

11 PARIS

11.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the first record detailing the history of the oldest surviving taxidermy of dingo specimens, a male and female pair. They are registered on the catalogue of mammalian specimens in the Paris *Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle* (MNHN) as Holotype/type specimens for the species (1820). The dingoes were transported to Paris in 1803 and became the first recorded live exhibits of the species in Europe and the UK, on display at the *Ménagerie du Jardin des Plantes*. The Menagerie had opened in 1794, 32 years before the London Zoological Gardens (the zoo opened in 1828 with a dingo included in the live exhibits).

The taxidermy mounts, and one complete skeleton survive today in the type stores beneath the Paris museum. The dingoes were studied in life and after life by the leading scientists of the day, including Frédéric Cuvier, Georges Cuvier, and Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (Figure 11-1). They were recorded in systematic French tradition, leaving the earliest comprehensive account of the species – including details of their travels from Port Jackson to Paris, and life in the French menagerie. The history is brought together from many primary and secondary sources; from the taxidermy mounts themselves – the hand written notes of zoologist, François Péron and artist, Charles-Alexandre Lesueur that were left on the base of the montage stands, plus from letters and journals from Baudin's voyage, and published records from collectors and the scientists at the *Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle*.



Figure 11-1 *Chien de la Nouvelle-Hollande*, published in '*Histoire Naturelle des Mammifères*' Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire & Frederic Cuvier 1824.



Figure 11-2 Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris – Type Store: Female dingo, Holotype, 1810. MNHN-ZM-2010-671 Baudin. Photo: Source: MNHN 2014

11.2 Baudin

The dingo specimens, Figure 11-2 and Figure 11-3, had been collected as live animals in 1802 at Port Jackson, by Captain Nicholas Baudin. They were assigned into the care of Captain Jacques Felix Emmanuel Hamelin to be transported back to Paris on *le*

Naturaliste. The female lived for seven years in the *Ménagerie du Jardin des Plantes*, and many records have survived about her, including both scientific and narrative accounts. The material concerning both dingoes reveals characteristics of the species, illustrating the growing interest in exotic animal collection and display, and the formative dedication of French scientists to the systematic recording and preservation of natural science specimens.



Figure 11-3 Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris – Type Store: Male dingo montage, 1803. MNHN-ZM-2010-672 Baudin. Photo: Source: MNHN 2014

11.3 The First Live Dingo Exhibit, *Jardin des plantes*.

The two dingoes had arrived in Paris onboard the ship *Le Naturaliste*, on the 6th June 1803, after 6 months at sea (Starbuck, 2013). They had travelled from Port Jackson on the south-eastern coast of Australia, a region first occupied by the British just 14 years before their capture. Most of the live animals had survived the journey, transported in wooden crates and cages stacked up on the quarterdeck of the ship – exposed to the elements and covered with tarpaulins when the weather deteriorated. Fresh air above-deck was considered a far better option for the livestock than musty, airless environment below the decks of the 39-meter, Salamandre-class bomb-corvette. From Cuvier's record, the dingoes were not confined for the duration of the voyage (Cuvier et. al., 1827).

Le Naturalist was the first vessel to return from Baudin's scientific expedition of the Southern Seas, having originally departed from Le Havre in the north-west of France

three years before – on 19 October 1800 (Starbuck, 2013). Napoleon Bonaparte had commissioned the voyage, assigning Captain Nicholas Baudin to conduct a ‘voyage of scientific discovery’ to the largely unexplored continent of *Novelle Hollande*.

Baudin was assigned two ocean vessels, *le Géographe* and *le Naturaliste*, along with 215 crew members and a support staff of 23 scientists and artists – astronomers, botanists, zoologists, geographers, mineralogists, draftsmen and horticulturists (Baudin Legacy Project, 2015). On board there were also two passengers and 11 stowaways. Baudin captained *le Géographe*, Jacques Felix Emmanuel Hamelin captained *Le Naturaliste*.

Charles-Alexandre Lesueur (1778-1846) and François Péron (1775–1810) had met on the voyage. As an afterthought, Baudin had included Péron on the expedition, to join the team of zoologists (Starbuck, 2013). Péron became firm friends with the young, talented illustrator, Lesueur, who started out the voyage as a gunner, and was swiftly promoted to ship’s artist. Lesueur provides us with some of the earliest and most intricately detailed illustrations of Australian flora and fauna (see 11-4, an illustration of the female dingo at *Jardin des plantes*).



Figure 11-4 *Canis dingo* 1803–1810, watercolour on vellum. Illustration by Charles-Alexandre Lesueur (1778–1846)

The two ‘official’ artists that had been assigned the job of documenting the voyage, resigned when they reached Mauritius, six months after leaving France. Many of the other scientific crew also abandoned the expedition at this point due to the extreme conditions aboard the vessels, leaving the 25-year-old Peron and 22-year-old Lesueur with the primary task of documenting the flora and fauna for the rest of the voyage through the Antarctic islands. During their travels, Péron had taught Lesueur the art of taxidermy, trapping and hunting (Bonnemains, Forsyth & Smith, 1988).

