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Citation

Reed, Marcia. 2019. The Qianlong Emperor's copperplate engravings. Harvard Library Bulletin 28 (1), Spring 2017: 1-24.

Permanent link

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The Qianlong Emperor's Copperplate Engravings

Marcia Reed

IN THE HISTORY OF PRINTMAKING IN CHINA, woodcuts are the best-known print medium, made from relief patterns and images carved into blocks. Yet for both Europeans and Chinese, it was engravings of art and architecture which were key works in cultural exchanges during the reign of the Qianlong emperor. They transmitted detailed images of European culture; they inspired Chinese imperial commissions; and they introduced artistic methods, materials, and techniques, most notably the use of copper engraving itself for Chinese printmaking. At least eight suites of prints were created for the Qianlong emperor. Initially, two series were produced in collaboration by European and Chinese artists. Sixteen prints made in Paris, sometimes titled the “Sixteen Conquests,” recorded the emperor’s successful military victories in East Turkestan. These were based on sketches of Chinese paintings by European Jesuit artists and printed from copper plates engraved in France. Twenty prints engraved and printed in Beijing depicted the European Pavilions at the Garden of Perfect Clarity; these prints depicted the architectural and garden designs made by European artists as commissions for the Chinese emperor. Six more suites produced in China illustrated the emperor’s conquests in diverse regions of his realm.

This paper presents an overview of these print projects, showing how the Parisian prints of Qianlong’s victories in the western regions of East Turkestan initiated the lesser known print suites of battles produced by Chinese artists. Special attention is given to their imperial or elite presentations, comparing European and Chinese artistic practices and taste. In the course of my research on the Getty Research Institute’s collections, I discovered Houghton Library’s exceptional and nearly comprehensive holdings of these prints and two unique documentary sources: a surviving copper plate and a contemporary manuscript. Although there are collections in China, in France and Germany,¹ Houghton Library’s collection provides diverse and fascinating

The author presented a version of this article at Houghton Library as a Philip and Frances Hofer Lecture on March 25, 2014.

¹ Namely, at the Bibliothèque nationale, Musée Guimet in Paris, and at the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin. The website <www.battle-of-qurman.com.cn> (accessed December 3, 2018) provides

perspectives on the encounters of Europeans and Chinese in the early modern era. They show parallel practices of artistic commissions, graphic production, dissemination, and collecting. This paper focuses on Houghton Library's collections and is based on my lecture given as the Philip and Frances Hofer Lecture in March 2014. Houghton Library's collection of the prints commissioned by the Qianlong emperor was acquired in 1957 by William A. Jackson from the respected Paris book dealer Georges Heilbrun with funds from Hofer and a bequest of Amy Lowell.²

Houghton Library's collections include not only a volume of the original European states of the prints in the Turkestan conquests bound in a European binding, but also later Chinese states printed from the Paris copper engravings with sections re-etched and European artists' names cropped from edges of the plates (see figure 1.1). These are assembled with the Qianlong emperor's texts on the plates and accompanied by large-format woodcut prints of texts; and finally, one of the copper plates for the Turkestan conquests that was made in France, then sent to China (see figure 1.2). In addition, Heilbrun's comprehensive collection included prints of subsequent conquests and fifteen of twenty engravings of the European Pavilions to compose a nearly complete documentation of Qianlong's commissions for copper-engraved prints. The later conquest prints include: sixteen engravings of the campaign in Jinchuan (1771–6); twelve engravings of the campaign against Taiwan (Formosa) (1787–8); six engravings of the Annam (Vietnam) campaigns (1788–9); six of eight engravings of the campaigns in Nepal against the Gurkhas (1792–3); sixteen engravings of the campaign in Miao (Hunan) 1795); and four engravings of campaigns in Chong Miao (Yunnan, 1795). An additional suite of ten prints illustrates the Second Turkestan Campaign in 1828 by the Daoguang Emperor (1782–1850, reign dates 1820–1850) in Xinjiang; while not commissioned by Qianlong and clumsily executed and produced, they are memories of Qianlong's commemorative battle publications (see table 1.1). Not only do the prints chart the military history of Qianlong's reign, but they also provide a nearly complete history of the engagement between French court artists and Chinese counterparts, as well as its aftermath in continuing print productions. In addition to Heilbrun's collection, a 1975 acquisition from the Paris dealer Paul Jammes brought a manuscript

excellent and continually updated information on documentation of the conquest print series, including the histories of the conquests and transmissions as well as present locations of the prints, copperplates, and related objects such as paintings and lacquer works.

2 See Roger E. Stoddard, "More Valuable to Us Than All the Books in the World: Georges Heilbrun and His Harvard Library Friends," *Gazette of the Grolier Club* n.s. 47 (1995–1996): 5–31. Stoddard's article describes Heilbrun's life as a book dealer, especially his relationships with Hofer and Jackson. This collection seems to be an unusual acquisition from the dealer and for Hofer; neither is known up to now for his interest in Chinese prints. My surmise is that, as knowledgeable bookmen, they were fascinated by these prints and their unusual history, as I was when I first learned about them.



Figure 1.1. Jean Denis Attiret, Jacques-Philippe Le Bas, [Battle at Khorgos], *Description des batailles de la Chine* (Paris: C.N. Cochin, 1769–1774), pl. 14. 70 x 105 cm. Typ 715.69.280.



Figure 1.2. Jacques-Philippe Le Bas, “Battle at Khorgos” [Copper plate for *Description des batailles de la Chine*] (between 1766 and 1774), recto. 57.3 x 94.3 x 0.3 cm. TypR–83.

Table 1.1

Description of Plates	Publication Information	Houghton Library Call Number
European states of the Turkestan conquests	<i>Description des batailles de la Chine</i> (Paris: C.N. Cochin, 1769–1774)	Typ 715.69.280
Chinese states of the Turkestan conquests	<i>Zhūngè'èr Huibu deng chu de sheng tu</i> (Beijing: Wu Ying Dian Press, 1780s?)	Typ 778.85.277
European Pavilions	<i>Changchun Yuan Shuifa tu</i> (Beijing: Wu Ying Dian Press?, 1783–1786)	Typ 778.83.274
Campaign in Jinchuan	<i>Ping ding liang Jinchuan de sheng tu</i> (Beijing: Wu Ying Ting Press, 1778–1785)	Typ 778.78.694 P (1)
Campaign in Taiwan	<i>Ping ding Taiwan zhan tu</i> (Beijing: Wu Ying Dian Press, 1789–1790)	Typ 778.89.694
Campaigns in Vietnam	<i>Ping ding Annan zhan tu</i> (Beijing: Wu Ying Dian Press, 1789–1790)	Typ 778.78.694 P (2)
Campaigns in Nepal against the Gurkhas	<i>Ping ding Guò'èrke zhan tu</i> (Beijing, ca. 1793)	Typ 778.78.694 P (3)
Campaign in Miao (Hunan)	<i>Yubi ping ding Chongmiao zhan tu</i> (Beijing: Wu Ying Ting Press?, 1798–1803)	Typ 778.98.893 P (1)
Campaign in Chong Miao (Yunnan)	<i>Yuti ping ding Miaojiang zhan tu</i> (Beijing: Wu Ying Ting Press?, 1798–1803)	Typ 778.98.893 P (2)
Second Turkestan Campaign	<i>Ping ding Hui Jiang zhan tu</i> (Beijing: Wu Ying Dian Press?, ca. 1830)	Typ 878.30.694

