

Compiled
and introduced
by Noah J. Stern

Raoul Deleo

TERRA ULTIMA

The discovery of a hidden continent

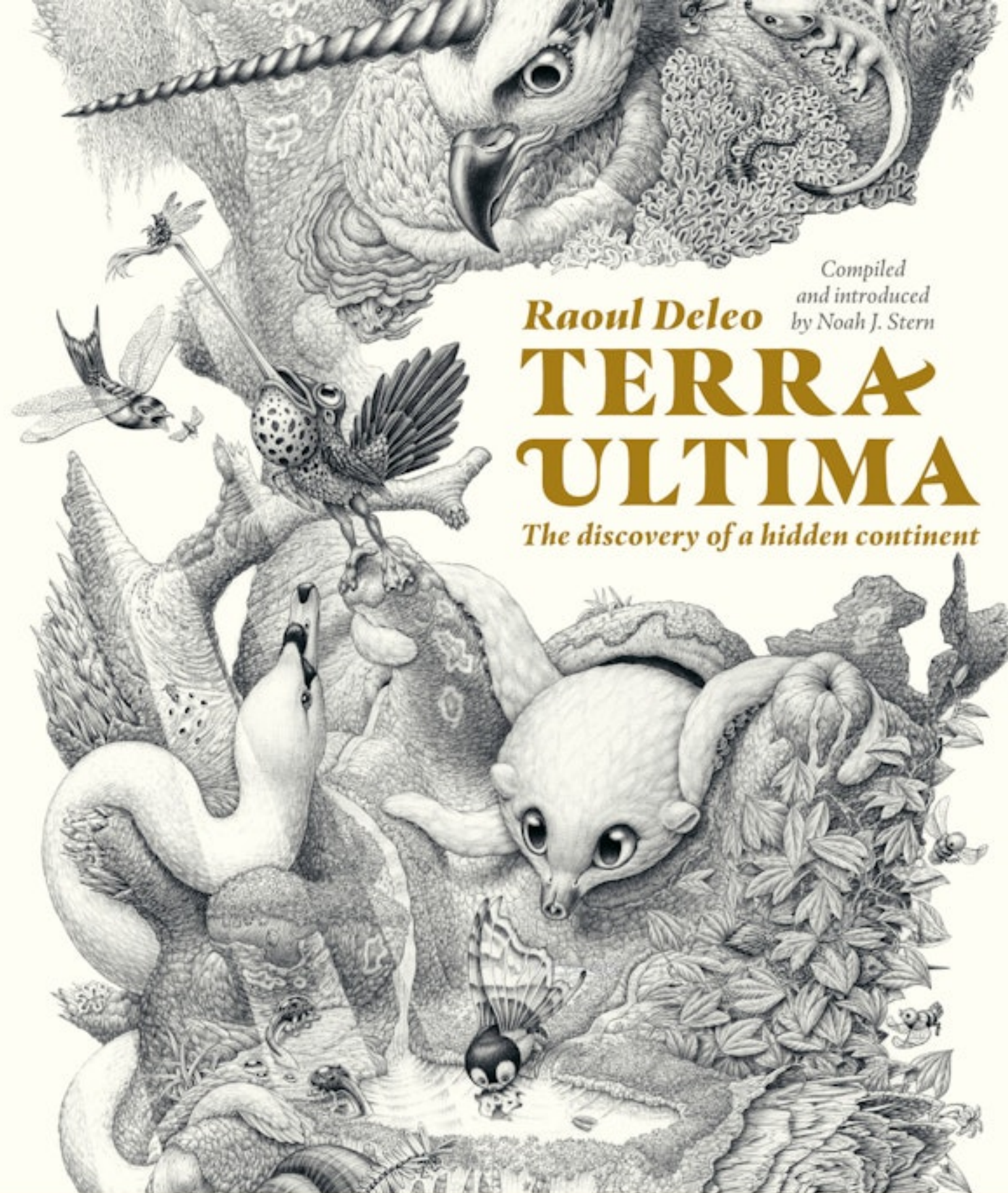
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*the
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edition*





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- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Butterfly chickadee | <i>Psychornis leucopsis</i> |
| 2. Horned harpy eagle | <i>Harpyopsis cornuperforans</i> |
| 3. Armour-plated jay | <i>Garrulus cipeatus</i> |
| 4. Blue faintailed frog | <i>Rhipidurana caerulea</i> |
| 5. Honey-billed stroller | <i>Peripatus mellirostratus</i> |
| 6. Pallid octopossum | <i>Octopossum leucostolum</i> |
| 7. Gyal giraffe | <i>Giraffa cochleanata</i> |
| 8. Soft-toe erminogecko | <i>Erminogecko mollidactylus</i> |
| 9. Hironfly | <i>Hirundo zygopteryx</i> |
| 10. Swirling swan snake | <i>Cygnophidiamus spirocorpus</i> |
| 11. Canary bumblebee | <i>Apicula canaria</i> |
| 12. Dense damselfly | <i>Ischnura pycnophylla</i> |
| 13. Sticky tadpole | <i>Ranunculum sugopedium</i> |
| 14. Buzz chick | <i>Nigropullus hyalatus</i> |

Please note: Though every effort has been made to compile and organise Deleó's archives, some ambiguities remain.



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Swirling Swan Lake
CYGNOPHIDIANUS SPIROCOPUS



INTRODUCTION TO TERRA ULTIMA

WRITTEN BY DR. NOAH J. STERN, BIOLOGIST

Honorary member of the Royal Science Society, member of the expedition to Terra Australis

It might have been better if this book hadn't been written. Don't misunderstand me, there's nothing wrong with it, not in the slightest – it's a real feast for the eyes. And it's important, too. No, something else troubles me. What I'm worried about are the long-term effects this book might have. Let me explain.

People are queuing up to fly to the moon. They are willing to pay millions, even though it's a boring, barren place to be. There's nothing special to see there. You can't even walk about or breathe normally. And apparently it stinks of old cheese.

So, if people are getting excited about something as miserable as the moon, Terra Ultima is going to be utterly irresistible to them. What if the readers of this book decide to go there in their masses? What if 'all-in' package trips to this untouched continent suddenly appear in travel brochures? Terra Ultima would be trampled underfoot, and all because of this book. I don't want that on my conscience.

Nevertheless, this book exists. Why? Well, first and foremost because I always keep my word. I was asked to compile this book and I said yes. It would be quite dishonourable to suddenly say, 'I've changed my mind! I'm quitting!', all because this book might encourage some tourists.

What's more, this book has cost me blood, sweat and tears. It all sounded so simple, I'd be given the archives of the man who discovered and charted Terra Ultima: Mr Deleo. If necessary, I could rearrange his material a little. I might explain a few things, for people who, unlike Deleo and myself, weren't veteran adventurers who'd been on voyages of discovery themselves.

But the reality was different, remarkably different.

The state of the archives I encountered is described a few pages further. For now, it is enough to say that I had to work like a dog to organise the material and turn it into a book. After all that effort, should I have dropped the project? To protect Terra Ultima?



THE LOCATION OF TERRA ULTIMA

I almost forgot that the chance of hordes of tourists is not that great just yet. After all, no one knows where Terra Ultima is, and no one knows how to get there. Except for one lucky fellow: Deleo. And he is as silent as a stone.

Of course, I asked him where to find Terra Ultima. I angled after its latitude and longitude, the direction in which the compass needle points. After all, that's where everything starts. Especially in a book like this.

Deleo agreed entirely: everything does indeed start with the location. Then he simply changed the subject. But I wouldn't be fobbed off. 'Next time, let's go on an expedition there together,' I suggested. 'Take me with you, even if it's just for a few days. I'll find my way back. It would greatly assist me in compiling the book.'

Deleo whistled a little tune.

'I promise I won't tell anyone about the journey,' I continued. 'Not a soul! Hand on my heart. I'm even prepared to put it in writing, with three wax seals and my own signature.'

He picked a piece of lint from my sleeve.

'Better still, blindfold me during the journey. Plug my ears! Bind me to the mast!'

It was starting to get embarrassing. Everything I tried was in vain. Deleo wouldn't budge.

Let this much be clear, I had offered my assistance, so it's no longer up to me. The fate of Terra Ultima rests entirely in Deleo's hands. It is up to him to make sure that he doesn't slip up or get followed while travelling, so that the location of Terra Ultima can remain a secret.

OUR COLLABORATION

The world of explorers is small. Yet our paths had only crossed once previously: in Chicago, at a lecture Deleo gave at the Field Museum. If I remember correctly, it was shortly after his first expedition. We exchanged a few pleasantries and that was it. Whenever I came across articles by him afterwards, I read them. I followed his activities with interest, but from a distance.

So, his suggestion to work together on this book came as a complete surprise. Why did he have his publisher approach me in particular? Had my discovery of the *Anguis fragilis*'s phantom limb caught his eye? Was it because I had participated in the famous expedition to Terra Australis? Or

was it the question I had asked during his lecture that was the deciding factor? In going through his journals, I discovered that my question had made more of an impression than I realised.

But what did the reason matter? I was the right man for Deleo's job. I replied immediately that he could count on me. I was looking forward to seeing his archives.

A week went by, and then another. Then I received an elegant business card upon which had been scrawled in apparent haste: 'Expect archive tomorrow, K.R.' (for kind regards) and at the top right corner his initials: RD.

THE 'ARCHIVES'

The next morning, a rickety truck unloaded five hefty cabin trunks in front of my house. They had sturdy iron bands and were covered with stamps, seals and labels. The delivery people dragged them into my home with great effort.

