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THE UN-DISCOVERED ISLANDS

An Archipelago of

Myths and Mysteries, Phantoms
and Fakes

MALACHY TALLACK

'One of the best new travel books' *Guardian*

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THE UN-DISCOVERED ISLANDS

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MALACHY TALLACK



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Some of these islands never appeared on maps, while others moved location, sometimes more than once. Their positions here should be considered only approximate.

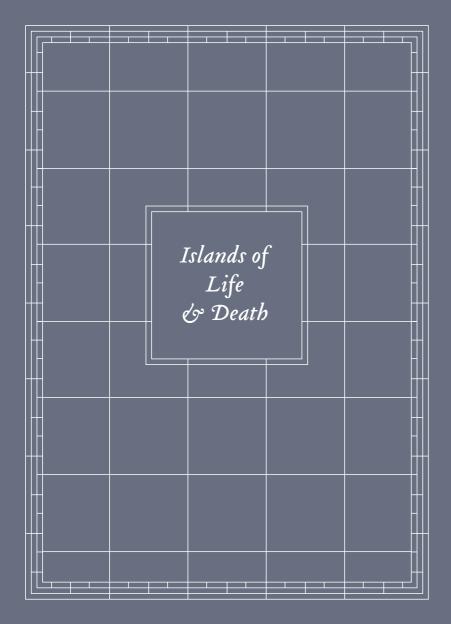
THE ANDERSON HIGH SCHOOL in Lerwick, displayed on the brightly coloured crest that was fixed to the gates outside. 'Dö weel and persevere', it counselled. At some point we pupils must have been told the origin of these words, for they were intimately tied to the place itself. 'Dö weel and persevere' was the formative advice given in 1808 to the young man Arthur Anderson, later to be the industrialist Arthur Anderson, co-founder of the P&O shipping company, member of parliament for Orkney and Shetland, and benefactor of the school that still bears his name.

It was not a particularly stirring piece of advice. To me it sounded half-hearted, like the words of an inattentive father patting his son absent-mindedly on the head. But the story of Anderson's rise from poverty to philanthropy was supposed to inspire young Shetlanders. It was part of the history of our school and the history of our islands. The implication was that, if heeded, these words could help shape our futures too. Hard work and perseverance: those were the lessons that would lead us forward.

Accompanying that motto on the crest were three Viking images—an axe, a longship and a flaming brand—alongside another, more ambiguous inscription. On a yellow scroll across the centre of the emblem were three words in Latin that pointed to a rather different part of our history. 'Dispetta est Thule': Thule was seen.

Though I passed through those gates countless times in my years at school, no teacher ever explained the Latin words they bore, and I never bothered to ask. From somewhere, I had gathered a vague notion that Thule was supposed to be the edge of the world, and that somehow

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aced with the sky we imagine gods; faced with the ocean we imagine islands. Absence is terrify-

ing, and so we fill the gaps in our knowledge with invented things. These bring us comfort, but they conflict, too, with our desire for certainty and understanding. And sometimes that desire gives us back the absences we sought to fill.

For as long as people have been making stories, they have been inventing islands. In literature and in legend, they are there from the very start. For societies living at the sea's edge, the dream of other shores is the most natural





THE ISLES OF THE BLESSED

he notion of a paradise on Earth has long been part of European mythical traditions, and in Homer's Odyssey we find one of the oldest extant versions of the

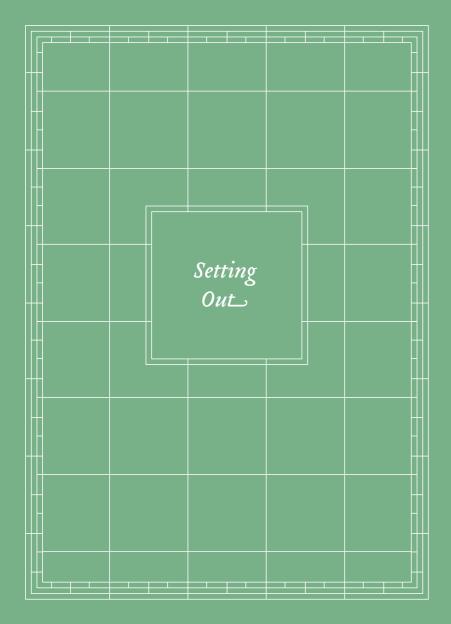
we find one of the oldest extant versions of the story. There, Elysium, or the Elysian Plain, is the land to which those favoured by the gods are brought. According to Proteus, the Old man of the Sea, people there 'lead an easier life than anywhere else in the world, for in Elysium there falls not rain, nor hail, nor snow, but Oceanus breathes ever with a west wind that sings softly from the sea, and

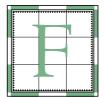
Previous Spread: St Brendan holding mass on the back of a whale, from Caspar Plautius, Nova Typis Transacta Navigatio, 1621. John Carter Brown Library.

gives fresh life to all men'. This, then, was not a place beyond death, but an alternative to it.

The ancient Greeks did not have one single version of this story, however. It was an evolving and multifarious idea. By the time of Plato, in the fourth century BC, Elysium was most commonly imagined as an island or archipelago in the western ocean. It was known as the White Isle, or the Isles of the Blessed, and some considered it a place to which all could aspire.

In Plato's dialogue Gorgias, Socrates outlines his own belief, in terms that clearly anticipate the Christian religion yet to be born. After death, he says, body and soul become separated, but each retains the character it had when alive. The fat remain fat; the scarred remain scarred. At least for a time. Equally, 'when a man is stripped of the body, all the natural or acquired affections of the soul are laid open to view'. Unlike the body, however, the soul must face judgement after death, a task undertaken by three sons of Zeus. Aeacus judged those from the west and Rhadamanthus those from





or travellers in the last centuries BC and the first millennium AD, the boundaries of geographical knowledge

were narrow. People understood that the world was big and that their part of it was small, but they knew little of what lay beyond. The map was hardly more than a sketch, its edges crowded with speculation. Those who did make journeys towards those edges would encounter things they had never seen or even heard about before. The ocean was a terrifying, wonderful place, where legends and facts would mingle, and where anything imaginable might be possible.

