



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Mort de Cook [Death of Capt. James Cook]

Stock#: 96645
Map Maker: Cook
Date: 1784
Place: Paris
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 14.5 x 9 inches
Price: \$ 750.00



Description:

French Edition of Webber's View of the Death of Captain James Cook in Hawaii.

A nice example of perhaps the most famous of all prints from Cook's Third Voyage, showing his death at the hands of the native Hawaiians at Kealahakua Bay on the island of Hawaii.

This view appeared in some examples of the French edition of the Official Account of Cook's Third Voyage, first published posthumously in 1784 in London, and thereafter translated into a number of languages. Neither the French or English edition of the Official Account originally included a view, and it was only added later, making the "Death of Cook" plate much rarer than other maps and views from these works.

This fine French edition faithfully follows the original "Webber" version, which first appeared as a separately published view in 1784.

Cook's death in Hawaii is one of the iconic images of the 18th Century. Reproduced on numerous occasions, this is the Webber edition, the best known of the views.

James Cook was killed in Hawaii on February 14, 1779. He and his men had spent the two months on the Big Island and been well received. They departed in early February 1779, but returned due to storms and the need for ship repairs. The second reception turned hostile, and tensions between the sailors and the natives increased. When Cook went ashore to investigate, a scuffle occurred and Cook was killed.

Conflicting accounts regarding Cook's death circulated, as there was some confusion over whether Cook was facing the Hawaiians and whether he had ordered his men to shoot at the islanders. Lieutenant James King, who was on the voyage but did not witness the incident, reported that "it was remarked that while he faced the natives, none of them had offered him any violence, but that having turned about, to give his



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orders to the boats, he was stabbed in the back, and fell with his face into the water."

In the Webber view, Cook is situated slightly to the right of center and stands out as he is represented in lighter tones than the other sailors and natives. He faces his men and, while armed with a rifle, has his back to the islanders. Other views, such as the impressive work of George Carter, show Cook facing his attackers.

The official French account of Cook's third voyage did not originally include an image of his death, although some copies did include this added 'Mort de Cook' plate.

Detailed Condition:

Faint centerfold toning, foxing, and one stain in the upper left margin, as illustrated.