The Garden of Perfect Brightness—3
Destruction, Looting, and Memory (1860-present)
by Lillian M. Li

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SOURCES

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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


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.


7. Hevia, Chapter 4, provides a detailed account of the looting.

8. Hevia, pp. 94-95.


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.


CREDITS
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