I didn't have the patience or strength to lug them to my study. Still in the hall, I opened one of the trunks. I couldn't have wished for a better start. The first thing I saw was a pile of original drawings of Terra Ultima's flora and fauna. With slightly trembling hands, I grabbed a random drawing from the trunk. I had seen reproductions of Deleo's work in scientific journals before, but never in colour and at such close range. The

pencil marks were still visible from the underlying sketches. I blew away some leftover eraser rubbings.

A creature looked up at me from the paper. According to the caption, it was an *Octopossum leucostolus*. It did indeed resemble an octopus, but there was also something rather anteater-like about it.

I followed the contours of the animal with my right index finger, over its head, down its back, and so on. The fur felt stiffer than expected. It even tickled a little. Where did the anteater end and the octopus begin? I couldn't quite work it out.



1 — Publisher's note: see page 64.





I was so absorbed in my research that at first, I didn't notice something sticking to my hand for a split second. Was it leftover glue? I glanced at the *Octopossum's* head. It still looked exactly the same, the tongue unmoved on the paper.

I took another picture in my hands: the *Pinguilagus pseudopticus*. Again, I lost myself in the drawing. On my travels I had seen many unusual creatures, but these were new to me. Only the rumbling of my stomach brought me back to the here and now. Hours had passed and I had only looked at two drawings.

I couldn't wait to explore the rest after I'd eaten. Enthusiastically, I plunged into Deleo's material. Soon, however, doubts crept over me. What was that boot (a left one, size 9) doing in the trunk? Or that shopping list? I opened another trunk, and another. It didn't get any better. By the time I had opened numbers four and five, I was feeling completely dejected. Disconcerted, I looked at the whole sorry lot and muttered, 'Oh help me, Carlyle.'²

Deleo seemed to have grabbed random items from his archives and stuffed them into the trunks. They appeared to be filled with everything he had happened to get his hands on: drawings, half-dried plants, land and sea maps, three-quarters of a chocolate bar (85% cocoa), logbooks, diaries, reference books, two mosquito nets, measuring instruments of all kinds, a teabag. Useful items and utterly useless junk lay in a jumbled heap. The material he had collected must have gradually overwhelmed him.

I could forgive Deleo. Did he have to be tidy in addition to adventurous and astute? No, it is precisely in this kind of chaotic circumstance that one fraternal colleague can be there for another. But it did not change the fact that I was left with the muddle. I took a bite of the chocolate bar and gave myself a pep talk, 'You'll figure it out. Especially once you ask Deleo to explain things.'

2 — Editor's note: reference to Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), Scottish writer and historian. He was able to somewhat organise the papers of the great (but careless) philosopher, Diogenes Tzafeladrück.



THE ATELIER

I repeatedly attempted to meet with Deleo. Each time there was no reply. Until finally, after five months, two weeks and four days, a sign of life arrived in the shape of the now familiar business card. Deleo informed me that it would be 'a real pleasure' for him to receive me in his 'atelier', to 'clear up any ambiguities.'

The next morning, I stood in his studio.

At first, I thought I had made a mistake. Was this the studio of the same man who had sent me an archive that was shambolic, to put it mildly? Here everything was astonishingly well-organised. The stuffed animals were neatly lined up, and a spirit level had been used when hanging the pictures. The room's centrepiece was an easel, with tubes of paint and pots of brushes. Above the drawers, on the left side of the studio, hung a sign on which 'Inanimate Matter' was inscribed in jaunty handwriting. I opened a drawer and encountered a collection of bones, feathers, claws and beaks, ranging from long to short, large to small, sharp to blunt. At least seven birds could be constructed from the parts. In another drawer I found stones and pebbles, pieces of bark and petrified wood, bags of sand (coarse and fine), mosses in every imaginable shade of brown, blue and green, and tubes of indeterminate liquids, some of which seemed to emit light. There was enough to make a miniature landscape.

To the right of the studio was a dark, wooden cabinet containing folders of green, marbled cardboard, 'elephant folio' size. Above it hung a sign that read 'Sketches'. I had just begun to pluck the ribbon from one of the folios when Deleo stopped me. 'Save yourself the trouble,' he said. 'You already have everything you need for the book.'

Deleo disappeared to make coffee. He was very meticulous in that – half my visit was spent waiting for it. Once we were seated and I had asked my first couple of questions, a kitchen timer went off to signal that my time was already up. Smiling, Deleo handed me my coat. He even helped me put it on. Before I knew it, I was outside again.

That was the only meeting we had. I wasn't able to ask for any further explanation or help. Everything I know about Terra Ultima, Deleo and his expeditions, I had to derive entirely from his archives.

It was anything but straightforward, even for an organised man like me. After our meeting, a few more weeks went into sifting through the debris, smoothing, deciphering and sorting. I finally conquered the chaos and unearthed what was valuable. From the material emerged a picture of nothing less than Terra Ultima, and of how Deleo had heard about the continent and located it.



DISCOVERY, ROUTE AND SIZE

An unknown continent: who would have thought it was even possible? The globe had already been traversed in every direction and mapped to the last millimetre. At most, one might think that adding more of a dried-up seabed to the atlas, or erasing a crumbled coastline, was all that was left to be amended.

But suddenly it turned out that something had been overlooked, something that had escaped all atlases. An entire continent no less: Terra Ultima. Translated, the name more or less means *the end of the world*.

As much as I would have liked him to, Deleo did not discover Terra Ultima himself. In fact, Gilles Jansz, captain of the Rotterdam Company, beat him to it. This isn't mentioned in any history books. All that was known of Jansz was that his ship, the *Postiljon*, disappeared without a trace in the Pacific Ocean in 1599. His knowledge of Terra Ultima didn't come to light until the *Postiljon* resurfaced centuries later, floating abandoned in the Indian Ocean. In its hold were maps and drawings of an unknown continent and the life that had developed there, far from humankind.

The discovery caused much excitement in scientific circles; I remember it well. This event did not go unnoticed by Deleo either. In his archives, I found a well-thumbed newspaper article about the treasure found in the *Postiljon*.

It would be nine years before Deleo found his way to Terra Ultima. In a lecture for the Trompenveste Botanical Society, he talked about it some more. When I read the report of that meeting (found in trunk number two), I winced. How could he be so open to an unknown, anonymous audience, and leave me in the dark? Was he so elated by his discovery that he forgot to think?

'Terra Ultima should be sought between Alaska and Asia,' Deleo told his listeners. 'From the Chukchi Sea, steer a course to the Beaufort Sea, and then head for the Delta Gulf.' To add insult to injury, Deleo made things very clear, 'Once there, you won't be able to miss it.'

Finally, let me turn to the size of Terra Ultima. Nothing can be determined from the archives with any certainty, aside from that the continent is gigantic. In his notes, Deleo speaks of 'immense

horizons' and mountain ranges 'stretching as far as the eye can see.' He abandoned an attempt to measure a coastal strip after 6 weeks and 842 kilometres. 'Impossible task,' he scribbled in his journal (with a less steady hand than usual, I noted).

It's time to let Terra Ultima and Deleo themselves do the talking. The drawings and diary entries that follow certainly have an interesting story to tell. If anything is missing or remains unclear, it's Deleo's fault, not mine. I cannot extract more from his archives than was in them. But don't judge too harshly. After all, this is not the discovery of a meadow, but an entire continent. Beat that, dear reader! Besides, biology is a science, remember. And in science, if something doesn't raise questions, it isn't worth a jot.





THE FIRST EXPEDITION

102 days – Coastal zone – 842 km



A ship adrift at sea, freight that breaks free from its fastenings, contaminated drinking water... anyone who travels themselves or is familiar with the experiences of sea voyagers like Tasman (1603–1659), Roggeveen (1659–1729) and Gulliver (unknown), will recognise much in Deleo's account.

Even his mood follows a familiar pattern. Good cheer at departure – life at sea seems so much better than on land. But after a few days, weariness sets in when Deleo has to adjust the sails or bail out water from the hold. Anything to keep the ship sailing smoothly, on course or, at times, simply afloat. His notes become less detailed, the tone becomes flatter: *'Accompanied by hammerhead sharks for hours. A pair?'*



Toward the end of the journey, on day 43, excitement rears its head again, with total predictability. Remarkably, it isn't the usual elation of 'land ahoy!' No, Deleo has spotted something else: a glare high up in the sky, moving along with him. He instantly comes back to life.

The glare was blinding. What climbed, soared and plummeted there in the heavens? It looked too big for a herring gull and too small for an albatross. It was too light in colour to be a frigate bird. The distance and motion made it impossible for me to determine what it was.

From the moment I spotted the apparition, my mood changed. Joy took hold of me. I had found my pole star.

Deleo follows his companion in the sky and soon spies a barely discernible dark stripe on the horizon. His first reaction is one of disbelief.

Hastily, I reached for my map and compass to make sure it was Terra Ultima and nothing else. I calculated my position, and then recalculated it.

Excitedly I ruled out all other possibilities. This indeed had to be it.

The next day the ship's prow hits sand. With a dull sigh and a jolt, the ship firmly plants itself. On the boundary between water and land, Deleo falls silent, the old world at his back, a new one at his feet.

I crouched down on the bow and stared at the water for hours on end, until I was stiff. Shells and seaweed rolled to and fro over the seabed. The sun burned the back of my neck. Then, I slowly looked up. My gaze ran across the beach to the foot of some cliffs and then upward.



I took in the scene. The rocks were shaped like an elephant, waiting motionlessly for me. The words 'Elephant Beach' sprung to mind. What better name for this place of arrival?

The trusty rock formation becomes the landmark Deleo uses to orientate himself. From it, he ventures into Terra Ultima, before returning and finding solace here.

