CHAPTER 4

Beijing 1860: Loot, Prize, and a Solemn Act of Retribution

THE FINAL ACT OF THE SECOND OPIUM WAR took place in early and mid-October in and around the Qing capital at Beijing. By this time the emperor and his inner council had fled to the Mountain Retreat for Escaping Summer Heat (Bishu shanzhuang) at Chengde, leaving Prince Gong and the demoralized remnants of Senggerinchin's Mongol cavalry to deal with the allied armies. While Prince Gong contemplated his options, Lord Elgin, from his headquarters in Western Yellow Temple outside of the north wall of Beijing, awaited word on Harry Parkes and the group of soldiers, diplomats, and civilians captured near Zhangjiawan on 17 September. Meanwhile, French forces reached the gates of the Summer Palace on 7 October and began to loot the buildings. Later in the day they were joined by elements of the British army. Not long afterward, Beijing surrendered and Lord Elgin learned of the fate of the captives, which led directly to his decision to destroy the Summer Palace. On 18 and 19 October, forty-four hundred officers and men of the 1st Infantry Division of the British contingent burned the entire palace complex. Within days of the destruction of the palaces, the Tianjin Treaty and the Beijing Convention were ratified, and Euroamerican relations with China were forever altered.

This chapter seeks to use these events as a resource for addressing several interrelated issues. The first and perhaps most important of these involves consideration of a relationship between European imperialism and colonialism in East Asia and in other parts of the world. One such link involves the large number of British civilian and military personnel who were active in China after having served in other parts of the empire. An additional connection concerns plunder in warfare and the nomenclature related to it, in particular, the word *loot* itself.

Intimately linked to British expansion in India, loot entered the English language from Hindi or Sanskrit in the eighteenth century.[1] In either its noun or verb form, it frequently replaced older English words, such as pillage, booty, spoils, and plunder. Yet, because it was firmly embedded in the new lexicon of empire, loot was not, strictly speaking, interchangeable with these terms. Insofar as it related to British imperial adventures in India, East Asia, and later, Africa, it evoked a sense of the opportunities, particularly as "prize" of war, that empire building offered to the brave and daring.[2]

Equally important for our purposes here, the imperial lexicon *Hobson-Jobson*, like Lord Elgin, found the term loot entering common usage in India and China between the first and second Opium Wars (Yule and Burnell [1886] 1994: 519–520; Walrond 1872: 215). As the career of the word suggests, although the events of 1860 signaled a shift in global relations of power, the primary actor and main beneficiary of the change in China's relations with the West was the British Empire. Although French, Russian, and U.S. diplomats and the French army played important roles in these events, it was British agents who not only led the way, but who seemed to be motivated by quite different considerations from their Euroamerican colleagues. Such differences can be accounted for in a variety of ways: in terms of the personalities of individual leaders, on the basis of different national goals, and perhaps even on the basis of the historical antipathy and rivalry among the Euroamerican parties. Here, however, the focus is on the different actions of the Western powers in China as manifestations of their distinct historical trajectories in the development of European global expansion. These distinctions then provide a way of making another kind of sense out of the looting of the Sum-

1. See the *Oxford English Dictionary*, where the first usage is attributed to the *Indian Vocabulary* published in 1788.

2. Opportunities for prize and medals for bravery were used on recruiting posters in Great Britain; see Farwell 1981: 211.

mer Palace and its destruction as a "solemn act of retribution" (Walrond 1872: 366).

"No End of Loot!": The Pleasures of Plunder

Let me begin this investigation with accounts of the plunder of the Yuanming yuan, the emperor of China's Summer Palace.[3] In the first few days after they arrived at this sprawling park at the foot of the Western Hills, the two armies ransacked and looted in a seemingly wild, unregulated frenzy of destruction and theft. The specifics of the pillage of the Summer Palace are, however, open to some conjecture, partly because the leaders of the expedition made no formal reports to their respective governments describing the looting. Instead, they either denied that it existed, blamed each other for starting it, or, as in the case of the British leadership, explained matters that were handled after the fact. Accounts that do address what happened are not, in other words, in parliamentary papers or other public records. Rather, they are to be found in newspaper stories, reminiscences, and collections of letters and journals published between 1860 and 1912. Some appeared in the first books about the 1860 campaign, others exist in private papers, autobiographies, and biographies published well after the fact or following the author's death. Among these sources, there is some dispute over how the looting began and who started it.

On the French side, some versions, including those of General Montauban, Charles de Mutrécy (1862), and Paul Varin (1862), simply note that after the French reached the gardens, sentries were posted and no one was allowed onto the grounds, with the exception of a small patrol that discovered a treasury. Once the English arrived, a commission of officers was set up who were to choose the "most precious objects of curiosity" for the Emperor Napoleon and Queen Victoria. Meanwhile, the treasure that had been discovered was divided with the British. None of these sources mentions looting, except by the British. Moreover, because these French versions were the first to arrive in Europe via telegraph, they initially dominated the newspapers and opinion magazines.[4]

3. The quotation in the title of this section is from Graham 1901: 187.

4. General Montauban's report of 12 October was published in the Paris *Moniteur* on 19 December. It was later reprinted by Volontaire au 102e (1861: 112–113) and Bazancourt (1861: 273–275). Also see Varin 1862: 235–239, 242; Mutrécy 1862: 2: 25. In London, the

British sources provide a wholly different picture. Among the first published accounts was one that appeared in the *North China Herald* of 20 October; it emphasized that "indiscriminate looting [of the Summer Palace] had been allowed" by the French command. In the same edition, a headquarters general order from 12 October appeared commending the British army for exercising restraint "when a large amount of plunder was at the mercy of the troops." The *North China Herald* report was supported in publications of the personal papers of Lord Elgin (1872) and General Grant (1875) and by British publications that began to come out in 1862. According to Elgin and Grant, when they arrived at the south gate of the Summer Palace, they found the plunder of the site well underway. Elgin added that Montauban was full of "protestations" and promises that all would be equally divided between the two armies, which, according to Grant, he supported on the spot by promising to provide one of the two " 'joës' [jade ruyi], or staves of office" as a present for Queen Victoria (Walrond 1872: 361; Knollys 1875: 128). Supporting these accounts was the "eyewitness" report of Garnet Wolseley, the quartermaster-general for the British contingent. In his book published in 1862, Wolseley reported that although the French command had posted guards, uncontrolled "plunder and wanton destruction" ensued ([1862] 1972: 224). Forty years later, in his autobiography, he added more detail, recalling that when the British contingent reached the entrance, General Montauban met them and "begged" Lord Elgin not to enter. "I was amused by this," Wolseley recalled, "because at that very moment there were a string of French soldiers going in empty handed and another coming out laden with loot of all sorts and kinds." As he spoke to Baron Janin, a French general, soldiers presented Janin with one or another "curiosities" and one of them placed a small enamel into Wolseley's hand, exclaiming, "Mon camarade, voici un petit cadeau pour vous" (Wolseley 1904: 77–78). These versions were further supported by Colonel C. P. B. Walker (1894: 211), who would soon be put in charge of a prize commission for the British army (see next section), the Reverend R. J. L. M'Ghee (1862: 205–207), and later published accounts of British officers who claimed to be eyewitnesses.[5]

ILN of 20 December 1860: 617 paraphrased the *Moniteur*. Two days later, the *Times* published a complete version of Montauban's report; the ILN followed suit on 5 January 1861. Apparently, it was not until the following March that the Elgin-Grant version of events appeared in Great Britain; see *Blackwood's Magazine* 89 (March 1861): 381.

5. Additional testimony appeared in 1874 when Montauban proclaimed his innocence

A third version of events was provided by Maurice d'Hérrison, secretary and interpreter to General Montauban. In a campaign account published in 1866, d'Hérrison wrote that as the commissioners assigned to select objects for the French and British monarchs carried them into the French camp, the following scene ensued: "French infantry, Englishmen, unmounted cavalry, artillerymen, Queen's dragoons, Sikhs, Arabs, [and] Chinese coolies looked on, wondering when their turn would come. Suddenly, word began to spread through the ranks that the Chinese from the nearby village of Haidian had, along with some of the Cantonese Coolies, begun to scale the wall and enter the palaces. The soldiers rushed the gate, carrying away the sentinels, and spreading through the park."[6]

As suggested earlier, these divergent accounts can be attributed to national rivalries, questions of honor, and criticisms generated then and later about the plunder of the palaces. Neither the British nor the French, it would seem, wanted to be held responsible in the eyes of the other, and if a scapegoat were needed, the Chinese were conveniently at hand. At the same time, the dispute over how the looting began deflected attention from the looting itself. How soldiers looted, what they took, and the overall atmosphere of the scene in and outside of the garden grounds seem to have been of less concern. Lost in the flurry of accusations that followed the sack of the palaces was any sense of the sheer enjoyment and pleasure that it provided for many of those involved.

From all indications, the initial stage of plundering was a raucous affair in a carnivalesque atmosphere. French soldiers, many dressed in Qing imperial robes or "richly embroidered gowns of women" and wearing "fine Chinese hats instead of the French képi" (Wolseley 1904: 77), ran about emptying into their tents sacks filled with jade, precious stones, cloisonné vases, ivory carvings, and watches and clocks of European manufacture, while others attempted to commandeer wagons or carts. The chaos outside the palace grounds was matched by what was going on within the gates of the Summer Palace. The reporter from the *North China Herald* wrote that hundreds of rolls of silk were pulled off shelves in store rooms, some spread indiscriminately on the floors, others used to secure the piles of loot on wagons, and

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yet again in public testimony in Paris; see letters in the *Times*, 12, 13, 14, and 18 March and chapter 5.

6. This version of events is taken from the English translation of the 1901 Paris reprint of the second edition of d'Hérrison (1886); see 1901: 623–625.

still others sewn together to make tents in the French camp (*North China Herald* [NCH], 20 October 1860). After he surveyed the scene, Lord Elgin commented in his journal that there was not a room "in which half the things had not been taken or broken to pieces" and expressed deep disappointment over the waste that was evident (Walrond 1872: 361–362). Observers spoke of seeing "grand embroideries" torn down for no apparent reason, Frenchmen using clubs to smash things to "atoms," and "wanton destruction" of what could not be carried away (Tulloch 1903: 117; Swinhoe 1861: 306; Wolseley [1862] 1972: 224).

