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SCIENCE BEYOND BORDERS | *NAUKA BEZ GRANIC*

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Jan (John) Zier (?–1793) – pages from his biography and scientific activity

Abstract

Botany in 18th-century Poland faced challenging conditions for development, resulting in only a small number of active botanists in the country at the time. Notable figures included Jacob Theodor Klein (1685–1759) in Gdańsk, Christian Heinrich Erndtel (1676–1734) in Warsaw, and Krzysztof Kluk (1739–1796) in Ciechanowiec. Until now, Jan (John) Zier (?–1793) had been completely unknown in Poland. This article is the first attempt in Polish literature to gather all previously known information about him and present his contribution to the development of botany.

Little is known about Zier's birth, place of origin, or education. Around 1780, he settled in Hanover, Germany, where he collaborated with the German botanist Jakob F. Ehrhart (1742–1795) in publishing the exsiccata *Phytophylacium Ehrhartianum*. In 1785, he moved to London, where he worked with James Dickson (1738–1822), the well known owner of a plant-nursery and seed shop, on his work *Fasciculus* [*secundus* etc.] *plantarum cryptogamicarum Britanniae*, focusing on cryptogamic plants of Britain. Zier wrote the diagnoses of species for the first three fascicles of this treatment, which were published between 1785 and 1793, though his contribution is not acknowledged in the text. In London, he also met the apothecary and botanist William Curtis (1746–1799) who was at that time working on *Flora londinensis*. One source suggests that J. Zier may have assisted in the creation of this opus, though this has not been definitely confirmed.

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On 18 March 1788, J. Zier was admitted as a member of the Linnean Society of London, which allowed him to establish connections with prominent British botanists of the time, including Joseph Banks (1743–1820), president of the Royal Society; James E. Smith (1759–1828), founder and president of the Linnean Society; William Hudson (1730–1793), author of *Flora anglica*; and Jonas C. Dryander (1748–1810), librarian of the Royal Society and vice-president of the Linnean Society. In 1790, J. Zier was set to take up the chair of the natural history at the University of Vilnius in the then Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but his poor health prevented him from leaving London. Around 1792, he made a will, the content of which has survived to this day. A progressive illness led to his death at a relatively young age in early July 1793.

Jan (John) Zier did not publish any scientific work under his own name. The plant specimens he collected are preserved in various herbaria, including those of Ehrhart in Göttingen (GOET), Moscow (MW), and the Linnean Herbarium in London (LINN), as well as in the Natural History Museum in London (BM), the Komarov Institute of Botany of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg (LE), and in Uppsala (UPS). Jan Zier's name is commemorated in the generic name *Zieria* Sm. (Rutaceae) and in the moss name *Bryum zieri* Dicks. *ex* Hedw. (Bryaceae). The latter species was subsequently placed in the separate genus *Zieria* Schimp., but this name, as a younger homonym, was replaced by *Plagiobryum* Lindb. for formal reasons, though it is still retained in the subgeneric name *Bryum* subg. *Zieria* C.Hartm.

Keywords: *history of botany*, *biographies of eighteenth-century botanists*, *British botany*, *Linnean Society of London*, *Poland*, *University of Vilnius*, *systematics*, *cryptogamic plants*, *eponyms*

Jan (John) Zier (?–1793) – kartki z życiorysu i aktywności naukowej

Abstrakt

Botanika w Polsce w XVIII w. miała trudne warunki do rozwoju, stąd tylko bardzo nieliczni botanicy działali wówczas w naszym kraju, np. Jacob Theodor Klein (1685–1759) w Gdańsku, Christian Heinrich Erndtel (1676–1734) w Warszawie czy Krzysztof Kluk (1739–1796) w Ciechanowcu. Do chwili obecnej Jan (John) Zier (?–1793) był w Polsce zupełnie nieznany. Niniejszy artykuł jest pierwszą w polskiej literaturze próbą zebrania wszystkich znanych dotychczas informacji na jego temat oraz przedstawienie jego wkładu w rozwój botaniki.

Nic nie wiadomo kiedy i gdzie urodził się J. Zier oraz jakie miał wykształcenie. Od około 1780 r. przebywał w Niemczech w Hanowerze, gdzie współpracował z niemieckim botanikiem Jakobem F. Ehrhartem (1742–1795), m.in. przy wydawaniu w latach 1780–1785 eksykatu *Phytophylacium Ehrhartianum*. W 1785 r. przeniósł się do Londynu gdzie współpracował z Jamesem Dicksonem (1738–1822), znanym właścicielem szkółki roślin oraz sklepu z nasionami, nad jego dziełem o roślinach zarodnikowych Wielkiej Brytanii *Fasciculus* [*secundus* etc.] *plantarum cryptogamicarum Britanniae*. Zier napisał diagnozy gatunków zawartych w pierwszych trzech części tego opracowania, opublikowanych w latach 1785–1793. Niestety, w tekście nie ma żadnej wzmianki na ten temat. W Londynie Zier poznał również aptekarza i botanika Williama Curtisa (1746–1799), który w tym czasie pracował nad *Flora londinensis*. Jedno ze źródeł podaje, że J. Zier miał mu pomagać w pracy nad tym dziełem, ale nie zostało to potwierdzone z całą pewnością.

18 marca 1788 roku J. Zier został przyjęty w poczet członków Towarzystwa Linneuszowskiego w Londynie, co umożliwiło mu nawiązanie kontaktów z tak wybitnymi botanikami brytyjskimi tamtej epoki, jak Joseph Banks (1743–1820), prezes Royal Society, James E. Smith (1759–1828), założyciel i prezes Linnean Society w Londynie, William Hudson (1730–1793), autor *Flora anglica* i Jonas C. Dryander (1748–1810), bibliotekarz Royal Society i wiceprezes Linnean Society. W 1790 r. J. Zier miał objąć katedrę historii naturalnej na Uniwersytecie Wileńskim w ówczesnej Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów, ale zły stan zdrowia nie zezwolił mu już na opuszczenie Londynu. Około 1792 r. sporządził testament, którego treść zachowała się do dziś. Postępy choroby doprowadziły go do śmierci w dość młodym wieku na samym początku lipca 1793 r.

Pod własnym nazwiskiem J. Zier nie opublikował żadnej pracy naukowej. Okazy roślin zebrane przez niego powinny być w zielnikach Ehrharta przechowywanych m.in. w Getyndze (GOET), Moskwie (MW) i w Zielniku Linneuszowskim w Londynie (LINN), a także w Muzeum Historii

Naturalnej w Londynie (BM), w Instytucie Botaniki im. Komarowa Rosyjskiej Akademii Nauk w Sankt Petersburgu (LE) oraz w Uppsali (UPS). Nazwisko J. Ziera zostało uhonorowane w nazwie rodzajowej *Zieria* Sm. (Rutaceae) i w nazwie mchu *Bryum zieri* Dicks. *ex* Hedw. (Bryaceae). Ten ostatni gatunek został umieszczony w osobnym rodzaju *Zieria* Schimp. Jego nazwa, ze względów formalnych jako młodszy homonim, została zastąpiona przez *Plagiobryum* Lindb., ale nadal jest zachowana w nazwie podrodzaju *Bryum* subg. *Zieria* C.Hartm.

Słowa kluczowe: *historia botaniki*, *biografie osiemnastowiecznych botaników*, *brytyjska botanika*, *Towarzystwo Linneuszowskie w Londynie*, *Polska*, *Uniwersytet w Wilnie*, *systematyka roślin*, *rośliny zarodnikowe*, *eponimy*

1. Introduction

In the 18th century, Poland was a gradually declining dual state that included the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, known as the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (*Polish* Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów) and also referred to as the First Polish Republic (*Polish* I Rzeczpospolita). The reforms initiated by Stanisław II August Poniatowski, the last king of Poland, were insufficient to save the country, and Poland lost its independence in 1795. Political turmoil throughout the century led to successive waves of emigration. The most significant of these occurred in 1709–1713, 1733–1735, post-1772, and post-1792.[1] However, some families migrated to Poland during the 18th century. Among them were the ancestors of the renowned botanist Edward Strasburger (1844–1912).[2]

During these troubled times, science, including botany, faced a challenging environment for development in Poland. One notable exception was Gdańsk, where Jacob Theodor Klein (1685–1759) resided. Klein was the author of several botanical works, including *Fasciculus plantarum rariorum* (Gedani 1726). Another important figure in Gdańsk was Gottfried Reyger (1704–1788), who authored the two-volume *Tentamen florae gedanensis methode sexuali accomodatae* (Dantisci 1764–1766). In Węgorzewo (*German* Angerburg, located in the then East Prussia) Georg Andreas Helwing (1666–1748) lived and wrote *Flora quasimodogenita* […] (Gedani 1712) and its supplement, *Supplementum Florae prussicae* […] (Gedani 1726). At the court of King Augustus II the Strong, Christian Heinrich Erndtel (1676–1734) served as court physician and authored *Warsavia physice illustrata* […] (Dresdae 1730), which included *Viridarium warsaviense*, *sive Catalogus plantarum circa Warsaviam nascentium*. The botanical contributions of Krzysztof Kluk (1739–1796), who wrote the first modern botanical publications in Polish, came in the latter half of the 18th century. At the University of Vilnius, botanists such as Jean Emmanuel Gilibert (1741–1814), Johann Georg Forster (1754–1794), and Stanisław Bonifacy Jundziłł (1761–1847) worked for varying periods. Jundziłł was the author of the first flora of Poland.[3]

Among the few naturalists associated with Poland in the second half of the 18th century, the name of Jan (John) Zier has remained largely unknown in Polish literature. It does not appear in any Polish dictionaries or encyclopedias, and the editors of *Polski słownik biograficzny* [=*Polish biographical dictionary*] have no records of him in their files.[4] This article aims to shed light on this long-forgotten Polish botanist, gather existing information about his life, and highlight his contribution to the field of botany.

[1] Kuzicki 2019, pp. 5–6.
[2] Hryniewiecki 1938, p. 3.
[3] Köhler 2020.
[4] Dr Maria Czeppe, Department of the Polish Biographical Dictionary, Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, personal communication, 3 December 2024.

2. Outline of Jan (John) Zier's biography

There are few sources available to reconstruct the life and work of Jan (John) Zier. The following text primarily relies on English-language sources, as previous research in German archives has yielded no significant findings.[5] Among the available materials, there is a notable absence of primary sources, such as diaries, autobiographies, or correspondence. Instead, we had access to a number of secondary sources, including brief biographies of J. Zier[6] and some archival documents. As a result, the reconstructed biography of J. Zier still contains many gaps and ambiguities.

2.1. Zier's early life

The exact birth date of Jan (John) Zier is unknown. His close friend from his time in London, James Edward Smith (1759–1828), a renowned English botanist and founder of the Linnean Society of London,[7] remarked that Zier passed away "at no advanced period of life".[8] This statement likely indicates an age between of around 30 to 40 years, suggesting that Zier may have been born between approximately 1750 and 1760, or possibly even later. Unfortunately, there is no additional information about the early years of his life. Details about his parents are also absent. However, his will reveals that he had a sister who predeceased him. Notably Zier does not mention a wife or children in his will.

The birthplace of J. Zier also remains unknown, though it is believed to have been Poland. In 1893, Britten and Boulger reported: "b[orn in] Poland".[9] Earlier, in 1886, Britten had stated more cautiously: "John Zier was a Pole by birth".[10] In the context of the eighteenth century, this phrase likely referred to geographical heritage rather than modern concepts of nationality.

For several decades following Zier's death, most authors did not mention his Polish origins or descent. The record linking Zier to Poland appeared in 1831, when the Scottish botanist and plant collector George Don Jr. (1798–1856) wrote in the first volume of his four-volume work *A general system of gardening and botany*: "Mr. John Zier, a learned and industrious Polish botanist".[11] Subsequent authors, including Hereman[12] and Britten & Boulger,[13] repeated this information. It is possible that G. Don Jr. had some knowledge of Zier from his father, George Don Sr. (1764–1814), who was the first botanist to extensively explore the Scottish Highlands[14] and may have known Zier personally.

Finally, little is known about where J. Zier received his education or the nature of his academic background. However, his association with Jakob F. Ehrhart and collaboration with this renowned botanist (as discussed below) suggests that Zier likely possessed a solid foundation in botany. It is plausible that he further developed his expertise under the guidance of Ehrhart, a distinguished authority on vascular and cryptogamous plants. Zier almost certainly had a strong command of Latin, which he may have acquired through informal studies, such as an unfinished theological seminary. It is unlikely that he only began learning the language during his interactions with Ehrhart. At most, he may have refined his Latin skills to the point

[5] The following archives were consulted during the search: Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena – Universitätsarchiv; Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv – Abteilung Hannover; Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv – Abteilung Wolfenbüttel.

[6] By Britten 1886; Desmond 1994; Hereman 1868; Quattrocchi 2023; Sims 1811; Smith 1819.

[7] Kennett 2016.

[8] Smith 1819, pp. 168–169.

[9] Britten & Boulger 1893, p. 188.

[10] Britten 1886, p. 102.

[11] Don 1831, p. 794.

[12] Hereman 1868, p. 595.

[13] Britten 1886; Britten & Boulger 1893, p. 188.

[14] Lawley 2010; Reid 2013.

where Ehrhart felt confident recommending him to his English colleagues in need of someone fluent in botanical Latin to translate plant diagnoses and descriptions.

Since Ehrhart himself referred to Zier as an apothecary, similar to what later occurred in England, it suggests that Zier may have studied medicine at one of the German universities but did not complete his studies or earn a scientific degree. However, another possibility exists. In the 18th century, to become an apothecary, one was required to complete a pharmacy course or undergo apprenticeship at a chemists's shop until passing the "master's" exam. Afterwards, the new apothecary could either work for someone else in a pharmacy or purchase their own establishment.