of twenty-four pages dated 1775, “Conquêtes de l’empereur de la Chine.” Its handwritten text describes both the military history of the Qianlong emperor’s conquests in East Turkestan as well as the history of the prints’ commission by the Chinese emperor for execution by European artists.³ The manuscript is a European document, possibly made for publication, that demonstrates the French interest in Chinese history and politics. This foundational collection is supplemented by later reduced series of the prints published for French Sinophile collectors by Isidore-Stanislaus Helman, titled “Conquêtes de l’Empereur de la Chine,” (1783–1788) (see figure 1.3).⁴ Thus Houghton Library’s collections provide a rich resource for scholars with an interest in the cross-cultural transmissions of both graphic media and contemporary history during a fertile period for the development of eclectic artistic tastes in Qing China. In this same period there was strong interest in collecting and connecting with China in Europe, particularly in France.⁵

QIANLONG, PATRON AND COLLECTOR

The Qianlong emperor (1711–1799, reign dates 1735–1796) was the sixth emperor in the Qing dynasty, fourth to rule over China. Known as a powerful and cultivated leader with aesthetic interests and literary talents—he wrote hundreds of poems—Qianlong ruled his extensive realm and diverse peoples during a prosperous period in Chinese history. Similar to the wane of the corrupt and decadent royals in eighteenth-century regime in France, the end of Qianlong’s reign began the decline which characterized late Qing (nineteenth-century) China. The emperor was especially notable for his

3 Compagnie des Indes, Description of a set of 16 engravings entitled “Conquêtes de l’empereur de la Chine,” manuscript, 1775. MS Typ 607. Written in columns on the right-hand sides of both sides of large paper sheets, it accords with descriptions of the print project in other contemporary sources as well as later publications. See Pascal Torres, *Les Batailles de l’Empereur de Chine* (Paris: Musée de Louvre Editions, 2009), which reproduces proof impressions of the prints; Tanya Szrajber, “The Victories of the Emperor Qianlong,” *Print Quarterly* 23 (2006): 28–47; Paul Pelliot, “Les Conquêtes de l’Empereur de la Chine,” *T’oung pao* 20 (1920–1921): 183–274; Henri Cordier, “Les conquêtes de l’empereur de la Chine,” in *Mémoires concernant l’Asie Orientale* (Paris: Leroux, 1913); and Marc Furcy-Raynaud, “Correspondence de M. de Marigny . . .” *Nouvelles Archives de l’Art Français Troisième Série* 20 (1904): 100–201. Most recently, see Laura Newby, “Copper Plates for the Qianlong Emperor: From Paris to Peking Via Canton,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 16 (2012): 161–199; the author states her article is “not about art history,” but rather “the politics behind the commission.”

4 Isidore Stanislaus Helman, *Conquêtes de l’empereur de la Chine* (Paris: Chez l’Auteur . . . et chez M. Ponce, 1783–1788). Typ 715.69.280.

5 See Petra Ten-Doesschate Chu and Ding Ning, eds., *Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges between China and the West* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2015).



Figure 1.3. Isidore-Stanislaus Helman, “Bataille d’Altchour gagnée par Fou-Té contre les deux Hot-Chour, Aout 1759,” *Suite des seize estampes représentant les Conquêtes de l’empereur de la Chine, avec leur explication* (Paris: Chez l’auteur . . . et chez M. Ponce, 1783–1788), pl. 14. 43 x 60 cm. Typ 715.88.449.

military campaigns which expanded China’s borders with impressive conquests by his generals and troops in Central and South Asia as well as Taiwan.

The Qianlong emperor is well known for his wide-ranging interests in art, architecture, and the decorative arts. He collected not only Chinese art, but also appreciated works in diverse genres from many cultures, including Europe. His collections of ceramics, cloisonné, metalwork, and furniture as well as his commissions for architectural complexes and garden designs demonstrated his extensive knowledge of contemporary artistic media. Foreign ambassadors and missionaries were expected to bring him many gifts, including the automata and clocks presently on display in the Forbidden City and the Beauvais tapestries with designs by French artists of Chinese subjects which were installed by Qianlong in the Observatory of Distant Oceans at the Yuanming Yuan.⁶ The 2010 exhibition *The Emperor’s Private Paradise* portrayed the

6 Richard Strassberg, “War and Peace: Four Intercultural Landscapes,” in Marcia Reed and Paola Dematté, eds., *China on Paper* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2007) 108; reproduced in Candace Adelson, *European Tapestry in the Minneapolis Institute of Art* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Institute of Art, 1994), 322–342.

Qianlong emperor's cultivated collections, some of which could be seen as esoteric.⁷ The exhibition's title points out a major difference between art collecting in China and Europe. Unlike European collectors who displayed art in early museums and palaces as marks of their status and wealth, public exhibitions of personal patronage and expansive collecting were not parallel traditions in China. The Qianlong emperor collected not so much for prestige, but rather because he was the emperor. Much like the aggrandizing royal prints created for Louis XIV, Qianlong's engravings served as imperial gifts, visually publishing his imperial world.⁸ As a collector, Qianlong was notably less engaged in practices of conspicuous display for others and far more interested in the deployment of artworks that would interpret and memorialize his achievements as a ruler on a global stage, radiating out from China to the rest of the world. It is significant that, rather than disseminating the first series of his Turkestan conquests among European collectors, promoting his accomplishments on a different continent, Qianlong commanded that all the prints should be sent back to China, for him to appreciate and to give as gifts.