Soon the British forces, officers and men, joined in (Swinhoe 1861: 305–306). Frederick Stephenson, adjutant-general of the British army, wrote his brother that

> the rooms and halls of audience . . . and specially the Emperor's bedroom, were literally crammed with the most lovely knick-knacks you can conceive. Fancy having the run of Buckingham Palace and being allowed to take away anything and everything you liked . . . Large magazines full of richly ornamented robes lined with costly furs, such as ermine and sable, were ruthlessly pulled from their shelves, and those that did not please the eye, thrown aside and trampled under foot. There were large storerooms full of fans, Mandarins' hats, and clothes of every description, others again piled up to the ceiling with rolls of silk, all embroidered, and to an incredible amount . . . All these were plundered and pulled to pieces, floors were literally covered with fur robes, jade ornaments, porcelain, sweetmeats, and beautiful wood carvings. (1915: 272–273)

Faced with this awe-inspiring scene, A. B. Tulloch recalled feeling like "a boy suddenly told to take what he likes in a pastry-cook's shop." He loaded himself and his pony with a collection of jade, the like of which "had probably rarely been seen." On his way back to camp, he passed a detachment of the Sikh cavalry from Probyn's Horse and sang out "Jeldi jow sub jata howinga" (Be quick or it will all be gone; 1903: 117–118). They seem to have taken Tulloch at his word. Soon after, Major Gerald Graham of the Royal Engineers noted in his diary that he had seen a troop of Probyn's Horse riding from the gardens laden with loot. They, in turn, were but one part of a train of carts full of loot being hauled away by Chinese "coolies" and what Graham identified as the "Pekin mob" (1901: 188). In another case, a Lieutenant Harris claimed that he got his nickname, "China" Jim, because he was attributed with having

gotten more loot from the Summer Palace than anyone else. In his reminiscence, he recalled that he took a vermillion seal from the emperor's own quarters, along with a golden wire basket and large quantities of silk and satins. He also purchased pearls from French soldiers ignorant of their true value and acquired several valuable old watches of European manufacture. One of these came with a label in Chinese, which Thomas Wade translated for him as having been presented to the emperor of China by Lord Macartney! Harris's real coup, however, was hauling off two large solid gold pagodas worth about £22,000 (J. Harris 1912: vii, 111–122).

Given what has already been said about the high moral tone in which the British and French diplomats conducted their intercourse with the Qing Court, how are we to account for the wanton excess that these reports describe? What are we to make of this carnival-like atmosphere in which British officers and men appeared to have been cheek-by-jowl with French soldiers, "wild" Pathans and Sikhs, and apparently even some Chinese in the sacking of the Summer Palace? Are we to consider looting an aberration, a brief slide from civilized behavior into the sort of barbarism that Europeans often ascribed to non-European peoples? Or was plunder simply an unfortunate side effect of warfare, to be expected under the circumstances? These questions seem especially pertinent because, contrary to what might be expected, the British commander, General Grant, indicated in his official dispatches that had he not taken certain actions (see below), his army would have looted in spite of orders to the contrary (Knollys 1875: 226–227). Why, we might wonder, did the general have so little faith in the moral fiber of his men?

In part, the answer to all of these questions appears to have been based on a widely shared understanding of human nature and behavior. For example, General Montauban's aide, Maurice d'Hérrison, noted that when the "artificial regulations which serve to bind nations as well as armies" are suspended, the remainder was "primitive human nature in all its crudity and absolute surrender to its free instincts." To put this another way, without the constraints of what might be called culture, Europeans turned into savages. Under the circumstances, it was best for officers to be "prudent and patient," waiting for the soldiers to fatigue themselves and return on their own accord to take up their "accustomed yoke" (1901: 625–626). British accounts seem to support d'Hérrison. Robert Swinhoe, a consular official serving as interpreter on Grant's staff, argued that the sack of the palaces afforded "good proof of the innate evil in man's nature when unrestrained by the force of law or public opinion" (1861: 306). Colonel Garnet Wolseley concurred, adding

that "human nature breaks down the ordinary trammels which discipline imposes, and the consequences are most demoralizing to the best constituted army" ([1862] 1972: 224–225).

This global answer to the loot question (i.e., human nature) was, however, only the most overt response discernible in the campaign sources. In light of discussion in the previous chapter, another explanation suggests itself. Recall, for example, Rutherford Alcock's description of unprincipled foreigners who disrupted the commerce of honest men in the treaty ports. How different was the behavior of Alcock's culprits from that of soldiers who looted? Moreover, given the close link between plunder and British military adventures in South Asia, the difference between British soldiers and those whom Richard Cobden identified as the "loose fish" of the treaty ports might have been a very difficult distinction for the leadership of the British forces to make. One need only add to this Lord Elgin's own observation that contact with "inferior" Asians seemed to bring out the worst features of British character, or the widely held belief that Indians and Chinese were both obsessed with looting and experts at it,[7] to conclude that this particular reversion to a "primitive" state of human development may have been understood as having a quite specific cause, that is, the contact with Asia and Asians. Such concerns about the "polluting" effects of contact with "inferior races" suggest that the breakdown in military discipline signified by looting could easily have been viewed with a profound sense of alarm.

In this respect, plunder posed a serious threat for maintaining order within the army, which itself was coded by means of a ranked hierarchy and by the absolute distinction drawn between officers and the "other ranks"—the warrant officers, noncommissioned officers, and privates.[8] In his discussion of looting, Wolseley, for example, took great pains to make it appear as if it was only done by common soldiers, not officers. Soldiers, he argued, were no more than grown-up "schoolboys," for whom the opportunity to plunder was a "remarkable event" in a life otherwise spent "under the tight hand of discipline." Moreover, looting afforded a kind of pleasure that lived long in a soldier's memory even if he "did not gain sixpence by it." For years to come,

7. On Elgin, see Walrond 1872: 199, 252. Characterizations of Indians and Chinese can be found in M'Ghee 1862: 166, 210, 212, 216; J. Harris 1912: 89; and Walker 1894: 162, 164. Later, Wolseley (1904: 84) argued that the villagers around the Summer Palace got more loot than the two armies combined.

8. For a discussion of discipline in the British army at the time, as well as the division between officers and enlisted men, see Farwell 1981.

soldiers would recall their exploits as part of their own regimental lore, separate and distinct from the official version of events and the stories told in the officers' mess ([1862] 1972: 225–227). They constructed, in other words, an oral history of plunder that cut against the grain of the official story produced in the dispatches of the diplomatic and military authorities and in accounts of authoritative eyewitnesses like Wolseley.

Pronouncements like those of Wolseley therefore served a number of purposes. First, they sutured up the wounds looting inflicted on the body of the British imperial project in China and provided a crucial means for retaining the high moral ground on which the entire campaign was based, while still accounting for the plunder of the palaces. Second, Wolseley accorded gentlemen soldiers and diplomats a rationale for distancing themselves from the polluting effects of plunder and, in so doing, reconstituted the fundamental class divisions that animated the British army and society. Moreover, by maintaining clear motivational boundaries between participants, his account provided a rationale for informed public opinion in Great Britain to rally behind the version of events produced in official dispatches. Finally, by framing the looting question in class terms, Wolseley provided support for the actions of the British leadership who ultimately decided to impose the rule of law over the plundering of the Summer Palace.

From the Excess of Loot to the Order of Prize

Unlike the French, the British authorities had long experience dealing with the issue of plunder and the threat it posed to order and discipline in an army. This experience had led to the creation of a body of parliamentary and military law that established a set of procedures for transforming theft into the rightful fruits of conquest. By the time of the China campaign of 1860, these rules were so ingrained in the behavior of British soldiers that their looting patterns could clearly be distinguished from those of the French. As d'Hérrison noted, for example, the British "arrived in squads, like gangs of workmen, with men carrying large sacks and commanded by noncommissioned officers, who brought with them, strange at it may seem, touchstones," the "primitive jeweler's tool" (1901: 625). They also seem to have worked in units to haul as much as possible into the British camp at the Yellow Temple near the Anding Gate.

This orderly pattern of plunder can, in turn, be accounted for on the basis of certain expectations British soldiers had for sharing in the spoils. At roughly the same time General Montauban and his staff were waiting for the

loot fever to run its course, General Grant appointed Colonel Walker, Major Anson, Major Wilmot, and Captain Lumsden as prize agents and ordered that all looted objects, with the exception of things purchased from the French (Tulloch 1903: 118; Swinhoe 1861: 310), be turned over to them (Knollys 1875: 193–194). The items were to be put on display and auctioned off immediately for the "general benefit." Officers having small items they wished to keep were allowed to take them to the prize committee on 10 October and have them appraised; they then had the option of purchasing them or placing them in the auction. Proceeds would be added to "Treasure already seized" and distributed in three equal parts: one part to officers and two parts to noncommissioned officers and men.[9] This procedure of plunder, auction, and prize distribution requires some explanation.

BRITISH PRIZE LAW

From at least the reign of Henry IV (r. 1399–1413) an intricate pattern of British legal codes had established that plunder taken in warfare was the legal property of the sovereign. At the monarch's discretion, portions of the plunder could be awarded to the military forces involved (Colombos 1940). For much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these rules applied primarily to naval captures, but from the reign of George III forward a series of parliamentary laws created procedures for the disposition of plunder taken in land warfare.

Prize law was based on the notion that without the promise of an equitable distribution of plunder, armies would become undisciplined mobs. To avoid such a possibility, authorities treated loot as the natural fruit of victory. They converted plunder, with its threats to order, into prize, the lawful reward of righteous warfare, while transforming the stolen objects themselves into private property. As outlined in parliamentary statutes, the procedures used by the British army for legalizing plunder were as follows:

1. The commander in chief appointed prize agents to organize and take charge of a prize commission. The commander also issued orders to members of the army instructing them to hand over all loot to the commission.
2. The commission inventoried all plunder, arranged for its sale at public

9. See WO 147/2: 1–5. Although apparently all forces were allowed to participate in the auction, the prize money was to be distributed only among those who had accompanied the commander-in-chief to the field on 6 October.

auction after the campaign, kept meticulous records of each sale, and created a prize roll indicating how much money was to go to members of each rank in the force.

3. All records of sales were forwarded to the Royal Hospital at Chelsea, which administered the allotment of prize money and kept the records.
4. A notice was placed in the *London Gazette* announcing the allotment of prize money.
5. Soldiers or their heirs filed claims at Chelsea and produced proof that they were part of the campaign that had seized the prize. (This was apparently the main way for ordinary soldiers to collect prize awards.)
6. Forms were created for such claims and standards established to prove participation in a particular campaign.[10]

Prior to the invasion of China in 1860, these procedures had been used most recently in the wake of the suppression of an 1857 rebellion in India, claims from which were still being processed when the British invaded China. Unlike the India instance, however, the prize commission formed by Grant held the auction immediately in the field. The participants were the looters themselves and the prize money realized through the sale was apportioned on the spot.

THE BEIJING AUCTION

The day before the auction began, items were put on display in the main hall of the Yellow Temple.[11] Robert Swinhoe described the scene:

> White and green jade-stone ornaments of all tints, enamel-inlaid jars of antique shape, bronzes, gold and silver figures and statuettes, &c.; fine collections of furs, many of which were of much value, such as sable, sea-otter, ermine, Astracan lamb, &c.; and court costume, among which were two or three of the Emperor's state robes of rich yellow silk, worked upon with dragons in gold thread, and beautifully woven with floss-silk embroidery on the skirts, the inside being lined with silver fur or ermine,

10. See *Statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland*, 54 George III (1814): vol. 54, 328–351; 1&2 George IV (1821): vol. 61, 210–211; 2&3 William IV (1832): vol. 72, 236–259.

