

# THE ROLE OF THE EXPLORATION ARTIST: LOUIS CHORIS AND THE KOTZEBUE EXPEDITION, 1815–1818

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**Abstract.** In 1816, the second Russian circumnavigation of the globe, led by Lieutenant Otto von Kotzebue, called on the west coast of North America and Hawai'i. Expeditionary artist Louis Choris documented the indigenous people of Alaska, California, and Hawai'i with the intent of furthering anthropological research into the origin of the various races. The resulting *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde, avec des portraits de sauvages d'Amérique, d'Asie, d'Afrique, et des îles du Grand Océan*, containing 105 hand-colored illustrations, is one of the first great lithographic works of exploration. Interestingly, one character of this paper had peripheral connections to the Romanian lands: Lieutenant Kotzebue was the son of the successful playwright August von Kotzebue (1761–1819) who had two other sons, the navigator's brothers, Karl von Kotzebue, the Russian consul in Jassy, and Wilhelm von Kotzebue, a traveller, diplomat and writer, who settled by marriage in Moldavia. He authored the delightful volume, *Aus der Moldau. Bilder und Skizzen*, translated into Romanian under the title *Din Moldova. Tablouri și schițe din 1850* and the novel *Lascăr Viorescu*, inspired by the Moldavian elite's morals.

**Keywords:** Louis Choris; Kotzebue Expedition; Russian Exploration; *Rurik* Voyage; Choris in Paris, California and Hawaii.

On August 3, 1818, the Russian brig *Rurik* captained by Lieutenant Otto von Kotzebue cast anchor in the Neva River at St. Petersburg, in front of Count Nikolai Petrovich Romanzoff's palace, thus completing an around-the-world voyage that had consumed more than three years. After reporting to Count Nikolai Romanzoff,<sup>1</sup> the intellectual Russian nobleman and former foreign minister who had sponsored the undertaking, twenty-three-year-old expedition artist Louis (Login Andrevich) Choris (Fig. 2.1) took his watercolor sketches to Paris, where "persons distinguished in arts and letters" told him that no book of such images existed and encouraged him to publish them. Choris prepared a brief text, based on his diary, to describe the events of the voyage which included visits to Alaska, California, and Hawaii, and in 1820 began the serial publication of *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde, avec des portraits de sauvages d'Amérique, d'Asie, d'Afrique, et des îles du Grand Océan*, which he ultimately illustrated with 105 hand-colored lithographic plates. "[I] above all tried to render faithfully the characteristic features, the color, in a word, the physiognomy of these peoples," he wrote. "It is up to the public to decide how well [I]... succeeded."<sup>2</sup>

## WORLD EXPOLRATION AND THE ORIGIN OF RACE

That statement reveals Choris's awareness of the scientific theories and squabbles of his time, what historian William H. Goetzmann has called "the second great age of discovery," an age in which, as the innovative French historian Fernand Braudel explained, "the voyages around the world had no other goal than to obtain new information about geography, the natural world, and the mores of different

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<sup>1</sup> There are several variant spellings for the name of Count Nikolai Petrovich Rumyantsev (1754–1826). I have used the spelling that Choris used in his book.

<sup>2</sup> Louis Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde, avec des portraits de sauvages d'Amérique, d'Asie, d'Afrique, et des îles du Grand Océan* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822), iii (quote). See also Louis Choris, *Voyage dans le Pacifique (1815–1818)*, preface by Stéphane Martin (Paris: Chandeigne, 2008). For a summary of the Kotzebue expedition, see N. A. Ivashintsov, *Russian Round-the-World Voyages, 1803–1849*, ed. Richard A. Pierce, trans. Glynn R. Barratt (Kingston, Ontario: The Limestone Press, 1980), 23–31. Niklaus R. Schweizer of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa has transcribed and edited Choris's diary as *Journal des Malers Ludwig York Choris* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 1999).

peoples.”<sup>3</sup> That quest culminated in the most challenging scientific question of the day: the origin, or origins, of the different races. The famed Swedish physician and botanist Carl Linnaeus took the lead by extending his system of naming organisms to include humans in his *Systema naturae* (1735). The French naturalist George Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, declared in his *Histoire naturelle* (1748–1808) that environment was a key factor in the development of living things. He believed that the New World was literally younger than the Old World, that it had emerged relatively recently from the Noachian waters, and that the humid and miasmatic airs from the remaining swamps, lakes, and jungles still blanketed the landscape. These conditions stunted all life, including the natives, who, Buffon conjectured, were neither as strong nor sexually virile as Europeans.<sup>4</sup> His was but one of many attempts to make sense out of the flood of cultural, biological, and cartographic information that poured into European centers of learning during these decades of exploration.



Fig. 1. After a self-portrait by Louis Choris, *Louis Choris*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822). Lithograph printed by Joseph Langlumé, --x--". Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University (ZZc86 822c COPY 1).

<sup>3</sup> William H. Goetzmann, *New Lands, New Men: America and the Second Great Age of Discovery* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1995), Braudel quotation, 1; John C. Greene, *The Death of Adam: Evolution and Its Impact on Western Thought* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1959), 221–247; and Hugh Honour, *The European Vision of America* (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1975).

<sup>4</sup> David Bindman, *Ape to Apollo: Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), 17; Robert E. Bieder, *Science Encounters the Indian, 1820–1880: The Early Years of American Ethnology* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 6; Ray Allen Billington, *Land of Savagery, Land of Promise: The European Image of the American Frontier* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), 1–25.

Professor Johann Friedrich Blumenbach of the University of Göttingen, one of the greatest German naturalists of his day and the founder of scientific anthropology, continued Buffon's line of reasoning. Theorizing that all people sprang from a single creation and are biologically equal, he, too, posited that differences in cultures must be due to the natural environment – climate, habitat, means of subsistence, and diet – rather than inherent racial characteristics. And if the environment were responsible for these differences, which Blumenbach and others, such as the Dutch physician and naturalist Petrus Camper at the University of Groningen, perceived as degenerations from original people who lived near the Caspian Sea, it followed that these conditions must be thoroughly documented and studied through careful observations, collections, and drawings and paintings. In his *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind* (third edition, 1795), Blumenbach, who evolved his thesis as evidence accumulated, described his examination of eighty-two skulls and numerous artists' portraits of various peoples. From them he derived five basic races – Mongolian, American, Caucasian, Malayan, and Ethiopian – concluding that the Caucasian cranium was the most beautiful and symmetrical, and therefore the original “from which, as from a mean and primeval type, the others diverge....” But the variety of races discovered by the likes of British Captain James Cook during his three voyages in the dozen years following 1768 raised serious questions about this theory. Were the primitive peoples of Africa, the South Seas, and America from the same racial stock as Europeans?<sup>5</sup>

Not everyone agreed that Blumenbach was even on the right track. Did differences in the environment explain racial diversity, or did it originate in several different creations? Among the polygenists were the French author Voltaire and the Scottish philosopher Henry Home, Lord Kames, who suggested, in his *Sketches of the History of Man* (1774), what many saw as an anti-Biblical idea that racial differences could only be accounted for by separate creations. They doubted that environment alone could explain the different races, claiming that such distinctions were innate – and that Africans and Indians were inferior to all others. Several Americans, the Rev. Samuel Stanhope Smith, Albert Gallatin, and Samuel G. Morton among them, also researched the topic, but from different points of view. Smith, a Presbyterian minister and college president, felt that classifying the races was “a useless labor” because it was probably impossible. Gallatin, the former Secretary of the Treasury under President Thomas Jefferson, approached the problem from the perspective of Indian languages, and Dr. Morton, a Philadelphia Quaker, collected and studied skulls of different races and published the results in his widely read *Crania Americana* (1839).<sup>6</sup> Smith and Gallatin felt that all men were of one species, while Morton hypothesized, to the benefit of the relatively new practice of phrenology, that each race possessed a different but characteristic – and therefore identifiable – cranium, which, to him, suggested the possibility of separate creations. These questions were important because the answer held not only scientific but also theological and political implications: would this new science uphold or deny the Christian belief in the descent of all people from Adam? Would it provide evidence that people of color were inherently inferior to the white race and attempt to justify slavery? Would it materially affect the relationship that colonial powers had with indigenous peoples?<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Bindman, *Ape to Apollo*, 12 and chapter 3; Greene, *Death of Adam*, 222, 224 (quote); Bieder, *Science Encounters the Indian*, 61. Blumenbach would have had access to some of the artifacts that Cook collected, because Göttingen purchased a large collection of them from the London dealer George Humphrey, who acquired them directly from various members of the crew. See Adrienne L. Kaeppler, “Tracing the History of Hawaiian Cook Voyage Artefacts in the Museum of Mankind,” in *Captain Cook and the South Pacific* (London: British Museum, Yearbook 3, 1979), 169. Banks also loaned Blumenbach materials from Cook's expeditions during their lengthy correspondence. See John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 149-158; Arthur Keith, “Blumenbach's Centenary,” *Man*, 40 (June 1940): 82-85; and Londa Schiebinger, “The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth-Century Science,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 23 (Summer 1990): 387-405.

<sup>6</sup> See Greene, *Death of Adam*, 222; Albert Gallatin, “A Synopsis of the Indian Tribes of North America,” *Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society*, 2 (1836): 1-422; and Samuel G. Morton, *Crania Americana; or, A Comparative View of the Skulls of Various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America, to which is Prefixed an Essay on the Varieties of the Human Species* (Philadelphia, 1839).

<sup>7</sup> Bieder, *Science Encounters the Indian*, has chapters on both Gallatin and Morton, see pages 16-103. See also John S. Michael, “A New Look at Morton's Craniological Research,” *Current Anthropology*, 29 (Apr. 1988): 349-354; and Reginald Horsemann, “Scientific Racism and the American Indian in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” *American Quarterly*, 27 (May 1975): 152-168. Phrenology was a popular but controversial belief. See, for example, George Combe, “Combe on Phrenology, Number VII,” *Southern Literary Messenger*, 5 (Dec. 1839): 810-813; J. S. Allen, “Phrenology Examined,” *Southern Literary Messenger*, 12 (May 1846): 267-277; and Dr. Thomson, “Phrenology,” *Ladies' Repository*, 1 (Dec. 1841): 361-367.

In his attempt to answer these questions, Blumenbach emphasized to his students the importance of obtaining documented observations and collections from distant lands. At Göttingen, he offered a course in the art of traveling, or “Apodemics,” the goal of which was “to make travel a method for the disciplined, systematic gathering of knowledge, which was achieved by organizing all aspects into categories,” and he dispatched his students around the world in search of evidence.<sup>8</sup> By following his teachings – derived from Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, John Locke, and others – that knowledge could be gained from a disciplined observation of the physical world, careful description, and orderly classification, Blumenbach’s students eagerly added to the university’s collections and to the world of knowledge. Ideally, the Newtonian philosophy of the “world machine, running according to law,” would now be reconciled with the Lockian model of discovering natural law by gathering facts and organizing them in a methodical manner.<sup>9</sup>

## ROLE OF THE EXPEDITION ARTIST

As rigorous a scholar as the protean Romantic Alexander von Humboldt, a Blumenbach student who had transformed the new field of geography with his 1799 to 1804 explorations in Latin America, likewise insisted on precise delineations of native peoples and their environment for his research. Pictures were required for a number of reasons, and their use went beyond what one might think of today. The popular Enlightenment pseudo-science of physiognomy, as practiced by one of its most famous adherents Johann Caspar Lavater of Zurich, held that a judicious physiognomist could divine a person’s character from his or her facial features. “‘There are’ I say, ‘in the exterior of man many things not susceptible to disguise,’” Lavater wrote in one of his best-known works, *Essays on Physiognomy*,

“and these very things are certain indications of an internal character.” Where is the man, for example, who can at pleasure influence his body system? who can present his forehead in the form of an arch, when it is naturally flat, or render it uneven and angular when it is naturally regular?

Lavater claimed that careful study of one profile “announces a higher degree of intelligence and activity,” while another has in it “the power neither of education nor circumstances, to unite with that face... sagacity or exquisite sense; and it is absolutely incompatible with Philosophy and Poetry, with the talents of the Politician, or the heroism of the soldier.”<sup>10</sup> Lavater’s concept of physiognomy became well known throughout Europe, enticing even the great William Blake to provide some of the illustrations for his book.<sup>11</sup> The popularity of physiognomy was so pervasive that a young artist such as Choris would doubtless have known of it, and in 1831 it almost kept a young Charles Darwin from being appointed naturalist on the *HMS Beagle*, because Captain Robert Fitz Roy was an “ardent disciple of Lavater” and felt that Darwin’s nose indicated that he did not have “sufficient energy and determination for the voyage.”<sup>12</sup> But whether one accepts any element of physiognomy is not the point; the point is that the practice required the most accurate portraits that one could acquire. And, in a similar manner, as art historian Bernard Smith has observed, the urge for accuracy also elevated the humble practice of topographic art to the “authority and prestige of classical landscape.”<sup>13</sup> The role of the expeditionary artist was never more important than during the decades at the turn of the nineteenth century.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph C. Porter, “Marvelous Figures, Astonished Travelers: The Montana Expedition of Maximilian, Prince of Wied,” *Montana, the Magazine of Western History*, 41 (Autumn 1991): 40. See also Pär Eliasson, *Platsens blick: Vetenskapsakademien och den naturalhistoriska resan 1790-1840*, Idéhistorisk skrifter 29 (Umeå: Inst. för Historiska Studier, Umeå Univ., 1999), esp. chapter two (quotation from English summary on Internet at <http://www.cfvh.kva.se/abstr16.html>).

<sup>9</sup> Brooke Hindle, *The Pursuit of Science in Revolutionary America, 1735-1789* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1956), 12.

<sup>10</sup> Johann Caspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy, Designed to Promote the Knowledge and the Love of Mankind*, trans. by Henry Hunter, 3 vols. in 5. (London: John Murray, H. Hunter and T. Holloway, 1789-99). For quotations see vol. 2:12 (first quote), 27 (second quote), 35 (third quote).

<sup>11</sup> G. E. Bentley, Jr., “The Physiognomy of Lavater’s Essays: False Imprints, ‘1789’ and ‘1792,’” *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly*, 29 (No. 1, Summer, 1995), 16-23.

<sup>12</sup> Charles Darwin, *Selected Letters on Evolution and Origin of Species, with an Autobiographical Chapter*, ed. by Francis Darwin (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1958), 27.

