

Emperor Qianlong's East Turkestan Campaign Pictures

The Catalytic Role of the Documentation of Louis XIV's Conquests

SHI-YEE LIU

Assistant Research Curator of Chinese Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The East Turkestan Campaign prints are featured in the exhibition "Show and Tell: Stories in Chinese Painting"
On view at The Metropolitan Museum of Art until August 6th, 2017

AFTER CONQUERING Ming (1368–1644) China in the mid-17th century, the Qing regime (1644–1911) continued its expansion into East Turkestan, where the Zunghar Mongolian confederation and Turkic Muslim tribes contended with the Manchus for dominance. Despite Emperor Kangxi's (reigned 1661–1722) initial defeat of the Zunghars in 1697, warfare lasted into the Qianlong reign (1736–1795). Taking advantage of factional conflicts among the Zunghars, Qianlong dispatched an army to the region in early 1755 and subdued both enemies by September 1759. The campaign brought vast land, later named Xinjiang (New Territory), under Chinese domain, a most consequential deed in Qianlong's legacy. In order to commemorate this hard-won victory, Qianlong soon commissioned a suite of sixteen monumental silk paintings from the Jesuit-artist Giuseppe Castiglione (Chinese: Lang Shining, 1688–1766) in collaboration with Chinese court painters. Later, on July 30th, 1762 and November 18th, 1764, Qianlong ordered Castiglione to make reduced versions of the paintings to serve as designs for a suite of sixteen copperplate engravings to be produced in France.¹ Three other missionary-artists were added in July 1765.² Keen on propaganda on a grand scale, he commissioned 200 sets of the suite from Louis XV's (reigned 1715–1774) imperial workshop. The designs reached Paris between 1765 and 1767. With enthusiastic support from the French king and ministers,³ the completed order was shipped to Beijing in separate groups between 1770 and 1777.⁴ This joint painting and print project aimed at glorifying a military feat and the colossal scale of both parts were unprecedented in China, but appear in line with Louis XIV's (reigned 1643–1715) enterprise of documenting his serial conquests with tapestry suites and the compilation of outsize prints. This article explores the ways in which Louis XIV's exploitation of art for self-aggrandizement may have prompted Qianlong's extraordinary endeavour to propagate the East Turkestan Campaign.

The French documentation of Louis XIV's conquests and its spread to China

Representation of war for public display had been well established in European art since Greek antiquity, featuring

mythological, biblical and historical subjects. During the Renaissance, contemporary warfare entered the repertory for court-sponsored tapestry suites. Afonso V of Portugal (reigned 1438–1477) commissioned the *Pastrana* suite to celebrate his exploits in North Africa in 1471 (four pieces, circa 3.66 × 11 metres each). Charles V of Spain (reigned 1516–1556) commissioned the *Pavia* suite to commemorate his defeat of the French in Pavia, north Italy, in February 1525 (seven pieces, circa 4.4 × 8.6 metres each). During Louis XIV's reign, his ministers, Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683) and Charles Le Brun (1619–1690), initiated the *History of the King* (*L'Histoire du Roi*) tapestry suite to extol his military and diplomatic achievements. Manufactured at the Gobelins in Paris beginning in 1664, it consists of fourteen pieces about 5 by 7 metres each—the most ambitious project during the height of the factory's tapestry production.⁵ A related suite, titled *The Conquests of Louis XIV* (*Les Conquêtes de Louis XIV*) and produced in Beauvais, joined the project from the late 17th to the early 18th century with an unspecified number of pieces measuring 4.6 by 8 metres on average.⁶

To spread the imperial aura more widely, about the same time as he initiated the tapestry project, Colbert propelled into full swing a print project commissioned by Louis XIV to publicise his accomplishments and prodigious possessions. The official publication of these prints, later known collectively as the *Cabinet du Roi*, began in 1670 and continued well after Colbert's death in 1683. By then, the compilation encompassed fourteen categories, including the King's conquests and collections and views of Versailles.⁷

The *Cabinet du Roi* prints were intended as gifts to those whom Louis XIV wanted to honour or impress. From 1671 to 1683, hundreds of copies were distributed by Colbert in this way. The French ambassadors to Holland, Germany, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Constantinople (Istanbul), etc. presented them to foreign monarchs at their audiences. The Jesuit mission leaving for Persia (Iran) on October 29th, 1682 carried several copies from six different categories.⁸ They came to early Qing China through the Jesuits too.

Impressed by Philippe Couplet (1623–1693), a Belgian Jesuit, and his Chinese protégé, Shen Fuzong (1657–1692),



1 Unidentified artists, right-hand side fragment of *The Great Victory at Qurman*, 1760. Hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk, 388 x 366 cm. Copyright: Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg (A 4577)

at an audience at Versailles on September 15th, 1684, Louis XIV selected five Jesuits to form a state delegation to China three months later.⁹ An official document, dated February 15th, 1685, lists over 100 titles in the *Cabinet du Roi*, with three copies of each, prepared for the delegation's imminent departure from Brest on March 3rd.¹⁰ With thirty crates of gifts, it arrived in Ningbo, Zhejiang province, in July 1687 and was received by Emperor Kangxi on March 22nd, 1688.¹¹ It is noteworthy that fifteen titles on the print list were created by the artist in charge of the military

³Szrajber, 2006, pp. 35–42.

⁴Zhou and Cheng, 2015, pp. 240–307.

⁵See Jean Vittet's entries on cat. nos 41–47, in Campbell, 2007, pp. 374–389. See also Bertrand, 2007, pp. 348–350.

⁶Bremer-David, 2007, pp. 416–417.

⁷Schnapper, 1986, pp. 195–196; Grivel, 1985, pp. 36–57. On the evolving contents of the *Cabinet du Roi*, see Brunet, 1860–1865: Vol. 1, columns 1442–1444. My deep gratitude to John Finlay for this important information.

⁸Grivel, 1985, p. 47.

⁹On the journey and the contribution of this mission, see Han, 1998/02, pp. 68–75.

¹⁰The document is titled “Du 15e. fevrier 1685. Delivré au RR. Peres Jesuites Missionnaires allans a la Chine, suivant l'ordre de Monseigneur de Louvois, les pièces suivantes, scavoit” in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. See Abbé de Varès, cited in Grivel, 1985, p. 53; Knothe, 2010, p. 354; Ma, 2015, p. 166. My deep gratitude to John Finlay for sending me the image of the original document.

¹¹Recorded in *Xi chao ding'an*. See Han and Wu, 2006, p. 169.

¹See entries dated August 6th, 1762 and November 27th, 1764 in *Qing gong neiwufu zaobanchu huojidang*, recorded in Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan, comp., *Qing zhongqianqi xiyang Tianzhujiao zai Hua huodong dang'an shiliao*, Beijing 2003, 4 vols, Vol. 4, pp. 296 and 315. See also Nie Chongzheng, “Huerman dajie tu (canben) de bianshi he tanjiu”, *Meishu xue*, 2014, 2, pp 105–108, on pp. 106–107.

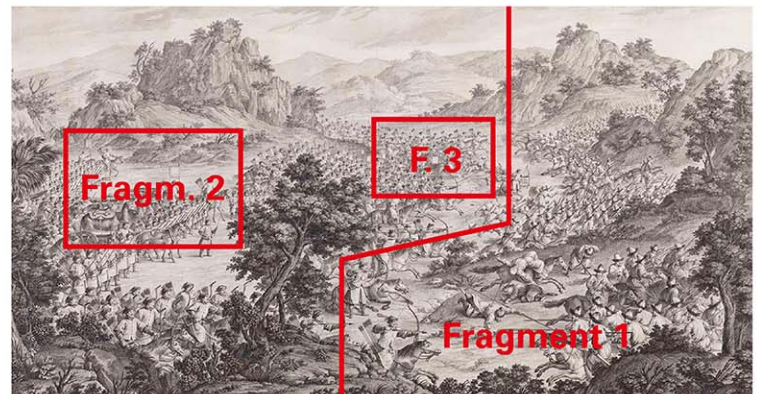
²Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan, comp., Vol. 4, p. 319.



