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ROBERT JAMESON IN LONDON, 1793

Excerpts from Robert Jameson's 'Journal of a Voyage from Leith to
London 1793'*

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[PLATES VIII and IX.]

ROBERT JAMESON (1774–1854), Professor of Natural History in the University of Edinburgh from 1804 to 1854, made his first trip to London at the age of nineteen by sailing ship from Leith. He was the third son of Thomas Jameson, a wealthy soap-boiler in Leith, whose eldest son Thomas¹ was already in the business in London. With Robert on this occasion was his young brother Andrew,² aged fourteen. Jameson had already studied for some time in the University of Edinburgh. In 1787, when he would have been fourteen, a Robert Jameson took out the classes of Humanity and Greek. The signature in the Matriculation lists of the University is rather childish, but firmer in the following year when he attended a more advanced course in both subjects. However, our Robert Jameson probably did attend medical classes in the sessions 1789–1796. In only one year is the entry in his own handwriting—1793—when he was attending 'Practice of Medicine, Botany and Clinical' lectures. The other entries of his name are notes added in pencil. We know from other sources that he was attending classes in Botany, Natural History, Medicine and probably Chemistry during that period. Hence he would be well qualified to make the observant notes that form this journal. During the latter part of this period he came much under the influence of Dr. John Walker,³ Professor of Natural History, whom he succeeded in 1804.

* From a manuscript in the Archives of the University of Edinburgh and published by permission of the Librarian and also with the help of a grant from the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland.

¹ Thomas Jameson (1769–1830). He married Mary Hanson or Henson in 'Mary-le-Bonn', London, in 1795.

² Rev. Andrew Jameson (1779–1861), Minister of St. Mungo, Dumfriesshire.

³ John Walker, M.D., D.D. (1731–1803). Professor of Natural History, Edinburgh (1779–1803).

Following Dr Walker's example he kept a fairly complete diary of his visit. The ship left Leith on 12 August 1793, but the diary lapses after 16 August, when they were off Flamborough Head, and begins again with a visit to the Zoo at the Tower of London⁴ on 22 August—a note at the end of the diary says he paid 1s. 6d. admittance for himself and Andrew. It may be of interest to observe what animals were in the Tower at that date:

' 1. *Canis Hyaena* there were two one perfectly tame and suffered the Keeper to stroke it and use other familiarities with it; the other was very fierce. 2d. *Felis Tigris* Royal Tiger was tame. 3d. *Felis Leo*, a very fine one; also a Lioness and two young Lions that were bred in the tower, the one male and the other female, beside the Large Lion which they called Nero was a dog which has remained with him since he was confined. 4th. *Felis Leopardus*, two very beautiful ones. 5. *Viverra Ichneumon*⁵ from the banks of the Nile. 6. *Viverra Narica*. *Coati-mondi*. 7. *Viverra Civetta*, Civet Cat. 8. *Ursus Artotos*, a young one. 9. *Canis Lupus* Wolf. 10th. Tiger Cat. 11th. A beautiful variety of the *Felis Leopardus* from the East Indies is is [*sic*] of a beautiful black colour sent (if I remember right) by Governor Hastings.⁶ 12th. Several species of the order *Simia*. 13th. A very fine *Vultur Papa*. 14th. *Falco Aquila leucocephala*, and one or two animals which I do not at present recollect. I was very much disappointed when I had seen the Royal collection, as I had entertained hopes of seeing one of the finest menagers in London, whereas it was the most insignificant. The dens in which they were confined were very well contrived, and of a good size '.

It will be noted that every beast was referred to by its Latin name and Jameson seldom gives any biological specimen its common name. For instance, on a walk on Blackheath every ordinary plant he sees is noted in Latin and even a passing yellow butterfly near Soho Square becomes a '*Papilio Rhamni*'.

On 23 August he was more successful, as he

' went to Sir Ashton Levers' celebrated Museum Surry end of Blackfriars Bridge, now in the possession of Mr Parkinson⁸ where I paid 2s6 to see the Museum, but being so much delighted with this truly wonderful

⁴ The Kings of England formerly kept their wild beasts at the Tower of London. Cubs were born in the Tower in 1794 and again in 1827, and so this pair seen by Jameson in 1793 were of especial interest (E. T. Bennett, *The Tower Menagerie*, London, 1829, p. 14). This collection was transferred to the Zoological Gardens in 1834 (A. J. C. Hare, *Walks in London*, 7th edn., London, 1923, vol. i, p. 296).