<sup>13</sup> Joan K. Stemmler, “The Physiognomical Portraits of Johann Caspar Lavater,” *Art Bulletin*, 75 (Mar. 1993): 151-168; Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 65 (quote); Claudio Greppi, “‘On the Spot’: Traveling Artists and the Iconographic Inventory of the World, 1769-1859,” in *Tropical Visions in an Age of Empire*,

Blumenbach acknowledged the essentiality of pictures to his work when he wrote to thank Sir Joseph Banks, the naturalist on Captain Cook's first expedition, for "the unrestricted use of all the collections of treasures relating to the study of Anthropology, in which your library abounds; I mean the pictures, and the drawings and c. [*sic*] taken by the best artists from life itself." On another occasion, he thanked Banks for permitting him "the perusal of your inestimable portfolios of drawings of the South Sea curiosities & even the copying of many of them...."<sup>14</sup> Nor were the navigators unaware of the expeditionary artists' role. Captain Cook wrote that John Webber was along "for the express purpose of supplying the unavoidable imperfections of written accounts." The French explorer Jean-François de Galaup, Comte de La Pérouse, explained artist Gaspar Duché de Vancy's task as "to paint the dresses and scenery of the different countries... and everything else that it is impossible to describe." And Captain Vasilii Golovnin, who sailed around the world on the Russian *Kamchatka* in 1817–1819, elaborated: "There are many things in distant parts of the world which can not [*sic*] possibly be brought back and of which even the most detailed descriptions cannot convey a proper understanding. Only a drawing can compensate for these inadequacies."<sup>15</sup>

## RUSSIAN EXPLORATION

These were among the issues that most challenged the European scientific and geographic community as Lieutenant Adam Johann von Krusenstern led the first Russian circumnavigation of the world, a voyage that spanned the years 1803–1806. A few years after Krusenstern's return, as the Spanish crown battled independence movements throughout Latin America, the Russian-American Company, a state-chartered joint stock company under the authority of the Russian Ministry of Commerce with a mandate to establish Russian settlements in Alaska, California, and Hawaii, made its farthest southern penetration of North America, establishing posts well within Spanish-claimed territory at Fort Ross, about eighty miles up the coast from San Francisco Bay, and Port Bodega, about twenty miles further south. The spread of these Russian settlements across the northwest of the North American continent stressed the system of transporting goods across Siberia and emphasized the need for a northwest passage – which the Russians referred to as a *northeast* passage. The need to supply their colonial outposts, and the evident Spanish weakness in California, encouraged Russian navigators to continue their explorations.<sup>16</sup>

Krusenstern, now promoted to admiral, talked frequently to Count Romanzoff about discoveries yet to be made and probably would have followed up on his first voyage more quickly had not Napoleon's disastrous invasion of Russia and the continuing wars of the French Revolution left the Russian fleet in disrepair. While waiting for an opportunity, Krusenstern amassed data from discoveries made since his circumnavigation to convince his logical and practical sailor's mind that another full-scale search for a northwest passage through the Arctic was really worthwhile. With Romanzoff's encouragement, he began planning the next expedition and securing the necessary equipment. Finding that the government had monopolized all the oak timber in Russia for warships, he went to Abo, Finland, and contracted with shipbuilder Erick Malm to construct a 180-ton vessel of fir.<sup>17</sup> Count Romanzoff named it *Rurik* after the legendary founder of Russia. Krusenstern then continued to England, where he bought all the astronomical

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edited by Felix Driver and Luciana Martins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 31–33; and William H. Goetzmann, "The Man Who Stopped to Paint America," in *Karl Bodmer's America*, edited by David C. Hunt and Marsha V. Gallagher (Lincoln: Joslyn Art Museum & University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 6.

<sup>14</sup> Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, "Introductory Letter to Sir Joseph Banks," in *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach*, trans. and ed. by Thomas Bendyshe (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1865), 149 (quote); Blumenbach to Banks, Mar. 10, 1794, in the British Library, Additional MSS, quoted in Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment*, 153 (second quote).

<sup>15</sup> Cook quotation is from Smith, *European Vision*, 109; J. F. G. de La Pérouse, *A Voyage Round the World, Performed in the Years 1785, 1786, 1787, and 1788, by the Boussole and Astrolabe* (3 vols.; London: J. Johnson, 1799), 1: 448–449; Vasilii M. Golovnin, *Around the World on the "Kamchatka," 1817–1819*, ed. and trans. by Ella L. Wiswell (Honolulu: Hawaiian Historical Society, 1979), 8.

<sup>16</sup> Glynn Barratt, *Russia in Pacific Waters, 1715–1825: A Survey of the Origins of Russia's Naval Presence in the North and South Pacific* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981), 176–185; Berg, "Russian Discoveries," 17–18; Joshua Paddison, *A World Transformed: Firsthand Accounts of California Before the Gold Rush* (Berkeley, California: Heyday Books, 1998), 135.

<sup>17</sup> Otto von Kotzebue, *A Voyage of Discovery, into the South Sea and Beering's Straits, for the Purpose of Exploring a North-East Passage, Undertaken in the Years 1815–1818*, trans. by Hannibal Evans Lloyd (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1821), 1: 12–15. This 3 volume work is a translation of *Entdeckungs-Reise in die Süd-See und nach der Berings-Strasse zur Erforschung einer nordöstlichen Durchfahrt, Unternommen in den Jahren 1815–18 auf kosten Sr. Erlaucht des Herrn Reichskanzler Grafen Rumanzow auf dem Schiffe 'Rurik'* (3 vols.; Weimar: verlegt von den Gebrüdern Hoffman, 1821). It was also issued in an abridged, two-part edition that same year by Sir Richard Phillips and Co., London.

and physical instruments – sextants, compasses, barometers, dipping-needle, aerometer, thermometers, hygrometers – for the voyage. He was able to take advantage of several recent English inventions, such as a log and sounding machine, a chronometer, a Six's thermometer (to measure temperature minimums and maximums), and a mountain barometer. He also purchased a camera lucida, an optical device to aid artists in copying any scene or object before them.<sup>18</sup>

Continuing his tour of London, Krusenstern acquired an “extensive collection” of maps by James Horsburgh, Aaron Arrowsmith, and John Purdy, including recent maps of Cook's voyages. He got a lifeboat, the invention of master builder John Fincham, that was so new he was only able to obtain the British government's permission to purchase it because the scientific community supported his request. Some tin boxes, made by the English firm of Donkin, Hall, & Gramble, in which meat, vegetables, soup, milk, “in short eatables of every kind,” reportedly could be kept for years in a “perfectly fresh state” also caught his attention.<sup>19</sup> These boxes proved especially useful when they were the only source of nourishment that the ship's doctor could provide sick members of the crew, but, for the most part, apparently were failures.



Fig. 2. Otto von Kotzebue, frontispiece to volume 1, Kotzebue, *Puteshestvie v ĭuzhnyĭ Okean i v Beringov Proliv dlia otiskaniia Sĭvero-vostochnago morskago prokhoda, predprinĭatoe v 1815, 1816, 1817 i 1818 godakh izhdiveniem Ego Sĭiatel'stva, Gospodina Gosudarstvennago Kantslera, Grafa Nikolaia Petrovicha Rumiantsova na korabliĭ Riurikiĕ* (St. Petersburg: Nik. Grecha, 1821[-1823], 3 vols. plus atlas). Stipple engraving, 11 5/8 x 9 1/4", page size, approximate. Courtesy the Russian State Library, Rare Books Department, Moscow. [(The Library of Congress has a digital copy of Kotzebue's book online at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.ndlpcoop/mtfctx.s00018>.) I intend to move this to a note in the text.]

<sup>18</sup> John H. Hammond and Jill Austin, *The Camera Lucida in Art and Science* (Bristol: Adam Hilger, 1987).

<sup>19</sup> Robert Gardiner, *Frigates of the Napoleonic Wars* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 65, 77, 109; and W. H. Chaloner, *People and Industries* (London: Routledge, 1963), 106.

Krusenstern then selected an international crew for the voyage. For captain, he chose Lieutenant Otto von Kotzebue (Fig. 2.2), who had proved himself an intelligent, enthusiastic leader on Krusenstern's circumnavigation, and was the son of one of Europe's best-known writers, August von Kotzebue.<sup>20</sup> Kotzebue's aide was an old friend, Lieutenant Gleb S. Schischmareff. Krusenstern selected Dr. Karl Friedrich von Ledebour, professor of natural history at the University of Dorpat, as expedition naturalist, but Ledebour declined the appointment because of poor health. In his place, Krusenstern employed the talented young scholar and naturalist Adelbert von Chamisso (Fig. 2.3) of Berlin, who had spent the last two years in Coppet, Switzerland, engaged in botanical research as a member of Madam de Staël's salon. Ledebour's assistant, Dr. Johann Friedrich von Eschscholtz, accepted the position of ship's doctor, and the Danish naturalist, Morten Wormskjold, who had sailed on a previous Danish expedition to Greenland, served the expedition as a second naturalist until he left the ship in Kamchatka to study what he thought to be an imperfectly explored land.<sup>21</sup>



Fig. 3. Louis Choris, *Adelbert von Chamisso*, ca. 1815-1818. Watercolor on paper, 8 7/8 x 7 3/16".

©Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin, Photo by Oliver Ziebe. Unfortunately, the inscription is too faded to read, but the dates make it apparent that Choris gave the portrait to Chamisso as a memento of their voyage.

One of the more fortunate choices was Choris as expedition artist. A Ukrainian born of German parents, the precocious youngster was well-qualified for the trip both by training and temperament. Born

<sup>20</sup> Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 1: 14. Kotzebue's father was August von Kotzebue, author of historical works, dramas, and plays.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 1: 22-24. In 1814, Chamisso had published *Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte* (*Peter Schlemihl's Miraculous Story*), the story of the man who sold his shadow, which later made him famous. See Marko Pavlyshyn, "Gold, Guilt and Scholarship: Adelbert von Chamisso's *Peter Schlemihl*," *The German Quarterly*, 55 (No. 1, Jan. 1982), 49-63.

Login Ludwig Andrevitch Choris in Yekaterinoslav (Dnepropetrovsk) in 1795, he studied drawing at the university at Kharkov, where his father was an instructor.<sup>22</sup> Orphaned at a young age, he became the foster child of J. Matthes, a drawing instructor at the university, and went with him to St. Petersburg, where he received an excellent education. Matthes might also have been responsible for getting him the appointment, at age eighteen, as artist-naturalist on Marshal von Biberstein's expedition to Mount Caucasus, and it was probably through Biberstein, an old classmate of Baron Georges Cuvier, that Choris met the great French naturalist. Choris presented Krusenstern with an impressive portfolio and high recommendations from his professors at the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts and got the job as expedition artist.<sup>23</sup>

Choris apparently was blessed with a personality just the opposite of the stereotypically volatile artist, one that served him well, whether dealing with his colleagues within the confines of a small ship over a three-year period or attempting to win the confidence of the different native peoples. He seemingly was quite patient, an eager student and adventurer, characteristics that won the respect and cooperation of many people on the voyage. He was able to get the crew to do things for him that they would not do for Chamisso and the other scientists, such as shine his shoes, and he willingly took on the job of steward for their small space. He was also the victim of friendly harassments, such as hiding his shirt and, on another occasion, his mattress, leaving him to conclude that they had blown overboard. Nevertheless, he became good friends with the older Chamisso, whom he recognized as someone well versed in the arts and who taught him English as they began the voyage. Choris tried to return the favor by teaching Chamisso Russian, and they maintained a correspondence for several years after their return.<sup>24</sup>

Krusenstern was "more than doubtful" that a northwest passage existed, but, probably encouraged by Romanzoff's major holdings in the struggling Russian-American Company, which would have greatly benefitted from such a passage, he convinced himself that "another attempt... might perhaps not be a vain enterprise" and established a series of secondary goals for Kotzebue. Krusenstern felt that "yet many important advantages would accrue from it to the sciences, and especially to navigation."<sup>25</sup> If he found no passage, Kotzebue was, first, to prove that no further endeavors were necessary. Then he was to engage in scientific research and documentation that would expand the world's knowledge of the oceans and of little known lands of the Arctic and the South Pacific.<sup>26</sup> Since he would be in a smaller ship that could sail closer to the shore without landing, he was to more fully explore the North American coast, then, when it became impossible to proceed by ship, send a party ashore to explore further. They were to mark the point at which the land ceased its northward thrust and turned to the east. Finally, Krusenstern wrote, the expedition was to cross the Pacific twice from different directions, which surely would yield new discoveries that he could not possibly predict at the outset of the voyage.<sup>27</sup> The *Rurik* is said to have made the last circumnavigation of the world for the purpose of exploration, subsequent expeditions being for scientific study or commercial gain.

<sup>22</sup> "Necrology," in *The Foreign Review*, 2 (No. 3, Sept. 1828), 263–264; Paul Mills, ed., *Early Paintings of California in the Robert B. Honeyman Jr. Collection* (Oakland: Oakland Art Museum, 1956), 19; and Peter Renn, "Zum künstlerischen Werdegang von Ludwig Choris als »Reisemaler«," Kreusberg Museum, *Mit den Augen des Fremden: Adalbert von Chamisso – Dichter, Naturwissenschaftler, Weltreisender* (Berlin: Gesellschaft für interregionalen Kulturaustausch: Kreusberg Museum, 2004), 188.

<sup>23</sup> "Choris, Louis," in Ferdinand Hoefer, ed., *Nouvelle biographie universelle depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à nos jours* (46 vols.; Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, Editeurs, 1852–1866), 10: 383, and in Hoefer (ed.), *Nouvelle biographie Générale depuis les temps les plus reculés...* (37 vols.; Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, Editeurs, 1854–1866), 10: 383; Niklaus Schweizer, "'At Last He Fell Asleep': Choris, Chamisso and Kamehameha I of Hawai'i," in Irmengard Rauch and Cornelia Moore, eds., *Across the Oceans: Studies from East to West in Honor of Richard K. Seymour* (Honolulu: College of Languages, Linguistics and Literature, University of Hawai'i, 1995), 17; and James W. Van Stone, ed., "An Early Nineteenth-Century Artist in Alaska: Louis Choris and the First Kotzebue Expedition," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 51 (1960), 145. See also Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 1: 24.

<sup>24</sup> Choris, *Journal des Malers*, 48; Adelbert von Chamisso, *A Voyage Around the World with the Romanzov Exploring Expedition in the Years 1815–1818 in the Brig Rurik, Captain Otto von Kotzebue*, trans. and ed. by Henry Kratz (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 23, 28, 35, 129, 166, notes, for example, that Choris's drawings won the confidence of natives on several islands. This is a translation of *Reise um die Welt mit der Romanzoffischen Entdeckungs-Expedition in den Jahren 1815–1818 auf der brigg "Rurik"* (Leipzig: Weidmann'sche Buchhandlung, 1836). Chamisso's book is a revision of his journal some two decades after the voyage. See also Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 1: 175, 178–80, 230.

<sup>25</sup> Krusenstern's introduction to Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 1: 7, 9–11. For Russian expansion into Northern California, see Lydia T. Black, *Russians in Alaska, 1732–1867* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2004), 181–183. A northern passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific was discovered in the mid-nineteenth century, but no one successfully navigated it until the early twentieth century. Commercial traffic through the passage began in 1969 and continues to grow as the Arctic ice melts. See "What is the Northwest Passage?" <http://geology.com/articles/northwest-passage.shtml>.

<sup>26</sup> Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 2: 41–83.

<sup>27</sup> Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 1: 10–11.

Ever since his Latin American trip, Humboldt had called for an artist who could do justice to America. Now Choris had that opportunity. In choosing Choris for this task, Krusenstern recognized the importance of the illustration to scientific endeavor, “the descriptive word wedded to accurate image,” an undertaking, says art historian Barbara Stafford, “whose very existence and popularity is based on an ardent yearning for facts rather than fictions.” In this, Bacon’s ideal that our trained senses can provide a replica of the real world “elevated [art] to the task of picturing reality.”<sup>28</sup>

## VOYAGE OF THE *RURIK*

Malm finished the *Rurik* on schedule, and Kotzebue sailed from Abo, Finland, in May 1815. He proceeded to Kronstadt, where Count Romanzoff and Krusenstern came to see him off. On July 17, less than a month after Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo, he saluted the Count with thirteen guns, the crew gave three cheers, and the *Rurik* cast off. Kotzebue stopped at Copenhagen Roads to pick up Chamisso and Wormskjold, and at Santa Cruz de Tenerife, where they took on wine and fresh food. Less than a month and a half later the vessel was in the harbor at St. Catherine’s Island off the coast of Brazil. It took forty-five days to round Cape Horn and reach Talcahuano, Chile, arriving in February 1816. Sailing in a northwesterly direction, they crossed the Pacific, reaching the Kamchatka peninsula on the Asian coast of the Bering Sea on June 7, and spent the next month probing the Alaskan coastline. As they crossed the Arctic Circle, they encountered a large inlet not shown on Cook’s charts and explored it, sailing eastward until bad weather drove them back.<sup>29</sup> Their documentation of this region may be their most important contribution to geographic knowledge of the northwest. The Alaska place names Chamisso Island and Choris Peninsula in Kotzebue Sound, are cartographic reminders of their visit (Fig. 2.4).