2 Augustin de Saint-Aubin, after Giovanni Damasceno Salusti, *The Great Victory at Qurman*, plate 8 from *The Conquests of the Emperor of China (Les Conquêtes de l'Empereur de la Chine)*, dated 1770. Etching and engraving, 57.7 x 94.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1945 (45.100.8)

scenes in the *History of the King* tapestry project, Adam-Frans Van der Meulen (1632–1690), including thirteen views of conquered cities and royal mansions and the images of two *History of the King* tapestries. Joachim Bouvet (1656–1730), a member of the delegation who remained in Beijing, was sent to France by Kangxi with a gift of forty-nine volumes of Chinese books to Louis XIV to further cultural exchange in the mid-1690s. Upon his return to Beijing with ten other Jesuits in 1699, he is said to have brought Louis XIV's gift of "a magnificently bound collection of engravings" to Kangxi.¹²

As the copperplates for the *Cabinet du Roi* became worn and lost through decades of usage while its popularity grew, two substantially expanded new editions in twenty-three volumes were issued in 1727 and 1743 respectively.¹³ Added at the end is an eight-volume section devoted to French imperial conquests, primarily those of Louis XIV designed by Van der Meulen.¹⁴ Certain volumes in the series definitely went to China, as three of them were recorded in the *Catalogue of the Pei-t'ang Library* that documents the immense holdings of printed materials brought by Catholic missionaries to China from the late 16th century to the suppression of the Jesuit Order in 1773.¹⁵ One of the three features the cities conquered by Louis XIV that were created for the *History of the King* tapestry production (no. 705). There must have been more, since the *Catalogue*, compiled in 1944–1949, could not include the numerous items that had been dispersed through nearly two centuries, and those kept in the palace left no records.



3 Corresponding positions of the three painting fragments of *The Great Victory at Qurman* in the print of the same title (from <http://www.battle-of-qurman.com.cn/>)

The publication of the 1743 edition roughly coincided with the departure for China of the eminent French Jesuit, Michel Benoist (Chinese: Jiang Youren, 1715–1774), who arrived in Macao in late summer of 1744 and at Qianlong's court by early 1745.¹⁶ He supposedly brought the latest pride of France in the footsteps of the 1688 delegation and Bouvet—choice samples from the *Cabinet du Roi*, especially those from the new section. He soon rose in stature to become a pivotal figure in the construction of the European Pavilions (*Xiyang lou*) in the Yuanming Yuan imperial garden from 1747 onwards, and in the cartographic project for the expanded empire after the East



4 *The King's Entry into Dunkirk on December 2nd, 1662*, from a fourteen-piece suite of the *History of the King*, 1668–1671. Wool tapestry, 500 x 690 cm. The Mobilier National, Paris (after Jean Vittet et al., *La Collection de Tapisseries de Louis XIV*, Dijon: Faton, 2010, p. 188, fig. 154)



5 *The Meeting of Louis XIV and Philippe IV on June 6th, 1660*, from a fourteen-piece suite of the *History of the King*, 1665–1668. Tapestry in wool, silk, and silver and gilt-metal wrapped thread, 515 x 690 cm. The Mobilier National, Paris (after Jean Vittet et al., *La Collection de Tapisseries de Louis XIV*, Dijon: Faton, 2010, p. 186, fig. 151)

Turkestan Campaign, which led to a close relationship with Qianlong.

The *History of the King* tapestries and related prints are the powerful prong of Louis XIV's propagandistic venture. It is all but impossible that the French missionaries, doubling as envoys, could have introduced one without the other to Qianlong. In 1762 and 1767, Qianlong produced a pair of paintings of deer antlers, a subject not in the Chinese painting repertory but popular in contemporaneous French court painting, with explicit imperial symbolism.¹⁷ Qianlong's appropriation attests to his knowledge and earnest emulation of French political art, of which the East Turkestan Campaign pictures are earlier manifestations.

Serial monumental paintings on the East Turkestan Campaign

Emperor Qianlong's commission of the suite of sixteen paintings is recorded in a letter, datable to October 27th, 1765, by Augustin de Hallerstein (Chinese: Liu Songling, 1703–1774), a distinguished missionary-astronomer active at the Qing court, in which he told his brother that Qianlong "ordered the painting of 16 large pictures, with which he adorned his halls".¹⁸ He also reported in great detail Qianlong's commission of the print suite.¹⁹ A Slovenian Jesuit, Hallerstein arrived in China in 1738 and entered the Imperial Astronomical Bureau the next year. He served as its head for twenty-eight of his thirty-five-year tenure there, the longest among European and Chinese astronomers alike. Also well trained in cartography, he collaborated with Castiglione in revising the map of the Mulan Imperial Park in Inner Mongolia in 1749.²⁰ After the East Turkestan Campaign, he participated in mapping the newly annexed region in 1760.²¹ He was apparently familiar with people involved in the commemorative projects on the Campaign. The accuracy of the abundant information in his letter indicates an insider's knowledge of the court's activities. In official documents, though, the painting suite is only partially recorded.²²

Extant today are only three fragments of one painting that depicts the battle at Qurman. The largest one, measuring 388 by 366 cm, has been mounted as a hanging scroll in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg (1); the two smaller fragments are in private German collections.²³ Its original form, however, can be envisioned from the engraving that derived its composition from the complete painting (2). The sizes of the three painting fragments and their corresponding positions in the print (3) indicate that the painting was originally enormous at about 4 metres tall

¹² See the entry on Bouvet in the Catholic Encyclopedia (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02723b.htm>).

¹³ Grivel, 1985, pp. 51–53.

¹⁴ Vols 16–23. The first three volumes are devoted to Van der Meulen, and the other five to Sebastien Beaulieu (1612–1674). See Brunet, 1860–1865, Vol. I, column 1444.

¹⁵ See Lazarist Mission, 1949. The Pei-t'ang Library index lists three entries (nos 667, 705, 706) that identify the items as from the *Cabinet du Roi*: the volume of *Tapisseries du Roy* (no. 667, p. 184), the volume of *Vues des maisons royales et des villes conquises par Louis XIV* (no. 705, p. 192), and the volume of *Vues, plans, etc. du Chateau de Versailles, avec les statues termes et vases* (no. 706, p. 192), bound together with *Description de la grotto de Versailles* (no. 284, pp. 76–77).

¹⁶ Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan, comp., Vol. 1, entry 55, p. 78.

¹⁷ See Liu, 2015, pp. 2–13.

¹⁸ Pelliot, 1921, p. 268. Cited in Szrajber, 2006, pp. 29–30.

