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LOT 3073

**AN IMPORTANT FRAGMENT OF THE IMPERIAL PAINTING "THE GREAT VICTORY AT QURMAN" FROM THE SET OF SIXTEEN PAINTINGS OF THE EAST TURKESTAN CAMPAIGN (1755-1759) BY GIUSEPPE CASTIGLIONE (LANG SHINING, 1688-1766) ET. AL.
QING DYNASTY, QIANLONG PERIOD**

wall painting, ink and colour on silk the lower left fragment of the painting of the battle of Qurman (3rd February 1759) during the East Turkestan campaign (1755-1759), depicting a battalion of infantry supported by camel artillery led by three officer bannermen Doubin, Rongbao and Fulu, accompanied by the archer Shujintai, with four plow horses in the foreground trailing a large cannon and a line of battle camels caparisoned with further cannons above, among several several lines of soldiers and archery marching spiritedly towards battle, all finely painted with minute detailing, the faces meticulously differentiated and the name of some military leaders inscribed in Manchu script, mounted on scroll, together with the engraving of the corresponding battle after a drawing by Jean Damascene (Giovanni Damascenus Salusti, Ch. An Deyi, d. 1781) dated 1765, from the set of The Conquests of the Emperor Qianlong printed by Charles Nicolas Cochin fils, Paris, first ed. 1770, pl. VIII

the painting 69 by 105.5 cm., 27 1/8 by 41 1/2 in., the engraving 58.5 by 94 cm., 23 by 37 in.

ESTIMATE ♦10,000,000-15,000,000 HKD

PROVENANCE

Acquired by the first collector in Germany around 1902.

Subsequently sold to a second owner in Europe.

In the present collection since 1999.

EXHIBITED

The Printed Image in China from the 8th to the 21st Centuries, British Museum, London, May - September 2010.

The Printed Image in China from the 8th to the 21st Centuries, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, May - July 2012.

LITERATURE

Niklas Leverenz, 'From Painting to Print, The Battle of Qurman from 1760,' *Orientalia*, Hong Kong, May 2010, pp. 48-53.

Camille Schmitt, 'The Battle of Qurman: Restoration and Remounting of a Qing Imperial Wall Painting,' *Orientalia*, Hong Kong, May 2010, pp. 53-54.

Niklas Leverenz, 'On Three Different Sets of East Turkestan Paintings,' *Orientalia*, Hong Kong, November 2011, pp. 96-103.

CATALOGUE NOTE

The Great Victory at Qurman

Nie Chongzheng

I recently saw some images of a painting sent to me by Sotheby's Hong Kong. The images were of a color-on-silk painting. After viewing these images, I immediately thought of images of this painting that I saw several years before. Only, in the previous images, the painting was placed in a black wooden frame, and there was no matting separating the glass and the painting. Moreover, in the recent images, the painting now has a traditional mounting with scroll spindle. Yet in the earlier and recent images, the content, details, and brush style of the painting are the same. The newer images do not seem to be of a copy of the painting. In the images, the lines and colors of the painting are still fresh, although the silk is damaged in many places—an indication that the painting was not preserved under ideal conditions.

The painting depicts the Qing army in formation. There is a line of foot soldiers, a line of cavalry, and a line of camels with cannons mounted on their backs. In the lower right corner is a mounted officer in martial attire claspng bow and arrow and ready to join the fight. But the lower half of this officer's body and his horse are no longer in the painting. From this fact one can see that this silk painting is only a portion of the original, only a remnant.

When we look closely at the soldiers in the painting, we can see the unique features of individual faces, as in the case of the mounted officer ready to join the fight. Faces not only show individual features; they also exhibit contrasts in lighting—a feature of European painting. Hence, overall, this color-on-silk painting matches the distinct characteristics of court painting during the Qianlong period (r. 1736-1795).

Having inferred this basic fact, I can go further and say that this silk painting is part of the series 'Paintings of Battles of the Qianlong Pacification of the Dzungars and Muslims' (Qianlong pingding Zhunbu, Huibu zhantu), and that the name of the painting is The Great Victory at Qurman (Huerman dajie). Comparing this color-on-silk painting with The Great Victory at Qurman, the ninth in the copperplate series 'Paintings of Battles of the Qianlong Pacification of the Dzungars and Muslims' (fig. 1), one finds that portions of the two works match quite well. The lower left corner of the copperplate print Great Victory at Qurman has the Qing army arrayed in battle formation, the cavalry, and five camels with cannons mounted on their backs. From these correspondences I infer that the present color-on-silk painting is the lower left portion of the larger color-on-

silk painting Great Victory at Qurman.

