

The Garden of Perfect Brightness—3

Destruction, Looting, and Memory (1860-present)

by Lillian M. Li

Opium War:
The Final Act

Plundering
Paradise

Collecting
Loot

Relics &
Controversy

Ruins &
Memory

Sources
& Credits

SOURCES | NOTES | CREDITS

SOURCES

Bibliography

Barmé, Geramie R. "A Garden of Perfect Brightness, A Life in Ruins," *East Asian History* 11 (1996), pp. 111-58.

Broudehoux, Anne-Marie, "Selling the Past: Nationalism and the Commodification of History at Yuanmingyuan," in *The Making and Selling of Post-Mao Beijing*, Chapter 3 (Routledge, 2004).

Harris, David, *Of Battle and Beauty: Felice Beato's Photographs of China* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1999).

Hevia, James L., *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003).

"The Imperial Sale—Yuanmingyuan," Catalog (Christie's Hong Kong, April 30, 2000).

Lee, Haiyan, "The Ruins of Yuanmingyuan: Or, How to Enjoy a National Wound," *Modern China* 35.2 (March 2009), pp. 155-190.

Jin Tiemu 金铁木, *Yuanmingyuan: Yige diguo de beijing 圆明园：一个帝国的背景* (Yuanmingyuan: background of an empire) (Beijing: Xin shijie chubanshe, 2006).

Li, Lillian M., Alison J. Dray-Novey, and Haili Kong, *Beijing: From Imperial Capital to Olympic City* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Malone, Carroll Brown, *History of the Summer Palaces under the Ch'ing Dynasty* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1934).

"Le Musée Chinois de l'impératrice Eugénie," catalog, Musée national du Château de Fontainebleau. Edited by Colombe Samoyault-Verlet, Jean-Paul Desroches, Gilles Beguin, and Albert Le Bonheuf (Réunion des musées nationaux, Paris, 1994).

Qianlong yupin Yuanmingyuan 乾隆御品圆明园 (Qianlong's Imperial treasure Yuanmingyuan), edited by Guo Daiheng 郭黛姮 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2007).

Sirén, Osvald, *Gardens of China* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1949).

Strassberg, Richard E., "War and Peace: Four Intercultural Landscapes," in *China on Paper: European and Chinese Works from the Late Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century*, edited by Marcia Reed and Paola Demattè (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2007), pp. 88-137

Thiriez, Régine, *Barbarian Lenses: Western Photographers of the Qianlong Emperor's European Palaces* (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1998).

Thomas, Greg M, "The Looting of Yuanming and the Translation of Chinese Art in Europe," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture*, Vol 7, Issue 2 (Autumn 2008).

Wolseley, Viscount Garnet, *The Story of a Soldier*, Vol. 2 (A. Constable & Co., Ltd., 1903).

Wong, Young-tsu, *A Paradise Lost: The Imperial Garden Yuanming Yuan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001).

Yuanmingyuan Changchungyuan Hangjingtang yizhi fajue baogao 圓明園長春園含經堂遺址發掘報告 (Report on the excavation of the Hangjingtang ruins at the Changchungyuan of the Yuanmingyuan), edited by Wenwu Yanjiuso (Beijing: 2006).

Yuanmingyuan liusan wenwu 圓明園流散文物 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2007).

Yuanshi de huihuang: Yuanmingyuan jianzhu yuanlin yanjiu yu baohu 远逝的辉煌圆明园建筑园林研究与保护 (Brilliance of the distant past: research and protection of Yuanmingyuan's architecture and gardens). Edited by Guo Daiheng 郭黛姮 (Shanghai: Shanghai keji jishu chubanshe).

