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A Living Orang Utan in Uppsala in 1785

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The first orang utan (*Pongo pygmaeus*) exhibited alive in Europe had its fair share of fame, controversy and historical research (RÖHRER-ERTL 1983, VISSER 1985). This ♀ specimen was kept in the menagerie of WILLEM V, Prince of Orange, at the Kleine Loo near The Hague, Holland, from 29 June 1776 until 22 January 1777. The second orang utan in Europe has escaped notice. It is not mentioned in the otherwise trustworthy summary of captive orang utans by JONES (1982). The only known reference is well hidden in an obscure dissertation, which needs to be introduced first for a good understanding of the context.

The booklet may be ascribed to CARL PETER THUNBERG (1743–1828), a pupil of LINNAEUS at the University of Uppsala, Sweden. After his study of medicine (which included botany and zoology), THUNBERG made a long journey to Japan in 1771–1779 visiting other places like the Cape of Good Hope, Java and Sri Lanka on the way. He proved to be a meticulous observer and an assiduous collector. He returned to Sweden with a considerable collection of all kinds of plants, insects and other animals. In July 1785 he donated everything to the University of Uppsala where he taught and besides curated the museum of natural history. This museum contained less than 100 specimens before THUNBERG added his collection. THUNBERG soon started to prepare a catalogue of the species represented in the museum, published as the *Museum Naturalium Academiae Upsaliensis* in 61 parts between 1787 and 1821. Each installment of some 10 pages served as a dissertation to one of his pupils (the respondent) named on the title pages.

The enumeration of species contained in the “Donatio CAROL. PETR. THUNBERG” started in the second part of the Museum issued in 1787 (p. 25) and continued through almost all subsequent parts. Remarkably, unlike most other entries, the first name mentioned among animals in THUNBERG’s donation referred to a specimen which obviously was not collected by THUNBERG personally. The entry is only “*Simia satyrus*” which is explained in a footnote (here translated from the latin in THUNBERG 1787, 25):

“This monkey was brought alive from Java by the famous traveller CL. FR. HORNSTEDT, formerly a student of the praeses (= THUNBERG), presently a medical doctor and a lecturer in medicine and natural history at the Gymnasium at Linköping. He returned home and is much valued for his knowledge of natural history. He sent to the praeses this strange and very rare monkey, as well as specimens of *Mustela lutra*, *Moscos pygmaeus* and many other remarkable treasures from the East Indies.”

CLAS FREDRIK HORNSTEDT (1758–1809) was a pupil of THUNBERG who had made a journey to the Cape of Good Hope and the East Indies (Java) in 1782–1785. His botanical specimens are preserved in the Bergianska Trädgården, Stockholm, while at

least some of the animals went to Uppsala. HORNSTEDT is only known to have visited Java where the orang utan does not occur. He may have obtained one in Jakarta either from Sumatra or, less likely, from Borneo. He left Java on 22 July 1784, visited the Cape of Good Hope from 22 October to 22 December 1784 and returned to Sweden in the beginning of 1785. It appears that the orang utan was still alive at the end of the journey. The above quoted footnote in latin started with the word "Vivam" (alive) indicating an emphasis. It is unknown how long the orang utan lived, but certainly by 1787 it had died.

Possibly this orang utan was shown in Uppsala's Botanical garden near the house of LINNAEUS. Other living animals were sometimes shown there. THUNBERG (1787, 24) listed several animals which had been exhibited in the botanical garden before they were added to the collection of the museum in Uppsala. This short list of scientific names only may be given here for the sake of curiosity: *Simia cepheus* β *aethiops*, *Simia jacchus*, *Erinaceus europaeus*, *Mus aguti*, and birds: *Psittacus macao*, *Psittacus cristatus*, *Struthio camelus*, *Casuarus setotus* and *Ardea grus*. THUNBERG did not add any information about the origin of these species.

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