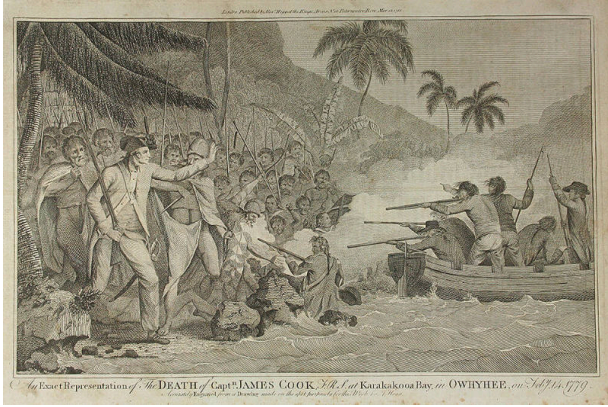


Basic Detail Report



An Exact Representation of the Death of Captn. James Cook, F.R.S. at Karakakooa Bay, in Owhyhee, on Feby. 14, 1779. Accurately Engraved from a Drawing made on the spot purposely for this Work by A. Hogg.

Date

1785

Primary Maker

Artist Unknown

Medium

engraving

Description

Despite the caption, Webber was not present when Cook was killed at Kealahou Bay on February 14, 1779. His depiction of the scene was painted in England, and likely sourced from first-hand accounts, although these were not all consistent. Cook had departed Kealahou Bay but returned a few days later to repair damage to the Resolution's foremast. With the end of the Makahiki festival, Hawaiian veneration of Cook had waned and he encountered a very different response from the native population. Attempting to resolve a number of thefts, he went ashore with several others and amongst confusion and aggression on both sides, was stabbed in the back. Webber shows Cook, dressed in a white naval uniform, standing in front of a large mob of angry Hawaiians, holding up his hand in an effort to stop his men from firing on the crowd. Just behind the Captain, a Hawaiian man in a feathered cloak holds his knife aloft about to strike the deathblow. Reports indicated that Cook had, in fact, fired into the crowd in an effort to disperse it, and had killed another man but Webber has altered the event to depict Cook as a heroic defender of peace, valiantly trying to stop his men from firing on the crowd, his rifle held passively at his side. For the European viewer, Cook was not a participant in the aggressions that led to his death, but an innocent casualty, tragically killed while attempting to keep his men from firing on the crowd. In Hogg's version, the scale of the event has been reduced, the figures of both Cook and his attacker have been altered, and the composition is reversed. More significantly, he has added a caption designed to confirm the legitimacy of his image, sending the message to his readers that they could believe the authenticity of his version because it had been drawn on-site especially for the publication.

Dimensions

Sheet: 9 3/4 x 14 3/8 in. (24.8 x 36.5 cm)