

**ISLAND LANDSCAPES BY WILLIAM HODGES:
RECONSTRUCTING PAINTING PRACTICES THROUGH
PHOTOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK**

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At the time of his appointment as official artist of Captain James Cook's second voyage, William Hodges was a promising but young and relatively unaccomplished painter. As the first professional landscape painter to document a voyage of exploration, Hodges was cast into a paradoxical situation. For although he had been trained, under Richard Wilson, to paint idealized compositions in the classical landscape tradition, the explicitly scientific orientation of Cook's expedition emphasized empiricism rather than idealization. Hodges's paintings vividly reflect his response to these opposing influences. Some works exhibit formula-like principles characteristic of planned studio compositions while other views appear to be fresh, direct records of the artist's initial response to nature.

Previous studies of the contrasting influences of empiricism and idealism in Hodges's work are based upon stylistic analysis and archival research.¹ Here, photographs of the landscape views illustrated by Hodges are presented as the first direct documentation of his methods for recording and transforming topographical detail. These on-the-spot photographs, taken from the same viewpoints from which Hodges depicted the landscapes, allow detailed reconstructions of the artist's painting practices.² This analysis reveals distinct patterns, showing that Hodges employed varied methods of composition derived both from his academic training and his experiences on Cook's voyage.

Recent studies of Hodges's work draw attention to the highly personalized style he developed during the course of Cook's expedition.³ During this three-year voyage through the southern hemisphere Hodges

painted an extraordinary variety of scenes, ranging from iceberg-studded seas bordering the Antarctic Circle to tropical Polynesian islands. His role as the first professional landscape artist to document a voyage of circumnavigation offered the exciting challenge of illustrating island worlds hitherto unknown to Europeans. The voyage exposed Hodges to landscapes completely foreign to any that he had seen in Europe, introduced him to the scientifically oriented company of Cook's expedition, and isolated him from the world of English painting. Analysis of Hodges's painting practices provides valuable information both for understanding the artist's conception of his role as official artist of Cook's second voyage and for understanding the process by which he attempted to communicate his impressions to the public.

The historical context of Hodges's South Pacific landscapes contributes greatly to their scholarly interest. At the time of Cook's second voyage (1772-1775) published accounts of pristine island cultures, dramatic scenery, and a salubrious tropical climate combined to create an idyllic image of Polynesia in European minds. The immensely popular account of Cook's first voyage expressed unreserved admiration for Tahiti and its inhabitants.⁴ The Tahitians' beauty and strength, combined with their shameless sensuality, gentle comportment, and remarkable ingenuity made them models for the hitherto only-conceptualized "noble savage." Cook observed that Tahitians appeared so favored by the beneficence of nature that, in obtaining food, they seemed "to be exempted from the first general curse, 'that man should eat his bread in the sweat of his brow.'"⁵ Bougainville, who reached Tahiti some months before Cook's first visit, exclaimed after a walk through the countryside: "I thought that I had been transported into the garden of Eden."⁶ Studies by Smith,⁷ Stuebe,⁸ and Joppien and Smith⁹ argue convincingly that some of Hodges's South Pacific landscape views reflect the paradisiacal image of Tahiti conveyed by early visitors including Cook and Bougainville. These studies examine the structure of Hodges's compositions and his use of classicizing and literary elements, as well as his use of color and treatment of atmospheric conditions. The photographs presented here thus add an important source of new information, providing the first direct evidence for determining the degree of accuracy in Hodges's treatment of topography.

Reconstructing Hodges's Painting Practices

The British Admiralty Orders concerning Hodges's role during Cook's voyage specify that he should make drawings and paintings "as may be proper to give a more perfect idea thereof than can be formed from writ-

ten descriptions only.¹⁰ These instructions reflect the overall emphasis on scientific accuracy that is a hallmark of the Admiralty Orders. Very little is known about how or where Hodges worked, but Smith suggests that the artist composed many of his views in the *Resolution's* "great cabin," a spacious area in the stern of the ship.¹¹ Fitted with large windows facing aft and to both sides of the vessel, this cabin served Hodges as a mobile studio, providing expansive views from a protected vantage point. Sketches from the great cabin and others made in the open air were probably used to develop finished views worked up either aboard ship or later in London.

Cook recorded Hodges's painting habits on only a single occasion. On that day, he wrote that having accompanied Hodges to visit a waterfall in Dusky Sound, New Zealand, the artist "took a drawing of it on paper and afterwards painted it in oyle colours which exhibits at one view a better description than I can give."¹² Although this practice of making on-the-spot sketches from which finished compositions were later worked up was likely one of Hodges's most common methods, almost none of the original sketches are known to exist. George Forster suggested that Hodges's collection of open-air sketches may even have been lost during the voyage, forcing the artist to work from memory and his imagination after returning to England.¹³ This charge was vehemently denied by William Wales (the expedition's astronomer) who noted that he had been authorized by the artist to write "that he has not lost any of his original sketches."¹⁴ At present, however, Hodges's preliminary sketches are indeed lost, preventing comparisons with the finished paintings that might yield valuable insight into the artist's methods of composition.

Some inferences concerning Hodges's methods of composition can be drawn from knowledge of practices employed by Richard Wilson, under whom Hodges received his most important training. Wilson, it has been argued, did not paint his pictures directly from sketches, but rather he composed them from his imagination, using sketches only as a device for mastering the details of nature.¹⁵ According to Joseph Farington, "when he [Wilson] painted views he seldom adhered to the scene as it was."¹⁶ Academic principles advocated this practice of freely altering aspects of a landscape in an artistic rendition. While president of the Royal Academy, Sir Joshua Reynolds argued that by identifying and correcting "imperfections" in nature, the painter could create a *general* portrayal of nature that would be more faithful than the unmodified representation of any *particular* view.¹⁷ Thus, to the eighteenth-century mind, "accuracy" in the illustration of a landscape was not directly equated with the precise rendition of topographical detail.

Hodges's South Pacific landscapes may be classified into three categories according to the medium employed and the manner of execution: (1) ink drawings colored with wash, (2) oil sketches painted on small canvases and wooden panels, and (3) large-scale oil paintings worked up in London after the voyage while Hodges was employed by the Admiralty. Of the thirty-nine South Pacific landscape views documented,¹⁸ thirteen are ink and wash drawings, seventeen are oil sketches (including ten which, on stylistic grounds, are thought to have been painted during the voyage), and nine are large-scale paintings worked up after the voyage. This study examines a diverse group of Hodges's paintings, focusing on seven views depicting landscapes in New Zealand, Tahiti, the Marquesas, New Caledonia, and Vanuatu. The cultural settings of these views include scenes from both Polynesia and Melanesia while the climatic zones represented range from temperate to tropical.

The most accurate topographical representations among Hodges's landscape views are his coastal profiles drawn in ink and colored with wash. These panoramic offshore views clearly demonstrate the important influence of Hodges's exposure to the naval practice of drawing coastal profiles. Hodges taught some of the *Resolution's* midshipmen to draw three-toned coastal profiles¹⁹ and his own washes bear strong resemblance to views made by the ship's draftsmen for purely scientific purposes, such as to identify harbor entrances. Photographs of the same landscapes represented in the ink wash coastal profiles show that Hodges experimented with a variety of methods to achieve the finished views. All of the pictures give the appearance of distant offshore views, and this is, in fact, the viewpoint from which some of the landscapes were actually drawn. For example, comparison of the New Caledonia ink wash (Figure 1) with photographs of the actual landscape (Figure 2) shows that Hodges's view is a close rendition, portraying an accurate representation of the island except for a slight exaggeration in the steepness of the mountains.

In other ink washes, however, the artist projects a falsified viewpoint. *Resolution Harbour in St. Christina, One of the Marquesas* (Figure 3) gives the impression of a distant offshore view but is actually a panorama taken from inside the bay. The right-hand portion of the landscape illustrates mountain peaks and ranges that allow precise identification of the vantage point from which the view was drawn. Figure 4, a panoramic view photographed from that place, shows the entire landscape as represented in Hodges's drawing. The key topographical feature is a small pinnacle located behind the mountain ridge at the south-

ern entrance to the bay. The only place where the pinnacle can be seen as drawn by Hodges is from along the rocky shoreline of the bay, near the north entrance (Figure 5). Movement of more than a few meters in any direction renders the view unrecognizable as the landscape drawn by Hodges. Comparison with the photograph shows that Hodges's view slightly exaggerates the relief of the mountains and compresses the panorama. Yet, despite these minor topographical alterations and a falsified perspective that makes the picture appear as if it were drawn from offshore, the view is a remarkably precise illustration of the bay.

In contrast to the washes drawn from a single vantage point, at least one of the coastal profiles is a composite, combining different views of the same landscape seen from the moving ship. The wash of **Sandwich Island** [Efate, Vanuatu] (Figure 6) was drawn from two different points as the **Resolution** sailed past the island. Figure 7, a composite view combining the photographs from these two vantage points, produces an image that is strikingly similar to Hodges's wash. First, as the ship passed the offshore islet of Nguna, Hodges drew part of its coast and another more distant islet, Pele, toward which the ship was headed (Figure 8). Figure 9 is a photograph taken from approximately the same position, showing Nguna (far right) and Pele (center) separated by a narrow channel. Hodges completed the left-hand portion of the coastal profile after the ship had almost passed Pele. Figure 10 shows the landscape illustrated from this second vantage point. The edge of Pele is at the far right and the mountains of Efate are visible in the background. A key topographic landmark is the high plateau intersected by a ridge descending to the edge of the island.

The practice of making composite views was one that Hodges used repeatedly. In the case of **Sandwich Island** he may have employed this method out of necessity if the ship's movement did not allow him time to draw the entire landscape from a single vantage point. In other instances, however, Hodges's decision to paint composite views was clearly deliberate, a decision that reflects his training under Wilson and the influence of Sir Joshua Reynolds, then president of the Royal Academy. In his fourth annual "Discourse on Art" presented in the Royal Academy in 1771, Reynolds contrasted landscapes by painters of the Flemish and Dutch schools, whose works he described as "always a representation of an individual spot,"²⁰ with those by Claude, whose "pictures are a composition of the various draughts which he had previously made from various beautiful scenes and prospects."²¹ Reynolds concluded: "That the practice of Claude Lorrain, in respect to his choice, is to be adopted by Landscape Painters, in opposition to that of the Flem-

ish and Dutch schools, there can be no doubt, as its truth is founded upon the same principle as that by which the Historical Painter acquires perfect form."²² Wilson, in whose studio Hodges received training from around 1757 until sometime between 1763 and 1766,²³ also praised and adopted Claudean principles of composition in his own works, even to the extent that one critic berated him as "little more than an imitator of Claude."²⁴ A fellow pupil of Hodges's wrote that once when Wilson found his students wasting time "in idle mirth and frolick . . . he only shook his head, and in his dry loconick manner, said 'Gentlemen--this is not the way to rival Claude.' "²⁵ Hodges's practice of painting composite views is thus probably linked to late-eighteenth-century academic influences that encouraged this Claudean method of composition.