11. Originally built during the Ming Dynasty, the temple became associated with Tibetan Buddhism after the Dalai Lama was housed there during the Shunzhi emperor's reign at the beginning of the Qing. The temple is also famous for a white pagoda erected by the Qianlong emperor to honor the Panchen Lama, who died on the site while visiting Beijing. See Bredon 1922: 224–227; Arlington and Lewisohn [1935] 1987: 238–240.

> and cuffed with glossy sable. At the end of the hall were piled immense quantities of rolls of silk and crape of various colors, with several of the beautiful imperial yellow, *a kind prescribed by the Chinese law for the use of his Imperial Majesty alone*. (1861: 311; emphasis added)

The auction itself appears to have been a spectacular affair, one heightened by a rumor that one of the officers was "understood to have an unlimited commission from Baron Rothschild." The bidding was lively and the sale prices high (Swinhoe 1861: 311). Army chaplain M'Ghee noted that jade pieces went for £10–30 and furs for £10–50. One of the emperor's court robes sold for £120. General Grant himself bought several jade-stones, a jade and ruby necklace labeled as tribute from a famous "Tartar chief," and a lapis lazuli carving. As the bidding continued, the thoughts of some turned to sovereigns and leaders: two large enamel vases secured by Major Probyn were set aside for the queen, and a "beautiful gold jug, from which the emperor of China used to pour rose-water over his delicate hands," was purchased by the prize commission and presented to General Grant. And while Colonel Walker and Major Graham complained in letters home that they could not compete in the bidding wars, George Allgood wrote enthusiastically about having purchased the emperor's own seal of state (1901: 59)![12] Others wrote that they had been able to acquire just the right "gift" for each member of their family, especially the female ones (Spence 1969: 76–77; Allgood 1901: 59; M'Ghee 1862: 211).

But the acquisition of desirable objects was not the only reward the army received; there was the prize money itself, which totaled £26,000. With Generals Grant, Michel, and Napier relinquishing their shares, it was divided up among officers and men as follows: first-class field officers, £60; second-class field officers, £50; chaplains, £40; lieutenants, £30; ensigns, £20; sergeants, £7 10s.; privates, £5.[13] Meanwhile, in spite of his grousing, Colonel Walker

12. For other accounts of the auction, see Graham 1901: 189; Knollys 1875: 193–194; M'Ghee 1862: 294; Swinhoe 1861: 311; Walker 1894: 213; Wolseley [1862] 1972: 237–242.

13. The figures are from Knollys 1875: 226–227 and *ILN*, 5 January 1861: 7. In 1861 the monthly pay of a British soldier was around £1 and that of a sowar or trooper in an Indian army cavalry unit Rupees (Rs) 8. In 1855 the monthly pay of British officers in the Indian army was as follows: colonel, Rs 1,478; lieutenant colonel, Rs 1,157; major, Rs 929; captain, Rs 563; lieutenant, Rs 365; and ensign Rs 311. All figures are from Heathcote 1974: 110, 128, who gives the exchange rate for this period at roughly Rs 10 to the £, and Farwell 59–60, 160.

Prize rolls for this campaign are not in the India Office record collection. There are, how-

did not go away empty-handed: he received £350 as head of the prize commission. For their part, although the Indian troops were excluded from these procedures, they were not required to hand over what they had plundered from the Summer Palace to the prize commission (Graham 1901: 188).

With the threats posed by plunder effectively neutralized by prize procedures, the British army could now turn to completing its task of disciplining and teaching lessons to the political and military powers of China. Before turning to a discussion of how this pedagogical project worked itself out, however, it might be worth considering in more detail the relations among plunder, prize, and British imperial politics.

PRIZE AND IMPERIAL SOVEREIGNTY

Although the processes of collection, auction, and redistribution of proceeds might seem at first glance unnecessarily involved, their importance lay in the way they mirrored and mimicked the processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization that were transforming China's relations with European powers. Like warfare and treaties in general, prize procedures incorporated China and its political order into the regularities of the British Empire in Asia. In so doing, they helped to undermine Qing imperial sovereignty. Central to this process of subversion was the theft and redistribution of objects that could be tied directly to the person of the Qing emperor. Objects redistributed in this way included his imperial robes and armor, jade scepters, throne cushions, seals, and the "Cap of the Emperor of China" (fig. 3), a carved screen "from behind the Emperor's throne," pages from the *August Court's Illustrated Catalogue of Ritual Implements* (*Huangchao liqi tushi*), which included hand-painted drawings of Court robes of emperors and empresses, and the yellow silk identified by Swinhoe as exclusively for the emperor. There were also various objects taken from the emperor's private quarters, such as a small jade-covered book said to be the sayings of Confucius, a Tibetan ritual vessel erroneously but tellingly identified as the skull of Confucius, and a Pekinese

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ever, a substantial number of rolls and claims for various military operations that occurred in India before and after the China campaign, especially for 1857–1858. See, for example, the Deccan Prize Money rolls, dated 31 July 1832, in British Library and India Office Records (hereafter IOR), L/MIL/5/326, where the distinctions between British and Indian troops is clear. Indian army procedures for handling loot and the allocation of prize money to all ranks dated to at least the middle of the eighteenth century; see Mason 1974: 205.

3. The cap of the emperor of China. Source: Holmes, *Naval and Military Trophies and Personal Relics of British Heroes*, 1896.

"lion" dog christened "Looty" (fig. 4).[14] In addition to these items, a host of objects of European manufacture were also plundered, a number of which could be identified as gifts previously given to Qing emperors by European monarchs. These included numerous mechanical clocks and watches, one of which, as Harris reported, was supposed to be the very timepiece presented by Lord Macartney to the Qianlong emperor, the cannon that Macartney had brought as a gift from George III (Rennie 1864: 166; M'Ghee 1862: 210; Swinhoe 1861: 331), works of fine art like the "Petitot" acquired by Colonel Wolseley, and a tapestry from the French monarch Louis XIV.

Some of these items, such as the emperor's cap, the "Sayings of Confucius," and Looty, were presented to Queen Victoria. Much like the plundered regalia of South Asian kings that Carol Breckenridge (1989: 203) has described, they took their place with other symbols of the British monarchy, constituting an expanded British imperial sovereignty. In other cases, pieces were deposited in the officers' mess of various of the regiments involved. At these sites, Qing objects were incorporated into regimental his-

14. With the exception of "Looty" and "skull of Confucius," these items are all presently in collections in Great Britain.

4. Looty. *Illustrated London News,* 15 June 1861.

tories as trophies, signs not only of successful imperial campaigns, but of a material link between the regiments and the British Crown.[15] Other objects came to rest at institutions that played significant material and ideological roles in supporting and maintaining the British Empire. The cannon, for example, was "repatriated" to the Woolwich Arsenal, the site where it had been manufactured and where armaments were produced for empire.[16] The tapestry from Louis XIV passed through the Victoria and Albert Museum, that treasure house of empire, and came to rest at the Ashmolean Library, Oxford, where so many statesmen and administrators of empire were trained.[17] Other pieces found their way into the collections of the Victoria and Albert, includ-

15. The officers' mess of the Queen's Royal Regiment and of the Wiltshire Regiment have porcelain and silver trophies. On the former, see Davis 1887–1906, 5: 132; Haswell 1967: 103. On the latter, see Gibson 1969: 86. On battle honors, see Leslie 1970: 85–86.

16. Knollys (1875: 128–129) mentions that they were returned, but no records existed in the Arsenal when I visited there in 1987. However, Kaestlin (1963: 15) indicates that the cannon were catalogued as part of the Rotunda Museum collection, which appears to be a separately administered portion of the Arsenal complex. I am grateful to Aubrey Singer for bringing this source to my attention.

17. Victoria and Albert Museum, Acquisition Records, the Crealock file. I am indebted to Verity Wilson for this source.

5. Reverse of throne cushion, Wolseley Bequest. © The Board of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Used with permission.

ing a cloisonné ice chest and a throne cushion[18] as well as other items donated by the self-described nonlooter Garnet Wolseley (fig. 5). Still other pieces found their way into the marketplace, where they were revalued as unique commodities bearing the mark of a foreign ruler (see below). As they circulated through these alien domains, the imperial regalia and precious objects of the emperor of China were reordered as meaningful elements within a new realm of sovereignty, one stretching well beyond the territorial limits of any one nation-state. They were now part of the political economy of an imperial sovereignty that spanned the globe.

As if to emphasize this point, the presence of the emperor's regalia and private property in British hands also stood as material proof of Britain's superiority over the Chinese Empire. As Robert Swinhoe so aptly put it, "Fancy the sale of the emperor's effects beneath the walls of the capital of his empire, and this by a people he despised as weak barbarians and talked of driving into the sea!" (1861: 311–312). George Allgood, an officer on Grant's staff, added that the humiliation of the "proudest monarch in the universe" would have an additional benefit. "The news of the capture of Pekin," he wrote, "will resound through Asia, and produce in India an excellent effect" (1901: 60). In these terms, prize and trophies not only bore the signs of the humbling of China's haughty monarch and mandarins. As a deliberate act of hu-

18. These two items were part of a recent Victoria and Albert Museum show on the Victorian era. I saw them both for the first time in July 2001 while in London. See chapter 10 for further discussion.

miliation, it was an object lesson for others who might contemplate defying British power.

The orderly procedures of auction and redistribution had other effects as well. Recall the earlier discussion of prize law. According to its regulations, all plunder seized in time of war belonged to the British monarch, and the auctioning off of the fruits of plunder ought to have been held at another time and place and the army's share distributed at a later date. This did not happen in China. Instead, General Grant decided to hold the auction on the spot and have the prize shares handed out immediately. In justifying this decision to the secretary of State for War, Sidney Herbert, Grant argued that because his men had seen the French "laden with dollars and sycee [silver ingots]," he had ordered the auction and division of the proceeds and other treasure so that his army would be satisfied and have no reason to either loot or complain (Knollys 1875: 192, 226–227).[19] Thus, prize procedures seem to have had the capacity to deflect and channel the potentially disruptive desires generated by the treasures of the emperor's palaces into peaceable feelings consistent with a moral order of law, private property, and orderly commerce.[20] Moreover, because the distribution of prize money was done on the basis of rank, it also had the practical effect of reproducing the proper structure of the army, while maintaining a hierarchical distinction between British forces and India army units. This last was no small concern; one third of the expeditionary force was made up of South Asians. Among these, the "irregular" cavalry regiments were widely asserted to be virtual experts at looting. Thus, prize procedures helped to demonstrate to Sikhs and "wild" Pathans the disciplinary regularities of their rulers. With the army now sealed off from the polluting effects of plunder, the lesson should have been clear: disciplined forces, not a mob of looters like the French, achieved righteous conquest. In 1900, as we shall see below, Indian soldiers demonstrated that they had mastered the lesson.

