



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## **Mort Tragique du Capitaine Cook. le 15 Fevrier, 1779. Sur la cote d'Owhy-hee l'une des Isles Sandwich, decouverte par ce Navigateur. . . Dediee et Presentee a Monsieur De Bougainville Officier General de Terre et de Mer, de la Societe Royale de Londres et de celle de Cincinnati**

**Stock#:** 37788hs  
**Map Maker:** Fessard  
  
**Date:** 1784  
**Place:** Paris  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 14 x 12 inches  
  
**Price:** SOLD



### **Description:**

Fine example of the rare Claude-Mathieu Fessard depiction of the death of Captain James Cook in Hawaii, during his third voyage.

Claude-Mathieu Fessard, a prominent French engraver and book artist. - See more at:  
<http://www.hordern.com/pages/books/3003088/john-webber-after/mort-tragique-du-capitaine-cook-le-janvier-1779#sthash.NcaTG4Zp.dpuf>

The view was engraved by Claude-Mathieu Fessard, a prominent French engraver and book artist and published by Isabey in Paris. The view includes a brief biography of Cook and description of his death engraved below the image as a caption, with a dedication to Bougainville.

Cook's death in Hawaii is one of the iconic images of the 18th Century. Reproduced on numerous occasions, this is the original engraving from which most depictions of his death are taken. 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.



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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 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 include an image of his death, although some copies did include an added 'Mort de Cook' plate. The inclusion of Webber's scene in some English editions of the official account prompted Claude-Mathieu Fessard to create this fine example of the Webber view.

The view is very rare on the market, this being the first example we have ever offered.

**Detailed Condition:**

Separately issued. Minor foxing.