While waiting for a storm to clear around the Sound, Choris demonstrated his talent for the natives, sketching the features of an old man, then holding it up for their approval. “The son held his sides with laughter when he saw his father’s face drawn in the book,” recalled Kotzebue. Kotzebue found that the natives of Alaska appreciated Choris’ watercolors as much as had those of the Pacific, specifically acknowledging the accuracy of his drawings with regard to Indian costumes<sup>30</sup> (Fig. 2.5).

Leaving the far north, Kotzebue moved down the coast to San Francisco in October. “Our chief task,” the naturalist Chamisso recalled, “was to escape the northern winter. I do not consider that the stupidest thing I have done in my life...” Of course, they also wanted to provision and repair the vessel for the coming trip to the Sandwich Islands and the south Pacific, where they would spend the winter. The Russians had been granted permission to call at San Francisco, so Kotzebue found a welcoming but almost comically inept garrison under commandant José Darío Argüello and a Spanish presidio and mission in a dreadful state of neglect, having not received a supply ship in several years because of the revolutionary turmoil in Mexico. As he approached the harbor, Kotzebue raised the Russian flag and saluted the fort, which raised its flag and returned the salute. Then he waited for more than an hour as “the whole military contingent had left the fort and taken up position on the shore opposite our ship.” He finally remembered George Vancouver’s 1793 comment that the garrison did not have a boat and sent two men ashore to announce his arrival to the commandant. After the formalities, he sent one of the *Rurik*’s sailors to repair the rope on the little-used flagpole, because no one in the presidio could climb the pole, and later dispatched Dr. Eschscholtz to treat two soldiers who were injured as they fired the fort’s worn-out cannon to announce the arrival of Governor Pablo Vicente Solá from Monterey.

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<sup>28</sup> Humboldt apparently felt that German artist Johan Moritz Rugendas (1802–1858), who painted in both South America and Mexico, provided the kinds of pictures that he called for. See Renate Löschner and Xavier Moyssen, *El México luminoso de Rugendas* (México: Edición Privada de Cartón y Papel de México, S.A. de C.V., 1985), 13–14, 24–28, 96–102; and Stafford, *Voyage into Substance*, xx, 445 (quote).

<sup>29</sup> Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 1: 90–91; N. A. Ivashintsov, *Russian Round-the-World Voyages*, 23–31; Andrei L. Isotoff, “Russian Contributions to the Geographical Knowledge of Alaska and the Adjacent Islands and Seas” (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Oregon, 1942), 101; *The Northwest Coast: A Century of Personal Narratives of Discovery, Conquest & Exploration from Bering’s Landfall to Wilkes’ Surveys, 1741–1841* (New York: Edward Eberstadt & Sons, n. d.), 22; Bancroft, *History of Alaska*, 496–497.

<sup>30</sup> Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 1, 175, 230, 281. Later critics have called Choris “probably the most talented of the early documentary artists” to visit California. Mills, ed., *Early Paintings of California*, 19.



Fig. 4. Drawn and on stone by Louis Choris, *Vue des Glaces dans le Golfe de Kotzebue*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822), Kamtchatka section, Plate IX. Hand-colored lithograph printed by Joseph Langlumé, 6 1/4 x 11", image. The figure standing in the center, with the sketchbook under his arm, is probably Choris. William S. Reese, New Haven, CT.



Fig. 5. Drawn and on stone by Louis Choris, *Habitans du Golfe de Kotzebue*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822), Kamtchatka section, Plate II. Hand-colored lithograph printed by Joseph Langlumé, 6 5/8 x 11 3/8", vignette. When portraying indigenous peoples, Choris included full-front, profile, and three-quarter views to document their physiognomy. Courtesy William S. Reese, New Haven, CT.



Fig. 6. On stone by Victor Jean Adam after Louis Choris, *Vue du Presidio S. Francisco*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822) California section, Plate II. Hand-colored lithograph printed by Joseph Langlumé, 6 ¾ x 12", image. Courtesy William S. Reese, New Haven, CT.

The scientists went about their collecting, and Choris his sketching (Fig. 2.6). Chamisso lamented how Spain had neglected northern California, which, he thought, could be the “granary and market of the northern coasts” if it were opened up to trade. The padres kept the local Indians, whom he concluded were “far beneath” those farther to the north and to the interior, in virtual slavery and treated them with contempt, and they were dying at an astonishing rate. Choris observed that the *Rurik* was only the third non-Spanish vessel to visit San Francisco in some time, although he was told that perhaps as many as 250 American ships annually conducted smuggling operations up and down the coast.<sup>31</sup>

Governor Solá took the opportunity to complain to Kotzebue that the Russian-American Company had infringed upon Spanish territory and had declined even to reply to the Viceroy’s letters. Although he had no authority in the matter, Kotzebue stirred a minor diplomatic spat when he naïvely promised, in a written document, that he would submit the matter to the authorities upon his return.<sup>32</sup>

With the *Rurik* repaired and provisioned, Kotzebue and crew departed for Hawaii on November 1, ushered out of the bay by the barking of the sea lions on what is today known as Seal Rocks. With them was a Portuguese-English adventurer, John Elliot de Castro, who had joined the Russian-American Company in an attempt to make his fortune but had been arrested by the Spanish authorities for illegal trading. Elliot, who had also spent time in Hawaii as King Kamehameha’s physician and member of his court, “possessed much natural understanding,” and his “society... was very agreeable to us,” Kotzebue wrote.<sup>33</sup> His experience in Hawaii and acquaintance with the king would prove to be helpful.

<sup>31</sup> Chamisso, *Voyage Around the World*, 98 (quote), 99–110, 244–245; August C. Mahr, *The Visit of the “Rurik” to San Francisco in 1816* (Stanford University, CA: Stanford University Publications, University Series, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1932), 103; and Edward Mornin, *Through Alien Eyes: The Visit of the Russian Ship Rurik to San Francisco in 1816 and the Men Behind the Visit* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2002), 8; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California, 1801–1824* (6 vols.; San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft & Company, Publishers, 1885), 2: 278–279.

<sup>32</sup> Bancroft, *History of California*, 2: 309–310; Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 1: 277, 288;

<sup>33</sup> Mornin, *Through Alien Eyes*, 20–21; Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 1: 292.

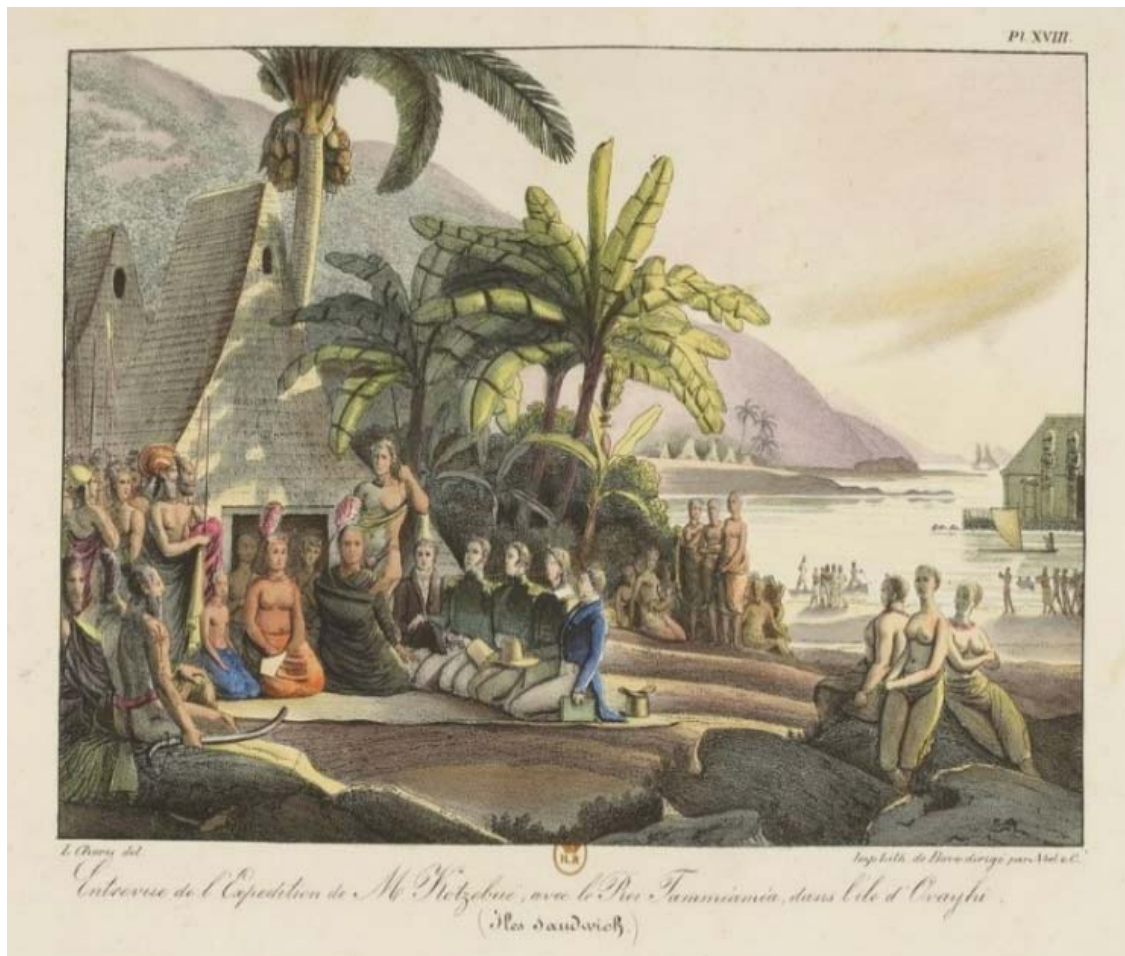


Fig. 7. Louis Choris, *Entrevue de l'Expedition de M. Kotzebue avec le Roi Tammeamea dans l'île d'Ovayhi (Îles Sandwich)*, from Choris, *Vues et paysages des regions equinoxiales* (Paris: Paul Renouard, 1826) Plate XVIII. Hand-colored lithograph by [Jean-Marie-Joseph] Bove dirigé par [Francisque] Noël & C., 8 1/16 x 10 3/8", image. Choris placed himself in the foreground of the line of kneeling Europeans, wearing a blue coat, sketchbook in hand, top hat behind him. Courtesy William S. Reese, New Haven, CT.

A peaceful reception in Hawaii was not a foregone conclusion because King Kamehameha I, who had unified the islands and established the kingdom of Hawaii in 1810, had recently expelled Dr. Georg Anton Scheffer, an associate of the Russian-American Company. Scheffer had arrived in Hawaii to reclaim the cargo from a company ship that had beached in a storm and to establish a foothold for the company, but had aligned himself with one of the king's competitors and had threatened that Russian ships would soon arrive in his support. As was his practice, Kotzebue sent Elliot and the "scientific gentlemen" of the party ashore first, and Chamisso recalled seeing "a large crowd of armed men" waiting for them on the shore. Chamisso continued: "The old king, before whose residence we landed, sat on a raised terrace surrounded by his wives and dressed in his native costume, the red maro [*malo*, or loincloth] and the black tapa [a cloak of bark cloth, or *kapa*]. His shoes and his light straw hat were the only articles he had borrowed from the Europeans."<sup>34</sup> Elliot assured him that the Europeans came in peace and the name of science, and Kamehameha welcomed them (fig. 2.7). The scientists left to explore the island, while Choris set to work painting a portrait of the king. When he arrived on shore, Kotzebue quickly assured Kamehameha that the Russian Tsar did not condone Dr. Scheffer's belligerent and subversive acts.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Chamisso, *Voyage Around the World*, 114–115.

<sup>35</sup> For the background on the Russian-Hawaiian situation before Kotzebue's arrival, see Glynn Barratt, *The Russian View of Honolulu, 1809–26* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1988), 16–22; Richard A. Pierce, *Russia's Hawaiian Adventure, 1815–1817* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965), 16–19; Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1974), 29–60; and James L. Haley, *Captive Paradise: A History of Hawaii* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2014), 28–30.

After three weeks on Oahu, resupplying and repairing the *Rurik* and Choris sketching all the while, Kotzebue sailed in a southwesterly direction, discovering a series of small islands in the Marshall Island chain. Then, in March 1817, he turned northward to continue the search for the northern passage. The effort was cut short when they encountered a storm that exacerbated an earlier injury that Kotzebue had sustained and caused him to fear for the survival of his ship. At St. Lawrence Island, approximately 170 miles south of the Bering Strait, and well short of the point that Cook had attained, the lieutenant ordered the crew to turn around. Chamisso received the news “with painful outrage” and felt from the “silent, downcast faces” that the other crew members shared his feelings.<sup>36</sup> Sailing southwest across the Pacific, the *Rurik* passed by the Sandwich Islands, the Marshalls, and the Marianas.

An encounter while on Guam, prompted Chamisso to relate another story about how swiftly Choris captured a likeness. He offered to paint the portrait of an apparently vain Don José de Medinilla y Piñeda, the captain general of the Marianas.

The latter went immediately to attire himself in full-dress and came back in gala attire with silk stockings, shoes, and buckles. Choris made only a bust, upon which only his epaulets could be pictured. These epaulets were the target of vicious tongues, which asserted that Don José would not be able to send the picture thus ornamented to his family, for which it was intended, as he had the right to wear them only from himself.<sup>37</sup>

Spending an extra day in the Marianas to enjoy the hospitality, Kotzebue then pushed on to the Philippines and around the Cape of Good Hope, arriving at Kronstadt on July 19, 1818, a little more than three years after his departure.

Those associated with the expedition immediately proclaimed it a success, and Kotzebue was soon promoted to captain. But Count Romanzoff received his report with little or no comment, nor did the Naval Ministry respond with the usual patriotic statement. Kotzebue could not have known that his return coincided with particularly intense criticism of the Russian-American Company, which ultimately resulted in the government taking control of the company, and that two of his actions during the voyage had reflected directly on the company: The officials at the ministry were probably concerned that his conference with the Spanish officials at San Francisco would focus further attention on the company’s encroachment into Spanish territory, and his disavowal of Scheffer’s machinations in Hawaii had revealed a dispute between the government and the company, of which Kotzebue’s sponsor, Count Romanzoff, was a share-holder. Nevertheless, admiral Krusenstern added an essay to Kotzebue’s official report, published in Russian, German, and English in 1821, and Dutch the following year. Krusenstern elaborated upon *Rurik’s* “service towards the extension of geography.” While no “north-east” passage had been found, as the Russians termed the prospective passage, he pointed to geographic and scientific information that had been added to the cumulative record, including several newly-discovered islands in the southern Pacific.<sup>38</sup>

For years the Kotzebue expedition received little attention, perhaps because of its modest accomplishments, but, in addition to the discoveries that Krusenstern mentioned, it resulted in three classic publications: Kotzebue’s official account (1821), Chamisso’s journal (1836), and Choris’s *Voyage pittoresque*, which, insofar as North America is concerned, may be seen in the same context as the later, better known works of artists George Catlin and Karl Bodmer, but precedes them by almost two decades and includes dozens of early eyewitness images of people and places along the northwest coast and Hawaii that they did not see.<sup>39</sup> Krusenstern himself, in his essay, called attention to Choris’s accomplishment by stating,

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<sup>36</sup> Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 2: 176–177; Chamisso, *Voyage Around the World*, 174.