An interesting issue is the surname 'Zier' itself. This surname is quite rare in Poland (in 2024 – only nine people bear it[15]) but popular in Germany (in 2024, there are 1236 people with this surname[16]). There are several possible explanations for why J. Zier had such a surname: (*1*) his ancestors may have migrated from Germany to Poland (as did E. Strasburger's ancestors), and therefore J. Zier could have been considered Polish, hence "born in Poland"; (*2*) his ancestors might have emigrated from Poland to Germany, where J. Zier's mother married a German man with the surname Zier, which would explain why he is referred to as "a Pole by birth"; (*3*) he may have originally had a typically Polish surname, such as D***ZIER***żyński, Je***ZIER***ski, Kęd***ZIER***zawski or ***ZIER***zyński, etc., which he simplified to 'Zier' to avoid issues with spelling and pronunciation in Germany;[17] finally (*4*) it is also possible that his family's surname was originally 'Ozdoba" (a Polish surname recorded since 1607[18]), and in Germany, they adopted the German version, 'Zier' (since the German word 'Zier' means 'Ozdoba' in Polish[19]). Without definitive archival sources, however, this question remains unresolved.

In the second half of the 18th century, Stefan Zier (dates unknown) resided in Warsaw. He was the father of Walenty Kazimierz Zier (ca. 1783–1842), a woodcarver, and the grandfather of Wiktor Kazimierz Zier (1822–1883), a painter active in Paris.[20] It is possible that J. Zier was a member of this family.

2.2. The stay in Hanover

The first individual mentioned in J. Zier's biography is Jakob Friedrich Ehrhart (1742–1795), a Swiss-born German botanist. Ehrhart's name appears on one of the herbarium labels of a specimen collected by Zier himself: *In Germania legi circa Hanoveram in consortio Ehrharti, qui nomen Byssi ferruginei ei imposuit* [I collected it near Hanover in Germany in the company of Ehrhart, who gave it the name *Byssa ferruginea*].[21] In one of his manuscripts on mosses and lichens, which later came into the possession of Archibald Menzies (1754–1842), a British physician, gardener, botanist, zoologist, and plant collector, Zier even refers to himself as a close friend of J. F. Ehrhart.[22]

Jakob F. Ehrhart began working in 1770 at a pharmacy in Hanover owned by Johann Gerhard Reinhard Andreae (1724–1793), a prominent Hanoverian naturalist, chemist,

[15] [Anonymous] 2024c.

[16] [Anonymous] 2024d.

[17] It is a known phenomenon that Poles working abroad often simplified or modified their surnames. A notable example is Helena Modrzejewska (1840–1909), a renowned Polish-American actress famous for her Shakespearean and tragic roles, who adopted the surname Modjeska in the United States.

[18] Cieślikowska 2011.

[19] The practice of surname alteration is not unique to Polish history. Similar examples can be found worldwide, such as Matthias de l'Obel (1538–1616), who changed his name to Matthaeus Lobelius; Józef Korzeniowski (1857–1924), who became Joseph Conrad; and Wilhelm Kostrowicki (1880–1918), who adopted the name Guillaume Apollinaire.

[20] [Anonymous] 2024a.

[21] Britten 1886, p. 104.

[22] Quattrocchi 2023, p. 2874.

geologist, and court apothecary (*Hofapotheker*). Andreae was an influential figure of his time and one of Hanover's main benefactors.[23] Ehrhart honoured him by naming the moss genus *Andreaea* in his memory.[24]

Ehrhart then spent several years in Sweden, where he occasionally attended lectures by Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778) and his son, Carl Linnaeus Jr. (1741–1783).[25] Upon returning to Hanover, Ehrhart was appointed in 1780 to study the flora of the Electorate of Hanover (Braunschweig-Lüneburg).[26] A few years later, he became the Royal Botanist. During this period, the Elector of Hanover, George William Frederick, also reigned as King George III of Great Britain.

As the Royal Botanist, J. F. Ehrhart earned his livelihood primarily by distributing herbarium specimens and publishing works on natural history. He was one of the pioneers of the practice of selling series of exsiccatae.[27] As a keen observer, Ehrhart not only supplemented, but also improved upon Linnaeus's plant descriptions.[28] He described numerous new plant species, particularly from challenging genera such as *Carex*, as well as ferns and mosses. Notably he introduced the concept of subspecies into systematics. Ehrhart maintained an extensive correspondence with contemporary scientists.[29] In 1796, his memoirs were published, though he made no mention of J. Zier in them.[30] However, after Zier moved to London, he sent to Ehrhart a specimen of *Salix villosa*,[31] suggesting that their professional connections may have persisted, even after their paths had diverged.

Ehrhart amassed large herbarium collections, the majority of which are now housed in the Moscow University Herbarium.[32] The labels also include details about the collectors.[33] Under more favourable political conditions, it would be valuable to examine this herbarium for specimens collected by J. Zier.

Jan (John) Zier may have assisted Ehrhart in his work on the flora of the Electorate of Hanover, possibly continuing to help him later with the preparation of his first exsiccata. The exact nature of this assistance remains unknown. At the time, Zier was likely between 20 and 30 years old and may have previously worked as an assistant in the pharmacy where Ehrhart was employed in Hanover. Zier could have supported Ehrhart in various ways, such as by assisting with fieldwork – perhaps carrying boxes of plants – or by contributing to the completion of the exsiccata *Phytophylacium Ehrhartianum, continens plantas, quas in locis natalibus collegit et exsiccavit Fredericus Ehrhart*.[34] This exsiccata was published in decades (sets of ten numbers), with the first eight decades released in 1780 (Fig. 1), and the ninth and tenth decades in 1785.[35] The collection is predominantly comprised of phanerogams, with only 16 lichens and mosses included.[36] Zier may have used his time with Ehrhart to refine his Latin and master the complex art of writing Latin diagnoses based on examined plant specimens,

[23] [Editorial staff] 2005, p. 165.
[24] Ehrhart 1778, 1787a, 1787b, p. 180; Hooker 1811, p. 381: in the first number of his *Beiträge*.
[25] J. F. Ehrhart himself writes about attending lectures by both Linnaeuses. Ehrhart 1796.
[26] Ehrhart 1780.
[27] Britten 1922.
[28] Britten 1923; Ehrhart 1787b.
[29] Knoll 2004; Müllerott 1959.
[30] Ehrhart 1796.
[31] Ehrhart 1789, p. 177: *Salix villosa* Hoffm. obs. n. 44, gehört in Schottland zu Hause. Ich habe sie vom Herrn Apotheker Zier in London, und nicht von Thunberg, erhalten.
[32] Balandin 2003; Karavaev, Barsukova 1968; Stafleu, Cowan 1976, p. 731.
[33] Sokoloff et al. 2002.
[34] Britten 1922.
[35] Sayre 1969.
[36] Ehrhart [1780-1785].

a skill he would later employ during his stay in Great Britain. It is certain that Zier continued to collect plant specimens throughout his time in Hanover.

It is possible to determine with considerable precision when J. Zier left Hanover and moved to Great Britain. If he participated in the work on *Phytophylacium Ehrhartianum*, the

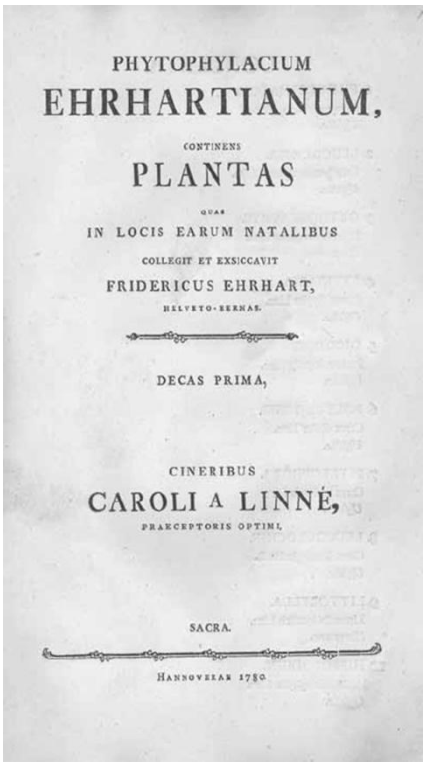

PHYTOPHYLACIUM
EHRHARTIANUM,
CONTINENS
PLANTAS
QUAS
IN LOCIS EARUM NATALIBUS
COLLEGIT ET EXSICCAVIT
FRIDERICUS EHRHART,
HELVETO-BERNAS.
DECAS PRIMA,
CINERIBUS
CAROLI A LINNÉ,
PRAECEPTORIS OPTIMI,
SACRA.
HANNOVERAE 1780.

Fig. 1. Title page of Friedrich Ehrhart's (1780) *Phytophylacium Ehrhartianum.* Decas prima

year 1785, when the project was completed,[37] would have been the most likely for him to have relocated to London. The last specimens collected by Zier in Germany date from that year.[38] Additionally, the manuscript he left to Menzies suggests that Zier was still botanising in Germany as late as 1785.[39]

2.3. Zier's stay and activities in Great Britain

In 1785, J. Zier left Hanover for Great Britain, though the reasons behind his decision remain speculative. It is possible that Ehrhart, recognising Zier's talents, used his connections to recommend his gifted student, collaborator, and friend to someone in need of an individual fluent in botanical Latin and skilled at writing diagnoses of plant taxa in the language. That person was James Dickson (1738–1822), a Scottish nurseryman and plant collector. Dickson ran a successful plant nursery and seed shop in Covent Garden, which he maintained until his death.[40] He had a particular interest in mosses and other non-flowering plants.[41]

In May 1785, Dickson published the first of four parts of his study on the cryptogamic plants of Britain, titled *Fasciculus plantarum cryptogamicarum Britanniae*[42] (Fig. 2). The Latin

[37] Sayre 1969, p. 19.
[38] Britten 1886, p. 104.
[39] Quattrocchi 2023, p. 2874.
[40] [Anonymous] 2025a; Henrey 1975, p. 379; Simmonds 1943.
[41] [Anonymous] 2024b.
[42] Stafleu, Cowan 1976, p. 644.

diagnoses and descriptions of the plants were written by Zier.[43] It is likely that Zier completed the descriptions for this initial part of the work while still residing in Hanover. However, after finishing his work on *Phytophylacium Ehrhartianum*, there appears to have been no further reason for him to remain in Hanover. Consequently, he relocated to Great Britain to continue his work without delay on the descriptions for the subsequent parts of Dickson's *Fasciculi plantarum cryptogamicarum Britanniae*.

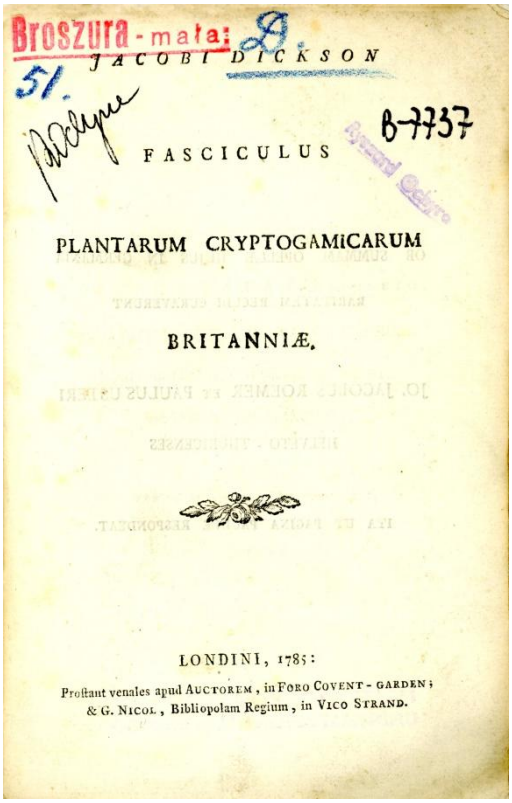
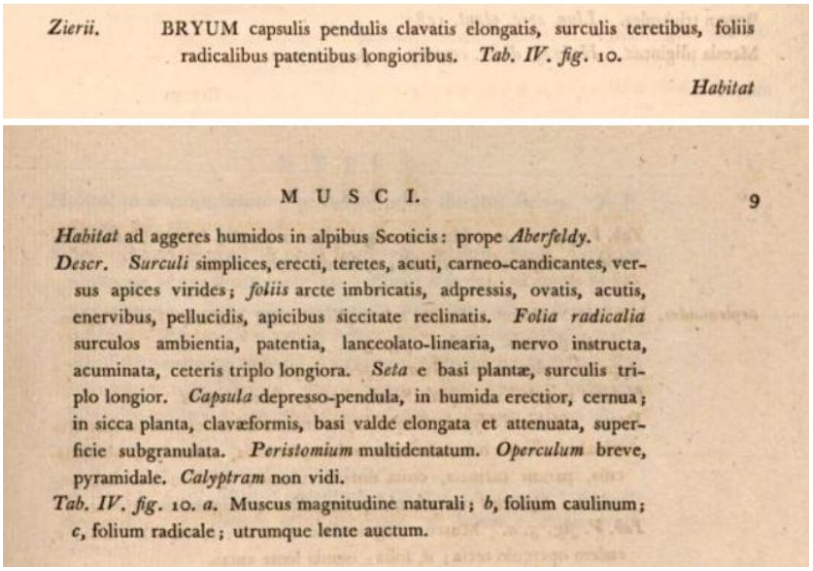


Fig. 2. Title page of James Dickson's (1785) *Fasciculus plantarum cryptogamicarum Britaniae*

Living in Great Britain, Zier wrote Latin descriptions at least until the second part (published between January and September 1790[44]) and the third part (published in September 1793[45]).[46] After Zier's death, Dickson was assisted by Robert Brown (1773–1858)[47] from 1796 onward. However, none of Dickson's publications mention Zier or his contribution to the work (nor R. Brown either). Despite this, Dickson honoured Zier by naming a species of *Bryum* in his memory, *B. zieri*[48] (Fig. 3), which reflects his appreciation of Zier's contributions.

