

SPECIAL ISSUE

ANNALS OF

IMPROBABLE RESEARCH



GEOGRAPHY & TEABAGGING



**Cartozology,
Panhandling Geography,
Teabagging Research...**

MARCH | APRIL 2010 (volume 16, number 2) \$6.50 US | \$9.50 CAN



Cartozoology

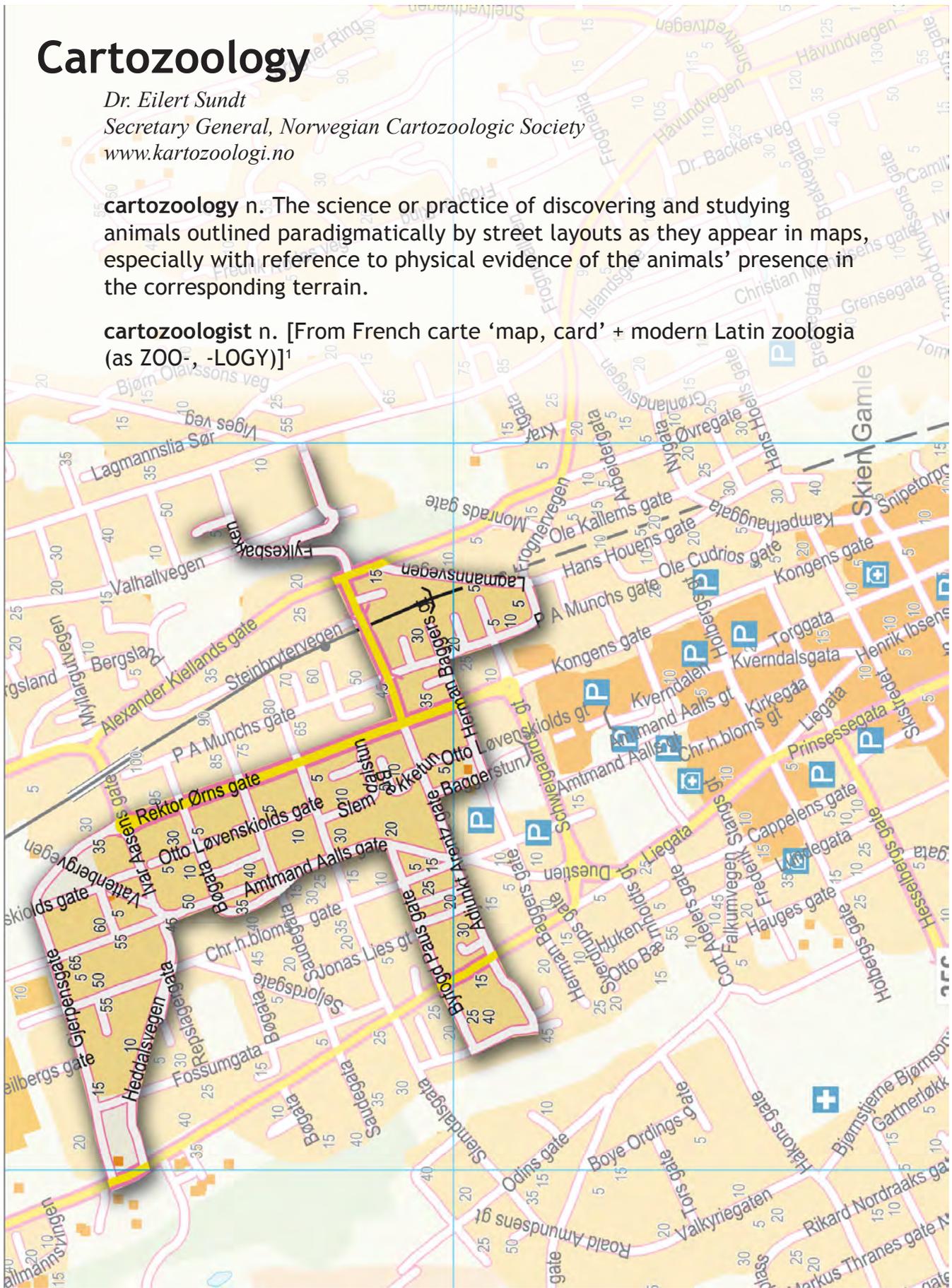
Dr. Eilert Sundt

Secretary General, Norwegian Cartozoologic Society

www.kartozoologi.no

cartozoology n. The science or practice of discovering and studying animals outlined paradigmatically by street layouts as they appear in maps, especially with reference to physical evidence of the animals' presence in the corresponding terrain.