Commodification, Royal Exotica, and Curiosities

Through its procedures for converting loot into prize via the market mechanism of the auction, British prize law also transformed signs of Qing imperial

19. Grant later received a response from Lord Russell, who said that given the circumstances, the queen had approved his action; see FO 17/362: 94a–95b.

20. See Grant's General Order of 12 October 1860 in WO 147/2: 7.

sovereignty and royal "exotica" into commodities. The French did something similar, although in a more direct way. In their case, the process of commodification began almost immediately. Recall the French military command's understanding of looting: they would let the "fever" run its course and then begin to reimpose discipline in their army. When his soldiers appeared to have exhausted themselves, General Montauban attempted a novel tack: he appealed to the reason of his men. Moving among them, he pointed out that they would have great difficulty carrying off all they had taken. Furthermore, what would they do if they were suddenly attacked by Qing forces? Who knew how large a force of Chinese might still lie between Beijing and the coast? If attacked, Montauban added, the soldiers might lose everything. According to d'Hérrison, Montauban's approach was quite effective; the French soldiers ceased plundering and abandoned some of the larger and more cumbersome items (1901: 631). More than a few, as British sources indicate, became even more rational; they decided to translate their plunder into ready cash, selling either to the English or to the train of suttlers (private merchants) that accompanied the two armies (Graham 1901: 190; J. Harris 1912: 104, 127; Swinhoe 1861: 310; Tulloch 1903: 120). For British officers and men who were unable to acquire a desirable object at the auction, the French market was a welcome source. In all of this, there were a number of effects or consequences.

LOOT INTO COMMODITIES

The market process transformed things produced in imperial workshops for the use and consumption of the emperor and his Court into objects that could be bought and sold by literally anyone with sufficient capital; they entered, in other words, a world of universal exchange. The shift of imperial treasures from the domain of the ruler to the hands of traders meant, in turn, that what had been relatively sedentary suddenly had the capacity for great mobility. In a very short time, Summer Palace loot found itself moving through markets that included Chinese dealers in and around Beijing, traders in treaty ports, and the auction houses of London and Paris. The emperor's subjects, much to the amusement of some Englishmen, became involved in the market almost immediately. They may have been looters themselves, or they might have purchased looted items from residents of Haidian, the village that lay near the Summer Palace, from the foreign soldiers as they departed the city,[21]

21. Tulloch (1903: 121–122) mentions selling silk to Chinese dealers.

or from the "Pekin mob."[22] Yet, regardless of how they got their hands on the emperor's treasures, the Chinese dealers could also easily have been connected to the large fine arts market of Beijing, located in the area outside of the Qian Gate on streets like Liulichang. Indeed, some British officers found Liulichang—they called it Curiosity Street (fig. 6)—and purchased items like those to be found in the palaces (M'Ghee 1862: 302; Walker 1894: 197; *Illustrated London News* [ILN], 16 February 1861: 142, 147).

Soon, however, the objects moved ever further from their point of origin. As the British and French armies withdrew from north China, some soldiers sold their loot along the lines of transportation and communication used to invade China. The buyers were European traders in the treaty ports, but also Chinese in Tianjin, Shanghai, and, eventually, Canton.[23] When the British returned to Beijing to set up their legation in 1861, David Rennie, the medical officer for the group, claimed that it was still possible to buy Yuanming yuan objects from Chinese dealers. He also noted that an advertisement had appeared in a Chinese-language newspaper in Hong Kong a year after the sack offering Summer Palace loot for sale.[24]

At about the same time Rennie was observing the continued flow of deterritorialized Qing imperial objects in Chinese markets, others appeared on the auction block in London and Paris. The first sale of such items was held by Phillips on 18 April 1861. Among the twenty-one items sold were a pair of "magnificent oriental jars" that fetched £585. The next month Christie, Mason & Woods auctioned off a number of pieces brought by Elgin's secretary, Henry Loch, who had carried his lordship's official dispatches to London. There followed three more sales, in June, July, and December 1861. The June sale contained Summer Palace "Art and Curiosities" that belonged to an officer of Fane's Horse;[25] the July sale included Chinese Court dress, a "richly embroidered cover taken from *the* Imperial throne," and "*the* Emperor of China's Great Seal of State." Eight more sales followed between 1862 and 1866 (see table 1 and fig. 7). In Paris, meanwhile, there were approximately

22. On Chinese looting, see M'Ghee 1862: 212; most other British sources also mention it.

23. ILN reported on 13 April 1861: 339 that "a certain quantity of the booty" had made its way to Shanghai and Hong Kong, where it was purchased by the "Celestials themselves."

24. On the "art" market, including the offer of an imperial throne, see Rennie 1865, 1: 289–291, 300–302, 313–314, 324–325. Mention of the advertisement appears in 2: 100.

25. I am grateful to Nick Pierce for sharing this catalogue cover with me.

6. Curiosity Street, Peking. *Illustrated London News*, 16 February 1861.

TABLE 1. London Auction Sales of Summer Palace Loot

Date	Auction House	Description and Catalogue Accession Numbers
18 March 1861	Phillips	21 items said to be property of an officer, including Oriental jars that sold for £585 (AN 23.DD)
37 May 1861	Christie, Manson & Woods	"Property of a Gentleman"; handwritten, "Mr Loch Lord Elgin's Sect." 8 items in all (AN 23.N)
12 June 1861	Christie, Manson & Woods	A pair of "curious" altar ornaments. "These are models of the Pagoda in the Winter Palace at Pekin, and were taken from the Summer Palace." (AN 23.N)
5 July 1861	Christie, Manson & Woods	Two lots from officers: 8 items; 23 items, including "The Emperor of China's Great Seal of State" (AN 23.N)
12 December 1861	Phillips	1 item from "A Gentleman of Known Taste and Judgement" (AN 23.ZZ)
13 June 1862	Christie, Manson & Woods	Robert Fortune, 1 item said to be from the Summer Palace (AN 23.XX)
30 June 1862	Christie, Manson & Woods	3 enamels from the Summer Palace and "A Magnificent Incense Burner . . . One of the largest pieces brought to England . . . used as a stove in the Emperor's library" (AN 23.XX)
21 July 1862	Christie, Manson & Woods	Brought by an officer, 124 items including a throne cushion and pair of cylindrical vases "believed to be the finest specimens known" (AN 23.XX)
1 December 1862	Christie, Manson & Woods	Sale by Remi, Schmidt, & Co. of items from the International Exhibition: 2 carpets from the Summer Palace (AN 23.XX)
25 July 1864	Christie, Manson & Woods	36 items labeled from the Summer Palace; not so designated, but under "Carvings in Jade, &c." are silks and furs that "may" be from same (AN 23.XX)

TABLE 1. *Continued*

Date	Auction House	Description and Catalogue Accession Numbers
18 May 1864	Christie, Manson & Woods	The Elgin sale. None are designated Summer Palace, but the same sale has items from the 1862 exhibition, including the "skull of Confucius," plus items from 1843 exhibition (AN 23.XX)
14 July 1864	Christie, Manson & Woods	10 items in all, including 2 "European watches" (AN 23.XX)
28 June 1866	Christie, Manson & Woods	3 items: pagoda, bed cover, and necklace (AN 23.XX)

Note: This chart was culled from catalogues of auctions held in the National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The number in parenthesis is the library accession code on each catalogue.

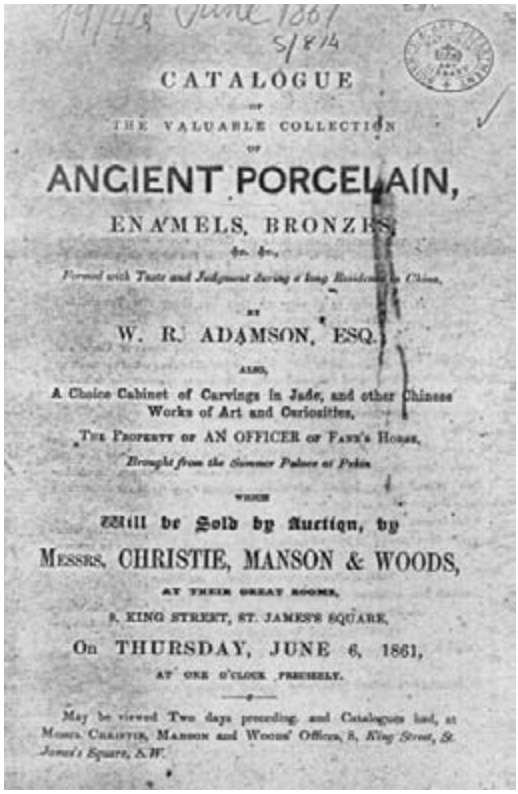
twenty-one sales of Summer Palace loot at the Hotel Drouot between 1861 and 1863.[26]

LOOT ON DISPLAY AND INTO COLLECTIONS

The auction markets of Europe introduced Qing imperial objects into an entirely alien and relatively new representational regime that included public display and private collections. A large number of pieces gathered by General Montauban and his staff are noteworthy in these respects. The items in question were those that Montauban organized as gifts for Napoleon III, where they became part of the Empress Eugénie's Oriental collection at the Château de Fontainebleau outside Paris.[27] First, however, the items were put on public exhibit at the Tuileries in April 1861. They were primarily military paraphernalia and included "the Chinese emperor's war costume," rifles, pistols, swords, daggers, halberds, and saddles. In addition, there were two *ruyi* or imperial scepters, a gilded and bejeweled stupa, a guardian figure with flaming head and tail, a large square covered urn, and a bronze bell. A drawing

26. I am indebted to the generosity of Regine Thiriez for information about the Paris sales.

27. The collection remains there to the present; see Samoyault-Verlet 1994. I am indebted to Craig Clunas for bringing it to my attention, Vincent Droguet for allowing a private viewing in June 1998, and Regine Thiriez for arranging the visit to the château.



CATALOGUE

OF

THE VALUABLE COLLECTION

OF

ANCIENT PORCELAIN,

ENAMELS, BRONZES,

&c. &c.,

Formed with Taste and Judgment during a long Residence in China,

BY

W. R. ADAMSON, ESQ.

ALSO,

A Choice Cabinet of Carvings in Jade, and other Chinese Works of Art and Curiosities,

THE PROPERTY OF AN OFFICER OF FANE'S HORSE,

Brought from the Summer Palace at Pekin

WHICH

Will be Sold by Auction, by

MESSRS. CHRISTIE, MANSON & WOODS,

AT THEIR GREAT ROOMS,

8, KING STREET, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE,

On THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 1861,

AT ONE O'CLOCK PRECISELY.

