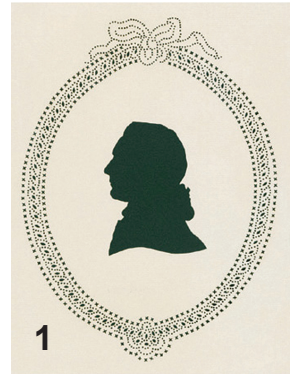


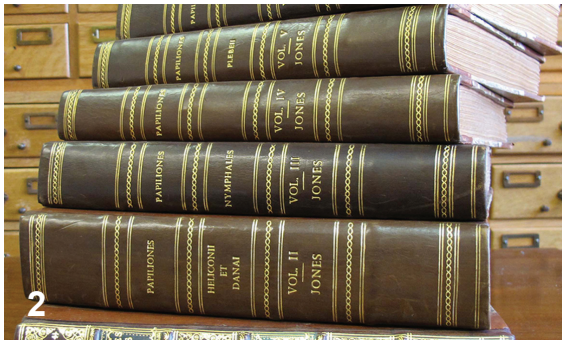
## Leps in books 4: The Jones' *Icones redivivus*

### Roger Kitching

William Jones (1745–1818) (Fig. 1) was a prosperous English wine merchant who, newly married in 1779, and at the ripe old age of 35 ‘retired’ to the Thames-side village of Chelsea to concentrate on his two major passions (presumably in addition to wife, Sarah) of butterflies and painting (Salmon 2000). Jones began illustrating the locally occurring butterflies, gradually expanding his attentions to specimens of adult butterflies arriving in collections in London from all parts of the World.



Although forming a significant collection of his own, Jones drew on the great collections of his entomological contemporaries including Drury, Banks, Smith, Francillon and many others. Jones' illustrations were accurate, mostly painted from the actual specimens using the finest (and most expensive) materials of the day. Between 1780 and 1810 he painted 856 species of butterflies and moths in a total of 1292 illustrations organized as seven volumes. Unlike the 1085 paintings from actual specimens which make up Volumes 1 to 6, the 207 images in Volume 7 (simply entitled by Jones as *Papiliones*) are copies of illustrations from other contemporary publications. The images remained unpublished upon Jones' death in 1818. The paintings passed to his cousin, John Drewitt, and remained in the Drewitt family until presented by John Drewitt's grandson to his *alma mater*, Oxford University in 1925–38. The archive became known as the *Jones' Icones* (*icones* being Latin for pictures – as I'm sure I didn't need to tell you) and has been held in the library of the Hope Department of Entomology in Oxford ever since (Fig. 2).



Jones' images were of far more than artistic significance. Bear in mind that the great Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778) had published his *Systema Naturae* in 1758 (Linnaeus 1758) applying the binomial system of nomenclature to animals for the first time. This is the genus/species usage that

revolutionized zoology and which we use to this day. In 1758 Jones was just 13 but as he grew into his passion for Lepidoptera, he became a dedicated and prominent Linnaean and was among those prominent personages who helped found the Linnaean Society of London in 1788. Jones became a good friend of Linnaeus' best-known pupil, Johan Christian Fabricius (1745–1808), who visited London several times while occupying a Professorship at the University of Kiel. Fabricius was particularly interested in viewing and describing new species from the renowned collections of British lepidopterists such as Dru Drury, Sir James Smith and Sir Joseph Banks. It seems likely that Jones met Fabricius during his first London visit in 1768 and, then and in later visits, Fabricius included scrutiny of the Jones' paintings as well as the actual specimens in the collections of others. A total of 231 butterflies from the Jones' archive were the direct inspiration and model for species' descriptions by Fabricius and the Jones' illustrations are, accordingly, designated as 'iconotypes' as the material 'anchors' for Fabricius' original descriptions. These then act in lieu of actual specimens designated as 'types' of various kinds (holotypes, allotypes, lectotypes, syntypes, neotypes, paratypes etc) as the cornerstone of modern taxonomy.

So why is all this relevant, in 2022, to Australian naturalists?

Well, first, the full set of Jones 'icones' has now been published for the very first time (Fig. 3) and, second, some of Jones' iconotypes underpin the very first designations of some of our familiar Australian butterflies.



The images were held in the Hope Department library in Oxford for about 90 years bound, most recently, as six volumes. During that time they were consulted and referred to by the cognoscenti who visited Oxford. From an Australian viewpoint the most significant of these visitors was the lepidopterist, G. A. Waterhouse, who examined the images twice in 1936. His article on the visit (Waterhouse 1938) attempted to resolve some apparent contradictions in Fabricius' referencing of particular volumes of the *Icones*. An appendix to that paper by Sir Edward Poulton suggested that

the paintings had been rebound as six volumes since Fabricius' time (Fabricius had referred to seven volumes) and this had been the source of the confusion which occupied Waterhouse.

The Jones' images were scanned and made available on the Hope Department's website in 2015 but it was only in November 2021 that they appeared in print for the first time – more of that shortly.

Fabricius described butterflies from Australia in two separate publications (Fabricius 1775:1793) (as well as naming a couple of species which occur in Australia but which were described from elsewhere, and in other works). Details of these names, their type material, original location and current status are given in the invaluable but often overlooked volume by Edwards, Newland and Regan (2001).