Deleo plots his course using Mr La Bonne Foi's simple but proven method. This French marshal discovered in 1853 that it is best to follow your nose (*suivre votre nez*) wherever you go.

Deleo's nose takes him no further than Elephant Beach for the first few days. In the morning, when it is still cool, he climbs the face of the cliffs. He scrapes mosses from the rocks. To escape the sun's heat in the afternoon, he examines the inside of the rock formation. During the sea's temporary retreat, he stumbles upon sea urchins in high-roofed caves. *'They walk sideways like crabs. If you aren't careful, you could tread on them.'* He strolls along the beach, dacking in and out of palm groves at his leisure.

'I slowly recovered from the journey,' he writes. 'Here I found peace.'

On the fifth day, his nose leads him higher up the cliff, along 'a gradually ascending, easy, pleasant path.' (No joke, he really does write pleasant. His expedition is beginning to resemble a pleasure trip!) From the top of the cliff, he sees the land's interior for the first time. An immense expanse stretches out before him: in the foreground grassy plains in ochre, brown and green, undulating in the wind. Aside from a few scattered clutches of palm trees, there are no other forms of vegetation. Further inland, the vegetation becomes denser and more varied. Deleo sees forests that look impenetrable. Even further away, mountains rise up into the sky. The landscape is boundless.



There, on top of the cliff, Deleo becomes aware of the adventure he has embarked upon. For the first time he feels doubt, even a bit of fear. Dismayed, he returns to the only familiar place he knows.

'What awaited me here? How on earth was I supposed to map an entire continent? By simply walking around it? Never had I posed myself this question, occupied as I was with the journey's preparations and my ambition to find Terra Ultima. Ideally, I would just vanish in a puff of smoke now. End of story.'

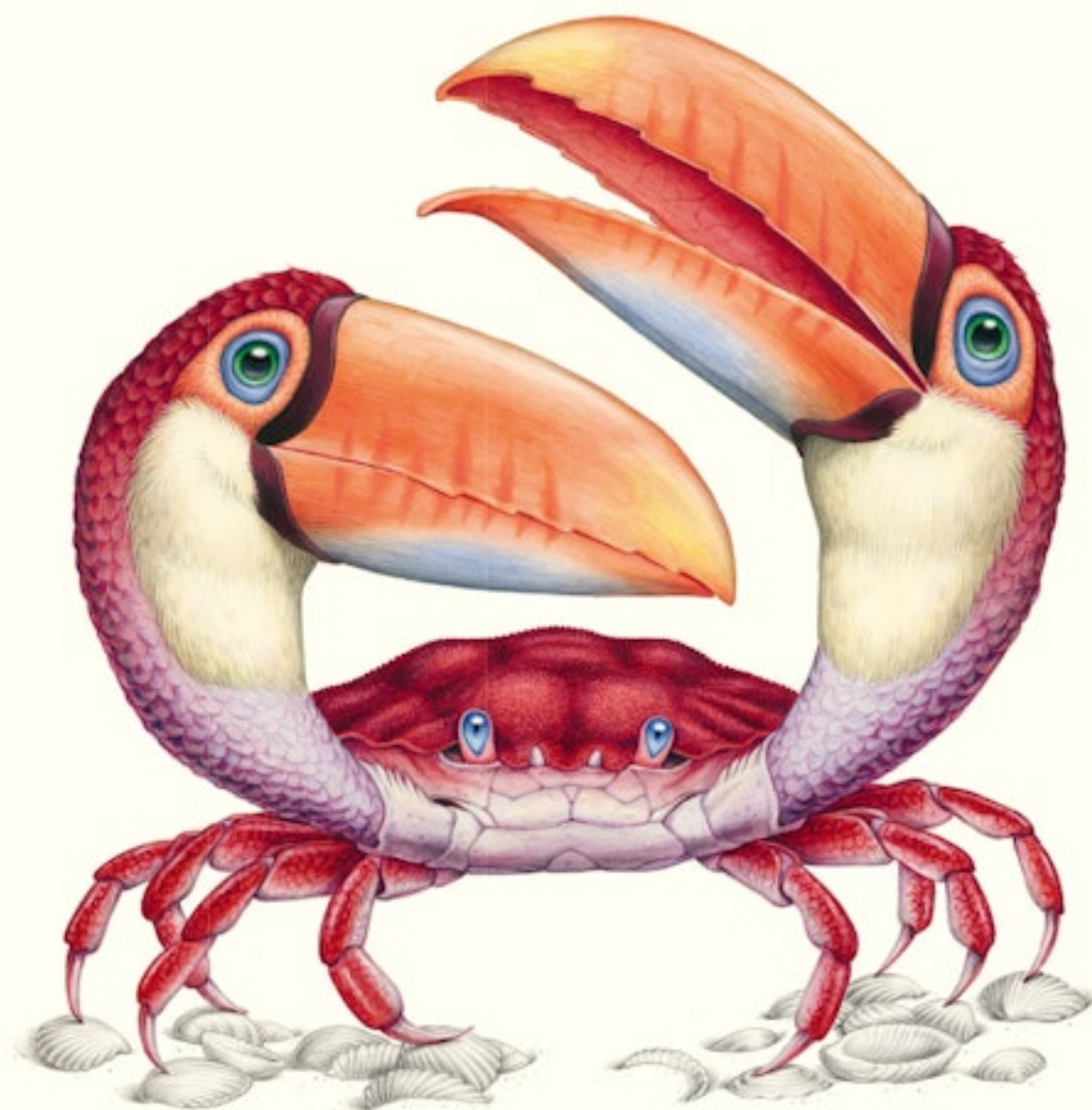
Terra Ultima brings Deleo firmly back down to the ground. He decides to ignore the inland and save it for a future expedition – if there is to be one. Now he focuses on the coast. In 6 weeks, he charts 842 kilometres of the tideline. On the outward journey he has the sea to his left and the land to his right; on the return journey, it's the other way around. His choice to explore the coastal zone does not disappoint – he encounters Poseidon's gorillrus there (see page 25).

After returning from the east, Deleo risks a short trip inland. Southwest of Elephant Beach, he comes across an estuary. From there he walks upstream into the plains for one kilometre and not a step farther. It is far enough for him to discover a flamingo fawn's foraging spot (see page 30).



TOUCAN TWIN CRAB
Tucanogemina carcioformis

The brains of the toucan crab are divided between its two heads. It processes sensations with its left head and controls its movements with its right one. The heads exchange information by rhythmically tapping their beaks together.



EXP 1, day 4

Behind me I heard snorting and splashing. I looked over my shoulder and froze. Even if I could have run away, I wouldn't have dared. In the surf a strapping beast was frantically shaking off water. Two enormous tusks swung dangerously back and forth. Then, with a thud, the colossus sat down.

Calmly, the beast began to smooth the hair on its forearms. It was at least 2.5 metres high, with massive legs and sea blue eyes. It sat there stately and confident. I was reminded of that other king of the sea, Poseidon, only he had three prongs.

The beast looked up; something had caught its attention. It bent forward and planted its front legs in the sand. Languidly it lifted its abdomen. And then everything happened fast. It tucked its tusks to its chest, tensed its muscles and shot forward, straight at me. Five, six jumps and it was beside me. In a reflex, I jumped to one side. I smelled fish, got a splash of wet fur and... the beast vanished. It hadn't even given me a second glance.

After fifteen minutes, my racing heart had calmed and I realised what had just happened. Or rather, what hadn't happened. I'm used to animals reacting to me, fleeing, observing, sniffing, challenging, attacking or bamboozling me. But to simply ignore me? This was new. I didn't like it one bit. Couldn't this animal have at least growled at me?

'Who knows, maybe it wasn't because of me. After all, the creature had never seen a human before. What you don't expect, you don't perceive. Could what's true for humans also apply to animals? If you think of Columbus's experience? When his fleet appeared off the coast of America, it went unnoticed by the people living there. Simply because they had never beheld such large ships before.'

I look up from the journal. Being ignored by an animal, what an interesting experience. Uncomfortable too, I should think. I would rather animals saw me, and I'm not the only one. Think of the efforts zoo visitors make to attract an elephant or a polar bear's attention.

But I think Deleo should have asked himself why people do that, instead of bringing up Columbus (1451–1506). And let's face it, that story about the locals is nonsense, isn't it? Even if they hadn't seen big ships before, they weren't blind.

Back to the diary. My finger slides across the page, picking up where I left off.

'That story about American Indians is a myth of course. As if they were that gullible.'

Now I think about it, another question seems more important to me: why do I want animals to notice me in the first place? The loneliness I'm experiencing here leads me to the answer. Attention is a necessity of life. It makes you feel that you belong somewhere, that you exist.'

Cautiously, I close the journal and push it away from me. I remember I still have a letter to post.



POSEIDON'S GORILLRUS
Gorillrus poseidonides

The gorillrus is a solitary creature. It only encounters others of its kind during the annual migration of the mouse carp (see page 31). Gorillruses gather along the streams in which the carp swim. The banks soon become overcrowded. The solution: once a gorillrus has caught five fish it makes way for another. We can deduce from this that the animal can count.



CORAL LEOPARD
Coralloporus perforatus

It is unclear what comes first – the holes that make up the coral leopard, or the calcium skeleton that holds it together. However, it is already determined that a saltwater clam (the naval shipworm) causes the holes to get bigger over time. Eventually, you can no longer see the coral leopard – you can only suspect it is there.

EXP. 1, day 32

The flirting alpine folioles (*Papilio aldomanuti*) found me before I found them. Yesterday, at dusk, three specimens perched on me as I rested on a boulder. They looked like yellowish-brown commas and resembled the leaves of a bush you see everywhere around here, only they had legs and a head. I batted them away in terror, though in vain. They were the first of a swarm. In a few seconds I was completely covered in them.