11.4 Port Jackson

The dingoes had been collected from the area of Port Jackson where both *le Naturaliste* and *le Géographe* had put down anchor for an extended stay – six months – in 1802 (Baudin Project, 2015). The crew and scientists were free to explore the surrounding region, collecting items of natural history in their thousands, and surveying ‘the County of Cumberland’ in the company of Captain Flinders and the British settlers at Port Jackson.

The dingoes were acquired in 1802 in Port Jackson and it is believed that they can be attributed to Baudin, as they are recorded in the logbook of the *le Géographe* on 3 November 1802 by sub-lieutenant Joseph Rasonnet as having been “embarked aboard the *le Naturaliste* “at Baudin’s order” (Starbuck, 2013).

Baudin was given several animals by people in the colony at this time: H. Weld Noble, an agent of the American brig *Fanny*, had donated two birds, and Andrew Thompson, Hawkesbury chief constable, farmer and businessman, ‘contributed’ a “wild cat and some young swans” (Starbuck, 2013). In the ship’s accounts register, it was recorded that Baudin paid £128, three shillings and six pence for a variety of quadrupeds, birds, and reptiles, and traded quantities of rum in exchange for the native cat, a fish and a swan.

It can be assumed that the financial transaction included a fee for the dingoes, as the final tally of live quadrupeds to embark on *le Naturaliste* for the return trip to France was listed as just two Kangaroo, three numbat (wombats) and two wild dogs (Starbuck, 2013).

In his notes, Péron recorded that he and Lesueur spent three weeks “working day and night” packing and loading the collections onto *le Naturaliste* (cited in Duyker, 2006):

... we arranged in the most methodical manner more than 40,000 animals of all sorts and descriptions, collected in various parts during a period of two years. Thirty–three large packing cases were filled with these collections, which were more valuable and numerous than any voyagers had ever sent to Europe ...

Baudin drafted a memo, with the directions of care for the live animals onboard *le Naturaliste*, entrusting the live cargo to Captain Hamelin for the voyage back to France

(Baudin BB4995, NLA). Instructions for the care and conservation of the “quadrupeds, birds and plants embedded aboard the vessel”, dated 17 November 1802 states:

Les kangarouroux, les numbat et les chiens sauvages sont assez familiers pour croire qu'ils vous donneront peu de peines et que moyennent une nourriture convenable en bien reglee, vous les transporterez facilement. Les émeus demanderont plus de soins ...

The Kangaroo, wombats and wild dogs are familiar enough to believe that they will give you little trouble, and that with decent food they will adjust well, and you will be able to move easily around them. The Emus will demand more care ...

François-Désiré Breton, an officer on *le Naturaliste*, noted that all of the quarterdeck of *le Naturaliste* was taken up with enclosures and cages for these animals: “*Tout le gaillard d'arrière n'était que parcs ou cages pour ces animaux*” (Breton, 1803). In the list of animals onboard he included the dogs as “*2 chiens des naturels du pays*”, ‘two dogs of the natives’, the suggestion here was that the dingoes had been raised by the Aboriginal people of Port Jackson.

On 18 November 1802, the two canines set out aboard *le Naturaliste* with Captain Hamelin, and sailed from Port Jackson to King Island in company of *le Géographe*, and then *le Naturaliste* departed alone for France on 9 December 1802 (Baudin Project, Sydney). Onboard were 33 cases of specimens, many plants and shrubs, and over 20 live animals including two black swans, four emus or cassowaries, three wombats and two dingoes (the cages also doubled as furniture as in Lesueur's sketch, Figure 11-5).



Figure 11-5 Self portrait, Lesueur resting on cages aboard the ship *le Géographe*, 1802.
Source: *Muséum du Havre*

The night before departing King Island, François Breton noted in his journal, 8 December 1802:

*Depuis le pt Jackson, il était mort un hombac les deux kangourou & des oiseaux
: un des chiens était blesse.*

Since leaving Port Jackson, one wombat, two kangaroo and some birds have died, and one of the dogs was injured.