Later, in the 19th century, James Britten (1846–1924), an English botanist who worked in the Herbarium at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, from 1869, in the Department of Botany at the British Museum from 1871, and served as the long-time editor of *The Journal of Botany, British and Foreign*[49] from 1879, collaborated with William Carruthers (1830–1922), a British botanist who had been part of the Department of Botany at the British Museum since 1859.[50]

[43] Britten 1886, pp. 103–104; Quattrocchi 2023, p. 2874.
[44] Stafleu, Cowan 1976, p. 645.
[45] Stafleu, Cowan 1976, p. 645.
[46] Quattrocchi 2023, p. 2874.
[47] Mabberley 1985, pp. 15–18.
[48] Dickson 1790, p. 8, tabl. IV, fig. 10.
[49] [Anonymous] 1917, p. 19.
[50] Smith 1923.



Zierii. BRYUM capsulis pendulis clavatis elongatis, surculis teretibus, foliis radicalibus patentibus longioribus. *Tab. IV. fig.* 10.

Habitat

M U S C I. 9

Habitat ad aggeres humidos in alpibus Scoticis: prope *Aberfeldy*.

Descr. *Surculi* simplices, erecti, teretes, acuti, carneo-candicantes, versus apices virides; *foliis* arcte imbricatis, adpressis, ovatis, acutis, enervibus, pellucidis, apicibus siccitate reclinatis. *Folia radicalia* surculos ambientia, patentia, lanceolato-linearia, nervo instructa, acuminata, ceteris triplo longiora. *Seta* e basi plantæ, surculis triplo longior. *Capsula* depresso-pendula, in humida erectior, cernua; in sicca planta, clavæformis, basi valde elongata et attenuata, superficie subgranulata. *Peristomium* multidentatum. *Operculum* breve, pyramidale. *Calyptram* non vidi.

Tab. IV. fig. 10. *a.* Muscus magnitudine naturali; *b*, folium caulinum; *c*, folium radicale; utrumque lente auctum.

Fig. 3. The protologue of *Bryum zieri* published in Dickson's (1790) *Fasciculus secundus plantarum cryptogamicarum Britaniae*

Together, they compared the species descriptions in Dickson's work with Zier's manuscripts, which were housed in the collections of the British Museum. As Britten later noted, this comparison...

> "has convinced us both that the descriptions in Dickson's 'Fasciculi' (1785–1801) were in great part, written by Zier. That these MSS.[51] are no transcripts, but the original descriptions subsequently corrected for the press, is manifest on a comparison of them with the printed book. Zier's work may thus be traced in the mosses and lichens throughout the four fascicles. There is besides, much unpublished matter, with descriptions of species believed by Zier to be new, many of them taken from specimens in Dickson's Herbarium, and so indicated: thus, "*Lichen junceus* M[ihi?]. . . . . Hospitatur in H[er]bario. D[ickso]ni."[52] Dickson makes no reference to having received any help in his work; but besides this aid from Zier, he was assisted by Robert Brown. If any doubt remained as to Zier's connection with the work, it would be removed by his note on a plant which he at first thought new and named *Lichen involutus*, but subsequently identified with *L. marmoreus* Hoffm.: „Sic. observavi Lichenum a D—o mihi, pro fascic. suo 2do. describendi causa, datu.".[53]

As demonstrated, comparing the content of Zier's manuscript with the plant descriptions in Dickson's work confirms Zier's involvement in the latter's research.

An intriguing question concerns the source of J. Zier's livelihood in Great Britain. It is clear that he wrote Latin diagnoses of species for Dickson's work, for which he likely received some remuneration. However, this may not have been his only occupation. Between 1785 and 1791,[54] Dickson undertook several botanical expeditions in the Scottish Highlands in search of plants, and it is possible that J. Zier participated in these excursions. During this time, he may have also encountered the young George Don. Some sources suggest that Zier was a apothecary.[55] Ehrhart refers to him as such when he mentions the person from whom

[51] It means: Manuscripts.

[52] It means: *Lichen junceus* Mihi. Hosted in Dickson's Herbarium.

[53] It means: Thus I observed the lichen given to me by Dickson, for the purpose of describing his second bundle. Britten 1886, pp. 103–104.

[54] G. S. B. [G. S. Boulger] 1888, p. 44.

[55] For example, [Anonymous] 2024e.

he received a specimen of *Salix villosa*: "Ich habe sie vom Herrn Apotheker Zier in London".[56] Ehrhart wrote this note on 24 November 1788. However, Zier's name does not appear in the lists of English apothecaries from the 18th century.[57] It is possible that he worked as a private apothecary, which would explain his absence from these official records.

Jan (John) Zier also maintained contacts with Kew Gardens or directly with its director, William Aiton. William Aiton (1731–1793) was a Scottish botanist who served as the director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew from 1759 until his death.[58] In his three-volume *Hortus kewensis* (1789), the first[59] and the second[60] volumes contain information about how J. Zier contributed plant specimens belonging to several species for cultivation at Kew Gardens (there is no mention of Zier in the third volume). In the second, five-volume edition of *Hortus kewensis* (1812), three additional species are listed in the fourth volume.[61] Between 1786 and 1788, J. Zier contributed specimens of 14 plant species to Kew Gardens, including *Crassula verticillaris* L., with the majority of specimens sent in 1787, including *Briza virens* Walter (= *Briza minor* L.). These species came from all over the world. However, the source of these specimens from J. Zier remains unknown.

In London, J. Zier is believed to have met William Curtis (1746–1799), who began his professional career as a apothecary before developing an interest in botany. Between 1777 and 1798, Curtis published *Flora londinensis*, one of the first illustrated urban floras, and, starting in 1787, he edited *The Botanical Magazine*.[62] James Edward Smith, a close friend of Zier, referred to Zier's anonymous contributions to the work of other botanists as early as 1798, writing: "*In memoriam piè defuncti Johannis Zier, Soc. Linn. quondam Sodalis, botanici indefessi, nobis non obliviscendi, quamvis alio sub nomine labores ejus sæpius inclaruerint*"[63] [In memory of the late Johannes Zier, a former member of the Linnean Society and an indefatigable botanist, whose contributions remain unforgettable, even though they have often become famous under a different name] (Fig. 4). In 1819, Smith clarified his earlier statement: "We have been informed that Mr. Zier was the coadjutor of Mr. William Curtis, at least in part of the celebrated *Flora londinensis*, taking upon himself the technical Latin descriptions, while Mr. Curtis was engaged in the practical observations, experiments, and scientific distinctions that constitute the unique merit of the work.".[64]

Flora londinensis was published at irregular intervals from 1777 to 1798 in six fascicles, containing a total of 72 issues, with 12 issues in each fascicle. If J. Zier was involved in the project, his participation would have been between issue 50 (probably published in January 1785) and issue 67 (published on 10 April 1793), most likely starting with issue 51 (1 February 1785).[65] However, Smith did not support his claim, quoted above, with any evidence, as Britten has already concluded from an analysis of the content of *Flora londinensis*.[66] Britten attributes Smith's suggestion to a possible animosity between Smith and Curtis, which may have arisen when Smith began publishing his *English botany* in 1790.[67] Curtis is believed to have felt offended or threatened by Smith's publication. Smith described this situation in the introduction

[56] Ehrhart 1789, p. 177.

[57] Janet Payne (archive officer, Apothecaries' Hall, London) – personal communication (30.09.2024); Professor Stuart Anderson and Professor Nicholas Wood – personal communications (30.09.2024).

[58] J. B. [James Britten] 1885, p. 208.

[59] Aiton 1789a, pp. 103, 154, 332, 398.

[60] Aiton 1789b, pp. 103, 132, 291, 370, 392, 406, 456.

[61] Aiton 1812, pp. 75, 112, 197.

[62] H. M. S. [H. M. Stephensen] 1888, p. 349.

[63] Smith 1798b, p. 216.

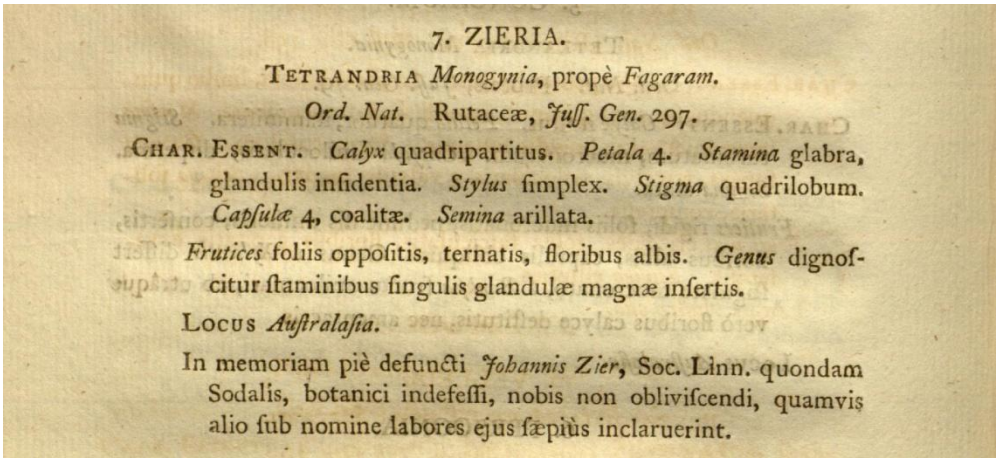
[64] *idem* 1819, pp. 168–169.

[65] Stafleu, Cowan 1976, pp. 575–577.

[66] Britten 1886, p. 102.

[67] *idem* 1886, p. 103

to the seventh volume of his *English botany*.[68] Britten, however, qualifies this assertion by suggesting that Smith, being acquainted with both Zier and Curtis, may have received his information from individuals "directly involved" in the matter.[69]



7. ZIERIA.

TETRANDRIA *Monogynia*, propè *Fagaram*.

Ord. Nat. Rutaceæ, *Juſſ. Gen.* 297.

CHAR. ESSENT. *Calyx* quadripartitus. *Petala* 4. *Stamina* glabra, glandulis inſidentia. *Stylus* ſimplex. *Stigma* quadrilobum. *Capſulæ* 4, coalitæ. *Semina* arillata.

Frutices foliis oppoſitis, ternatis, floribus albis. *Genus* dignoſcitur ſtaminibus ſingulis glandulæ magnæ inſertis.

LOCUS *Auſtralaſia.*

In memoriam piè defuncti *Johannis Zier*, Soc. Linn. quondam Sodalis, botanici indefeſſi, nobis non obliviſcendi, quamvis alio ſub nomine labores ejus ſæpiùs inclaruerint.

Fig. 4. The protologue of *Zieria* published in J. E. Smith's (1798) *The characters of twenty new genera of plants*

Zier's expertise in the scientific description of plants and his extensive knowledge of lower plants were highly regarded by his contemporaries. A testament to this recognition was his election as a fellow of the Linnean Society of London. He was inducted on 18 March 1788 during the Society's second session[70] (Fig. 5). At the time, he resided on Castle Street in Leicester Fields, London, before later moving to Ranelagh Street in Pimlico.[71]

In 1791, J. Zier took part in the presentation and examination of a specimen of *Ranunculus bellidiflorus*, which Sir Joseph Banks (1743–1820), the renowned English naturalist and president of the Royal Society from 1778 to 1820,[72] had received from Germany. The results were published, and the plate accompanying the publication features Zier's signature alongside those of eight other participants[73] (Fig. 6). These participants, all distinguished botanists of the time, can be identified as follows: William Hudson (1730–1793), a botanist from London and member of the Linnean Society; [Sir] J[ames] E[dward] Smith, botanist and president of the Linnean Society; John Zier; Philip Werner (identity unknown); [Sir] Jos[eph] Banks, president of the Royal Society; J[onas Carlsson] Dryander (1748–1810), librarian of the Royal Society and vice-president of the Linnean Society; the aforementioned James Dickson; Adam Afzelius (1750–1837), a Swedish botanist; and R[ichard] A[nthony] Salisbury (1761–1829), who bore the surname Markham until 1785, and was a member of both the Royal Society and the Linnean Society. After 1792, Zier's name no longer appeared on the list of members of the Linnean Society.[74]

[68] *idem* 1886, p. 103; Smith 1798a, p. ii.

[68] Britten 1886, pp. 102–103.

[69] *idem* 1886, pp. 102–103.