I jumped up and the swarm sprang with me. I flailed my arms. The cloud swelled and shrank again. Panicked, I rubbed the pests from my face, but they returned instantly. As I gasped for breath a few entered my mouth. I mashed them against the roof of my mouth and spat them into the sand. They were as bitter as bile.

My panic did nothing to improve matters. Calm was needed. I sat back down on the boulder. The swarm descended upon me once more, leaving no spot uncovered. Gradually the swarming and fluttering stopped. I opened my eyes one at a time and cautiously moved my lips. The creatures shifted to make space.

From within my cocoon, the surf sounded distant, the whole world was distant. I immediately felt less alone. The insects began to pulsate peacefully around me, more palpably than audibly. I let myself slide from the boulder and onto my side, carefully controlling my movements so as to crush as few of the creatures as possible. There I fell asleep. In the early morning they left.

EXP. 1, day 35

Like on previous nights, I was joined by the alpine folioles. The swarm has begun to feel like a second skin. It is light in weight and no itchier than a woollen sweater. It moves serenely along with me when I stoke the fire or go for a stroll before bedtime.

EXP. 1, day 41

The evening was empty. Dolefully empty. During the day I had visited the river to do some sketching and to swim. I had returned in time and sat there ready, but for the first time, my visitors failed to appear.

I (...)³

Nevertheless, my ponderings last night accomplished something. For science, at least, I have figured out why I am so attractive to the alpine folioles. Over the past week I listed and tested possible causes. I soon eliminated my odour, and heat could not be the cause either. Last night I suddenly realised what it was: salt. The flirting alpine foliole must be salt-loving, and I have been saltless since yesterday. In the river I had rinsed all the sea salt and sweat from my skin. I decided to bathe only in the sea from now on.

3 — Note from Stern: the next two lines are illegible due to blurred ink.





FLAMINGO FAWN
Phoenicopterus cervocephalus

Each year, the flamingo fawn lays seven eggs, three of which are brooded and later hatch. The other four are used as markers. The animal rolls the eggs with her snout to the corners of her territory.



EXP. 1, day 55

I stumbled upon a creek today, which resulted in two unusual discoveries. (Although it was close to being just one discovery.)

It must have been mid-afternoon. The sun was past its zenith and the tide was at ebb. The creek was 3 metres wide, and my dipstick indicated 54 centimetres in depth. The water was crystal clear, salty and 22°C. I would have left it at these measurements and hiked on if the creek had not been teeming with life. Fish-like creatures swam landwards along the creek in groups of three or four. In barely 5 minutes, I had counted 103 of them. I was delighted. Their appearance seemed to be related to a discovery I had made a few weeks ago.⁴

The animals were a cross between house mice and carp. They had eyes as big as eggs and webbed feet. They varied in length from 65 to 85 centimetres. They darted effortlessly through the water. I couldn't get enough of them.

After spending the afternoon with the creatures, I put away my sketchbook. My day had been a success.

Before rearranging my journal too, I reread my notes. Ashamed, I noted that four things should have given me pause for thought while writing them. One: the word 'ebb', the next thing: the word 'salty' and then: 'landwards' and 'effortlessly'. Future readers who lay eyes on this text will have already figured it out, of course. I cottoned on just in time.

I cast a piece of bark into the water. It floated inland. A strip of palm leaf: the same thing. After trying another paper boat, I was in no doubt: this creek did not obey the natural law that all water flows to the sea.

I followed the mouse carp and soon we came to a crowded palm tree grove. Water and animals glided smoothly past the trunks; I became wedged between them.

Upon breaking free, I lost a boot (my right one, size 9). Time to abandon my research. I resolved to return the next day with a cleaver and a hand axe.

EXP. 1, day 56

No creek left to be seen and nothing to even suggest that it was ever here.



LARGE-EYED MOUSE CARP
Cyprinomusculus macrommalus

A mouse carp's ears don't grow along with the rest of its body. Its birth ears fall off after its early years and large ones, which it keeps for the rest of its life, appear. The constellation M61 (in Virgo) has been nicknamed 'Mouse Carp' by explorers because its colour and shape closely resemble those of this creature.

⁴ — Note from Stern: On day 9 of the expedition, Deleo noted, 'Found a bleached fish head and skeleton on the sand. The bones seem to suggest foot!!!!!!' In a later note, Deleo writes that the animal is part of the gorilla's diet.



JELLY-BACKED TURTLE
Testudo medusa

For the first few months of its life, the jelly-backed turtle lives as a polyp. It lies on its back, its flippers and fledgling tentacles waving above it. When faced with danger, and sometimes for no reason at all, an adult will flatten itself and spread out on the seabed, like a bearskin rug in front of a fireplace.



THE SECOND EXPEDITION

89 days – Arid zones – 1,157 km



Deleo could breathe a sigh of relief: his mission had been accomplished. I can reveal in hindsight that he was never entirely confident it would be. Because let's be honest, despite thorough preparation, his first expedition had been a gamble. Suppose Terra Ultima couldn't be found or turned out to be a mirage?

Fortunately, those concerns could be dismissed. Terra Ultima really did exist. Deleo had been there and was able to show what he'd found, although this was of secondary importance. He shared his findings with the scientific community through enthusiastically received lectures, but what was actually on his mind was something else: a return trip to Terra Ultima. As he travelled home, he resolved to go back there. Six months later, his preparations began.

A second expedition presents an explorer with a difficult choice. Does he or she pick up where the previous trip left off? Or should they turn their gaze to new, unexplored terrain? The explorer Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) is said to have so struggled with this choice that he let fate decide. A flipped coin determined his destination. Usually it was heads, meaning something new.

Surprisingly, there is nothing to suggest that Deleo gave this even a moment's thought: like a young dog, he opted for the new and unknown.

Elephant Beach was history. As an explorer I can understand it, as a scientist I have my doubts. Had he really scoured the coastal area enough? Did he know enough to be able to say anything meaningful about it?

These kinds of questions are the last thing on Deleo's mind, though. One sunny morning something else unexpectedly lands on his lap: a letter. The handwriting is unfamiliar. The stamp depicts a black eagle with a golden crown. According to the postmark, the letter is from Vienna, Austria.

'I have something before me that may interest you,' the writer begins. *'Especially now that you are emerging as an expert on Terra Ultima within the scientific community.'* The letter is from a lady who introduces herself as a collector, marine archaeologist and former European weightlifting champion (in the 50kg category).

The 'something' she mentions turns out to be a folder containing four antique drawings and a parchment map. They are from the hold of Gilles Jansz's ship, the *Postilion* (see p. 16).

Deleo can hardly believe what he's reading. For years he had been trying to figure out where Gilles Jansz's treasure had got to. Through the journalist who had first written about it, Deleo contacted an archivist at the Maritime University of Szczecin in Poland, who referred him on to an auctioneer at Christie's in Milan, through whom he got in touch with.... Anyone leaving through

the correspondence can see how the informants formed a chain like a necklace. Everyone knew something about the treasure from the *Postilion*, but no one knew the finer details. Deleo travels to Austria, where he spends three 'agreeable' days at the letter-writer's castle. On parting, his hostess promises him copies of the drawings and map. Several weeks later, they arrive. In an attached note, the Austrian thanks him for his visit and the stories he told her.

'When I think of you bending over Gilles Jansz's papers – the image moves me anew. Even though he lived centuries before you, you seemed to have a direct connection to the man, who also knew Terra Ultima. As one of the few, you know what he knew, you felt what he felt.'

Deleo studies every last millimetre of the map. Two rivers run across it vertically, as though a lioness has placed her claws on the paper and pulled it toward her. A faint dotted line marks the route Gilles Jansz travelled by boat and on foot. At the end of the line, an exclamation mark and the words, 'By jove!' There is no doubt about it: Deleo must see whatever it is that is here.

In a single night he figures out where in vast Terra Ultima the rivers must lie. He plots the route. His incomprehensible calculation covers six sheets of paper (front and back). It is a marvel of formulas, angles, coordinates and the positions of stars. Had there been enough room for them, I would have included them here from start to finish. The upshot is that this time he will have to bear east a little earlier.

It takes Deleo 53 days and the same number of nights to reach the river zone. He sails inland along the left-hand river until it becomes too narrow and shallow. Then, like Gilles Jansz, he abandons his boat and continues on foot.

He crosses expanses of sand and cracked clay. Some areas are bare, others overgrown with herbaceous plants and chest-high grasses, mainly of the species *Rhodes* and *Bermuda*. There are spiny shrubs, which twist their leaves so as to catch as little of the sun's heat as possible. The trees have flattened crowns and cracked trunks that drip resin. Moisture is stored in their round, fleshy leaves. Burning during the day and freezing at night, Deleo roams through yellow-white mountain ranges that are bone dry.

The three months of his stay fly by. His pores, nose and ears gradually fill with dust, turning him white. As ever his notebooks and sketchbooks fill with descriptions and drawings. And Gilles Jansz's discovery? He manages to locate it. Not without a struggle, but he finds it and is as impressed as his predecessor was.



EXP 2, day 2-5

Perhaps Gilles Jansz was unable to accurately determine where north was. Or was I holding his map upside down? Either way, it wasn't easy to follow the route Jansz had mapped out.

The river part was alright. I reached the point where he must have moored the *Postiljon* easily enough. On foot, things became more difficult. When I reached the ford indicated on the map, I went under, twice. Perhaps this wasn't so strange: things can change over the course of a couple of centuries.