On the 6th December, *le Naturaliste* had attempted to leave King Island but was forced back due to storms and high winds (Starbuck, 2013) with the ill dingo on board. The ship and remaining cargo did not arrive back in France until 6 June 1803, after briefly being detained in Portsmouth by the British. On return to Paris the surviving animals on *le Naturaliste* were listed as:

2 Cygnes noirs Cygnus atratus
1 Émeu Dromaeus novaehollandiae
3 Wombats Vombatus ursinus

1 Tortue a long col Chelodina longicollis

2 Pigeons ?Phaps elegans

2 Chiens Canis lupus familiaris dingo

(2 black swans, 1 emu, 3 wombats, 1 long-necked turtle, 2 pigeons and 2 dogs)

This was almost a year before *le Géographe* returned to France with the rest of the Australian collection. The livestock and plants were divided between the *Museum d'Histoire Naturelle* and Josephine de Beauharnais' (Napoleon's first wife) gardens at Malmaison (Starbuck, 2013).

On returning to Paris, Peron and Lesueur set up office beside the grounds of the *Museum d'Histoire Naturelle*, where they spent the following years documenting the Australian collection, illustrating the specimens and recording details of the voyage for publication. It took years, working side by side, to document the thousands of specimens of Australian flora and fauna that they had collected with Baudin.

11.5 Museum in Paris – Collection

The first formal live exhibit of the Australian dingo went on display to the scientific community and public of Paris in the summer of 1803. The dingoes, a male and female,

were placed in the menagerie beside the *Jardin des Plantes*, under the management of French naturalist Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, the Chair of Mammals and Birds in the Paris *Museum d'Histoire Naturelle*. They were attended to by the head keeper Frédéric Cuvier, younger brother of anatomist Georges (Jean Léopold Nicolas Frédéric) Cuvier. The older brother was one of 12 Professors stationed next door in the Natural History Museum (Saint-Hilaire *et al.*, 1924).

The *Museum d'Histoire Naturelle* and menagerie had been founded ten years before the dingoes arrived. It opened on the 23rd June 1793 – during the height of the French Revolution (Strehlow, 2001). The site adjacent to the museum was allocated as the botanical gardens, to take the medicinal plants and animals that had been in the 'Imperial Center for Science' and the 'Royal Academy' at Versailles. Here, in Paris, the animals and plants were to be “a living part of the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle, a symbol of the “new free nation and the new scientific consciousness” (Strehlow, 2001, p. 89).

Jean-Baptiste Lamarck was Professor of Zoology, and Chair of Insects and Worms at the museum, refining his evolutionary theory alongside (but not eye to eye) with Georges Cuvier, while Frederick Cuvier worked in the menagerie and wrote the four volume text, *Histoire naturelle des mammifères*, with St Hilaire, the Chair of Mammals and Birds (1824). The works of both brothers included recording the dingoes at *Jardin de Plante* in some detail. Various exhibits of *Chien de Nouvelle Hollande* were subsequently traded, displayed and preserved throughout Europe over the following decades.



Figure 11-6 Illustration of the female dingo in *Jardin des plantes* 1803-1810 (Cuvier, 1827)

The sketch Figure 11-6, was published under the heading of *Wild varieties of the dog; the dingo of New Hollande* by Cuvier, with the following documentation about her transportation to Paris (1827, p. 167):

This dog, who was female, was about eighteen months when she arrived in Europe. She lived in freedom in the vessel where she was embarked, and despite the corrections inflicted on her, as well as a young male that died as a result of a punishment too harsh, she continued to evade punishment and consume all that suited her appetite.

From the outset, the menagerie at the *Jardin des Plantes* was to be a living museum, and the directors tried to keep as many species as possible (Baratay & Hardouin-Fugier, 2002). The philosophy of the menagerie worked in tandem with the study of animals, in keeping with the nineteenth century preoccupation with systematic studies: the description of new species and their geographical distribution, that were central topics of scientific inquiry.

Georges Cuvier dedicated his energies to investigating the mysteries stored in the remnants of the Royal collections. It was through investigating the bones of giants and the growing inventory of strange remains turning up at the museum (through the emerging and flourishing trade in bones and ancient fossils) that he became the first scientist to describe extinction in its true form (Barrow, 2009).



Figure 11-7 *Crane de peac* (skull in skin) detail of male, no other bones remain. Source: Source: MNHN

The live animals were housed in the old stables and green house, as zoo enclosures were gradually built up around them over the next 40 years. The conditions were described as challenging, “worse than a fairground menagerie” (Baratay & Hardouin-Fugier, 2002). Despite this, many of the animals thrived, and the female dingo lived for

seven years within the gardens. She was measured, drawn and observed in captivity, documented in journals of the scientists and their keepers, recorded in life drawings, and eventually dispatched to the ‘afterlife’ in the stores of the museum, as specimen MNHN-ZM-2010-671 (details in Figure 11-7, & 11-8).

2014



Figure 11-8 Female skull – the entire skeleton has been preserved and is in storage with the montage.
Source: Source: MNHN 2014

11.6 Behavioural Characteristics

From the notes of Georges and Frederick Cuvier, it is possible to establish some of the behavioural characteristics of Baudin’s dingo. Reportedly she “evinced a disposition to fly upon the Jaguars, Leopards, and Bears, whenever it caught a glimpse of them through the bars of its den” (Bennett, 1830) as previously mentioned in the catalogue notes of the London Zoological Gardens, (see p. 134).