⁵ *Viverra Ichneumon*, Ichneumon, Mongoose; *Viverra Nasua*, *Coati-mondi* (see foot-note 21 below); *Ursus Arctos*, Brown Bear; *Vultur Papa*, King Vulture; *Falco Leucocephalus*, White-headed Eagle. Jameson's spelling has been reproduced throughout this paper.

⁶ Warren Hastings (1732-1818), F.R.S. (1787). Governor-General of India.

⁷ Sir John Ashton Lever (1729-1788), F.R.S. (1773). Moved his Museum to Leicester House, Leicester Square, 1775; offered to the British Museum in 1783, but declined; acquired in a lottery by James Parkinson (1730?-1813) in 1784 and then housed in the Rotunda, Surrey side of Blackfriars Bridge; eventually sold in lots by auction, 1806.

⁸ See foot-note 7.

collection I paid one guinea which entitled me to attend there for 3 months. I observed there the marble statue of his majesty⁹ cut by [blank] which is to be placed on the front of the Register Office of Edinburgh. Amongst a number of articles I observed particularly the following.

'A very fine specimen of the Labrador Stone¹⁰ which measured [blank] as also another large slab unpolished measuring [blank] besides a number of other beautiful specimens of the same stone. 2. A specimen of the elastic Stone¹¹ measuring [blank]. 3d. The famous specimen of the Avanturine¹² found in the Ruins of [blank] it measures [blank]. 4th. A beautiful chrystal of the Aqua Marine about 6 inches long and 3 quart[er]s in diameter. 5th. Also another capital groupe of chrystals of the same from Siberia sent by Dr Pallas.¹³ 6th A most beautiful mass calcedony from the East Indies of different colours white brownish and red like carnelian.¹⁴ 7th. Some most beautiful Malachite from Siberia.¹⁵ 8th A very fine specimen of a stalactitical Iron. 9th A specimen of petrified wood about a foot in diameter, and 4 feet in Length. 10th. Specimen of the Argus Luen Pheasant. 11th. . . . of the Vultur Gryphus, male & female. 12. . . . of the Anas Occidentalis. Westren Duck. 13. . . Great crowned Indian Pigeon. 14. . . Mandarin Duck or Chinese Teal. 15. . . Summer Duck of Catesby. 16. . . Red Ibis pair. 17. . . Albatross. 18. . . Storks from Holland. 19. . .

⁹ Statue of George III by Anne Seymour Damer (1749-1828). The statue is now in an alcove in the Dome Room, Old Register House, Edinburgh, which was opened in 1789.

¹⁰ Labradorite feldspar from Labrador; was on sale by 'one Shaw of London' from about 1790 onwards (see foot-note 25 below). See *A Companion to the Museum (Late Sir Ashton Lever's)*, London, 1790, Part ii, p. 59, No. 2. Specimen fixed in a moveable mahogany frame, suitable for turning to get reflections.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, No. 3. Flexible sandstone from Brazil in a mahogany glass-case, part of it projecting through the top of the case to show its curious property of bending. Probably lot 477, *Leverian Sale Catalogue (Main Sale)*, London, 1806; sold for £3-6-0. This annotated sale catalogue is in the British Museum (Natural History), hereafter referred to as Brit. Mus. Nat. Hist.

¹² Avanturine (rock-crystal enclosing golden mica), weight near 5 lb. Found in the ruins of the triumphal arch of Julius Caesar in the Val di Susa, Piedmont, Italy, in 1788 by the 'Sieur Francis Ludwig of Mayence'. Bought by Sir Ashton Lever from the owner for 200 guineas, *A Companion* etc. (see foot-note 10 above), p. 73, Lot 112. *Sale Catalogue*, (see foot-note 11 above), 12 July, p. 10, Lot 120. Bought in by 'Carrudas' for J. Parkinson at £210-0-0 (see W. H. Mullens, 'Leverian Museum', *Museums Journ.*, 1915, 15, 165-166). The present whereabouts of this specimen is not known (Private communication, British Museum, 1964).

¹³ Peter Simon Pallas, M.D. (1741-1811), F.R.S. (1764); travelled extensively in Russia. Probably *Companion* etc., p. 77, No. 164. Group of hexagonal crystals with flat ends from Nerchinsk, Siberia; *Sale Catalogue*, 11 July, 1806, Lot 120. Bought in by 'Carrudas' at £10-15.