Among the best examples of Hodges's composite views are his paintings of two waterfalls in Dusky Sound, New Zealand. [***Waterfall in Dusky Bay with a Maori Canoe***] (Figure 11), an oil sketch, illustrates a scene in Nine Fathoms Passage. As shown in Figure 12, a photomontage, this sketch is a composite view created from two separate vantage points, both of which were very likely on rock outcrops in the fjord channel (Figure 13). Figure 14 shows the waterfall photographed from one of the small rock formations that could have provided Hodges with excellent places to work. Hodges apparently sketched the left portion of his view from a different, but nearby outcrop. In Figure 15, a photograph from this second outcrop, Cooper Island is clearly recognizable as the spit of land in the left middle distance of Hodges's painting. Hodges combined views from the two separate vantage points to create his finished oil sketch.

Like the small oil sketch of Nine Fathoms Passage, Hodges's more dramatic painting, [***Cascade Cove***] ***Dusky Bay*** (Figure 16), is also a composite view but one in which the topographical detail has been considerably altered. This large-scale painting, worked up after Hodges's return to England and exhibited in the Royal Academy around 1777,²⁶ combines an offshore view of the upper falls with a separate view taken from the base of the cascade. Although Hodges's painting depicts the entire waterfall, only a small but distinctive part of it is visible from offshore, as shown in Figure 17. It is necessary to hike to the base of the cascade, as Cook and Hodges did, in order to see the lower falls (Figure 18). The composition was completed through addition of a mountainous background and a group of Maoris before a rainbow in the foreground. The finished painting is so different from the actual scene that it must represent a radical departure from Hodges's on-the-spot sketch,

(continued on page 78)

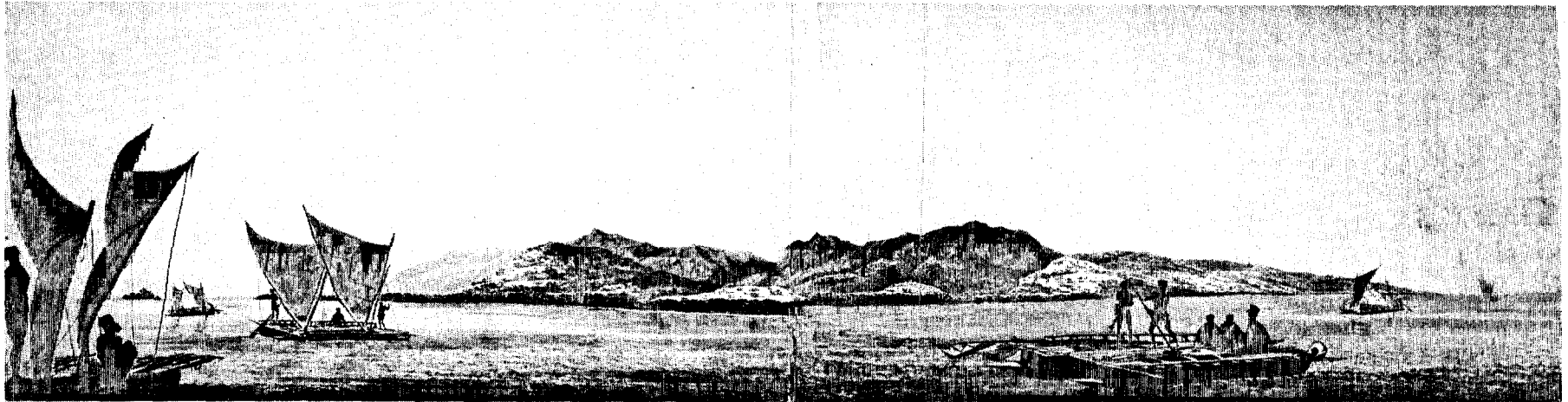


FIGURE 1. William Hodges, [A View of Balade Harbour] New Caledonia, September 1774. By permission of the British Library, London (Add. MS 15743, f. 10). This ink wash is a coastal profile depicting the island with remarkable topographic detail and accuracy.

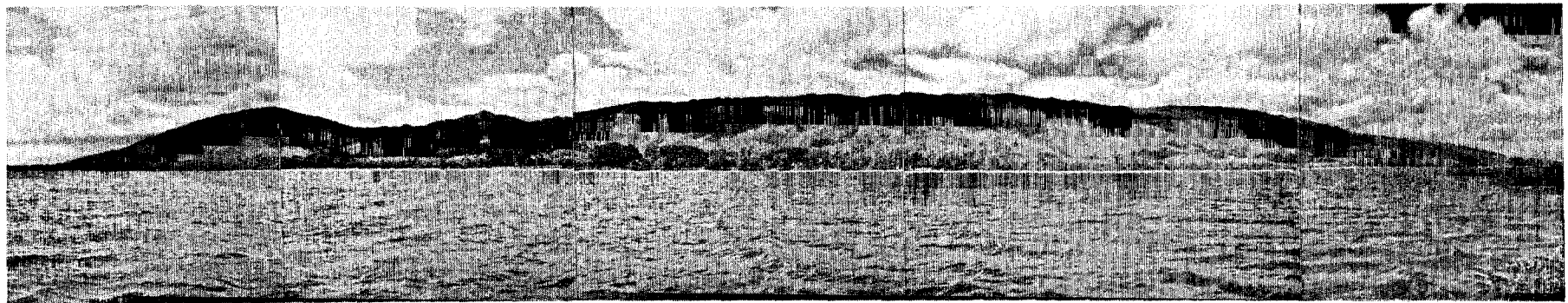


FIGURE 2. Panoramic view of New Caledonia photographed from Balade Harbour (montage combining five photographs), December 1980. Compare with Hodges's [A View of Balade Harbour] New Caledonia.

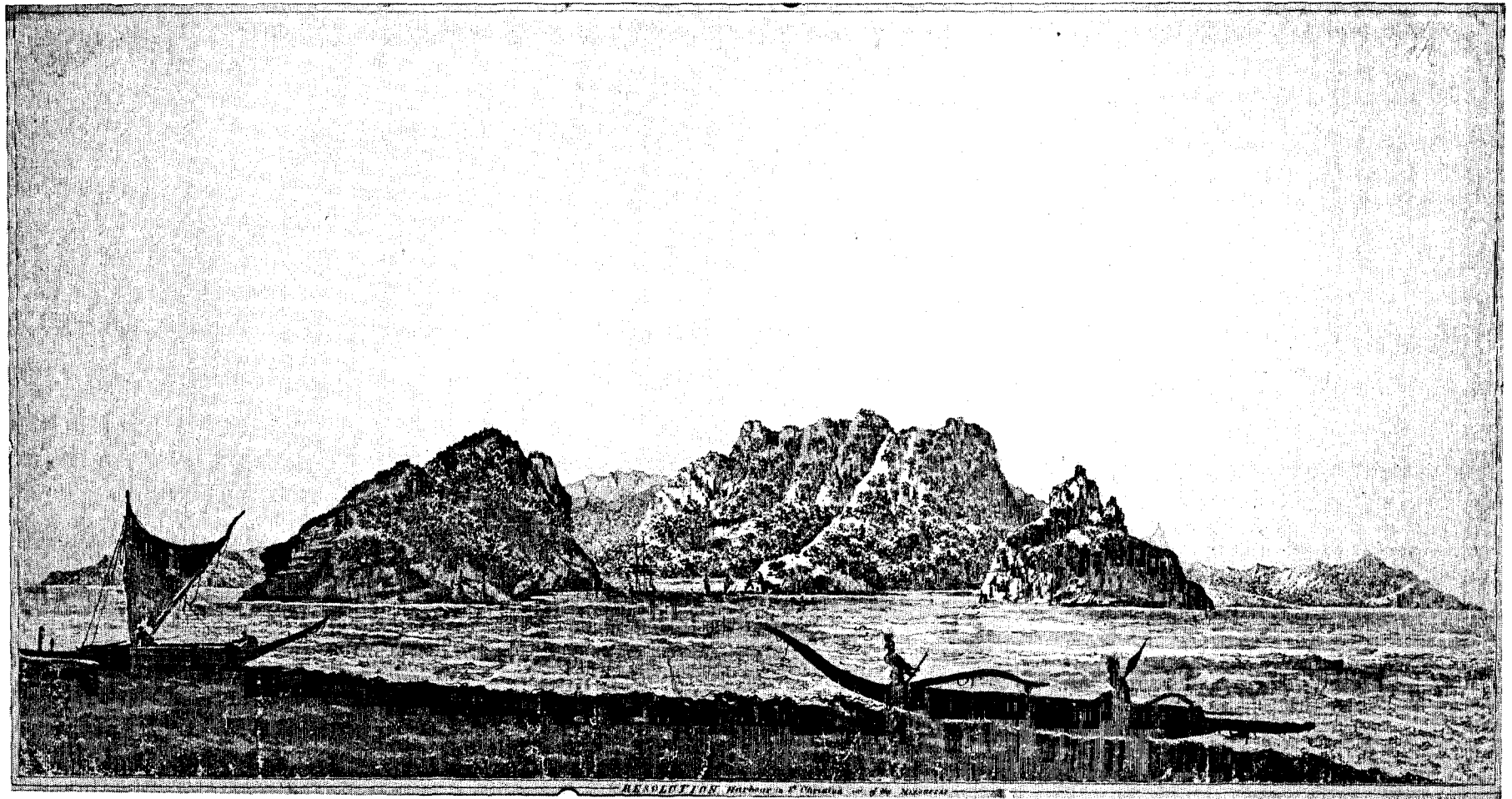


FIGURE 3. William Hodges, *Resolution Harbour (Vaitahu Bay) in St. Christina (Tahuata), One of the Marquesas, April 1774.* By permission of the British Library, London (Add. MS 15743, f. 4). This ink wash coastal profile displays a high degree of topographic accuracy but the perspective projecting the scene as a distant offshore view is falsified. In fact, the view is taken from the north entrance to the bay (see Figure 5 for location of actual vantage point).

