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LOT 140

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A suite of fifteen Imperially inscribed and sealed engravings commemorating the Qianlong Emperor's victorious campaigns in Central Asia between 1755-1759. Completed 1769-1774.

FINE CHINESE ART

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QIANLONG, EMPEROR OF CHINA (1711-1799); GIUSEPPE CASTIGLIONE (1688-1766 ET AL, ARTIST), AND CHARLES-NICOLAS COCHIN (1715-1790, ENGRAVER)

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First French edition, 15 copper engraved plates, partially mounted.

88.7cm (35in) wide x 51.3cm (20 1/4in) long. (15).

Footnotes

1769-1774年「乾隆平定西域得勝圖」版畫十五幅

Provenance: Arthur Probsthain bookshop, London, possibly before 1927

來源: Arthur Probsthain 書店, 或於1927年前獲得

The iconic London bookshop, founded by the Probsthain family in 1903, has been a fixture at 41 Great Russell Street, opposite the British Museum, since 1905. Initially managed by Arthur Probsthain, it later passed to his nephew, Walter Sheringham, who took over in 1941. He was soon joined by his wife in 1943. Their children, Michael and Lesley, became involved in the 1970s, ensuring the continuity of this renowned family business. For decades, Probsthain's has been considered one of the foremost dealers in Chinese books in the Western world.

In a report presented at the Guimet Museum in 1927, the French sinologist Paul Pelliot claimed to know the storage places of five copies stating one was held by a bookshop in London. He did not give specific details and it is possible that this is the work he referenced. See P.Pelliot, *Les influences européennes sur l'art chinois au XVIIe et au XVIIIe siècle*, Conférence faite au Musée Guimet le 20 février 1927, Paris, 1948, pp.12 and 27.

This suite of engravings represents a remarkable and unprecedented collaboration between East and West, at the height of the military power, artistic ambition and international collaboration of the Qing dynasty under the Qianlong Emperor.

The set of engravings, originally sixteen, marks the successful campaigns in Eastern Turkestan that the Qianlong Emperor embarked upon between 1755 and 1759. These campaigns, ending with the suppression of a revolt of the Muslim Altishahr Khojas (1757-1759), led to the creation of the Western

province of Xinjiang, under the control of the Qing empire. A ceremony was held in the Spring of the following year during which the two generals who had successfully led the campaigns, Zhaohui (1708-1764) and Fude (d.1776) were honoured and sixteen large-scale paintings recording the events were commissioned to be executed and installed in the *Ziguangge* (Hall of Purple Splendour), a building in the Imperial garden adjacent to the Forbidden City, which was to become the location of reception of foreign envoys and public display of the Qianlong Emperor's military conquests.

The paintings were planned and executed by the Jesuits Giuseppe Castiglione (郎世寧 1688-1766), Jean-Denis Attiret (王致誠 1702-1768), Ignatius Sichelbarth (艾啟蒙 1708-1780) and the Augustinian Jean Damascene Sallusti (安德義 ?-1781). These formed the basis for the original set commissioned by the Qianlong Emperor of sixteen engravings commemorating his military victories in 1765 based on the wall paintings of the battles, conquests and ceremonies that marked his successful campaigns in the Western Region. They comprise:

1. *Receiving the Surrender of the Yili* (preparatory drawing by Ignatius Sickltart (艾啟蒙 1708-1780), completed 1769) (1);
2. *Storming of the Camp at Gädän-Ola* (preparatory drawing by Giuseppe Castiglione (郎世寧 1688-1766), completed 1769);
3. *The Battle of Oroj-jalatu* (completed 1770);
4. *The Victory of Khorgos* (preparatory drawing by Jean-Denis Attiret (王致誠 1702-1768), completed 1774);
5. *The Battle of Khurungui*;
6. *The Chief of Us (Turfan) Surrenders with His City* (preparatory drawing by Joannes Damasceus Salusri (安德義 ?-1781), completed 1774);
7. *Lifting of the Siege at the Black Water River* (preparatory drawing by Giuseppe Castiglione (郎世寧 1688-1766), completed 1771);
8. *The Great Victory of Qurman* (preparatory drawing by Joannes Damasceus Salusri (安德義 ?-1781), completed 1770);
9. *The Battle of Tonguzluq* (completed 1773);
10. *The Battle of Qos-qulaq* (completed 1774);
11. *The Battle of Arcul* (preparatory drawing by Jean-Denis Attiret (王致誠 1702-1768));
12. *The Battle of Yesil-köl-nor* (preparatory drawing by Joannes Damasceus Salusri (安德義 ?-1781), completed 1772);
13. *The Chef of Badakhsan Asks to Surrender* (preparatory drawing by Joannes Damasceus Salusri (安德義 ?-1781), completed 1772);
14. *The Emperor is presented with Prisoners from the Pacification of the Muslim Tribes* (preparatory drawing by Jean-Denis Attiret (王致誠 1702-1768));

15. *The Emperor in the Suburbs Personally Receives News of the Officers and Soldiers Distinguished in the Campaign against the Muslim Tribes* (preparatory drawing by Joannes Damasceuns Salusri (安德義 ?-1781), completed 1772);
16. *A Victory Banquet Given by the Emperor for the Distinguished Officers and Soldiers* (completed 1770).

In commissioning the engravings, the Emperor was inspired by prints of battles by the Augsburg engraver Georg Philipp Rugendas the Elder (1666-1742) and followed guidance from Louis-Joseph Le Febvre, head of the French Jesuit mission to China.

To prepare the engravings, drawings were first created in China by Giuseppe Castiglione with the assistance of Jean-Denis Attiret, Ignatius Sichelbarth, Jean-Damascène Sallusti and Ding Guanpeng. These were then sent to France to be transformed into copper plate engravings under the direction of Charles-Nicolas Cochin, engraver to King Louis XV, by a team of engravers, including Jacques-Philippe Le Bas (1707-1783), Augustin de Saint-Aubin (1736-1807), Benoît-Louis Prévost (1747-1804) and Jean-Jacques Aliamet (1726-1788).

The Qianlong Emperor requested an edition of one hundred copies but double that were printed and distributed across two ships, to reduce the chances of their being lost. 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 pounds. Only a very limited number of extra copies was printed for the French King, his ministers and some members of the Court.

The present set is of particular significance for bearing hand-written Imperial inscription and seals of the Emperor meaning that it was clearly one of the sets sent back to China.

The Qianlong Emperor created a series of albums incorporating the engravings and his own poems. Two types existed: the first appended the inscriptions and Imperial poem to each engraving on a separate sheet, and the second, of which the present lot is an example, inscribed the poems directly onto the sheets of engravings. One of these sets was mentioned in the *Catalogue of Books from the Tianyi Pavilion* (天一閣書目) as having been gifted by the Qianlong Emperor in the 44th year of his reign (1780).

Compare with one of a series of 16 engravings of the Turkestan campaign, 1764-1772, with added inscriptions, in the British Museum, illustrated by J.Rawson, *The British Museum Book of Chinese Art*, London, 1992, p.283, no.212.

Compare with also 25 engravings including 16 of the Turkestan campaign 1755-1759 with added

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