THE PLACE OF PRINTS

As a Manchu, the Qianlong emperor has been dismissed as not truly Chinese, and until recently, the engravings which he commissioned have been disdained for their mongrel quality by European and Chinese collectors and curators.⁹ It is true that compared to European tastes in fine prints, such as those by Albrecht Dürer or Giovanni Battista Piranesi, prints made in China could seem to lack technical expertise, appearing as awkward renderings of standard subjects such as military victories, landscapes, and architecture. In light of recent interest in global art history and cross-cultural transmissions, these hybrid productions delineate significant artistic and intellectual exchanges. European techniques were passed on or appropriated by Chinese graphic artists who implemented and altered them according to their own aesthetic practices. As commissions, the prints were specifically made to serve the Qianlong emperor's tastes and his political agenda, presenting his accomplishments while simultaneously appealing to his eclectic interests as a patron and collector. They provide parallels to the European manner of commissioning and producing prints. Notably this is a history

7 Nancy Berliner, *The Emperor's Private Paradise: Treasures from the Forbidden City* (Salem, Mass.: Peabody Essex Museum; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

8 See Peter Fuhring, Louis Marchesano, Rémi Mathis, and Vanessa Selbach, *A Kingdom of Images: French Prints in the Age of Louis XIV, 1660–1715* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2015).

9 "The quality of printing is inferior to that of the Paris set—hardly surprising given the lack of experience in China with the copper-engraving technique." See Clarissa von Spee, *The Printed Image in China* (London: British Museum Press, 2010), 124.

of artistic appropriation, with Qianlong first enlisting European court artists for his commissions in Beijing, as well as those French artists who printed in Paris. Afterward the emperor employed Chinese artists exclusively to produce prints in Beijing.

The Qianlong emperor seemed to realize that prints were perfect vehicles to convey cultural and political messages. Unlike unique works of art created for a single designated space in a palace or private salon, as multiples prints are intended for more than one collector or collection. While they are meant to be viewed contemplatively, prints are also made to circulate, actively communicating ideas. They are frequently copied, excerpted, and transformed for new venues, different owners and audiences. This was the case in Europe as well as in China.

Prior to the Qianlong emperor's reign, Jesuit missionaries in China had already produced prints for imperial projects. The Jesuit astronomer Ferdinand Verbiest created a large woodcut world map in 1674, and he composed astronomical texts and illustrations for Qianlong's grandfather, the Kangxi emperor (1654–1722, the fourth emperor of the Qing dynasty who reigned from 1661–1722). Borrowing illustrations from European publications and maps, detailed woodcuts transmitted Verbiest's handwritten texts which were copied onto woodblocks rather than printed European-style with letterpress. Deftly inserting Christian concepts, they demonstrated European science by means of a Chinese medium.¹⁰ These woodcut books and prints were designed as practical works to communicate specific information. The first intaglio prints were made by Matteo Ripa who produced thirty-six engraved views of the Bishu shuanzhuang, the Mountain Retreat from the Summer Heat at Jehol in 1714.¹¹ The Jesuit Michel Benoist who designed fountains for Qianlong's court gardens, is also credited with creating an engraved map of the empire in 104 leaves.¹² In the eighteenth century the Jesuits' print projects grew increasingly sophisticated, no longer solely addressing the missionaries' projects but rather responding directly to artistic commissions from their eminent patron.

10 Gang Song and Paola Dematté, "Mapping an Acentric World: Ferdinand Verbiest's Kunyu Quantu," in *China on Paper*, 71–87; Paola Dematté, "From Astronomy to Heaven: Jesuit Science and the Conversion of China," in *China on Paper*, 53–69.

11 Fortunato Prandi, *Memoirs of Father Ripa* (London: John Murray, 1855), 66; Pelliot, 220–223; Richard E. Strassberg and Stephen H. Whiteman, *Thirty-Six Views: The Kangxi Emperor's Mountain Estate in Poetry and Prints* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2016).

12 Augustin de Backer, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, nouv. éd., 12 vols. (Héverlé-Louvain: Editions de la Bibliothèque S.J., 1960), 1:1310.

THE CONQUESTS OF THE EMPEROR OF CHINA

The history of Qianlong's copper-engravings begins in 1765 with the Qianlong emperor's request for prints based on paintings of his military campaigns in East Turkestan, which were displayed in the Ziguange ge (Hall of Imperial Glory).¹³ The 1775 manuscript describes the process of the commission, describing the subjects of the scenes as well as identifying the artists.¹⁴ With some corrections or notes in other hands, the manuscript appears to be a fair copy possibly drafted for publication; with slight differences in spelling and capitalization, it closely follows the text of a document in the Archives Nationales.¹⁵ It introduces the Qianlong emperor, describing his court artists, taking particular note of Jean-Denis Attiret, the French Jesuit brother who came from Dole, and the artists' commissions of the military heroes.¹⁶ Pleased with Attiret's talents, the Emperor commissioned studies for the sixteen paintings of his military conquests by him and three other artists, "The Compagnie des Indes had the honor to be selected to do the views of the Emperor of China."¹⁷ The manuscript references Qianlong's imperial decree of July 13, 1765 which is specific about the number of copies: here it is 100, and it lists the first four designs for the conquest series that were sent to France. These are not in order of the series, but rather an initial selection by Jean-Denis Attiret who did the largest number of sketches according to this manuscript. These sketches are by Attiret, Giuseppe Castiglione, Ignatius Sichelbart, and Jean Damascène.¹⁸ The Houghton Library manuscript reproduces the text of a letter of the same date written by the Milanese Jesuit Joseph [Giuseppe] Castiglione to the President of the Academy of Painting (in France) which speaks to the artistic details concerning the commission, mentioning two significant recommendations: First, the emperor wishes to have European-style engravings—both etched and engraved ("au burin ou à l'Eau forte")—which express delicacy and grace on the copperplate appropriate to such a grand emperor. Second, after the initial printing of the engravings, if they have become worn, it may be necessary to retouch them to preserve the high quality of the prints.¹⁹ After it was received by the Compagnie française des Indes, the order was sent

13 The Chinese name translates most accurately as "Hall of Purple Radiance."

14 Compagnie des Indes.

15 See Pelliot, 184–185. Houghton Library's folder on the acquisition has a "Note de Paul Pelliot. "C'est le Mémoire de la Compagnie des Indes dont il est question dans les lettres de Parent(?) au 18 avril 1775: les passages qu'il a ont correspondent exactement."

16 Compagnie des Indes, [2–3].

17 Compagnie des Indes, [3].

18 Compagnie des Indes, [4]. On the sketches see Niklas Leverenz, "Drawings, Proofs, and Prints from the Qianlong Emperor's East Turkestan Copperplate Engravings," *Arts Asiatiques* 68 (2013): 39–60.

