took Fire, and in less than a Quarter of an Hour was all in a Blaze, upon the first notice sent our Boats, and Engine to her Assistance, but to no purpose, saved what People we could, Her cables being cut she drove up above the shipping, and was then Towed ashore' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/509B).

Sep 25: 'about seven oclock in the evening the Fattee Shaw Capt. Maughan fom Surat blew up and in about 5 Minutes was all in a flame the different boats of the fleet went immediately with Engines to her assistance but finding her too far gone to be recoverd they cut her cables and let her drive up with the flood she was the uppermost and Northern. ship and a little breeze from the southward and the Tide together kept her close over to the Paddy grounds twas young flood when the accident happend and the ship driving up by degrees till about one oClock then grounded below the 2[nd] pagoda and burnt down to ye waters edge we caried the Kedge anchor out towards French Island and bent a towline to the small Bow[er]. cable ready for veering away upon the Ebb in case the wind had chopd about and brought the burning wreck down again and got a Grapnell and a chain with a piece of Lanyard stuff bent in readiness to have towd her clear of the fleet in case she had come down again with the Ebb' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/545C).

Sep 25: 'A Melancholly Accident happend at 7 PM were alarmd with a shock & loud Explosion, of Gunpowder, and in a few minutes afterwards, saw the Fatti Shawi (Country Ship) Captain Maund totally in flames all the Fleet sent their boats & Engines instntly to assist, but all in vain, for her Magazine having caught Fire, she was blown up & all her Decks & Beams were shattered to pieces & many souls were lost in the Flames, after burning some time, till two Country Ships above her moved their births, she was cut adrift & it being young flood, was tow'd by different ships boats, clear of the shipping, she grounded several times, but by the Tide rising, she floated so high up the River, as abreast of the Whampoa Pagoda, where she was Towd ashore, & stuck fast at high water being Midnight, still burning very furiously . . . there was upwards of Forty Perrish'd in the Flames among which Number was the Chief Mate of the *Cartier*, Captain Watson, who went to see his Acquaintance on board her, a Great many were taken up in a very shattered & Melancholly manner with loss of Limbs & Excessive bruises, not any person could give any accont how it hapend, unless it was the Lightning, the Gunner had not been down in the Magazine for some days past (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/556E, p. 67v).

Sep 25: 'At 7 PM the Fatueloy Country ship was blown up by some unknown accident and burnt down to the Waters Edge they lost a great number of the People' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/458C).

Sep 25: 'At 8 PM the magazine of a Country ship blew up with a great explosion. She was instantly in a flame fore and aft. All the boats of the fleet went immediately to her assistance. They cut her cables and tow'd her up to a small kreek above Wampoa Town when she took the ground and bund to the water edge. A great many of her people were missing and no account how the accident happen'd. The people missing are supposed to have been kild when the magazine blew up, which blew up all her decks fore and aft' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/0452E).

Sep 25: [paraphrased from the Danish text] at 7 p.m., an unfortunate event occurred where a Moorish ship here in the road entirely burned up in the night, and by the following day lay completely in ashes, and an English upper mate, as well as many of the crew burned up in the fire (RAC: Ask 929, p. 39v).

Sep 25: [paraphrased from the Danish text] at 7 p.m., the unfortunate event occurred where the three-masted ship *Fatty Koe* from Surat, commanded by Captain Maughon, an unspeakable fire occured, two barrels of gunpowder exploded, and a quarter of the crew perished. We and other nations sent our boats and water pumps, but the ship burned up completely (RAC: Ask 930, p. 48r).

Sep 25: [paraphrased from the Danish text] an English country ship, the Fatty Show captain Maughan, was entirely burned up at Whampoa Road (RAC: Ask 234, letter dated 1773.11.20 and 1773.12.12).

Sep 26: 'the Country ship burnt down to the Waters Edge and nothing saved, 40 People missing' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/150D).

Sep 26: 'sent the Carpenter to Scuttle the Wreck of the Fatah Soya, and at Noon sent the Long Boat to assist in saving the Iron Work &c. Was informed they have lost above 20 men the Fleet struck their Colours ½ Mast on Acct of the Death of Mr. Wyatt, Chief Mate of the *Cartier* Country ship, who unfortunately happen'd to be on Board the Fatah Soya, when she blew up' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/317K).

Sep 26: 'We hear upwards of Thirty of the Lascars that belonged to the Fatta Shaw are missing & many more very much bruized. No Person can account, how this unfortunate accident happened' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/278F).

Sep 26: 'At 4 AM our Cutter returnd on board, having left the Wreck of the Fatti Shawi, fast in the Mudd, where the Tide had left her, saw the Flames of her overland till daylight, and the Smoke of her till noon when we supposed her entirely burnt down to the waters Edge & fill'd by the Flowing Tide' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/556E, p. 68r).

