



Cook, Captain James. A Scarce Resolution and Adventure Medal for Presentation to Pacific Islanders During Cook's Second Voyage.

Produced by Mathew Boulton for Sir Joseph Banks, 1772, Copper Medal (4 cm diameter), with later ribbon attached as a ceremonial gift, morocco case. £ 7,500

Cook's medals were originally called 'Otaheti Medals' and are now known as Resolution and Adventure Medals due to the engraved image of the two Ship's from Cook's second Voyage, depicting the sloops at sea.

The Medal is titled 'Resolution and Adventure, Sailed from England March MDCCLXXII'. The obverse side of the medal depicts the profile of King George III facing right with the title around the rim: 'George III, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland etc.

These medals were passed to islanders during the voyage and although, perhaps some were treasured, few have survived.

It is known that Sir Joseph Banks, who sailed with Cook on his first voyage and planned to be part of the second voyage, ordered medals and other items to give as presents or for bartering with Pacific Islanders. Orders were placed with Boulton and Fothergill of Birmingham, who made the medals. Banks, acting as agent for the Admiralty, ordered 2000 medals in base metal – these were struck in copper – 142 in silver and 2 in gold. The letters B.F. are stamped denoting Boulton and Fothergill as the factory for the official pressing.

Since it took five blows to strike the silver medals and only one for the much softer copper, Boulton decided to strike the silver medals first, while the die was new and showed little or no sign of wear. When the reverse die, depicting the ships, cracked on the 'first blow' of the silver medal, it created a dilemma for Boulton. Although hardly noticeable, he would not have wanted to fulfil Banks's personal order with silver and gold medals showing signs of a cracked die.

It is likely that Boulton made all 2000 copper medals using the cracked die as there was little time to make a new die before the intended date of departure and he thought the medals would be good enough for the 'natives' as the crack was hardly noticeable.

Fortunately, the sailing date had been delayed well beyond the month appearing on the medal and Boulton was able to produce a new die to complete Banks's order of the silver and gold medals before the expedition departed. However, they apparently show a crack from the die as well!

Banks declined to take part in the second voyage after difficulties arose over his scientific requirements on board Cook's new ship the Resolution.

The shipping is included worldwide.

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