19 Compagnie des Indes, [7].

to Paris to be executed as indicated, by the most accomplished graphic artists in Europe, the French royal printmakers. Indeed, the French seized on the project, viewing it as a vehicle to bolster trade. They thought that the artworks would distinguish France in the eyes of the emperor, raising their country's prestige, and distinguishing France from other European countries. They regarded the project as "un hommage à la France de ce que de les Extremités de l'Asie . . ."20 The French were especially pleased that the commission appeared to prefer their nation above all others, however in truth, the Qianlong emperor simply desired prints of the best quality. It is not certain that the emperor expressed any preference for their place of production, but Castiglione knew that the French royal printmakers would provide prints with the desired delicacy and grace.

This significant political and economic opportunity coincidentally appealed to the strong Sinophilic interests of the French minister Henri Bertin whose collections contained a growing number of Chinese objects.²¹ Initially, the project was elaborated to include additional projects, none of which were ever realized. Bertin speaks of the benefits of reproducing the designs for Sevres vase decorations as well as for Gobelins tapestries.²² He stresses the "commercial, political, and religious" advantages of the artistic project.²³ In their rush to respond it appears to have escaped the French that they had been enlisted into the service of the Qianlong emperor. Similar to the royal imprints commissioned for the French rulers such as the Charles-Nicolas Cochin's own *Histoire de Louis XV par Médailles* on which he began work in 1753, Jesuit artists and French printers were publicizing the glorious reign of the emperor of China.²⁴

Parallel to the artists who worked for the King of France at the Imprimerie royale, the Chinese emperor also employed court artists, including the four European missionaries whose works celebrated the accomplishments of his regime. Charles-Antoine Jombert's contemporary account published in his catalogue of Cochin's works describes details of the project, noting with some chauvinism that the Jesuit Jean-

20 Compagnie des Indes, [7]. The phrase "par préférence à l'autres nations" is underlined in the manuscript.

21 See John Finlay, "Henri Bertin and the Commerce in Images between France and China in the Late Eighteenth Century," in *Qing Encounters*, 79–94.

22 Compagnie des Indes, [4]. The document speaks of the need for color in order to create the tapestries.

23 Pelliot, 203, quoting a memorandum from Bertin's office: "Cela . . . donnerait à tout l'empire de la Chine une haute idée de la supériorité de nos artistes, de nos manufactures et de notre nation, et les Français ne seraient plus, comme ils le sont à la Chine, confondus avec les autres nations sous le nom d'Européans . . ."

24 However, this project was one that Cochin would never complete. Houghton has a volume of proofs for this work: Charles Nicolas Cochin, *Histoire de Louis XV par les medailles* (1753–1770). Typ 715.53.294. Hope Mayo kindly brought this to our attention.

Denis Attiret from Avignon (actually Dole) was the “premier peintre of the emperor of China.” Today Castiglione is thought to be the Qianlong emperor’s principal artist and by far the most technically accomplished, yet it appears that Attiret’s stature was not insignificant, at least from the French perspective. In Paris, Cochin’s supervisory role including retouching the proofs, and he redrew five of the sketches completely, observing the highest standards of quality. Jombert notes the difficulties of bridging European and Chinese artistic conventions, “always attending to the task of conforming to the particular [which was possibly in some cases quite peculiar] taste and national custom which marked the foreign designs.” On this same topic, in 1769 the Marquis de Marigny wrote tartly to Attiret that his drawings, “done in the Chinese taste were more remarkable for their singularity than for their beauty.”²⁵ Jombert stresses the grand scale of the suite, and mentions twice that the prints were commissioned and paid for by the emperor. Although they were a very important production, Jombert stresses that the prints of the Turkestan conquests would not be available to collectors in France.²⁶

The French appear to have understood both their role and the opportunity which the print project presented. Quite fortunately the memoranda among principal artists and administrators have been preserved. In 1767 the engraver Charles Nicolas Cochin the younger responded to the General Director of the King’s Buildings, the Marquis de Marigny (who was Madame Pompadour’s brother). Their discussion provides detailed plans for the project. Expressing the ambitious nature of the commission, they delineate their perceived differences in European and Chinese artistic taste which both the preliminary sketches and finished prints reveal. There is an extended discussion of the engraved borders to be created separately as frames for the victory scenes. Pierre-Philippe Choffard is mentioned as a possible artist for the borders, and these should echo those he made for the *Histoire de Louis XV*. Although this does not appear to have been accomplished, Cochin reflects on the difficulties of creating art for people who are so distanced from French culture (“si éloignés de nos moeurs et de nos connoissances”). He writes that the images should be distinguished by all that characterizes the majesty of the King of France. The problem is that this is typically done by means of emblematic images drawn from Greek mythology and religious sources. Cochin astutely notes that this is an unintelligible language for the Chinese, as inappropriate as it would be to send images of the seven incarnations to China. He concludes with suggestions of border designs which integrate architecture, as well as emblems which express attributes of certain animals or plants: the courage of lions, the flight of the eagle, the laurel for

25 Quoted in Pelliot, 206.

26 Charles-Antoine Jombert, *Catalogue de l'oeuvre de Ch. Nic. Cochin Fils* (Paris: De l'imprimerie de Prault, 1770), 120–121.

glory, the oak tree for the protection of citizens. Even here, he suggests that explications might be necessary.²⁷

The Houghton Library manuscript speaks of one hundred copies, yet archival memoranda state that the commission was for 300 copies of each print on paper, of which 150 would be printed in red.²⁸ The quantity of prints to be made changed several times, and ultimately 200 copies were delivered to China. No versions of the prints in red are known, however, Cochin acknowledges this possibility. What he rejects are prints on silk, suggesting instead that prints be made on Chinese silk paper. Later in this same memorandum, Cochin responds to questions of the quantities of the edition in case the plates need to be retouched. As many as 1500 prints could be made from the plates, however after 300 to 400 pulls, the plates might need retouching. He affirms that this can be done. Indeed, the copper plate now in Houghton Library has been re-engraved.

With specific reference to the four drawings which had been sent from China, Cochin requested that the French artists should be free to correct anything that appeared too ridiculous and make changes that would improve the images. Three of the designs needed only minor enhancements to shading and delineation of the subjects, however he is critical of the sketch done by Father Damascène which he says must be re-done. Cochin notes somewhat dismissively the Chinese preference for small precise hatch work (“petites hachures froides et bien précises”) above other effects which demonstrate artistic genius and talent.²⁹ In the end, he hopes that they will produce accomplished fine prints, pleasing to all no matter whether viewers are sophisticated or not. One of the last stipulations documents the transfer of presses and printmaking equipment and supplies from Europe to China. Cochin agrees that the Chinese will receive detailed instructions on how to produce the prints themselves, together with a press and all necessary tools.³⁰

The Chinese emperor’s conquests and victory ceremonies bore some resemblance to earlier French engravings made “in the Grand Manner” for French kings as well as other elite patrons and collectors. As Cochin notes, the emblematic imagery drawn from ancient history, mythology, or religion was re-cast to new purposes, elaborating old meanings for current rulers and new political circumstances. Officially commissioned prints by Gerard Audran such as “Alexander crossing the Granicus” (1672) drew explicit parallels between classical heroes, such as Alexander the Great, and Louis the

27 Furcy-Raynaud, 102–103.

28 Furcy-Raynaud, 103. Drawing upon and translating a memorandum from Cochin to Marigny, dated January 9, 1767, 102–105.

29 See the discussion of uses and appreciation of hatch work in Yue Zhuang, “Hatchings in the Void: Ritual and Order in *Bishu Shanzhuang Shi* and Matteo Ripa’s *Views of Jehol*,” in *Qing Encounters*, 142–157.