<sup>37</sup> Chamisso, 204.

<sup>38</sup> *The Quarterly Review*, 26 (Jan. 1822), 343, 363; Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 2: 176–177; and Jacques Brosse, *Great Voyages of Discovery: Circumnavigators and Scientists, 1764–1843*, trans. Stanley Hochman (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1983), 130. For information on the various editions of Kotzebue’s report, see David W. Forbes, comp., *Hawaiian National Bibliography, 1780–1900* (4 vols.; Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press in Association with Hordern House, Sydney, 1999–2003), 1: entries 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 551, and 609; and Valerian Lada-Mocarski, *Bibliography of Books on Alaska Published Before 1868*, intro. by Archibald Hanna Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 282–289. The Russian edition includes an atlas.

<sup>39</sup> The Kotzebue voyage has received attention from Glynn Barratt, *The Russian View of Honolulu and Russia in Pacific Waters*, and in the more recent work of Harry Liebersohn of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, who has published several works including *The Travelers’ World: Europe to the Pacific* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 15–76; “Images of Monarchy: Kamehameha I and the Art of Louis Choris,” in *Double Vision: Art Histories and Colonial Histories in the Pacific*, Nicholas Thomas and Diane Losche, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 44–64; “Images of Monarchy:

“the richness of the portfolio which he has brought home and the praise which has been bestowed upon him by the most celebrated artists of St. Petersburg, as well as by the president of the Petersburg Academy, fully justify the choice of this young and deserving artist.”<sup>40</sup>

## CHORIS IN PARIS

Count Romanzoff did not claim ownership of Choris’s sketches, as Prince Maximilian would of Karl Bodmer’s a little more than a decade later, and, after a serious illness, Choris left Kronstadt for Paris in August 1819, with the intent of publishing his paintings, though he did consult Krusenstern as to whether he should publish them separately or as a part of Kotzebue’s narrative.<sup>41</sup> The newly restored Bourbon monarchy had found some stability after Napoleon’s defeat and exile, the Academy of Sciences had been reestablished, and those interested in travel research organized the Geographical Society of Paris in 1821. The young artist brought with him a number of utensils and natural history objects that he had collected on the expedition and donated them to local museums, a gesture that won him many friends among French academics, and he became a virtual protégé of the scientific elite. He was not the earliest artist to visit the northwest coast of North America, nor even the first whose work resulted in a published eyewitness picture. That honor may go to Lieutenant Sven Waxell, a member of Vitus Bering’s 1741 crew, who produced a sketchy image of an Aleut man in a small, skin boat as a map illustration; John Webber and the artists who accompanied James Cook on his voyages; and/or the cartographic artists of the Vancouver expedition.<sup>42</sup> But no collection similar to his had been published, and Choris proved to be in the right time and place to take advantage of his opportunity. He met Chamisso’s friend, the ethnologist and explorer Julius Klaproth, provided Dr. Franz Joseph Gall, a German neuroanatomist credited with founding phrenology, with a skull from the Bering Strait, gave the naturalist and zoologist Baron Georges Cuvier three new species of birds for his museum, and showed his paintings to Alexander von Humboldt. He studied further with artists Jean-Baptiste Regnault and François Gérard, and learned how to draw on a lithographic stone.<sup>43</sup>

## VOYAGE PITTORESQUE AUTOUR DU MONDE

Encouraged by the compliments of his friends and the academy, Choris began work on his book. Soon after his arrival he published a short summary of the voyage – the first published information on Kotzebue’s trip – in *Nouvelles annales des voyages*, a journal that focused on exploration and discovery.<sup>44</sup> He then set to

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Kamehameha I and the Art of Louis Choris,” *Voices: The Quarterly Journal of the National Library of Australia*, 6 (Dec. 1996), 95–110; and “Zur Kunst der Ethnographie. Zwei Briefe von Louis Choris an Adelbert von Chamisso,” *Historische Anthropologie*, 6 (1998), 479–491. See also Bancroft, *History of California*, 2: 280; Louis Choris, *Voyage pittoresque*, 2; and Adelbert von Chamisso, *A Voyage Around the World*, 190, 340n. Conrad Malte-Brun, a Danish geographer and political writer in Paris, reviewed the book in “Varietes,” *Journal des débats politique et littéraires*, Nov. 6, 1821, 2–4.

<sup>40</sup> Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 1, 24.

<sup>41</sup> Choris, *Journal des Malers*, 353. The Choris-Krusenstern correspondence is in the National Archives of Estonia in Tartu. See Barratt, *Russian View of Honolulu*, 402. For a discussion of the Bodmer watercolors, see Maximilian, Prince of Wied, *The North American Journals of Prince Maximilian of Wied*, ed. Stephen S. Witte, ed., Marsha V. Gallagher, trans., William J. Orr, Paul Schach, and Dieter Karch, 3 vols. (Norman, OK: Arthur H. Clark Company in cooperation with the Joslyn Art Museum, 2008–2012), 1: xxxii.

<sup>42</sup> Klaus Mehnert, *The Russians in Hawaii, 1804–1819* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Occasional Paper Number 38, 1939), 58–59; Robin Fisher, “George Vancouver and the Native Peoples of the Northwest Coast,” in *Enlightenment and Exploration in the North Pacific, 1741–1805*, edited by Stephen Haycox, James K. Barnett, and Caedmon A. Liburd, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 201; Andrew David, *The Artists on Vancouver’s Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America* (Burnaby, British Columbia: The Vancouver Conference on Exploration and Discovery, Simon Fraser University, 1991); and Alexey Postnikov and Marvin Falk, *Exploring and Mapping Alaska: The Russian American Era, 1741–1867*, trans. Lydia Black (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2015), 61–62.

<sup>43</sup> Choris to Chamisso, Paris, April 3, 1820, in Liebersohn, “Zur Kunst der Ethnographie,” 486–488; Michael Twyman, *Lithography, 1800–1850: The Techniques of Drawing on Stone in England and France and Their Application in Works of Topography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 48 n3. Gérard had studied lithography in Munich.

<sup>44</sup> Louis Choris, “Extrait de la campagne de M. Otto de Kotzebue dans le Grand Océan,” *Nouvelles annales des voyages, de la géographie et de l’histoire*, 4 (1820), 393–409.

work on a complete illustrated account of the expedition, published as *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde, avec des portraits de sauvages d'Amérique, d'Asie, d'Afrique, et des îles du Grand Océan*. Choris based the text on the extensive journal that he kept during the trip but secured help from such notables as Baron Cuvier, Dr. Gall, the herpetologist Achille Valenciennes, and his friend and compatriot on the expedition, Chamisso, for more learned comments on certain of the images. Chamisso also supplied several watercolors of plants for the book. French was not Choris's first language, so Jean-Baptiste-Benoit Eyriès, co-editor of *Nouvelles annales des voyages*, assisted him by smoothing his prose.<sup>45</sup>

Paris was one of the centers of lithography by 1820. Invented by the Austrian actor and playwright Alois Senefelder around 1798, this new method of printing quickly spread throughout Europe. It is a planographic, chemical process using a fine-grained limestone surface, as opposed to the centuries-old relief processes of engraving and etching on wood and metal. Artists could draw directly on the stone with a greasy crayon, and the resulting printed impressions were so faithful to the original (albeit reversed) that artists referred to them as multiple originals. Although lithography was still in its infancy, printers had produced some substantial illustrated works by the time Choris arrived in Paris, for example, the *Voyage dans le Levant* (Paris, 1819), and the first volume of *Voyages pittoresques et romantiques dans l'ancienne France* (Paris, 1820-78).<sup>46</sup> Both works showed that lithographers had made significant advances in the ability to reproduce an image, with the additional advantage that the process was faster and significantly less expensive than copper-plate engraving, up until then the preferred method for fine art printing. Kotzebue's publishers illustrated his volumes with engravings, but Choris chose the relatively new method of lithography for his personal account of the voyage.

Choris's ability to draw directly on the lithographic stone gave him a huge advantage over most artists, who had to depend on an intermediary, a lithographic artist, to translate their paintings into prints. Lithographic draftsmen were a continual source of frustration to artists, because, as talented as they were, mistakes inevitably found their way into the finished print. Lithographic artists unfamiliar with native physiognomy, for example, often made their faces appear more European, which could change the entire tone of a scene, or mislead naturalists such as Blumenbach and Gall, who depended upon the accuracy of the image for their research and conclusions. The artist Frederic Remington cursed the "infernal wood engravers... who invariably made my drawings say things I did not intend them to say," and Cook biographer John C. Beaglehole observed that the purpose of the "professional" writers who helped many expedition leaders bring their journals to print was to "polish the style"; he might have made a similar observation about the engravers and lithographic artists who prepared expeditionary artists' sketches for publication.<sup>47</sup> Sensitive to these issues, the Danish political writer and geographer Conrad Malte-Brun, real name Malte Conrad Bruun, co-editor of the newly-revived *Nouvelles annales des voyages*, attacked the images published in "fine editions" of the voyages of Captain Cook, Comte de Bougainville, and other eighteenth-century explorers because in these illustrations "every native islander of Otahiti becomes an Apollo, a Hercules, a Venus or a Diana."<sup>48</sup> But Choris had more control over his prints, especially the portraits, perhaps the highest priority of the stay-at-home naturalists who would evaluate his work.

Although Choris drew more than ninety of the plates on stone himself, several other lithographic artists, including Jean-Augustin Franquelin, who drew three plates, Jean Pierre Norblin, who drew five plates, and Jean Victor Adam who drew three plates, and the painter/lithographer Jean-Henri Marlet occasionally assisted him, especially with the most complicated scenes. Franquelin, Marlet, and Adam had

<sup>45</sup> Liebersohn, "Images of Monarchy," 47; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1874), 1: 46n; Liebersohn, *Travelers' World*, 90-93.

<sup>46</sup> Twyman, *Lithography*, 41-57; Estelle Jussim, *Visual Communication and the Graphic Arts: Photographic Technologies in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1974), 39-44.

<sup>47</sup> Perriton Maxwell, "Frederic Remington - Most Typical of American Artists," *Pearson's Magazine*, 18 (October 1907), 403; J. C. Beaglehole, *The Life of Captain James Cook* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 456-471.

<sup>48</sup> Malte-Brun, "Varietes," 4. For a biography of Malte-Brun, see Charles Knight, *Biography, or Third Division of "The English Cyclopaedia"* (6 vols. plus supplement; London: Bradbury, Evans, & Co., 1866-1872), Supplement, 849. See also Kesler E. Woodward, "Images of Native Alaskans in the Work of Explorer Artists, 1741-1805," in *Enlightenment and Exploration in the North Pacific, 1741-1805*, edited by Stephen Haycox, James K. Barnett, and Caedmon A. Liburd, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 161-162, 170-173; and John Frazier Henry, *Early Maritime Artists of the Pacific Northwest Coast, 1741-1841* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984), 146-147. Engravers were guilty of the same kind of alteration in preparing a work of art for the printing press. See Smith, *European Vision*, 74-75.

also studied with Regnault and were, no doubt, Choris's friends. The well-known lithographic firm Joseph Langlumé, located at rue de l'Abbaye, number 4, printed all but two of the images.<sup>49</sup>

Choris began issuing *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* in parts in December 1820. Each part, called a fascicule or *livraison*, was approximately seventeen by ten inches and contained five plates along with text; the ultimate size of the book depended upon the binding. In an effort to attract a wider audience, he issued the plates of California and Hawaii first, explaining that the owners could place the fascicules in the correct order, to match the expedition's itinerary, before binding them. He initially announced that the final work would include "from 12 to 15 *livraisons*" and would be available in three states: uncolored (7 francs 50 for each part), with the natural history plates colored (9 francs per part), or with all plates colored (15 francs per part), accompanied by a map showing the route of the voyage. But his vision for the book increased as he worked, and he continued to add plates until the completed publication comprised twenty-three fascicules containing 105 images plus two charts. Pierre Didot, the printer of *Voyages Pittoresques et romantiques dans l'ancienne France*, produced the letterpress on wove, or Vélin, paper, and Firmin Didot, one of the major publishing houses in Paris, distributed the book. It was the first major pictorial document of exploration to be printed by lithography.<sup>50</sup>

## CALIFORNIA

Perhaps Choris thought that the California section would have immediate interest because Mexico was in the process of winning its independence from a Spain still not recovered from the Napoleonic wars. He began with profiles of the landforms surrounding San Francisco, Point Reyes, the Golden Gate, and the Farallones Islands, then included a landscape of the presidio (Fig. 2.6), several genre scenes (Fig. 2.8), portraits (Fig. 2.9), implements (Fig. 2.10), a grizzly bear (Fig. 2.11), and a young sea lion. He wrote that he considered the port well-defended, although acquaintance with the officers and soldiers would later bring that judgement into question. Kotzebue, for example, found that Vancouver's more than two-decades-old description of mud-brick buildings and dangerously old cannons was still accurate. Choris recounts that, coming ashore, he passed by Fort San Joaquin, now Fort Point National Historic Site, which the Spaniards had established in 1794 on the spit of land jutting out into the bay. He then walked up the hill about a mile and sketched a view of the San Francisco presidio, with a few horses and riders in the foreground and a fenced-off area, perhaps a garden, in the lower left-hand corner of the image (fig. 2.6). He probably did not employ the camera lucida in the landscape views, for he had tried it before they left Copenhagen and found it problematic. The presidio is in the left-center of a panorama that shows the hills behind and the mountains in the distance across the Golden Gate, with the *Rurik* resting at anchor in the harbor.<sup>51</sup> He described the presidio as being "square in form and has two gates which are constantly guarded by a considerable company of men ... [with] windows on the side towards the interior court only."<sup>52</sup> Victor Jean Adam drew the image on stone after Choris's landscape, producing a considerably more complicated composition, adding a number of soldiers supervising groups of Indians who march to and fro in apparent military style with packs on their

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<sup>49</sup> E. Benezit, *Dictionary of Artists* (Paris: Gründ, 2006), 1: 95, 5: 1031, 8: 431, and 10: 434-35; Michael Bryan, *Dictionary of Painters and Engravers, Biographical and Critical*, ed. by Robert Edmund Graves (2 vols.; London: George Bell and Sons, 1886, 1889), 1: 5, 522, and 2: 109, 215; See Twyman, *Lithography*, 56, 136-137, 230-233. It is possible that the P. Langlumé who immigrated to New Orleans and established a lithographic press for the New Orleans *Bee* in 1837 was related to Joseph Langlumé, who continued to issue imprints in Paris into the 1840s. See Priscilla Lawrence, "A New Plane: Pre-Civil War Lithography in New Orleans," in *Printmaking in New Orleans*, edited by Jessie J. Poesch (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi and The Historic New Orleans Collection, 2006), 121-122.

<sup>50</sup> Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde*, iv. See the prospectus for the book at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6544937w/f3.item.r=Choris>. Two copies of the book in the Western Americana Collection of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University have the horizontal plates bound in an opposite manner. One copy has the plates bound with the bottom toward the gutter. The other has the bottom of the plates facing the right-hand edge of the book. One of the Yale copies also contains Choris's portrait of Chamisso (ZZc86 822c COPY 1).