Sep 26: 'At 8 PM the Fatty Soy and English Country was Blown up & Burnt, but by the timely assistance of the boats of the fleet she was tow'd up clear of the rest of ye shipping without further damage' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/462D).

Sep 26: 'the ships hoisted the colours half staff for the death of Mr. Wyat first Mate of the *Cartier* Country ship who was unfortunately on board the Fattee Shaw at the time she blew up' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/545C).

Sep 26: [paraphrased from the Danish text] The private English ship from Surat, in Whampoa Road, caught fire and immediately blew up. It was towed upriver with the flood of the tide, and put aground near the first tollhouse. We are afraid that about 60 people died in this one accident (RAC: Ask 1171, p. 91v).

Sep 27: 'AM Departed this life Cook 3^d Mate of the Ship that was burnt, Buried him on Deans [Danes] Island' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/150D).

- 8) 1777, Jan 27: EIC ship *Norfolk* 'At 11 AM there was an Alarm of Fire, given by the Gunners Mate in the Powder Room, all sort of Assistance was soon there (ie) water by Engines & Buckets, it was soon after perceiv'd, the smoke was in the Fore Hold, close to the Bulkhead of the Magazine, we got the Pipe to the Engines into the Forehold, but could reach nothing till we broke down 6 longers [layers?] of stow'd Tea's in doing which we broke 5 or 6 chests of Tea's all to pieces, 3 or 4 of the Content we saved, but all mixed together, believe them to be Singlo's [tea], we then broke through the Powder Room Bulk head & got out the Powder & at about 12 oClock the smoke disappear'd to our great joy & deliverance on this dangerous occasion, Capt. Reggall of the *Camden* & her 1st Mate Mr. Strong together with Mr Urmston 2d Mate of the *Fox* with some of their People gave us very great assistance, as well as our own officers & seamen none deserting the cause' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/541J).

Jan 28: 'in examining the damage done yesterday by the dreadful accident and which to our comfort we find not so bad as expected as little damage is done by the water & but 4 chests totally broke one of which is preserv'd unmix'd, the other three though mixed together are not spoilt by water' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/541J).

- 9) 1780, Dec 18: DAC ship *Sophia Frederica* caught fire, and after half an hour, blew up, and was entirely consumed. There are many accounts of this fire, which I reproduce below.

Dec 18: [paraphrased from the Danish texts] at 3:45 we were alarmed to see that the ship *Princess Sophia Fridericka* was on fire, and all loading was ceased. A heavy smoke started billowing out of the ship, and immediately thereafter, within 5 minutes, the entire vessel was on

fire, and immediately all the tackling was put into the boat, and people into the sloop and jolly boat and all available water pumps went to her assistance, but the fire was so fierce that there was no saving her. At 4:15 the stern erupted in fire, and sometime thereafter the mainmast and mizzenmast fell overboard and sank. The burning vessel was towed away from the shipping. The value of the cargo lost in the fire was estimated at 82,405.533 taels (RAC: Ask 235, doc. No. 38, Ask 1067, p. 101r, Ask 1183, p. 131v-132r).

Dec 18: 'At ½ past 4 PM perceivd. a large Danish ship (the *Sophia Frederica* Capt. White) to be on fire at the upper part of the Reach and near French Island. The fire raged so furiously that in less than half an hour the ship blew up an was totally destroy'd, not withstanding all the Boats of the fleet went to her assistance. Fortunately the officers and ships Crew had just time sufficient to escape in their own Boats. The Boats of the Fleets saved many stores and delivered them at the Danish Bankshall. She lay the uppermost ship at Whampoa, and the Fire breaking up at the begining of the Flood tide she did no Damage to the Fleet. Her sails were bent and she was to have saild to the 2^d Bar to morrow' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/237M).

Dec 18: 'At 4 PM Observed the *Sophia Frederika* a Danish ship on fire, sent a boat to the Banksall for the Engine, but before she could get there the fire got hold of her rigging and at 5 she blew up & immediately sunk' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/259B).

Dec 18: 'The *Princess Sophia* a Danish Indiaman took Fire and Blew up' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/42H).

Dec 18: 'at 1/2 past 3 PM the P.S. *Frederica*, Danish ship, Cap, Wyght, unfortunately took fire, and in about 20 minutes blew up, all our boats were set to their assistance as were the other ships, but to no purpose, and by dusk in the evening, she burnt to the waters Edge. Our Boats sav'd some Nankeens which were deliver'd to the Officer at their Bankshall' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/408A).

Dec 18: 'PM a large Danes ship took Fire and about 20 minutes afterwards she blew up—Only two People lost their lives' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/458E).

Dec 18: [paraphrased from the Danish text] today in the afternoon a fire suddenly erupted on the ship *Sophia Friderica*, and within 20 minutes blew up, not more than one man was involved, but the flames very quickly grew out of control (RAC: Ask 942, p. 134v).