30 Furcy-Raynaud, 104.

14th.³¹ While the valor of the warriors is emphasized in these depictions, the focus on the muscular, near-nude male physiques and the impressive bodies of horses so dear to classicizing artists would have been completely unsuitable for Chinese viewers and drops away completely.

Cochin directed the project on a daily basis. The Conquests were a significant commission for him as well as some of the most distinguished French artists and printmakers during the latter part of the eighteenth century. His name appears on the prints, citing his role as director. Cochin was a busy man, yet this project absorbed much of his time in the decade from 1765 to 1775. For this reason, two copies of the suite, of the small number which remained in France, receive a very brief mention under his name in the Bibliothèque Nationale's inventory of their collections of eighteenth-century French prints. Strangely, this definitive inventory gives far more space to descriptions of Isidore-Stanislas Helman's later reduced edition possibly because these prints were available in France and thus more widely known.³²

In fact very few French actually saw the first series of Qianlong's battles since most were sent back to China, along with the copperplates. Their rarity and their exotic subjects made the prints even more interesting to French connoisseurs and collectors. The Houghton Library's copy of the Conquests is one of several that remained in France, counter to the emperor's command. Evidently, there were a number of such residual suites which were presented to the French king, others given to his ministers Jacques Necker and Bertin.³³ Yet the variety of textual narratives in the French National Archive, at Houghton Library, and captions to Helman's reduced copies testify to the circulation of some amount of information on these prints and their subjects, at least in France. Houghton Library's copy of the French impressions is printed on large sheets of heavy white paper with wide margins. Bound in marbled boards with a leather spine with a dealer's description in German tipped inside the front cover, the volume contains a calligraphic title page (inscribed "DESCRIPTION DES BATAILLES DE LA CHINE") and a handwritten short-list in French of the military engagements shown on the plates ordered by historical dates. Like the Getty copy which is also in a French eighteenth-century binding and which never left France, the volume contains

31 Louis Marchesano and Christian Michel, *Printing the Grand Manner* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2009). For examples, see Gérard Audran's engraving after Charles Le Brun's painting, *Battle at the Milvian Bridge*, 1666, Audran's engraving after Le Brun's *Crossing of the Granicus* (1672), or Audran's engraving after Le Brun's *Alexander and Porus* (1678).

32 See Bibliothèque nationale, Département des estampes, *Inventaire des fonds français graveurs du XVIII^e siècle t. V* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1946), 11–12. Concerning Helman's edition, see Bibliothèque nationale, Département des estampes, *Inventaire des fonds français graveurs du XVIII^e siècle, t. XI* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1970), 279–285.

33 "Les exemplaires restés en Europe étaient donc sûrement tirés en surnombre." Pelliot, 214.

the printed list of the plates organized as a table which appeared in Isidore-Stanislas Helman's later edition; at the top of this table the copy in Houghton Library has a note which indicates that plates 18, 19, and 20 are made to be put together to be a single print.³⁴ This confirms that this list corresponds to Helman's reduced prints, not the larger set. More appropriately, the same table of prints in the Getty volume has been cropped, so this "Avis" does not appear. Not corresponding to the chronological order of the handwritten list, in the Houghton Library volume the printed list gives an incorrect order of the battle scenes. The New York Public Library holds a suite of the Turkestan conquests with handwritten captions in French below the prints; this is probably another suite which never left Europe. This problem concerning information and the correct history of the imperial campaign was only rectified when the prints arrived in China, and the Qianlong Emperor's texts were either added to the plates by hand or produced as full-page woodcuts to accompany the Conquest scenes, which the Chinese continued to print.³⁵

Houghton Library holds another set engraved in France and printed in China, with plates re-engraved in China, as well as the woodcut text pages. The dealer Heilbrun wrote to William A. Jackson that this suite is "completed with all the leaves of poems and explanations by the Emperor and engraved in China to be put together (what must be the greatest rarity) there is one of the copper plates by Cochin which bears an engraved inscription [on the plate which was] made in China and too, the Chinese printing for those plates."³⁶ The French Conquest prints, together with the presses and printing supplies and equipment which were sent with them, transmitted the sophisticated and labor-intensive technique of copper-engraving to China.

Among the variants of the Turkestan Conquests are first states printed in France, and second states, accompanied by the emperor's texts, either inscribed on the prints or printed with woodblocks on separate sheets. The latter were printed in China, possibly over a period of time. From the moment when the French received the imperial commission, it had always been planned for the prints to be re-printed in China as Cochin's response of January 9, 1767 to Marigny states: "On pourroit même

34 "AVIS. Les nos. XVIII, XIX, et XX sont fait pour être rassemblés et ne former qu'une seule Estampe."

35 For examples of engravings with the Chinese texts added, see Ya-Chen Ma, "War and Empire: Images of Battle during the Qianlong Reign," in *Qing Encounters*, 158–172, as well as the website <www.battle-of-qurman.com.cn>.

36 Heilbrun's letter to Jackson dated October 9, 1956, from Houghton Library's acquisitions files. Indeed, the eight full-page leaves of text are woodcuts. Paul Pelliot mentions having seen a similar set and used it for his renditions of the correct order of these prints. Given that the collection came from Paris during Pelliot's era (he lived from 1878 to 1945), it seems possible that he had seen this very set, since he was the acknowledged expert on the subject of China in the first half of the twentieth century.

leur envoyer une presse avec tous les ustensiles nécessaires pour imprimer . . .” Further, he wrote that if the copperplates became worn after printing the initial commission, the French would retouch and repair them before their return to China so that the additional prints would have the same beauty as the first issues.³⁷ Indeed, Houghton Library’s *Conquests* printed in China show considerable evidence of wear on the plates; on close examination, the copper plate engraved by Le Bas after Attiret’s drawing of the Victory of Khorgos, acquired as part of the collection at Houghton Library reveals that it has been refurbished.³⁸ New lines, mostly hatch work, have been added somewhat clumsily; it is far more likely that this was done in China.