During these

centuries, extraordinary journeys were taking place all over the world. In the Pacific, the Polynesians were navigating across thousands of miles, using skills their descendants still employ today. In the North Atlantic, the Norsemen were island-hopping, from Shetland to Faroe to Iceland to Greenland, and even to North America. They too developed a rare competence at sea, which took them to places no European had ever been before.

Everywhere, human beings were crossing the oceans in search of new land. Some of these journeys were recorded in writing, some in oral traditions, and others on maps. But myth and geography are difficult to prise apart after so long. Facts

are hard to separate from fiction. Legendary islands appeared on charts of the Atlantic as late as the nineteenth century without any proof of their existence, yet stories of Viking expeditions to 'Vinland' more than one thousand years ago were widely considered to be false until archaeological evidence of Norse settlement was uncovered in L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland, in 1960.

Some of the islands in this chapter may likewise be real places, but it is impossible now to know. Their stories are so distant, and so infused with the imaginary, that they exist today only in name. With nowhere left to go, they are true ex-isles.



THULE

ritain is a long way from the Mediterranean, and for the ancient Greeks it was a dark and potentially dangerous land, at the edge of the human world. But in the fourth century BC, an explorer from the Greek colony of Massalia – today's Marseille – claimed not just to have reached Britain but to have gone beyond, to the previously unknown island of Thule.

That explorer was Pytheas, and his book recounting the journey, On the Ocean, though since lost, was widely read and remarked upon by other classical writers. From what has been pieced together, it seems Pytheas set out on his travels

Previous Spread: Map of Thule. The British Library.

around 330 BC. He first reached the tin-producing regions of south-west Britain and then went onwards, taking measurements of the sun's height along the way. When he reached the edge of the mainland he did not turn back. Instead, the Greek claimed to have continued, travelling six days north to the 'farthest of all lands', Thule. This was truly an astonishing journey.

Among early commentators, however, Pytheas' voyage was not looked upon with unqualified admiration. Some expressed considerable scepticism about the authenticity of his reports, and in particular serious doubts were raised about the existence of Thule. In his *Geography* of 30 AD, Strabo, another Greek historian, was voracious in his attacks. Repeatedly he questioned Pytheas' claims, and described his fellow Greek as an 'arch-falsifier'. Earlier still, in the second century BC, Polybius wrote that Pytheas 'misled many readers' with his stories, and that 'Even





ST BRENDAN'S ISLAND

he early Christian monks of Ireland sought out remote places in which to contemplate the glory of God, where prayers would be undisturbed and where faith could be strengthened through solitude and silence. They wanted isolation, and they found it on the islands of western and northern Scotland, where they began to settle in the middle of the first

The monastery at Iona was founded in the

millennium AD.

Previous Spread: Part of Carte de la Barbarie de la Nigritie et de La Guinee, 1707, by Guillaume Delisle. Library of Congress. Detail on right, from west of the Canaries, showing St Brendan's Island (as Isle de St Borondon).

year 563 by St Columba, but other monks went further afield, to Orkney and Shetland and beyond, becoming the first people to settle in Faroe and in Iceland, many years before the arrival of the Vikings.

Not all of these wanderers travelled north, though. Some, in fact, took no particular direction at all, but instead launched themselves into the ocean and let God (or the wind and currents) do the navigating. The lucky ones hit land eventually. Many others must have perished.

The best known of the travelling monks was St Brendan, who lived from 484 to 577, and was responsible for founding, among other institutions, the monastery at Clonfert in the west of Ireland. But it was not his work within the church for which he is principally remembered, it was his adventures overseas.

There are several versions of the Brendan story, each of them differing slightly from the others. Those that have survived were largely written between the tenth and twelfth centuries, but were based on earlier texts. This was a tale that was widely known across northern Europe in the High Middle Ages.

Depending on which version you read, the saint set off from Ireland in the year 512 with sixty followers, or perhaps sixteen, or fourteen. He was prompted to go by news of a glorious island-the Land of Promise of the Saints-described to him by a returning priest (or else an angel). On the journey that ensued, the monks met other holy men, as well as demons, and even the tormented soul of Judas Iscariot. They were chased by a sea serpent and a griffin; they encountered a dragon and landed on the back of a whale, mistaking it for an island. Elsewhere, they alighted on several new lands, including one known as the Paradise of Birds, and another that was home to sheep larger than oxen. The monks saw islands of smoke and

fire, which surely must have been volcanoes, as well as a huge column 'the colour of silver' and 'hard as marble', consisting 'of the clearest crystal'. It could only have been an iceberg.

After seven long years, the travellers finally reached the place they had been seeking. It was, like the rest of their journey, extraordinary.

When they had disembarked, they saw a land, extensive and thickly set with trees, laden with fruits, as in the autumn season. All the time they were traversing that land, during their stay in it, no night was there, but a light always shone, like the light of the sun in the meridian, and for the forty days they viewed the land in various directions, they could not find the limits thereof.

This, clearly, was an Isle of the Blessed wrapped up in Christian language. It was a paradise on earth, to which good people would ultimately find their way. According to a young man 'of

















HY BRASIL

he story of Hy Brasil demonstrates a problem common to many of the places in this book: namely, it is hard to establish

facts about phantoms. Much has been written about the island over the centuries, and much of what has been written is certainly wrong. The traditional story, repeated in countless books and articles, begins with cartography and then moves backward into folklore. It goes something like this.