May be viewed Two days preceding, and Catalogues had, at Messrs. Christie, Manson and Woods' Offices, 8, *King Street, St. James's Square, S.W.*

7. Auction catalogue from Christie, Mason & Woods, 6 June 1861, including "Art and Curiosities" from an officer of Fane's Horse.

of this ensemble appeared in the *Illustrated London News* (fig. 8). Capturing the many valences of meaning that the pieces had begun to acquire since their theft, the *News* reporter referred to them as the "booty," "sacred relics," and "curiosities of the Chinese collection at the Tuileries" (ILN, 13 April 1861: 334, 339). A similar, although not nearly as large, display occurred at the International Exposition held in London in 1862 (Palgrave 1862; Waring 1863).[28] Prior to its opening, there was anticipation that the loot of the emperor and empress of the French would take its place beside that reserved for Queen Victoria, all of which would be complemented with the emperor of China's throne (*The Queen*, 18 January 1862: 398). Although none of this actually happened—only a large carved screen taken from behind an imperial throne and the "skull of Confucius" actually turned up (fig. 9)—in conjunction with the

28. Chinese objects had appeared on display in London previously (Altick 1978), but this was the first display of items that had been touched by royalty.

8. The Tuileries exhibition of French loot. *Illustrated London News*, 13 April 1861.

9. The "Skull of Confucius," second from left. Source: Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture at the International Exhibition, 1862, 1863*, vol. 3, plate 291. © The Board of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Used with permission.

auction markets, the public displays did serve to fix two critical designations on the emperor's possessions.

The first of these was the designation "from the Summer Palace of the Emperor of China," a phrase that has remained with the objects through future sales and on museum displays almost down to the present.[29] As such, the epithet stood as a continual reminder of the British triumph over China's haughty monarch and mandarins and humiliation of their exaggerated sense of superiority over all foreigners. To put this another way, the presence of the emperor's things outside of his palaces placed a permanent stain on him and his empire. Moreover, the sense of debasement that British actors attached to the possession of the emperor's things was further enriched by generally held notions about Chinese disdain for foreigners. As Wolseley remarked dur-

29. In the late 1980s, it was still possible to see this designation on display tags at the Victoria and Albert and British Museums. Since then, the collection displays have been redone, and all references to the Summer Palace have disappeared.

ing the sack of the palaces and the *Illustrated London News* reporter noted at the Tuileries exhibit, the emperor's treasures were gathered in the "profane" hands and under the "sacrilegious gaze" of "barbarians" and "unappreciating amateurs" (Wolseley [1862] 1972: 224; *ILN*, 13 April 1861: 334, 339). Thus, the transport of the Chinese emperor's possessions to Europe added another layer of humiliation to a monarch already brought low by the sacking of his palaces. Perhaps here, in the early career of Summer Place loot, we can also observe the central role that humiliation played in the construction and reproduction of European empire in the nineteenth century.

CURIOSITIES, CIVILIZATION, AND THE SOVEREIGN MALE SUBJECT

The second proper name attached to these items was that of curiosities, a designation used in virtually all accounts of looting and one that figured quite prominently in the auction market and public displays. The term itself had a rich history beyond its usage with respect to the emperor's treasures. It had referred, for example, to collections of objects brought to Europe from other parts of the world in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and displayed in "cabinets of curiosities" (Pomian 1990; Impey 1977; Impey and MacGregor 1985; Ayers 1985). In this setting, curiosities stood as "singularities" that, because "anomalous," defied classification (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991: 392; Breckenridge 1989: 199–200). By the end of the eighteenth century, the term was used to decontextualize South Pacific artifacts collected by the Cook expeditions and reorganize them into motifs that foregrounded a collector's claims to disinterested scientific inquiry (Thomas 1994). With respect to things Chinese, the term curiosities had been applied to collections that appeared at shows held in London in 1842 and 1847 (Altick 1978: 292–297) and in the China section of the 1851 Crystal Palace exposition, where it seemed to denote the exotic and strange.

While these various senses of the term curiosity may have operated with respect to Summer Palace loot, they were given added weight by the fact that the objects themselves were not produced for export trade or gathered at one of China's treaty ports for a London show. They were, instead, *royal* exotica, which gave them a monetary and collection value, particularly as souvenirs—individual tokens of remembrance—far superior to the sorts of Chinese objects that had previously appeared in Europe. At the same time, however superior their value might appear in relation to other things Chinese, insofar as they could also defy easy classification into known aesthetic categories,

labeling them curiosities set them apart from the refined arts of European civilization. This opposition is significant for a number of reasons. It points, for example, directly to the polymorphous nature of the meanings that were being constructed around these objects. At one and the same time, they stood for conquest and humiliation, for fantastic monetary value, and for little or no meaning at all. Curious, indeed. Yet, if the curiosity signaled some kind of absence of meaning, it should perhaps come as no surprise, particularly given that the invasion of China was itself a veritable engine of meaning generation, that over time efforts would be made to fill the curious with content. To gain a sense of these kinds of operations, it is necessary to shift the focus away from the imperial objects themselves to the site where they were found: the Summer Palace.

In virtually all of the descriptive accounts of the Summer Palace, the most detailed of which appear in French, the gardens, palaces, and pavilions were treated as unique works of art. In part, this was because many of the French were aware of the fact that part of the site was made up of European-style buildings, fountains, gardens, and a maze, all of which had been designed by French and Italian Jesuits in the service of the Qing emperors. Given that no one in either of the two armies had been to Beijing before, it is perhaps this knowledge itself that explains how the French and British identified the Yuanming gardens as the Summer Palace in the first place. Be that as it may, when confronted with the gardens, some observers were thoroughly astounded. Maurice d'Hérrison, for example, wrote that "to depict all the splendors before our astonished eyes, I should need to dissolve specimens of all known precious stones in liquid gold for ink, and to dip into it a diamond pen tipped with the fantasies of an oriental poet" (1901: 615–623). Though far less eloquent, Robert Swinhoe was similarly impressed with what he saw (1861: 332–334).

Nevertheless, there were those who, after further inspection and reflection, demurred. And it was precisely the notion of the curiosity that provided the leverage for escaping any temptation to stand in awe of the Chinese emperor. The critical testimony is, again, that of Garnet Wolseley, who once more performed the necessary surgical strike to make sure that there was no seepage of meaning across the great divide of the West and the Orient. More significant, the category of the curiosity allowed Wolseley to situate the Qing Empire and Chinese civilization as inferior to Great Britain and Europe.

Critical to Wolseley's rhetorical strategy was the construction of his encounter with the Summer Palace in a scene like those Mary Louise Pratt has

termed the "monarch-of-all-I-survey." Pratt has used this notion to explore the structure of British discovery literature, particularly those moments in which a foreign landscape (presumably those places never before seen by a "white man" and hence, seen by no one of significance) was constituted discursively for the first time. She finds in these writings the creation of an observer position that, through the melding of a language of aesthetics and an ideology of presence, takes possession of that which is observed (1992: 205). There is, of course, an obvious difference in the situation discussed here. The north China plain was neither an "empty" landscape nor one devoid historically of a European presence. Like others in both armies, Wolseley knew that the Summer Palace and its gardens were renowned in Europe; he was also aware that Englishmen had been there before. Indeed, it was a place, he informed his readers, "in which the ambassador of an English king had been insulted with impunity" ([1862] 1972: 226). But if Wolseley could not cast himself as the discoverer of the Summer Palace, he could do something even better: see it as no European had ever been capable of seeing it before.

Wolseley made himself a pioneer through a simple act of defiance. Evoking the history of the kowtow, he walked upright into the Hall of Audience and stood directly in front of the imperial throne, "before which so many princes and ambassadors of haughty monarchs had humbly prostrated themselves, according to the slave-like obeisance customary at the Chinese court."[30] As he turned away from the throne, having quite literally established his own sovereign viewing position, he became the monarch of all he surveyed. The imperial Wolseley could admit, for example, that the overall effect of the Audience Hall was better than his "preconceived ideas" and that each object in the hall was "a gem" of its kind. At the same time, however, "there was nothing imposing in the *tout ensemble*." Chinese architects "seemingly never" strove to achieve a unity of parts that transcended the whole. Rather, "both in landscape gardening and building," Wolseley observed, "the Chinaman loses sight of grand or imposing effects, in his endeavours to load everything with ornament; *he forgets the fine in his search for the curious.* In their thirst after decoration, and in their inherent love for minute embellishment, the artists and architects of China have failed to produce any great work capable of inspiring sensations of awe and admiration which strike one when first gazing upon the magnificent creations of European architects."

30. This and all the quotations that follow in the next two paragraphs are taken from Wolseley [1862] 1972: 232–237.

This "search for the curious," this passion for ornament produced not majesty, but a kind of obsession for the miniature, which in turn led to a second order of failure. Like the grotto at Cremorne, whose "diminutive representations of mountains and rustic scenery" are crowded into small spaces, the Summer Palace (as well as "all other ornamental localities of the empire") has "compressed into every nook or corner, tiny canals, ponds, bridges, stunted trees and rockery." Such comparison led to the conclusion that the Summer Palace "resembles more the design of a child in front of her doll's house than the work of grown-up men."

This reference to the feminine and child-like qualities of Chinese building and landscape architecture was immediately followed by the imputation of another kind of failure. If the living architecture of China was immature, Wolseley asserted, her past architecture was nonexistent. Unlike other great and now dead civilizations, China had failed to produce lasting monuments like those of Egypt, Nineveh, Thebes, Memphis, and even the "long-forgotten races of South America." Accordingly, no one could visit the Summer Palace without being disappointed: "There was an *absence* of grandeur about it, for which no amount of careful gardening and pretty ornaments can compensate."

Wolseley's simultaneous feminization, infantilization, and denigration of the Summer Palace places China in a moral discourse and an economy that defines it as an immature civilization, one lacking anything of superior and enduring quality. Set in this framework, the emperor, his palaces, and his possessions produce a China of absence and failure, a China very much in need of the "social and material intervention" of Great Britain (Pratt 1992: 205). Wolseley creates, in other words, a concise justification for a British pedagogical project in both its destructive and constructive aspects.

The chaotic processes of looting the Summer Palace and transforming its materiality into curiosities might be understood, therefore, as mechanisms of deterritorialization given emphasis by Wolseley's act of defiance before the emperor's throne and through his deprecation of the emperor's precious things. Brought low and disordered by these actions, the Qing Empire could then be reterritorialized in a new role: as the backward student of a British tutor. The tutorials that resulted included punishment and discipline as the necessary grounding on which learning could be initiated.

A Solemn Act of Retribution

Wolseley's discursive maneuvering through the grounds of the summer palace effectively established the position of domination that the British would insist on maintaining for the next half century. At its core was the notion of the political, intellectual, and cultural superiority of the British Empire and Englishmen over China and China's leaders. Its global denigration of all things Chinese was also a virtual mimicking of the attitude that the British had long imputed to the Chinese themselves. This "revered" position of superiority was, in turn, perpetuated by treating any act of resistance, however mild, as an apocalyptic threat to the political order established by warfare and treaty. Due to a degree of Chinese compliance, born of fear, that would have been unimaginable in earlier years, events in the coming decades did not give the lie to these attitudes. The excessive violence and vehement self-righteousness with which China was brought low may well account for that compliance. Nothing exemplifies this combination of British savagery and sanctimony more than the destruction of the Summer Palace; and it, in turn, is difficult to imagine without the position of the elevated sovereign masculine subject that Garnet Wolseley so self-consciously occupied.