The engravings printed in China reveal Asian tastes for prints. Unlike the Paris impressions, the Chinese prints are printed on vegetal fiber paper made in China. Even though the French had sent ample amounts of French paper, the Chinese preferred their own stock. However, the thin paper did not pick up the fine lines and details of the etched and engraved copper plates; they appear amateurish compared with the French pulls of the same prints. Some of the prints made in China have large ink blotches, especially in sections where the plate was re-engraved clumsily. Prints made in China were then mounted on heavy paper (or in some case, on silk) and cropped so that the artists’ names on the lower plate-edge are missing on most plates. The Cleveland Museum of Art holds a copy of the *Conquests* printed on European paper augmented by manuscript texts which are written at the top of the prints. These plates have not been re-engraved. Possibly the set was one of those printed in France and sent to China where manuscript texts were added. As with the additional nineteen woodblock printed pages of texts (sixteen of the texts, plus preface and final note) in Houghton Library’s *Conquests* printed in China, these integrate the Qianlong Emperor’s texts with battle scenes.³⁹ Obviously the texts were seen essential to the Chinese viewers, but less so to European viewers who had little knowledge of Chinese political history or geography. Yet Houghton Library’s 1775 manuscript from the *Compagnie des Indes* with its detailed descriptions of the engravings proves that it wasn’t simply a problem of access to the information. Both the Chinese suites at Houghton Library and the copy of the *Conquest* prints at Cleveland Museum of Art have similar heavy wooden board covers, a style of book cover that is not portable, not made to be shelved on its

37 See nos. 12 and 13 reproduced in Furcy-Raynaud, 104. Similar statements appear in Pelliot, 185, referencing Castiglione’s letter July 13, 1765, and in *Compagnie des Indes*, [7]. Today these copperplates are held in several collections, enumerated on the website <www.battle-of-qurman.com.cn/e/hist.htm>. At present the greatest number of plates for the *Turkestan Conquests* and other campaigns are held by the *Ethnologisches Museum* in Berlin.

38 Jacques Philippe Le Bas, [Copperplate for the fourth plate in the *Description des batailles de la Chine*], [between 1766 and 1774].

39 Pelliot, 253–267.

end; more like a boxed protective enclosure, it differs greatly from European board and leather covers. The Houghton Library suite remains in single sheets, while Cleveland's copy has been re-mounted on heavy paper with vertical edges pasted together, so it unfolds. Cleveland's copy also has an inscription which indicates it was saved from the destruction of the Summer Palace in the 1880s. This is most probably how a number of copies of the prints came into European, and then to American, collections.⁴⁰

FRENCH CHINOISERIE PRINT SUITES

The Conquest prints were of considerable interest to both French print collectors and Sinophiles. As an artistic commission with impressive French and Chinese royal connections, it is not surprising that the Qianlong emperor's command that all copies of the Conquests be returned to China was not obeyed. Indeed there had always been plans for copies to remain in France since this was a commission executed by the royal printmakers; it was planned for copies to be given to the French king, Jacques Necker, and Bertin. The interests of the European collectors were addressed by the publication of a reduced deluxe Paris edition of the Conquests from 1783–88, with eight additional plates of Chinese subjects and some very inaccurate captions (see figure 1.3).⁴¹ This suite was published by Isidore-Stanislas Henri Helman, a student of Jacques-Philippe Le Bas who had engraved plates for the first series. Helman reproduced the Conquest scenes in half-size prints with captions below the images. He gives a brief history of the commission on the title sheet, attributing his captions to a full-size set of the Conquests in the king's apartments. In reduced format, the "small conquests" are delicately rendered, similar to garden scenes, and too pretty to be appropriate depictions of military aggression and slaughter. French decorative qualities merge with Chinoiserie style. The images transmit a pleasant European fantasy in which Chinese warriors populate picturesque but not very topographically accurate Chinese landscapes.

Responding to the fashion for Chinese subjects among European book and print collectors, Helman then published two more engraved bibliophilic editions that were selective visual and textual translations of Chinese sources. In translation, these were: "The Notable Deeds of the Emperors of China" and "A Brief History of Principal Events

40 Giuseppe Castiglione, Jean Denis Attiret, and Jean Damascene Sallusti, "Battle Scenes of the Quelling of Rebellions in the Western Regions, with Imperial Poems," ca. 1765–1774. Acquired by the Cleveland Museum of Art in 1998, the label inside the front cover reads: "R. Reboul, 44. Rue Jouffroy, Paris . . . Sauvé des flames . . . de Palais d'Été (1886)." See <www.clevelandart.org/art/1998.103.1> (accessed November 5, 2018).

41 Helman.



Figure 1.4. Yi Lantai, “Xieqiqu beimian [North façade of the Pavilion Harmonizing surprise and delight],” *Changchun Yuan Shuifa tu [The European Pavilions at the Garden of Perfect Clarity]* (Beijing: Wu Ying Dian Press?, 1783–1786), pl. 2. 52 x 86 cm. Typ 778.83.274.

in the Life of Confucius,” both of which appeared in 1788.⁴² Houghton Library’s copies of these are bound together with Helman’s *Conquests*.⁴³ Although based on Chinese woodcut books in Bertin’s collection, these works again translate the original images into elegant French Chinoiserie prints. More like court figures at Versailles than denizens of the Forbidden City, Chinese people are shown wearing eighteenth-century French fashions in imaginary landscapes with pavilions and pagodas.

EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURE AND DECORATIVE ARTS IN CHINA

Prints from Europe also inspired the designs and depictions of the European Pavilions at the Yuanming yuan, known as the Old Summer Palace. Inspired by European engravings of palaces and gardens with fountains, the Qianlong emperor particularly enjoyed waterworks. He commissioned this architectural-garden project as an imperial

42 In French their titles were *Faits mémorables des empereurs de la Chine, tirés des annales des chinoises* Paris: Chez l’Auteur, 1788, Ch 19.1 and Joseph Marie Amiot, *Abrégé historique des principaux traits de la vie de Confucius* (Paris: Chez l’auteur et chez M. Ponce, graveur, [1788?], Ch 401.6 2.