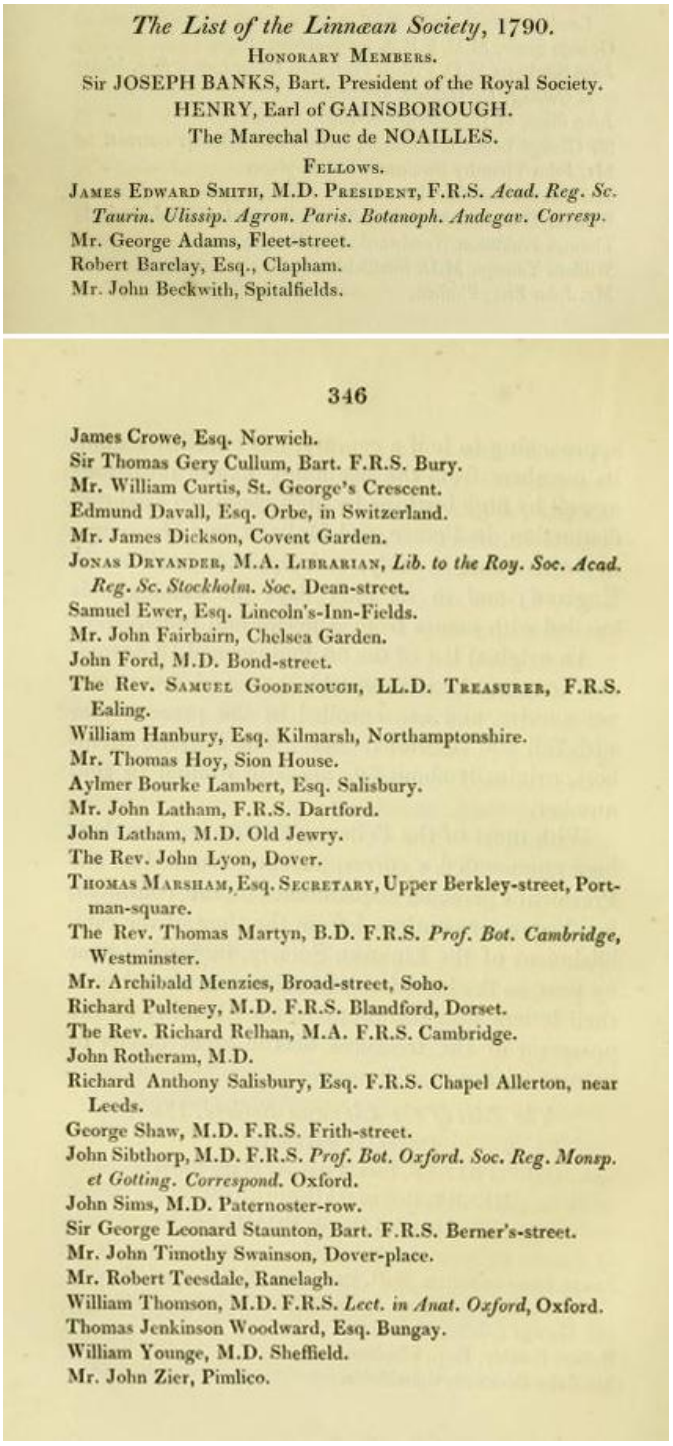
[70] Christina McCulloch (assistant archivist, Linnean Society, personal communication, 06 August 2024); [Anonymous] 1791; Britten 1886, p. 102.

[71] Christina McCulloch (assistant archivist, Linnean Society, personal communication, 06 August 2024); Britten 1886, p. 102.

[72] Gascoigne 2004.

[73] Konig 1805.

[74] Christina McCulloch (assistant archivist, Linnean Society, personal communication, 06 August 2024).



The List of the Linnæan Society, 1790.

HONORARY MEMBERS.

Sir JOSEPH BANKS, Bart. President of the Royal Society.
HENRY, Earl of GAINSBOROUGH.
The Marechal Duc de NOAILLES.

FELLOWS.

JAMES EDWARD SMITH, M.D. PRESIDENT, F.R.S. *Acad. Reg. Sc. Taurin. Ulissip. Agron. Paris. Botanoph. Andegav. Corresp.*
Mr. George Adams, Fleet-street.
Robert Barclay, Esq., Clapham.
Mr. John Beckwith, Spitalfields.

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James Crowe, Esq. Norwich.
Sir Thomas Gery Cullum, Bart. F.R.S. Bury.
Mr. William Curtis, St. George's Crescent.
Edmund Davall, Esq. Orbe, in Switzerland.
Mr. James Dickson, Covent Garden.
JONAS DRYANDER, M.A. LIBRARIAN, *Lib. to the Roy. Soc. Acad. Reg. Sc. Stockholm. Soc.* Dean-street.
Samuel Ewer, Esq. Lincoln's-Inn-Fields.
Mr. John Fairbairn, Chelsea Garden.
John Ford, M.D. Bond-street.
The Rev. SAMUEL GOODENOUGH, LL.D. TREASURER, F.R.S. Ealing.
William Hanbury, Esq. Kilmarsh, Northamptonshire.
Mr. Thomas Hoy, Sion House.
Aylmer Bourke Lambert, Esq. Salisbury.
Mr. John Latham, F.R.S. Dartford.
John Latham, M.D. Old Jewry.
The Rev. John Lyon, Dover.
THOMAS MARSHAM, Esq. SECRETARY, Upper Berkley-street, Portman-square.
The Rev. Thomas Martyn, B.D. F.R.S. *Prof. Bot. Cambridge*, Westminster.
Mr. Archibald Menzies, Broad-street, Soho.
Richard Pulteney, M.D. F.R.S. Blandford, Dorset.
The Rev. Richard Relhan, M.A. F.R.S. Cambridge.
John Rotheram, M.D.
Richard Anthony Salisbury, Esq. F.R.S. Chapel Allerton, near Leeds.
George Shaw, M.D. F.R.S. Frith-street.
John Sibthorp, M.D. F.R.S. *Prof. Bot. Oxford. Soc. Reg. Monsp. et Gotting. Correspond.* Oxford.
John Sims, M.D. Paternoster-row.
Sir George Leonard Staunton, Bart. F.R.S. Berner's-street.
Mr. John Timothy Swainson, Dover-place.
Mr. Robert Teesdale, Ranelagh.
William Thomson, M.D. F.R.S. *Lect. in Anat. Oxford*, Oxford.
Thomas Jenkinson Woodward, Esq. Bungay.
William Younge, M.D. Sheffield.
Mr. John Zier, Pimlico.

Fig. 5. The list of the British members of the Linnean Society, 1790

Some biographical accounts of J. Zier suggest that he was set to receive a professorship at a Polish university, often noting that a chronic illness (possibly tuberculosis) that ultimately led to his death prevented him from leaving London to take up the position. As early as September 1, 1810, the *Monthly Magazine* reported that Zier "had been appointed Professor of Botany at a Polish university, but died from a decline before he could depart to assume his

appointment."[75] In 1811, John Sims (1749–1831), a close friend of Zier, reiterated this account,[76] and it was later confirmed by others.[77] This information is entirely accurate.

Fig. 6. *Ranunculus bellidiflorus* with signatures of nine participants in the research and presentation on this species published on Plate 10 in *Annals of Botany* (Konig & Sims) in 1805

At the University of Vilnius, a vacancy in the chair of Natural History had existed since 1787, when Johann Georg Forster left the position.[78] The chair was not filled until five years later, when Ferdinand Spitznagel (1760–1826), brought from Vienna, took over.[79] Earlier, in the spring of 1790, the Commission of National Education, in search of a candidate for the professorship, reached out to J. Zier through Franciszek Bukaty (1747–1797), the Polish King's Envoy to the English Court (Fig. 7; Annexe I). It is unclear how Zier came to be known in Vilnius,[80] as he had not published any works under his own name. Nevertheless, negotiations with him began.

[75] [Anonymous] 1810, p. 198.

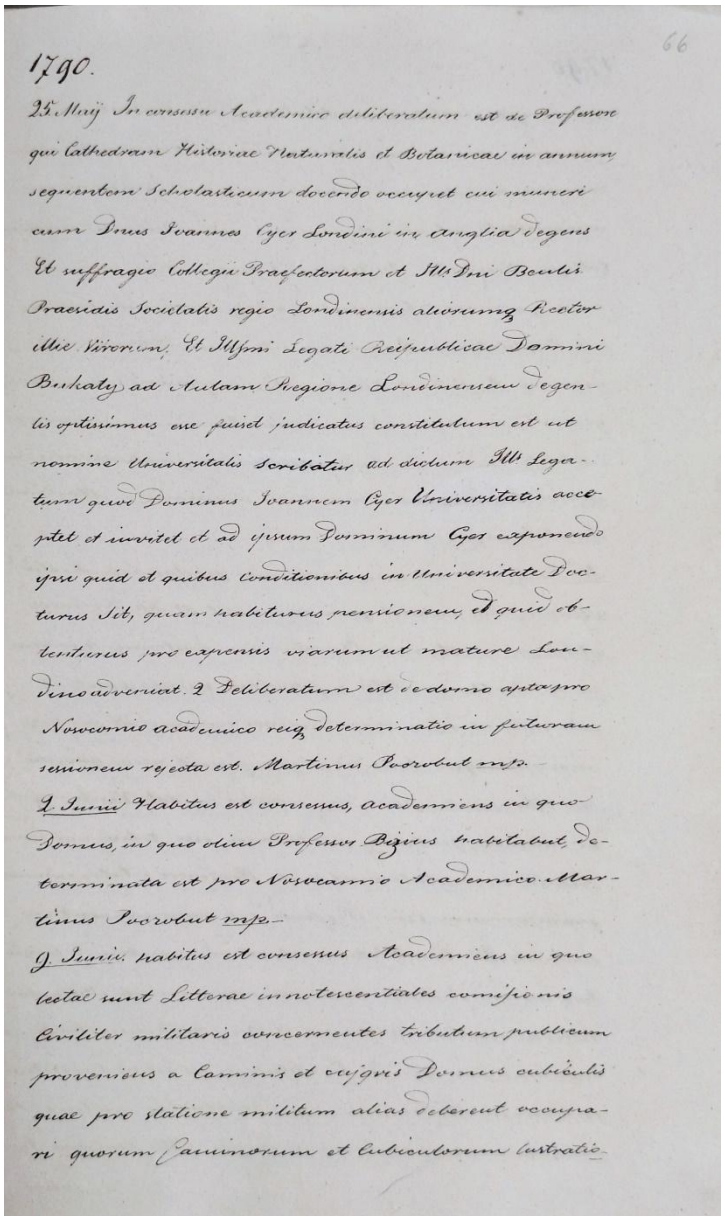
[76] Sims 1811, p. 1396: This genus was named by Dr. Smith in honour of our late friend Mr. Zier, a learned and industrious botanist, who, having been appointed to a professorship in a Polish University, was preparing to leave this country, but was prevented by a chronic disease which terminated in death.

[77] For example: Britten 1886, p. 102; Smith 1819, pp. 168–169.

[78] Köhler 2024.

[79] Sroka 2002.

[80] Dr Veronika Girininkaitė (librarian, Library of the University of Vilnius, Manuscripts Department), personal communication, 19 December 2024.



1790.

25. Maij In consessu Academico delitteratum est de Professore qui Cathedram Historiae Naturalis et Botanicae in annum sequentem Scholasticum docendo occuret cui muneri cum Dnus Joannes Cyer Londini in Anglia degens Et suffragio Collegii Praefectorum et Illi Dni Bukati Praesidis Societatis regio Londinensis alterumq Rectoris illic Virorum, Et Illmi Legati Reipublicae Domini Bukaty ad Aulam Regione Londinensem degentis optimus esse fuisset judicatus constitutum est ut nomine Universitatis scribatur ad dictum Illi Legatum quo Dominus Joannem Cyer Universitatis acceptet et invitet et ad ejusum Dominum Cyer exponendo ejsi quid et quibus conditionibus in Universitate Docturus sit, quam habiturus pensionem, et quid obtenturus pro expensis viarum ut mature Londino adveniat. 2 Deliberatum est eodemo aptapro Novocomio academico rei determinatio in futuram sessionem rejecta est. Martinus Poorubut mpp.

1. Junii Habitus est consessus, academicus in quo Domus, in quo olim Professor Bejus habitabat, determinata est pro Novocomio Academico. Martinus Poorubut mpp.

2. Junii. habitus est consessus Academicus in quo lectae sunt Litterae intercessionales commissionis Civiliter militaris concernentes tributum publicum provenientes a Caminis et cujusvis Domus cubiculis quae pro statione militum alias deberent occupari quorum Caminorum et cubiculorum lustratio

Fig. 7. A page from the minutes of the Commission of National Education of the University of Vilnius of 25 May 1790 (VUB – call number: F2 DC 9)

As reflected in the minutes of the session of this Commission, held on 25 May 1790, Jan Zier's candidacy for the position of head of the Department of Natural History was accepted. This decision was undoubtedly influenced by the favourable recommendation issued for Zier by Sir Joseph Banks, president of the Royal Society. The university authorised F. Bukaty to establish the terms of Zier's lectures at Vilnius, including his salary, the costs of his relocation, and other related matters. Zier was set to begin lecturing at the start of the 1790–1791 academic year. Unfortunately, the details of the subsequent negotiations remain unknown, but Zier's deteriorating health likely prevented him from ultimately assuming the position.

It is also noteworthy that in the Latin text of the aforementioned minutes, in line with the prevailing custom in Poland at the time, Zier's surname is written phonetically as "Cyer". This suggests that his name was pronounced [cjer] or [tsyer], rather than [zi:r].

The matter of Zier's employment at the University of Vilnius was likely well known in the city. In 1790, Stanisław Bonifacy Jundziłł, who was then working at the Piarist convent

in Vilnius, mentioned it in a letter (dated 18 September 1790 from Szczuczyn) to Marcin Poczobutt-Odlanicki (1728–1810), the rector of the University of Vilnius.[81] Jundziłł expressed his hope that he would be able to learn much from Zier.