<sup>51</sup> Choris, *Journal des Malers*, 47; Joachim Rees, *Die verzeichnete Fremde. Formen und Funktionen des Zeichnens im Kontext europäischer Forschungsreisen 1770-1830* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 2015), 329. Original watercolor in the collection of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>52</sup> Mahr, *Visit of the "Rurik,"* 93. There are several translations of the California portion of the journey, including Mornin, *Through Alien Eyes*, 14.

backs while another group near the center of the image gathers around a fire. Adam was only nineteen, but he came from an artistic family, his father was an engraver, and his assistance on this plate probably indicates that Choris was not yet comfortable undertaking the more complicated scenes himself.

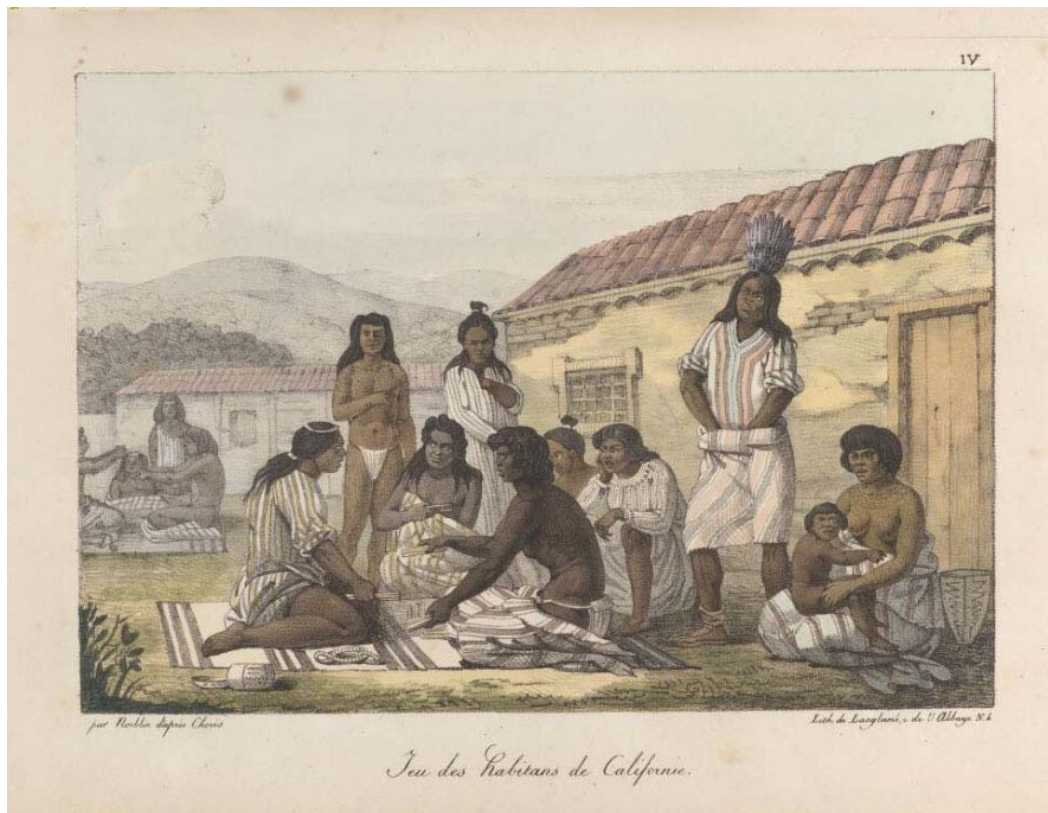


Fig. 8. On stone by Jean Pierre Norblin after Louis Choris, *Jeu des habitans de Californie*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822), California section, Plate IV. Hand-colored lithograph printed by Joseph Langlumé, 7 3/8 x 10 1/2", image. Courtesy William S. Reese, New Haven, CT.



Fig. 9. Drawn and on stone by Louis Choris, *Coiffures de danse des habitans de la Californie*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822), California section, Plate XII. Hand-colored lithograph printed by Joseph Langlumé, 6 1/4 x 10 5/8", vignette. Courtesy William S. Reese, New Haven, CT.



Fig. 10. Drawn and on stone by Louis Choris, *Armes et ustensiles de Californie*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822), California section, Plate VIII. Hand-colored lithograph printed by Joseph Langlumé, 6 3/8 x 11 5/8", vignette. Courtesy William S. Reese, New Haven, CT.



Fig. 11. Drawn and on stone by Louis Choris, *L'Ours gris de l'Amérique Septentrionale (Ursus griseus. Cuv.)*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822), California section, Plate V. Hand-colored lithograph, printed by Joseph Langlumé, 4 1/2 x 9", vignette. Courtesy William S. Reese, New Haven, CT.

Two days after *Rurik's* arrival, the Spanish hosts treated the visitors to the celebration of the feast of Saint Francis at the San Francisco de Asís Mission, also known as Mission Dolores because of the nearby Arroyo de los Dolores (Creek of Sorrows), which was located about an hour's horseback ride from the presidio. Having just come from the Russian settlements to the north, Kotzebue and the scientists had become aware of the poor living conditions of the natives and found them equally deplorable at the mission. Choris reported that, out of the thousand who lived there, three hundred natives would die each year and concluded that they were "too unskilled and too lazy to hunt." He did not realize that the Indians were still suffering from the collapse of their complex community systems and that relationships had been rendered dysfunctional with the arrival of the Spaniards and the imposition of the mission system. As they were about

to leave the mission, a small but imposing stone church that dominated the settlement, two groups of Indians arrived and began performing what Kotzebue interpreted as a war dance, which Choris sketched (fig. 2.12) and described.

When the service is ended, the Indians gather in the cemetery, across from the missionary's house, and begin to dance. Half of the men adorn themselves with feathers and with girdles ornamented with feathers and with bits of shell that pass for money among them, or they paint their bodies with regular lines of black, red, and white. Some have half their bodies (from the head downward) daubed with black, the other half red, and the whole crossed with white stripes, and some powder their hair with bird down. The men commonly dance six or eight together, all making the same movements and all armed with spears. Their music consists of clapping the hands, singing, and the sound made by striking split sticks together which has a charm for their ears; this is finally followed by a horrible yell that greatly resembles the sound of a cough accompanied by a whistling noise. The women dance among themselves, but without making violent movements.<sup>53</sup>

Kotzebue reported that "Mr. Choris ... was busy painting" the following day, and the artist returned alone to the mission to watch the Indians dance again and spent the night there. "I slept well that night," he recorded in his diary.<sup>54</sup>



Fig. 12. Louis Choris, *Danse des Californiens*, dance of native Californians at San Francisco de Assis Mission, California, 1816.

Watercolor and pencil on paper, 6 7/8 x 11 1/2". Robert B. Honeyman Jr. Collection of Early Californian and Western American Pictorial Material [graphic], BANC PIC 1963.002:1312—FR. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>53</sup> "Port San-Francisco et ses habitants," Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde*, 4. Choris's book was issued in parts, or fascicules, and he numbered each part separately. See also Mahr, *Visit of the "Rurik,"* 97; and Malcolm Margolin, *The Ohlone Way: Life in the San Francisco-Monterey Bay Area* (Berkeley: Heyday, 1978), 29–35. David Igler, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 140–143, focuses on the Spanish subjugation of the Indians and sees in Choris's picture "a large population that retained elements of its indigenous culture and also possessed the vigor for violent rebellion." For a similar interpretation, see Claire Perry, *Pacific Arcadia: Images of California, 1600–1915* (New York: Oxford University Press and the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts, Stanford University, 1999), pp. 15–16.

<sup>54</sup> Choris, *Journal des Malers Ludwig York Choris*, 206.

Choris again left the final composition of this complex scene on the stone to another of his younger classmates from Regnault's studio, Jean-Augustin Franquelin, who, judging from a self-portrait done this same year, was also a more advanced painter than Choris.<sup>55</sup> In his sketch, Choris emphasized the architectural and ethnological details, rendering a bit more detail in the church's façade as well as the body paint of the dancers. Franquelin added details, such as Indians keeping time with sticks at the left and priests at the church gate (Fig. 2.13). He provided faces for Choris's faceless dancers and impressive muscles for the almost emaciated figures in his sketch, bringing to mind Malte-Brun's criticism of the illustrations published in earlier expeditionary accounts. But he did not include as much of the details of the dancer's body paint as Choris did in his sketch, although, to be fair, the details of the body paint probably were omitted from the lithograph and intended to be finished with hand-coloring.<sup>56</sup>



Fig. 13. On stone by Jean-Augustin Franquelin after Louis Choris, *Danse des habitants de Californie à la mission de S. Francisco*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822), California section, Plate III. Hand-colored lithograph printed by Joseph Langlumé, 7 x 12", image. Courtesy William S. Reese, New Haven, CT.

The exotic and, given the limits of scientific endeavor at the time, scholarly documentation of Choris's brief California stay includes three group portraits of various natives (e.g., Fig. 2.9); a genre scene of a gambling game that involved tossing a handful of sticks on weaving spread on the ground and betting whether they fall in even or odd numbers, or, in another version, on a rounded or flat side (Fig. 2.8), and full-length portraits of two Tcholovonis (Cholvon) men hunting (Fig. 2.14). Choris described and painted their "facial traits" as "rather pleasant [in] appearance," probably unaware that Kotzebue would later characterize the "physiognomy of these Indians as ugly, stupid, and savage."<sup>57</sup> Choris also commented on their "very beautiful weapons" and depicted a long, graceful bow, a quiver probably made of a wolf or dog skin, and arrows "decorated with very artistically carved stones."<sup>58</sup> He described and painted "lovely vessels and

<sup>55</sup> Franquelin's self-portrait, which is in a private collection, was included in a 2011 exhibition, "Eye to Eye: European Portraits, 1450–1850," at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA.

<sup>56</sup> Details of the body paint may vary from lithograph to lithograph, but I have not seen enough of them in direct comparison to be able to reach a conclusion.

<sup>57</sup> Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 1: 282. Mornin, *Through Alien Eyes*, 17, offers a slightly different translation – "ferocious" instead of "savage."

<sup>58</sup> Travis Hudson and Craig Bates, *Treasures from Native California: The Legacy of Russian Exploration*, ed. by Thomas Blackburn and John R. Johnson (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc., 2015), 88–89.

watertight vases made from the petals of various climbing plants” woven into “elegant shapes” with “pleasant drawings in the fabric” and decorated “with pieces of shells and feathers” (Fig. 2.10). He also documented three Tcholovonis in a reed canoe (Fig. 2.15), two of them paddling with long oars that were pointed at both ends: “When one steps in, they fill halfway up with water, so that, when seated, one is in water up to the calf,” he reported.



Fig. 14. On stone by Jean-Augustin Franquelin after Louis Choris, *Tcholoventis à la chasse dans la baie de S<sup>t</sup> Francisco*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822), California section, Plate XII. Hand-colored lithograph printed by Joseph Langlumé, 7 3/8 x 9 1/4", image. Courtesy William S. Reese, New Haven, CT.



Fig. 15. On stone by Jean Pierre Norblin after Louis Choris, *Bateau du port de S<sup>t</sup> Francisco*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822), California section, Plate IX. Hand-colored lithograph printed by Joseph Langlumé, 6 3/4 x 10 1/8", image. Courtesy William S. Reese, New Haven, CT.

Choris's friends again executed three of the more complicated scenes on the lithographic stone: Norblin drew *Jeu des habitants de Californie* (fig. 2.8), and *Bateau du port de S<sup>t</sup>. Francisco* (fig. 2.15), while Franquelin drew *Tcholovonis á la chasse dans la baie de S<sup>t</sup>. Francisco* (fig. 2.14). Chamisso was generally complimentary of Choris's prints – “an estimable series of portraits” – but took exception to *Tcholovonis á la chasse*, which shows one warrior holding a quiver made of a fox or some similar skin while the other has laid his quiver and arrows on the ground as he prepares to shoot an arrow at a target outside the composition. Noting that Choris painted it in his Paris studio after his return, Chamisso concluded that “anyone knows that the bow is not used the way it is pictured there.”<sup>59</sup> He did not acknowledge that the published work was Franquelin's interpretation of Choris's picture, nor did he explain the correct procedure for using the bow. Choris's composition does document that the Indians generally wore no clothing, a frankness that he did not employ in a Hawaiian dance scene (fig. 2.20).



Fig. 16. After Louis Choris, [Two Indians from New Albion], from Kotzebue, *Puteshestvie v Tuzhnyi Okean i v Beringov Proliv dlia otiskaniia Sŕevero-vostochnago morskago prokhoda, predprinŕiatoe v 1815, 1816, 1817 i 1818* (St. Petersburg: Nik. Grecha, 1821[-1823]), vol. 2, facing p. 12. Hand-colored engraving, 11 5/8 x 9 1/4", page size, approximate. Courtesy Russian State Library, Rare Books Department, Moscow.

The *Rurik* had been in port for two weeks when Governor Solá arrived from Monterey to join commandant Argüello in welcoming the visitors and, before their departure for Hawaii, the Spaniards staged a local spectacle. Apparently, a fight between a bear and a bull was commonly organized as a treat for the rare visitors to the presidio, for Argüello would have arranged such an event for Georg Henrich von Langsdorff during his 1806 visit, had not the bear died before the fight began. Kotzebue reported that bears were “so numerous” that one only had to go a mile or so into the woods “to meet them in great number” and found “the combat ... remarkable.” But the poet Chamisso viewed it as another example of Spanish inhumanity: “Forced to fight against their will and constrained as the animals were, there was nothing grand or sublime about the spectacle. You can only pity the poor creatures that are used so shamefully.”<sup>60</sup> Choris commented only that the Spaniards considered such a fight to be an amusement and took the opportunity to paint the portrait of the first grizzly bear he had ever seen (Fig. 2.11). Baron Cuvier wrote a lengthy caption to accompany the plate.<sup>61</sup> Kotzebue used only one of Choris's California pictures, *Two Indians from New*

<sup>59</sup> Chamisso, *Voyage Around the World*, 102, was referring to plates 10 and 12.

<sup>60</sup> G. H. Von Langsdorff, *Voyages and Travels in Various Parts of the World, During the Years 1803, 1804, 1805, 1806, and 1807*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1813–1814), 2: 181; Mornin, 20, 28–29.

<sup>61</sup> “L'Ours Gris de l'Amerique Septentrionale,” Choris, *Voyage pittoresque*.

*Albion* (Fig. 2.16), in the Russian edition of his book, and none in the German, Dutch, or English editions. He used three in the abridged English edition in 1822.<sup>62</sup>

## HAWAII

Choris's portrait of King Kamehameha, which Kotzebue used as the frontispiece of his official report (Fig. 2.17), proved to be one of the more troublesome images as well as, probably, the most famous picture that he produced. Once he was assured that the visitors were traveling in the name of science, Kamehameha had received them at his home at what is today Kailua-Kona, on the west side of the island of Hawai'i. Choris later painted and lithographed the scene (Fig. 2.7) for his second book, *Vues et paysages des régions équinoxiales, recueillis dans un voyage autour du monde* (Paris: Chez Paul Renouard, 1826). The king in his black cloak is the center of attention, with members of his court at his right, and the visitors at his left. Kamehameha's temple may be seen at the far right, with the eight-feet-tall idols standing near it. Choris depicted himself in a blue coat, with his sketchbook in his left hand and his top hat on the ground behind him. Next to him is his friend Chamisso, the expedition naturalist, wearing an open collared shirt in the style of Lord Byron, and next to him is Eschscholtz, the ship's doctor. The man immediately to the king's left is Elliot, his friend who had returned on the *Rurik*, and between Elliot and Eschscholtz Choris has pictured Kotzebue, who was not there – he was still on the ship waiting to be told that it was safe to come ashore.<sup>63</sup> Kamehameha invited the visitors to a meal of baked pig, but they demurred until Kotzebue arrived. Chamisso and Eschscholtz asked permission to go botanizing around the island, and Choris requested permission to paint the king's portrait, to which he readily assented.