The present color-on-silk portion measures 68.5 centimeters high and 105.5 centimeters wide. By comparing this portion with the copperplate print of the same name, we can assume the original color-on-silk Great Victory at Qurman must be of a considerable size.

For the copperplate series 'Paintings of Battles of the Qianlong Pacification of the Dzungars and Muslims,' four European painters employed by the court—Giuseppe Castiglione (Ch. Lang Shining, 1688–1766), Jean-Denis Attiret (Ch. Wang Zhicheng, 1702–1768), Ignaz Sichelbarth (Ch. Ai Qimeng, 1708–1780), and Joannes Damascenus Saslusti (Ch. An Deyi, d. 1781)—painted drafts. These drafts were then sent to France for engraving, and the copperplates were used to make prints. Meanwhile, Castiglione and the other painters painted large paintings of the same scenes on silk. These color-on-silk paintings were displayed in the Hall of Purple Splendour (Ziguangge) in the West Garden of the Forbidden City to show the Qianlong emperor's successes in the Ten Great Campaigns. Hence, quite naturally, the soldiers in the large painting Great Victory at Qurman are painted in the European style. The drafts for the copperplate series 'Paintings of Battles of the Qianlong Pacification of the Dzungars and Muslims,' painted by the European painters, are noted in the archives of the Workshop of the Qing Imperial Household Department:

On 27th November [1764], we received a note signed by Director De Kui and Vice Director Li Wenzhao saying that on 18th November the eunuch Hu Shijie conveyed the imperial instructions: 'For the sixteen pictures depicting victories in the campaigns to pacify Ili and other areas, have Giuseppe Castiglione draw drafts, and present them to me for timely inspection. Then give them to the Guangdong customs superintendent for shipment to France. Have a skilled artisan engrave copperplates. Have Castiglione write down clearly how they are to be made, and send this with the other materials.'

On 4th July [1765], we received a note signed by Director De Kui, et al., saying that on 18th November, the eunuch Hu Shijie conveyed the imperial instructions: 'Giuseppe Castiglione and the three other Western painters have begun painting the drafts for the sixteen victory pictures. Have Ding Guanpeng and the other four painters follow the drafts to paint sixteen colored paintings on Xuan paper.'

On 5th August [1765], we received a note signed by Director De Kui, et al., saying that on 2nd August, for the first four of the sixteen drafts of victory pictures, we attached a Chinese statement of the emperor's desires, a letter of trust, and four Western-language statements, and we gave all this to the eunuch Hu Shijie to present to the emperor for inspection. The emperor said to give these materials to Wang Changgui to give to the Council of State to convey to the Guangdong customs superintendent Fang Tiyu, who is to carry on according to instructions. Hence, these materials were sent through the Council of State.

The archival materials above give the times and a portion of the production process for drafts for the copperplates. The large painting Great Victory at Qurman was produced later, between 1766 and 1769. The archival materials also record that the European painters Giuseppe Castiglione, etc., participated in the production of drafts for the copperplates. Thus we know why the large painting Great Victory at Qurman exhibits a European style. It was because Giuseppe Castiglione, Jean Denis-Attiret, Ignaz Sichelbarth, etc., probably painted portions of the large painting Great Victory at Qurman. In this large painting, the individuals painted in portrait fashion were officers who distinguished themselves in battle in the campaigns to pacify the Dzungars and Muslims. The Great Victory at Qurman, with its full-body portraits of these officers, was quite appropriate for hanging among the 'Portraits of Distinguished Officers in the Hall of Purple Splendour.' We know of the four officers identified in Manchu either on their quivers or next to their head. The most important officer depicted is Doubin, mounted on a white horse in the upper right segment. His individual portrait in the Ziguangge as a meritorious officer is number 21 of the first group of 50 portraits. [The smaller handscroll version of Doubin was sold at Sotheby's New York, 31st/1st April 2005, lot 280]. Doubin died during the battle of Qurman, leading his rifle brigade. In the upper left segment, identified by his dark blue coat and the peacock-feather plume on his hat, is the Manchu officer, Fulu. His Ziguangge portrait, which is lost, is number two of the second group of 50 portraits. The officer in the upper centre, between Doubin and Fulu, is

Rongbao, and the officer in the bottom right-hand corner (cut-off figure drawing a bow) is Shujintai. During the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), the Hall of Purple Splendour housed portraits of distinguished officers, paintings of battles, as well as armaments for the Forbidden City.