From the early fourteenth century, maps produced in Genoa and then elsewhere in Europe showed an island west of Ireland, circular in shape,

Previous spread: Theatrym orbis terrarym by Abraham Ortelius, 1572. Library of Congress. Brasil appears west of Ireland. labelled 'Insula de Brazil', or some variant of that name. Many of these maps also showed one or two other islands elsewhere in the Atlantic with the same name, but this was merely an etymological coincidence. While these other islands – and later the South American country – were named after a kind of wood used to create red dye, the more northerly Brazil had an entirely different origin. It was derived either from the Old Irish word *bres*, meaning 'beauty' or 'strength', or else from some historical figure by the name of Breasal.

As these derivations suggest, the island was rooted in Celtic mythology. It was one of those mystical lands, like Tír na nÓg or St Brendan's Isle, that echoed back to earlier beliefs in a paradise on earth. Brazil – or Hy Brasil, as it was later known – was a place rarely seen. It was hidden by thick fog, and only appeared to a chosen few, once every seven years. Or so the story went.

But the line between myth and map took



FRISLAND

he British empire boasted several non-existent islands at one time or another. Indeed, some of its very first acquisitions turned out not to be real. Frisland was one, and a peculiar one at that. But no less peculiar was the man who first claimed it for the crown.

Dr John Dee was a mathematician and occultist, a spy and alchemist. He was also a strangely influential figure in the court of Queen Elizabeth I. On the back of a map he presented to the monarch in 1580, Dee argued that it was not the Spanish crown that had first claim to the New World, but Elizabeth herself. North America had been discovered three

Previous spread: Carta da navegar de Nicolo et Antonio Zeni furono in Tramontana lano, 1558. Princeton University Library.

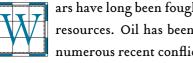
centuries before Columbus, he said, by the Welsh prince Madog ab Owain Gwynedd, and was therefore British territory. But not only that. In fact, the whole of the North Atlantic region had been conquered around 530 AD by none other than King Arthur. Iceland, Greenland and even the North Pole: Elizabeth was queen of them all. And what's more, Dee concluded, King Arthur 'did extend his jurisdiction and sent Colonies thither' to 'Friseland' and probably even 'the famous Iland Estotiland'.

The good doctor was not being wholly truthful. He was relying on some rather suspect sources, and adding some myths of his own. But what he didn't realise—what he had no way of knowing—was these latter two colonies did not actually exist. After all, they were not his inventions. They were there on the map. And they were there, too, on the maps of esteemed cartographers elsewhere in Europe. Neither Dee nor Elizabeth had any reason to think they might not be real.

* * * [94] * * *



SARAH ANN ISLAND



ars have long been fought over precious resources. Oil has been at the heart of numerous recent conflicts, and water is

almost certain to fuel future ones. In the twentieth century, diamonds helped to stoke civil wars in Africa, and disputes over fishing grounds in the North Atlantic led to the three - fortunately bloodless - 'cod wars' between Britain and Iceland, from the 1950s to the 1970s.

But a hundred years earlier it was a different resource altogether that brought conflict to

Previous Spread: A Map of Oceania from Keith Johnston's General Atlas, 1861. David Rumsey Historical Map Collection. The detail shows Sarah Ann Island (as Sarah Anne).

the western coast of South America: bird droppings. High in nitrogen and phosphates, guano, as it is known, can be used to produce agricultural fertilisers, and in the mid-nineteenth century a lucrative trade was developing, with Peru as the main exporter. On arid islands, where birds had previously been undisturbed by people, the guano could be found in extraordinary depths, up to 150 feet. Before long, hundreds of thousands of tons were being removed each year.

From early on, the United States was keen to cut in on the guano trade, but its first attempt was clumsy and entirely unsuccessful. The country got itself involved in an angry confrontation in 1852, when it brazenly claimed rights to the Lobos islands off the Peruvian coast. The claim was baseless, and the us was soon forced to apologise and withdraw. (Twelve years later, Spain succeeded in occupying the Chincha Islands, sparking a war with Peru, before it too had to withdraw. By that







time, guano accounted for about sixty per cent of Peru's total income, and the Chincha Islands were the most productive region of all. The country had no choice but to defend them.)

Having failed to make inroads in South America, the United States then decided to try its luck elsewhere. In 1856, Congress passed a law known as the Guano Act, which essentially gave permission for a land grab.

Whenever any citizen of the United States discovers a deposit of guano on any island, rock, key, not within the lawful jurisdiction of any other government, and not occupied by the citizens of any other government, and takes peaceable possession thereof, and occupies the same, such island, rock, or key may, at the discretion of the President, be considered as appertaining to the United States.

More than a hundred islands were ultimately claimed under this law-most of them in the

equatorial Pacific Ocean – and among the earliest of these was Sarah Ann Island (sometimes called Sarah Anne), registered in 1858 by the United States Guano Company. It was supposed to lie about 4 degrees north and 154 degrees west.

Like the scores of other islets and atolls in the Pacific that never really existed, Sarah Ann should have faded quietly from the map. But instead, a coincidence of geography briefly made it famous. In the early 1930s, the United States Naval Observatory was looking for a convenient place from which to watch the total solar eclipse that was due in the summer of 1937. Searching their charts for the ideal location, right in the path of the eclipse, they hit upon Sarah Ann. But when the astronomers went looking for it, Sarah Ann was nowhere to be found.

Somehow, the idea that the island had sunk became widespread. Newspapers and magazines at the time repeated this claim, sometimes



concocting apocalyptic stories to explain the event. In December 1933, the *Milwaukee Journal* published a lengthy article about the disappearance, claiming the entire Pacific region was in a state of unprecedented upheaval.

