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The Royal Society

Frontmatter

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### **The Instructions to be Prepared for the Scientific Expedition to the Antarctic Regions**

The 1839–43 Antarctic expedition was primarily a scientific voyage. James Clark Ross, a member of the expedition that had located the Magnetic North Pole in 1831, was the natural choice to lead this mission to find the Magnetic South Pole. Although he was unsuccessful in this aim, he charted the coastline of most of the continent, collected valuable scientific data and made several important discoveries. Published in 1840, these papers were prepared by the Royal Society for the expedition and give detailed instructions on how to make the important magnetic and meteorological observations. There are further instructions, such as how to preserve animal specimens, and surprisingly a request to investigate the reasons for the poor cultivation of vines at the Cape of Good Hope as 'the bad quality of Cape wine ... is well known'. These papers reveal the expectations and demands placed upon this expedition.

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# The Instructions to be Prepared for the Scientific Expedition to the Antarctic Regions

THE ROYAL SOCIETY



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**R E P O R T**

**OF**

**THE PRESIDENT AND COUNCIL**

**OF**

**THE ROYAL SOCIETY**

**ON THE INSTRUCTIONS TO BE PREPARED**

**FOR**

**THE SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION**

**TO**

**THE ANTARCTIC REGIONS.**

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## R E P O R T,

&amp;c.

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THE PRESIDENT AND COUNCIL OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY having recommended to Her Majesty's Government the equipment of an Antarctic Expedition for scientific objects, were informed by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that it had been determined to send out Captain James Clark Ross on such an expedition, and the Council were at the same time requested to communicate to them, for their information, any suggestions on those subjects, or on other points to which they might wish Captain Ross's attention to be called, in preparing the instructions to that officer\*. The Council, having due regard to the magnitude and importance of the question submitted to them, considered that they would best fulfil the wishes of Her Majesty's Government, by a subdivision of the inquiry into different parts, and by referring the separate consideration of each part to distinct Committees, consisting of those members of the Society who were especially conversant with the particular branches of science to which each division of the inquiry had relation. These several Committees, namely, those of Physics, of Meteorology, of Geology and Mineralogy, of Botany and Vegetable Physiology, and of Zoology and Animal Physiology, after bestowing much time and great attention in the investigation of the subjects brought under their notice, have each drawn up very full and

\* This request was conveyed in a letter from Sir John Barrow, addressed to the Secretary of the Royal Society, and dated June 13, 1839.

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complete Reports of the results of their labours. These reports have been considered and adopted by the Council, and have been incorporated in the following General Report, which the Council present as their opinion on the matters which have been referred to them by Her Majesty's Government. They take this opportunity of declaring their satisfaction at the prospect of the benefits which are likely to accrue to science from the expedition thus liberally undertaken by the Government on the representations made to them by the Royal Society and other scientific bodies in this country, and in conformity with a wise and enlightened policy. They also desire to express their grateful sense of the prompt attention which has been uniformly paid to their suggestions, and of the ample provision which has been made for the accomplishment of the various objects of the expedition.

Royal Society, 8th August, 1839.