Zier did not hold a doctorate, but this did not prevent him from taking up the chair at the University of Vilnius. A similar situation occurred with the previous professor of natural history, J. G. Forster, who assumed the position in 1784 and obtained his medical doctorate a year later at the University of Halle, based on his work *De plantis esculentia insularum Oceania Australis*.[82] However, Forster was already a renowned naturalist with significant accomplishments and a vast network of scientific contacts across Europe. In contrast, Zier could not demonstrate comparable achievements. Ultimately, due to Zier's declining health, his contract with the University of Vilnius fell through.[83]

2.4. Health problems, will and death

Serious health issues began to affect J. Zier as early as 1790, when they prevented him from travelling to Vilnius to assume the chair. These problems may have prompted him to pass some of his herbarium specimens and manuscripts to Menzies between 1789 and 1791, as discussed below. By 1792, Zier's health had evidently deteriorated, as his name no longer appeared on the membership list of the Linnean Society.[84]

Concerned by the lack of news from Zier, Rev. Hugh Davies (1739–1821), a member of the Linnean Society and Rector of Aber, wrote to J. E. Smith, President of the Linnean Society, on 10 November 1792. In his letter, Davies inquired whether Smith knew what had become of Hudson[85] and Zier, with whom he had unsuccessfully tried to make contact.[86] Although we do not know Smith's reply, an intriguing piece of information appears in a letter from Davies to Smith dated 4 March 1793. Davies writes that he is "greatly affected by his [i.e. Smith's] account of Hudson and Zier". William Hudson, author of *Flora anglica*, had been paralysed for the last six years of his life. In 1791, he became a member of the Linnean Society, contributing to its work as his health allowed. He passed away on 23 May 1793.[87] It is likely that Smith also informed Davies of J. Zier's health issues.[88]

In 1792, J. Zier's health must have been so poor that he made a will. A surviving copy, dated July 5, 1793[89] (Fig. 8; Annexe II), provides a glimpse into his final wishes. Although the will itself is undated, Zier refers to Easter 1793[90] as a future event ("up to next Easter 1793"), suggesting he must have written it much earlier, likely before Easter 1792.[91] The executor of J. Zier's will was John de Verdion (ca. 1744–1802), an eccentric bookseller, language instructor, and translator, renowned for being a remarkably colourful figure in London at the time.[92]

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[81] VUB – *Letter from Stanisław Boniface Jundziłł to Marcin Poczobutt-Odlanicki, Rector of the University of Vilnius (dated: Szczuczyn 18 September 1790)*, call number: F2-DC41_14-1.

[82] Köhler 2024.

[83] Kamińska 2004, p. 137.

[84] Christina McCulloch (assistant archivist, Linnean Society), personal communication, 06 August 2024.

[85] William Hudson (1730–1793) was British apothecary, horticulturist and botanist in London, and the author of *Flora anglica* (1762). See: Stafleu, Cowan 1979, pp. 354–356.

[86] TLSoL – The Linnean Collections. Ref No GB-110/JES/COR/4/10 from Hugh Davies, Aber, [Gwynedd], to James Edward Smith (10 November 1792).

[87] Gorton 1851 [the work has no numbered pages].

[88] Smith 1832, p. 434.

[89] TNA – Prerogative Court of Canterbury and related Probate Jurisdictions: *Will Register, 1384-1858*. Name of Register: Dodwell, Quire numbers: 381–424. Will of John Ziers. Reference: PROB 11/1235/24.

[90] In 1793 Easter fell on 31 March. Pears 2024.

[91] In 1792 Easter fell on 08 April. Pears 2024.

[92] Punchard 2022, p. 52.

Zier bequeathed his herbarium of cryptogams to his friend John Sims, an English physician and botanist who, starting in 1800, would become the publisher of *The Botanical Magazine*.[93] This herbarium was later praised as "an extensive collection, particularly rich in cryptogamic plants".[94] The collection of minerals and the herbarium of medicinal plants listed in Aiton's *Hortus kewensis* and Hudson's *Flora anglica* were entrusted to Johann Gottfried Schmeisser (1766–1837), a German apothecary, physician, chemist, and mineralogist. Schmeisser, who resided in London from 1786 to 1793, began lecturing on pharmacy and mineralogy there. He was introduced to scientific circles by his English friend, Joseph Banks.[95] Zier was clearly included in these circles, which likely explains his close relationship with Schmeisser and his decision to leave him his collection of minerals and herbarium of medicinal plants.

The new books in Zier's possession, which were probably numerous, were to be sold, with the proceeds going to Zier's brother-in-law, Litchterfildt [?], who lived in Zerbst (then the capital of the Principality of Anhalt-Zerbst, now in Sachsen-Anhalt, Germany). This detail suggests that Zier's sister had already passed away. The text does not mention Zier's wife or children, which could indicate that he was unmarried, childless, divorced, or widowed. According to Zier's last will, his funeral was to be conducted "at the least possible expense". It is unfortunate that he left no further personal information about himself.

Jan (John) Zier passed away in early July 1793, though the exact date remains unknown. His funeral took place on Friday, July 5, 1793[96] (Fig. 9), possibly at the now-defunct churchyard of St. George Hanover Square in Bayswater, London. His will was registered on the same day, although his surname was mistakenly recorded as 'Ziers'[97] Interestingly, his colleagues at the Linnean Society did not document his death. When J. E. Smith dedicated the genus *Zieria* to him in 1819, he failed to recall the exact year of Zier's death, stating that he "died in or around 1796".[98]

3. Jan (John) Zier in the community of British botanists

Jan (John) Zier did not leave behind any diaries that could provide significant insight into his character. However, several notes from his colleagues offer valuable clues. It is clear that he was modest and hardworking. As early as 1798, Smith, who knew Zier personally, acknowledged Zier's substantial contributions to botany by naming a flowering plant genus after him, a gesture that recognised his important work. Smith also noted that Zier's anonymous contributions helped others achieve success.[99] Similarly, Britten highlighted Zier's role in enhancing the scientific reputations of individuals who did not give him due recognition in return.[100] This lack of acknowledgment likely stems from the absence of any mention of Zier's involvement in the works to which he contributed. Furthermore, in a note accompanying the botanical diagnosis of *Zieria*, Smith referred to him as an "indefatigable botanist"[101] which, beyond being a figure of speech, may reflect genuine admiration for Zier's exceptional diligence.

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[93] Stafleu, Cowan 1985, p. 612.

[94] [Anonymous] 1810, p. 198.

[95] [Anonymous] 2025b.

[96] TNA – City of Westminster Archives Centre: *St George Hanover Square Parish Registers*, Vol. 92 (Burials from 1 Jun 1792–31 Dec 1817).

[97] TNA – Prerogative Court of Canterbury and related Probate Jurisdictions: *Will Register, 1384-1858*. Name of Register: Dodwell, Quire numbers: 381–424. Will of John Ziers. Reference: PROB 11/1235/24.

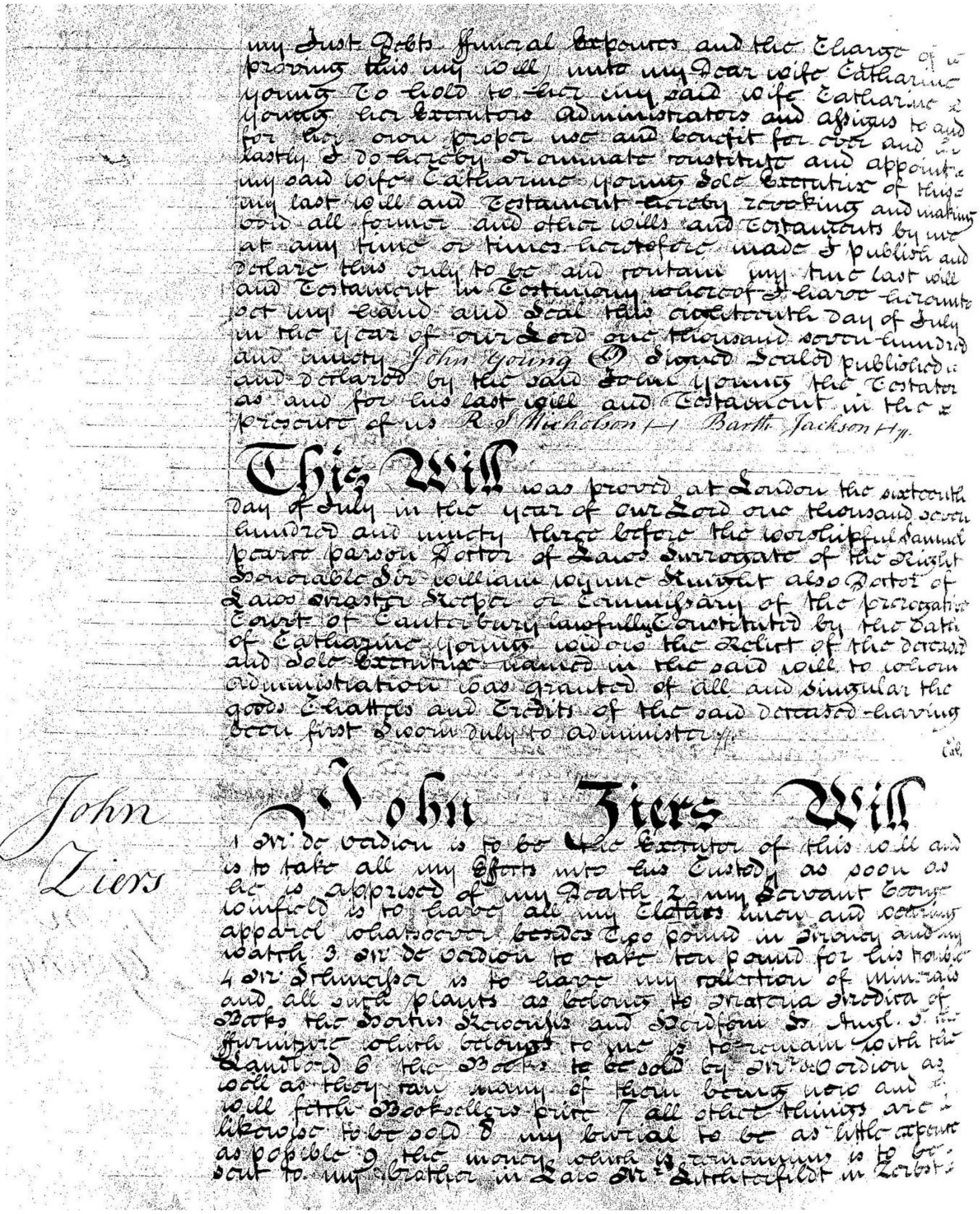
[98] Smith 1819.

[99] *idem* 1798b, p. 216.

[100] Britten 1886, p. 102.

[101] Smith 1798b, p. 216.

Fig. 8. The will of Jan (John) Zier, copy of 5 July 1793 (continued on the facing page) (TNA – Reference: PROB 11/1235/24)

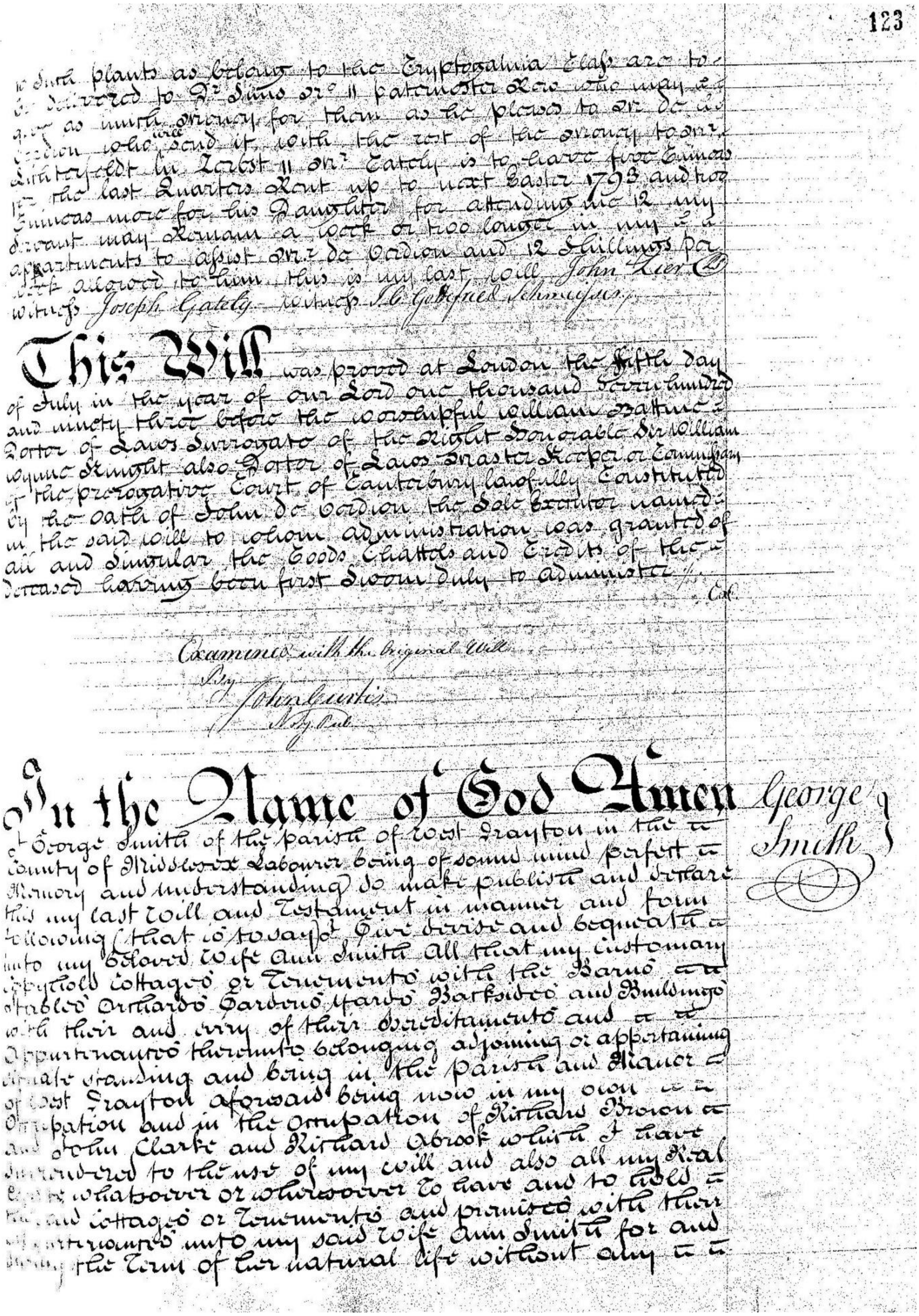

my Just Debts Funeral Expences and the Charge of
proving this my Will unto my Dear Wife Catharine
Young To hold to her my said Wife Catharine
Young her Executors Administrators and Assigns to and
for her own proper use and benefit for ever and
lastly I do hereby Nominate constitute and appoint
my said Wife Catharine Young Sole Executrix of this
my last Will and Testament hereby revoking and making
void all former and other Wills and Testaments by me
at any time or times heretofore made & publish and
declare this only to be and contain my true last will
and Testament In Testimony whereof I have hereunto
set my hand and Seal this eighteenth Day of July
in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred
and ninety John Young (L.S.) Signed Sealed published
and declared by the said John Young the Testator
as and for his last will and Testament in the
presence of us R. J. Nicholson Barth. Jackson

This Will was proved at London the sixteenth
Day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand seven
hundred and ninety three before the Worshipful Samuel
Pearce Parson Doctor of Laws Surrogate of the Right
Honorable Sir William Wynne Knight also Doctor of
Laws Master Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative
Court of Canterbury lawfully constituted by the Oath
of Catharine Young Widow the Relict of the deceased
and sole Executrix named in the said Will to whom
Administration was granted of all and singular the
goods Chattels and Credits of the said deceased having
been first sworn duly to administer.