Coincident with the submerging of Sarah Ann island have come reports of immense activity all over the Pacific bottom, some islands slowly submerging and, in other instances, submerged peaks slowly rising to the surface to become islands. Submarine explosions and eruptions, tidal waves of various dimensions and velocities and earthquakes in southern California, Central and South America and New Zealand, have attended this activity in the Pacific basin, while old volcanoes, long quiescent, have again commenced eruption.

And so the story of the island's sinking stuck. Even today, at the time of writing, Sarah Ann is described on Wikipedia as 'submerged' rather than as a phantom. Yet quite why this explanation came to be accepted is difficult to understand. After all, as early as 1859—just one year after it was registered with the us government—articles appeared in several publications declaring the island to be 'of doubtful existence', and a search in the 1870s turned up nothing. It seems certain that no one ever extracted guano from it.

So the question of what actually happened to Sarah Ann remains open. And looking back to the first known mention of the island, the story seems even murkier. That mention came in December 1854, when the Alice Frazier, a whaling vessel, was travelling south from Honolulu. The skipper on the voyage was Daniel Taber, whose wife and two daughters were also on board, and the eldest of his daughters, ten-year-old Asenath, was keeping a journal. The crucial entry was made on 10 December, and it amounts to only a few words: 'We passed quite near the Sarah-Ann & Christmas Islands'.





Brief as it is, there are several things worth noticing about this entry. First, Asenath does not make it clear if these islands were actually seen, or if the ship merely 'passed quite near' where they expected them to be. Second, at least one of the details must be incorrect. Christmas Island - now known as Kiritimati-is a real place, lying about 2 degrees N. and 157 degrees W. But Asenath also claims the ship had 'crossed the line' (i.e. the equator) two days earlier. So by this time they must have been several degrees south of that position. A log kept by crewman Benjamin F. Pierce confirms this. He puts the ship at 3 degrees s. and 155 degrees w. on 10 December, but makes no mention of Sarah Ann or Christmas Island.

These contradictions do not provide a certain answer, but they do hint at a possible solution. What they suggest is a case of double identities, with one standout contender. For there is another island in this region – Malden – which lies at the

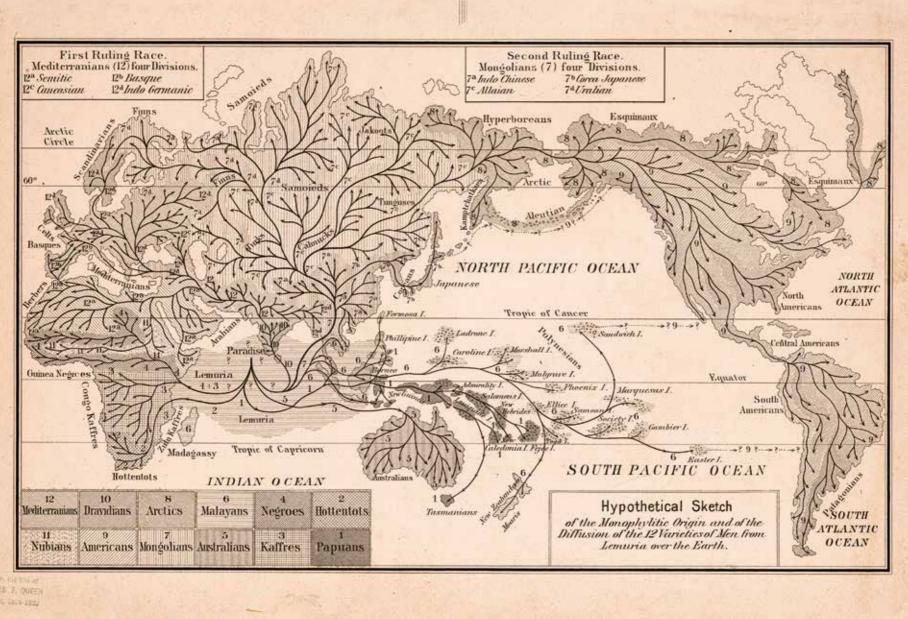
same longitude as Sarah Ann, but at 4 degrees south rather than north of the equator. Perhaps, like many such islands in the nineteenth century, Malden was known by more than one name. And perhaps, banking on the possibility that they were in fact two islands rather than one, the United States Guano Company claimed both of them. The change of latitude may have been merely an error, compounded by Sarah Ann's failure to surface.











LEMURIA

or

KUMARI KANDAM

n the mid-nineteenth century, the British zoologist Philip Sclater was faced with a puzzle. A well-respected scientist, who would go on to become secretary of the Zoological Society of London, as well as founding editor of *Ibis*, the journal of the British Ornithologists' Union, Sclater specialised in zoogeography.

He studied the distribution of animals and birds around the world, and was the first to divide the planet into the biological regions which today are called ecozones.

Previous spread: Hypothetical sketch of the monophylitic origin and of the diffusion of the 12 varieties of men from Lemuria over the earth, from The History of Creation, Ernst Haeckel, 1876.

Though he wrote most extensively on the birds of South and Central America, Sclater's interests were wide-ranging and included the wildlife of Madagascar, which he described as 'one of the most anomalous faunas existing on the world's surface'. The anomaly that particularly interested him was the lemur, a primate endemic to the island but with relatives both on the African continent and in India.

The connection with Africa was easily explained—the island is only 250 miles offshore—but India was a more troubling question, for a whole ocean divides it from Madagascar. This was the puzzle facing Philip Sclater, when, in 1864, he wrote a short essay for *The Quarterly Journal of Science*, in which he suggested one possible explanation:

that anterior to the existence of Africa in its present shape, a large continent occupied parts of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans stretching out towards (what is now) America to the



ONASEUSE

O

n page five of the *Literary Gazette*, published in London on 12 February 1825, a brief notice gave details of a discovery in

the South Pacific.