Still, it seemed unlikely to me that the rockface blocking the route further on had once stood in a different place. Had Jansz really gone right through it, as the map suggested? If I hadn't been so focussed on my path, I'm sure I would have noticed I was approaching a ravine. Fortunately, a branch broke my fall about 20 metres down. After three quarters of an hour of dangling, and two hours of scrambling out, I was able to resume my trek. One and a half days later I arrived at my destination unscathed, at the spot Jansz had marked with an exclamation mark.

I stood at the edge of an impressive crater (1.3 kilometres in diameter). It was half filled with reddish-brown boulders. Their darkness contrasted strongly with the basin's pale grey walls. They lay in curved rows, as though they had been raked.

A mysterious whistling rose from the crater. High and low notes swirled around each other, died away and swelled again.

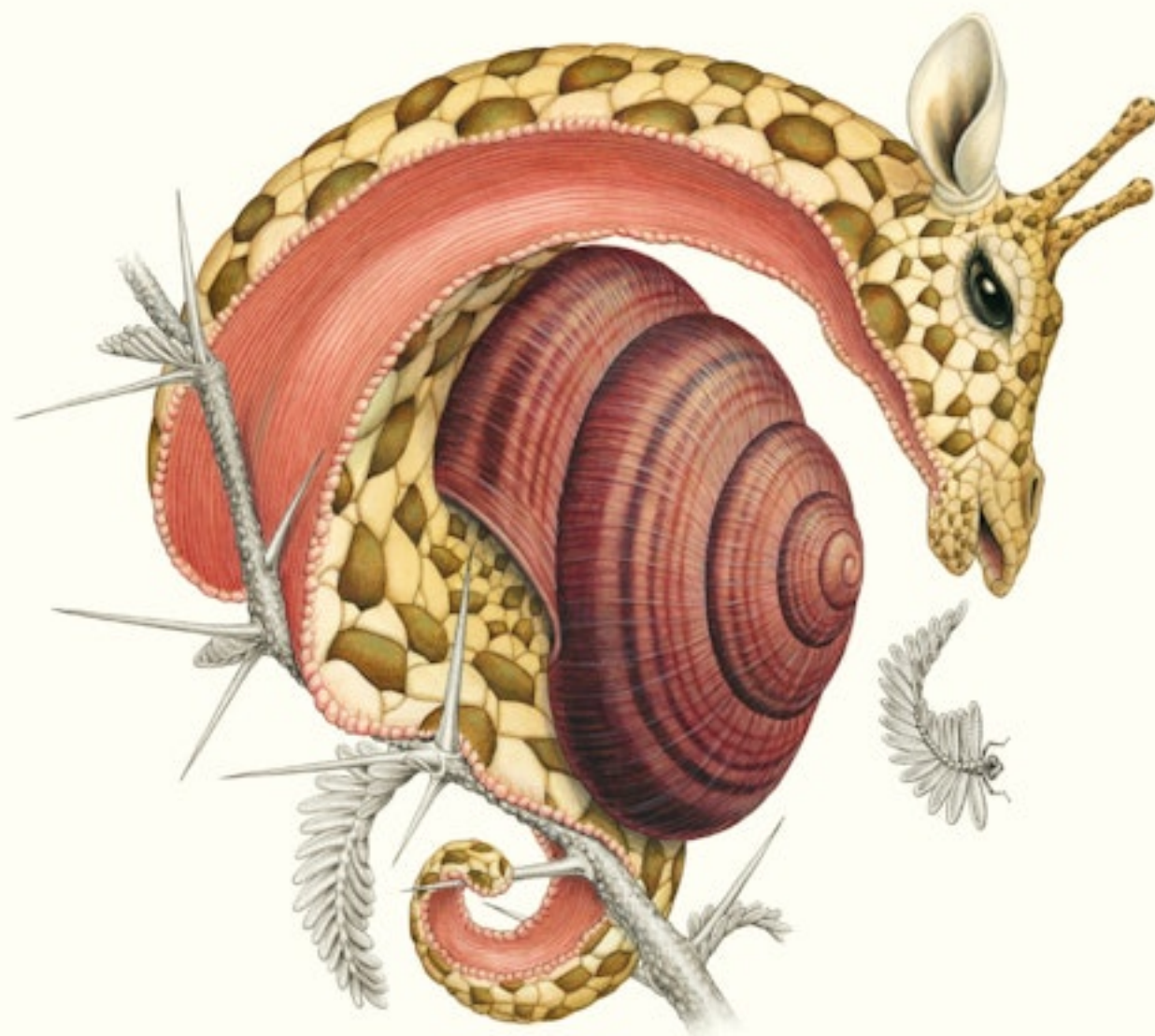
I descended, shuffling and sliding as I went. A surprise awaited me at the bottom: what I had mistaken for boulders

were in fact empty snail shells, the size of rugby balls. There must have been tens of thousands of them, piled high. They cracked as I stepped on them. Three steps and I was up to my knees in shards. Walking further seemed disrespectful.

I made my way around the edge of the burgundy plain, stopping every few metres. I was continually afforded new views as light and shadow hit the shells at different angles. I could have seen everything in an hour and a half, but I spent four hours there. And always that magical whistling of the wind, gliding over the snail shells, blowing into them, whispering and sighing. These sounds must have also reached Gilles Jansz's ears.

Publisher's note

Shortly before the book went to press, Mr. Stern provided us with new information concerning the map that Deleo had in his possession here. It turned out not to be a map of Terra Ultima, but of the Grain (or Pepper) Coast, a region in West Africa, located in present-day Liberia. In the National Archives' collection, Stern found similar maps that pointed to this fact. Stern considers it highly plausible that Gilles Jansz visited the Grain Coast before he travelled to Terra Ultima. The material from both areas must have become mixed up in the *Postiljon*'s hold. To our regret, there was insufficient time to properly incorporate this information into the book. We thank you for your understanding.



GYRAL GIRAFFE
Giraffe cochlosinata

Some gyral giraffes have a clockwise shell, others an anticlockwise one. About 30 percent of the animals appear to have been born in the wrong shell. Often, years pass before a gyral giraffe finds a companion in the same situation, or rather, the opposite one, and can swap shells.



PALLID OCTOPOSSUM
Octopossum leucostolus

The octopossum can lift up to 50 times its own body weight. It rests in trees, hanging from one tentacle like a mop. It was believed for many years that the tail no longer had a function, but it was later discovered that specimens that had no tail could no longer climb in a straight line.





SIX-LEGGED LADYBEAR
Coccinellurnus hexaped

The number of dots on the ladybear's back varies from 6 to 15, but is always a multiple of three. Twice in its life, the animal changes tree – always during the mating season. During the search for a mate, its fur changes colour from its usual deep red to a soft pink.



Let no one claim that Deleo lived in an ivory tower, a scholar looking down on the world from the safe comfort of his study. No, his discoveries came at a price and Deleo was prepared to pay it.

EXB 2, day 21

I'm managing pretty well not to see Calcar's¹ drawings in my mind all the time, although I must admit that I've never been reminded of his work so often. In particular, the drawing with the boils, swellings and blisters.

I'm relieved Calcar never depicted a bloated right hand. A dark red one, three times its normal size. A condition like this was too common and harmless to be worth drawing, I suspect.

When I poke it, the skin jiggles a little like a balloon. My finger leaves white patches behind.

I discovered the swelling this morning, when I was awoken by a fiendish pain. Its cause was a mystery. I hadn't banged my hand or cut it on anything. The only thing I could think of was that the six-legged ladybear might have something to do with it. Yesterday, I climbed a tree to take one from the highest branches. The animal had let me pick it up without a struggle and I had examined it from every angle. I stroked it too, I must add. It had wonderful, velvety soft fur.

Naturally stroking just one ladybear isn't sufficient as a study. So, this morning I climbed back up the tree, which wasn't easy with just one hand. I picked up two bears. I ran one under my armpit and stroked my cheek with the other. An hour later the swellings appeared. They are larger and the burning sensation is worse than in my hand. Glad to have the start of some kind of proof.

I won't be able to sleep on my side for a while. I'm curious whether I'll manage on my back. Eating and writing must also be undertaken in a different manner than accustomed.

The way Deleo continues to serve science in all circumstances is admirable! He does not describe the next step in his investigations, but I have no doubt he also had himself stung by a scorpion and bitten by a sunspider to rule out any other cause of the swellings.