John Ziers

John Ziers Will

1 Mr De Vadion is to be the Executor of this will and
is to take all my Effects into his Custody as soon as
he is apprised of my Death 2 my Servant George
Winfield is to have all my Clothes linen and wearing
apparel whatsoever besides two pound in money and my
watch 3 Mr De Vadion to take ten pound for his trouble
4 Mr Schmeisser is to have my collection of minerals
and all such plants as belong to Materia Medica of
Banks the Doctors Koenig and Sandfom [illegible] 5 the
furniture which belongs to me is to remain with the
Landlord 6 the Books to be sold by Mr De Vadion as
well as they can many of them being new and
will fetch Booksellers price 7 all other things are
likewise to be sold 8 my burial to be as little expence
as possible 9 the money which is remaining is to be
sent to my Brother in Law Mr Lichtenfeldt in Zerbst



123

such plants as belong to the Cryptogamia Class are to be delivered to Dr Sims No 11 Paternoster Row who may give as much money for them as he pleases to Mr De Cadion who [illegible] send it with the rest of the money to Mr Lichtenfeldt in Berlin Mr Gately is to have five Guineas for the last Quarters Rent up to next Easter 1793 and two Guineas more for his Daughter for attending me [illegible] my Servant may remain a week or two longer in my apartments to assist Mr De Cadion and 12 Shillings per week allowed to him this is my last will John Zier (LS)
witness Joseph Gately witness J.G. Gottfried Schmeisser

This Will was proved at London the fifth day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety three before the worshipful William Battine Doctor of Laws Surrogate of the Right Honorable Sir William Wynne Knight also Doctor of Laws Master Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury lawfully constituted by the oath of John De Cadion the sole Executor named in the said will to whom administration was granted of all and singular the Goods Chattels and Credits of the deceased having been first sworn duly to administer.

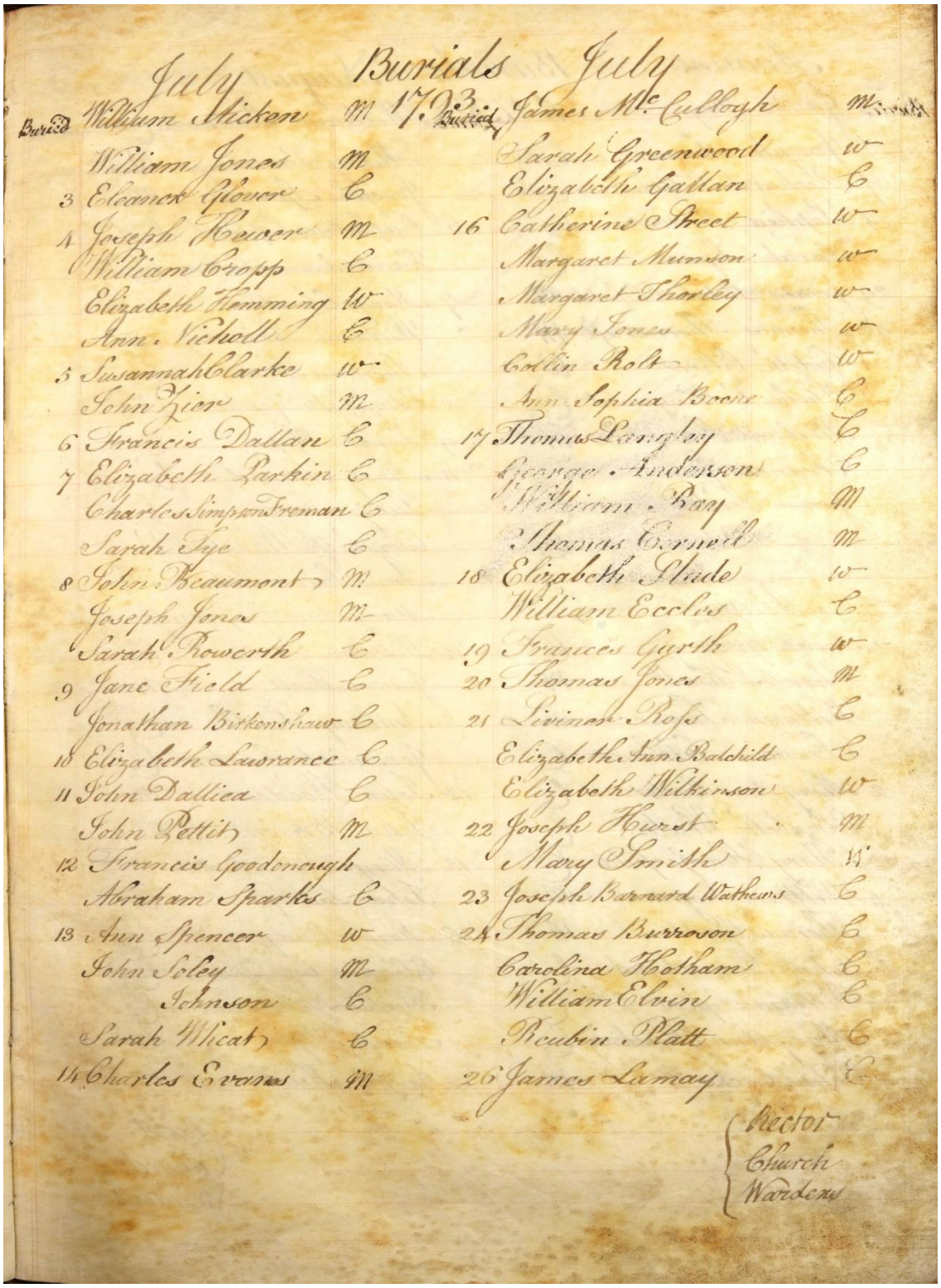
Examined with the Original Will
By John Curtis
Noty Pub

In the Name of God Amen I George Smith of the parish of West Drayton in the County of Middlesex Labourer being of sound mind perfect Memory and understanding do make publish and declare this my last Will and Testament in manner and form following (that is to say) I give devise and bequeath unto my beloved Wife Ann Smith All that my customary Copyhold Cottages or Tenements with the Barns Stables Orchards Gardens Yards Backsides and Buildings with their and every of their Hereditaments and Appurtenances thereunto belonging adjoining or appertaining situate standing and being in the Parish and Manor of West Drayton aforesaid being now in my own occupation and in the occupation of Richard Brown and John Clarke and Richard Abrook which I have surrendered to the use of my Will and also all my Real Estate whatsoever or wheresoever To have and to hold the said Cottages or Tenements and premises with their appurtenances unto my said Wife Ann Smith for and during the Term of her natural life without any

George Smith

During the early period of his stay in London, Zier's closest acquaintances were undoubtedly James Dickson and James E. Smith. Dickson employed him in his work on cryptogamic plants of Britain, while Smith, greatly admiring his knowledge, invited him

to join the prestigious Linnean Society. It was there that Zier encountered many prominent figures in British botany, including the president of the Royal Society. Zier's closer acquaintances, especially towards the end of his life, when the symptoms of his illness were becoming more and more troublesome, undoubtedly included John Sims, a practising physician. Sims would eventually be named one of the beneficiaries in Zier's will.


Burials July 1793

July

Buried William Hicken m
William Jones m
3 Eleanor Glover c
4 Joseph Hauer m
William Cropp c
Elizabeth Hemming w
Ann Nicholl c
5 Susannah Clarke w
John Zier m
6 Francis Dallan c
7 Elizabeth Parkin c
Charles Simpson Freman c
Sarah Sye c
8 John Beaumont m
Joseph Jones m
Sarah Howerth c
9 Jane Field c
Jonathan Birkenshaw c
10 Elizabeth Lawrance c
11 John Dallica c
John Pettit m
12 Francis Goodenough
Abraham Sparkes c
13 Ann Spencer w
John Soley m
Johnson c
Sarah Wheat c
14 Charles Evans m

Buried James Mc Culloyh m
Sarah Greenwood w
Elizabeth Gallan c
16 Catherine Street w
Margaret Munson w
Margaret Thorley w
Mary Jones w
Collin Rolt w
Ann Sophia Boone c
17 Thomas Longley c
George Anderson c
William Bay m
Thomas Cornell m
18 Elizabeth Slade w
William Eccles c
19 Frances Garth w
20 Thomas Jones m
21 Livinea Ross c
Elizabeth Ann Balchild c
Elizabeth Wilkinson w
22 Joseph Hurst m
Mary Smith
23 Joseph Barnard Wathews c
24 Thomas Burrowon c
Carolina Hotham c
William Elvin c
Reubin Platt c
26 James Lamay c

Rector
Church
Wardens

Fig. 9. The date of the burial of Jan (John) Zier on 5 July 1793 (TNA – *St George Hanover Square Parish Registers*, Vol. 92)

Zier was likely somewhat alienated from the London botanists, a possibility suggested by his association with John de Verdion, a highly eccentric figure in the city who, among other things, irritated its residents with his distinctive appearance. The fact that de Verdion was appointed as the executor of Zier's will implies that, toward the end of his life, Zier may not have had any trusted botanists close by. This choice could also have been influenced by Zier's substantial book collection, as de Verdion, who was a book dealer by profession, would have been well-suited to manage such a collection. However, it is worth noting that London was home to many book dealers at the time. Therefore, Zier's decision to select de Verdion as his executor was likely intentional.

Certainly, Zier was an outsider in London. Lacking good health, wealth, a prestigious education, or the right connections, he could not have expected a brilliant, or even a swift career. Smith understood this harsh reality of Zier's, writing of him: "He was no less meritorious in his private character, and bore with modesty and patience those privations, which too often belong to literary merit in a foreign country, especially where canting and time-serving are out of the question".[102] Perhaps Zier felt the patronising treatment or condescending tone from some botanists, a sentiment that others also observed. Andrews bitterly remarked, "Were celebrity only to be gained by real merit, many of the high-sounding names that now swell the trump of fame would, we fear, have far less pretensions than Zier".[103]

There is no information available regarding Zier's financial status. However, the contents of his will suggest that he was likely not wealthy during the final years of his life. On the other hand, he employed a servant and purchased new (rather than secondhand) books, indicating that he had enough financial resources to meet not only his basic needs but also some discretionary expenses. It is possible that his relatively early death prevented Zier from making a significant name for himself in botany through his own publications.

4. Herbaria and manuscripts

Jan (John) Zier began collecting plants while working for J. F. Ehrhart. The specimens he gathered during this time are believed to be part of Ehrhart's herbaria, including those in Göttingen (GOET), the Linnean Herbarium at the Linnean Society of London (LINN), Moscow (MW), St. Petersburg (LE), and Uppsala (UPS).[104] While residing in Hanover, Zier also collected plants for his personal collection, as indicated by the data in the manuscript he left to Menzies.[105] He continued to expand his herbarium in Great Britain until around 1790, gathering specimens in places such as Hampstead (now part of north London) in 1788, between Kew and Hounslow, and on the Isle of Wight in the English Channel, as evidenced by references in his manuscripts.[106]

[102] Smith 1819, pp. 168–169.
[103] Andrews 1810, text accompanying plate DCVI [606] [no pagination].
[104] Stafleu, Cowan 1976, pp. 731–734; Reiner-Drehwald, Hörandl, Appelhans 2022, p. 672.
[105] Quattrocchi 2023, p. 2874.
[106] Britten 1886, p. 104.