¹⁴ *Sale Catalogue*, 14 July, 1806, p. 17, Lot 114: 'rich oriental amber-coloured onachine chalcodony or Sardonyx . . . wholly unrivalled weighs nearly 224 pounds'. Passed, not bid for at all.

¹⁵ *Main Sale Catalogue*, Lot 96. 'Beautiful malachite. Tourtschininow, Urals, Siberia', bought by 'Carrudas'. (Locality perhaps Turzhinsk).

fast went to Dr Crichtons Library and inspected his collection of fossils, amongst the most remarkable things were the following.

1. A prism of Aqua Marine about an inch diameter and $2\frac{1}{2}$ long. 2nd. A piece of native antimony. 3. A/2 specimens of Boracit from Lunenburg in the Electorate of Hanover its contents are as follows 68 parts Acid of Borax; 11 Calcareous Earth; 13.5 Magensesia; 2. Siliceous; 1 Argill. Earth; 0.7 Iron; (3.7 lost). according to Westrumb's⁶⁹ analysis; Has 26 sides. The Doctor was so kind as to give me one of his specimens, as also a separate Chrystal. 4th. Pitch stone. 5. Elastic Bitumen saw this also in Mr Wilsons collection both from Derbyshire. 6. Saw there also the Astrapia which he also calls a Barytes.

Went in the evning to Bermondsey Spa⁷⁰ in the evning [*sic*] where there was a pretty considerable company.

The next day (4 September) he had a violent headache, but recovered sufficiently to call on Mr Paton in Blackheath in the evening.

On 6 September he

' went and bought a specimen of Gum Copal for Dr Walker cost 6^s and some some [*sic*] Cologne Earth⁷¹ cost 1^s, went to the Shop where the filtering stones⁷² are sold and got not yet any specimens as they get them home manufactured into vessels for the purpose of filtration which cost about £1. 16. Went thro different Booksellers shops in Holburn. Come home and dined. After dinner went to Lackingtons⁷³ and bought a copy of Puffendorf's law of native and nations cost 9/6.⁷⁴ Then went and drunk tea in the Edinburgh Coffe House⁷⁵ which cost [blank]. Waited for my brother till eight o'clock and went from thence to West Smithfield where St Barthlem fair⁷⁶ is kept. Went to the exhibition of some animals they were the following.

' 1st. Bos Americanis or Bison, which is one of the most fierce looking animals I ever saw. 2. Rhinoceros Unicornis a young one preserved, it

⁶⁹ Johann Friedrich Westrumb (1751–1819), Chemist, *Ann. Chim.*, 1789, 2, 101–117. Boracit (Boracite), A. G. Werner, 1789, from Lüneburg, Hannover, Germany. There are two specimens of Boracite from Lüneburg, belonging to an old collection having no history, in the Geology Department of the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh. The Museum collection includes the collection of the University Museum of which Jameson was the curator and one of these specimens could possibly be that given to him by Crichton. There are as well numerous isolated crystals.

⁷⁰ An attempt was made at the end of the eighteenth century to transform Bermondsey into a spa. See *Old and New London*, vol. vi, p. 128; W. Wroth, *The London Pleasure Gardens of the Eighteenth Century*, London, 1896, pp. 231–237.

⁷¹ Cologne Earth, presumably used for making the famous Cologne stoneware.

⁷² Presumably used in water filtration, but no information available.

⁷³ James Lackington (1746–1815), bookseller, Finsbury Square, London (*D.N.B.*).

⁷⁴ Baron Samuel von Pufendorf, *Of the Law of Nature and Nations*, (Oxford, 1710; London, 1729 and 1749).

⁷⁵ Edinburgh Coffee House—no reference found.

⁷⁶ Bartholomew Fair, Smithfield; established in the reign of Henry I for three days around St Bartholomew's Day (24 August) but later was extended. A. J. C. Hare, *Walks in London*, 7th edn., 1923, vol. i, p. 142.

had been alive about three years in the Lyceum⁷⁷ and died a short time before I came to London, which loss I much regreted. 3. *Canis Lupus*. 4. *Ursus Maritimi* (?) Polar Bear who seemed to be quite fatigued by its being so much irritated these two days past; it uttered most dreadful howls when a pole was put into it. 5. Black Bear which they called a *Hyaena*’.

