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AN IMPERIAL DOCUMENTARY ENGRAVED COPPER PRINTING PLATE, the surface very finely etched with one of the scenes from the series of Qianlong's military campaigns showing foot soldiers and cavalry variously in a mountainous landscape with wooded areas below a descriptive inscription, all in reverse image, dated *jiyou* year of Qianlong (corresponding to A.D. 1789) and of the period
95cm. × 58cm.

The inscription records that the scene depicts Qianlong's campaign in Annam (present day Vietnam) and describes the victory of the battle at *Sanyi Zhuyou*. The reverse is incised 'engraved by the *Zhao Banchu* (The Official Manufactory) recording the campaign in Annam—second of the series'.

This series of engravings recording Qianlong's victorious campaigns, is an entirely Chinese production in contrast to the first series, commissioned by Qianlong in 1765, to record the victories of 1755 to 1760. These were drawn by the Jesuit fathers, Giuseppe Castiglione, and Jean Damascene, and executed later in Paris under the supervision of Louis XVI's employee, Charles-Nicolas Cochin. The series was completed in France in 1775, and the plates and 200 copies of each engraving were all sent back to Beijing. The second series was produced at the Palace Workshops (the *Zhao Banchu*) and was obviously inspired, as much else in the later Qianlong period, by the Sino-European style practiced by the Jesuit fathers. All the series of Qianlong campaign prints, except for the first, were apparently prepared by Chinese engravers themselves, though there was no technical difference in the method of production, and — according to contemporary engravers today — the quality of working on the copper plate is extremely high. While some of the Chinese artists have been identified, for the series of campaigns in Formosa and Hunan, those working on the Annam set are not known or recorded in the scanty literature on the subject. The information is summarised by Pirazzoli-T'ser Stevens, *Gravures des Conquêtes de l'Empereur de Chine K'ien-long au Musée Guimet*, Paris, 1969

£12,000-15,000

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