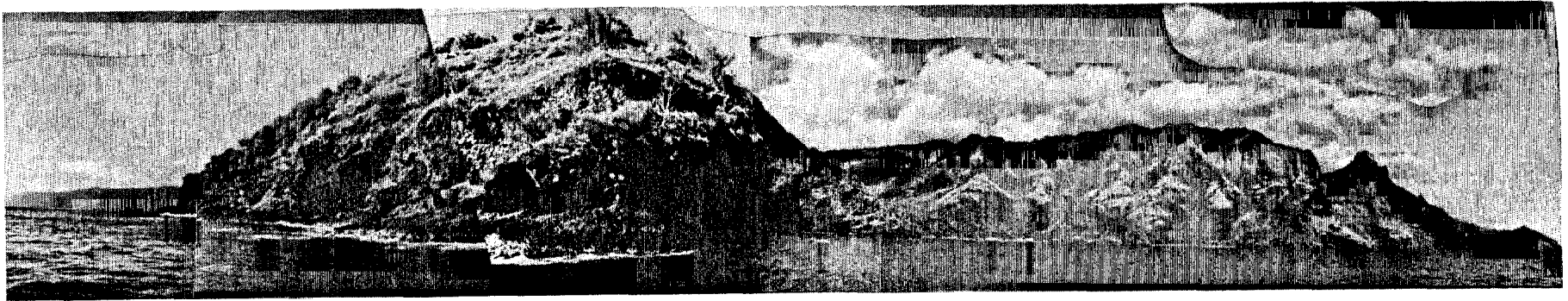


FIGURE 4. Panoramic view of Tahuata (Marquesas) photographed from Vaitahu Bay (montage combining six photographs), May 1981. Compare with Hodges's *Resolution Harbour (Vaitahu Bay) in St. Christina (Tahuata), One of the Marquesas.*

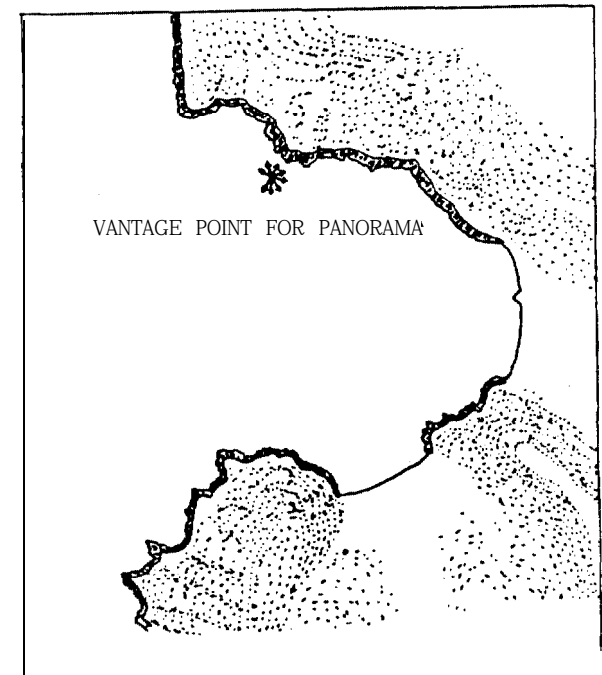


FIGURE 5. Plan of Vaitahu Bay, Tahuata (Marquesas), showing location from which the photographs comprising Figure 4 were taken. This is the vantage point for Hodges, *Resolution Harbour (Vaitahu Bay) in St. Christina (Tahuata), One of the Marquesas.*



FIGURE 6. William Hodges, *Sandwich Island [Efate]*, July 1774. By permission of the British Library, London (Add. MS 15743, f. 6). This ink wash coastal profile is a composite of two views taken from aboard the *Resolution* as it sailed past these islands in northern Vanuatu, following the route shown in Figure 8.

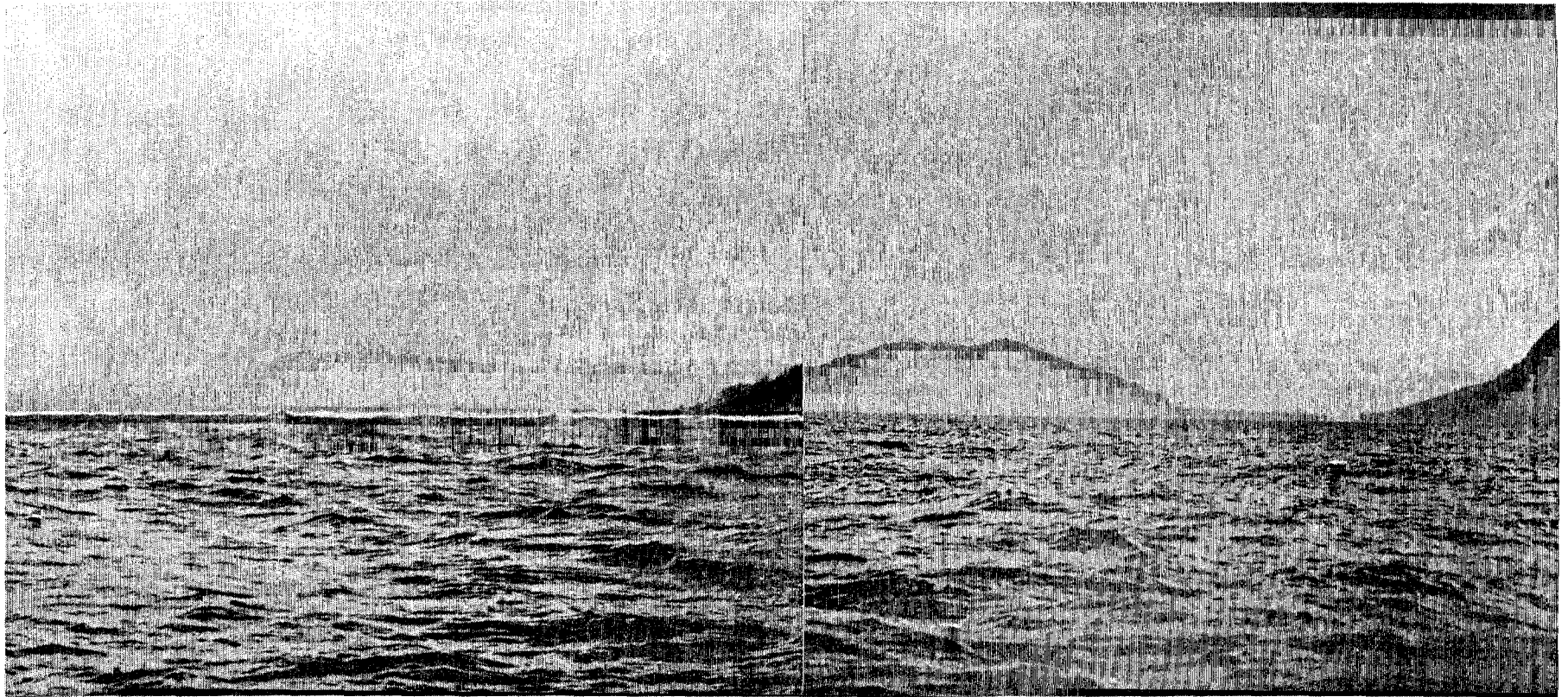
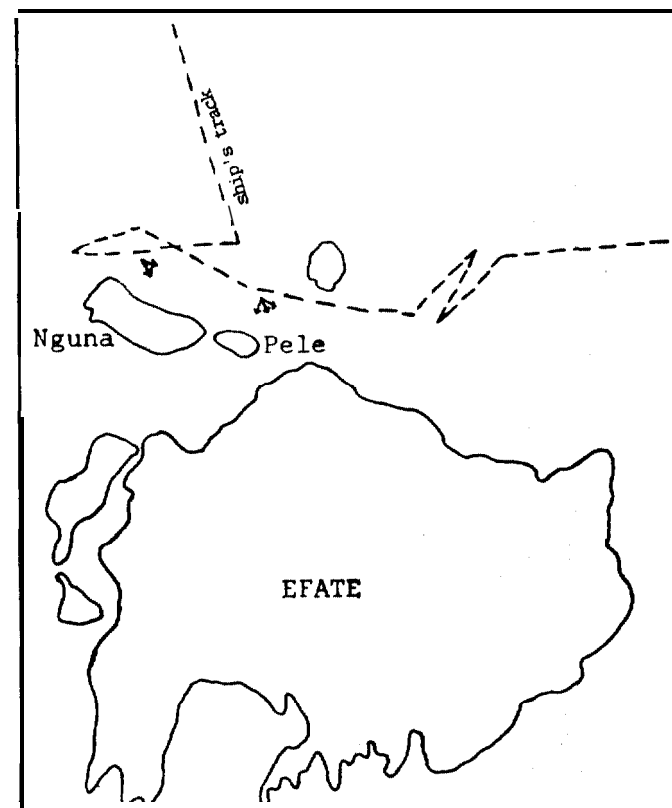


FIGURE 7. Composite view of Efate and neighboring islets made by combining Figures 9 and 10. Compare with Hodges's *Sandwich Island [Efate]*.

FIGURE 8. Plan of Efate (Vanuatu) and neighboring islets showing the track of the *Resolution* as it sailed past these islands on 25 July 1774 (taken from the chart in Cook's journal). Arrows indicate the vantage points from which Figures 9 and 10 were photographed.



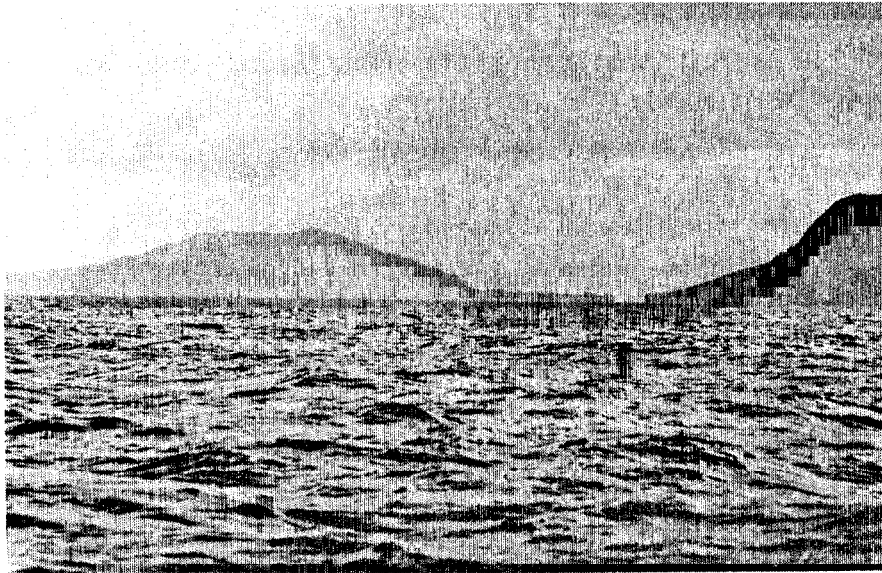


FIGURE 9. Photograph of Nguna (right) and Pele (center) islets with Efate barely visible in the background, January 1981. Figure 8 shows the location from which this view was photographed.

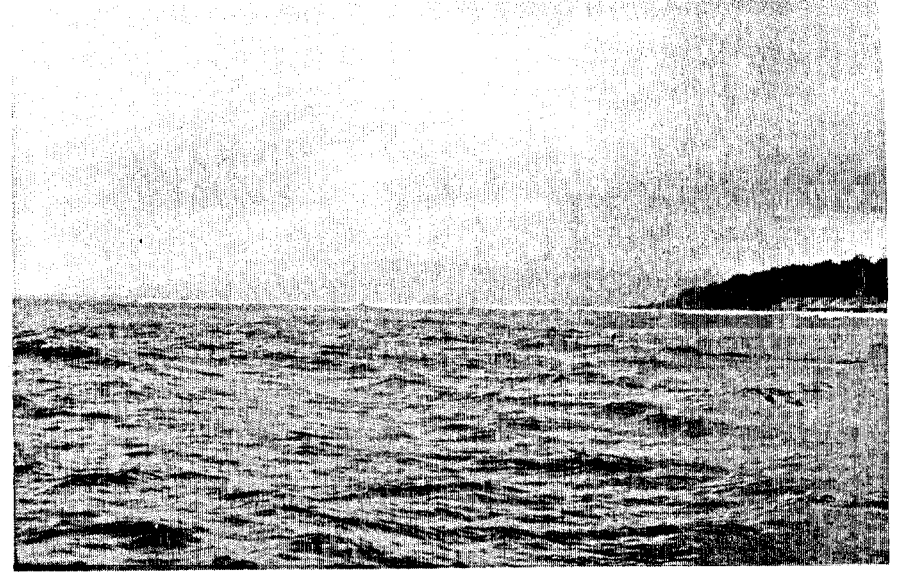


FIGURE 10. Photograph of Pele islet (right) with Efate barely visible in the background, January 1981. Figure 8 shows the location from which this view was photographed.