43 See Paola Dematté, “A Confucian Education for Europeans,” *Art Bulletin* 98 (2016): 43–71.

retreat northwest of Peking. Twenty prints depict the Jesuits' designs for the complex which was sacked and burned in the mid-nineteenth century, its contents including the print suites looted and brought to Europe (see figure 1.4). Houghton Library acquired fifteen of the twenty engravings from Georges Heilbrun together with the battle prints.⁴⁴ Completely executed in China, these large engravings are almost the same size as the Conquests. Unlike the densely populated and active battle scenes and military ceremonies of the Conquests, the European Pavilions are static, lacking human presence, except for two figures centrally placed above the fountain in the first print. The Qianlong emperor may have seen views of French gardens in prints by the Perelles or Israël Silvestre that show visitors strolling amiably among the fountains and buildings.⁴⁵ In China however, this garden complex was not intended for sociability; rather it was a private space for the emperor and his European collections.

Like the architecture of the European Pavilions which they reproduce, the prints are highly eccentric visions. They do not reference views of Chinese gardens such as the forty watercolor views of the larger park in Beijing, known as The Garden of Perfect Clarity, or Chinese woodcut images of the Bishu shuanzhuang, the Mountain Retreat from the Summer Heat in Jehol, in which landscape and buildings are shown vertically tilted up. While the twenty views are said to simulate a walk through the gardens, unlike European garden prints, the images of the European Pavilions do not evoke pleasant and spacious landscapes. The engravings are symmetrical, flat, and frontal, a fantasy that is more like stage designs than garden scenes.⁴⁶ Possibly based on plans and elevations, prints of the hybrid-style buildings, fountains, and gardens are depicted from multiple points of view. Depicted in the prints, the architecture is almost over-decorated with repeated patterns: arabesques, scrolls, leaves, flower arrangements, fantastic animals, cartouches, strap work, and trophies. Artistic renderings of the botanical features outline the flowers, trees, and shrubs, filling them with repeated schematic shapes of branches and leaves similar to the foliage in the subsequent Chinese battle prints.

44 *Changchun Yuan Shuifa tu*.

45 Such prints were in volumes of the Cabinet du Roi brought as imperial gifts; and the Jesuits had extensive libraries of books and prints at their disposal in Peking, including many illustrated books and prints. These are described in Mission Catholique des Lazaristes à Peking, *Catalogue de la Bibliothèque du Pé-Tang* (Peking: Imprimerie des Lazaristes, 1949). Illustrated books and suites of prints include André Félibien, *Description de la grotte de Versailles* (1676); Charles Perrault, *Tapisseries du roi* (1679), *Vues des maisons royales et des villes conquises par Louis XIV* (1666–1682) with engravings by Silvestre, Marot, and Dorbay, and *Vues, plans . . . du Chateau de Versailles avec les statues, termes, et vases* (1673–1688) with engravings by Lepautre, Silvestre, and the Edelincks.

46 Kristina Kleutghen, "Staging Europe: Theatricality and Painting at the Chinese Imperial Court," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 42 (2013): 81–102.

Each of the Yuanming yuan prints bears a descriptive title in Chinese. Unlike the Conquest prints, they are not narrative illustrations, inscribed by lengthy texts penned by the emperor. Revealing the aesthetic side of the emperor's accomplishments, the ornaments and auspicious symbols of the Yuanming yuan prints present a controlled and harmonious world. Turning away from the agitated violence of the conquests, these peaceful garden pavilions recall the order and *décor* of the formal portraits of Qianlong as a contemplative ruler. Although they were published, the twenty prints were intended to be given as special imperial gifts, like European deluxe print suites and illustrated folios, as well as the Conquest prints.⁴⁷

MADE IN CHINA: LATER SERIES OF BATTLE SCENES

In later years Qianlong continued to commission copper engravings of battles and military triumphs, but for these subsequent suites Chinese printmakers returned to standard formulae which echoed Ming-period battle scenes, etching and engraving them on oversize copper plates.⁴⁸ Military and political histories were communicated via the European medium, however the prints used a cartographic and topographic visual language familiar to Chinese viewers augmented by descriptive texts inscribed on the plates. Six more suites of military campaigns were engraved in China during the last decades of the Qianlong emperor's reign. Produced on the same grand scale as the Conquests and the European Pavilions, these engravings illustrate the emperor's continued desire for copper engravings which memorialized his military victories. These prints demonstrate the importance of landscape and cartographic imagery to crafting the imperial image.

Chinese artists had mastered the production of large-scale engravings, printing them to accord with indigenous tastes. Altogether the six Chinese battle suites comprise an astonishing number of sixty-two very large engravings on single sheets. Houghton Library holds copies of almost all the battle suites including: sixteen engravings of the campaign in Jinchuan (1771–6); twelve engravings of the campaign against Taiwan (Formosa) (1787–8); six engravings of the Annam (Vietnam) campaigns (1788–9); six of eight engravings of the campaigns in Nepal against the Gurkhas (1792–3); sixteen engravings of the campaign in Miao (Hunan) 1795); and four engravings of campaigns in Chong Miao (Yunnan, 1795).⁴⁹ These are notably larger than any comparable European single-sheet prints which achieved monumental dimensions only by pasting

47 Kleutghen, 90.

48 For examples, see Ma, 158–172, especially fig. 3 on p. 164.

49 See the comprehensive online collection of the battle prints, documenting locations, sales and the existence of copperplates, of which a surprising number are still extant, as shown on the website <www.battle-of-qurman.com.cn>.



Figure 1.5. Jacques-Philippe Le Bas, “[Victory banquet for the officers and soldier who distinguished themselves],” *Description des Batailles de la Chine* (Paris: C.N. Cochin, 1769–1774), pl. 16. 70 x 105 cm. Typ 715.69.280.

together sheets printed from separate plates. The later battle prints exist in variant states; and some of the engravings made in China were hand-colored. Like prints from the Sixteen Conquests, some have been reproduced in high-relief red lacquer.⁵⁰ Emphasizing the important ceremonies associated with the battles, a few prints in different suites are close copies of one another (see figure 1.5). Prints of the Gurkha campaigns of the 1790s, processions and victory celebrations in the Hall of Imperial Splendor for the officers and soldiers who distinguished themselves in battle echo the ceremonial images of the Turkestan Conquests, demonstrating that the initial set served as a continuing model and reference (see figure 1.6). Prints have always had parallel agendas of art and communication. While these images of the later campaigns did not appeal to European tastes, in fact they promoted the Qianlong emperor’s victories in a legible way to Chinese viewers. Additionally, all these later suites have the emperor’s elucidatory texts about the campaigns at the top of each plate. Designed to illustrate the Qianlong emperor’s victories, they are intended as systematic propaganda and historical narrative.

50 Reproduced in *Bilder für die Halle des Purpurglanzes*, hrsg. Herbert Butz (Berlin: Staatliche Museen, Museum für östasiatische Kunst, 2003) and on the website <www.battle-of-qurman.com.cn>.