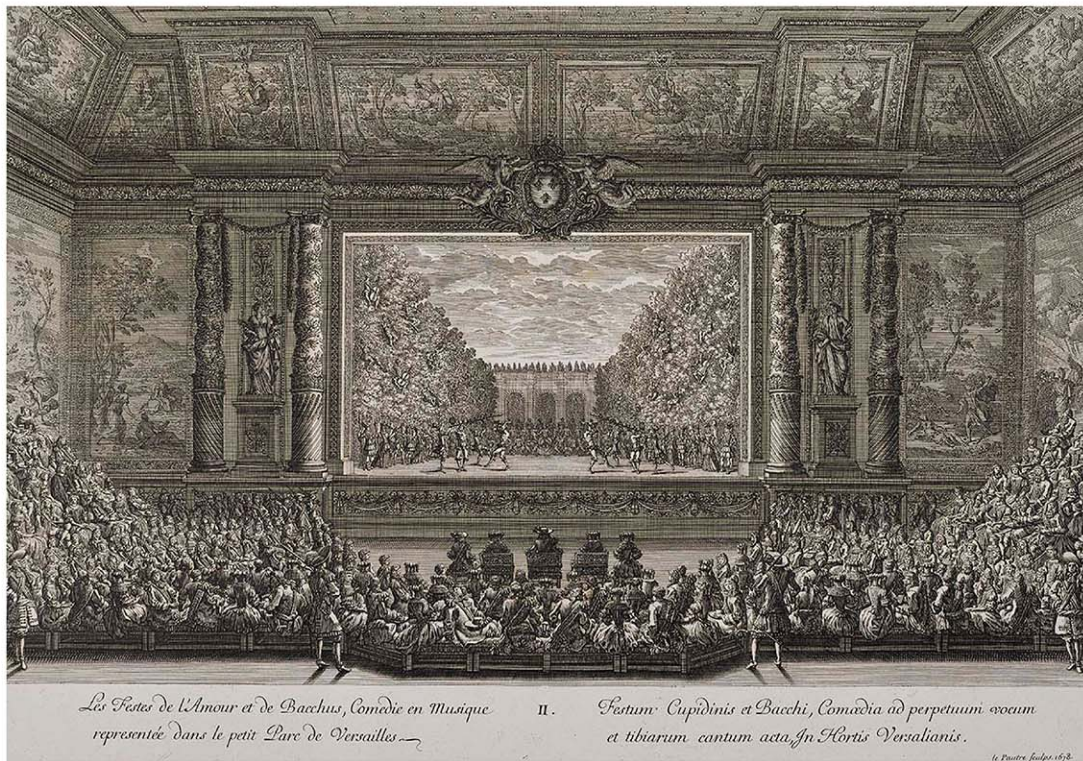
¹⁹ The names of the four missionaries, the time of delivering the first four designs to the Viceroy of Canton, the procedures for sending four designs each time, the initial order of 100 copies of each print, and the return of the copper plates correspond exactly to Emperor Qianlong's edict issued on July 10th, 1765. The edict is cited in Zhuang, 1982, p. 520.

²⁰ See entry dated August 28th, 1749, in Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan, comp., Vol. 4, p. 172.

²¹ See Ju, 1985/01, p. 58.

²² Ma, 2016, pp. 181–183.

²³ Leverenz, 2010, pp. 48–53; Leverenz, 2015, pp. 76–80.



6 Jean Le Pautre, *The Festivities of Love and Bacchus, Comedy in Music Performed at Versailles*, engraved in 1678, 17th–18th century. Etching, plate 30.6 x 42.5 cm. From Vol. 11 of *Le Cabinet du Roi*, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, Band 33

and 8 metres wide, as Niklas Leverenz has observed.²⁴

The East Turkestan Campaign paintings differ from earlier war representations in fundamental ways. Examples from the Ming dynasty and the Kangxi era employed the intimate formats of handscroll and album for close appreciation, served primarily as pictorial biographies of individual military leaders, and were created independent of the court. Qianlong commissioned a few long handscrolls to commemorate conquests that focus on ceremonial—especially surrender—scenes. Prior to the East Turkestan Campaign, he commissioned several large paintings that documented military parades and royal events.²⁵ However, the largest of them, *Qianlong Watching a Tail-spreading Peacock* (3.4 × 5.37 metres, Palace Museum, Beijing), is only about 55 per cent of the individual Campaign paintings. Moreover, they are neither war-related nor part of a suite. The closest analogy to Qianlong’s Campaign painting suite appears to be European monumental tapestry suites that chronicle contemporary imperial conquests from the late 15th century onwards. Both are military narratives, serial in nature, and, measuring over 30 square metres individually, so monumental in scale. The Qing production compares particularly well with the French *History of the King* suite because both comprise battle and ceremonial scenes for a comprehensive presentation of the subject (4, 5).

Tapestry, often in suite, was the most prestigious luxury item in Europe at the time, playing a central role in the decoration of palaces and royal residences, especially on formal occasions. In the backdrop of the treaty-signing ceremony between Louis XIV and Philippe IV of Spain in 1659, for instance, are two wall-size landscape tapestries (5). Quite a few tapestries given by Louis XIV to Kangxi were publicly displayed in Beitang, the French Catholic church in Beijing.²⁶ Qianlong was fond of European tapestries that continued to arrive as diplomatic gifts, which he

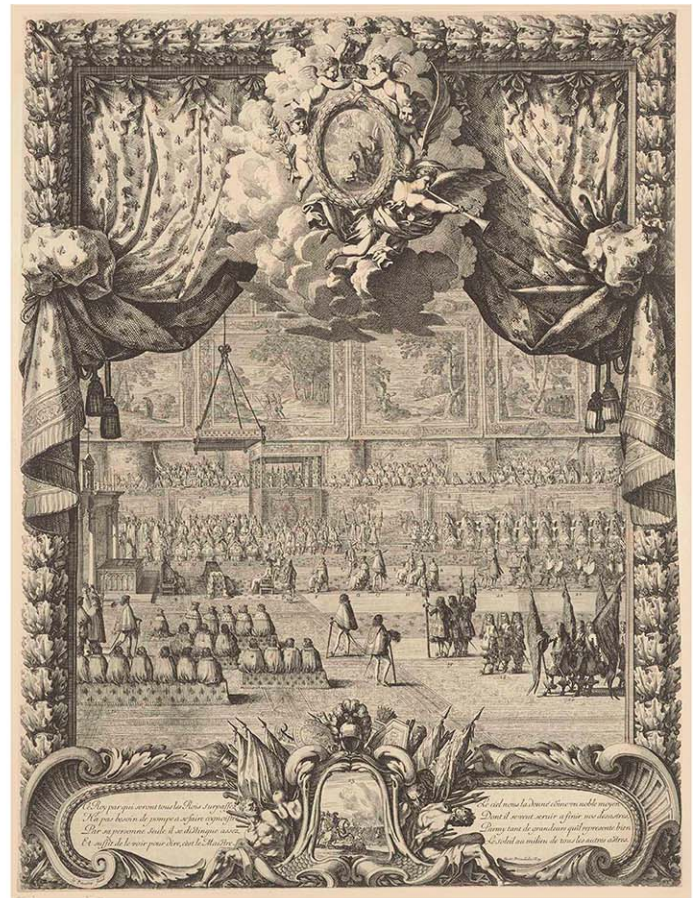
used to decorate the European Pavilions.²⁷

Not only did Qianlong have European royal tapestries at his disposal, but he may also have seen printed images of grand displays of them in European palatial settings. Tapestry had a conspicuous presence at Versailles, which was well illustrated in the *Cabinet du Roi* prints. In the scene of a theatrical performance at a festival held on July 18th, 1668, for instance, the areas above the cornice and to either side of the stage are lavishly decorated with monumental tapestries and tapestry-like textiles (6).²⁸ Prints of views of Versailles were among the gifts brought by the 1688 mission. In addition, one of the three *Cabinet du Roi* volumes, still in the Pei-t’ang Library in 1949, comprised illustrations of Versailles (no. 706).