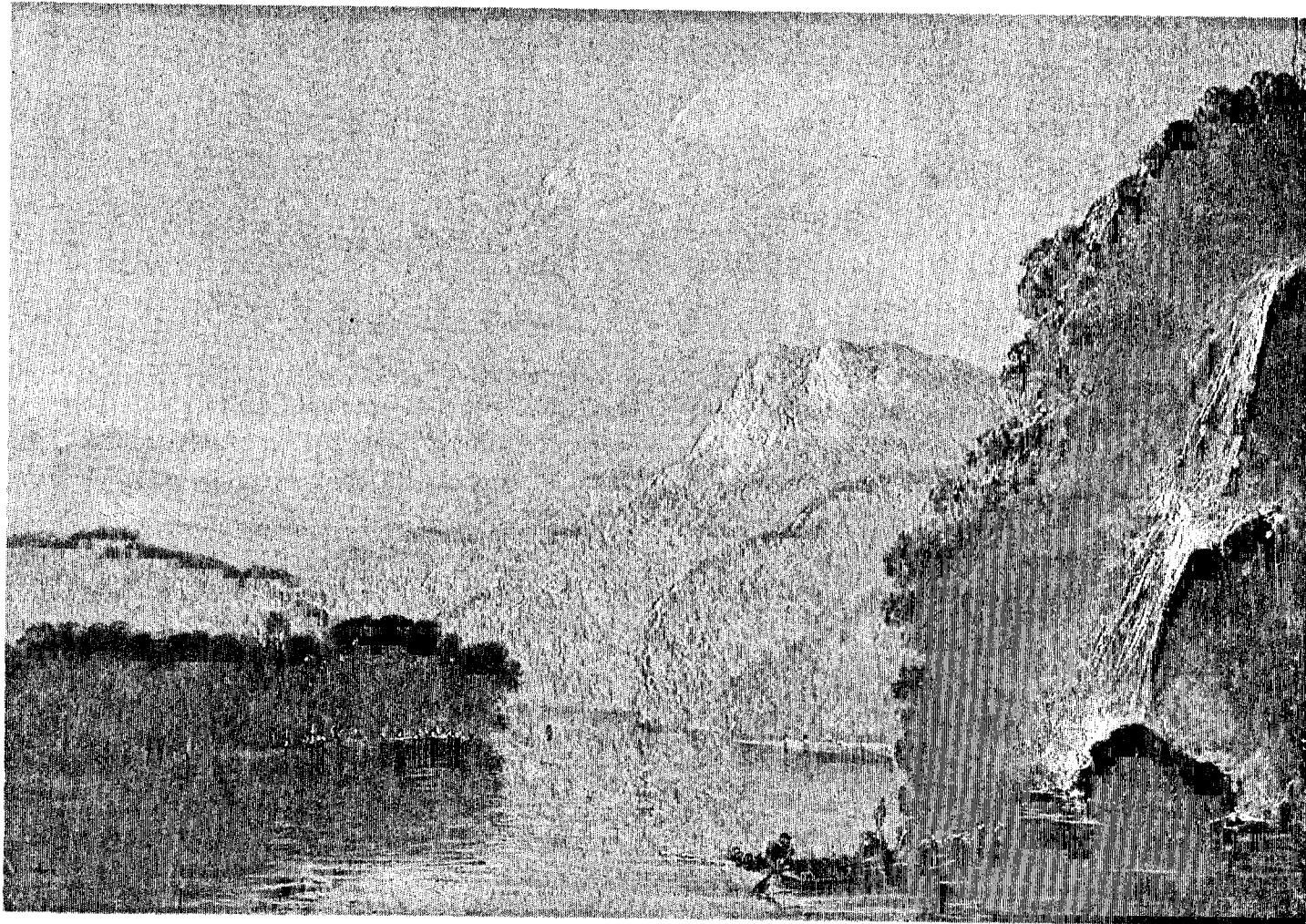


FIGURE 11. William Hodges, *[Waterfall in Dusky Bay with a Maori Canoe]*. National Maritime Museum, London, on loan from Ministry of Defence-Navy (L36-8). This oil sketch is a composite view combining separate scenes painted from two rock outcrops conveniently located in the fjord channel. Both components of the view are depicted with a high degree of topographic accuracy.

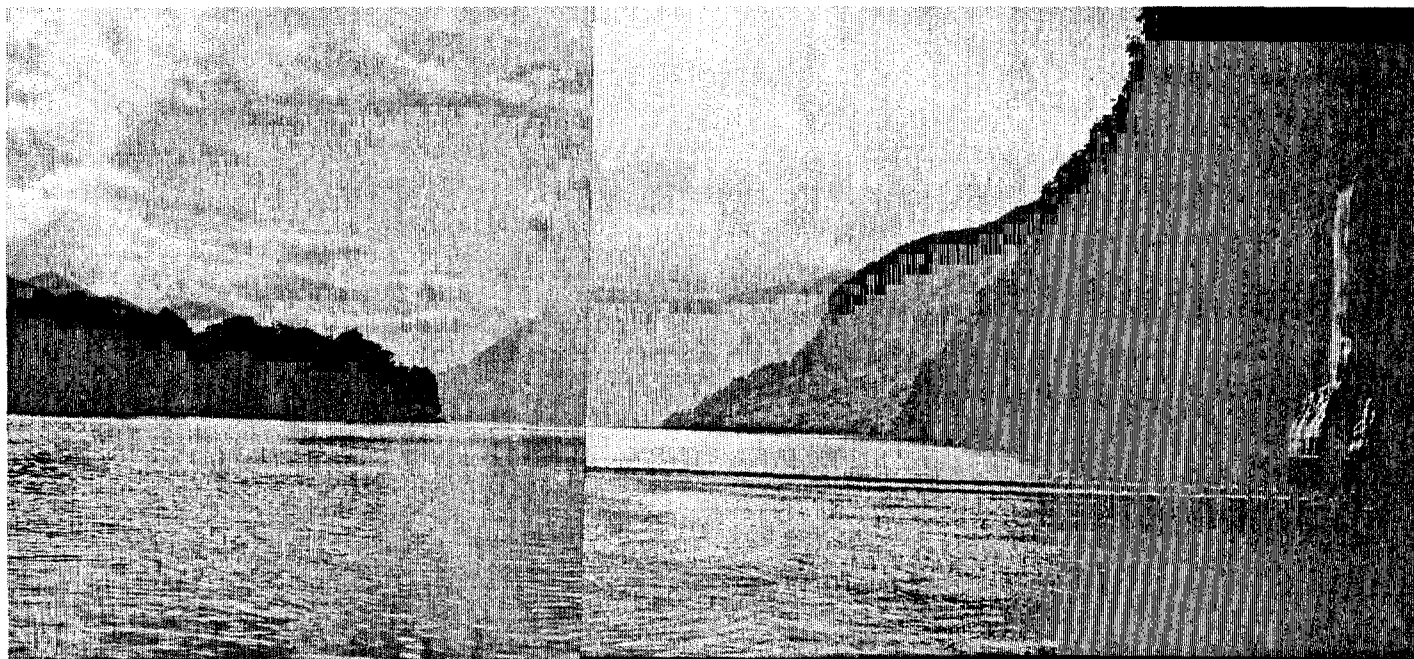
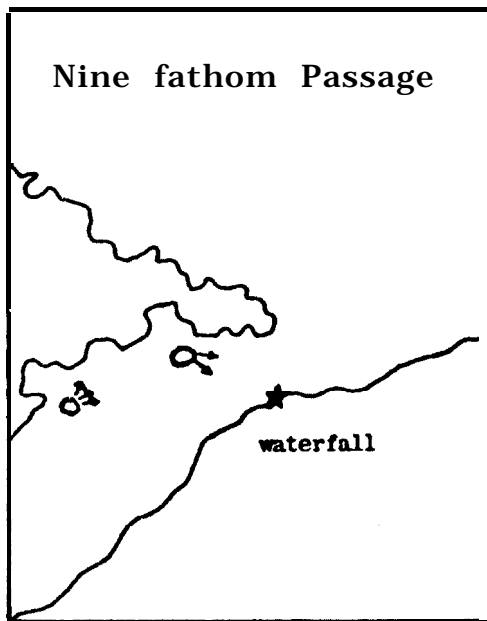


FIGURE 12. Composite view of Nine Fathoms Passage, Dusky Bay, New Zealand, made by combining Figures 14 and 15. Compare with Hodges's [*Waterfall in Dusky Bay with a Maori Canoe*].



 = rock outcrops

FIGURE 13. Plan of Nine Fathoms Passage, Dusky Bay, New Zealand (after N. Z. Topographical Map NZMS 1 S157). Locations of the waterfall and the rock outcrops from which Figures 14 and 15 were photographed are shown.

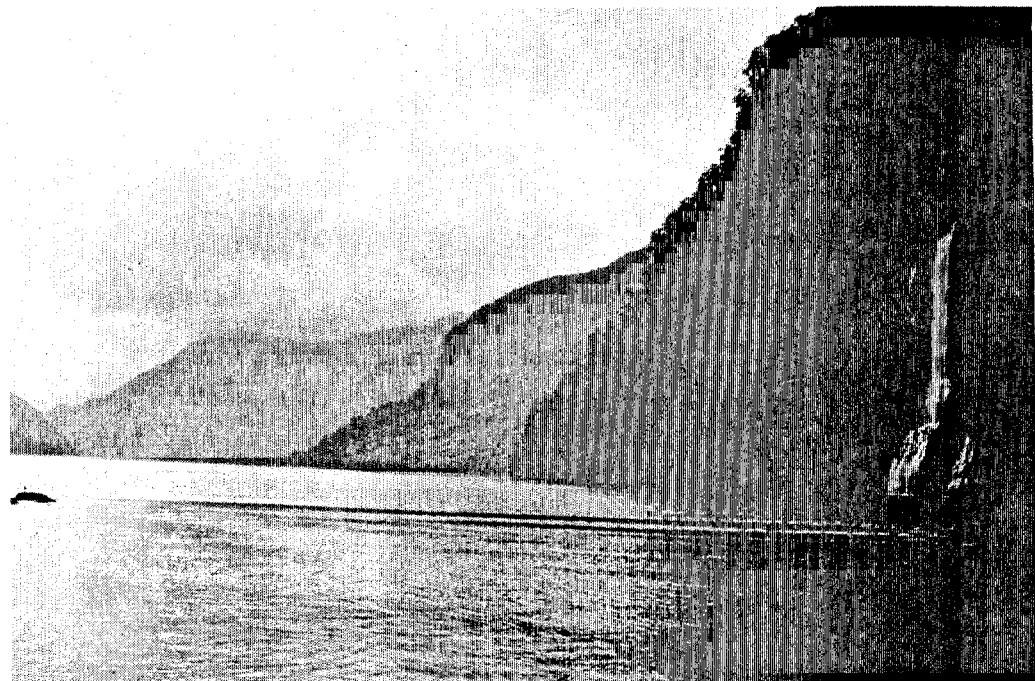


FIGURE 14. Photograph of waterfall in Nine Fathoms Passage, Dusky Bay, New Zealand, November 1980. Figure 13 shows the location of the rock outcrop from which this photograph was taken.