Choris wanted to paint Kamehameha just as he was, dressed in a red malo (loincloth) with a large black tapa (bark cloth) cloak around his shoulders. But the king retired to his room and emerged wearing blue trousers, a red waistcoat, a clean white shirt, and a yellow silk necktie. The artist was surprised at his appearance: "I begged him to change his clothes, but he absolutely refused, and insisted upon being painted as he was dressed." The artist and art historian Jean Charlot has suggested that Kamehameha's choice was not whimsy, that it was diplomatic and "disarming in its simplicity." Perhaps he chose the sailor suit so as not to appear either subservient before the Europeans or provocative to them.<sup>64</sup> Choris set to work and produced a good sketch. He probably also used the occasion to paint portraits of other members of the king's court.

When Kotzebue arrived onshore, he probably did not know of the earlier sitting and he also asked that the king consent to a portrait. Kamehameha initially refused, agreeing only when Kotzebue "represented to him, how happy our emperor would be to possess his likeness." Kotzebue also expressed surprise at the king's dress, "for I had formed very different notions of the royal attire."<sup>65</sup> Choris probably made a quick tracing of his earlier sketch and spent the second sitting coloring the outline; hence, Kotzebue's astonishment that "M. Choris succeeded in taking a very good likeness of him, though Tamaahmaah [*sic*], in order to embarrass him, did not sit still a moment, and made all kinds of faces, in spite of my entreaties."<sup>66</sup> Chamisso agreed, noting that, "Everybody recognized it and took pleasure in it." Kamehameha and Choris apparently did not reveal that Choris already had a good portrait in his sketchbook. Choris later copied the painting several times and traded a copy to American merchants who took it to the "Chinese painting factories" where they had it reproduced in large numbers for the trade. Chamisso remarked that by the time they reached Manila the following year they found reproductions already in circulation and that Choris bought one for his portfolio.<sup>67</sup> Choris provided Kotzebue with a copy of the portrait for use in the official account, and it appeared in all four translations as well as the abridged English edition (Fig. 2.17). For his own book, he reworked it, replacing the red vest, white shirt, and yellow tie with Kamehameha's black cloak, and added a stylized landscape with the *Rurik* and another ship, the *Brutus*, in the background, to produce the image (fig.

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<sup>62</sup> Mornin, *Through Alien Eyes*, 15–16, 18; Lada-Mocarski, *Bibliography of Books on Alaska*, 282–285. The Estonian History Museum in Tallinn holds a watercolor that may be the study for *Two Indians from New Albion*. See Thomas Blackburn, "A 'New' Choris Watercolor," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology*, 21 (No. 2, 1999), 154–157.

<sup>63</sup> Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 1: 281. See also Perry, *Pacific Arcadia*, 15–16; and Jean Charlot, *Choris and Kamehameha* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1958), 16.

<sup>64</sup> Choris, *Voyage pittoresque*, 59; Charlot, *Choris*, 11; Schweizer, "'At Last He Fell Asleep'" in *Across the Oceans*, edited by Rauch and Moore, 21.

<sup>65</sup> Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 1: 301.

<sup>66</sup> Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 1: 314–315.

<sup>67</sup> Chamisso, *Voyage Around the World*, 123–124.

2.18) that appears in *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde*. In producing the finished plate, Choris recalled that Vancouver had been surprised during his second visit, in 1793, to see how the “years had tempered the ferocity” and that Kamehameha’s “face bespoke honesty, intelligence, goodness and generosity,” words that could have come from Lavater’s pen.<sup>68</sup>

After meeting with Kamehameha, Kotzebue sailed on to Oahu, where Elliot advised him that there was a little-known safe harbor where he could take on supplies and repair the ship. As he approached Honolulu, he found dangerous coral reefs extending for a mile or more out to sea, but “behind these, nature has formed the beautiful harbor of Hana-rura, which is protected by reefs on the sea side..., and might be called the first in the world, if the entrance were not too shallow for large ships.” The passage was so narrow and dangerous that the *Rurik* had to wait until the next day, when eight double canoes, each with sixteen to twenty rowers, came out and towed the ship into the harbor.<sup>69</sup> Choris’s two pictures of Honolulu are the first published views of the port. *Vue du port hanarourou* (Fig. 2.19) shows their approach to the harbor, with several vessels at anchor, native canoes in the foreground, and the fort and the village lining the shore in the middle distance. The second view, *Port d’hanarourou*, shows the harbor from behind the fort and a number of triangular prism-shaped structures, with several foreign vessels at anchor and many native canoes crowding the harbor.



Fig. 17. After Louis Choris, [Kamehameha, King of the Sandwich Islands], frontispiece to volume 2, Kotzebue, *Puteshestvie v Ĭuzhnyi Okean i v Beringov Proliv dlia otiskaniia Siĕvero-vostochnago morskago prokhoda, predpriniate v 1815, 1816, 1817 i 1818* (St. Petersburg: Nik. Grecha, 1821[-1823]). Hand-colored stipple engraving, 11 5/8 x 9 1/4", page size, approximate. Courtesy the Russian State Library, Rare Books Division, Moscow.

<sup>68</sup> Charlot, Choris, 23, 31; and Choris, *Voyage pittoresque*, 23 (quote). See also George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean, and Round the World...Performed in the Years 1790, 17901, 1792, 1793, 1794, and 1795* (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1798), 2:122; Cummins E. Speakman, Jr., and Rhoda E. A. Hackler, “Vancouver in Hawai’i,” *The Hawaiian Journal of History*, 23 (1989), 44. See also Barratt, *Russian View of Honolulu*, 322. The original portrait of Kamehameha in the cloak is now in the collection of the Honolulu Academy of Arts. John Coffin Jones Jr. presented a copy of the painting to the Boston Athenæum on June 18, 1818, before the *Rurik* had returned home. See <https://www.bostonathenaeum.org/about/publications/selections-acquired-tastes/kamehameha-great-king-sandwich-islands-ca-1816>.

<sup>69</sup> Kotzebue, *Voyage*, 322 (quote), 326–327.

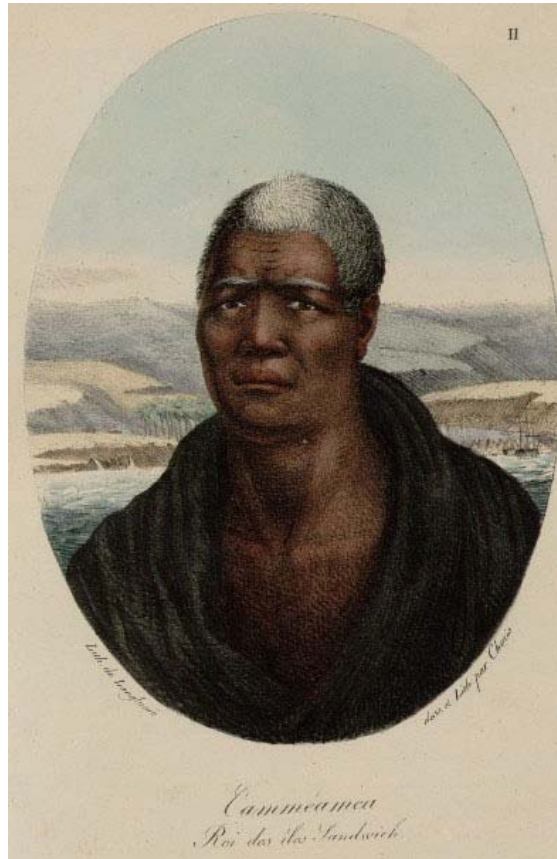


Fig. 18. Drawn and on stone by Louis Choris, *Kaméamea/ Roi des îles Sandwich*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822), Hawaii section, Plate II. Hand-colored lithograph printed by Joseph Langlumé, 8 1/4 x 6 1/8", oval. Courtesy William S. Reese, New Haven, CT.

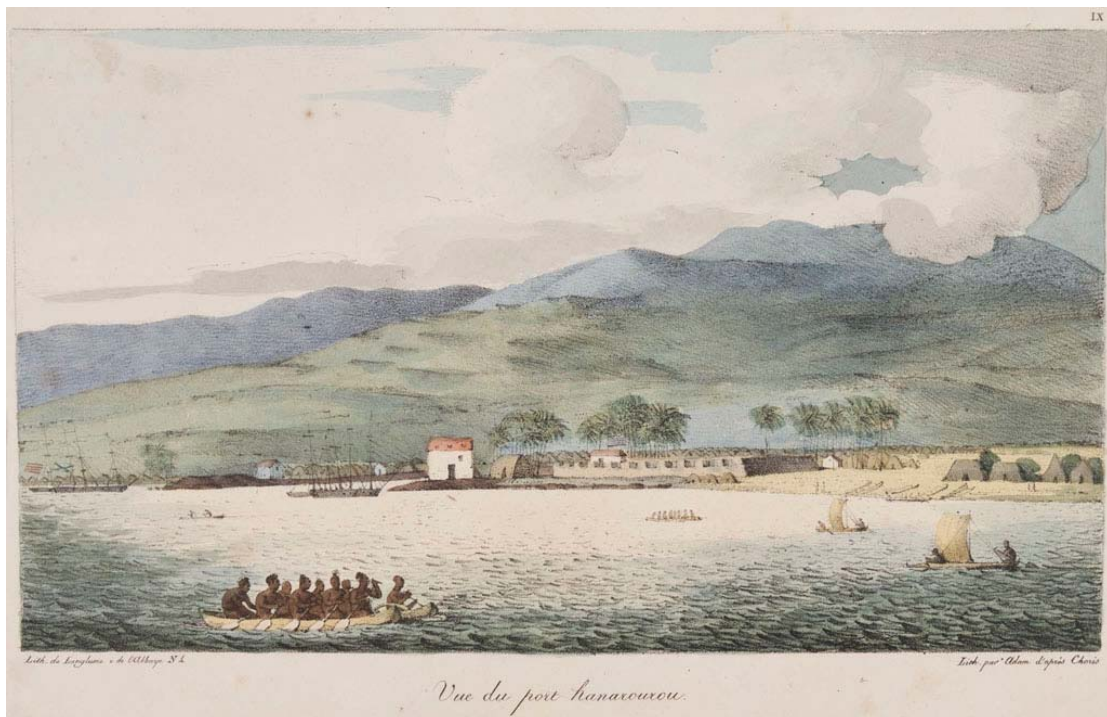


Fig. 19. On stone by Jean Victor Adam after Louis Choris, *Vue du port hanarourou*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822), Hawaii section, Plate IX. Hand-colored lithograph printed by Joseph Langlumé, 6 7/8 x 12", image. Courtesy William S. Reese, New Haven, CT.

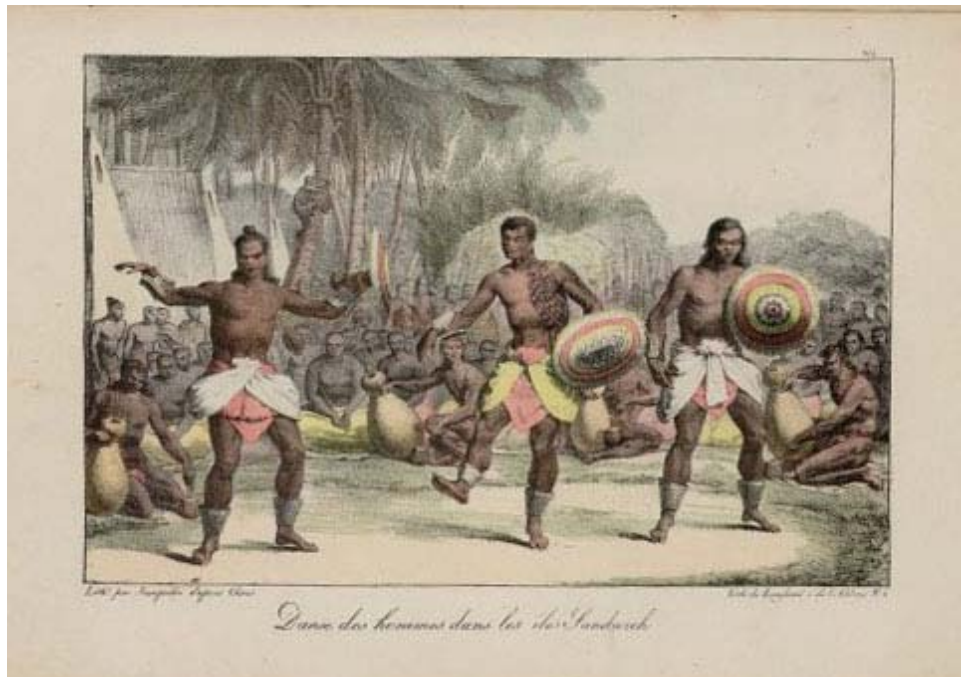


Fig. 20. On stone by Jean-Augustin Franquelin after Louis Choris, *Danse des hommes dans les îles Sandwich*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822), Hawaii section, Plate XII. Hand-colored lithograph printed by Joseph Langlumé, 7 1/2 x 11 1/4", image. Choris wrote that the professional male dancers performed naked except for bracelets on their arms and ankles. The loincloths he added in his drawing were copied by subsequent artists. Courtesy William S. Reese, New Haven, CT.

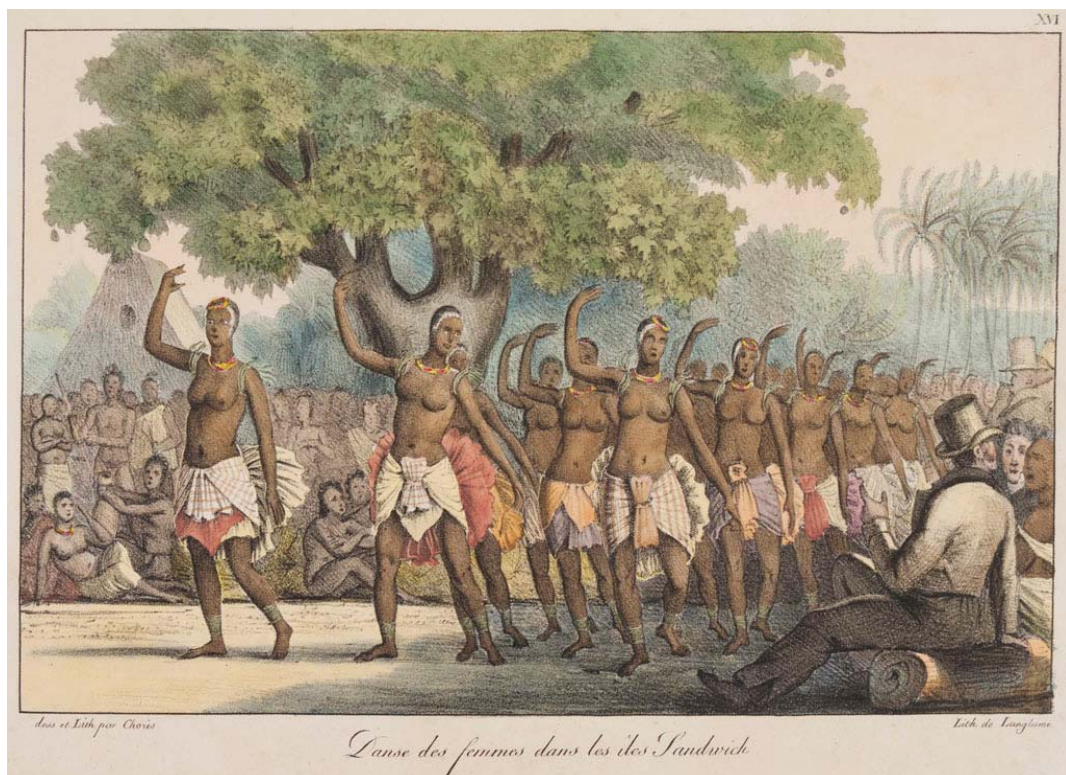


Fig. 21. Drawn and on stone by Louis Choris, *Danse des femmes dans les îles Sandwich*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822), Hawaii section, Plate XVI. Hand-colored lithograph printed by Joseph Langlumé, 7 1/4 x 11 3/4", image. Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas.

