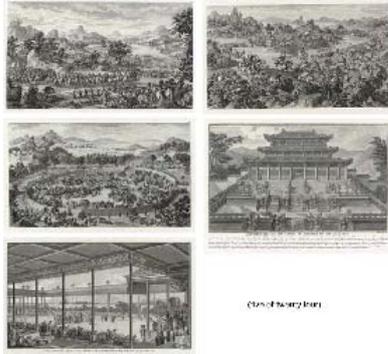


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1701

THE CONQUESTS OF THE EMPEROR QIANLONG

A RARE SET OF TWENTY-FOUR ENGRAVINGS AFTER CASTIGLIONE, DAMASCENE, ATTIRET AND SICHELBARTH
LATE 18TH CENTURY

**Price Realized** (Set Currency)

\$33,600

Price includes buyer's premium

Estimate

\$30,000 - \$40,000

Sale Information

Sale 1701

Fine Chinese Ceramics And Works

Of Art

19 September 2006

New York, Rockefeller Plaza

ENLARGE

Lot Description

THE CONQUESTS OF THE EMPEROR QIANLONG

A RARE SET OF TWENTY-FOUR ENGRAVINGS AFTER CASTIGLIONE, DAMASCENE, ATTIRET AND
SICHELBARTH

LATE 18TH CENTURY

Comprising a complete set of sixteen engravings commissioned to commemorate the Emperor Qianlong's victory in Central Asia (1755-1759), including scenes of battlefields, sieges and encampments, mostly set in rugged, mountainous terrain, as well as victory banquets; one of a ploughing scene; three of a procession scene; one of a ceremonial presentation; and the last three commemorating an ancestral ritual

1. "Presenting the prisoners taken during the pacification of the Muslim tribes to the Emperor", 1754, from a drawing by Jean-Denis Attiret, engraved by Helman, 1783.
2. "The great victory of the Chinese against Muslim troops", 1755, from a drawing by Jean Damascene, engraved by Helman, 1784.
3. "Raising the siege of the Black River", 1755, the second battle between the Chinese army and that of Ta-ou-Atsi, who was beaten and taken prisoner in 1755; from a drawing by Giuseppe Castiglione, engraved by Helman, 1784.
4. "Storming of the camp at Garden-Ola", the Chinese army fighting Amour-sana who had betrayed them after receiving support against Ta-ou-Atsi, 1757, from a drawing by Giuseppe Castiglione, engraved by Helman, [no date].
5. "The Battle of Tonguzluq", the pillage of the capital of the Elauths, 1756; from a drawing by Giuseppe Castiglione, engraved by Helman, 1785.
6. "The Emperor reviewing his troops", from a drawing by Jean Damascene, engraved by Helman, 1784.
7. "The battle scene between the Emperor's Grand-General Tchao-Hoei and the resurgent Amour-sana", 1757, from a drawing by Jean Damascene, engraved by Helman, 1784.
8. "Receiving the surrender of the Ili", from a drawing by Ignatius Sichelbarth, engraved by Helman, 1784.
9. "The Battle of Oroï-Jalatu", the destruction of the enemy camp; 1758, from a drawing by Giuseppe Castiglione.
10. "The Battle of Qos-Qulaq", the enemy is driven into the ravines in the mountains and trapped, 1758, from a drawing by Giuseppe Castiglione, engraved by Helman, 1785.
11. "The Khan of Badakhsan asks to surrender", a great feast is given in honour of the General, 1750, from a drawing by Jean Damascene, engraved by Helman, 1784.
12. "The Battle of Yesil-Kor-Nor in 1759", from a drawing by Jean Damascene, engraved by Helman, 1785.
13. "The Chief of Us (Turfan) Surrenders with His City in 1759", the Tartars presenting tributes, from a drawing by Jean Damascene, engraved by Helman, 1783.
14. "The Battle of Alchouv in 1759", from a drawing by Jean-Denis Attiret, engraved by Helman, 1785.
15. "The Battle of Arcul on 1 September 1759", against the two Hot-chom in the mountains of Pulok-koi, from a drawing by Jean-Denis Attiret, engraved by Helman, 1785.
16. "The Emperor gives a Victory Banquet for the Officers and Soldiers Who Distinguished Themselves at Battle", Imperial Palace Gardens, Beijing, on 5 July 1754, from a drawing by Giuseppe Castiglione, engraved by Helman, 1784.
17. "Ploughing Ceremony Conducted by the Emperor of China", after a painting belonging to Minister Henri-Léonard Bertin, engraved by Helman, 1786.
18. "Ordinary Procession of the Emperor of China When He Visits the City of Beijing", left leaf of a triptych dedicated to Charles Alexandre de Calonne (Minister of Finance), after a Chinese painting dated 1717 belonging to Minister Henri-Léonard Bertin.
19. "Ordinary Procession of the Emperor of China When He visits the City of Beijing", center leaf of triptych.
20. "Ordinary Procession of the Emperor of China When He Visits the City of Beijing", right leaf of triptych, engraved by Helman, 1786.