Tucked between a paragraph on the use of Chinese costumes in French theatre and the announcement of an invention that allowed people to breathe while in dense smoke, were the following words:

New Island – Captain Hunter, of the merchantvessel Donna Carmelita, is stated, in the New South Wales' Journals, to have discovered a new island in the Southern Ocean, in July last. The latitude is 15 degrees 31'S. and longitude 176 degrees 11'E. The notice went on to explain that the crew of the *Donna Carmelita* 'had friendly intercourse with the King and natives', who, it stated, 'do not seem to differ from the South Sea Islanders, already known to navigators'.

As it happened, the *Literary Gazette* was out of date. The discovery of Onaseuse, as it was called, had in fact been made two years previously, on 20 July 1823. The journal's brief outline of the story also failed even to hint at the extraordinary level of detail about the island and its inhabitants with which Captain Hunter had furnished the world's media.

Phantom islands are rarely explored, for obvious reasons. But this one was. And the information recorded by captain and crew demonstrated beyond any doubt that Onaseuse was not a case of mistaken identity. There were no other known islands in this region (around 250km northwest of Fiji), and certainly none that matched the descriptions given by those onboard the *Donna Carmelita*.



CROCKER LAND

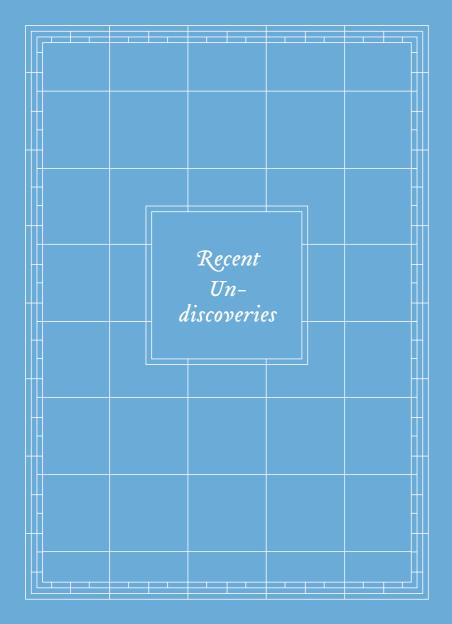
obert Peary did not always tell the truth. That much is certain. For most of the twentieth century he was believed to be the first man to reach the North Pole, in April 1909, with his companion Matthew Henson and four Inuit assistants.

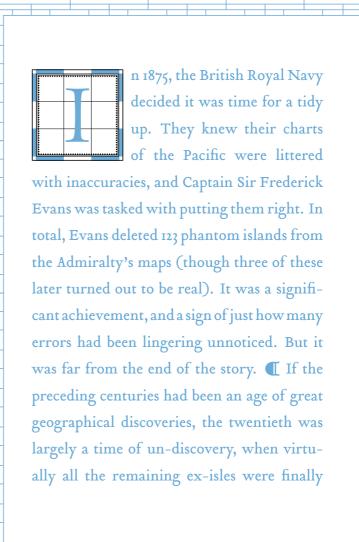
After a very public and very nasty campaign, his rival Dr Frederick Cook's claim to have got there one year earlier was dismissed, and Peary took the title. But doubts over his account continued to niggle, and in the 1980s the British explorer Wally Herbert was asked to settle the matter. He

was given access to diaries and records from the expedition, and spent three years examining the evidence. Herbert concluded that, though he may have been close, Peary never made it to the Pole.

Whether or not the American knew he had failed is impossible to say, but if he did lie it would not have been the first time. He had form. On a previous journey in the north, Peary claimed to have sighted land beyond Axel Heiberg Island, at around 83 degrees north, which he called Crocker Land. It was a canny choice of name. George Crocker was one of Peary's financial backers, from whom he wished to squeeze some cash to fund his next expedition. Flattery, he thought, would do the trick.

Crocker, though, did not pay up, and had it not been for Peary's frantic race to the Pole with Frederick Cook, that might have been the end of the matter. Crocker Land would have been forgotten. But Peary had influential friends, and

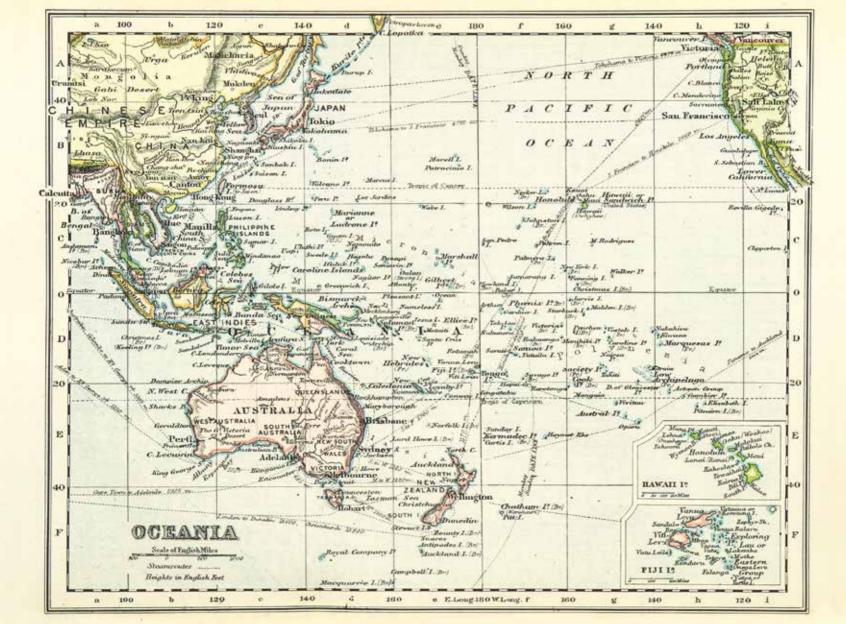




expunged. Many of these, understandably, were in the Arctic and Antarctic. These were most difficult regions in which to travel, and the last to be properly explored. They were also the places where optical illusions such as fata morgana were most liable to confuse weary sailors, and where enormous icebergs were sometimes hard to distinguish from tiny islands.