On the files at the *Museum d’Histoire Naturelle*, the documentation stated that the dingoes were registered from “aux environs de Port Jackson” Australia, collected by Francois Péron and Charles Alexandre Lesueur; dated 1820, reference *Mammalogie ou description des espèces de Mammifères*, 1:191. Repere historiques Exp. Capt Baudin. [note: the specimens would be more correctly labeled as documented by Péron and Lesueur, collected by Baudin, 1802]

The taxidermy mounts were registered as ‘Type specimens’ in 1820, with the reference to *Mammalogie ou description des espèces des Mammifères* published in Paris (1820, p. 191) This report was written by Péron and Lesueur:

Dog of New Holland, Australia, Dingo, Shaw

Size and proportions of a sheepdog, except the head which resembles that of a guard dog. The coat is very pretty with a bushy tail and two types of fur, wool like grey and silk like – the colour of fawn (tawny). Above the head, neck, back and tail is a dark fawn, underneath the neck and chest is rather more pale. Muzzle and inside of the chest and legs are whitish.

18 vertebrae to the tail. Length of the body is 2 feet 5 inches from tip of snout to base of tail.

HABITS

Very agile, runs with the tail raised or stretched horizontally with the head held high and the ears straight. Very vigorous, and full of Courage. Voracious. Throws itself at fowl or meat it finds at its disposal, without the fear of any punishment or of anything that would hold it back.

Fatherland: New Holland, around Port Jackson.

The male dingo from Baudin's voyage survived the journey, but died in the menagerie just two months after arrival, on the 24 August 1803 (NMNH Paris, manuscripts).



Figure 11-9 detail of the female montage Source: NMHM 2014

The female dingo (detail, Figure 11-9) died in the menagerie on the 27 May 1810, as recorded on the base of her montage. Francois Péron died of tuberculosis at the age of 35, on 14 December that same year. The hand written note by Lesueur was pasted to the base of the female montage, and reads as follows (Lesueur 1810):

Chien marron

Morte a la menagerie le 27 Mai 1810

Expédition du capitaine Baudin

Voyages aux terres australes

Canis dingo (blumenb.)

[Brown dog

Died in the menagerie, May 27 1810

From the expedition of Captain Baudin

Travels to the southern lands

Canis dingo (blumenb.)]



Figure 11-10 Information on the base of the male montage, 1803. Source: MNHN 2014

The male dingo had suffered injuries on the ship after leaving Port Jackson, and died of complications two months after arriving in Paris in 1803. There are few details in print about his short and tragic life. Péron's handwriting is on the label peeling off the wood across the base of his montage (Figure 11-10) reads:

Canis Dingo (Blumb.)

Chein Marron

de la nouvelle Hollande

a vecu a la menagerie

repport par le Capitaine Baudin

[*Canis Dingo*, (Blumb.)

Brown dog of New Holland,

has lived in the menagerie.

Report by Captain Baudin.]

In the *Museum d'Histoire Naturelle* library, there is an uncatalogued box of notes about the animals from Baudin's voyage. The notes in French, were collated from diaries, manuscripts, ships daybooks etc. by a long line of Baudin's researchers. Notes for *Museum d'Histoire Naturelle* specimen MNHN-ZM-2010-672 (Figure 11-3) stated that early on in the voyage of *le Naturalist*, somewhere between leaving Port Jackson and finally departing King Island for France, the male dingo had "been too brutally castrated because of his independent character" and these injuries eventually killed him (Paris NHMN, manuscripts).

11.7 Conclusion

Despite records of a number of dingoes transported to Britain prior to 1803, none were preserved as a Holotype for the species. The French adopted a systematic approach to the collection, exhibition and preservation of Australian flora and fauna, and excelled in methods of preservation and scientific illustration. The Paris type store beneath the *Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle* still holds these specimens, and they form an irreplaceable addition to records of Australian natural heritage. There are thousands of Australian specimens in the Paris store – as yet there has not been any research specifically to record the scale of the collection, for Australian records.

Appendix 5 details a brief account of N. W. G. Macintosh's research, where he tested one of Cuvier's theories on dingo physiology. While in general the accounts were correct, there are limits to what can be ascertained from a singular specimen, as Macintosh's record demonstrates.

The following Chapter 11 examines the history of the collection and exhibition of wild animals, detailing the motivations, forms of animal collection, and changes to these traditions over time. The representation of the dingo within these institutions and in the popular media/zoo ephemera of international collections, draws information from their colonial past – forming pervasive narratives, many of which paint the dingo in an unfavorable light, and persist today in the representation of the species.