

is addressing a British, indeed a European audience. Ethnographical information of great interest is being conveyed about the nature of the temporary habitations, the dress and adornment of the Maori, but it is conveyed within the framework of a potentially political message: Cook the friendly voyager meeting his old friends the Maori.



Plate 3. John Webber, 'The Reception of Captain Cook at Hapae', pen, wash and water-colour, 44.8 x 63.6 cm. 1777. British Library, London. Add. MS 15513, fol. 8.

A few months later in Lifuka, Tonga, Webber began another large history set-piece. Cook and his men now intermingle freely with a great crowd of Tongans as they mutually enjoy the boxing and other entertainments prepared for them (Plate 3). The painting may be identified with the work in Webber's catalogue entitled 'The manner of receiving, entertaining and making Captain Cook a present of the productions of the Island, on his Arrival at the Happi'.

So it continued throughout the voyage. Everywhere Cook goes in the Pacific his arrival is celebrated by Webber in scenes of joyful reception, in dancing, boxing entertainments, gifting, trading. Nothing must disturb this sense of peacefulness. Even Cook's own death, the great trauma of the voyage, is not drawn nor will it be included in the official publication.

Webber got better at it as the voyage progressed. One of the finest of all John Webber's drawings surely must be his record of Cook's meeting with the Chuckchi people of northern Siberia. They were only on that icy peninsula for between two and three hours, yet Webber managed to make a number of delightful drawings on the spot.²² Naturally suspicious of the newcomers the Chuckchi refused to put down their arms the journals tell us. Except upon one occasion when