Figure 1.6. “Guo’erke pei chen zhi jing zhi tu,” *Ping ding Guo’erke zhan tu* (Beijing, ca. 1793), pl. 8. 62.5 x 101 cm. Getty Research Institute. 2012.PR.33**. Digital image courtesy of Getty’s Open Content Program.

As documents of imperial battles, the engravings are memorable visual records of the regions where the imperial troops enacted their conquests. Borrowing conventions from maps, the prints present topographical features that organize the vignettes of the warriors’ skirmishes and their military strategies. Distinctive methods and weapons are recorded. Foot soldiers brandish halberds and swords, shooting bows and arrows or blasting with guns and cannons at fortresses and their fleeing victims. Slaughter and submission are the common themes in these images of war which Western eyes might view as almost cartoonish. Naturalistic depictions or individual warriors’ portraits are less important than the landscape, shown as mountainous ridges, craggy cliffs and canyons, framed by graceful trees. It is the trees which are featured and treated with delicacy, outlined, cross-hatched, and filled in with repetitive shapes of ornamental leaves and pine needles. A biographical account of the Jesuit court painter Jean-Denis Attiret notes the close attention, critiques, and requested corrections that the Chinese made of his trees.⁵¹

51 Depictions of trees were important features. Joseph Amiot describes the Chinese critiques of Jean-Denis Attiret’s depictions of trees as not accurate. Henri Bernard, “Frère Attiret au service de K’ien-long (1739-1768),” *Bulletin de Université l’Aurore* (1943), 64–65. See also “Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot letter to Claude-François Attiret regarding Jean-Denis-Attiret,” March 1, 1769, Getty Research Institute, 2013.M.13.



Figure 1.7. “Gong ke Jilong zhi tu,” *Ping ding Guo’erke zhan tu* (Beijing, ca. 1793), pl. 3. 53 x 90 cm. Typ 778.78.694 P (3).

Plants and architecture are outlined with dark lines and occasionally hatched to show volume; almost no attempt is made to vary the qualities of lines in order to create three-dimensional qualities. Most battle scenes are depicted in multiple perspectives, simultaneously displaying the progress of the conquest in different engagements with deep views, flat vertical depictions, and bird’s-eye views. By contrast, figures are simplified, sketched schematically with a few strokes, most depicted with groups in outline. There is almost no use of shading or perspective to create volume and depth. Figures are scaled large in the foreground, especially the emperor who is always shown larger than members of his retinue. They are tiny in the background, melded into single units of prisoners or imperial attendants. As part of the artistic program which promoted the Qianlong emperor’s military successes, near life-size portraits of the heroes were painted and hung in the Hall of Imperial Glory. Warriors and meritorious officials who participated were depicted in other ways, intended for display in a different venue than the prints which could circulate.⁵²

In later suites such as the Gurkha campaigns, chaotic and violent depictions of war become like the surface patterns of metalwork or textiles (see figure 1.7). The panoramas of the later conquest prints depict the history and the imperial narrative of the battles, identifying characteristic regional land- and seascapes and architectural elements as well as ethnic identities, by means of headgear or weaponry. In the Taiwan series

52 These portraits are the subject of *Bilder*.



Figure 1.8. “Sheng qin Zhuang Datian,” *Ping ding Taiwan zhan tu* (Beijing: Wu Ying Dian Press, 1789–1790), pl. 10. 51 x 87 cm. Typ 778.89.694.

overlapping depictions of ships on the rolling seas demonstrate the lack of naturalism as figures are mounded into bowl-shaped boats; trees and rocks merge with high waves without any indications of the coastline (see figure 1.8). Rather than presenting mythic and heroic battle scenes, the episodically organized Chinese engravings document the Qianlong emperor’s program of successful state-building in regions on the frontiers of his empire.⁵³

The Gurkha campaigns are one of the last series of eight battle prints, commemorating the Qianlong emperor’s campaigns in Nepal. It is not surprising that given the emphasis on territorial domination, contemporary maps survive, depicting the regions where the battles took place. These were prepared by a high-ranking Chinese official, Song Yun (1754–1835) when he was high commissioner in Tibet during the reigns of the Qianlong emperor and his successor the Jiaqing emperor. During an inspection tour, Song Yun took notes and made sketches. It is striking how closely these official maps resemble the battle prints. The maps are dramatic depictions of the rugged terrain—jagged mountain ridges, steep canyons, cliffs, and deep rivers—where the Chinese forces invaded and slaughtered the Nepalese, taking no prisoners, as

53 See Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).

the history of this campaign records.⁵⁴ Such maps provide significant help to explicate the battle prints, appropriately foregrounding their documentary, topographic, and military significance. We can only surmise that European-style compositions with their theatrical focus on the muscular warriors and horses in scenic landscapes did not adequately convey how truly grueling and arduous the campaigns were. What was important to show was the Qianlong emperor's continued successful control over his territories, as well as the manner and difficulty of the military triumphs. While the prints of the Garden of Perfect Clarity depict a peaceful realm which is orderly and harmonious, by contrast the Conquests show the emperor at work in the world, aggressively addressing the lands and peoples which need to be conquered and ruled.

The coda to the eighteenth-century life of the copper-engravings concerns the copper plates for the East Turkestan conquests, as well as the plates for later suites. These continue to surface, and now are viewed as collectibles. As noted, Houghton Library acquired one copper plate together with the prints from the dealer Heilbrun. Others can be found today in museum collections. Contemporary collectors value them as matrices, and researchers can discover the alternations made to the plates in China. The evidence of wear on the plates reveals their use. In view of the Qianlong emperor's vast collections of decorative arts,⁵⁵ the ornamental landscapes of the Chinese engravings are themselves visually appealing, prizing textures and patterns: rocks and plants, rolling waves and roiling water, and smoking curls from guns. Like the red lacquer versions of battle scenes, the copper plates are themselves decorative objects. The prints, graphic works on paper can be seen as references back to the original images on the copper plates, many of which evidently have survived. They were collected together with the prints, like Houghton Library's ensemble. Therefore, although European audiences see the prints as representations of frightening battle scenes with difficult terrain and considerable carnage or an elegant series of garden pavilions, they can be viewed as decorative images to be appreciated as if they were rubbings made from the originals engraved on the copper plates; and finally, they could serve as sources for art works such as the lacquer plaques which enterprisingly reproduce the patterns and images in three-dimensional surfaces as bas-reliefs.

54 L. Boulnois, "Chinese Maps and Prints on the Tibet-Gorkha War of 1788–92," *Kailash Journal of Himalayan Studies* 15 (1989): 85–112.

55 See Jonathan Hay, *Sensuous Surfaces: The Decorative Object in Early Modern China* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010).

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