On 10 September:

‘Set off this morning on my jaunt to the Isle of Sheppy accompanied by Mr Anderson in the Canterbury coach to Rochester, where we put up all night at a public house called The Mitre where we paid very extravagantly for our lodging. After dinner took a walk about the city and observed the external appearance of the Dockyard & Barrack which seemed to be pretty large, saw on the stocks at C[h]atham the *Ville de Paris* 120 Guns. She is to be built after the same manner as the one that was lost after that glorious day the 12 April.⁷⁸ Sailed next morning for Sheerness in one of the passage Boats, but finding that she did not go fast enough we took the opportunity of going on board a small boat with oars which landed us in Sheerness in about 2 hours. This is but a small town consisting entirely of people belonging to or depending on the Dock Yard, the houses are of brick, but what surprized me a good deal was to find 4 or 5 old ships from 74 to 98 [guns?] pulled upon the Beach and converted into houses for the working people of the Yard. We dwelt whilst on the island on a public house called the Marlborough head, altho the best had very indifferent attendance, and worse victuals. There is a fort beside the Town for its defences which consists of a good number of Guns but indifferently mounted, defended by some old invalids. Went around part of the island by Queenborough. All the coast I found to consist of an Argillaceous earth or Clay. The coast all this way I went was defended by stakes driven into the ground in rows and masses of chalk and other fossils laid betwixt them, three rows of chalk generally. What part of the interior ground I observed this day was dreadfully parched and cracked occasioned by the great heat, and was was [*sic*] intersected in every place by small canals of stagnant salt water, beside the town of Sheerness beside a part called the Bleu houses there is a great quantity of stagnant water of this kind that occasions ague frequently. Went next day to the opposite side of the island which I found embanked in the same manner in some parts altho left without any defence in other parts, it was in those parts that I first found good specimens of the *Astrapia*. These were found adhering to *Septaria*. Upon breaking these sep I found some most beautiful

⁷⁷ The Lyceum was built on part of the land originally occupied by Exeter House and was used for exhibitions before becoming a theatre. *Old and New London*, vol. iii, p. 117.

⁷⁸ The original *Ville de Paris* (104 guns) was De Grasse’s flag-ship at the Battle of the Saints, 12 April, 1782, off Dominica in the West Indies, where it was captured by Admiral Rodney. The second *Ville de Paris* referred to here was a ship of 110 guns launched at Chatham, 17 July, 1795. (Information from National Maritime Museum, Greenwich; also see Ann Parry, *Parry of the Arctic*, London, 1963, p. 15 n).

specimens. These septaria were found in an argillaceous cleft along with selenite which plainly shows its origin'.⁷⁹

On his return Jameson went again

'to Sir Joseph Banks where I breakfasted with Mr Dryander. After breakfast he was so kind as to show me Sir Josephs collection of Fuci⁸⁰ which I examined, but did not think anything of them at all and if from the descriptions I have recd th[e]y be right named I am much mistaken. When I asked Mr Dryander the name of some of the Fuci he told me he did not know or at least that he did not wish to know which answer not a little surprized me'.

Later he 'went and called upon Mr Cruickshanks who I found to be a very haughty kind of a man. He invited me to come & dine with him & see the Hunter Museum.'⁸¹

On 21 September :

'went this morning and called upon Dr Garshore about 9 oClock when he requested me to sit down and read to him Browns Book on the inequality of Men⁸² which I did with a great deal of pleasure as it is a most excellent Book. Having read to him for about an hour he desired me to take a walk and deliver any of the letters I had not delivered and return at 11 oClock to breakfast. I accordingly went and waited upon the amiable Dr Smith,⁸³ Great Marlborough street who I found at home. I delivered my letter from Dr Walker to him, when he asked me how the Dr was then read the letter, and told me that he was sorrow it was not in his power to let me see his collection that day as he was going into the country, but he very politely gave me a copy of the names of the Linnæan Society (of which he has the honour of being perpetual president an honour which only such amiable and worthy characters deserve) and invited me to attend the first meeting of the Society on Tuesday [1st] of October when he would introduce me to Dr Shaw^{83a} a young and very ingenious naturalist and other of the members, he was also so polite as to offer to introduce me to the illustrious Banks on his arrival from the country. Returned to Dr Garshore's about 11 oClock when I was ushered into the drawing room, where I remained about a quarter of an hour alone when the company began to assemble which consisted of 12 Ladies & 8 Gentlemen. I was introduced

⁷⁹ There are two specimens of this baryte from Sheppey in the mineral collection of the Royal Scottish Museum (see foot-note 69), which might possibly have been collected by Jameson at this time.