Fig. 10. The herbarium folders containing all the material of Jan (John) Zier housed in the bryophyte herbarium in the Natural History Museum in London (BM)

Britten is convinced that Zier's manuscripts came into Menzies' possession only upon Zier's death.[107] However, based on the will's contents, this is not the case. If Menzies had Zier's manuscripts and herbarium, then Zier must have given them to him before the will was written, as Menzies is not mentioned in the document. This transfer could have occurred between 1789 and 1791, during Menzies' time in Great Britain.[108] In any event, Archibald Menzies acquired Zier's manuscripts, which included his species descriptions and notes, as well as his herbarium, which contained specimens of mosses, lichens, and fungi. Around 1871, Menzies' heirs (rather than his representatives) transferred these materials, along with his other herbaria, to the New College, University of Edinburgh, for use by students in the Class of Natural History. Before 1886, they were moved to the British Museum in exchange for a collection of British plants (Figs 10–11).[109] There, they were examined by Britten and Carruthers, as previously mentioned. The herbarium that J. Sims received in Zier's will should now be housed in the herbarium at Kew, along with the rest of Sims' collection.[110]

5. Jan (John) Zier as an eponym

An eponym is a polysemous term that conveys various meanings through a single linguistic form. It refers to a word derived from a proper name, as well as to the person, less frequently an animal or object, from whom the name of another thing, phenomenon, place, or locality originates. Jan (John) Zier, a botanist, serves as the eponym for several taxa of mosses and vascular plants, which reflects the acknowledgment by their authors of his significant, though often anonymous, contributions to the systematics of these plant groups. This also serves as a form of compensation for the fact that other researchers, rather than Zier himself, published the results of his work under their own names. This recognition is most clearly expressed by James E. Smith in the phrase quoted on page 216 of the protologue for the generic name *Zieria* Sm. (Fig. 12A), published in Zier's honour.[111] Smith writes that the name commemorates "… the late Johannes Zier, a former member of the Linnean Society and an indefatigable botanist, whose contributions remain unforgettable, even though they have often become famous under a different name".

[107] *idem* 1886, p. 104.
[108] Stearn 2003.
[109] Britten 1886, p. 101.
[110] Stafleu, Cowan 1985, p. 612.
[111] Smith 1798b, p. 216.

Fig. 11. The specimen of the moss *Bryum caespiticium* collected by Jan (John) Zier in Göttingen, Germany, in March 1781 (BM)

The genus *Zieria* belongs to the family Rutaceae and comprises approximately 60 species, though the exact number still remains uncertain. It is believed that more species will be described as taxonomic research on the genus progresses. All species of *Zieria* are endemic to Australia, with the exception of *Z. chevalieri* Virot, which occurs in New Caledonia. The genus is distributed in all Australian states except Western Australia.[112] When Smith described the genus *Zieria*, he did not assign any species to it. This was not done until 12 years later by Henry Charles Andrews (ca. 1759–1835), an English botanist, botanical artist, and engraver, who described the new species *Z. smithii* Andrews[113] and illustrated it on a coloured plate (Fig. 12B). This species also serves as the generitype for the name *Zieria*.

For the second time, J. Zier became the eponym of *Bryum zieri* Dicks. *ex* Hedw. in 1801, a name proposed for the species described and illustrated in his honour. To clarify, the species was first described and illustrated by J. Dickson in 1790, based on a specimen collected in the Scottish Highlands[114] (Fig. 13A). However, the name proposed at that time was not validly

[112] Armstrong 2002.
[113] Andrews 1810.
[114] Dickson 1790, p. 8, tabl. IV, fig. 10.

published because, according to the rules of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature,[115] in 1912, the starting point for nomenclature of mosses (excluding *Sphagnum*)

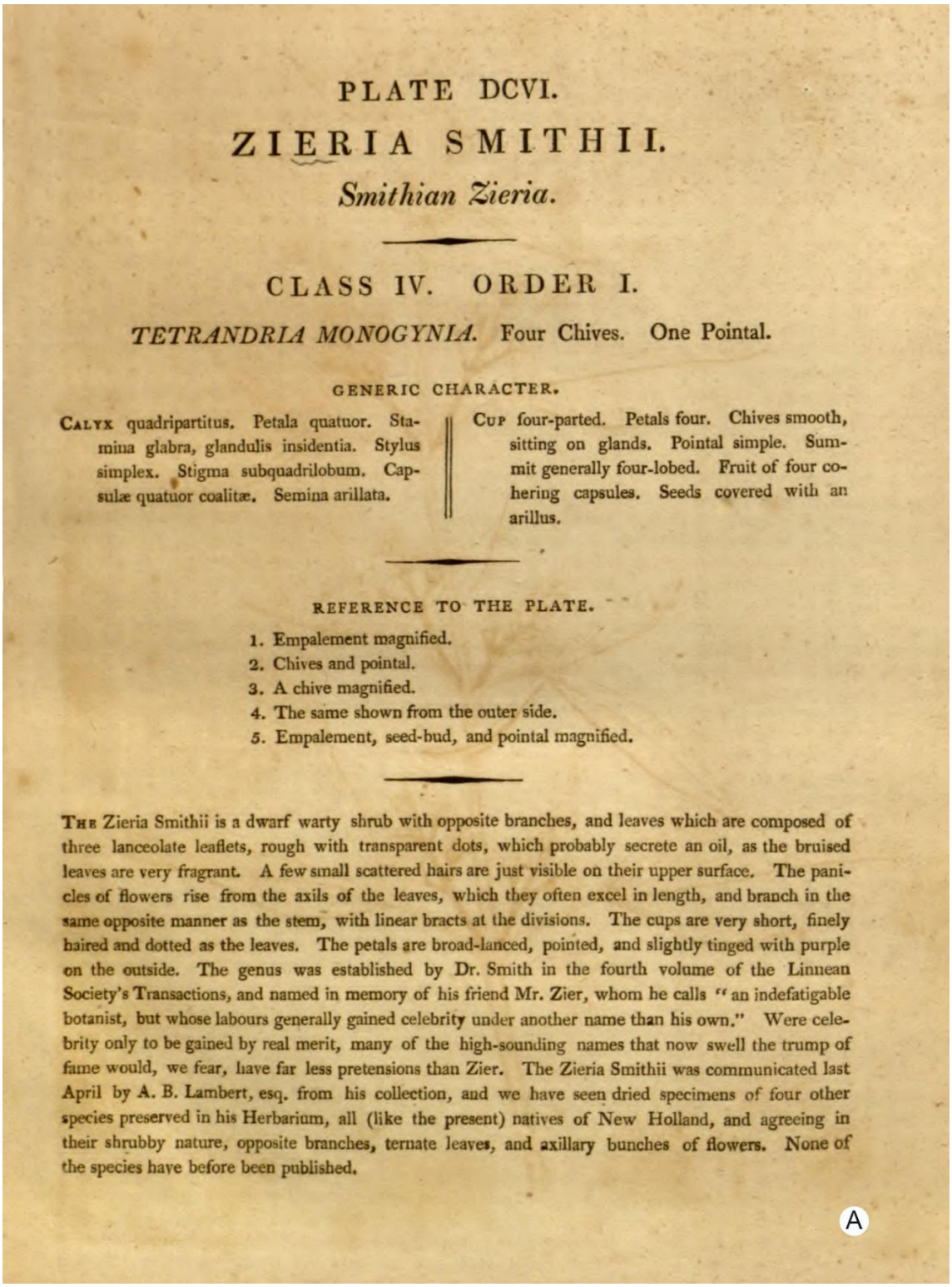


PLATE DCVI.

ZIERIA SMITHII.

Smithian Zieria.

CLASS IV. ORDER I.

TETRANDRIA MONOGYNIA. Four Chives. One Pointal.

GENERIC CHARACTER.

CALYX quadripartitus. Petala quatuor. Stamina glabra, glandulis insidentia. Stylus simplex. Stigma subquadrilobum. Capsulæ quatuor coalitæ. Semina arillata.

CUP four-parted. Petals four. Chives smooth, sitting on glands. Pointal simple. Summit generally four-lobed. Fruit of four cohering capsules. Seeds covered with an arillus.

REFERENCE TO THE PLATE.

1. Empalement magnified.
2. Chives and pointal.
3. A chive magnified.
4. The same shown from the outer side.
5. Empalement, seed-bud, and pointal magnified.

THE Zieria Smithii is a dwarf warty shrub with opposite branches, and leaves which are composed of three lanceolate leaflets, rough with transparent dots, which probably secrete an oil, as the bruised leaves are very fragrant. A few small scattered hairs are just visible on their upper surface. The panicles of flowers rise from the axils of the leaves, which they often excel in length, and branch in the same opposite manner as the stem, with linear bracts at the divisions. The cups are very short, finely haired and dotted as the leaves. The petals are broad-lanced, pointed, and slightly tinged with purple on the outside. The genus was established by Dr. Smith in the fourth volume of the Linnean Society's Transactions, and named in memory of his friend Mr. Zier, whom he calls "an indefatigable botanist, but whose labours generally gained celebrity under another name than his own." Were celebrity only to be gained by real merit, many of the high-sounding names that now swell the trump of fame would, we fear, have far less pretensions than Zier. The Zieria Smithii was communicated last April by A. B. Lambert, esq. from his collection, and we have seen dried specimens of four other species preserved in his Herbarium, all (like the present) natives of New Holland, and agreeing in their shrubby nature, opposite branches, ternate leaves, and axillary bunches of flowers. None of the species have before been published.

A

Fig. 12A. The plate of *Zieria smithii*, the type of the generic name *Zieria*. **A** – protologue.

[115] Turland et al. 2025.

Fig. 12B. The plate of *Zieria smithii*, the type of the generic name *Zieria*. **B** – illustration (on the facing page).

was set to 1 January 1801. It is the conventional date of publication of *Species muscorum frondosorum*,[116] a posthumous work by Johann Hedwig (1730–1799), a German physician and botanist based in Chemnitz. In this work, Hedwig validated the name *B. zieri*, providing a brief diagnosis, a full description of the species, and a new illustration (Fig. 13B). At the same time,

[116] Hedwig 1801.

he cited J. Dickson's diagnosis and included complete bibliographic data for Dickson's publication, thereby attributing the name to Dickson. As a result, the correct authorship of the name is "Dicks. *ex* Hedw.".

Fig. 13. The earliest drawings of *Bryum zieri*. **A** – taken from the original description of J. Dickson in 1790; **B** – taken from the validating description by J. Hedwig in 1801

The illustration of *Bryum zieri* in Hedwig's work[117] undoubtedly represents this species according to its current taxonomic interpretation. However, it is clear that Hedwig did not have access to original material of this species from Scotland, but instead relied solely on Dickson's description and illustration.[118] In the personal herbarium of Hedwig, housed at the Conservatoire et Jardin botaniques in Geneva (G), there are two shoots of *B. zieri* with sporophytes, accompanied by a handwritten note by Christian Friedrich Schwägrichen (1775–1853) that reads "Pohlia Zierii Helvet."[119] It is highly likely that Hedwig examined and studied a specimen of this species collected in Switzerland, which Schwägrichen later cited in the second part of the first supplement to *Species muscorum frondosorum*.[120] Given this, according to Art. 9.12 of the ICN,[121] the specimen in the Dickson herbarium at BM (Fig. 14) is eligible to be designated as the lectotype of *B. zieri*. Formally, a lectotype designation can only be effected by someone who has examined the specimen and confirmed its identity.

Bryum zieri is a commonly accepted species with a wide, highly disjunct arctic-boreal-montane panholarctic range, along with disjunct populations in South Africa. This species exhibits several distinctive morphological traits, including the zygomorphic (bilateral) symmetry of its capsules and the strongly concave leaves, which give the plant a julaceous appearance. These unique characteristics led Wilhelm Philipp Schimper (1808–1880), an Alsatian botanist and bryologist, co-author of the monumental *Bryologia europaea*, to place this species in a separate genus, *Zieria* Schimp.[122] In this genus, he included *Z. julacea* Schimp., an illegitimate new name for *B. zieri*, and *Z. demissa* (Hook.) Schimp., a Holarctic species with a distribution similar to that of *B. zieri*. However, the generic name *Zieria* sensu Schimper is illegitimate, as it is a younger homonym of the generic name *Zieria* proposed by J. E. Smith in 1798. Consequently, in 1863, the Swedish-Finnish bryologist Sextus Otto Lindberg (1835–

[117] *idem* 1801, pp. 182–183, tab. 44, fig. 1–4
[118] Dickson 1790, pp. 8–9, tab. 4, fig. 10.
[119] Price 2005.
[120] Schwaegrichen 1816, p. 89.
[121] Turland et al. 2025.
[122] Schimper 1856.