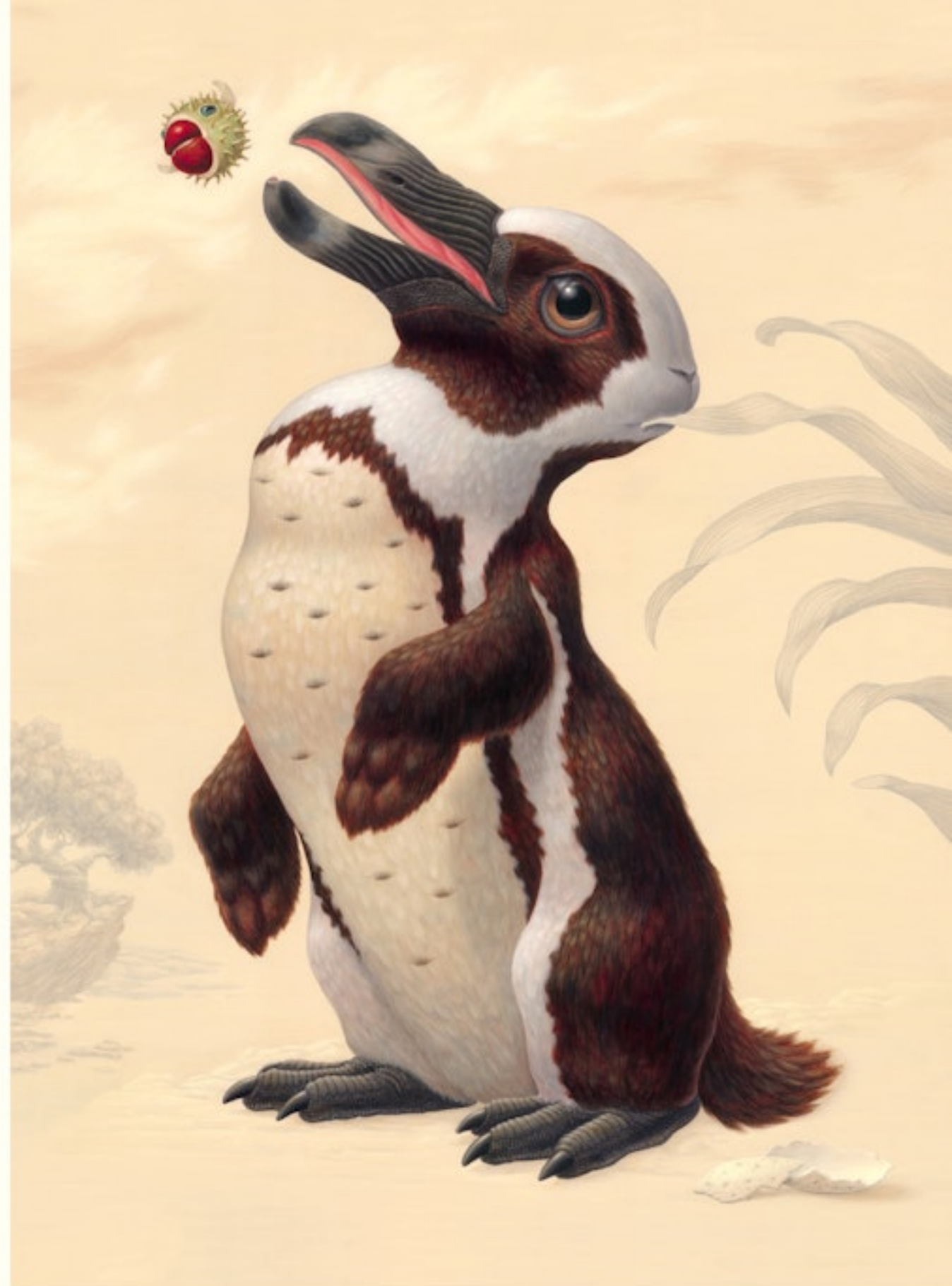
1 — Note from Stern: Jan van Calcar, or Kalkar (1499-1546) was a German artist, based in Italy. Amongst other things he was known for his revealing illustrations for Andreas Vesalius's (1514-64) anatomical book *Fabrics* (1543). It isn't clear exactly which drawings Deleo was referring to here.





LAPIN GUIN
Pinguicula vulgaris

The lapin guin confuses enemies with its elusive appearance. In a state of constant doubt, they linger nearby. Should they attack or flee? This state can last up to half an hour, after which the predators slink away, the lapin guin unharmed.





ARMOUR-PLATED JAY
Garrulus clipeatus

Aside from flies and seeds, the armour-plated jay also eats beetles. It can therefore be counted among the semi-carnivals. Its armour no longer serves as a place to keep its wings but is purely to protect its body. Given its reckless behaviour in flight, this is a necessity.



FLOWER-RUFFED JAY
Garrulus floricolaris

The flower-ruffed jay, with a folded collar, is most reminiscent of a badminton shuttle. It uses its collar, or ruff, to attract insects as well as potential mates. During courtship, the jay performs hair-raising antics in the air. Its ruff serves as an emergency brake. When opened in full flight, the ruff slows its speed by at least 50 kilometres per second.

EXP 2, day 42

"What a breath of fresh air to be able to paint animals in peace. Usually, they've had enough after a minute or so, and I need to be fortunate enough, too, for nothing to distract me.

Today that was the case. I was able to focus my full attention on a dozen golden-edged froggles. They, in turn, were planning to do nothing but hang around in a stream, right before my eyes.

It was remarkable enough that I'd come across the stream (2 metres wide and 30 centimetres deep). I'd expected the same as the previous days: sand, sand and more sand. The only water I expected to find was that in my flask.

I leaned forward, my shadow slid over the water. Young froggles darted away, the older ones floated about calmly. In no time, my easel, paint box and folding chair were ready. After fifteen minutes, I had sketched the outline of a juvenile specimen. I looked up from the paper and reached toward the stream to moisten a brush, but it had gone. In the spot where there had just been water, they were now only some dry reeds sticking out of the ground. The water had advanced 2 metres, froggles and all.

I took my things and set them next to the stream again. I dipped the brush into the water and began to colour in the sketch. Halfway through, I discovered that the water and the froggles had disappeared again. Again, I transplanted my easel, moved my paint box and shifted my chair, 3 metres this time.

The stream seemed to be avoiding me. Time and again it moved away. The froggles hopped after it and I shunted along. I had to move 16 times before I managed to produce reasonable depictions of the creatures. I packed up my belongings in relief. I'd painted for 6 hours non-stop.

I walked along the stream. Further up, it became wider and deeper, weaving its way endlessly into the plains. I felt heat rising from the sand and descending from above. My temples pounded, the corners of my mouth were dry. Red dots began to dance before my eyes.

It seems respectful to stop reproducing these notes here. What business is it of the reader that Deleo writes that he saw mouse carp swimming? In the desert? Wasn't it miraculous enough that he had encountered water? I put it down to sunstroke. Someone else might have published this information, but I'll pass.



GOLDEN-EDGED FROGGLE
Scarabaerana aurora

The golden-edged froggle's most powerful organ is its tongue. It collects food (beetles and flies) with it, but remarkably also uses it as a landing pad when jumping. Its front legs are too fragile to take the pressure when it jumps (up to 1 metres in distance), so landing on its tongue is the solution.



THE THIRD EXPEDITION

95 days - Tropical zone - 483 km



Deleo returned from his second expedition, his mind filled with impressions and a pile of drawings in his possession. Once back in civilisation, he longed for just two things: some time, and the peace and quiet to enjoy working through his notes and sketches. He didn't get either. He'd only just returned when the editor-in-chief of the journal *Contemporary Discoveries in Biology* got in touch. She felt it was high time Deleo ordered and presented the findings of his expeditions – in her magazine, of course. She foresaw that this would enable him to reach colleagues all over the world in one fell swoop, something that lectures alone could not achieve. Deleo accepted her offer. It felt like a reward for his efforts. Perhaps it was even a first step toward recognition, he mused in his diary.

The article was published a couple of months later. It contained illustrations of Poseidon's gorillrus, the toucan twin crab and the armour-plated jay. Due to the costs, the illustrations were not printed in colour alas, but in black and white. Nevertheless, his account made a splash. Never before had an article in *Contemporary Discoveries*

caused so many readers to write in. 'There was praise and enthusiasm. So thrilled to witness this,' professor emeritus Magnus Onka wrote to the journal. 'Bravo to Deleo for refusing to believe that our entire planet had already been discovered.'

Dr. Van Maerlant complimented the Latin names Deleo gave to his discoveries. 'Just pronouncing them is a delight. Moreover, they fit seamlessly with the names of animal species we already know, lending the animals of Terra Ultima something familiar.'

At the same time, Deleo's story was met with suspicion and doubt in some quarters.

A colleague from Argentina wanted to know why Deleo only used drawings to record his findings. 'It's certainly "romantic" but surely there are more modern ways of gathering evidence!' Kees Moeliker, director of the Natural History Museum in Rotterdam challenged Deleo: 'Why don't you bring an animal back with you next time? You could transport it intact in a bucket of ethanol.'

Other colleagues noted that the animals Deleo portrayed were all 'cute, cuddly and eye-catching'. 'Many will be charmed by them, but I wonder whether they provide a complete picture of Terra Ultima,' wrote Dr. Mozes Snodgrass. 'Do no cockroaches live there? Or has Deleo taken the pick of the bunch?'

And so, the scientific community began to form opinions on Terra Ultima. It did Deleo good to share his discoveries. He enjoyed the pleasure his colleagues got from it, as well as their critical questions. Yet he also had his concerns. Any new evidence he put forward would draw more attention to Terra Ultima. Hadn't he already revealed too much? And then the time taken up replying to everyone... 'Days go by,' Deleo sighs in his diary. 'Shouldn't I be spending that time on Terra Ultima?'

The weight on Deleo's shoulders grew heavier, he increasingly felt the need to shake it off. All in all, he could only think of one solution: a new expedition.

Deleo took stock: 'I have explored the coast and the desert. Now it's time for the Arctic Circle.' (A polar circle on Terra Ultima? I couldn't find anything in the archives to suggest this. Was it revealed to Deleo in a dream? Or did the evidence not reach the archive? I suspect the latter).

He reinforces his ship and his canoe so that the ice won't break them. He packs extra pencils, in case the ink in his pens freezes. The list of provisions grows: padded jacket, snowshoes, mittens, earmuffs, two pairs of white long johns. To reach the pole, he has to cross an inland sea in southern Terra Ultima, Deleo has calculated. But first he must find the channel that will take him to the sea. After more than a month of sailing, Deleo reaches Terra Ultima. He floats along the coast for days, until he spots the channel. It is narrow, overshadowed and easy to overlook. Deleo sails up it. Towering on either side of the boat are rock walls that endlessly echo the sound of his plumb line plunging. The further he goes, the colder it gets. He can see his own breath.

Arriving at the inland sea, he sails into the mist. Visibility is 50 metres at the most.