Kotzebue had requested that he see a dance, and Governor Kareimoku of Oahu arranged for one at his house. "The islanders' dance, especially the men's, is extremely graceful," Choris wrote. He explained that

the men, who perform naked except for bracelets on their arms and ankles, were paid professionals who traveled from island to island, but he pictured them, in both his painting and in the lithograph (Fig. 2.20), wearing colorful loincloths. The women, by comparison, danced for their own amusement in large groups of up to fifty. Choris sketched both dances, and Franquelin drew them on the stone, producing two different versions of the women's dance. In one, Franquelin pictured the women facing to the right with two native men lounging on rocks at the left watching the performance. In a second version, he showed the women facing to their left, while at the right Choris, clearly identified by his top hat and sketch pad in hand, sits on a log watching the performance (Fig. 2.21) – thereby continuing something of a tradition among expeditionary artists who included themselves in the picture, perhaps to document the fact that they were eyewitnesses to the scenes they depicted.<sup>70</sup>

## OBSERVATIONS ON THE ACCURACY OF THE PUBLISHED IMAGES

As soon as the California and Hawaii *livraisons* came off the press, Choris sent them to Chamisso for his “serious and not euphemistic” comments. Taking on the role of an “old strict well-meaning friend,” Chamisso prefaced a personal letter, writing that “I have written in my life a fairy tale, but I am careful in science,” he then proceeded with a candid, plate by plate critique of the pictures, “which I regard as the actual text.” He accepted the images as “harmless, very nice, useful in many respects,” a “desired work” that filled a void. He liked the view of San Francisco (Fig. 2.6), “Bravo! ...a charming picture – that's nature! This is California! The light in the middle, the shadows on both sides hold the image together,” reminding him of a “simple landscape by Rembrandt.” He also noted that Kotzebue was not including it in his volumes. Color, however, was a problem throughout the images, which he assumed was because Choris had not taken a color chart with him, as was the practice with many expeditionary artists, especially botanical illustrators, as Chamisso would have well known. He criticized the landscapes as having a northern European light rather than equatorial light and, more importantly, doubted that Choris and the lithographic colorists had accurately portrayed the skin color of the various natives. He wondered if the portraits of three Californians with jewelry (Fig. 2.9) was intended more to document the jewelry than the individuals – “they are not characteristic” – and suggested that the fern-like plant in another image (Fig. 2.14) was “conceived and drawn and painted in Paris,” not by Choris at the scene.<sup>71</sup>

Chamisso especially disliked the plates of the Hawaiian dancers (Figs. 2.20 and 2.21). “Do not look at the two [three] poor sheets that deface Choris's atlas,” he later wrote in his published journal. “Dancing cannot be painted, and may the genius of art pardon him for what he painted here.”<sup>72</sup> He probably realized that Choris's surviving watercolor of the male dancers, now in the Honolulu Museum of Art, is only a sketch and that the lithographic artist had altered and added significantly to the composition. Still, his poet's soul was offended by the stiff and forced appearance of the male dancers, which he compared to the rigid figures in David's *The Oath of the Horatii*, not a far-fetched allusion in that artists frequently consulted classical paintings and sculptures for time-honored poses. He suggested that more people should be shown in front of the royal temple (Fig. 2.22), because “the country is more populous than that.” Nor did he like Choris's view of the port of Honolulu (Fig. 2.19), “which gives us neither the reef nor the extent of the harbor, nor the volcanic city, nor the sunny fringe of the island, nor the shapes of their green mountains with the silver leaves of the masses of lucui [*sic*] tree [*Aleurites trilobal*].” He approved of Choris's portrait of Kamehameha (Fig. 2.18) as a “beautiful head,” endorsing his depiction in the black robe, and, with a nod toward the science of the day, concluded, “the more heads the better.”<sup>73</sup>

<sup>70</sup> See Greppi's discussion of “on the spot” sketching by expeditionary artists in “On the Spot,” 23–24.

<sup>71</sup> Chamisso to Choris, Mar. 7, 1821, is reproduced and analyzed in Monika Sproll, “Das ist Natur!” – Adelbert von Chamisso's Bildkritik an Ludwig Choris' Voyage pittoresque zwischen ästhetischem und wissenschaftlichem Anspruch,” in Roland Berbig, et al., *Phantastik und Skepsis: Adelbert von Chamisso's Lebens- und Schreibwelten* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2016), 151–153 (quotes), 154–163, 167 (quote), and 168 (quote). For information on expeditionary artists use of color charts, see the “Painting by Numbers?: An 18<sup>th</sup> Century Flower Show” at <http://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/conservation-blog/painting-by-numbers-an-18th-century-flower-show>. Rees, *Die verzeichnete Fremde*, chapter 4, discusses the use of color charts by expeditionary artists, especially botanical artists.

<sup>72</sup> Chamisso, *Voyage Around the World*, 125.

<sup>73</sup> Chamisso's letter is reproduced in Sproll, “Das ist Natur!” 166–171, 168–169 (quotes).



Fig. 22. On stone by Jean Pierre Norblin after Louis Choris, *Temple du Roi dans la baie Tiritatée*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822), Hawaii section, Plate V. Hand-colored lithograph printed by Joseph Langlumé, 6 7/8 x 12 1/4", image. Courtesy William S. Reese, New Haven, CT.

One observation that Chamisso did not make was that the images he criticized most severely – the dances, and the landscape views of Honolulu – were those drawn on the stone by Choris's colleagues, and one must wonder if the hyper-sensitive naturalist might have detected a diminished authenticity or visual glibness in them that was perhaps inevitable given the production process.

Both Chamisso and Choris realized that the portraits represented the most direct evidence that the artist could present concerning the looming scientific question of the day – the origin of the different races – and Chamisso later commented publicly on them, noting that Choris had assured their reliability by transferring them to stone himself, that they were “in general, of great fidelity,” and that they “deserve the full confidence of the anthropologist.”<sup>74</sup> In this context, Choris's inclusion of the elegant portrait of the *Femme des Iles Sandwich* (Fig. 2.23) seems almost an abdication of the scientific endeavor. He risked his credibility by whole-heartedly embracing what artist and art historian Jean Charlot called a “Rousseauesque idea of the noble savage... that borders on the fabulous.” Choris did some of his “best crayon work modeling the navel in full light,” Charlot noted. Was the final version of the print, no doubt conjured from his exotic memories of Hawaii now shrouded in romanticism, an effort to appeal to the presumed tastes of his learned European audience or a playful joke? Suffice it to say that there is no sketch for this figure among Choris's known work. Charlot theorized, based on two watercolors now in the Honolulu Museum of Art (Fig. 2.24) and a plate in the Russian edition of Kotzebue's book (Fig. 2.25), that Choris developed the portrait by combining the three images into one goddess-like figure.<sup>75</sup> Neither Chamisso nor any other reviewers apparently commented on this portrait.

Chamisso's comments remained private between the two friends, and Choris fared much better with the professional critics, such as the editor and geographer Malte-Brun at *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*. Malte-Brun judged that Choris's style “inspires confidence.” “It is simple, clear, and precise.” Then, speaking with reference to the scientific issues of the day, he claimed that, “We are shown the children of nature with their dirty skin and their fierce look; but it seems that few travelers have seized as well as Mr. Choris the essential physiognomy of the South Sea Islanders...”<sup>76</sup> Choris published a four-page prospectus

<sup>74</sup> Adelbert von Chamisso, “Correspondenz,” *Flora oder botanische zeitung*, 15 (April 21, 1823), 225.

<sup>75</sup> The complete story of the portraits, including quotes, is told in Charlot, *Choris*, 1–6.

<sup>76</sup> Malte-Brun, “Analyses Critiques,” *Nouvelles annales des voyages de la géographie et de l'histoire*, 8 (1821), 166–171. Malte-Brun was an editor of the journal, which had also published an extract of Choris's text in volume 4 (1820), 393–409.

for the book reprinting Malte-Brun's entire review and estimating that the final work would contain twenty parts, each with five plates and text.

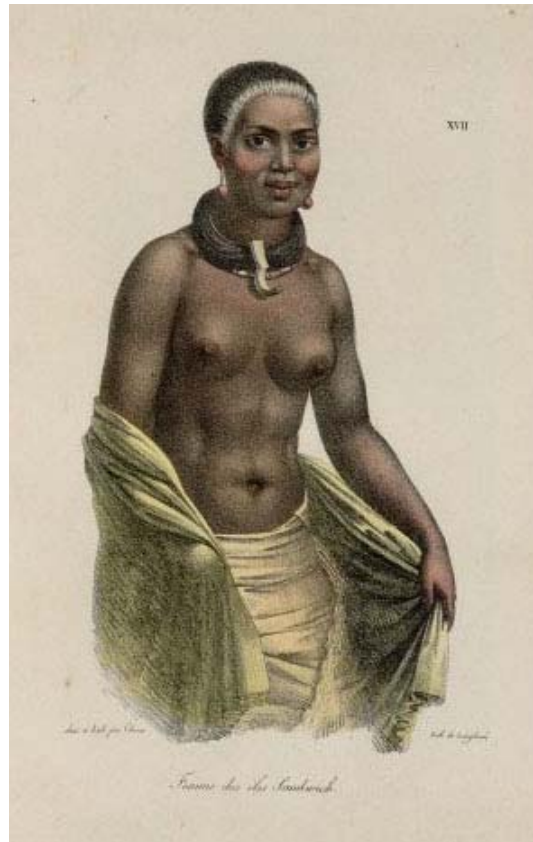


Fig. 23. Drawn and on stone by Louis Choris, *Femme des îles Sandwich*, from Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1822), Hawaii section, Plate 17. Hand-colored lithograph printed by Joseph Langlumé, 10 5/8 x 6", vignette. Courtesy William S. Reese, New Haven, CT.



Fig. 24. Louis Choris, *Femmes des îles Sandwich*, 1816 or 1817. Watercolor on paper, left figure 11 1/8 x 7 1/4 "; right figure 11 x 7 1/4 "; mount 15 7/16 x 21 5/16". Honolulu Museum of Art, Gift of the Honolulu Art Society, 1944 (12157ab).



Fig. 25. *Sandvichanka* [Woman of the Sandwich islands], from Kotzebue, *Puteshestvie v Juzhnyĭ Okean i v Beringov Proliv dlia otiskaniia Sĭvero-vostochnago morskago prokhoda, predpriniatoe v 1815, 1816, 1817 i 1818* (St. Petersburg: Nik. Grecha, 1821[-1823]), vol. 2, facing p. 38. Hand-colored stipple engraving, 11 5/8 x 9 1/4", page size, approximate. Choris apparently combined elements of the two watercolors in figure 24 into this portrait, which then evolved into *Femme des iles Sandwich* (fig. 23). The artist and art historian Jean Charlot thought this to be a more believable portrait of a native woman. Courtesy Russian State Library, Rare Books Department, Moscow, and the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

### CRITICAL RECEPTION OF KOTZEBUE'S REPORT

Shortly after Choris issued his first *livraisons*, the various editions of Kotzebue's book, titled in English, *A Voyage of Discovery, into the South Sea and Beering's [sic] Straits, for the Purpose of Exploring a North-East Passage, Undertaken in the Years 1815–1818*, began to appear in 1821, first in Russian, then in German and English, and in Dutch the following year. Kotzebue used only twenty-one of Choris's images as engravings in his various editions: eight in the German edition; an additional six in the Russian edition, including the portrait that is a combination of two of his watercolors (Fig. 2.25); and seven more in an abridged, two-part English translation. Four of the illustrations in the abridged English edition are copied from the first fascicules of Choris's *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* that had appeared earlier that year.<sup>77</sup> Malte-Brun called Kotzebue's contribution "very interesting," but the British were much less complimentary. Perhaps John Barrow, Secretary of the Admiralty in London, felt that Kotzebue's venture threatened British interests in the Northwest, for he observed in the *Quarterly Review* that the expedition failed in its primary goal of discovering an Arctic passage. Kotzebue had not even gone as far north as had Cook, and his "abrupt abandonment was hardly justified under the circumstances stated." The gallant Cook had given his life! "It would not be tolerated in England..." Barrow insisted. Admitting, nevertheless, that science and exploration had been served, Barrow, probably with the Russian-American Company in mind, then questioned the expedition's purpose: "We should not be disposed to detract from the merit which...

<sup>77</sup> Raymond John Howgego, *Encyclopedia of Exploration, 1800 to 1850: A Comprehensive Reference Guide to the History and Literature of Exploration, Travel and Colonization Between the Years 1800 and 1850*, 5 vols. (Potts Point, NSW: Hordern House, 2003–2008), 2: 329–331, lists the various editions of Kotzebue's book. Chamisso stated that he would recognize only the German text as the correct one. Various critics have pointed out that his precaution was wise, for the English translation contains a number of errors. See, for example, Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of Alaska, 1730–1885*, in *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Company, Publishers, 1886), 33, 503, 26.

would be justly due to the Russian government, if we could persuade ourselves that the extension of geographical knowledge, for its own sake and for the benefit of mankind, was the prime object of this expedition....”<sup>78</sup>

#### PUBLICATION HISTORY, *VOYAGE PITTORESQUE ATOUR DU MONDE*

Choris, meanwhile, finished his book. He dated his introduction May 1, 1822, but the final part did not arrive at the French National Library until May 3, 1823. The finished work comprises twenty-two parts: twenty-one parts with text and 104 plates relating to the voyage, a portrait of Count Romanzoff, and a final part that contains two and one-half pages of text and two engraved charts. Several copies of the book also contain a portrait of the artist (Fig. 2.1), which was probably produced later and bound in by the owners. One of the copies at Yale also contains Choris’s watercolor portrait of his friend Chamisso (Fig. 2.3).<sup>79</sup> Choris’s book is one of the more extensive treatments of America’s northwest coast as well as of the Hawaiian Islands at that time.