Tor a long time there was good reason to leave uncertain islands, shoals and reefs on the map, even after doubts had been raised. Such things could be a real danger to shipping, and it was better to be cautious than to be sorry. But when navigational technology finally made it possible to determine a location precisely, this began to change. And

in the latter half of the twentieth century, when satellites revolutionised our view of the world, one could finally check an island's location without the inconvenience of actually having to visit. Today the era of new island discoveries is over, and the age of un-discovery is likewise coming to an end. But that convenience is accompanied by loss. For millennia our oceans have been populated by imagined islands, reflecting back at us something about our understanding of the world. But now these places are endangered and headed for extinction. We are paying for our cartographic completeness with a feeling that something, somewhere, is missing.





LOS JARDINES

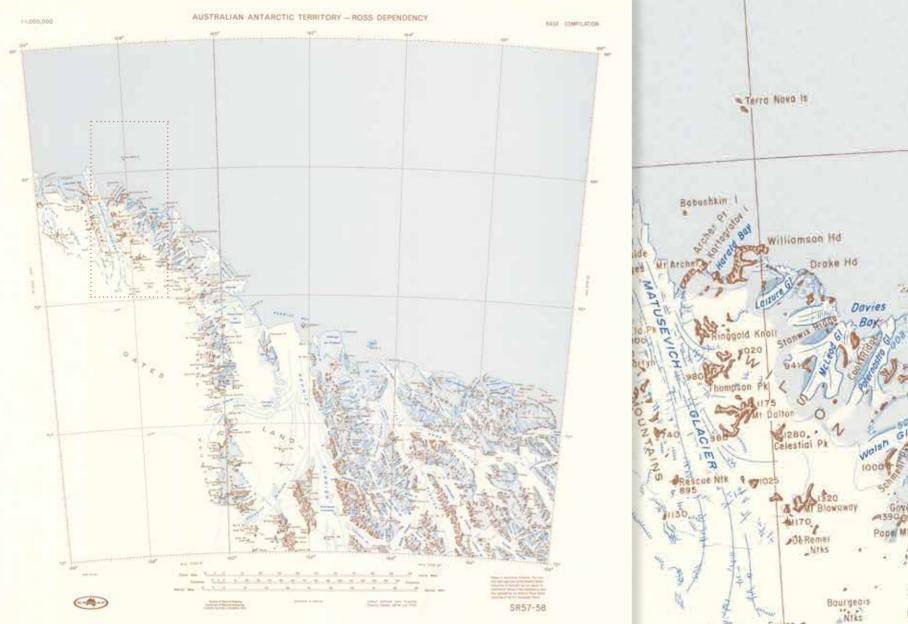
os Jardines should not have survived for as long as they did. As phantom islands go, they are among the most inexplicably stubborn. In the four hundred years or more in which they remained on the map, the islands changed size, shifted their location by twelve degrees of latitude, and shrank from ten to just two. They could never have been all that they were supposed to be, and in the end they were nothing at all.

But perhaps it was that very ability to transform themselves that saved the islands for so long. When

Previous Spread: From British Possessions and Colonies by William Balfour Irvine, 1899. British Library. Los Jardines are shown at around 20° north and 150° east.

they couldn't be found in one place, they moved to another; and when they still could not be seen, they became smaller. For century after century, mariners and cartographers gave them the benefit of the doubt. So while other Pacific phantoms were erased one by one, Los Jardines stood firm, the tiny letters E.D.—existence doubtful—sometimes appended to their name like a badge of honour. It was not until the Second World War that they began to disappear from charts, and not until 1973 that the International Hydrographic Bureau finally let go of them altogether. They had had a long and restless life.

The islands were first mentioned by Álvaro de Saavedra, the cousin of Hernán Cortés, destroyer of the Aztec Empire. Saavedra was employed by Cortés to undertake an expedition from New Spain to the Indonesian Maluku Islands in 1527. Despite losing two of the three vessels that set out on that voyage, Saavedra succeeded, and in doing so became the first European sailor to cross the Pacific Ocean from east to west.



TERRA NOVA

n the history of polar exploration, it is often those who have failed most spectacularly who have been lionised. Sir

John Franklin is among the most famous of British explorers, though he didn't find the Northwest Passage, and he and 128 of his men died (and probably ate each other).

Captain Scott and Ernest Shackleton are national heroes, though neither man achieved exactly what they set out to do, and both also died trying. Perhaps this is why the name of Phillip Law is not better known. For his is not a story of heroic

Previous spread: Australian Antarctic Territory – Ross Dependency, sR57-58, 1975. Geoscience Australia, National Library of Australia.

failure, it is one of almost unmitigated success.

Throughout the twentieth century, Australia was at the forefront of efforts to explore and map Antarctica, and the legacy of that work is clear. Today, the country claims around 42 per cent of the entire continent - a territory that, at more than two million square miles, is only twenty per cent smaller than Australia itself. Phillip Law is in no small part responsible for that legacy. Appointed as director of the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions (ANARE) in 1949, Law established the first two of the country's permanent research stations - Mawson and Davis - and negotiated the transfer of the third, Wilkes, from the United States, thereby ensuring an Australian presence on the continent that continues to this day.