In 1985, in West Berlin (Germany was still divided at the time), I saw an exhibit titled 'European and Chinese Emperors' presented two battle paintings: The Pacification of the Muslims (Pingding Huibu zhantu, color on silk, 366 cm high and 388 cm wide) [Ed. This is the right hand section of the present painting and now housed in the Ethnological Museum in Hamburg, Germany] and The Pacification of Taiwan (Pingding Taiwan zhantu, color on silk, 404 cm high and 469 cm wide).

According to our present understanding, after each of what the Qianlong Emperor called the Ten Great Campaigns ('Shiquan wugong'), he instructed the Workshop of the Imperial Household Department to paint the battle scene and portraits of distinguished officers. The battle pictures included copperplate prints (only for 'Paintings of Battles of the Qianlong Pacification of the Dzungars and Muslims'), handpainted colored albums, and large paintings, which were hung in halls. The present large painting Great Victory at Qurman belongs to the last category and is a rare find. This practice of making a pictorial record of military victories continued on to the end of the Qing dynasty. I myself have seen the large painting Pacification of the Guangdong Bandits (i.e., the Boxers, who were active at the end of the dynasty).

Above, I touched on several large battle paintings of the Qianlong period, none of which appear in the Qianlong portion of Shiquan baoji [Sequel to the Precious Collection of the Stone Canal] (a catalogue of imperial artwork of the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods), by Hu Jing. Hence, we are not sure of how many large battle paintings there actually were.

Excerpted with permission from Niklas Leverenz, 'From Painting to Print, The Battle of Qurman from 1760,' Orientations, Hong Kong, May 2010, pp. 48-53.

In 1755, the Qianlong Emperor (r. 1736-95) entered into an alliance with Amursana [(c. 1722-57), a prince of the Khoit tribe] against Dawaci [(d. 1759) a Zunghar noble] and sent troops to suppress the rebellion. However, Amursana subsequently turned against the Chinese, and in 1756-57, Qianlong had to send troops to Central Asia again, this time allied with Dawaci. The third stage of this complex conflict took place in 1758-59, brought about by the uprising led by two Muslim brothers, Burhn ad-Dn (d. after 1759) and Khoka Jihn (d. 1759), also known as the Elder and the Younger Khoja. After these victorious campaigns, the region became the new Chinese province of Xinjiang, which literally means 'new frontier'.

The battle of Qurman took place on 3rd February 1758, close to the city of Yarkland (at the western end of the Tarim basin), where the Qing general Zhaohui (1708-64) was besieged by superior Turkman forces along the Qara Usu (Black Water river). Vice General Fude (d. 1776) was on the way with his relief force when the 600 Chinese soldiers were attacked by more than 5,000 enemy troops. The battle lasted five days and four nights and the Chinese army only secured victory when reinforcements arrived.

In 1760, the Qianlong Emperor ordered the creation of sixteen large-scale paintings (each about 8 x 4 meters) to glorify his victories. Preparation had already begun during the campaigns, when artists were sent to the front to make sketches of key events. The sixteen battle paintings were created collaboratively by court artists and the four European missionary artists Giuseppe Castiglione (Ch. Lang Shining, 1688-1766), Jean-Denis Attiret (Ch. Wang Zhicheng, 1702-68), Ignaz Sichelbarth (Ch. Ai Qimeng, 1708-80) and Giovanni Damascenus Salusti (Ch. Ai Deyi, d. 1781). The work of these artists was highly prized by the emperor and their skills were in particular demand for many imperial painting projects. The East Turkestan battle paintings are extraordinary historical documents, depicting on a grand scale the landscape and soldiers with their assorted military equipment, and even recording the names of the important officers.