The coronation of Louis XIV at Reims Cathedral on June 7th, 1654 was a historic event. With two tiers of tapestries hung on the walls of the nave of the cathedral, this ceremony is famous for its extravagant display of tapestries, as well as its political significance.²⁹ The spectacle was recorded in a number of French imperial prints in commemoration of the occasion, such as the two etchings made by Jean Le Pautre (1618–1682) (7, 8). The presence of multiple copies of Le Pautre’s works in non-French collections, like The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Getty Research Institute, suggests their wide circulation as political propaganda. French Jesuits, who enjoyed esteem at the early Qing court, were devoted to their king’s cause and the coronation prints, exalting the glory of the French monarch, would make impressive gifts to the Manchu rulers. In his letter from Beijing, dated August 20th, 1704, the French Jesuit Pierre Jartoux (1669–1720) relates that his church had been displaying “beautiful engravings collected in great books to show the world the magnificence of the French court” and the Chinese have responded with “extreme curiosity”.³⁰ Through conversations and printed im-



7 Jean Le Pautre, partly after Henri d'Avicé, *The Coronation of Louis XIV*, engraved in 1655, plate 3 from a series of three plates. Etching, 66.5 x 50 cm. Getty Research Institute (after Peter Fuhling et al., eds, *A Kingdom of Images: French Prints in the Age of Louis XIV, 1660–1715*, Los Angeles and Paris, 2015, p. 58, pl. 2).



8 Jean Le Pautre, *The Coronation of Louis XIV*, engraved in 1655. Etching, sheet 63.1 x 47.9 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953 (53.600.67)

ages, Qianlong could learn of the political appeal of monumental pictures in serial display, and hence the commission of sixteen colossal paintings on the East Turkestan Campaign.

Although the Campaign paintings share their format, scale, subject matter and political ambition with European tapestry suites, their style, as represented by the Hamburg fragment of the *Great Victory at Qurman*, is far from Western (1). As Richard Strassberg and Ya-chen Ma have mentioned, it exhibits, instead, affinities with the Chinese tradition of small figures in the foreground against a landscape panorama.³¹ A telling example is *Illuminating the Poem on a Royal Hunt on Wooded Grassland* (*Congbo xing shiyi tu*) (9). About a foot taller than the Hamburg fragment, it depicts the presentation of a captured tiger to Qianlong and his reception of Muslim envoys at the Mulan imperial park on October 7th, 1758.³² The lower 45 per cent of both paintings presents a clearing, animated by human activities, from an elevated viewpoint. In the larger backdrops, grand mountain ranges, interspersed with military groups, loom on a sharply forward-tilting ground plane. The Chinese-style rounded hillocks, fissured mountain faces, and meandering cloud bands are also common motifs. Since the hunt took place in late autumn, the landscape is vibrant with red leaves. Although the Battle at Qurman occurred in wintry February, the painting employs the same decorative palette. Unconcerned with naturalism, the painters appeared to adopt an existing compositional formula, and simply replaced the ceremonial scene with a battle.

Another salient Chinese characteristic of the *Qurman*

painting and print is the temporal and spatial progression across the picture surface. According to General Fude's memorial to Qianlong, on his way to Yarkand to relieve the besieged General Zhaohui and his troops at the Black Water River, he encountered 5000 Muslim rebels at Qurman on February 3rd, 1759. Under his command, more than 600 cavalymen and a large infantry, equipped with muskets and cannon, took strategic positions and defeated the Muslims after several gruelling encounters. The Muslims retreated to the mountains, but resumed attacks for two days. With the arrival of backup forces, the Manchus eventually vanquished their enemies on February 7th.³³

²⁴ Leverenz, 2010, p. 48.

²⁵ Ma, 2016, pp. 29–89, 127–160, 163–168.

²⁶ See Huang Bolu, *Zhengjiao fengbao*, in Han and Wu, 2006, p. 362.

²⁷ See entry dated May 13th, 1761, in *Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan*, comp., Vol. 4, p. 285.

²⁸ Knothe, 2010, pp. 351–352.

²⁹ Knothe, 2010, p. 342.

³⁰ *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites par des missionnaires de la compagnie de Jésus: Mémoires de la Chine*, Paris 1702–1776; 2nd edition, Lyon 1819, 14 vols, Vol. 10, pp. 2–3. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433068275563;view=lup;seq=12>.

³¹ Strassberg, 2007, p. 98; Ma, 2016, pp. 171–172.

³² Liu, 2000/04, pp. 21–22.

³³ Fu Heng et al., comp., juan 68, pp. 7b–11a. *Xizang xue Hanwen wenxian huike* edition, Beijing, 1990, series 2, Vol. 3, pp. 2185–2187.



9 Unidentified artist, *Illuminating the Poem on a Royal Hunt on Wooded Grassland*, circa 1758. Hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk, 424 x 348.5 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing (after Nie Chongzheng, ed., *Qing dai gongting huihua*, Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1996, p. 197, pl. 43)

As represented in full in the print (2), the battle starts from the left, where a musket-armed infantry is backed with camels loaded with cannon and followed by another infantry farther away. Below, the cavalry proceeds rightwards to the battlefield. A violent combat rages in the foreground of the right-hand side. Above, skirmishes continue after the Muslims retreat to the mountains. The final chase of the Qing forces after their defeated enemy is depicted at the feet of distant mountains from left to right in the *Qurman* painting, but omitted in the print. The Chinese device of shifting perspectives enables a complete account of the military operation, through time and space, in a single picture. Employed first in creating the painting, it was preserved in the print.

This practice is seen in other battle scenes of the suite as well.³⁴ The one titled *Lifting the Siege at the Black Water River* depicts Zhao-hui (on horseback near the foreground centre)

leading his troops to fight back after Fude's defeat of the Muslims at Qurman (10).³⁵ The left side of the print shows Qing soldiers constructing a makeshift path over water to facilitate the crossing of the weaponry-loaded camels. Zhao-hui is then seen supervising the operation of cannons from a hilltop in the foreground. Under the hill, Qing cavalrymen charge rightwards and upwards at their enemy. The right edge of the middle ground shows the Muslim forces fleeing.

The East Turkestan Campaign prints and their French connection

Although the composition of the Campaign prints are based on those of Chinese-style paintings, they were executed in the European naturalistic manner. A comparison between the *Qurman* painting fragment and the print illuminates the radical change. The forward-tilting ground



10 Jacques Philippe Le Bas, after Giuseppe Castiglione, *Lifting the Siege at the Black Water River*, plate 7 from *The Conquests of the Emperor of China (Les Conquêtes de l'Empereur de la Chine)*, dated 1771. Etching and engraving, 57.5 x 93.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1945 (45.100.7)



11 Detail of 2



12 Detail of 1

plane in the painting is replaced by level spatial recession into deep distance, and motifs diminish in size and clarity from near to far. Sophisticated draftsmanship and chiaroscuro creates compellingly plastic forms. The most remarkable of all is the dramatic representation of combat. The foreground battle scene in the print centres around four injured soldiers (11). One is falling on his belly, with an arrow in his back and one boot missing, another is tumbling backwards, about to fall from his mount that is jumping over a fallen soldier, while another is bending forward from the pain of an arrow in his neck. These derive from the three figures in the upper left and the lower right corners of the illustrated detail of the *Qurman* painting (12), but their vivid postures in the print intensify the sense of suf-

fering, while the missing boot conveys the chaos. The scores of soldiers between them in the painting are gone. The drastic simplification of the composition helps highlight the agony of individual soldiers and the ferocity of war.

This change from Chinese classicism to European naturalism was explained by Hollerstein in his letter of 1765. According to him, after the completion of the painting project, Qianlong saw the battle prints of Georg Philipp

³⁴On the wide use of shifting perspectives in the Campaign prints, see Nie, 2008, pp. 222–223; Ma, 2015, pp. 163–166.

³⁵Fu Heng et al., comp., Vol. 3, pp. 2187–2188.