LINKS

["The Garden of Perfect Brightness: A Life in Ruins," Geremie R. Barmé's pioneer study of the Yuanmingyuan over the decades that followed its destruction.](#)
(Click here to view short article)

["Gong Xiaogong and the Sacking of the Garden of Perfect Brightness"](#)

["European palaces within ruins of Yuanmingyuan, Beijing," photos by Druh Scoff on Flickr](#)

NOTES

1. This account of events follows Hevia, James L., *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), Chapter 2.

2. On October 18th, Montauban expressed shock and regret at the incineration. "I've just been informed...that all the magnificent pagodas, whose marvelous workmanship I had admired are at this moment the victim of flames: a vengeance unworthy of a civilized nation because it destroys the admirable objects that have been respected for several centuries." Quoted in Thomas, Greg M, "The Looting of Yuanming and the Translation of Chinese Art in Europe," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture*, Vol 7, Issue 2 (Autumn 2008), p. 19.

3. Hevia, Chapter 2. The above account is taken from Li, Lillian M., Alison J. Dray-Novey, and Haili Kong, *Beijing: From Imperial Capital to Olympic City* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 107-111., which in turn is based on Hevia, Chapter 2.

4. Stephenson, Frederick, *At Home and On the Battlefield* (London, 1915), pp. 272-273, quoted in Hevia, p. 79.

5. Wolseley, Viscount Garnet, *The Story of a Soldier*, Vol. 2 (A. Constable & Co., Ltd., 1903), p. 77.

6. Boulger, D. C., *The Life of Gordon* (London, 1897), pp. 45-46, as quoted in Malone, Carroll Brown, *History of the Summer Palaces under the Ch'ing Dynasty* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1934), pp. 187-88.

7. Hevia , Chapter 4, provides a detailed account of the looting.
8. Hevia, pp. 94-95.
9. Greg M Thomas provides an outstanding discussion of the multiple cultural meanings of this nineteenth-century European Orientalism in "The Looting of Yuanming and the Translation of Chinese Art in Europe," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture*, Vol 7, Issue 2, Autumn 2008.
10. The website of the Poly Art Museum states: "Poly Art Museum was founded in December 1998 with the approval of State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China and Beijing Cultural Relics Bureau and opened to public in December 1999. It is the first museum operated by a state-owned enterprise in the Chinese mainland. The aim of the museum is to develop and display traditional national culture and art, and to rescue and protect Chinese cultural relics lost abroad."
11. Part 7 of the CCTV documentary "[Yuanmingyuan: 150 Years after the Fire](#)" provides many details of extensive looting of stone and wood—for the raw materials, rather than for art—by local residents and public institutions.
12. Wong, Young-tsu, *A Paradise Lost: The Imperial Garden Yuanming Yuan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), p. 115.
13. Thiriez, Régine, *Barbarian Lenses: Western Photographers of the Qianlong Emperor's European Palaces* (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1998).
14. On Piry, see Thiriez, pp. 93-101.
15. Extensively documented and photographed in *Yuanmingyuan Changchungyuan Hangjingtang yizhi fajue baogao 圓明園長春園含經堂遺址發掘報告* (Report on the excavation of the Hangjingtang ruins at the Changchungyuan of the Yuanmingyuan), edited by Wenwu Yanjiuso (Beijing: 2006).

CREDITS

"The Garden of Perfect Brightness III: Destruction, Looting, and Memory (1860–Present)" was developed by Visualizing Cultures at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and presented on MIT OpenCourseWare.

MIT Visualizing Cultures:

[John W. Dower](#)
Project Director
Emeritus Professor of History

[Shigeru Miyagawa](#)
Project Director
Professor of Linguistics
Kochi Prefecture-John Manjiro Professor of Japanese Language and Culture

[Ellen Sebring](#)
Creative Director

[Scott Shunk](#)
Program Director

[Andrew Burstein](#)
Media Designer

In collaboration with:

Lillian M. Li
Author, essay
Sara Lawrence Lightfoot Professor of History
Swarthmore College

SUPPORT

Funding for this website was provided by:

The J. Paul Getty Foundation
The Henry Luce Foundation
The Andrew Mellon Foundation
The U.S. Department of Education

On viewing images of a potentially disturbing nature: click here.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology © 2012 Visualizing Cultures

Creative Commons License 

Opium War:
The Final Act

Plundering
Paradise

Collecting
Loot

Relics &
Controversy

Ruins &
Memory

Sources
& Credits