1889) introduced the replacement name *Plagiobryum* Lindb.[123] for the illegitimate *Zieria* Schimp. This new name gained general acceptance, and in 1935, A. L. Andrews (1878–1961), an American professor of German philology and an avocational bryologist, designated *Bryum zieri* as the lectotype of this generic name.[124]

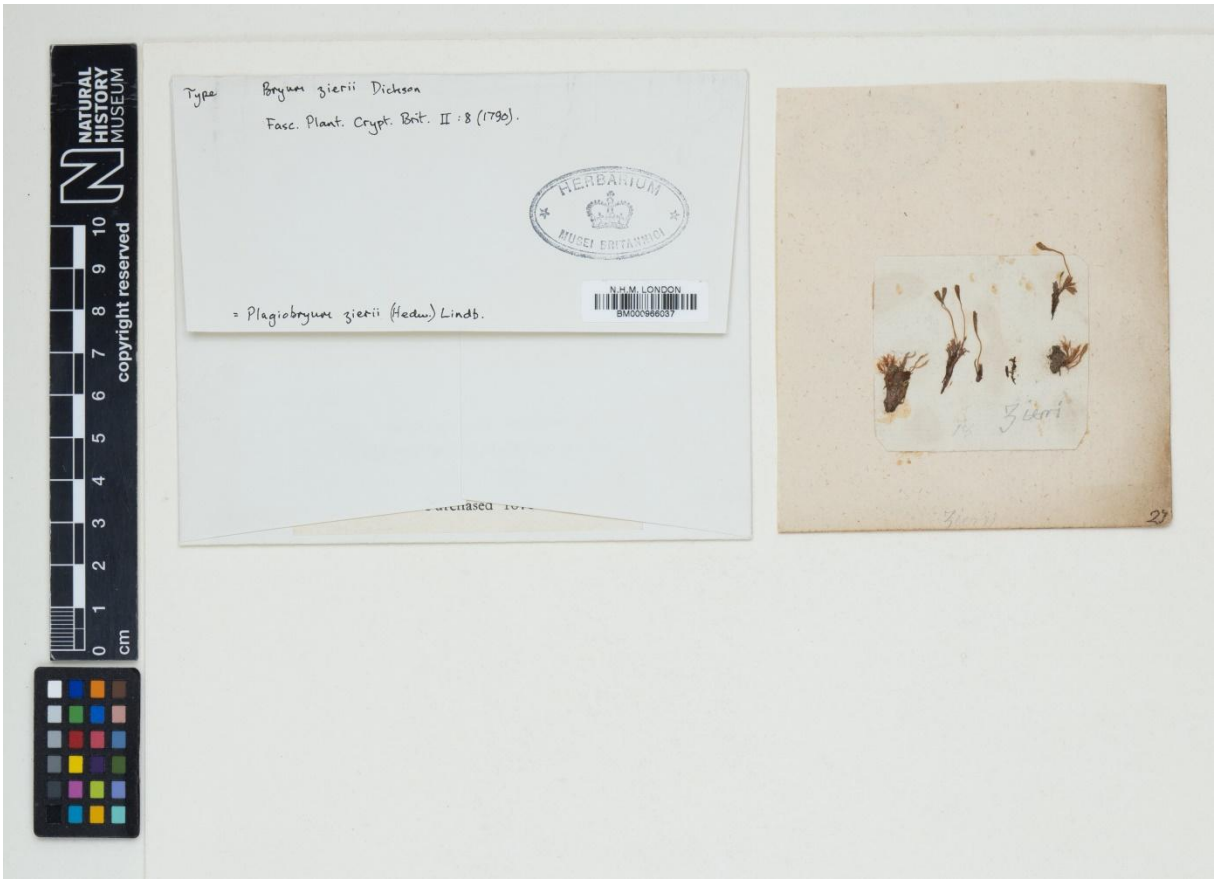


Fig. 14. The original specimens of *Bryum zieri* in the Dickson herbarium specimen housed in the Natural History Museum of London (BM)

The name *Zieria* did not disappear from bryology. In 1864, the Swedish botanist Carl Hartman (1824–1884) recognised the genus *Zieria* as a subgenus, *Bryum* subg. *Zieria* C.Hartm.[125] However, this name was not widely adopted, as the taxon was typically treated as a separate genus. Nevertheless, it cannot be ruled out that the name may be used in the future, especially when comprehensive phylogenetic studies of the traditionally recognised genus *Bryum* are conducted.

The bibliographic data of J. Zier's eponymous names, presented in chronological order, are as follows:

Zieria Sm., Trans. Linn. Soc. London 4: 216. 1798. – Type: *Zieria smithii* Andrews

Bryum zieri Dicks. *ex* Hedw., Sp. Musc. Frond.: 182, *pl. 44, f. 1–5*. 1801 [*B. zieri* Dicks., Fasc. Pl. Crypt. Brit. 2: 8, *t. 4*,*f. 10*. 1790, *nom. inval*.]. – Type citation: Ad aggeres humidos in alpibus Scotiae. Potential lectotype: BM-Dickson (not seen) (Fig. 12).

[123] Lindberg 1862 [1863].
[124] Andrews 1935, pp. 209–210.
[125] Hartman 1864.

Zieria Schimp., Coroll. Bryol. Eur.: 68. 1856, *hom. illeg.* ≡*Plagiobryum* Lindb., Öfvers. Kongl. Vetensk.-Akad. Förh. 19(10): 606. 1862[1863] ≡***Bryum*** Hedw. subg. ***Zieria*** C.Hartm., Handb. Skand. Fl. Ed. 9: 35. 1864. – Lectotype (*vide* Andrews 1935: p. 209): *Zieria julacea* Schimp. *nom. illeg*. [≡*Bryum zieri* Dicks. *ex* Hedw.]

6. Concluding remarks

Although Jan (John) Zier is now largely forgotten and remains an unknown figure in Poland, he has been recognised in world literature as a Pole or a person of Polish origin since the late 18th century. A passionate botanist, Zier was closely associated with some of the most prominent plant researchers of his time, initially in Germany and later in Great Britain, both of which were home to the elite of world botany. While he did not publish works under his own name, there is ample evidence of his substantial contribution to early bryological research. His anonymous input into the work of other researchers was well known among his peers and highly regarded during his lifetime. His contemporaries honoured him by immortalising his name in eponymous names of genera and species of vascular plants and mosses, which have endured and remain in use today.

It is possible that, in the future, the discovery of documents regarding his birth, education, and work in Germany, the United Kingdom and Lithuania may shed light on the missing elements of his biography. This potential is suggested by the recent archival find at the University of Vilnius, where records reveal his appointment as head of the Department of Natural History. Unfortunately, this position was never realised due to his untimely death in 1793. Had he lived, it is plausible that, with the university's support, Jan Zier would have authored publications on the flora of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, further cementing his legacy in botanical history.

7. Acknowledgments

The completion of this work would not have been possible without the kind assistance of many individuals, to whom the authors wish to express their heartfelt gratitude. We are particularly grateful to Professor David L. Hawksworth of Kew, Richmond, UK, for his invaluable advice and support during the early stages of our research. Our thanks also go to Priv.-Doz. Dr habil. Stefan Gerber, Dr Christian Helbich and Dr Brage Bei der Wieden for their research, respectively, at the Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena – Universitätsarchiv, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv – Abteilung Hannover and Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv – Abteilung Wolfenbüttel. We would also like to thank Ms. Janet Payne, archive officer at Apothecaries' Hall, London, as well as Professor Stuart Anderson and Professor Nicholas Wood for their insights on London apothecaries. Our appreciation extends to Ms. Christina McCulloch, assistant archivist, for her research in the Linnean Society's archives, to Mr. Oliver Jones, for his research in the City of Westminster Archives Centre, and to Dr Veronika Girininkaitė, librarian in the Manuscripts Department at Vilnius University Library, Lithuania, for conducting research in their archives. Special thanks are owed to Dr Joanna Wilbraham, Curator of Bryophytes at the Natural History Museum (BM), London, for providing the scan of the type specimen of *Bryum zieri* from the Dickson herbarium, as well as images of the folders containing Zier's collections of bryophytes and selected specimens from his herbarium. Grateful acknowledgment is also extended to Dr Neil Bell, Edinburgh, for his valuable assistance with rare literature, and to Marian Wysocki, Kraków, for his technical support with the iconography for this article. At last, but not least, we are deeply grateful to Mark Lawley, Ludlow, UK, for his linguistic assistance and valuable remarks on the manuscript.

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ANNEXE I

Excerpt from the minutes of the session of the Commission of National Education at Vilnius University discussing the employment of Jan Zier (original and translations)
Source: VUB – Vilnius University Library, Manuscripts Department: *Minutes Book of the Meetings of the Commission of National Education* (call number: F2 DC 9), meeting of 25 May 1790.

Original Latin text

1790. 25 Maij In consessu Academico [Academiae] deliberatum est de Professore qui Cathedram Historiae Naturalis et Botanicae in annum sequentem scholasticum docendo occupet cui muneri cum Doms [Dominus] Joannes Cyer Londini in Anglia degens et suffragio

Collegii Praefectorum et Ills Dni [Illustris Domini] Banks Praesidis Societatis regio Londinensis aliorumque Rector illic Virorum, et Illsmi [Illustrissimi] Legati Reipublicae Domini Bukaty ad Aulam Regione [Regiam] Londinensem degentis optissimus esse fuiset judicatus constitutum est ut nomine Universitatis scribatur ad dictum Ills [Illustrissimum] Legatum quod Dominus Joannem Cyer Universitatis acceptet et invitet et ad ipsum Dominum Cyer exponendo ipsi quid et quibus conditionibus in Universitate Docturus sit, quam habiturus pensionem, et quid obtenturus pro expensis viarum et mature Londino adveniat. [….]. Martinus Poczobut mp. [manu propria]

English translation

25 May 1790 At a session of the Academy it was discussed as to the Professor who would take up the Chair for the teaching of Natural History and Botany for the next school year, for which task Mr Jan Cyer, residing in London, England, by the vote of both the College of Prefects and the Eminent Mr Banks, President of the Royal Society of London, as well as other Rector(s), and the Eminent Envoy of the Republic Mr Bukaty, residing at the Royal Court of London, was found to be the best, it was resolved that a letter be written in the name of the University to the said Eminent Envoy with instructions that the University accepts the same Mr Cyer and invites him [to Vilnius], and that an identical letter be sent to Mr Cyer setting forth to him what and on what terms he would teach at the University, what salary he would have and what he would receive for travelling expenses, that he should soon arrive from London. [….]. Martin Poczobut written down by hand.

Polish translation

25 maja 1790 r. Na posiedzeniu Akademii dyskutowano nad wyborem profesora, który objąłby katedrę nauczania Historii Naturalnej i Botaniki na przyszły rok szkolny. Do tego zadania wybrano pana Jana Cyera, zamieszkałego w Londynie w Anglii, głosami Kolegium Prefektów i Znamienitego Pana Banksa, Prezesa Królewskiego Towarzystwa w Londynie, jak również innych Rektorów i Znamienitego Posła Rzeczpospolitej, pana Bukatego, zamieszkałego na Dworze Królewskim w Londynie. Uchwalono, że należy napisać list w imieniu Uniwersytetu do wspomnianego Znamienitego Posła z poleceniem, że Uniwersytet przyjmuje tegoż pana Cyera i zaprasza go [do Wilna], a także że identyczny list należy wysłać do pana Cyera, w którym wyjaśniono by mu, czego i na jakich warunkach będzie uczył na Uniwersytecie, jaką otrzyma pensję i co otrzyma na koszty podróży, że wkrótce przybędzie z Londynu. [….]. Marcin Poczobut napisane własnoręcznie.

ANNEXE II

Reading of Jan (John) Zier's will

Source: TNA – Prerogative Court of Canterbury and related Probate Jurisdictions: *Will Register, 1384–1858*. Name of Register: Dodwell, Quire numbers: 381-424. Will of John Ziers. Reference: PROB 11/1235/24.

John Ziers Will

1 Mr de Verdion is to be the Executor of this will and
is to take all my effects into his Custody as soon as
he is appraised of my Death **2** my Servant George [?]
Winfield is to have all my Clothes linen and working
apparel whatsoever besides Cigo[?] [two] pound in money and my
watch **3** Mr de Verdion to take ten pound for his trouble
4 Mr Schmeisser is to have my collection of minerals

and all such plants as belong to Materia Medica of
Books the Hortus Kewensis and Hudsoni Fl. Angl.[126] **5** The
Furniture which belongs to me is to remain with the
Landlord **6** the Books to be sold by Mr de Verdion as
well as they can many of them being new and
will fetch Booksellers price. **7** all other things are
likewise to be sold **8** my burial to be as little expense
as possible **9** the money which is remaining is to be
sent to my brather [sic!] [brother] in Law Mr Litchterfildt [?] in Zerbst
- - - - - - - - [next page] - - - - - - - -
10 such plants as belong to the Cryptogamia Class are to
be delivered to Dr Sims[127] M **11** Paternoster Row who may
give as much Money for them as he pleases to Mr de Ve-
rdion who will send it with the rest of the money to Mr.
Litchterfild [?] in Zerbst **11** Mr Caroly [?] is to have five Guineas
... [?] the last Quarters Rent up to next Easter 1793[128] and two
Guineas more for his Daughter for attanding me **12** my
Servant may Remain a week or two longer in my
apartments to assist Mr de Verdion and 12 Shillings per
week allowed to him. This is my last will John Zier
witness Joseph Gately, witness J. C. Gotefried Schnuifus [?]
This Will was proved at London the Fifth [originally ffifth[129]] [sic!] day[130]
of July in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred
and ninety three before the worshipful William Bathme
Doctor of Laws Surrogato of the Right Honorable Sir William
Wynne[131] [?] Knight [?] also Doctor of Laws Master Keeper or Commissary
of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury lawfully constituted
by the oath of John de Verdion the Sole Executor named
in the said will to whom administration was granted of
all and Singular the Goods Chattels and Credits of the
deceased having been first Swom duly to administer.

Examined with the original will
John Curtis
Noty. Pub.

[126] Hundson's *Flora anglica*.

[127] John Sims (13 October 1749 – 26 February 1831) was an English physician and botanist. He was born in Canterbury, Kent and was subsequently educated at the Quaker school in Burford, Oxfordshire, he then went on to study medicine at Edinburgh University. Later in life he moved to London (1766) where he worked as a physician. Notably, he was called in to assist with Princess Charlotte's labor, but mother and baby both died. He was the first editor of Curtis's Botanical Magazine. D'A. P. [D'Arcy Power] 1897.

[128] In 1793, Easter fell on March 31. Pears 2024.

[129] The digraph ff at the beginning of a word is an anomalous feature, in lower case, of a few proper names in English. In that setting it has no phonetic difference from F, and has been explained as a misunderstanding of palaeography. In other words, ff, which is "Latin small ligature *ff*", represented in certain traditional handwriting styles the upper case F. [Anonymous] 2025d.

[130] But the former will is recorded on 16 July; how is it possible?

[131] Sir William Wynne (1729–1815) was an English judge and academic, Dean of the Arches 1788 to 1809, and Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge from 1803. [Anonymous] 2025c.