13 Georg Philipp Rugendas, engraved by Johann Daniel Herz, *Battle on a River*, undated. Copperplate engraving from three plates, 77.9 x 161.3 cm. Staatsgalerie, Graphische Sammlung, Stuttgart (after Andrea Teuscher, *Die Künstlerfamilie Rugendas 1666–1858: Werkverzeichnis zur Druckgraphik*, Augsburg: Wissner, 1998, pl. 267, p. 87)



14 Detail of 10

Rugendas (1666–1742) and liked them so much as to order four missionary-artists at his court to reduce the paintings into print designs to be produced in Europe.³⁶ A native of Augsburg (modern Bavaria, Germany), Rugendas modelled his military painting after Le Bourguignon (1621–1676), a leader of the Italian “tumultuous” school of war representation that emphasises the chaos and violence of close combat.³⁷ Between 1690 and 1695, he lived in Rome and Venice for long stretches of time to study with local masters.³⁸ His Italian-style battle scenes, filled with dramatic action and vignettes, apparently fascinated Qianlong (13). The brutal confrontation of the cavalries, rendered with dynamic veracity in the lower right of *Lifting the Siege at the Black Water River*, appears to capture the essence of Rugendas’ style (14).

Two staples in Chinese war pictures, however, are missing from Rugendas’ works. As demonstrated in the *Qurman* painting fragment (1) and examples from the Ming and early Qing dynasty, such as the one depicting Prince Yunti’s (1688–1756) pacification of Tibet in 1720 (15), panoramic landscape setting takes significantly more pictorial space than the human actions in the foreground and is rendered even more masterly than the figures. The vast blue and green mountains easily upstage the military operation below.³⁹ In Rugendas’ work, the battle scene takes more than two-thirds of the composition, while the landscape backdrop is reduced to cursory space-filler. The other missing characteristic is landmark. Architecture is seldom featured in Italian-style war pictures, whereas in the *Pacifi-*



15

Unidentified artist, section of *The Pacification of Tibet by the Fuyuan General*, circa 1720–1723. Handscroll, ink and colour on silk, 49 x 692 cm. National Museum of China (after National Museum of China, comp., *Zhongguo guojia bowuguan guancang wenwu yanjiu congshu: Huihua juan (lishi hua)*, Shanghai, 2006, pp. 112–113)



16 Adam Frans Van der Meulen, engraved by Robert Bonnart and Charles Louis Simonneau, *The King's Taking of the City of Cambrai and the Citadel in 1677*, engraved in 1686, 17th–18th century. Etching, plate 52 x 95 cm. From Vol. 17 of *Le Cabinet du Roi*, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, Band 40

cation of Tibet, the Potala Palace and the Dazhao Monastery in Lhasa stand prominently in the foreground. When Castiglione and his fellow missionaries tried to convert Chinese-style paintings to Western-style prints, they must have felt the need of another model.

As Marcia Reed has also noted, the East Turkestan Campaign engravings may have been a response to French imperial prints that commemorate Louis XIV's conquests.⁴⁰ Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens has also singled out Van der Meulen as their primary stylistic source.⁴¹ A distinguished military genre painter trained in the Flemish topographical tradition, Van der Meulen meticulously documented terrain and landmarks in his works. As conquests were central to Louis XIV's accomplishments, Le Brun recruited him to take charge of the conquest-related designs at the launch of the *History of the King* tapestry project. During the War of Devolution (1667–1668) and the Franco-Dutch War (1672–1679), he followed the King onto the battlefield eight times, making onsite sketches for tapestry production. At the Gobelins manufactory, he also supervised a large workshop that replicated his paintings and quantities of prints for wide dissemination.⁴²

Three volumes in the 1727 and 1743 editions of the *Cabinet du Roi* are devoted to Van der Meulen, with eighty-one prints altogether of military scenes and landscapes related to Louis XIV's conquests,⁴³ attesting to their "extraordinary importance to the history of battle pictures, landscapes, town views, and propaganda".⁴⁴ Given his towering profile in the series, in addition to the fifteen prints that came with the 1688 mission, the bound volume on the cities taken by Louis XIV, once kept in the Pei-t'ang Library, surely prioritises his work.

Exemplary of Van der Meulen's style is his depiction of Louis XIV's siege of Cambrai in the Spanish Netherlands in 1677 (16) that presents a panoramic vista from an elevated viewpoint. The foreground rises like a stage to showcase the King and his troops in action; on the high horizon is a detailed rendering of the town, with distinct



17 Detail of 16

silhouettes of the cathedral of Notre Dame and other buildings on the left (17) and the citadel on the right.⁴⁵ Landscape elements—the earthen slopes, trees, tents and buildings—receive as much attentive treatment as the figures. Large trees on either side of the picture frame the central scene, a compositional device seen in many of his works. This framing device is employed in six of the ten battle scenes in the Campaign prints (2, 10). The populated foreground against a panoramic backdrop with a high horizon, the naturalistic spatial recession evoked by consistent diminution of scale and clarity of the motifs, the ele-

³⁶ See footnote 18.

³⁷ Plax, 2002, p. 136; Scheyer, 1960, p. 14.

³⁸ Andrea Teuscher, *Die Künstlerfamilie Rugendas 1666–1858: Werkverzeichnis zur Druckgraphik*, Augsburg, 1998, p. 2.

³⁹ See Liu Ruzhong's discussion on this painting in Liu, 2006, pp. 108–115.

⁴⁰ Reed, 2015, p. 126.

⁴¹ Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, 2007, pp. 191–192; and Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, 2005, p. 407.

⁴² Plax, 2002, p. 141.

⁴³ Vols 16, 17, 18, Brunet, I, column 1444.

⁴⁴ Marchesano, 2015, p. 276.

⁴⁵ On Van der Meulen's style, see Plax, 2002, pp. 141–143.



18 Benoit Louis Prevost, after Ignatius Sichelbart, *Receiving the Surrender of the People in Ili*, plate 1 from *The Conquests of the Emperor of China* (*Les Conquêtes de l'Empereur de la Chine*), dated 1769. Etching and engraving, 57.4 x 93.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1945 (45.100.1)



19 Detail of 18

vated perspective, and the framing device with trees, which characterise most of these ten compositions, bear out Van der Meulen's influence.