The incident that led to the decision to destroy the Summer Palace involved, as noted earlier, the arrest of Harry Parkes, Henry Loch (Lord Elgin's secretary), and their escort near Tongzhou while they were supposed to have been carrying a flag of truce. Lord Elgin and his staff interpreted the arrest and detention as a transgression of "the law of nations" and of the regular conduct of warfare. They also considered it to be a typical act of Chinese treachery and blamed Prince Yi and Senggerinchin personally for what had transpired. No one commented on nor appears to have thought about any connection between the British detention of the Tianjin prefect Shi Zanqing during this campaign or the British abduction of Liangguang viceroy Ye Mingchen in 1858 and the seizure of Parkes and his escort. Nor did anyone give much consideration to the possibility that the meaning of a flag of truce may not have been understood by Chinese forces. Yet, even with these sort of willful refusals to consider the context of the capture of Parkes, what elevated the entire incident onto an almost transcendental plain involved the treatment of the prisoners while in captivity. In Lord Elgin's communication to Prince Gong and in the official correspondence and accounts published shortly afterward, the physical treatment of the captives, visible as signs of "indignities and ill-treatment" on the bodies of the living and the dead, was considered

an outrage—it was understood as a transgression of the normal boundary between civilization and barbarism.[31]

More than one account registered shock at the condition of the prisoners when they were returned to the British camp beginning on 14 October. Reverend M'Ghee's reaction was typical: "I never saw a more pitiable sight . . . hardly able to walk, they dragged their legs along and held their hands before their breasts in a posture denoting suffering, and such hands as they were, crumpled up and distorted in every possible way; some with running sores at the wrists, some in which the bloated appearance caused by the cords had not yet gone away, and some were shriveled like a bird's claw and appeared to be dead and withered" (1862: 252).

It soon became clear from accounts of these survivors, all of whom, with the exception of one French private, were Indian cavalrymen mainly from Fane's Horse, that the condition of deformity had been caused by hands and feet having been tightly bound together with wet cords. Trussed up in this way, the captives had been left exposed to the elements and denied food and water for extended periods of time. With circulation cut off to the extremities, flesh swelled and burst, wounds putrefied and became infested with maggots. Depositions taken from survivors and published whole or in part in British parliamentary papers or campaign accounts indicate that all those who died did so as a result of this treatment. The only positive note to be found was in the heroic behavior of Private Phipps, one of the deceased. According to the depositions of Bughel Sing and Khan Sing, as the last surviving European member of his party, Phipps "encouraged the Sikhs in every way he could, until his decease on the 14th day of his captivity." Like Moyse, the Private of the Buffs, Phipps had faced death with the sort of bravery that was the mark of the British soldier "under the most trying circumstances."[32]

The pitiful condition of survivors and the story of Phipps's heroism were further magnified by the mutilated condition of the bodies of the deceased. According to Robert Swinhoe, the dead arrived in coffins with pieces of paper attached to their sides bearing phonetic transliterations in Chinese ideograms of their names. This was, perhaps, all to the good, as the bodies themselves "were found to be in such a state of decomposition that not a feature was

31. The quotation and the reference to barbarism is from Lord Elgin to Prince Gong, CRAC 217.

32. The quotations are from Hope Grant to Secretary of State for War, 22 October 1860, WO 32/8237. Copies of the testimony of the Indian troopers were printed in CRAC 197–198 and in Loch [1869] 1900: 161–165.

recognizable, and it was only by tattered garments" that some were identified. Word quickly spread through the camps, and the mood of the soldiers turned ugly (Swinhoe 1861: 320–321; M'Ghee 1862: 254). Loch recalled that the "sight of the bodies . . . excited general indignation" ([1869] 1900: 160), which, according to Swinhoe, reached a "terrible pitch" (1861: 323). In a letter to French Foreign Minister Thouvenel, Baron Gros summed up the mood of the two camps: "You can well imagine that extreme indignation and rage reigns in the allied camps and that we shall need all the prudence and calm we can command to prevent horrible reprisals from spoiling our cause. There are people who would like to burn Peking and to torture every Chinese mandarin."[33]

Given the general sense of indignation, the desire for revenge, and the central place that the death of the captives occupied in justifying the subsequent destruction of the Summer Palace,[34] one might have expected that the bodies of the deceased would serve as an element unifying the expeditionary force in a common endeavor. To an extent they did, particularly through the burial ceremonies, in which members of both armies participated. Furthermore, most probably agreed with Parkes when, in a letter to his wife of 27 October, he argued that "the treatment of our prisoners was too atrocious to be passed over without exemplary punishment." The difficulty, Parkes added, was "to know what punishment to inflict" (Lane-Poole 1901: 251). Here views diverged greatly.

Major Graham, for example, wondered in his journal why the army did not simply enter Beijing and "sack the palace" (1901: 191). Others, especially the leaders of the two armies, thought that some sort of mark or visible sign of punishment should be left on Beijing, perhaps even the destruction of the imperial palaces (the Forbidden City). As discussions continued, the civil and military leaders of the expedition mulled over their options. They could demand that Prince Gong turn over those responsible for the "high" crime, but the real culprits—the emperor, Prince Yi, and Senggerinchin—were well beyond reach. They could demand an additional indemnity, but that seemed too mild a punishment. They could leave a mark on Beijing, but the city itself had already surrendered and its inhabitants, according to a number of sources, were without blame.

33. Gros cited in Costin 1937: 333; also see Varin 1862: 248–252; Bazancourt 1861: 279.

34. See the reactions in M'Ghee 1862: 221–256; Swinhoe 1861: 303–304, 319–326; Wolseley [1862] 1972: 258–270; Loch [1869] 1900: 102–148, 157–165.

As these options were weighed, Baron Gros seemed to think that treaty ratification overrode all other concerns; therefore, anything that threatened swift completion of that objective, such as continued military operations, was to be avoided. Moreover, the commanders of both armies were bothered by a sudden change in the weather—neither army was prepared to winter in north China—and desired action and withdrawal to the coast as quickly as possible. Equally "pragmatic," the Russian ambassador, General Ignatiev, worried that Elgin's sole goal was "to degrade as much as possible the Chinese government and officials in the eyes of the Chinese people" and warned that a peace based on an overt act of humiliation would work not only against the British, but against all the other powers in China as well (J. Evans 1987: 98–101).

Elgin, however, was only partially influenced by these concerns. In a dispatch to Lord John Russell of 25 October, he justified his eventual decision to destroy the Summer Palace on the logical necessities of empire and on the history of British contact with China and Asia. The former required an action that would create the possibility of future security; the latter was grounded, as noted above, in the British translation of key Chinese terms that exposed the mentality of China's rulers. Underlying this view of China's rulers was a collection of stereotypical ideas about the East, Eastern peoples, Oriental despotism, and what constituted effective action in such an environment. Elgin told Russell, for example, that the low "standard of morals which now obtain in China" would have been lowered even further if he had not dealt with the question of the treatment of captives "as a high crime calling for severe retribution." Such an action, in turn, had to be done in such a way that it would leave a lasting impression if it were to have an effect, one that might even be more binding than the contractual arrangements in the treaty itself. He sought, in other words, something emblematic that would leave a stamp on the minds of China's rulers, one that they would remember and learn from and that would have a direct impact on their behavior.[35]

The razing of the Summer Palace, in Elgin's mind, was the precise act that would have the desired results. As he told Russell, he had "reason to believe that . . . it would produce a greater effect in China, and on the emperor, than persons at a distance may suppose." This was because the Yuanming gardens

35. For a while, he considered having the Qing government build a monument in Tianjin to the dead and compelling the highest-ranking Chinese officials to participate in its dedication. It would have plaques in English, French, and Chinese as a "lesson for future generations." For whatever reason, he abandoned this idea; see J. Evans 1987: 97–98; CRAC 214.

were the emperor's favorite place of residence; its destruction would thus be a "blow to his pride as well as his feelings." It was also the palace where some of the prisoners had been held and tortured; to destroy it would presumably provide some compensation for their suffering. Moreover, the Summer Palace had already been thoroughly plundered: therefore, destroying it would not involve the destruction of many valuable things. Finally, because it was the private property of the emperor and the imperial house, its loss would not be punishment directed at the blameless Chinese people (CRAC 213–215). "The army would go there," Elgin concluded, "not to pillage, but to mark by a solemn act of retribution the horror and indignation with which we were inspired by the perpetration of a great crime" (cited in Swinhoe 1861: 329). As his army carried out his order, Lord Elgin had posted in public places a proclamation in Chinese explaining to the Chinese people the precise cause and reason for the destruction of the emperor's palaces and gardens (Wolseley [1862] 1972: 281).

"A DREARY WASTE OF RUINED NOTHINGS"

"By the evening of the 19th October, the summer palace had ceased to exist, and in their immediate vicinity the face of nature had changed: some blackened gables and piles of burnt timbers alone indicating where the royal palaces had stood. In many places the inflammable pine trees near the buildings had been consumed with them, leaving nothing but their charred trunks to mark the site. When we first entered the gardens they reminded one of those magic grounds described in fairy tales; we marched from them upon the 19th October, leaving them a dreary waste of ruined nothings" (Wolseley [1862] 1972: 280). This passage provides one of the most graphic descriptions of the results of the British army's efforts on 18 and 19 October. And yet, as concise and clear as the passage appears, it tells little about two important aspects of the events: the sheer scale of the undertaking and the way participants justified to themselves and others Lord Elgin's decision. To begin, the destruction of the Summer Palace involved all of General Michel's 1st Infantry Division, which was made up of four British regiments and the 15th Punjabis from India. The combined strength of these units was 143 officers and 4,372 men. Also participating were approximately 300 officers and men of the Royal Engineers (W. Porter 1889 1: 514–515) and several squads of cavalry.

These numbers may seem large, but the site itself was of extraordinary size. What the British and French referred to as the Summer Palace was actually a complex of lakes, villas, landscapes and vistas, gardens, and govern-

ment offices, the largest part of which was made up of three distinct segments clustered together. These were the Yuanming (Perfect Brightness) garden, often confused for the whole site, the Changchun (Extended Spring) garden, and the Qichun (Beauteous Spring) garden. There were also a number of other, smaller gardens to the south and west of these, including the Wanshou (Birthday) garden, which would later become the focal point of the "new" Summer Palace (Yihe yuan). In addition, the northeast border of the Changchun garden was where the Chinese-rococo-style palaces and fountains designed by Italian and French missionaries were located.[36] Taken together, the gardens covered an estimated 857 acres.[37] Further, although some of the accounts refer to the destruction of the "Yuen-ming-yuen" (or Ewen-ming-Ewen, as M'Ghee delightfully heard it), the actual buildings burned may have exceeded those of the three primary gardens. Colonel C. P. B. Walker's journal entry for 19 October suggests, for example, that the cavalry troop he commanded destroyed buildings right up to the foot of the Fragrant Hills, perhaps including some of the military barracks and temples that were located there (1894: 217). Other accounts mention the burning of villages adjacent to the gardens (Swinhoe 1861: 336; M'Ghee 1862: 283–284; NCH, 7 November 1860).