He led 23 expeditions in his career, and succeeded in mapping more than 3,000 miles of coastline and almost 400,000 square miles of the interior. He visited parts of the continent no person had ever

FRED G. ALBERTS
Geographic Names Distaion
Defense Mapping Agency Topographic Center
Washington, D. C. 20315

This listing makes available the autarctic name decisions of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, concurred in by the Secretary of the Incerior, since the publication of Gazetteer No. 14: Antarctics, Third Edition, Official Name Decisions of the United States Board on Geographic Names (Geographic Names Division, U.S. Army Topographic Command, Washington, D.C. 2031b. June 1969). The names are those approved through December 1976.

The list includes approximately 1,600 new names, sognifier with a small number of amended names, and should be used as a supplement to the Gazetter. The names are arranged alphabetically, with the specific element first. Their geographic positions have been taken from the most reliable sources available. Those marked with a dagger (†) are listed in Gazetteer No. 14; only their positions or descriptions have been amended. Those marked with an asterisk (*) are amended forms of names previously listed as approved, the former name following in parentheses. Names that have been dropped are listed in italies followed by the word VAGATED.

All of the decisions by the Board on Geographic Names on these antarctic names have been approved upon the recommendation of its Advisory Committee on Amarctic Names. The present members of the ad-

visory committee are Walter R. Seelig, chairman (National Science Foundation), Alison Wilson (National Archives), William R. MacDonald (U.S. Geological Survey), Cdr. Jerome R. Pilon (U.S. Navy), and Richard R. Randall (ex officio, Board on Geographic Names). The members serve as individuals with special knowledge, not as representatives of agencies. Others who have served on the committee since June 1969 are Kenneth J. Bertrand (Catholic University of America), Meredith F. Burrill (ex officio, Board on Geographic Names), Albert P. Crary (National Science Foundation), Henry M. Dater (U.S. Naval Support Force, Antarctica), Herman R. Friis (National Archives), Cdr. Kelsey B. Goodman (U.S. Navy), and Morton J. Rubin (U.S. Weather Bureau). Fred G. Alberts and Thomas J. Strenger (Defense Mapping Agency Topographic Center) provide secretarial and staff support to the committee.

Research for the advisory committee as well as preparation of the antarctic names list was conducted in the Geographic Names Division, Department of Technical Services, Defense Mapping Agency Topographic Center, Washington, D.C. 20315. This research was supported by National Science Foundation grant DPP 73-25430.

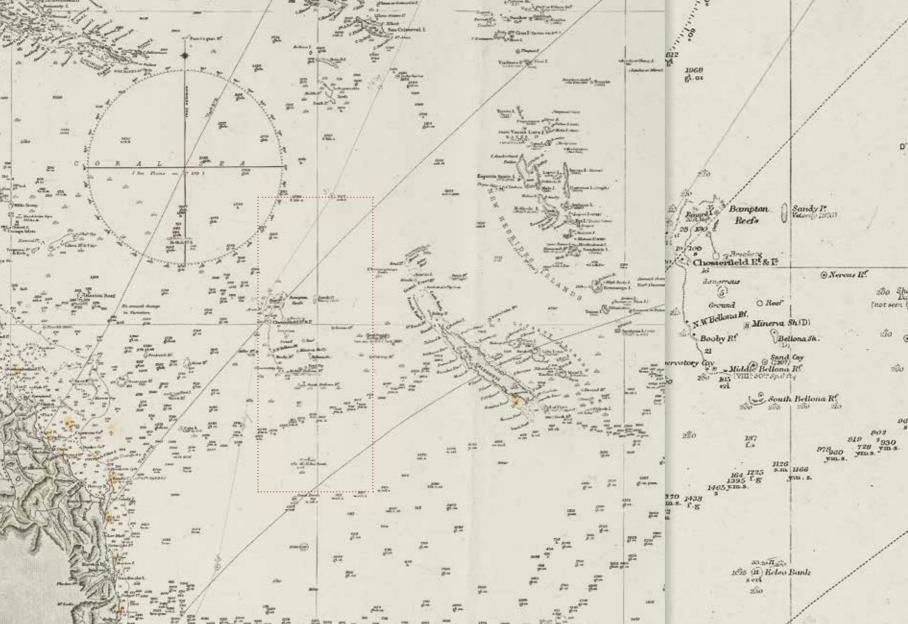
Store Swarthovn	71 35 5 12 33 E	Mountain Terra Nova Islanda	68585 15757E	Unter-See, Lake Uragannyy Point	71 20 3 13 27 E 69 57 5 12 50 E
Peak	Market Street			Urvagency Rocks	72 06 5 5 57 E
Stocksammen Cirque	71.445 11.44E	Terror Point	77 41 5 168 13 E		
Storney Penianula	EP 26 5 T6 00 E	Tenery Numerak	70:58.5 71.29 E.	Lienra Plug	82 38.5 ST 05 W
Storalisklubben Ridge	71.25 S 12.25 E	Thillimann Mountains	7E 90 S 4 45 E	Utrieta Rock	71.55.5 10.52 E.
Strongs Clarier	77 20 S 159 45 W	Theater, Mount	70 18 S 159 38 E		
Straviosky Inlet	72 20 3 71 50 W	Themis Nunatak	71 57 5 89 06 W	Valhalla, Mount	27 85 S 161 16 E
Strawberry Cirque	#5 20 5 157 36 E	Thode bland	37 02 5 148 05 W	Valhalla Glacier	77.365 161.58 E
Strawn Pass	25 06 S - 135 16 W	Thomas Lake	77 24 5 162 15 E	Vallkhanov, Mount	71 49 5 17 15 E
Stringed Numerak	47 31 5 56 15 E	Thorus Nunataka	20325 65 II E	Valleyrie, Mount	77.555 162.19 E
Strider Rock	28 02 5 135 26 W	Thomas Peak	77 46 S 166 43 E	Van Buren, Meunt	71.18.5 63.50 W
		Thompson Point	70.185 161.04 E		75 16 S 110 19 W
Striknme Ridge	71.275 6142W			Vane Glacier	
Streng, Moont	70 55 S 82 45 W	Thompson Ridge	76 27 5 146 05 W	Vangengeym Glacier	71 17 5 13 48 E
Stooner Peak	49 45 5 74 67 E	Thompson Spur	71 30 5 160 23 E	Van Hulsen Islands	67 55 S 62 45 E
Soubbs Pam	58 13 5 65 12 W	Thomson Rock	73.27.5 66.56 W	Van Loon Glacier	71 01 S 165 94 E
Südliche Petremann Range	21 46 S 12 20 E	Thorarinmon, Mount	67.15.5 64.59.W	Van Vern, Mount Vashka Crag	71 55 5 161 54 E 77 19 8 161 05 E
Sullivan Nunataka	70 52 5 45 35 E	Three Sisters Cases	77.34.5 166.56 E	Varilov Hill	72 02 5 13 11 E
Sultan Glacier	61 08 5 55 23 W	Threshold Numerak	85 46 S 166 96 K	Vice Cliffs	77.58 S 157.40 E
Saltan Head Rock	77 45 S 167 10 E	Thringsodos Col	65 12 S 174 19 W	Vela Bitati	71 10.5 65.56 W