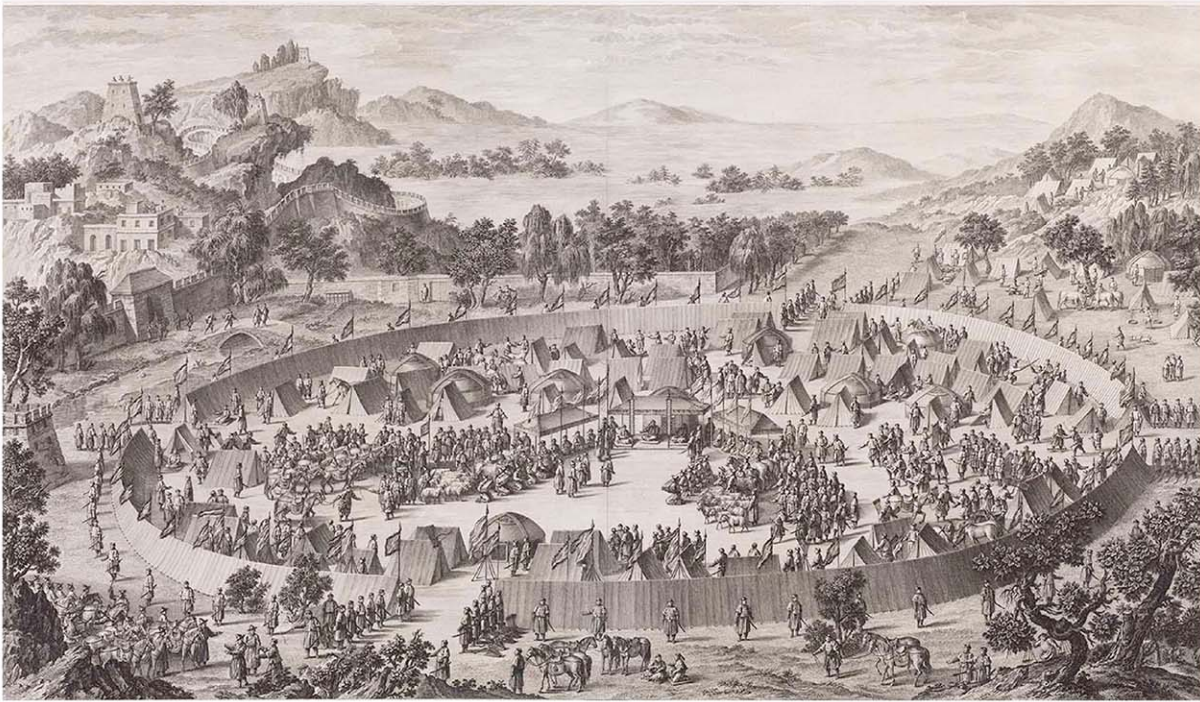
tions are conjectural rather than faithful. In the print on the surrender of Ili to the Qing army in July 1755 (18), along the feet of distant mountains lies a long stretch of gated wall in front of a circular edifice with a conspicuous pointed roof and at least three multistoried pagodas among trees (19). Their vivid silhouettes across the high horizon of the picture and the roofs of lower buildings behind the wall echo the positioning and the imagery of Notre Dame and other architecture in Van der Meulen's depiction of Cambrai (16, 17).

In another ceremonial scene, the surrender of the chieftain of Uş [Turfan] with his city on September 21st, 1758, the walled city spreads across the upper left and middle parts of the picture (20). A castle-like compound, with manned watchtowers and fortified buildings within crenelated walls, curves up a mountainous terrain (21).⁴⁶ The European naturalistic representation of the architecture and topography recall Van der Meulen's meticulous render-

ing of landmarks, particularly the one in the French siege of Dinant, Belgium, in May 1675 (22). The diagonally receding vista toward the mountaintop is likewise punctuated with massive curved and straight walls, a grand gateway, and distant towers jaggging the skyline.

Some distinctive motifs in the East Turkestan Campaign prints also suggest appropriations of Van der Meulen's work for the *History of the King* project. One example is the equestrian image of Zhaohui in *Lifting the Siege at the Black Water River*, as he looks to the right in a three-quarter view and raises his right arm to direct subordinates with a baton or whip (23). This majestic posture of a military leader, unknown in Chinese portraiture, is typically European, as exemplified by Louis XIV's image in *The King's Taking of Cambrai* (24) and *The King's Entry into Dunkirk* from the *History of the King* suite (25).

Another possible appropriation of Van der Meulen's motifs in the Campaign prints is the hectic river-crossing scene in *The Battle at Khurungui* that depicts Zhaohui's attack at the camping ground of the pasturing Muslim rebels on the early morning of April 23rd, 1758 (26).⁴⁷ In a river that



20

Pierre Philippe Choffard, after Giovanni Damasceno Salusti, *The Chieftain of Uš (Turfan) Surrenders with His City*, plate 6 from *The Conquests of the Emperor of China (Les Conquêtes de l'Empereur de la Chine)*, dated 1774. Etching and engraving, 57.5 x 94.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1945 (45.100.6)

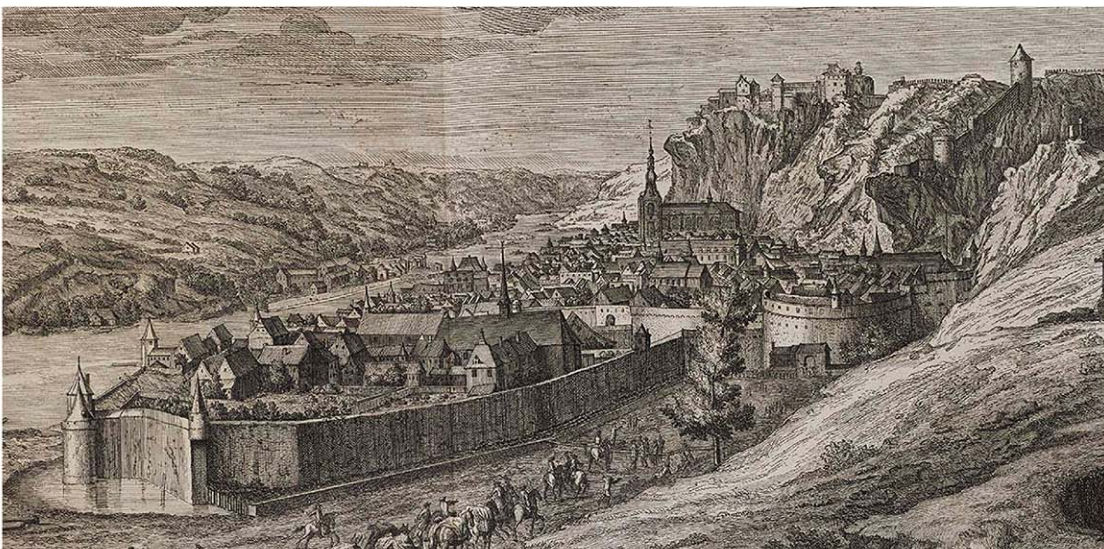


21 Detail of 20

meanders across almost the entire upper part of the middle ground, equestrian Qing soldiers waded through water at varying stages of submersion on the left (27), whereas their fleeing enemies on the right barely keep their heads above water (28). River-crossing with soldiers physically in water is a motif hardly seen in Chinese painting but featured in a few Van der Meulen prints in the *Cabinet du Roi*. In the one depicting the French troops crossing the Rhine in chase of the Dutch army at Lobith on June 12th, 1672, for instance, the spectacle of river-crossing cuts across the entire middle ground of the picture (29). In both works, the spectrum of the configuration of the equestrian soldiers runs from heads alone to full-figured on horses splashing over shallow water, and many of them wield a sword in their right hands.

⁴⁶ Strassberg regards the architecture as “generic Italianate forms to suggest a local, Central Eurasian style”. See Strassberg, 2007, p. 98.

⁴⁷ Fu Heng et al., comp., *juan 53*, pp. 30a–32b, reprint Vol. 3, pp. 1932–1933.

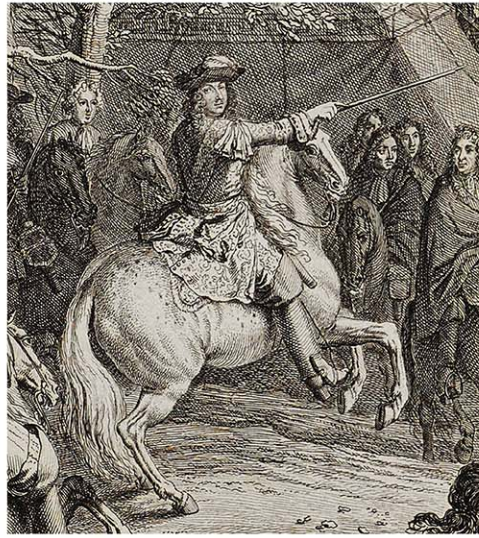


22

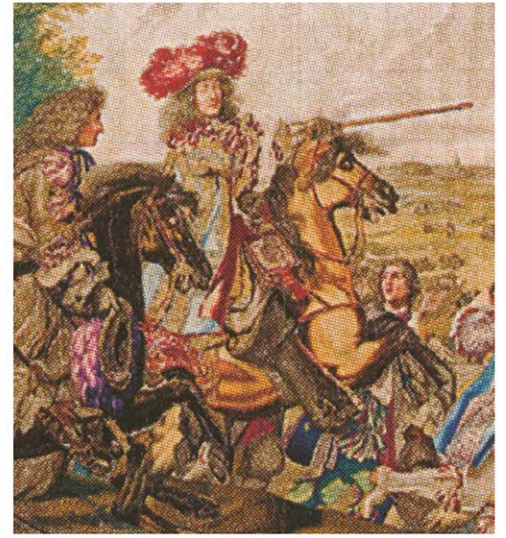
Adam Frans Van der Meulen, engraved by Robert Bonnat, *The French Siege of the City and Castle of Dinant on the Meuse River on May 22nd–29th, 1675*, 17th–18th century. Etching, plate 52 x 96 cm. From Vol. 16 of *Le Cabinet du Roi*, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, Band 39