Reports describing the scale and extent of destruction were coupled, in some cases, with observations of the effects it had on the perpetrators. Characterizing the results as Vandal-like and echoing earlier characterizations of looting, Charles Gordon spoke of the "beauty and magnificence of the palaces we burnt" and called it "wretchedly demoralizing work for an army."[38] Robert Swinhoe was appalled by the "crackling and rushing noise" of the fire as he approached the gardens, and disturbed by the destruction of what could not be replaced (1861: 330). Yet, he was also struck by the way the red flames gleamed on the faces of the men and made them appear to be demons glorying in their task. The sense of pleasure that Swinhoe alludes to here was recorded by a number of participants and was often connected to feelings of satisfaction.

36. Construction had begun during the reign of the Kangxi emperor (r. 1662–1723) and continued well into that of his grandson, the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736–1795). Following a number of southern tours into the Yangzi delta region, the Qianlong emperor had duplicates built of famous scenic sites and gardens from Hangzhou and Suzhou; see Barmé 1996: 118–121. Also see Malone 1934 for a history of the Summer Palace gardens.

37. For maps, drawings, and computer-generated reproductions of some of the buildings and scenic views, see Barmé 1996.

38. The quotation is from a letter to his mother; see Hope 1885: 14; W. Porter 1889, 1: 514–515; Boulger 1897: 46; Spence 1969: 74–75.

Wolseley, for example, argued that this "Gothlike act of barbarism" gave an "unmistakable reality to our work of vengeance" and quite literally awed Qing authorities ([1862] 1972: 279). Some even thought that the British had not gone far enough. In a journal entry, Colonel Walker expressed the desire to burn every government building and house of a known mandarin, the Tartar quarter of Beijing, and the imperial palaces in the center of the city. Further, he regretted that the British did not have the resources to carry away the enormous instrument that gave the Great Bell Temple (Dazhong si) its name. Walker thought it belonged in the clock tower at Westminster (1894: 218–219).

Accounts also acknowledge that the 1st Division did far more than burn the Summer Palace; it also engaged in a second great wave of plunder, one that authorities at the time and commentators later have generally ignored. The 15th Punjabis, for example, were reported to have secured large quantities of gold, with one of their officers supposedly hauling off £9,000.[39]

Yet, at the same time that accounts revel in the scale of the 1st Division's activities, they also expressed a kind of astonishment, bordering on reverence, for the magnificence of that which was being destroyed. This sense of wonder was expressed in an outpouring of descriptive prose about the beauty and expanse of the Summer Palace. Few, perhaps not even Wolseley himself, could look on the scene without a "pang of sorrow" (M'Ghee 1862: 287) or not "grieve over the destruction of so much ancient grandeur" (Grant, cited in Knollys 1875: 205), and this alone may have been enough to stimulate a desire to fix, if only in discourse, an image of what was there before the flames consumed history, taste, beauty, and workmanship. Some observers, perhaps, were aware that it was one thing to make light of their portrayal by the Chinese authorities as barbarians, but quite another to behave like a Vandal or Goth.

Nevertheless, these misgivings did not prevent some observers from attempting to capture the scenery in language like that of a sightseeing tour. Wolseley, for instance, could actually speak of the view from one of the buildings as "charming," and Swinhoe found the area around the Wanshou garden "pleasantly wooded" and the view from a hilltop "most perfect." Major Graham and General Michel had a magnificent view from the top of the White Pagoda in the Fragrant Hills a week after the destruction of the Summer

39. Swinhoe 1861: 331. In his history of the India army, Farwell (1989: 32) argues that the source of the wealth of Probyn's and Fane's Horse, later the 11th and 19th Bengal Lancers, was from China loot.

Palace, and Colonel Walker, from apparently the same place (and while the burning was in progress), praised the view and said he had "seldom looked over a finer country."[40] This is, no doubt, a variation of the master-of-all-he-surveys subject position discussed earlier, but what is stunning is how anyone could see anything through the conflagration and smoke.

These contradictory and, in some cases, seemingly impossible reactions to the destruction of the gardens were accompanied by other peculiar pronouncements. For example, paeans to the beauty of the gardens were paralleled by a tone of disavowal and defiance. These included reminders that the French had been in the garden precincts well before the British, burning some of the audience halls located near the entrance and, as they plundered, leaving behind "little more than the bare shell of buildings" (Wolseley [1862] 1972: 279–280). Henry Loch, who would later deny that Lord Elgin had ever thought about burning the Forbidden City,[41] claimed that nothing of either artistic or scholarly value had been burnt because nothing of rarity was actually kept there by the Qing Court! ([1869] 1900: 168).

By insisting that the gardens came pre-defiled, the British could presumably think about plunder as "salvage" (M'Ghee 1862: 286) and justify to themselves their acts of devastation. If they wavered, there were other means of self-assurance. When he weakened briefly while watching British soldiers set fire to one after another of the garden pavilions, Reverend M'Ghee recalled the mutilated bodies of the prisoners and all regrets vanished. But it was Consul Swinhoe who perhaps best captured the moment. As flames curled into "grotesque festoons and wreaths," twining "in their last embrace round the grand portal of the Palace," as black columns of smoke rose to the sky and red flames "hissed and crackled as if to glorify in the destruction" they spread about, Swinhoe watched with a "mournful pleasure" and "a secret gratification" that the blow had fallen, that justice had been done (1861: 336–337).

How much more forcible a message, Swinhoe seemed to suggest, could the British send to the Chinese government and the people of Beijing? If there were any lingering doubts that the British were sincere and determined in their purpose, the evidence was graphically there in the pall of smoke and burning embers that hung over the gardens, obliterating the sun, casting the

40. The quote from Wolseley is at [1862] 1972: 283; his description is on 282–287. Also see Swinhoe 1861: 332–336; Graham 1901: 196; Walker 1894: 217–218. Graham and Walker are probably referring to the Biyun temple; see Bredon 1931: 322–323.

41. Elgin and Grant had discussed such an eventuality and were prepared to destroy the palaces in Beijing if necessary; see WO 8239.

world around into shadows, and then slowly drifting on the wind and falling like snow showers upon Beijing (Loch [1869] 1900: 170). If the inhabitants of Beijing understood the stern and fearsome justice of the British, how much more so would "the cruel and perfidious author and instigator of the crime" (Swinhoe 1861: 337). The scene of desolation would make the emperor and his mandarins feel "something of the measure of their guilt" (M'Ghee 1862: 288). It was, Wolseley insisted, the only way to strike at the "great vulnerable point in a Mandarin's character": his pride ([1862] 1972: 281).

In the end, therefore, the British accounts invariably arrived at the same point. They cast doubts aside, forgot or trivialized the beauty they had destroyed, and discovered the "real" culprit, the real perpetrator of the crime they were forced to commit. For those who may have had lingering doubts, Chaplain M'Ghee gave absolution; without "a vestige" of the gardens remaining, he wrote, "a good work has been done" (1862: 288–289). There would be no apologies, no regrets. A stern precedent had been set for the future.

Teaching the Paramount Lesson: The Ratification Ceremony

With the Summer Palace destroyed, the primary purpose of the military expedition could now be addressed: the ratification of the Tianjin Treaty. The ceremony itself was carried out within the walls of Beijing on 24 October 1860 and meant to be consistent with procedures used by Euroamerican nation-states in their international relations. But it was also more than this. From the moment it was clear to Lord Elgin and his assistants that it was possible to hold the ratification ceremony in Beijing, opportunities presented themselves for additional acts of humiliation and pedagogy directed against China's rulers. The performance of these actions brought to an end this instance of reterritorialization, but it did so as an expression of imperial, as opposed to nation-state, sovereignty, inaugurating a colonization of the Qing regime, if not its empire as a whole.

SELECTING THE SITE

On 21 October, Harry Parkes, Henry Loch, and a detachment of the King's Dragoon Guards entered Beijing through the Anding Gate in search of an appropriate site to hold the ratification ceremony. They made their way down the narrow streets to the center of town and found themselves in a more open area lying between the Qian and Tianan Gates. Having identified the structures here as the "principal public departments" of the Qing government, Parkes

located the Hall of Ceremonies, which apparently had the Chinese ideograms *Li bu* (Board of Rites) on the door,[42] and with Loch, decided that this would be the appropriate place for the ratification to occur. Given the kinds of spectacular displays of power, the performance of which the British leadership thought particularly effective in the East, Parkes's ability to locate and identify the Hall of Ceremonies was more than a bit of good fortune.

As a linguist, Parkes was particularly attuned to the nuances of Qing Court language and practices. Like other Englishmen, he understood them to be the appearances or symbols of power and authority; indeed, he had spent a good deal of his career attempting to break through these façades and force Qing officials to "face reality." Now Parkes had an opportunity to demonstrate the distinction between apparent and real power, and to do so at sites dense with symbolic meaning for China's mandarins. A similar logic was no doubt at play when Parkes and Loch settled on a place for Lord Elgin and his staff to reside while in Beijing. In this case, they seemed determined to resolve the "city question" at Beijing immediately—there would be no more Cantons. After spotting the roofs of some large buildings in the distance and making inquiries, Parkes indicated that they had found the residence of the duplicitous Prince Yi, and after walking through the buildings and courtyards of the elegant Beijing residence, both agreed that it would make an ideal legation (Loch [1869] 1900: 171–172).

On their tour, Parkes and Loch encountered a group of officials and found themselves with an opportunity to perform the kind of instruction they thought critical, particularly at this juncture. Among the officials, they identified the president of the Board of Punishments. Speaking in Chinese to the "astonished gathering," Parkes told the assembled officials "in the strongest terms of condemnation" of the brutal manner in which the president had treated them. As the president "precipitately retired" from the scene, Parkes admonished him, "When a man takes advantage of the misfortunes of an enemy personally to insult him, then he forfeits the consideration of every civilized nation and deserves to be banished from the society of honest men." The rest of the crowd, according to Loch, "brightened" and made expressions of goodwill ([1869] 1900: 173–174).

These two incidents—locating sites proper for certain acts of discipline and pedagogy and the impromptu public humiliation of a Chinese official—are extremely significant. Both play on a particular aspect of "Chinese charac-

42. See Swinhoe (1861: 346), the only source who mentions this.

ter" the British thought they had astutely identified. The first struck at the purported hollowness of Chinese ceremony and substituted for it performances of real power. The second incident confronted the proud and effete mandarins with moral fortitude and bravery, both of which, when combined with the judicious use of physical force, produced submission. This theory of the Chinese character was commonplace. According to Reverend M'Ghee, "Pride and assertion in the Asiatic must be met in a corresponding manner; and if from a mistaken gentleness you yield to him one inch, he attributes it to fear and impotence on your part . . . and you are obliged again to master him or to leave him alone" (1862: 309). This is, of course, yet another rationale for and justification of gunboat diplomacy.