**Fig. 4.** The iconotype of the tailed emperor, *Polyura sempronius*

In 1775 Fabricius described 31 species which occur in Australia. Of these, four were from localities other than Australia. The remaining 27 were described from actual Australian material held in the Banks Collection (that is: on real specimens rather than paintings thereof). All but one of these names have survived as ‘good species’ (or, in two cases, subspecies’) names. One, *damoetes* Fabricius, proved to be a synonym of *Lampides boeticus* (the long-tailed pea blue), described earlier by Linnaeus in 1767.

The second major work by Fabricius which included descriptions of Australian butterflies was published in 1793. This included ten species names, eight of which are still in use. One, *harmonia* Fabricius, proved to be a synonym of *Cressida cressida* (Fabricius) (the big greasy) and another *zachaeus* Fabricius, of the earlier described species, *Mycalesis sirius* (Fabricius) (the cedar bushbrown). Of the ten it is reasonably certain that seven were described directly from Jones’ watercolours and this is a likely explanation for an eighth species. This is even though three of these eight were in the Banks’ Collection and probably acted originally as models for Jones’ artworks (and which, presumably, Fabricius had seen earlier). Others that Jones used as models may originally have been dispersed from collections made on the Cook voyage but by collectors other than Banks. For these eight, the images in the *Jones’ Icones* are appropriately designated as **iconotypes**. They are: *Euploea tulliolus* (the eastern brown crow), *E. sylvester* (the two-branded crow), *Polyura sempronius* (the tailed emperor) (Fig. 4), *Delias argenthona* (the northern jezebel), *Leptosia nina* (the Psyche), *Hypolycaena phorbas* (the common tit), *Leptotes plinius* (the zebra blue) and *Mycalesis zachaeus*. Of these, *Leptosia nina* was probably depicted by Jones from Indian material as was *Leptotes plinius*. *Mycalesis zachaeus*, as already discussed, turns out to be a synonym of *M. sirius*. This leaves four ‘good’ Australian species based on Jones’ material – *tulliolus*, *sylvester*, *sempronius* and *phorbas*. Note that this list differs slightly from that presented on pp. 672–675 of the newly published *Iconotypes* volume and is based on the close reasoning presented in the Edwards, Newland and Regan (2001) volume alluded to earlier.

Finally, then, let me tell you about the fine new volume which has stimulated this article. In November 2021 the publishers Thames and Hudson published the volume fully entitled: *Iconotypes. A Compendium of Butterflies and Moths or Jones’ Icones Complete. An enhanced Facsimile*. This is a true doorstop (but heaven forfend you would ever use it as such) comprising 688 pages weighing in at 2.2 kg (according to my bathroom scales). It reproduces, in high quality, all of Jones’ watercolours mostly at one per page (with a few at four sheets per page). Reproduction quality is very high and all of Jones’ annotations are legible (although mostly in Latin). The work

has a foreword by the director of the Oxford University Museum, Professor Paul Smith and is introduced and concluded with thoughtful and fascinating articles by Richard Vane-Wright, distinguished lepidopterist from the Natural History Museum in London. The seven original volumes of Jones' images are interspersed by five articles by other lepidopterists four of whom, variously, discuss the history of butterfly studies and the art of painting them. The final article is a rather out-of-place piece on the current perceived decline in butterflies globally (which contains several odd contradictions in its discussions of both UK and Australian butterflies which I shall not dwell on). This in no way detracts from the superb production values of the volume overall. Should you buy one (and I highly recommend it) then beware of its spine strength – I intend to get a slipcase made for my precious volume. At £65 the book is expensive but does, in my view, represent real value for money – and I doubt the print run was very large. This is undoubtedly destined to become a collectors' item.

### **Acknowledgement**

I am grateful to Caitlin Kirkman of Thames and Hudson publishers, London, for permission to reproduce images from *Iconotypes*.

### **References**

- Edwards, E. D., Newland, J. & Regan, L. 2001. Lepidoptera: Hesperioidea, Papilionoidea. In Wells, A. & Houston, W. W. K. (eds) *Zoological Catalogue of Australia*. Vol. 31.6, CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne.
- Fabricius, J. C. 1775. *Systema Entomologiae: Sistens Insectorum Classes, Ordines, Genera, Species, Adiectis Synonymis, Locis, Descriptionibus, Observationibus*. Korte, Flensberg and Leipzig; 832 pp.
- Fabricius, J. C. 1793. *Entomologica Systematica Emendata et Aucta Secundum Classes, Ordines, Genera, Species Adiectis Synonymis, Locis, Descriptionibus, Observationibus*. Vol. 3. Part 1. Proft, Copenhagen (Hafniae).
- Jones, W. 2021. *Iconotypes. A Compendium of Butterflies & Moths. Jones Icones Complete*. Thames & Hudson, London.
- Linnaeus, C. 1758. *Systema Natura per Regna Tria Naturae, Secundum Classes, Ordines, Genera, Species, cum Characteribus, Differentiis, Synonymis, Locis*. 1. *Regnum Animalium*. 10th Edition, Laurentii Salrii, Stockholm, (Homiae).
- Salmon, M. A. 2000. *The Aurelian Legacy. British Butterflies and their Collectors*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Waterhouse, G. A. 1938. Notes on Jones' Icones (Lepidoptera), with footnotes and Appendix by Sir Edward B. Poulton. *Proceedings of the Royal Entomological Society of London (A)* **13**: 9–17.