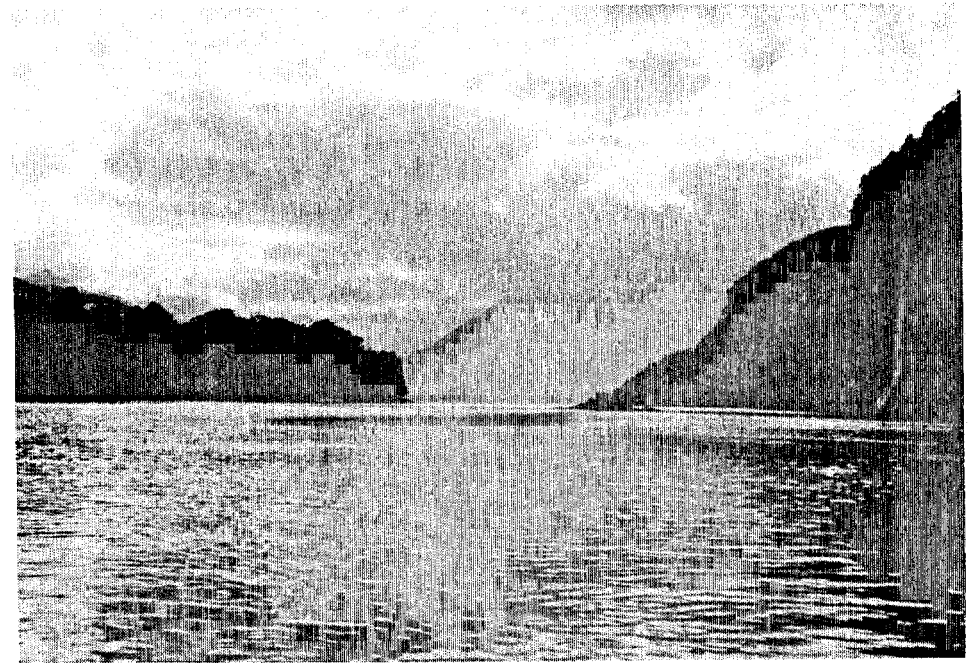


FIGURE 15. Photograph of Nine Fathoms Passage, Dusky Bay, New Zealand, November 1980. The waterfall is at right, Cooper Island at left. Note small rock outcrop in channel (center) from which Figure 14 was photographed. Figure 13 shows the location of this rock outcrop.

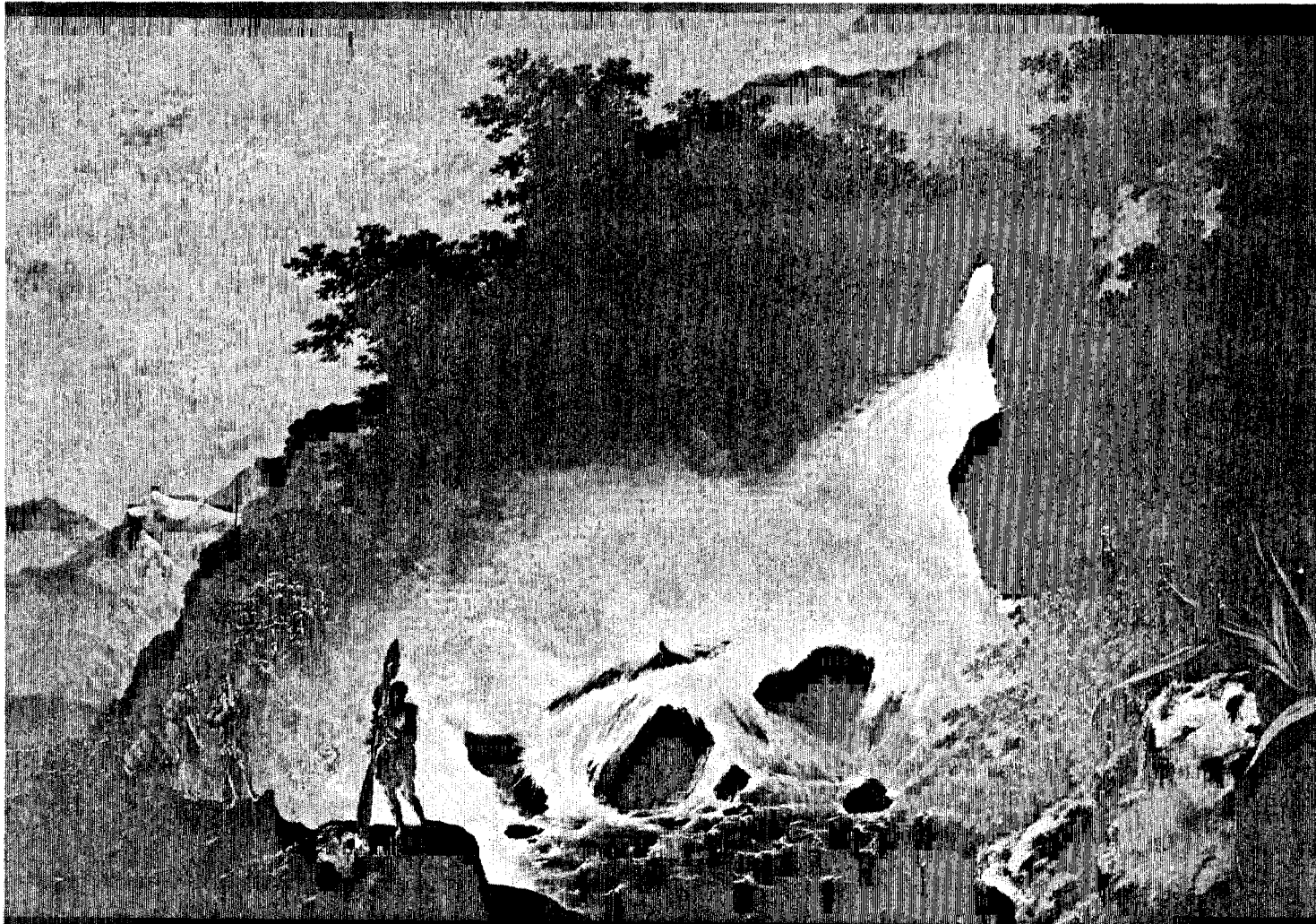


FIGURE 16. William Hodges, [*Cascade Cove*] *Dusky Bay*, 1775. National Maritime Museum, London, on loan from Ministry of Defence-Navy (L80-6). This large-scale painting worked up in London after the voyage is an idealized composite combining views of the upper and lower falls taken from separate offshore and onshore vantage points.

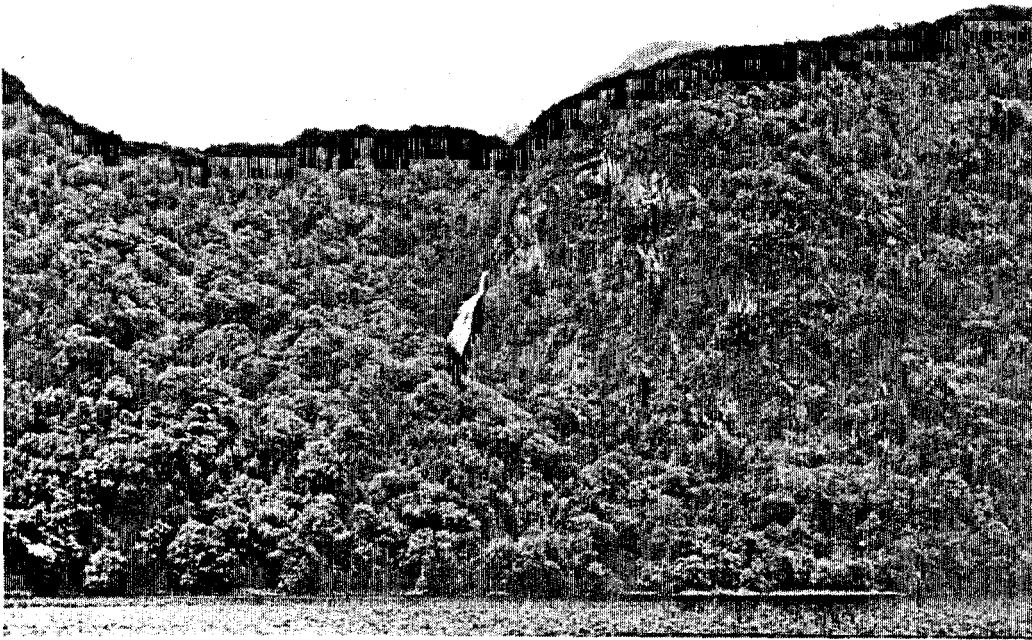


FIGURE 17. Photograph of waterfall in Cascade Cove, Dusky Bay, New Zealand, November 1980. Compare with Hodges's [*Cascade Cove*] Dusky Bay.

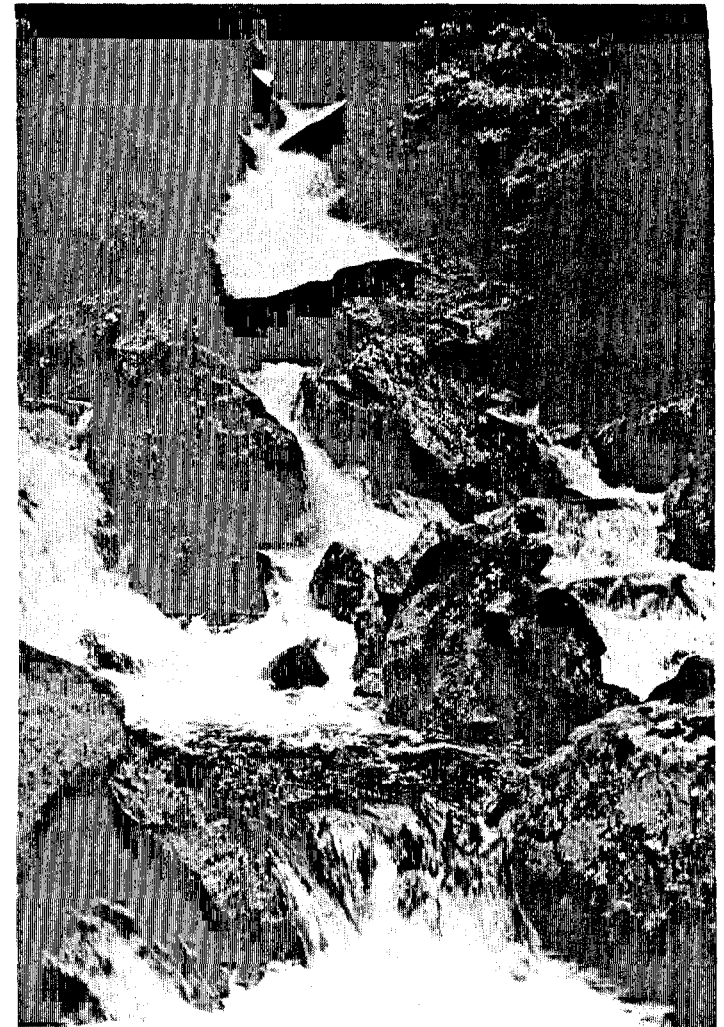


FIGURE 18. (RIGHT) Photograph of the base of the waterfall in Cascade Cove, Dusky Bay, New Zealand, November 1980. Compare with Hodges's [*Cascade Cove*] Dusky Bay.

