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THE DAOGUANG EMPEROR’S SECOND CONQUEST OF EAST TURKESTAN

[Pingding Huijiang Desheng Tu].

Author
HE SHIKUI

Publication date
c1830.

Publisher

Publication place
[Beijing],

Physical description
Eight (of ten) engravings, some inscribed with Imperial poems, accompanied by the Emperor’s seal mark, and dated the first month of 1829, numerous worm traces with engraved surface skilfully reinstated in facsimile, some spotting, without the plates of the first ‘Battle at River Honbasi’ and the second ‘Battle at Korping’ in the series.

Dimensions
555 by 900mm (each) (21.75 by 35.5 inches).

Notes

An exceptionally rare set of eight engravings from the ‘Pingding Huijiang Desheng Tu’ / ‘ 平定回疆得勝圖’ (Images of the reconquest of East Turkestan), commissioned by Emperor Daoguang 道光 (1782-1850, r.1820-1850), commemorating his victory of the second campaign in Kashgar against the rebel Jahangir Khoja during the years 1826-1835, and depicting crucial battles on mountainous terrain and outside fortified villages; the surrender of the enemy; and a palace reception honouring the victors.

In 1826, Jahangir, a scion of an ousted ruling family from East Turkestan began a holy war against the Qing Empire. The Daoguang emperor responded in 1827 by sending General Changling and 22,000 troops to reconquer the city of Kashgar and to capture Jahangir. Jahangir escaped but was later betrayed and sent to Beijing, where the Daoguang emperor had him ritually presented at the Imperial Ancestral temple before he was hacked to death and quartered.

The complete set of engravings is titled:

1. Battle at the Hobasi River (not present here)
2. Battle at the Korping (not present here)
3. Battle at Yangi-arbat
4. Battle at Sabdul-zhuang
5. Battle at Awabat-zhuang
6. Recapture of Kashgar and Capture of the Rebel Chief
7. Recapture of Khotan and capture of rebel chief, Garla
8. Capture of the Rebel Chief, Jahangir, at the Hartagai Mountain
9. Presentation of the prisoners at the Wumen gate
10. Banquet of the victory at Zheng Da Guang Ming Palace

This series of engravings, of Daoguang’s military conquest of Turkestan in 1830, is the rarest of the eight imperially commissioned battle scenes, and the last edition ever published. Daoguang followed the precedent of his grandfather Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (1711-1799, r. 1735-1796), who commissioned seven series of copperplate engravings commemorating his victorious battles. The majority of the Qianlong engravings were produced in Europe, including the series of sixteen plates illustrating the First Turkestan Campaign, published in France under the direction of C.N. Cochin between 1769 and 1774.

Unlike the Qianlong engravings, the present series was entirely produced in China. Only sixty sets were printed for presentation to princes and high officials. As a result, the 1830 engravings are considerably more scarce than the earlier Qianlong editions. Furthermore, among the domestically produced engravings, scholars consider the 1830 set to be superior in every way.

Rare: Von Walter Fuchs in his essay ‘Die Entwürfe der Schlachtenkupfer der Kienlung-und Taokuang-Ziet’ (The Drafts of the Battle Engravings of the Qianlong and Daoguang period), Monumenta Serica, vol. 9, 1944, pp. 101-122, mentions four existing sets of these Daoguang engravings (p. 119, footnote 83): one in the collection of Luo Zhenyu, one in the Dairen Library, one in the Peking jimbun kagaku kenkyûsho, and one in his own collection. See also Harmut Walravens, ‘Die Schlachtenbilder der Qianlong-und Daoguang-Zeit’ in China Illustrata: Das Europäsche Chinaverständnis im Spiegel des 16 bis 18 Jahrhunderts, Weinheim, 1987, pp. 36-56, discussing the Imperial Battle paintings of Qianlong and Daoguang. A copy of the complete series, mounted in a horizontal roll, sold at Sotheby’s New York, 21st September 2006, lot 10.

Cf. a Qianlong set of sixteen leaves in the Palace Museum, Beijing, illustrated Complete Collection of the Treasures of the Palace Museum, vol.14. Paintings by the Court Artists of the Qing Court, Hong Kong, 1996, no. 41.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 12563

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