1794, Oct 21: 'finding ourselves to near the Danish wreck, moved a little lower down & moored as before' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/107B).

- 10) 1788, Jan 23: EIC ship *Belvidere* 'at 12 PM some Billets of Wood took fire in the galley thro[ugh] the carelessness of the ships cook but was extinguish'd without doing any damage' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/332A).
- 11) 1790, Dec 18: EIC ship *Neptune* 'seeing a alarm of fire on board the *Neptune* Botany Bay ship which lays abreast of us got all clear for veering away fortunately had no occasion they extinguished it in a few minutes' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/332B).
- 12) 1793, Jul 15: Private English ship *King George* was hit by lightning and later burned up while on its way upriver to Whampoa (see Appendix 11.3 for description).
- 13) 1797, Jun 28: Private English ship *Seton* burned up at Macao 'at 5 pm came in and run on shore the ship *Seton* Captn Samways she being on fire give having [?] assistance from the *Amazon*. Saved the baggage of the officers' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/523A).
Jun 29: 'This morning went to the ship on fire with Captn Samways but the flames rendered every attempt to save anything useless at noon returned to the *Amazon* with the officers of the *Seton*. PM went on shore with the commander of the *Seton*' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/523A).
- 14) 1798, Nov 2: EIC ship *Surat Castle* 'Found an Ounce or more of Burnt Cotton, in the Hold abreast of the After Hatchway, about the 2nd from the Ground Tier, from which we conclude an attempt

had been made to set fire to the ship at Bombay, as while we were filling up the Hold a Great Heat, was felt, to come up from below, about the above mentioned place' (BL: IOR L/MAR/B/205B).

- 15) 1807, Dec 3: Private English ship *Albion* 'It appears that Captain Robinson, who having been detained [in Canton] in his passage down to his ship, did not reach Whampoa till this evening, proceeded [?] a smell of Fire the moment he came on board, and on going below into the main hold, where part of the treasure was putting away, he found his suspicions fatally confirmed. From the smell and other appearances, it was evident that a smothered fire had existed from some unknown cause for a very considerable time, but when the last accounts came away, some hopes were entertained that it might still be got under [control], and every possible caution was accordingly making for that purpose. Being at a distance from the place when this very extraordinary & unlooked [?] for disaster has happened, it was most probably that the danger would either have ceased entirely or have produced fatal consequences, before any directions could have been given by the committee, or effectual assistance dispatched from hence for the recovery of the Honble Companys property' (BL: IOR G/12/160, p. 49).
- Dec 3:** 'Immediately on the receipt of this letter, the Companys Engines [water pumps in Canton], which had been made ready for transport if required, were sent down to Whampoa, and we hope will arrive in time to be of some utility' (BL: IOR G/12/160, p. 51). [the handwriting in this source is very difficult to decipher, but over the next few pages, it mentions that the ship burned. Boats were sent to her assistance from neighbouring ships to help with the fire and to keep anyone from boarding her after the fire was put out. The *Albion* was carrying some chests full of silver bullion that belonged to the EIC. The Hoppo also sent his boats to the site in order to police the area until the fire could be put out and the treasure recovered. On p. 67, it mentions that the silver amounting to \$14,111.407 was recovered from the *Albion*.]
- Dec 3:** [paraphrased from the Dutch text] The Private English ship *Albion* caught fire at Whampoa, whereupon the English supercargos and some Hong merchants in Canton rushed to the site with their water pumps (NAH: Canton 99).
- Dec 4:** [paraphrased from the Dutch text] The cargo aboard the fore-mentioned ship [*Albion*] was destroyed, but \$14,000 were recovered (NAH: Canton 99).
- Dec 12:** the American Peter Dobell purchased what was left of the private English ship *Albion* for \$12,000 (BL: IOR G/12/160, p. 91; NAH: Canton 99, 1807.12.13). Thus, the cargo may have been destroyed, but the ship was saved.
- 16) 1817, Feb 12: EIC ship *Elphinstone* burned up at Whampoa down to the waters edge, and had 3/4 of its import cargo aboard which consisted of 1500 bales of cotton and 800 piculs of lead (BL: IOR G/12/209, p. 30, L/MAR/B/194A; NAH: Canton 273 letter dated 1817.02.23).
- 17) 1825, Dec 24: EIC ship *Royal George*, a fire started in the gun room at 4:30 a.m., which spread to the liquor room which fueled the flames. The crew escaped, but many Chinese went aboard to plunder what they could, and several of them were killed when the ship blew up, and others were wounded. Besides the ship, they lost 5,000 piculs of tea worth about 120,000 taels (BL: IOR G/12/234, 1825.12.24, pp. 46-9; *Niles Register*, 1826.06.10, pp. 252-253).