

which I had always desired to do most (to know, to sail and to see far away and unknown countries). The Admiralty appointed me for 100 Guineas per year and above that paid all the expenses of my work. This, together with the means which I hoped to receive on my return, in order to distinguish myself with images of novelties, gave me hope that my lot would be happier in the end, if God spared my life. All this was decided eight days before my departure, and I was in quite a hurry to pursue all matters that were necessary.⁵

It is pleasing to be able to record that in the end Webber succeeded in distinguishing himself with images of novelties he had seen and drawn in the Pacific, but it occurred only years after the voyage and only by his carefully cultivating the market for Pacific exotica that developed in Britain following the publication of the official account of the third voyage in 1784.⁶ Webber's *Views in the South Seas*, were the first of those etched or aquatinted series of prints put out independently by travelling artists to cater for the demand for scenes of the exotic picturesque that became so fashionable during the first half of the nineteenth century.

In our catalogue of the artwork of the third voyage Rüdiger Joppien and I have itemised and described over four hundred drawings made by Webber that relate to the third voyage. What I should like to do now is consider that body of work as a whole. What kinds of drawings were made? Is there a consistent programme of work being followed? Were there constraints on Webber, and how did they operate?

As to Webber himself there was the hope, innocent enough, as we have seen, that he would eventually be able to distinguish himself with 'images of novelties'. But he was in Cook's service and it is to Cook's perception of the uses that he could make of Webber's skills that we must turn if we are to understand the visual programme of work undertaken.

Cook was above all a navigator and coastal views were the most valuable drawings an artist could make for the purposes of navigation. So Cook asked Webber to make the coastal views that were used to embellish the charts made on the voyage, largely by the young William Bligh. The late R.A. Skelton attributed these views to Bligh himself but a comparison with the original coastal views by Webber now in the British Library indicates clearly enough that they are by Webber not Bligh. That is what one would expect. Cook was a man who made the best use of the talent available. There is in Webber's coastal views that feeling for atmospheric perspective that he probably gained from working with Aberli as a student in Bern.

Webber's coastal views have never been fully published, but they will be when the Hakluyt Society completes the three volumes of the *Charts and Views of Cook's Voyages* which has been designed to complement *The Art of Captain Cook's Voyages*. Then, when the historians of science eventually get around to publishing all the original drawings relating to natural history, we shall have the full corpus of visual