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all, there was no particular reason to seek out two rocks in the half-frozen sea. But in February 1989, a German scientific expedition, GANOVEX V, was working along Oates Coast and took the opportunity to visit these unexplored islands. Their geologists were helicoptered out to the location to map them and to take rock samples. What they found, or didn't find, surprised them.

In a telex sent from their ship, the *Polar Queen*, shortly afterwards, the fruitless search for the Terra Nova Islands was described as an 'interesting discovery that shows how incompletely known parts of the Antarctic coast still are today, or how much less secure the "known" is'. The telex was sent by Dr Norbert W. Roland, a scientist on board, who explained that they had good reason for assuming the islands would be there. They were noted, after all, in the Antarctic Pilot, used by

Opposite: 'New antarctic place names', United States Board on Geographical Names, 1970.





SANDY ISLAND

n November 2012, the Southern Surveyor, a research vessel from Australia, was in the Coral Sea west of New Caledonia. The

scientists on board were studying the tectonic evolution of the region, but took a break from their work to investigate a rather peculiar anomaly.

They had noticed that an island indicated on some of their maps was not present on the nautical chart they were using. According to the chart, the ocean was never less than 1,400 metres deep in that area, yet the maps – and Google Earth – indicated

Previous Spread: Pacific Ocean in four sheets, 1875, drawn by R.C. Carrington; south west sheet. Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira. Right, detail showing Sandy Island.

otherwise. A roughly oval stretch of land, 15 miles long by three miles wide, was clearly shown, alongside its name: Sandy Island.

The researchers approached the stated position with some caution. After all, they had no idea exactly what to expect. A half-submerged sandbar, a reef or shoal: such hazards are no less real in the twenty-first century than they ever were before, and the ambiguity of the available information meant that hidden dangers were a real possibility. But in the end their caution proved unnecessary. The ocean floor remained stubbornly in place, more than a kilometre beneath them. The ship sailed right through the middle of Sandy Island, and Sandy Island wasn't there.

Within a few days, the world's media were relating the details of this un-discovery to their readers. The *Sydney Morning Herald* gleefully announced 'The mystery of the missing island', while the *Guardian* called it 'The Pacific island

OTHER UN-DISCOVERED ISLANDS

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Hundreds of islands have come and gone over the centuries, in our stories and on our charts. This book has introduced only a small selection of them. Gathered below are ten additional islands, just waiting to be explored.

BUYAN: This Slavic myth has clear echoes of classical and Celtic stories. The island is a place of happiness and eternal life, which can appear and then disappear again. Some versions of the tale describe Buyan as the source of all weather, where the winds have their home. It has been linked to the real island of Rügen – now part of Germany – in the Baltic Sea.

THE UN-DISCOVERED ISLANDS

FURTHER READING

CROCKER LAND

Donald Baxter MacMillan, Four Years in the White North (London, 1918).

TERRA NOVA ISLANDS

Phillip Law, quoted in the Independent, 16 May 2010.

Phillip Law, quoted in the Scotsman, 11 March 2010.

Phillip Law, quoted in *Antarktis* by Norbert Roland (Spektrum Akademischer Verlag, 2009).

Telex sent by Dr Roland from the *Polar Queen*, quoted in *Antarktis* by Norbert Roland (Spektrum Akademischer Verlag, 2009). (Translated from the German by Anja Hedrich.)

FURTHER READING

*

General

William H. Babcock, *Legendary Islands of the*Atlantic (American Geographical Society, 1922).

Donald S. Johnson, *The Phantom Islands of the Atlantic* (Souvenir Press, 1997).

Raymond H. Ramsay, No Longer on the Map (Ballantine Books, 1973).

Henry Stommel, *Lost Islands* (University of British Columbia Press, 1984).

Individual Islands

Hundreds of books have been written about ATLANTIS, and dozens more about LEMURIA. The vast majority of these can probably be read as fiction.

Joanna Kavenna's *The Ice Museum* (Penguin, 2006) is an excellent introduction to THULE, both as a place and as an idea. Barry Cunliffe's *The Extraordinary Voyage of Pytheas the Greek* (Walker & Company, 2002) provides a more scholarly approach to the subject.

Andrea di Robilant's *Venetian Navigators* (Faber & Faber, 2011) offers a very readable account of FRISLAND and the other ZENO ISLANDS, though the author seems rather too eager to believe the tale.

Barbara Freitag's Hy Brasil: The Metamorphosis of an Island (Rodopi, 2013) peels away the many falsehoods and misconceptions that surround HY BRASIL.

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