

*VARIOUS PROPERTIES*

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A SET OF SEVENTEEN PRINTS by I. S. Helman of the battles of the Emperor Qianlong depicting battle scenes, parades and encampments after Jesuit artists Joannes Damascenus, Conceptione Augustinus Excalecatus (slight staining and some creasing) dated between 1783-1785  
26.5cm. x 42.5cm., backed and glazed (17)

CH'IENT LUNG'S CONQUEST OF FORMOSA

On July 13th, 1765, by Imperial decree, Ch'ien Lung ordered that sixteen drawings made by Castiglione and three other Jesuits, of his victories in Central Asia, should be sent to Europe for engraving in copper—the copper plates together with one hundred engravings to be sent to him in Peking. The Chinese Viceroy in Canton was persuaded to send them to Paris where the Royal Engraver, Cochin, was put in charge of this prestige order. The work of engraving was distributed to the best French artists of the day, le Bas, Saint-Aubin, Prevot and Aliamet.

The French East India Company was paid 204,000 French Pounds for the work by the Chinese Hong Merchants in Canton and the engravings finally reached China in 1775. Almost none of the original engravings were kept in France and in 1788 Helman published a new set of the Conquest Engravings in reduced form, adding four new engravings of his own, including the Emperor tilling the soil.

The engravings afforded satisfaction to the Emperor Ch'ien Lung and subsequently Chinese artists were instructed to produce copper engravings of further Imperial victories on the frontiers of Tibet, in Formosa, in Nepal, in Annam, in Yunnan, in Hunan and again in Turkestan.

There was a set of 12 engravings of the campaign in Formosa, 1786-1788; the engravings appeared in 1789-90. The two Court artists responsible for this work were Chia Ch'uan and Li Ming. The general who commanded the Chinese Forces and is commended in the text, published with these engravings, was himself a son of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung.

These engravings provide an extremely interesting example of the inter-action of Chinese and European artistic concepts as well as an indication of the fascinating relationship of the Jesuit artists in Peking with the Manchu Court.

An exhibition of some of the engravings on Ch'ien Lung's conquests was held at the Musée Guimet in Paris, January to March 1967. The engravings shown included those of the Musée de Fontainebleau. A well illustrated publication, produced by Monsieur Michele Pirazzoli-T'Serstevens, Deputy Keeper of the Musée Guimet, together with historical notes of interest, was issued by the Musée Guimet in 1969. According to this publication, the Musée Guimet at that time, possessed three of the twelve engravings of the Formosan Conquests.

References and illustrations of the Ch'ien Lung Conquests are contained in the Chater Collection Catalogue, 1924, Michel Beurdeley's book on the Jesuits in China, also in publications, Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766) by Professor Max Loehr. The set of the Formosan Conquests is probably rarer than the better known set of Ch'ien Lung's Conquests in Central Asia, more widely distributed as a result of the Helman publication.

A. A. E. F.

£1,000-1,500





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