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A FRENCH EDITION OF CLEVELLEY'S FAMOUS 'DEATH OF COOK' SCENE

£5,000.00

Mort du Capitaine Cook.

Cartographer	CLEVELLEY, James & John.
Date	1790
Stock #:	20359
Publication:	Paris: Bance ainé, c.1790. Aquatint with fine hand colour. 495 x 660mm.
Condition:	A few small tears repaired.

DESCRIPTION:

A view of Kealahakua Bay, Hawaii, with Captain James Cook standing on the beach, beset by warriors and about to be stabbed in the back. Cook's crew fire from longboats, and the 'Resolution' and 'Discovery' fire their cannon. Underneath is an extract from Cook's journal in French.

This aquatint is one of four etched by Benedikt Piringer (1780-1826) after a set of scenes of the Third Voyage published by Thomas Martyn in 1787-8. According to the original prospectus, were "executed by the late celebrated Mr John Clevelley, from accurate Drawings made by his Brother Mr James Clevelley of the Resolution Ship of War". The English titles of the set are: 'View of Huahine one of the Society Islands'; 'View of Morea one of the Friendly Islands'; 'View of Charlotte Sound in New Zealand'; and 'View of Owhyhee one of the Sandwich Islands' (this plate).

James Clevelley (not 'Clevelley' as in the prospectus) was the Resolution's ship's carpenter but, despite being from a family of artists, none of the third voyage journals mention him as a draughtsman, and no original sketch of his exists. It has been suggested that his brother, John Clevelley the Younger (1747-86), who was the intermediary draughtsman (redrawing the original sketches for engraving) for the Official Account of the Second Voyage, used his friendship with Sir Joseph Banks to study John Webber's artwork and use them as the basis of his prints. Using his brother's participation in the voyage he could capitalise on the public interest with 'authentic' scenes.