



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## Mort du Capitaine Cook

**Stock#:** 63111  
**Map Maker:** Cleveley  
**Date:** 1789 circa  
**Place:** Paris  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG+  
**Size:** 24 x 18 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

#### *A Rare View of Hawaii and the Death of Cook*

Rare aquatint view of the final moments of the life of Captain James Cook.

This image depicts the death of Captain Cook, while English sailors in rowboats fire at natives on the shore. The image captures Cook attempting to have his men cease fire, as a Hawaiian chieftain is about to stab him in the back.

Cook's death in Hawaii is one of the iconic images of the 18th Century. Cook was killed in Hawaii on February 14, 1779. He and his men spent the two months on the Big Island and had 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.

One of a set of four aquatint views, the image is an example of the European fascination with Pacific exploration during the eighteenth century. Joppien and Smith call the set "the kind of prints that anyone who travelled with Cook, whether officer, midshipman or able seaman, might want to possess to remind him and his family of the days when he travelled with Cook."

According to the publisher's prospectus, the four views were produced "on the spot" by James Cleveley, a carpenter aboard the *Resolution*, and "redrawn and inimitably painted in water-colors by his brother . . . John Cleveley, and from which the plates were engraved, in the best manner by Mr. Jukes." However, in



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### **Mort du Capitaine Cook**

the absence of any surviving drawings by James Cleveley, Joppien and Smith discount this claim, believing that the kinship between the two was, as far as these images are concerned, coincidental, being simply used to promote the prints. Instead they believe that John Cleveley made use of his connection with Sir Joseph Banks to gain access to the drawings of John Webber (Cook's official artist on the third voyage). John Cleveley had been chosen as part of Banks' team on Cook's second voyage, however following the Admiralty's refusal to adapt the *Resolution* to his requirements, Banks abandoned his plans to return to the Pacific and took Cleveley as his official draughtsman on a tour of Iceland. It is worth remembering however that James Cleveley was not only the brother of artists (John and his twin Robert), but also the son of one too (another John), so it would not seem surprising if he had not picked up some sketching skills before he set out with Cook.

John Cleveley was a talented maritime painter, and these images, engraved by F. Jukes are lovely representations of early contact between Europeans and Pacific islanders. The French images, issued just a year later, all include lengthy captions describing each scene and placing it in relation to Cook's third voyage. The set of four includes this view of Hawaii, two views in Tahiti and one view in New Zealand, this being by far the most important of the four views.

#### **Rarity**

Cleveley's view is among the finest of the views of Cook's death and perhaps the rarest. We were not able to locate another example of this view being offered for sale in the past 30 years.

The set of four is currently on the market for 30,000 GBP (Maggs Brothers).

#### **Detailed Condition:**

Old Color, recently retouched. Repaired tear above palm tree at left.