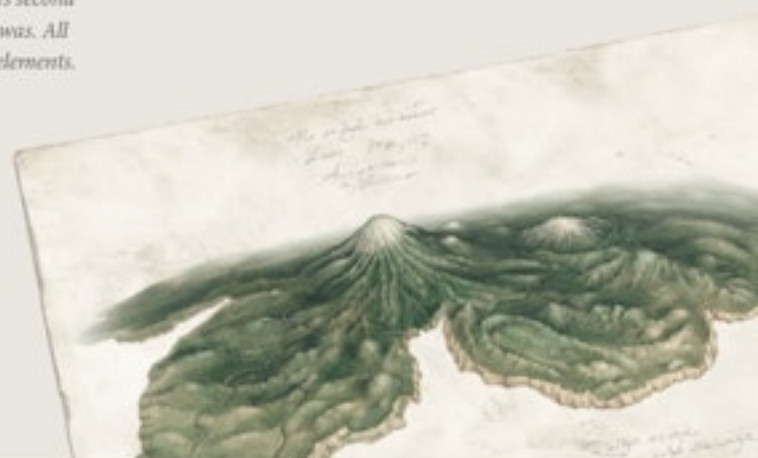
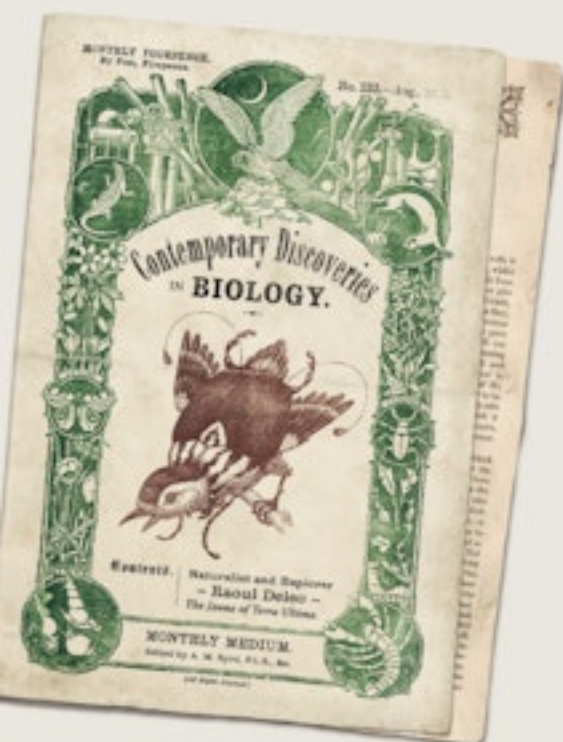
After two days of sailing, the mist lifted. No land to be seen, not even on the most distant horizon. What's more, it was impossible to orientate myself, the needle of the compass spun like a watch's second counter. No idea where the pole was. All I could do was surrender to the elements.

It gradually becomes warmer. Deleo takes off his padded jacket. When the sun breaks through the clouds, his ear warmers are thrown into the hold. The sun turns itself up a notch and Deleo ends up in just his long johns on deck. Then the contours of land begin to emerge.

It was like sailing into a diorama. As if someone had cut mountains out of green cardboard and stuck them in a diagonal row in a clear blue sea. The mountains at the rear formed an elongated chain covered with trees, full and exuberant. In two places, a snowy mountain peak protruded from the greenery. Waterfalls clattered from the slopes. The shadows of clouds slid across the landscape.

Deleo sets course at random for the centre of the mountain range. When he reaches its foot, a warm wind blows his ship into a vast mangrove swamp. After half a day of navigating tree roots and shallows, he spots a small beach. He moors there and sets up camp. He has arrived, for the third time. In the tropics now.

He surveys his polar equipment with amusement. Most likely only the canoe will be of any use here.





SHEEN GREEN HAREFLY
Libellula lagoformosa

The sheen green harefly can stretch both upper and underjaws to the extreme. Fossilised leaves with bite marks have been found from as far back as the Devonian period (419–358 million years ago). Some marks suggest an extraordinary over- and underbite. An early ancestor of the sheen green harefly was probably responsible.



HONEY-BILLED STROLLER
Peripatus mellivestrus

The honey-billed stroller spins a cocoon with its beak. It leaves the orange-coloured capsule open on one side and decorates the opening with a bright blue rim. The cocoon somewhat resembles the calyx of a carnivorous plant and spreads an intoxicating smell that attracts all kinds of welcome and unwelcome visitors.



EXP 3, day 23

'Dada, dada.'

There was no doubt about it: I'd heard a baby babbling. It was loud and clear against the monotonous rustling, murmuring and chirping that carried on here day and night. Oh, I thought, so there are people here after all. I felt both excitement and disappointment.

Which direction had the babbling come from? I waited tensely for new coos. I wasn't the only one, I soon noted. Around 20 metres away was a wine-red bird, at least as tall as me. It reminded me of an elephant with its large ears and trunk. Or were they wings and a neck?

I watched as it spread its ears and curled the edges inward a little, like a radar dish. It surveyed its surroundings with a slow movement from left to right. Its trunk swayed along, its head just above the ground. Suddenly it froze. Had it heard a sound? Then it crowed: 'Dada, dada.' After a few seconds, a response followed from deeper in the jungle – 'Dada, dada.' Not people at all, I thought in relief. Birds. A call and response game ensued, a cheerful babbling back and forth. I was fortunate to have found myself in the middle of a mating ritual.

As it uttered its cries, the bird stepped cautiously in the direction the reply was coming from. I crept after it, hiding behind tree trunks. In a clearing, the bird stopped and took one more quiet step. It braced itself and fixed its gaze on a spot just ahead. I held my breath. The mate could appear at any moment, his or her cries were very loud now.

Then the bird cooed one last time and thrust out its open beak. It threw something in the air. It was a mango-like fruit that whirled upward, emitting a drawn-out screech like a siren. When the fruit landed, the bird swallowed it in a single gulp. I could see it travelling down its neck. The smothered sounds of a baby's cries came from its throat.

The bird relaxed and shook out its feathers. It strolled on at leisure. A twig cracked.

Relationships... It's the same old song.
The beginning is better than the ending.



FLEEING ELEPHOENIX
Dromopteryx elephoenix

Deleo has a theory that every two years, the elephoenix travels 3,500 kilometres to visit its breeding grounds. There, the female digs both her nest and herself into the sand, leaving only her head and trunk above the surface. The eggs take a month to hatch. Accompanied by her new offspring, the return journey takes her, on average, three times longer than the outward journey.

EXP 3, day 28

The river I canoed along was wide but calm, its current rapid but manageable.

No whirlpools or dams in sight. I was therefore unprepared for the chasm that suddenly opened up before me.

It ran across the full width of the river like a crack. The water, propelling me forward, was plunging right into it. Water from the other side also thundered down. My canoe shot across it at full speed, its tip jamming into the opposite bank with a grating sound. I was launched forward, my head hit the bottom of the canoe.

When I came to and dizzily opened my eyes, I saw blue sky. There was a rushing sound all around me. I peered over the edge of the canoe and saw that I was suspended above the gap. Below me, water fizzed and churned. I prodded the sides with my paddle. The canoe was solidly wedged, it was impossible to capsize – which was a minor reassurance.

[...]

As I was suspended there, a question that had been asked years ago at one of my lectures popped into my mind. 'If you could choose between Terra Ultima or here, which would it be?' I'd replied that I'd most likely choose a coffee break, which had raised a laugh. Afterwards, we met. Stern was his name: Noah J. Stern. I knew I'd shrugged off his question but at the time it wasn't important to me. That only came later, the more I visited Terra Ultima.

Now it was as though I was suspended between two answers. On the one hand, I was being forced forward, deeper and deeper into Terra Ultima, toward the unknown and the uncertain. On the other hand, I was being pushed back, toward the known, my colleagues, acclaim.

I tied the paddle to the side of the canoe and attached the splash sail. I gripped the canoe firmly with both hands. Then, using my full force, I threw my upper body to one side. The canoe revolved on its tips onto its side until I was hanging upside down, it spun even further, and I was upright again. I was free. Below me the noise swelled, water reaching up.

With a movement of my hips, I jerked the front of the canoe so that it slid down the edge of the chasm. With a controlled motion, I shot into the swirling depths.



NON PLUS ULTRA ?

Adrian



BUTTERFLY CHICKADEE
Psychornis leucopsis

Over the course of the year, the skull of the butterfly chickadee shrinks and grows. The growth occurs during the two months when the chickadee is preparing for winter by hiding its food. The more boards it has to remember, the bigger its head gets. Later, as it seeks out and eats the supplies, its skull gradually shrinks back to its original size.



BLUE FANTAILED FROG
Rhipidurana caerulea

The fantailed frog is mainly active at night, during the daytime it shelters from the sun. At the hottest part of the day, it can lower its body temperature by as much as 15°C. It belongs to the beak-hatcher species who carry their offspring in their vocal sac until they have grown wings. Once they have, they are spat out, one by one, into the air.

EXP 3, day 43/44

Yesterday, I started describing the plants on one of the biggest mountains here. I was just bending over a goanna fern when a noise swelled from below. It came from seven rivulets, flowing from different directions. Once they'd reached the foot of the mountain, they energetically set about climbing it. Soon they were gushing past me on both sides. They were teaming with mouse carp that swam up the mountain at a rate of knots.

I recognised these streams; I'd seen them before. The creek on the beach I'd come across during my first visit... the stream with the froglets that had kept me busy on a later expedition...

I abandoned the vegetation and clambered upward with the streams. Over tree roots and mossy boulders, past tree trunks and ferns, determined to follow them to the very end this time. It was quite a trek. I skipped breaks and climbed the whole night. The temperature dropped, the air grew thin.