23 Detail of 10



24 Detail of 16



25 Detail of 4



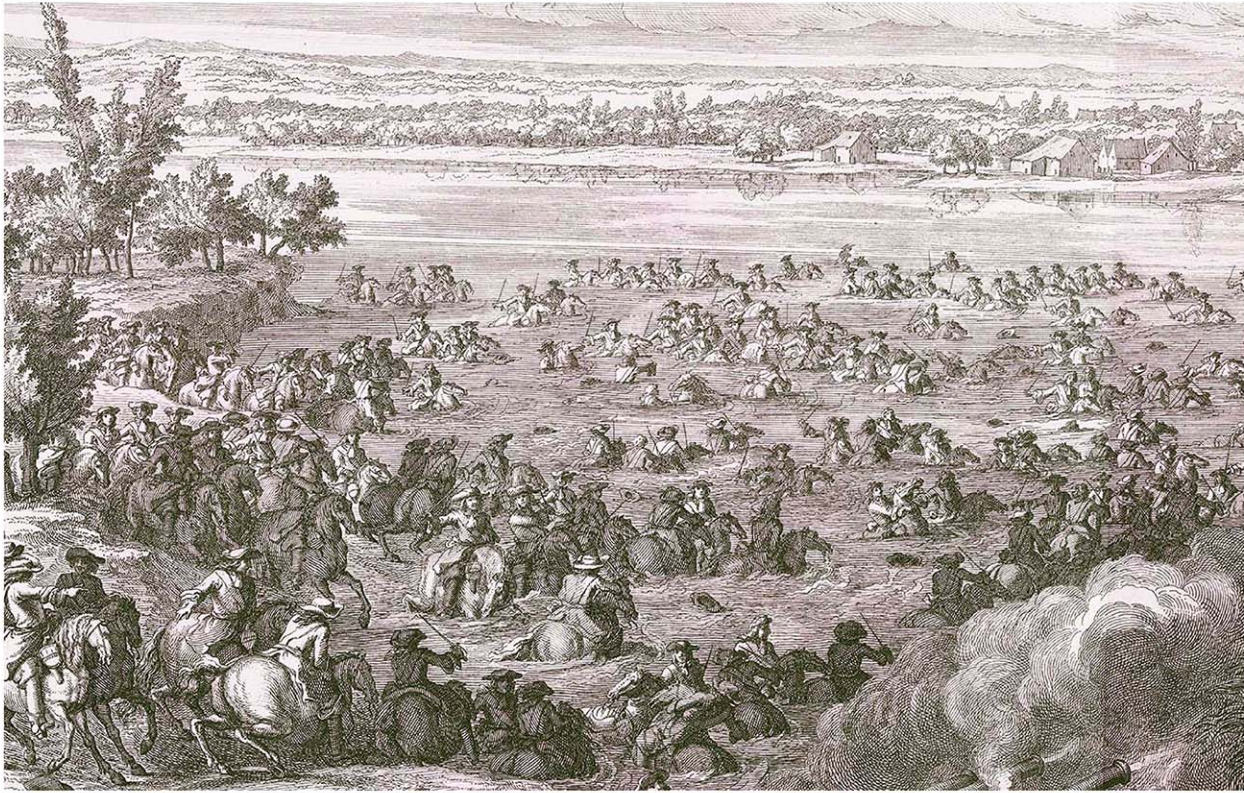
26 Jacques Aliamet (French, 1726–1788), after Giovanni Damasceno Salusti (Italian, 1727–1781), *The Battle at Khurungui*, plate 5 from *The Conquests of the Emperor of China (Les Conquêtes de l'Empereur de la Chine)*, dated 1774. Etching and engraving, 58.2 x 92.8 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1945 (45.100.5)



27 Detail of 26



28 Detail of 26



29 Adam Frans Van der Meulen, engraved by Charles Louis Simonneau, *The French Army Crossing the Rhine at Lobith, 1672*, 17th–18th century. Etching, plate 52 x 94.5 cm. From Vol. 16 of *Le Cabinet du Roi*, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, Band 39. Detail



30 Detail of 10

On the left side of *Lifting the Siege at the Black Water River* is another military river scene (30). In a river winding into the misty distance among groves of lush trees are a score of soldier-labourers, half-submerged in water, constructing a temporary path over the river for the camels to carry weaponry to the hilltop on the other side (26). Significantly, it evokes the river scene in one of the fifteen Van der Meulen prints presented to Kangxi by the 1688 mission, a view of a tapestry in the *History of the King* suite that commemo-

rates Louis XIV's defeat of the Count of Marsin near the Bruges Canal on August 31st, 1667 (31). The king is seen on horseback on a foreground slope overlooking his troops wading through water in chase of the Spanish army (32). In both pictures, the river scene is positioned to the left of the picture's centre with a tree-shaded cavalry on its left and a wooded waterway receding into mist on its right, depicted from an elevated foreground populated with large figures. With three copies of the *Defeat of the Count of Marsin*

print circulating in the capital, chances were high that the designers of Qianlong's Campaign pictures encountered it one way or another.

The hypothesis that the French celebration of Louis XIV's conquests with serial tapestries and prints inspired Qianlong's commission of the East Turkestan Campaign painting and print suites may find further support in Qianlong's sudden passion for European palatial architecture in the mid-1740s. Two years after the completion of the decades-long renovation of the Yuanming Yuan in the Chinese tradition, he decided to add a lavish Western-style compound in 1747, which materialised as the European Pavilions. His whim was said to have been triggered by the sight of European fountains in a picture.⁴⁸ Since it occurred shortly after Benoist's arrival at court with, presumably, a selection from the 1743 edition of *Cabinet du Roi*, in which Versailles and its famous fountains are extensively illustrated, the newly arrived prints may have catalysed Qianlong's fascination with European palatial architecture, even if the one he allegedly saw was not among them. As noted above, a *Cabinet du Roi* volume on the views of Versailles was still in the Pei-t'ang Library by 1949, and there must have been more available to Qianlong. The surge of his Europhilia is best explained by his exposure to the extravagance of the French court through its printed propaganda. The primary construction of the European Pavilions ended in 1759, and so did the East Turkestan Campaign. Qianlong's glorification of national expansion with painting and print suites based on European prototypes in the following years embodies a higher level of understanding and appropriation of French political art.

⁴⁸See Benoist's biography written as an obituary in 1775 in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères par quelques missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Vol. 13, p. 469. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433068275530;view=1up;seq=481>.

Bibliography

Abbé de Varès, "Registre des Livres de figures et Estampes qui ont été distribués suivant les ordres de Monseigneur le marquis de Louvois depuis L'Inventaire fait avec M. l'abbé Varès au mois d'août 1684", Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Estampes Réserve: pet. fol. rés. YE. 144.