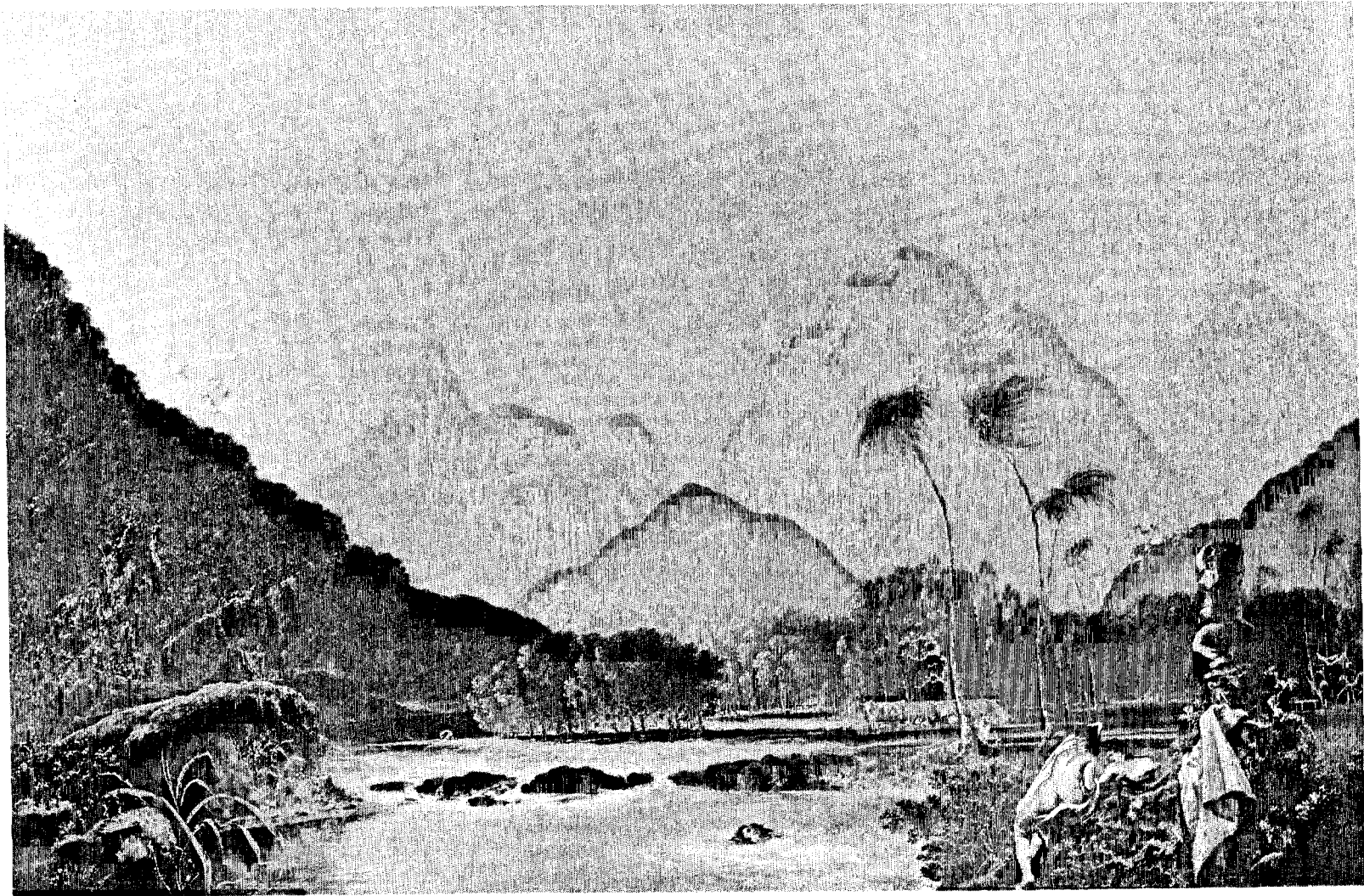


FIGURE 19. William Hodges, *Oaitepeha [Vaitepiha] Bay* [also called "*Tahiti Revisited*"], 1776. National Maritime Museum, London, on loan from Ministry of Defence-Navy (L36-19). This, large-scale painting worked up in London after the voyage portrays an idealized view that significantly alters the form and height of mountain peaks in the background.

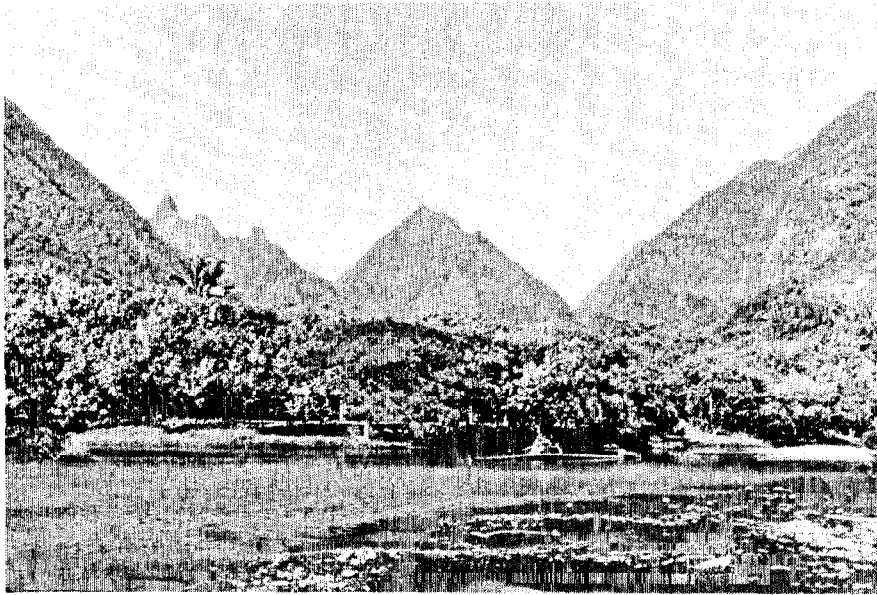


FIGURE 20. Photograph of Vaitepiha River and Valley, Tahiti, July 1981. Compare with Hodges's *Oaitepeha [Vaitepiha] Bay [Tahiti Revisited]*.

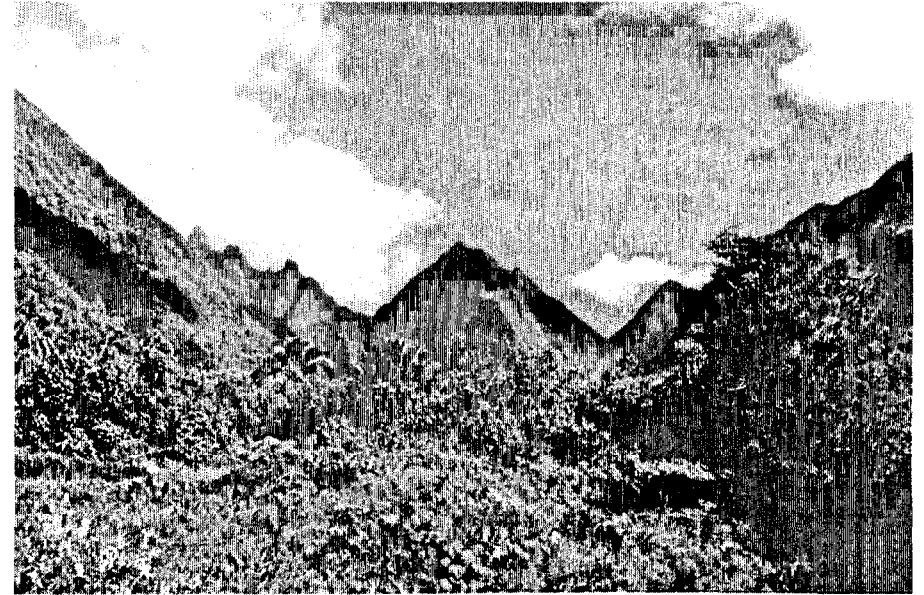


FIGURE 21. Photograph of Vaitepiha Valley, Tahiti, July 1981. Compare with Hodges's *Oaitepeha [Vaitepiha] Bay [Tahiti Revisited]*.