21. "A Celebration for Veterans under the Auspices of the Emperor Qianlong, 14 February 1785, engraved by Helman, 1788.

22. "A Visit by the Emperor to the Tombs of his Ancestors", engraved by Helman, 1788.

23. "Emperor Qianlong Paying Respects at the Tomb of his Ancestors", engraved by Helman, 1788.

24. "The Emperor Reciting Poems in Honour of his Ancestors", engraved by Helman, 1788.

16¼ x 9½ in. (41.3 x 24.1 cm.), framed (24)

Lot Notes

The first sixteen scenes of the present album are reproductions from a set produced to commemorate Emperor's Qianlong's victorious campaigns in Central Asia between 1755-1759.

The originals were commissioned by Qianlong on 13 July 1765 for the central hall of the Palace in Beijing. The drawings were prepared in China by four Jesuits: Giuseppe Castiglione, the director of the project, Jean-Denis Attiret, Ignatius Sichelbarth and Jean Damascene. By recommendation of Louis-Joseph Le Febvre, head of the French Jesuit mission to China, they were sent to Paris, where the engravings were executed by eight artists under the direction of Charles-Nicolas Cochin of the Academie Royale at the Court of Louis XVI. Jean-Philippe Le Bas, Helman's master, was one of the engravers. This commission was considered of utmost importance, as it potentially offered France means of leaving a favorable impression on the Emperor and thus gaining advantage in view of commerce and missioning, directed against the Dutch, Portuguese and English. The Qianlong emperor's commission was for an edition of one hundred copies only; however, to ensure the safe receipt of at least one hundred copies in China, an edition of 200 copies was actually printed. To reduce the risk of loss at sea they were distributed over two ships in lots of 100 impressions each. The entire edition was received in China by 1775 for which the Compagnie Francaise des Indes in Canton was paid the sum of 240,000 pounds. Only a very limited number of extra copies was printed for the French King, his ministers and some members of the Court and the greatest precaution was taken that no copies remained with the engravers or printers to ensure its exclusivity

The engraver, Isidore-Stanislas Helman (1743-1806?) was a student of Jean-Philippe Le Bas who worked on the original set of sixteen engravings. Between 1783-1788, Helman engraved a new series of cold-chisel prints in half the size of the original, for sale to the public. The success of the reproduction encouraged Helman to produce four additional prints in 1786, and a further four in 1788.

Complete series of Helman's work are extremely rare, although sets of the original battle engravings have been published: one set is in the Bibliotheque Mazarine; another in the Bibliotheque Nationale; a third is in the Musée Guimet; and a set given by Louis XVI to Necker is now lodged in the Castle Coppet in Switzerland.

The engravings are documented in a monograph by Michele Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, *Gravures des Conquetes de l'Empereur de Chine K'ien-Long au Musée Guimet*, Paris 1969.

Compare with a similar set of twenty-four prints sold in our Paris rooms, 19 November 2003, lot 298.

Department Information

Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art