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Previous: “Clearing Up – Coast of Sicily” by Andreas
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THE ISLAND OF LOST OBJECTS

JACKY BOWRING
I recently came across these documents during my research at the Royal Geographical Society in London. The papers detail the exploration of the enigmatic Island of Lost Objects. Located at 0.00°N 0.00°E, the island marks the world’s geographical cipher, the null point. Uncannily, it seems that the island was not always at its current location. I was astonished to find that it had previously been located at the antipodal point, its geographical Other. At its former location it was known as Howland Island, and is still shown as such on some maps. It is a flat, uninhabited island, forlorn and windswept. Not only is the Island a kind of phantom, its now non-existent Other persists as an after-image. There is an irresolvable sense of presence and absence, investing the Island with an aura of loss.

The documents recounted a number of curious elements on the island. A well is mysteriously noted as being “of seemingly infinite depth,” perhaps an extreme type of wishing well. An altar and a beacon were further signals of hope in the face of loss. Alongside these votive elements of hope, were various forms of searching: a lookout tower, an acoustic mirror, and a perimeter track worn into the ground from scouring the horizon. It struck me that these practices of hoping and searching were all futile rituals, unlikely to yield a result. Instead, I realized—however perverse this might be—that the island is a place for the love of loss, for the prolonging of longing. Its own absence from its origin amplifies this. The island is evidently for the contemplation of all lost objects: love, civilizations, innocence, missing persons, MH370, passenger pigeons, the Great Buddha of Bamiyan. The endless litany of lost objects, the gaping lacunae in our lives – extinctions, misplacements, destructions, death.
Paper presented to the Royal Geographical Society, London, documenting the exploration of the curious phenomenon of the Island of Lost Objects, located at 0°N, 0°E.

Figure 1. Map of the voyage of the Sigmund (indicated by a dotted line), showing the location of the Island of Lost Objects, observed near the Gulf of Guinea.
Fig. 2. Plan of Island

Fig. 3. Section AB
Fig. 4. The geology of the Island of Lost Objects (circled) indicates its origin in the mid-Pacific, where it was once Howland Island, marked with an X. Remanence\(^1\) has been detected at the island's previous location.

\[1.\text{ Remanence: in physics a residual magnetism, and in metaphysics the persistence of presence.}\]
LEGEND

a. Well of apparently infinite depth

b. Beacon possibly able to support a flame, but without a fuel source

c. Tower of approx. 25m with lookout at uppermost level

d. Ruins of dwellings and unidentifiable statues

e. Altar with evidence of offerings and mementoes in stages of decay

f. Track worn into perimeter of island

g. Acoustic mirror with a concave surface to amplify distant sounds (similar to examples on the south coast of England)

Fig. 5. Plan made on site, noting the perplexing elements located on the Island of Lost Objects (photographers' acknowledgements to be advised)

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