

Second, third, and second editions. 8 quarto volumes, of text (first and second voyages: 290 by 230mm), (third voyage: 235 by 300mm), 3 folio atlases, (1st voyage: 455 by 280mm), (second voyage: 480 by 310mm), (third voyage: 545 by 400mm); 180 charts and plates, including Bartolozzi and Byrne's 'The Death of Captain Cook' (1785); uniformly (not identically) bound in full eighteenth century tree calf, spines elaborately gilt, with double red and green lettering-pieces.

SET OF COOK'S THREE VOYAGES, WITH THE PLATES AND MAPS BOUND SEPARATELY IN THREE ATLAS VOLUMES

[Complete Set of the Official Accounts of His Three Voyages Round the World]. An Account of the Voyages Undertaken by the Order of his Present Majesty for Making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere..;
A Voyage towards the South Pole, and Round the World..; A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean...

Author
COOK, Captain James R.N., F.R.S. HAWKSWORTH, John; and James KING

Publication date
[1773 -1785].

Publisher

Publication place
[London,

Physical description
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Dimensions

Notes
An excellent set of Cook's three voyages with three separate atlases.

Cook (1728-1779) was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and despatched by the Admiralty at the insistence of the Royal Society to observe the 1769 transit of Venus across the face of the sun and to seek out the much discussed southern continent. Accompanying Cook were Joseph Banks (from the Royal Society), the Swedish naturalist Dr. Daniel Carl Solander and the artist Sydney Parkinson. Sailing via Madeira and Tierra del Fuego Tahiti was reached in April 1769 where the transit was successfully recorded in June of that year. From Tahiti Cook sailed to the South Pacific in search of the new continent, first striking the Society Islands, before reaching New Zealand, whose coast he surveyed. From thence Cook proceeded to New Holland surveying the whole East Coast, before returning home via Batavia, proving once and for all the New Guinea was not a part of Australia, a fact first shown by Torres in 1607. He finally reached England in 1771, anchoring off the Downs on 12th June, having lost one third of his crew.

In July of the following year Cook, now promoted to the rank of Commander, set out once more for the southern Pacific in the Resolution with the Adventure. This voyage was particularly important since Cook made the first crossing of the Antarctic Circle and finally determined once and for all that the Southern Continent did not exist. In addition Cook secured the medal of the Royal Society by successfully irradicating scurvy through diet and better hygiene. Only three shipboard deaths (all resulting from accidents) were recorded on this voyage – a dramatic reduction from the one third who died on his first voyage.

Cook's third voyage began in July 1776 and concentrated on the North Pacific, resulting in the discovery of Hawaii, which Cook considered to be his greatest feat. In addition the theory of a Northern passage connecting the Pacific to the Atlantic was also disproved. With him travelled George Vancouver who later charted the North West Coast of America and also the artist John Webber who provided Europe with many images of the Pacific. Cook however was killed on 14th February, 1779 in a shoreline skirmish. The tragic event is illustrated in Bartolozzi and Byrne's iconic separately published engraving, 'The Death of Captain Cook' (1785), included here, after the original painting by Webber.

Captain King subsequently took over command of the expedition, which returned to England in 1780.

Bibliography
Literature: Beddie, 'Bibliography of Captain James Cook', 650, 1216, 1552; Hill, 'The Hill Collection of Pacific Voyages', 783, 358, 361.

Provenance
Provenance: With the engraved armorial bookplates of Alexander Speirs of Eldersley.

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