

Islands (vol. I, p. 33); and in the detailed pencil sketch of a village on Anamooka (Nomuka), Tongan Islands, with an inscription referring to vol. I, p. 59. Such inscriptions, if by Ellis himself (and strong evidence points to the fact that they are) provide, of course, a very useful aid in identifying the more precise locations of the subject drawings or paintings.¹⁸

One point is clear; the art historian of Cook's voyages will have in these Ellis drawings—many of them experimental as the artist wrestled with problems of proportion, perspective and representation, especially in his human figure work—a most unusual and useful guide to the collection of one artist's skills and technique as the voyage progressed. For there is no doubt that Ellis improved with time in his human figures. His representation of Polynesians is still very much 'European' but, nearer the end of the voyage, his depiction of Aleut Eskimos (see e.g. 'A man of Unalashka', folio 41 in the collection and plate VII), shows how much his technique had improved. Of interest, too, in the collection are Ellis's experiments in positioning, proportion, symmetry and shape of the human figure (see e.g. ff. 16B, 29A and B).

Banks was, it seems, genuinely sorry that Ellis compromised his future career by publishing *An Authentic Narrative*. . . On 23 January 1783 he wrote to Ellis, who may still have been living at his old address in Gough Square, Fleet Street, chiding the younger man for not seeking his advice before publishing the book.¹⁹ Banks, the implication is clear, would have used his immense influence at the Board of Admiralty to further Ellis's naval and hence, perhaps, his medical and artistic careers. The appearance of the surreptitious account drove a formal wedge between Ellis and his patron and erstwhile employers. But just how effective was that wedge—was it final?

By the end of 1781 and certainly by early in 1782 Ellis was on his beam ends. He had been to Banks for a loan of £30, got it, and in a last move of sheer desperation had gone again to Soho Square bearing some 'drawings'. Banks, generous as ever, cancelled the debt and gave Ellis a further £20 for the 'drawings'. He also offered Ellis assistance in gaining some revenge or satisfaction with the booksellers (perhaps Robinson of Paternoster Row?) 'for his Judaic treatment'. 'If you would heartily join in it I would assist'.²⁰

What did Ellis do, apart from writing a book, between his arrival home in October 1780 and his appearances before Banks begging—for such it must have been—late in 1782 or thereabouts?

We know something. He worked on drawings for plates for the official publication of the third voyage. That, at least, is what John Webber (1752-98), the official artist on the voyage, reveals in a letter to Banks of 27 September 1782.²¹ Now here are interesting, fascinating facets of Ellis the artist; how much did he work with Webber during and after