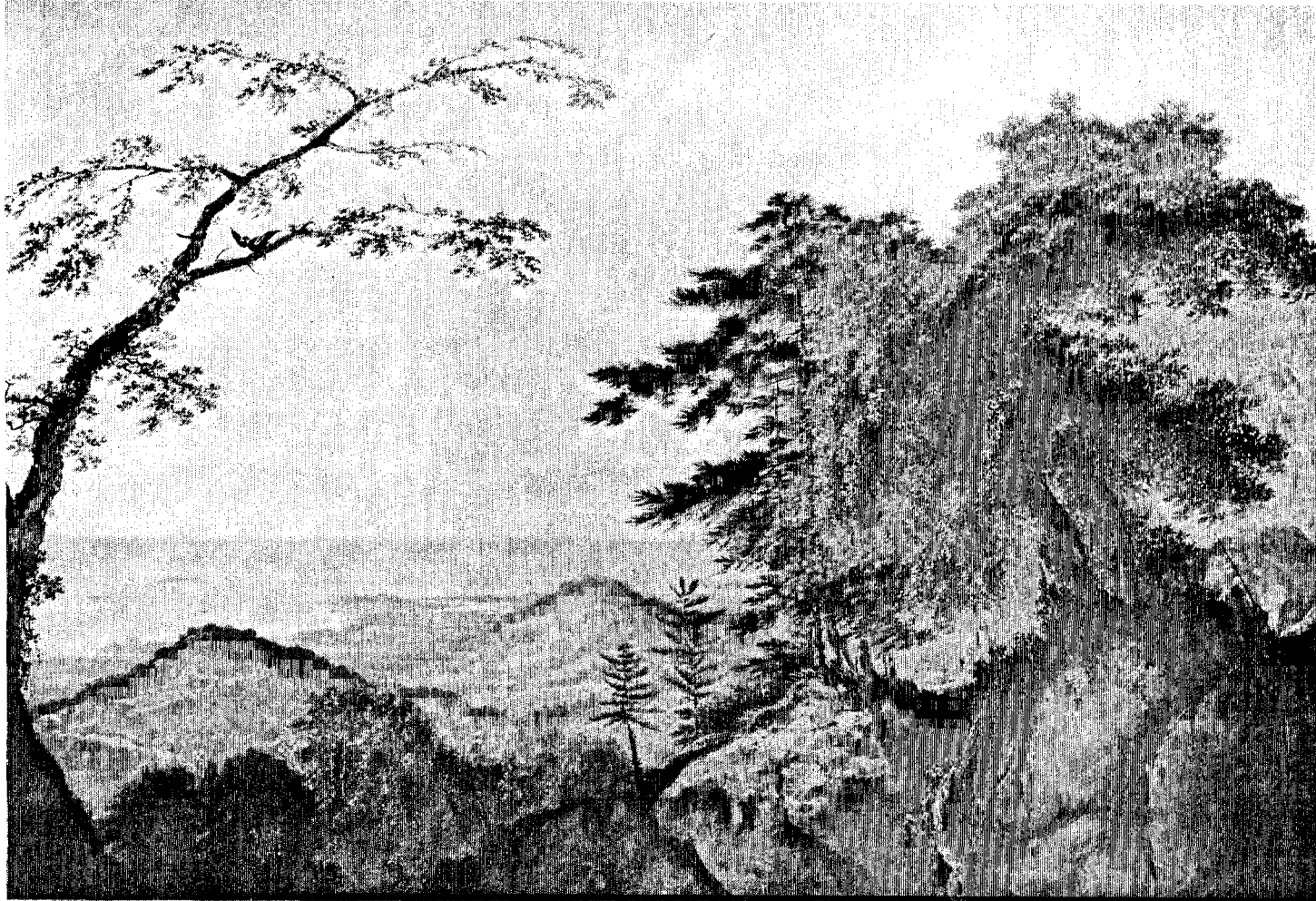


FIGURE 22. William Hodges, *A View in the Island of New Caledonia in the South*, c. 1777-1778. National Maritime Museum, London, on loan from Ministry of Defence-Navy (L80-14). This large-scale oil painting worked up in London after the voyage is so highly idealized that only the distinctive curved spit of land on the coast and the location of Observatory Isle are depicted accurately. The height of hills along the coastal plain is greatly exaggerated.

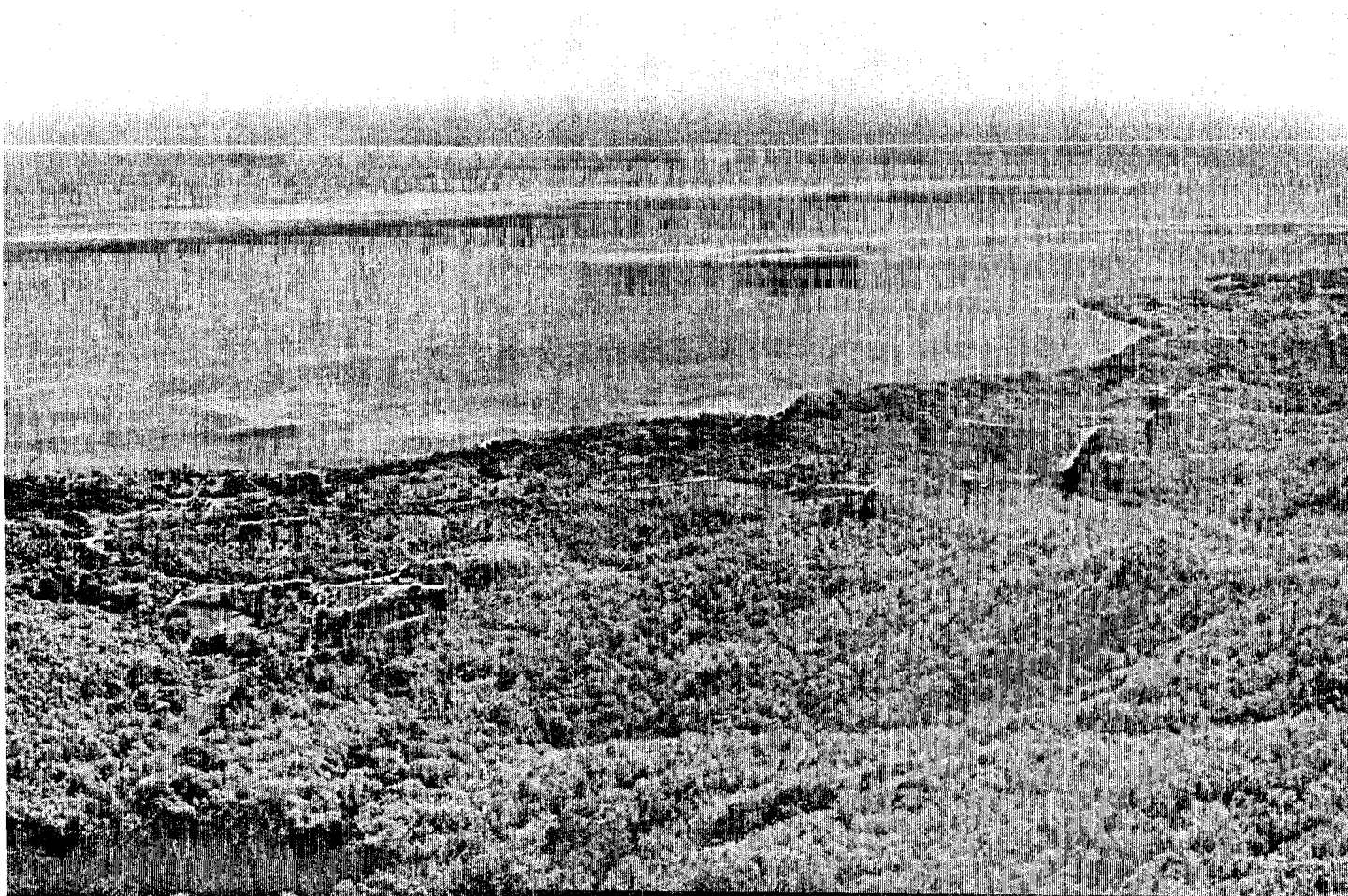


FIGURE 23. Photograph of Balade, New Caledonia, taken from the foothills behind the coastal plain, December 1980. Note Observatory Isle and the curved spit of land. Compare with Hodges, *A View in the Island of New Caledonia in the South*.

known only by the reference in which Cook stated that it “exhibits at one view a better description of it than I can give.”²⁷

Reynolds also advocated the painterly practice of altering topographical details to create “ideal” landscapes based on actual scenes but conceived in the artist’s imagination. The rationale for this practice is found in his 1770 address to the Royal Academy, in which he argued:

All the objects which are exhibited to our view by nature, upon close examination will be found to have their blemishes and defects. . . . [The painter] corrects nature by herself, her imperfect state by her more perfect. His eye being able to distinguish the accidental deficiencies, excrescences, and deformities of things, from their general figures, he makes out an abstract idea of their forms more perfect than any one original; and what may seem a paradox, he learns to design naturally by drawing his figures unlike to any one object.²⁸

The evidence that Hodges transformed landscape views to create idealized images of nature is much clearer in [*Cascade Cove*] and other large-scale views painted after his return to England than in his works completed during the voyage. The large-scale views signal his reentry into the world of British landscape painters, a milieu in which he was influenced not to portray nature as it appeared, but rather to use his discerning eye to identify the “imperfections” in nature and to correct them.

View in Oaitepeha [Vaitepiha] Bay [also called “*Tahiti Revisited*”] (Figure 19) illustrates certain of the changes in Hodges’s manner of landscape composition that are associated with his return to England in 1775 and his reentry into a milieu of professional artists. This painting is a slightly modified version of a view that was among Hodges’s first to be exhibited in the Royal Academy, in 1776. The historical significance of the work cannot be overlooked, for Hodges was the first professional landscape artist to present the avidly interested public with views of Tahiti, already famous as the “Paradise of the Pacific.” Although the mood of the work is distinctly Polynesian, the composition is arranged according to tenets of the classical landscape tradition. The mountain slope framing one side of the view, the river leading from the foreground into the far distance, and the series of horizontal planes receding by intervals are compositional elements of the classical landscape tradition. However, this controlled, measured layout is the only “classical” aspect of the composition. Elements and themes of antiquity such as

those typical of Wilson's landscapes are replaced in *Tahiti Revisited* by Polynesian motifs and themes. The group of bathing Tahitians is placed in the foreground much in the same way that Wilson used classical figures in his own compositions. Hodges praised this practice, remarking that Wilson's reputation was established "by the classical turn of thinking in his works, and the broad, bold, and manly execution of them; which added to the classical figures he introduced into his landscapes gave them an air more agreeable to the taste of true connoisseurs and men of learning."²⁹ Like Wilson, Hodges also sought to please "true connois-[s]eurs and men of learning." *Tahiti Revisited* gives a glimpse of Polynesian life, in the setting of a fertile river valley surmounted by high volcanic peaks. Tattooed women lounge beside a wooden image (*ti'i*) representing an ancestral deity, with a thatched house and a funerary platform on stilts in the middle distance.

It is likely that the Vaitepiha River has meandered somewhat from its course at the time of Cook's visit, for at present the view looking upstream (Figure 20) does not match Hodges' composition as closely as another view from a short distance south of the river (Figure 21). Figure 20 shows the broad river flanked on both sides by low tropical forest, as in *Tahiti Revisited*, but the background of mountain peaks is somewhat different than in Hodges's view. From the present riverbed, the view of the mountain peak in the far right background of Hodges's composition is mostly hidden. Figure 21 illustrates the most complete possible view of this mountain from the coastal plain, clearly illustrating the extent to which Hodges transformed the topographical features in his finished composition.

Although all the topographical features in *Tahiti Revisited* are present in nature, the artist's rendition exaggerates the height and steepness of the mountains, increasing the grandeur of the landscape. The dramatic landscape, combined with the sensual effect of the bathing women, admirably fits the popular image of the paradisiacal South Seas.

There are no known contemporaneous reviews of *Tahiti Revisited*, but an indication of how it may have been received is found in a review of Hodges's paintings exhibited the following year, in the Royal Academy of 1777:

Mr. HODGES, who in last year's Exhibition had several views of bays, etc about the Island of Otaheite, has this year a large piece exhibiting the warboats of that Island, and a view of part of the harbour of Ohamene-o, etc. The public are indebted

to this artist for giving them some idea of scenes Which they before knew little of. It is rather surprising, however, that a man of Mr. Hodges' genius should adopt such a ragged mode of colouring; his pictures all appear as if they were unfinished, and as if the colours were laid on the canvas with a skewer.³⁰

Thus, although the paintings were recognized as valuable documents of Cook's expedition, Hodges was criticized for the methods he used to achieve the plein-air feeling that distinguished his landscapes from those painted by his contemporaries.