Bertrand, Pascal-François, "Tapestry Production at the Gobelins during the Reign of Louis XIV, 1661–1715", in Thomas P. Campbell, ed., *Tapestry in the Baroque: Threads of Splendor*, New York, 2007, pp. 341–355.

Bremer-David, Charissa, "Manufacture Royale de Tapisseries de Beauvais, 1664–1715", in Thomas P. Campbell, ed., *Tapestry in the Baroque: Threads of Splendor*, New York, 2007, pp. 407–419.

Brunet, Jacques-Charles, *Manuel du libraire et de l'amateur de livres*, 6 vols, Paris, 1860–1865.

Campbell, Thomas P., ed., *Tapestry in the Baroque: Threads of Splendor*, New York, 2007.

Fu Heng et al., comp., *Pingding Zhunge'er fanglue/zhengbian*, 1772 (?), *Xizang xue Hanwen wenxian huike* edition, Beijing, 1990.



31 Charles le Brun after Adam Frans Van der Meulen's sketch, engraved by Sébastien le Clerc, *Louis XIV's Defeat of the Spanish Army Led by Comte de Marsin near the Bruges Canal in 1667*, engraved in 1680, 17th–18th century. Etching of a tapestry in the *History of the King* suite, plate 41 x 56.5 cm. From Vol. 9 of *Le Cabinet du Roi*, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, Band 31

Grivel, Marianne, "Le Cabinet du Roi", *Revue de la Bibliothèque Nationale* 18, 1985, pp. 36–57.

Han Qi, "Kangxi chao Faguo Yesuhui shi zai Hua de kexue huodong", *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 80, 1998/02, pp. 68–75.

Han Qi and Wu Min, eds, *Xi chao chongzheng ji, Xi chao ding'an (wai sanzong)*, Beijing, 2006.

Huang Bolu, *Zhengjiao fengbao*, in Han Qi and Wu Min, eds, pp. 237–384.

Ju Deyuan, "Qing Qintianjian jianzheng Liu Songling—Jinian Nansilafu tianwen xuejia Liu Songling shishi erbaiishi zhounian", *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan*, 1985/01, pp. 53–62.

Knothe, Florian, "Tapestry as a Medium of Propaganda at the Court of Louis XIV: Display and Audience", in Thomas P. Campbell and Elizabeth A.H. Cleland, eds, *Tapestry in the Baroque: New Aspects of Production and Patronage*, New York, 2010, pp. 342–359.

Lazarist Mission, *Catalogue of the Pei-t'ang Library*, Peking, 1949.

Leverenz, Niklas, "From Painting to Print: The Battle of Qurman from 1760", *Orientalia*, May 2010, pp. 48–53.

Leverenz, Niklas, "The Battle of Qurman: A Third Fragment of the 1760 Qianlong Imperial Painting", *Orientalia*, May 2015, pp. 76–80.

Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites par des missionnaires de la compagnie de Jésus: Mémoires de la Chine, Paris, 1702–1776, 2nd edition, Lyon, 1819, 14 vols. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001936208>.

Liu Lu, "'Congboxing shiyi tu' yu 'Qing Gaozong dayue tu' kaoxi: Qing dai duo minzu guojia xingcheng de tuxiang jianzheng", *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 90, 2000/04, pp. 15–26.



32 Detail of 31

Liu Ruzhong, “Fuyuan Dajiangjun xizheng tu juan” in National Museum of China, comp., *Zhongguo guojia bowuguan guancang wenwu yanjiu congshu: Huohua juan (lishi hua)*, Shanghai, 2006, pp. 108–115.

Liu, Shi-ye, “Containing the West in the Manchu Realm? Emperor Qianlong’s *Deer Antler Scrolls*”, *Orientalism*, September 2015, pp. 58–69.

Ma, Ya-Chen, “War and Empire: Images of Battle during the Qianlong Reign”, in Petra Chu and Ning Ding, eds, *Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges between China and the West*, Los Angeles, 2015, pp. 158–172.

Ma Ya-chen, *Kehua zhanxun: Qing chao diguo wugong de wenhua jiangou*, Beijing, 2016.

Marchesano, Louis, entry on Robert Bonnat’s etching *Arrival of the King at the Camp Outside Maastricht* after Adam Frans van der Meulen’s design. In Peter Fuhring et al., eds, *A Kingdom of Images: French Prints in the Age of Louis XIV, 1660–1715*, Los Angeles, 2015, cat. no. 99, p. 276.

Nie Chongzheng, “‘Ou feng dongjian’ yu Qing dai gongting tongbanhua”, in Nie, *Qing gong huihua yu ‘xihua dongjian’*, Beijing, 2008, pp. 208–231.

Pelliot, Paul, “Les Conquêtes de l’Empereur de la Chine”, *T’oung Pao*, Vol. XX, Leiden, 1921, pp. 183–274.

Pirazzoli-t’Serstevens, Michèle, entry on “*The Relief of the Black River (Heishui ying jiewei)* and *Victory at Khorgos (Heluohuosi jie)* from *Quelling the Rebellion in the Western Regions*”, in Evelyn S. Rawski and Jessica Rawson, eds, *China: The Three Emperors, 1662–1795*, London 2005, exh. cat. no. 75, p. 407.

Pirazzoli-t’Serstevens, Michèle, *Giuseppe Castiglione, 1688–1766: peintre et architecte à la cour de Chine*, Paris, 2007.

Plax, Julie Anne, “Seventeenth-Century French Images of Warfare”, in Pia Cuneo, ed., *Artful Armies, Beautiful Battles: Art and Warfare in Early Modern Europe*, Leiden, 2002, pp. 131–155.

Reed, Marcia, “Imperial Impressions: The Qianlong Emperor’s Print Suites”, in Chu and Ding, eds, *Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges between China and the West*, Los Angeles, 2015, pp. 124–139.

Scheyer, Ernst, “Baroque Painting in Germany and Austria: A Gap in American Studies”, *Art Journal*, Vol. 20, no. 1, Autumn 1960, pp. 9–18.

Schnapper, Antoine, “The King of France as Collector in the Seventeenth Century”, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 17, no. 1, *The Evidence of Art: Images and Meaning in History*, Summer, 1986, pp. 185–202.

Strassberg, Richard E., “War and Peace: Four Intercultural Landscapes”, in Marcia Reed and Paola Demattè, eds, *China on Paper: European and Chinese Works from the Late Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century*, Los Angeles, 2007, pp. 89–137.

Szrajber, Tanya, “The Victories of the Emperor Qianlong”, *Print Quarterly*, Vol. 23, no. 1, March 2006, pp. 28–47.

Vittet, Jean, entries on the *History of the King* tapestry suite, cat. nos 41–47, in Thomas P. Campbell, ed., *Tapestry in the Baroque: Threads of Splendor*, New York, 2007, pp. 374–389.

Xi chao ding’an, in Han Qi and Wu Min, eds, pp. 43–200.

Zhongguo diyi lishi dang’anguan, comp., *Qing zhongqianqi xiyang Tianzhuojiao zai Hua huodong dang’an shiliao*, 4 vols, Beijing, 2003.

Zhou Wei-qiang and Cheng Wing-cheong, “Documenting Military Achievements in Copperplate Prints”, in National Palace Museum, *Portrayals from a Brush Divine: A Special Exhibition on the Tricentennial of Giuseppe Castiglione’s Arrival in China*, Taipei, 2015, pp. 240–307.

Zhuang Jifa, “Qing dai Qianlong nianjian de tongban deshengtu”, in Zhuang’s *Qing Gaozong shiquan wugong yanjiu*, Taipei, 1982, pp. 518–531.