These perceptions may also be understood as part of a deeply ingrained Euroamerican lore about the fixation of the Chinese on how they were perceived by others around them. A well-placed insult could, as many generations of Euroamericans have learned from reading about incidents like the one involving Parkes and the mandarins (or the British linguists and Qiying), cause them to "lose face," something that appeared to be more important to a Chinese than perhaps life itself. More will be said about this particular "Chinese characteristic" below. Here it is worth noting that if this is indeed a formative moment of the discovery of "face" by Englishmen, it is important to keep the circumstances in mind. The appearance of face-saving and face-losing occurred in a situation of conquest, occupation, and deliberate humiliation. Such circumstances informed the remainder of the choreographed British performance.

PREPARATION

Now that an appropriate site had been selected for the ceremony, it remained for Lord Elgin's assistants to make the necessary preparations. For example, the room where the ratification was to take place had to be arranged in such a way that it demonstrated "equality" between the parties. Moreover, procedures had to be set, documents and credentials vetted, and because a rumor circulated that the Hall of Ceremonies had been mined, the structure had to be carefully inspected. While Colonel Wolseley and some Royal Engineers examined the hall, Parkes and Wade, Lord Elgin's crack linguists, settled "the points of etiquette" (Swinhoe 1861: 344; Wolseley 1904: 84). The latter included establishing the seating arrangement in the hall.

Like other audience halls in Beijing, the Board of Rites was rectangular, with its upper and more inner part on the longer, rear wall and its entrance

to the south. According to ritual manuals, for ceremonies held here involving foreign ambassadors, the ambassador and his retinue were placed on the east side of the hall, with imperial officials aligned facing them on the west side. At the upper center of the hall, a table was placed where imperial edicts and the ambassador's credentials were placed.[43] Whether or not they were aware of this particular arrangement, Parkes and Wade positioned the tables and chairs next to each other at the upper end of the hall, where Lord Elgin and Prince Gong would carry out the ratification, with both parties facing the entrance, or south door. Further, they seem to have retained the Qing order in the hall, placing Lord Elgin on the east and Prince Gong on the west. But because extant accounts refer to the location of the British participants as "the place of honor," they may well have interpreted such positioning as a form of appropriation of Qing imperial authority (Loch [1869] 1900: 178; Knollys 1894: 92; Swinhoe 1861: 346).

ENTRANCE INTO BEIJING

Perhaps because of the bomb threat and general concerns that there might be other mischief afoot, the British leaders decided to depute General Robert Napier, commander of the 2nd Division of the army, to post guards from the Anding Gate to the Hall of Ceremonies. Soon after noon, on Wednesday, 24 October, the British ambassador entered the city. Henry Loch described the scene, which was also produced (and reproduced) in a panoramic sketch by the *Illustrated London News:*[44] "[Lord Elgin] . . . was carried in a *chair of state* by sixteen Chinamen dressed in royal crimson liveries; the escort consisted of six hundred men, besides one hundred officers. A body of cavalry led, followed by infantry; the officers who had permission to attend came next, the Head-Quarters Staff in the rear of them, then the Commander-in-Chief with his Personal Staff, and, about thirty yards behind Sir Hope Grant, came Lord Elgin, his horse saddled and led behind his chair, the members of the Embassy on either side of the Ambassador; a detachment of infantry closed the procession" ([1869] 1900: 177; emphasis added).[45]

43. See the translation from *The Comprehensive Rites of the Great Qing* (*Da Qing tongli*) in Hevia 1996: 478.

44. *ILN*, 5 January 1861: 20–21; Cameron 1970: 357; Hibbert 1970: illustrations following p. 270.

45. Perhaps Parkes and Wade selected a "chair of state." From sketch drawings, this appears to have been a closed sedan chair. See *ILN*, cited in previous note, and the drawing

As the procession entered the gate of the Hall of Ceremonies, the army band that had been placed in the forecourt struck up "God Save the Queen." Elgin emerged from the sedan chair and was met by Prince Gong, who came forward to greet him.

THE RATIFICATION CEREMONY

Lord Elgin and Prince Gong entered the hall and took up their respective seats on either side. They then commenced the exchange and inspection of credentials. Both sides produced documents that constituted them as the authoritative subjects who could execute the ratification in the name of their sovereigns. In Prince Gong's case, this meant that he had the emperor's permission to affix the Seal of the Empire to the document. The documents conferring plenipotentiary powers having been scrutinized and accepted by both sides, the Convention of Beijing was then signed and the treaties exchanged. In normal state-to-state relations, this should have been sufficient, but according to various accounts, a few more demands were made of the Qing Court. Prince Gong was made to sign a statement that the Tianjin Treaty had been properly executed and the Great Seal affixed, indicating that the emperor accepted all conditions and clauses of the Treaty. This demand may, in turn, have provided the justification for another, the empirewide publication of the Treaty by the Qing government, the translation of which was completed by Parkes and Wade on 7 November, printed, and immediately posted around Beijing (Loch [1869] 1900: 178–179).

With the signing ceremony completed, the British decided to use an unusual technological innovation to capture the moment. Accompanying the expeditionary force since its arrival at Dagu was Felice Beato, an Italian photographer. He now set up what General Grant described as his "infernal machine," the presence of which seemed to shock Prince Gong. He looked at the contraption—Grant claimed it had the appearance of a mortar—"in a state of terror, pale as death," until Lord Elgin assured him that there was no danger (Knollys 1894: 192). Unfortunately for the British and posterity, Beato's photograph did not come out; there was insufficient light in the Hall of Ceremonies.[46] Lord Elgin then rose and departed. In an amiable atmo-

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entitled "The state entry of Lord Elgin into Peking 1860" located between pp. 192 and 193 in Beeching 1975.

46. On Beato and his photography, see D. Harris 1999.

sphere, Prince Gong saw him off at the top of the front stairs to the hall (Loch [1869] 1900: 179), performing, as it were, the "perfect equality" stipulated in Article 5 of the Treaty of Tianjin.[47]

Thus ended a struggle over the form of intercourse between the empire of Great Britain and the empire of China that had begun with the first British embassy in 1793, continued with the ill-fated missions of Lord Amherst and Lord Napier, and culminated in the third British invasion of China. Certainly conscious of past relations, Henry Loch no doubt felt completely justified in characterizing the signing of the Convention of Beijing and the ratification of the Tianjin Treaty as an incident of world-historical importance. "Thus was happily ended an event," he wrote, "which was the commencement of a new era, not only in the history of the Empire of China, but of the world, by the introduction of four hundred millions of the human race into the family of nations" ([1869] 1900: 180).

And yet, as profoundly important as the leadership of the British forces considered these events, there was at the same time an underlying current of derision, if not contempt for the officials with whom they had to deal. Consul Swinhoe, for example, characterized Prince Gong as "cadaverous-looking" and noted his "timid, sulky demeanour" and "snappish" answers during the ceremony; his retinue, meanwhile, was "dirty and badly dressed" (1861: 348). Chaplain M'Ghee referred to the prince's "sulky dignity" and noted with distaste his horde of retainers of "very questionable cleanliness" (1862: 309). And if the appearance of Qing officials generated a degree of antipathy on the part of British observers, the Hall of Ceremonies itself fared no better. As Swinhoe put it, the place "bore the stamp of neglect and decay of the thousand and one other public buildings in Pekin, and the tapestry that hung from the unceiled roof was of cheap stuff and faded" (1861: 348). But probably the most telling dismissal of the Qing officials and the ceremony came from Major Graham; he wrote in his diary that "the Punjabs thought it a miserable durbar, and that the Chinamen looked like a parcel of old women with no hair on their faces" (1901: 195).

These characterizations of Qing officials and government edifices should come as no surprise, but they do point to one of the unexpected outcomes of the struggle. China did not measure up to one of the dominant fantasies about the Orient: the ostentatious excess of its rulers. Yet, if this was noticed

47. Mayers [1877] 1966: 12. A footing of equality *sans* "perfect" is mentioned in Articles 3 and 7.

by the British leadership, it was not registered as a problem at the time. More important for the immediate future was an estimation of the degree to which Qing leaders were learning the lessons Lord Elgin was teaching. A few days after the treaty ceremony, Elgin received Prince Gong in his new residence, the commandeered home of Prince Yi, and had a satisfying conversation with him. The session ended with Beato photographing the prince. This time, the lighting was adequate. The portrait that resulted indicates, if not sulkiness, a degree of trepidation on the prince's face. But perhaps he was still reacting to the "infernal machine," for within a few days Lord Elgin returned the visit and found the prince open and forthright, demonstrating little if any fear of speaking to a foreigner, as Elgin thought common in other officials. Elgin took these signs to be extremely positive. But there was one more lesson he sought to deliver before he left Beijing to put the finishing touches on his mission.

On 8 November 1860, Frederick Bruce, Lord Elgin's brother and minister designate to China, arrived at Beijing. Elgin immediately arranged for a meeting with Prince Gong. At this meeting, Elgin not only wished to pass the torch to his brother, but to do so in a way that the prince would understand as normal diplomatic procedure. As the session opened, Elgin had Parkes explain that "in England the individual who represents the sovereign . . . always takes precedence over all others." Now that Elgin's task in China was accomplished, Bruce would occupy that position. Therefore, Elgin intended at that moment to give up his seat of honor. He then rose and changed seats with his brother, establishing Bruce as the appropriate sovereign masculine subject with whom Qing officialdom would henceforth deal.

The next day, the prince arrived at the British embassy and Elgin had Frederick receive him. Apparently now conversant in "universal" diplomatic forms, the prince engaged in a lengthy and productive conversation with the British minister.[48] Satisfied with his imperial handiwork, Lord Elgin departed the same day for Great Britain.

PRESENTATION IN LONDON

Back in the imperial center, news of the end of the war and treaty ratification, along with appropriate illustrations, appeared in the January editions of the *Illustrated London News*. The issue of 19 January 1861 provided what was perhaps the most concise report on the victory of the British Empire over the Qing.

48. This and the preceding paragraph are drawn from Walrond 1872: 370–371.

10. Beijing residents reading the treaty. *Illustrated London News,* 19 January 1861.

The front page carried a sketch of a large group of Chinese facing a wall, on which was posted the "Treaty of Peking" (fig. 10). According to the *News,* more copies were posted all around Beijing, where "crowds of astonished natives . . . could scarcely believe their own eyes on beholding such an instance of Imperial condescension." Not long afterward, his work done, Lord Elgin took leave of Prince Gong "with the most cordial respect and goodwill." For his part, the prince had overcome "his morose fit and assumed a cheerful aspect, exhibiting a *teachable and compliant* disposition" (emphasis added).

Just below the China report was another, this one from India. It was an announcement of the creation of a new Indian coinage, one made necessary by the "termination of the East India Company's authority" in the wake of the Indian uprising of 1857. The new coin bore the legend "Queen Victoria" and her portrait (ILN, 19 January 1861: 63–64). Pax Britannica now stretched from the subcontinent to the eastern seaboard of China, and the relationship between the two was on a firmer footing than ever before.