

First edition, five volumes (comprising folio atlas and four volumes text). Text: four volumes, 4to (280 by 212mm), [4], lxxii, 346pp., [1, imprint], [1, blank]; [4], 398pp., [1, imprint], [1, blank]; [4], 422pp., [1, imprint], [1, blank]; [4], 309pp., [3, blank], with engraved frontispiece portrait in vol. I, each volume with half-title, vol. I, p.1 with small area of loss at lower right. Atlas: folio (590 by 430mm), engraved title and 69 maps and plates (many folding), text volumes in contemporary red straight-grained morocco backed boards, flat spines gilt in compartments divided by decorative rolls, atlas volume expertly bound to style.

“ONE OF THE GREAT DOCUMENTS OF FRENCH EXPLORATION IN THE PACIFIC OCEAN”

Voyage de la Pérouse Autour du Monde ... redige par M.L.A. Milet-Mureau.

Author
LA PEROUSE, Jean François de Galaup de

Publication date
1797.

Publisher
de l’imprimerie de la République,

Publication place
A Paris,

Physical description
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Dimensions

Notes
First and best edition of the official French account of the voyage.

La Perouse, one of the foremost French navigators of the eighteenth century, left Brest in 1785 with two vessels to explore the northwest coast of America. He arrived there the following summer, explored extensively along the Alaskan coast, then sailed south to California. The expedition's goals were to explore the potential for fur trading ventures, pursue the geographical exploration of both America and Siberia, investigate the possibility of a northwest passage, and establish some French claim north of Spanish and south of Russian claims on the American coast. After his California visit, La Perouse visited China, some Pacific islands, and the Siberian coast. He sent back copies of his journals both overland across Russia and via British ships met at Botany Bay in the spring of 1788. After he left Australia, his party was never seen again, and it was not until the 1820s that the wrecks of his ships were discovered on a reef in the Santa Cruz group.

Observations on the natives of Chile, California, etc. by M. Rollin and other descriptions by M. de la Monueron are given in the Appendices.

Narratives of a voyage from Manila to New Guinea, Tonga, thence to San Blas (California) in 1780–81, and to the North West coast of America in 1779, both by Don F.A. Maurelle, are prefixed to the narrative of La Perouse in the first volume.

"La Perouse's Voyage is one of the great documents of French exploration in the Pacific Ocean. In addition to a detailed account of the expedition itself, these volumes contain invaluable scientific information, observations on the natives that were encountered, and a wealth of geographic and cartographic data. The beautiful Atlas, with its finely engraved maps, charts, and plates, includes a detailed chart of San Francisco Bay, the first representation of the crested quail, and several plates and maps of the harbors at Monterey and San Diego, as well as two charts and one view of the Sandwich Islands. It is a magnificent production, and some authorities consider the engraving and craftsmanship to be superior even to that in the Cook-Weber Atlas that accompanies the journals of the great English explorer's third voyage. Like Cook, La Perouse died in the service of his King and in the pursuit of geographical knowledge. Unlike Cook, however, he has not achieved the international recognition accorded the English navigator. Nevertheless, it is one of the finest narratives of maritime exploration ever written, and certainly deserves to hold a place of high honor among the great travel accounts of the eighteenth century" (Howell).

The atlas contains 31 maps, four costume plates, 11 plates of natural history objects, six of boats, 15 views and two other plates.

Bibliography
Barrett 1435; Ferguson, Australia, 268; Graff 2397; Hawaiian National Bibliography 272; Hill p. 173; Howes L93.

Provenance

Price:

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