

## THE CONQUESTS OF THE EMPEROR QIANLONG

SET OF THIRTEEN ENGRAVINGS AFTER CASTIGLIONE *ET AL.*  
1769-74

From a set of sixteen engravings commemorating the Emperor's military victories during the period from 1755 to 1760, depicting scenes of the various battles, surrenders of the enemy, and a banquet feast honoring the victors, each numbered, attributed to the artist and engraver, and dated. All in gilt European frames of the period, *some foxing and water staining*

Accompanied by a rare booklet describing the circumstances of this commission, the historic events, the precise wording of Qianlong's order of July 23, 1765, and including a descriptive text of each of the plates:

*Précis Historique de la Guerre*, Lille: L. Potier [ca. 1770 or later], quarto (10 in. by 8¼ in.), 52 pp., woodcut tailpieces throughout, 18th century marbled boards, *fore-edges of boards and text leaves somewhat worn, not affecting text, light foxing*

Each of the following prints is numbered in ink and described in the chronological order of the events as recorded in the accompanying booklet *Précis Historique de la Guerre*.

The engravings are documented in a monograph by Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, *Gravures des Conquêtes de l'Empereur de Chine K'ien-long au Musée Guimet*, 1909. The titles given are translations of those given by t'Serstevens, amended according to the descriptions in the booklet. Each description includes the corresponding Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens number. t'Serstevens nos. 4, 8, and 15 are not included.

*Each approximately 21½ by 36½ in. (54.6 by 92.7 cm)*

The Emperor Qianlong commissioned the original set of sixteen engravings of his conquests on July 13, 1765 for the central hall of the Palace of Beijing. The drawings were prepared in China by four Jesuits: Giuseppe Castiglione, the director of the project, Jean-Denis Attiret, Ignatius Sicklepart (or Sichelbarth) and Jean Damascène. By recommendation of Louis-Joseph Le Fermier, head of the French Jesuit mission to China, they were then sent to Paris, where the engravings were executed by eight artists under the direction of Charles-Nicolas Cochin of the Académie Royale at the Court of Louis XVI. This commission was considered of utmost importance, as it potentially offered France a means of leaving a favorable impression with the Emperor and thus gaining advantages in view of commerce and missioning, directed against the Dutch, Portuguese and English. Qianlong'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 on two ships in lots of 100 impressions each, and returned to China in three shipments. The entire edition was received in China by 1775 for which the Compagnie Française des Indes in Canton was paid the sum of 240,000 livres. 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 exclusivity to the Chinese Emperor. For the details concerning the execution cf. Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, pp. 9-12.

\$80,000-120,000



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1 'The Emperor Gives a Victory Banquet for the Distinguished Officers and Soldiers (at Tseu-kuang-ko, the Imperial Palace Gardens, Beijing) on July 5, 1754'; drawn by Castiglione and engraved by J. Ph. Le Bas, 1770 (P. A. Serstevens no. 16)

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- Friday, March 17, 10 am to 5 pm
- Saturday, March 18, 10 am to 5 pm
- Sunday, March 19, 12 pm to 5 pm
- Monday, March 20, 12 pm to 5 pm
- Tuesday, March 21, 12 pm to 1 pm

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