The list of seventy-three subscribers, printed in the final *livraison*, accounts for 188 copies. Prominent patrons included the kings of France (three copies) and Prussia (two copies), the emperor and the empress dowager of Russia (ten copies), the French Minister of the Interior (twenty copies), the French Minister of Public Instruction (twenty copies), various titled persons, a number of booksellers, and the Sèvres porcelain works, doubtless anticipating possible use of the images on their porcelains. There are two different title pages, one dated 1820, probably issued with the first number, and one dated 1822, as Choris was bringing the project to a close.<sup>80</sup>

The announced price of the finished book was 160 francs (uncolored), 200 francs (with the natural history plates colored), and 320 francs (fully colored). It is difficult to say how much that would be worth in today’s money, but it probably would be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$340, \$425, and \$680 respectively. In 1821, London booksellers offered the first four *livraisons* for twelve shillings (approximately \$32) and, in August 1823, they listed the finished book uncolored for £6 5 shillings (\$332), and colored for £12 10 shillings (\$665). The difficulty of estimating the price in today’s dollars, even taking into consideration the fluctuations over the years, becomes clearer when one realizes that Choris apparently was charging substantially more than the approximately \$120 that Prince Maximilian would permit Karl Bodmer’s magnificent hand-colored engravings of the Midwestern Indians with a much larger text to sell for two decades later, but less than the approximately \$1,000 that John James Audubon charged in the 1820s and 1830s for his considerably larger double elephant folio *The Birds of America* with 435 plates and five volumes of text.<sup>81</sup> H. C. Carey & I. Lea in Philadelphia advertised Choris’s book for sale, but they did not list a price.<sup>82</sup>

After *Voyage pittoresque* was published, Choris presented it to the newly-established Société de Géographie of Paris and was elected a member. He remained in Paris, “living for art” as his friend Chamisso put it in 1825, all the while hoping for a government position, perhaps as a botanical illustrator. He soon began work on a second book, *Vues et paysages des régions équinoxiales, recueillis dans un voyage autour du monde* (Paris: Impr. de P. Renouard, 1826), which, as the title suggests, contains twenty-four landscape

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<sup>78</sup> Malte-Brun, “Varietes,” 3; [Sir John Barrow,] “Art. III. – *A Voyage of Discovery*,” *The Quarterly Review*, 26 (Jan. 1822): 341–364 (quote on 363). For John Barrow’s identification as the reviewer of Kotzebue’s book, see Jonathan Cutmore, *Contributors to the Quarterly Review: A History, 1809–25* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 167.

<sup>79</sup> Forbes, comp., *Hawaiian National Bibliography*, 1: 376–377. See Choris, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde*, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University (ZZc86 822c COPY 1).

<sup>80</sup> Forbes, comp., *Hawaiian National Bibliography*, 1: entry 541, 373–378.

<sup>81</sup> There are a number of Internet sources that offer estimates of the value of money over time, sometimes providing radically different answers. I have used the World Coin Price Guide (<https://www.ngccoin.com/price-guide/world>) and “Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century French Currency” (<http://tenlittlebullets.tumblr.com/post/54856540503/resource-post-early-19th-century-french-currency>), among others, in reaching these estimates. See also Ron Tyler, “Karl Bodmer and the American West,” in Brandon K. Ruud (ed.), *Karl Bodmer’s North American Prints* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press and Joslyn Art Museum, 2004), 23; and Ron Tyler, *Audubon’s Great National Work: The Royal Octavo Edition of The Birds of America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 46.

<sup>82</sup> “Splendid Books,” *Aurora and Franklin Gazette* (Philadelphia), Dec. 9, 1824: 4.

views of scenes from the *Rurik* voyage. The volume's dedication to Humboldt acknowledges that Choris was responding to the great naturalist's call to provide visual and scientific documents of nature.<sup>83</sup>

## LEGACY

By publishing his images, Choris joined other artists and naturalists who shared their research with the scientific world by means of beautifully illustrated, documentary accounts of their expeditions. The great illustrated book had been the preferred method of preserving and transmitting scientific information ever since the sixteenth century, and Choris's *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde* found its place among the notable works on the New World by Theodore De Bry, Mark Catesby, James Cook, and Baron Alexander von Humboldt, among others.<sup>84</sup>

Ready for another adventure, on February 16, 1827, he proposed to the president of the Société de Géographie a trip to other areas of the New World – to Mexico, Guatemala, Quito, Chile, and Patagonia via New York, as a further response to Humboldt's call for research on the pre-Columbian cultures. The multi-talented Edme-François Jomard, editor of *Description de l'Égypte* (1809–1829), the series of publications resulting from Napoleon's Commission of the Sciences and Arts, replied on the Society's behalf with what amounted to a validation of Choris's work. He suggested that the artist might examine and document the native physiognomies and collect among the ancient monuments of Guatemala. Especially important would be the skulls of ancient civilizations and other objects that could be added to European collections. The Muséum national d'histoire naturelle agreed to pay him a wage for his services, and designated him a "Naturalist Traveler" and Correspondent of the Museum.<sup>85</sup>

Choris departed October 6, 1827, on board the *Jeanne d'Arc*. His ship stopped at Fort-Royal, Martinique, Havana, and New Orleans en route, and he sent Baron Cuvier specimens from the Caribbean islands, but his adventure came to an abrupt end when he reached Mexico. Choris and an Englishman named Henderson departed Veracruz for Jalapa on March 19, 1828. Thieves waylaid and robbed them the following day, and Choris died from both a sabre blow and a bullet wound. His traveling companion, although seriously wounded, reached Jalapa to report the incident, and the *alcalde* there oversaw Choris's burial at Plan del Río.<sup>86</sup>

His greatest work is the *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde*. Although it has been known for years among scholars, it has received almost no popular interest or circulation until this century. But those interested in the study of race did notice it. Blumenbach, Humboldt, and the Paris savants were aware of it from inception. The English editor Frederic Shoberl included copies after Choris plates in his *The World in Miniature: South Sea Islands...* (2 vols.; London: R. Ackermann, 1824), as did the English physician and ethnologist James Cowles Prichard in his *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind* (2 vols.; London: John and Arthur Arch, 1826). Professor Heinrich Rudolf Schinz of Zurich copied Choris's portrait of Kamehameha in his *Naturgeschichte und Abbildungen der Säugethiere: nach den neuesten Systemen sum gemeinnützigen Gebrauche entworfen und mit Berücksichtigung für den Unterricht der Jugend* (Zurich, 1824) (fig. 2.26). The French naval officer Jules-Sébastien-César Dumont d'Urville, who followed Kotzebue into the southern Pacific, employed several of Choris's images in his own *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde...* (Paris, 1832–1834). Two of Choris's illustrations of the Hawaiian dance were incorporated into composite views (figs. 2.27 and 2.28) and included among the five hundred engravings in the two-volume atlas that accompanied the great *Bilder-Atlas zum Conversations-Lexicon* (1849–51), edited by Johann Georg Heck and published by Friedrich Arnold Brockhaus in Leipzig. The reviewer for the *Southern Literary Messenger* liked the book and fully embraced its mission:

The Iconographic Encyclopedia has fully maintained to the last, the excellence of its letter press [*sic*] and the exceeding beauty of its steel engravings.... One derives but a feeble impression from reading a paper, however clear and well elaborated, upon any scientific subject, compared with that

<sup>83</sup> Greppi, "On the Spot," 37–42.

<sup>84</sup> Honour, *European Vision of America*, 1–14; Ron Tyler, *Prints of the West* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1994), 1–22; and Ron Tyler, *Visions of America: Pioneer Artists in a New Land* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983).

<sup>85</sup> Chamisso, *Voyage Around the World*, 234; E.-T. Hamy, "Le second voyage et la mort au Mexique de Louis Choris," *Bulletin du muséum d'histoire naturelle*, 12 (1906), 353–357; Liebersohn, *The Travelers' World*, 95–97.

<sup>86</sup> "Necrology," *The Foreign Review*, 2, no. 3 (Sept. 1828), 263–264.

which is made upon him by studying accurate diagrams and plates relating to it, and it is precisely upon this principle that the Iconographic Encyclopedia bases its title to general approval. *It writes by images.* In every possible branch of human investigation which is capable of being illustrated, it gives us spirited pictures of the *rationale*.... All are set before our eyes in the most exquisite and life-like engravings.<sup>87</sup>



Fig. 26. Portrait of Kamehameha (left) after Louis Choris, in Heinrich Rudolf Schinz, *Naturgeschichte und Abbildungen der Säugethiere: nach den neuesten Systemen zum gemeinnützigen Gebrauche entworfen und mit Berücksichtigung für den Unterricht der Jugend* (Zurich, 1824). Lithograph by Karl Joseph Brodtmann, 13 x 8 3/4" (page). Courtesy American Museum of Natural History, New York, Image No. 100216045\_1.

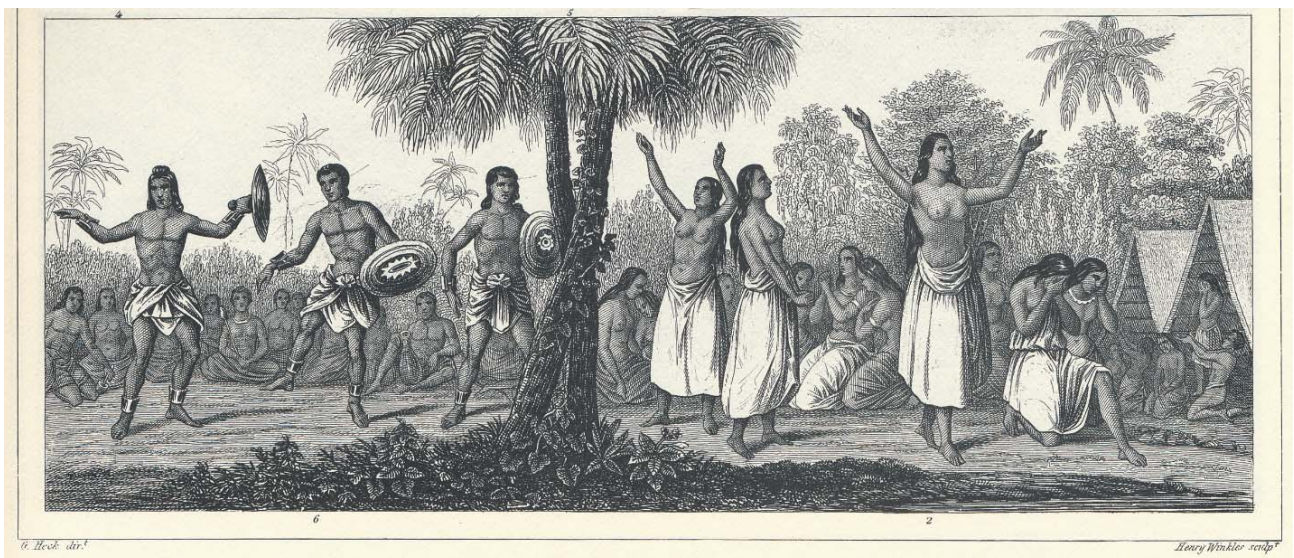


Fig. 27. Drawn by G. Heck and engraved by Henry Winkles after Louis Choris, from Johann Georg Heck, ed., *Iconographic Encyclopedia of Science, Literature, and Art*, trans. and ed. by Spencer F. Baird (New York: Rudolph Garrigue, 1851), vol. 1 Plates, Tab. 38. Figures 27 and 28 combine elements of two pictures of dancers by Choris (figs. 20 and 21. Steel engraving, 3 1/4 x 7 15/16", image; 12 3/8 x 9 5/8 ", page. Hirsch Library, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

<sup>87</sup> "Notices of New Works," *Southern Literary Messenger*, 18 (Mar. 1852): 192.

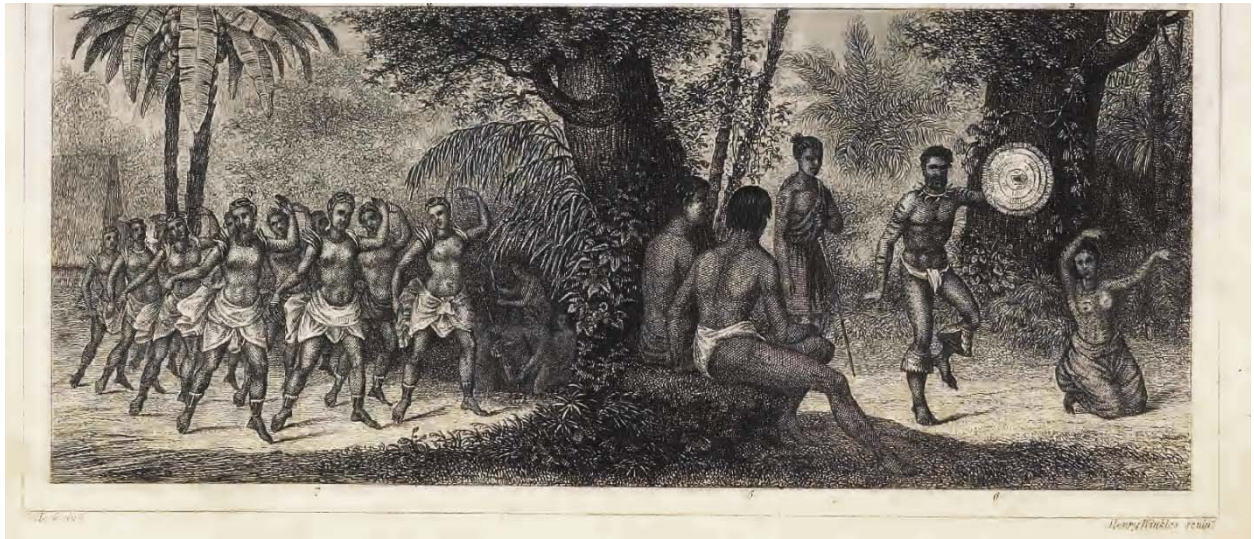


Fig. 28. Henry Winkles engraving after Louis Choris, in Johann Georg Heck, ed., *Iconographic Encyclopedia of Science, Literature, and Art*, trans. and ed. by Spencer F. Baird (New York: Rudolph Garrigue, 1851), vol. 1 Plates, Tab. 41. Steele engraving, 3 5/16 x 7 15/16", image; 12 3/8 x 9 5/8 ", page. Hirsch Library, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

But for decades Choris's books seemed to disappear, only to be unearthed in the late twentieth century by a few scholars and collectors of material relating to the Pacific Rim or to his more scholarly friend Chamisso. While various authors have used Choris's California and Hawaii pictures in recent publications, the lithographs of the Pacific islands and the northwest coast are, by comparison, infrequently used. His work has not been translated or published in this century, except in snippets; nor has he attracted a biographer.<sup>88</sup> The more academically oriented Chamisso would have liked for certain of his drawings – generally those composed in Paris – to be more scientifically accurate, but Choris's book is one of the handsomest relating to the Pacific Rim and his illustrations constitute some of the earliest published visual documentation of the people and places of the Northwest Coast of America, the Hawaiian Islands, and islands of the South Pacific.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Jules Sebastien Cesar Dumont d'Urville, *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde resumé général, des voyages de découvertes...*, 2 vols. (Paris: Chez L. Tenré, 1834), esp. 1: 460 and opp. 446, 451, 475, and 478; quote in *Pacific Voyages from the Dr. F. E. Ellis Collection* (Sydney, Australia: Hordern House, 1989), entry 31. See Henry B. Collins et al., *The Far North: 2000 Years of American Eskimo and Indian Art* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1973); Jules David Prown et al., *Discovered Lands, Invented Pasts: Transforming Visions of the American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Smith, *European Vision*; and Henry, *Early Maritime Artists of the Pacific Northwest Coast*, for example. The former Imprint Society of Barre, MA, had hoped to publish a translation of Choris's work, but ceased publication before the task was accomplished.

<sup>89</sup> The illustrations of the several artists on the Spanish expedition of Alejandro Malaspina, for example, were not published until the twentieth century in Carmen Sotos Serrano, *Los pintores de la expedición de Alejandro Malaspina*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1982).