Over the course of the following morning, I noticed the vegetation becoming sparser. The streams raced their way upward around me. After a few hundred metres, we reached the treeline. There was a rocky strip of no-man's-land, beyond which a glacier rose up. The streams and the mouse carp put on a final spurt. Shortly before the glacier, they launched themselves from the rocks several feet up the wall of ice. Water and creatures tumbled through the air, glittering in the sun.

There, high up, a miracle took place: in the few seconds between launching themselves and landing, the mouse carp spawned. They hurled shiny strands of red eggs into the air just before they hit the ice, slid down a few feet and froze solid. Immediately they were buried by another wave.

In fifteen minutes, all the streams had turned to ice. The mouse carp were suspended silently in the crystal-clear glacier – curled, twisted, upside down, their legs and fins pointing in all directions. Between them floated strings of eggs.

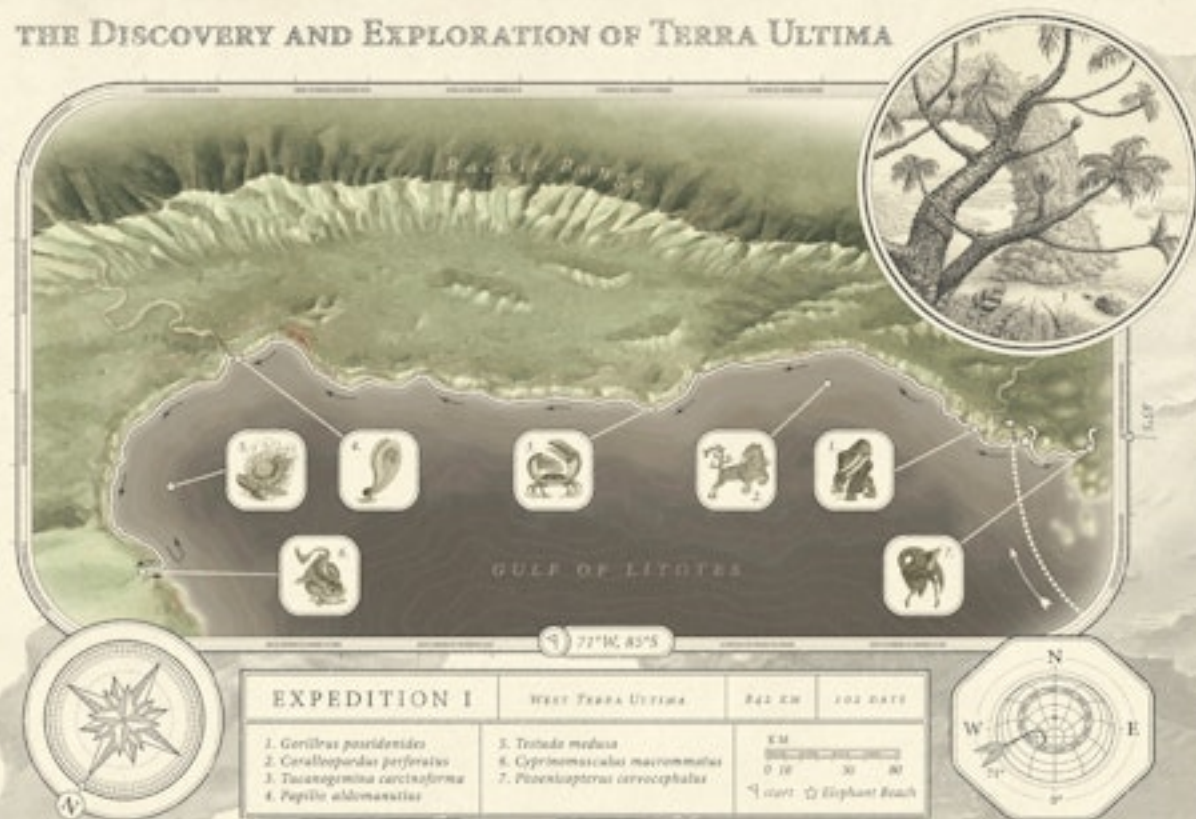
How much time passed before I recovered from the spectacle? Half an hour, an hour? The sun was high in the sky by now and at the top of the mountain it was peaceful, magnificent and luminous.

My gaze roamed over the forests below me and further toward the horizon. In the distance, something silvery appeared in the sky. I thought back to my very first encounter with the mouse carp, years ago on the beach. I thought of everything I had experienced and discovered on Terra Ultima since then! How much was I still discovering, day after day.

There at the foot of the glacier, I suddenly realised that I no longer feel like an outsider. I have become part of Terra Ultima and it of me. I have arrived.



THE DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION OF TERRA ULTIMA



[THE FIRST THREE EXPEDITIONS]





WIND WALTZER
Zaicophytus anemophorus

Without each other, the plants and animals that form the wind waltzer wouldn't be able to exist. The whole specimen can roll up into a ball and let itself be carried by the wind, similar to tumbleweed.



AFTERWORD

As an explorer, you don't know beforehand what your journey will yield. I know this first hand. But having to fumble about in the dark afterwards, well, this is the first time. Here at home, following my journey through Deleo's archives.

Sure, I know more about Terra Ultima than I used to. And yet, the question our fellow scientist Snodgrass asked in *Contemporary Discoveries* is bugging me. Do I know everything now? Do all the 'cute, cuddly and eye-catching' creatures that Deleo showed us really tell the whole story?

The archives included a note that sheds some light on the matter. While compiling this book, I read it more than once and set it aside. I honestly didn't know what to make of it. In the note, entitled 'Childhood Memory', Deleo describes his first encounter with 'nature in all its perfection'. He was seven and his uncle Carolus had set him down before an enormous book. It was open at an illustration of a winding tree. There were nameplates hanging from its branches. The tree of life. Using the tree as a basis, Uncle Carolus explained how nature worked. How one animal species evolves from another. How each animal and plant occupies their own special place. His uncle solemnly listed the Latin names biologists use to classify different species: *Homo sapiens*, *Felis catus*, *Gorilla gina*. They are concise names, unique and understandable to everyone, wherever you are in the world.

The young Deleo was astounded. How clear and simple nature was! How accurately biologists were able to describe and name it!

But then:

'Bang! My uncle slammed the book shut. I was startled out of my state of admiration. 'All good and well,' he said, 'but far too simple. As if nature can be pigeonholed and named. This story says more about people. They get confused when they lose their grip on nature and cannot control it.'

On Terra Ultima, I am regularly reminded of Uncle Carolus's wise words. The nature there is too wondrous and enigmatic for classifications and trees of life. It would cause confusion if I portrayed it that way.

A long time ago, I decided to give just a hint of things. To reveal, for now, only animals that have something familiar and beautiful, pleasant and reassuring about them. I will give them names that sound common enough and raise few questions. Let's see how people react to them first, before I reveal the continent in its full richness and variety.

I fear there's no getting around it: the archive I received was not only chaotic – it was incomplete.

I have conquered the chaos. Just look at this book. So, surely, I will be able to help Deleo paint a complete picture in due course?

Deep in his heart, he knows it must come. So why the excuses? Why wait and see? I will set aside some time in my diary in advance, I have no objections. When Deleo is back from his fourth expedition, we can get straight to work.



REGISTER

SCIENTIFIC NAME (ICZN)*

COMMON NAME

PAGE

1	<i>Apicula canaria</i>	Canary bumblebee	8
2	<i>Ardea rostrupectinata</i>	Comb-billed heron	
3	<i>Batrachopus leucostethus</i>	White-bellied frogfoot	
4	<i>Coccinella catellata</i>	Lady diplobug	73
5	<i>Coccinellus hexapedus</i>	Six-legged ladybear	44, 45
6	<i>Coralleopardus perforatus</i>	Coral leopard	26, 27
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10	<i>Dromopteryx elephoenix</i>	Fleeting elephoenix	63
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12	<i>Garrulus cipeatus</i>	Armour-plated jay	8, 32, 56, 75
13	<i>Garrulus florcollaris</i>	Flower-ruffed jay	50
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15	<i>Gorillas poseidenides</i>	Poseidon's gorillrus	21, 25
16	<i>Harpypops cornuperforans</i>	Horned harpy eagle	8, 20
17	<i>Hirundo zygopteryx</i>	Hironfly	8, 9
18	<i>Ichmura pycnophylla</i>	Dense damselfly	8, 41
19	<i>Leonata Chimaera</i>	Lion sprout	72
20	<i>Libellula lagiformosa</i>	Sheen green harefly	58, 59
21	<i>Maiestigallus maxilobus</i>	Majestic fowl	10
22	<i>Nigropallus hyulatus</i>	Buzz chick	8, 31
23	<i>Nyctea unguilata</i>	Ungulated snowy owl	
24	<i>Octopusum leucostolum</i>	Pallid octopusum	8, 14, 42, 43
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26	<i>Oxyctus hippocastaneus</i>	Chestnut bug	49
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29	<i>Papiliomaena glauca</i>	Blue sprat	72
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31	<i>Perca Cheilodonia</i>	Perch martin	10
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34	<i>Pholidotus rostrifodiens</i>	Scaled poker	11
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	Embryo <i>Pingulagus pseudopticus</i>	Embryonic lapin guin	48
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38	<i>Ramphastos oxyptalides</i>	Sabretooth toucan	57
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45	<i>Zelicophytus anemophorus</i>	Wind waltzer	72

* International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature

PHYLOGENETIC FAMILY TREE TERRA ULTIMA

- THE FIRST EXPEDITION
- THE SECOND EXPEDITION
- THE THIRD EXPEDITION
- FOUND IN THE POSTULON'S WORLD





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