A View in the Island of New Caledonia in the South (Figure 22), exhibited in the Royal Academy of 1778, the year following the above review, presents a stylistic contrast to the earlier works shown in 1776 and 1777. Joppien and Smith suggest that Hodges responded to the adverse criticism by switching to a thinner palette and a smoother style when he painted this more academically structured studio view.³¹ The large canvas depicts a landscape seen by Hodges and Cook during an excursion into the foothills of the island's central mountain range. Figure 23, a photograph taken from the path leading across the mountains, shows the most characteristic topographic feature in the view, a small embayment formed by a spit of land. The position in this photograph of Observatory Isle, situated just beyond the point of land, and the relative height of the horizon, also match the scene depicted by the painting quite well, leaving little doubt that this is the vantage point from which Hodges took his view. The rest of the landscape, however, bears only a general resemblance to Hodges's view.

Although reminiscent of the actual scene, Hodges's composition is more dramatic, depicting the hills on the coastal plain with exaggerated height and regularity of form. The painting fits Cook's glowing description of a view from the mountain pass:

The plains along the Coast on the side we lay appeared from the hills to great advantage, the winding Streams which ran through them which had their direction from Nature, the lesser streames conveyed by art through the different plantations, the little Stragling Villages, the Variaty in the Woods, the Shoals on the Coast so variegated the Scene that the whole might afford a Picture for romance.³²

The transformed representation of the coastal plain, the Claudean trees, and the measured proportions of Hodges's composition all indi-

cate that he intended to paint a view of ideal beauty, perhaps even inspired by Cook's description. *View in the Island of New Caledonia* is one of the last paintings worked up by Hodges after his return to England. As such it may represent a graphic portrayal of the artist's personal struggle between the influence to adopt accepted academic painting practices and an intuitive desire to follow his own methods developed during Cook's three-year voyage.

Interpretation

Comparison of Hodges's landscapes with photographs of the scenes they depict allows partial reconstruction of the artist's methods of composition, helping to explain the origins and development of his style. Fundamentally, what emerges is that Hodges's work represents a convergence of two major themes: (1) an astute attention to detail and scientific accuracy, and (2) adherence to traditional late-eighteenth-century techniques of landscape composition. Contrasting influences of the scientific orientation of Cook's voyage and the tenets of the classical landscape tradition combined to give Hodges's compositions a unique character among works by eighteenth-century painters.

Hodges's coastal profiles illustrate well the scientific influence of Cook's expedition. Since these were executed throughout the voyage they cannot be considered to represent a discrete stage in the development of Hodges's unique style. Indeed, recording the coastal profiles was one of his chief responsibilities as official artist of Cook's expedition. Profiles intended for publication, as were many of Hodges's, needed to be accurate enough to allow other navigators using them to identify islands and recognize the entrances to harbors described in the journal. Evidence that Hodges's works achieved this purpose is found in the narrative of a French expedition led by Etienne Marchand: "**Nos navigateurs qui ont fait usage de la Carte des îles de Mendoca que le capitaine Cook a levée, et qu'il a publiée avec la Relation de son second Voyage l'ont jugée très-exacte; et ils rendent le même témoignage du Plan et de la Vue de la Baie de Madre de Dios** [Vaitahu Bay, Marquesas Islands]. . . ." ³³

However, although Hodges's coastal profiles are accurate enough to serve as navigational guides, they differ significantly from profiles drawn by naval draftsmen. Draftsmen merely sketched the topographical relief of an offshore view, with little or no effort to illustrate perspective but with great attention to details of the silhouetted coastline. Hodges, on the other hand, used toned washes to create a three-dimen-

sional sense of topographical relief. Moreover, he often Compressed extensive panoramic views to create more compact images, and in ***Resolution Harbour*** he created the sensation of a distant offshore view when in fact his vantage point was close to the coast depicted. Nevertheless, the coastal profiles were primarily intended to provide an accurate image of the offshore appearance of an island and are noteworthy for their attention to topographic detail.

In contrast to the coastal profiles, Hodges's small oil paintings usually illustrate closer views of the island landscapes, often depicting individual bays or picturesque subjects such as waterfalls. These paintings, worked up both during the voyage and later in London, seem intended to illustrate the character of the paysage rather than to serve as topographical records. Certain oil sketches are based closely on particular landscapes, but Hodges often painted composite views or transformed elements of the topography. These paintings create a general impression that faithfully depicts the landscape but are hardly unmodified renditions of particular scenes.

Unlike the oil sketches that present relatively unembellished landscape views, Hodges's large-scale paintings present personal interpretations of a landscape. Based on especially splendid scenes, the large-scale views are intended to exaggerate the grandeur and the sublime qualities of the landscape. They are more consciously intended to commemorate Cook's expedition than the smaller oil paintings and coastal profiles, which are better described as scientific records and artist's impressions. The large-scale paintings invoke meaning by presenting allegorical themes such as the paradisiacal beauty of the South Sea islands and the pristine, uncorrupted Polynesian way of life. Europeans fascinated by the recent discoveries of Herculaneum and Pompeii were quick to draw an analogy between the natural, unspoiled way of life believed to have existed during classical times and the seemingly carefree Polynesian lifestyle. Though his paintings portray an idyllic image of Polynesia, Hodges may not have consciously distorted his own perception of what, to him, apparently was an actual tropical paradise. His philosophy of landscape painting, as outlined towards the end of his career, emphasized that "the imagination must be under the strict guidance of cool judgement, or we shall have fanciful representations instead of the truth, which, above all, must be the object of such researches."³⁴ In painting idealized views Hodges probably intended, as advocated by Reynolds, to distill the essence of the paysage, correcting nature to create an abstract view more perfect than any one original.

Hodges may have hoped that by painting allegorical views he could

elevate his work from the relatively low academic status of landscape painting to the more highly esteemed genre of history painting. He observed: "Pictures are collected from their value as specimens of human excellence and genius exercised in a fine art; and justly are they so; but I cannot help thinking, that they would rise still higher in estimation, were they connected with the history of the various countries, and did they faithfully represent the manners of mankind."³⁵ Hodges's understanding of his responsibility as official artist of Cook's second voyage is expressed clearly in both his writings and his paintings. He viewed the documentary and artistic aspects of his role as being inextricably linked. He used his skill as a trained artist to portray the qualities of a landscape, and he considered his depiction of the character of the culture to contribute to the intellectual interest of his pictures,

NOTES

The research reported here was conducted in 1980-1981 during a postgraduate fellowship year of independent study funded by the Thomas J. Watson Foundation. People on many islands befriended me and joined the search to locate scenes illustrated in Hodges's landscape views. I acknowledge with gratitude their enthusiastic help. I am also grateful for the encouragement, valuable comments, and criticism that I received from Bernard Smith and Duncan Robinson as I prepared this article. I thank Joseph Singer for making black-and-white prints from my color slides.

1. B. Smith, "William Hodges and English Plein-Air Painting," *Art History*, vol. 6, no. 2, June 1983, pp. 143-152; B. Smith, *Imagining the Pacific: In the Wake of the Cook Voyages*, New Haven and London, 1992; B. Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific, 1768-1850*, 2d ed., New Haven and London, 1985; I. C. Stuebe, *The Life and Works of William Hodges*, New York, 1979; R. Joppien and B. Smith, *The Art of Captain Cook's Voyages*, II, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure 1772-1775*, New Haven and London, 1985.

2. The photographs presented here were taken by the author during a yearlong study (August 1980 to September 1981) supported by a postgraduate traveling fellowship from the Thomas J. Watson Foundation. The project involved archival research at the British Library and fieldwork on twenty-eight South Pacific islands. The study was limited to Hodges's South Pacific landscapes, a group of works that nonetheless comprises the majority of his paintings from Cook's voyage. More specifically, the study focused only on paintings that illustrate distinctive landscapes, such as ones depicting high mountain ranges, so that it would be possible to identify with certainty a particular view when it was located. Information compiled from journals and charts documenting Cook's second voyage facilitated on-the-spot identification of the landscape views. Such information was essential in some cases because many of Hodges's picture captions provide little information, often only the name of the island depicted. Information from journals and charts about the places visited on each island, the location of the *Resolution's* anchorages, and the ship's route was useful in narrowing down the number of possible locations to be checked in the

field, On-the-spot location of vantage points from which each of the landscapes was depicted was made by reference to photographs of Hodges's paintings but often required persistent searching and the cooperation of local guides.

3. Smith 1983, op. cit.; Stuebe, op. cit.
4. J. Hawkesworth, *An Account of the Voyages undertaken by the order of His Present Majesty for making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere . . .*, London, 1773, II.
5. Ibid., p. 186.
6. "Je me croyais transporté dans le jardin d'Eden." L. A. Bougainville, *Voyage autour du monde, par la fregate du roi La Boudeuse, et La Flute L'Etoile; En 1766, 1767, 1768 & 1769*, Paris, 1771, p. 148.
7. B. Smith, "Art as Information: Reflections on the Art from Captain Cook's Voyages" (The annual lecture del. to the Australian Academy of the Humanities, Canberra, 16 May 1978), Sydney, 1979; Smith 1983, op. cit.; Smith 1985, op. cit.
8. Stuebe, op. cit.
9. Joppien and Smith, op. cit.
10. PRO, Adm 2/97, ff. 542-543, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 3.
11. Smith 1983, op. cit., p. 146.
12. J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery*, Hakluyt Society, London, 1961, II, p. 119.
13. G. Forster, *A Voyage round the World in His Britannic Majesty's Sloop, RESOLUTION, commanded by Captain James Cook, during the years 1772, 3, 4, and 5*, London, 1777, I, p. 427.
14. W. Wales, *Remarks on Mr. Forster's Account of Captain Cook's last Voyage round the World: In the Years 1772, 1773, 1774, and 1775*, London, 1778, p. 29.
15. B. Ford, "Richard Wilson in Rome," *Burlington*, XCIV, 1952, pp. 307-313.
16. Quoted in W. G. Constable, *Richard Wilson*, Cambridge, 1953, p. 43.
17. J. Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, ed. R. R. Wark, San Marino, Calif., 1959, p. 44.
18. Stuebe, op. cit.; Joppien and Smith, op. cit.
19. Beaglehole, op. cit., p. clviii.
20. Reynolds, op. cit., p. 69.
21. Reynolds, op. cit., p. 70.
22. Ibid.
23. Constable, op. cit., p. 139.
24. Ford, op. cit., p. 313.
25. J. Farington, quoted in Constable, op. cit., p. 56.
26. Stuebe, op. cit., pp. 20-121.

27. Beaglehole, op. cit., p. 119.
28. Reynolds, op. cit., p. 44.
29. W. Hodges, quoted in Constable, op. cit., p. 42.
30. *London Packet or New Lloyd's Evening Post*, no. 1174, 25-B, April 1777, p. 1, quoted in Smith 1983, op. cit., p. 151.
31. Joppien and Smith, op. cit., p. 98.
32. Beaglehole, op. cit., pp. 533-534.
33. C. P. C. de Fleurieu, *Voyage autour du monde, pendant les années 1790, 1791, et 1792, par Etienne Marchand . . .*, Paris, 1798-1800, I, pp. 64-65.
34. W. Hodges, *Travels in India during the years 1780-83*, London, 1793, p. 155.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 156.