Eight of the paintings depicted scenes from the first two wars, against Dawaci and Amursana (Ch. Yili quantiu, or 'complete paintings of the Ili region'), and the others scenes from the third war, against the Elder and Younger Khoja (Ch. Huibu quantu, or 'complete paintings of the Muslim regions'), along with the imperial

rituals that attended the Qing victories. In 1761, the sixteen paintings were mounted on the walls of the Ziguangge (Hall of the Purple Splendour) in the gardens west of the Forbidden City in Beijing. Nearly life-size portraits of 100 meritorious bannermen who served in the East Turkestan campaign - both civil officials and military officers - were also displayed. In the ensuing years, further battle paintings and portraits of meritorious officers from successful military campaigns were added.

Inspired by engravings of battle scenes by Georg Philipp Rugendas (1666-1743) in the possession of the Jesuits in Beijing, in 1764, the Qianlong Emperor ordered that his sixteen monumental East Turkestan battle paintings be reproduced as copper prints in Europe. The European missionary artists created reduced paintings as models; that of the The Battle of Qurman was the work of Giovanni Damascenus Salusti (fig. 1). These reduced paintings were sent in tranches from Canton to Paris; the first four arrived in 1766. It took Charles Nicolas Cochin (1715-90) and a team of master engravers nine years to make the copper plates. Some 200 impressions of each were printed, and the prints - along with the original plates and reduced paintings - were returned to China, the last shipment arriving in Beijing in 1775.

The original East Turkestan battle paintings were removed from the walls of the Ziguangge in 1890 to make space for twenty new battle paintings of the Taiping rebellion. Only one fragment [of the Qianlong-era paintings] (a large section of the right-hand side of the painting of The Battle of Qurman) was known to have survived. Purchased by the Ethnological Museum in Hamburg in 1903, The Battle of Qurman (or The Great Victory of Qurman, Ch. Hu'erman da jie) is usually numbered eight in the original series of sixteen. [The present lot in this sale is the left-hand side of this painting].

[The Hamburg Museum section shows a lively battle scene with soldiers on horseback along with injured or dead soldiers and horses on the ground.] In contrast, the left-hand fragment [the present lot] shows the well-organized formation of the Chinese ranks and bears a strong resemblance to the engraving. In the painting, the officers' faces are painted in superb quality, probably by the European missionary artists. Every facial muscle, even the reflection of the light in the pupils of the officers' eyes, is carefully rendered. This contrasts sharply with, for example, the hands of some of the officers, which are painted in a conventional way.

Another remarkable detail on the original wall painting is the presence of the names of the officers, written in Manchu in gold letters, in most cases on the quivers. In the fragment of the Qurman painting, four officers are identified by their inscribed names. The most important officer depicted is Doubin, mounted on a white horse in the upper right segment. His individual portrait in the Ziguangge as a meritorious officer is number 21 of the first group of 50 portraits. [The smaller handscroll version of Doubin was sold at Sotheby's New York, 31st/1st April 2005, lot 280]. The similarity of the renditions of Doubin's face in the battle painting and in the handscroll portrait is astonishing. We can safely assume that the faces of the officers in the East Turkestan battle paintings were painted from the same sources as the portraits of the meritorious officers. Doubin died during the battle of Qurman, leading his rifle brigade. We must therefore assume that his portrait was either painted beforehand, when Doubin was in Beijing to give a report, or that it was painted on the spot in February 1759 by the artist who accompanied the Qing troops to the Central Asian front.

In the upper left segment, identified by his dark blue coat and the peacock-feather plume on his hat, is the Manchu officer, Fulu. His Ziguangge portrait, which is lost, is number two of the second group of 50 portraits. The officer in the upper centre, between Doubin and Fulu, is Rongbao, and the officer in the bottom right-hand corner (cut-off figure drawing a bow) is Shujintai. These two officers did not merit full-size portraits in the Ziguangge, but their names appear in several contemporary historical sources on Central Asian campaigns. Rongbao's name is inscribed in gold in the yellow grass just to the left of his head. On the grass in front of the formation of Chinese soldiers, very fine white lines sketching soldiers on their galloping horses are faintly visible. The clearest of these sketched images and the depiction of the officer Shujintai in the lower right of the painting are very similar. We can assume that the painting of the battle of Qurman was first sketched in white outlines, and later painted in full colour and with all the details. In the process, some of the soldiers have been repositioned, so that the white draught lines remain visible and give

us a good idea how the painting was created.



Fig. 1

Part of lot 3073 Engraving of "The Great Victory at Qurman"