⁸⁰ Thomas Jameson was an importer of Kelp for the manufacture of soap and therefore his son would be an authority on Fuci and in fact wrote an article on Kelp in *Mineralogy of the Shetland Islands*, Edinburgh, 1798, pp. 186-196. See also A. Clow and Nan L. Clow, *Ann. Sci.*, 1947, 5, 297-316.

⁸¹ Museum of William Hunter (see foot-notes 49 and 56).

⁸² William Laurence Brown, D.D. (1755-1830), theological writer and Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen. *An Essay on the natural equality of men*, Edinburgh, 1793.

⁸³ Sir James Edward Smith, M.D. (1759-1828), F.R.S. (1785). Founder and President of the Linnean Society, 1788.

^{83a} See foot-note 18.

Some very beautiful arborescent amongst these was a specimen from South America. We stopped here for to day as Dr Crichton was obliged to visit a patient in the forenoon but I engaged to call upon Mr Babington on Friday at 10 o'clock and see the other part of the collection. From this went to the Leverian Museum when I was informed that yesterday there was about 150 people at the Museum but that to day on account of the bad news of the murder of the Queen of France²⁶¹ there had not been above 20. I saw there a very perfect specimen of *Enchrinus*²⁶² for which the man (a brother of Humphys) asked 12 guineas. It came from the Continent. He has also a very good collection of Native Cinnab[ar].²⁶³ &c.

Thursday Octob 24th

'Went this day and breakfasted with Dr Shaw and Dr Crichton. During breakfast Mr Nodder,²⁶⁴ Dr Shaws engraver came in. He appeared a very acquard and strange looking man. After Breakfast we went to view the Museum clausum²⁶⁵ that is below stairs. It is contained in about 5 rooms. Amongst the vast collection of objects I observed the following

'Some preparations made by Swammerdam²⁶⁶ in comparative anatomy. A complete skeleton of an elephant. A skeleton of an ostrich. A young Rusoan [?].²⁶⁷ A skeleton of a Rhein Deer. An Wolverene. A Dromedary. Several Egyptian Mumis. Several very good collection of shells. A twisted tusk of the *Trichechus Rosm* which is very remarkable. Horns of the the [*sic*] *Monodon Monoceros*. The King of the Herrings; this fish is remarkable for the process on its nose. This fish is described by Grew. The *Zeus Imperialis*. Sword Fish. Leonine Seal. Underjaw of the *Physeter Macrocephalis*. Broad Tailed Manis'.

Here the Journal finishes abruptly and unfortunately there is no description of the rest of Dr Babington's collection which Jameson was to have seen on Friday, 25 October. He was back in Edinburgh at the

²⁶¹ The execution of Marie Antoinette took place on 16 October 1793.

²⁶² *Enchrinus*, Crinoid.

²⁶³ Can find no reference to this brother of G. Humphrey (J.M.S., 1964).

²⁶⁴ Frederick Polydore Nodder probably died in 1800; the illustrations for the *Naturalist's Miscellany* were carried on after that date by Elizabeth Nodder and Richard P. Nodder (probably his son).

²⁶⁵ 'Museum clausum'. No information; but probably a collection not on view to the public (private communication, British Museum, 1964).

²⁶⁶ Jan Swammerdam (1637-1680). Entomologist. These preparations have not been traced. (J.M.S., 1964).

²⁶⁷ 'Rusoan', probably meant for rhinoceros; *Trichechus Rosmarus*, Arctic Walrus, *Nat. Misc.*, vol. 8, Pl. 276 (no date); *Monodon Monoceros*, Narwhal; *Ascanian Gymnetrus*, Oar Fish or Ribbon Fish, King of the Herrings; *Zeus Imperialis*, King-fish, *Nat. Misc.*, vol. 4, Pl. 140 (date 1793)—a specimen weighing about 50 lb. cast ashore at Cramond in October 1795 was preserved in Alexander Weir's Museum in Edinburgh; *Physeter Macrocephalis*, Spermaceti Whale, *Nat. Misc.*, vol. 6, Pl. 184 (no date); Broad-tailed Manis, G. Shaw, *General Zoology*, 1800, vol. i, p. 183 (several specimens in the British Museum).