cartozoologist n. [From French *carte* 'map, card' + modern Latin *zoologia* (as *ZOO-*, *-LOGY*)]¹



As the dictionary definition indicates, cartozoology is a study of maps: a search for animal outlines hidden in the street layouts primarily of cities. But equally, if not more importantly, it is a field study, a study of the terrain: the animal outline is meticulously explored on foot. In cartozoological terms, this exploration is referred to as a “con-tour”.

Cartozoology in Norway, as in the world at large, is a young science. Tor Åge Bringsværd’s seminal article “Den store fisken i Reykjavik” (“The big fish in Reykjavik”)² is generally accepted as the first properly cartozoological work. The term “cartozoology” is more recent still. The first recorded instance in print is from Bringsværd’s book *London*³ from 2003. The archives of the Norwegian Cartozoologic Society show the term in use in private correspondence in February 2003. In other words, we are dealing not with a young, but virtually an infant science. Nevertheless, we find that not only has a cartozoologic method been developed, but also elements of self-reflection and a critical methodology can be found in the cartozoological texts. As yet no fully-fledged meta-cartozoology can be said to have emerged; this article is intended as a first seed.

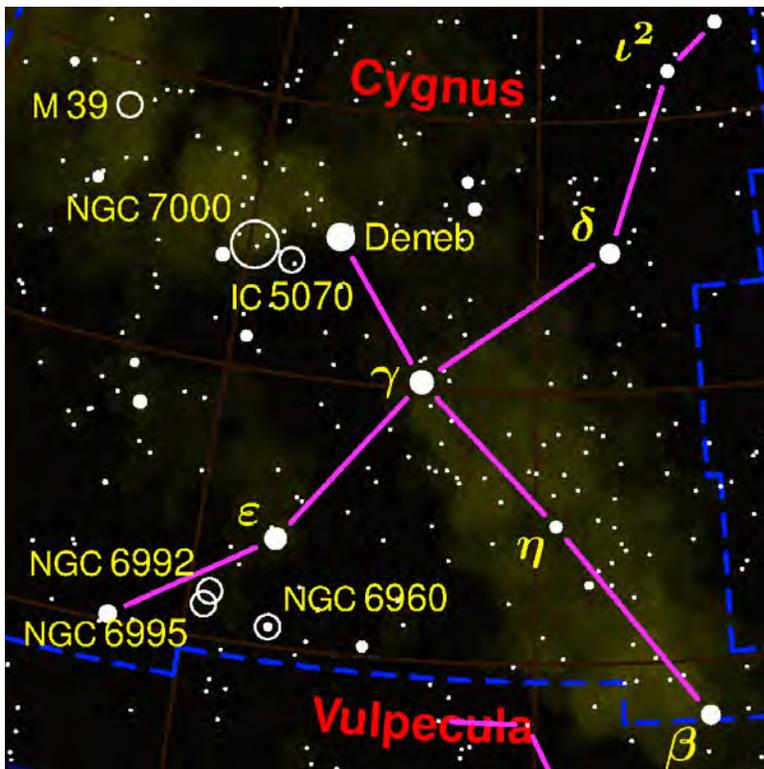
The Origins of Cartozoology

Even though cartozoology is a neophyte in the academic arena, it has of course not sprung full-born out of nothing. As Aphrodite rose from the ocean foam, cartozoology has been shaped by ideas and thought currents that have undulated through human consciousness since the beginning of history.

A fundamental trait of the human psyche is our search for meaning and understanding in addition to mere knowledge. This wish is naturally accompanied by a deep assumption that the meaning of existence is inscribed in the world, in the shape of more or less hidden messages that may be read and understood by she who acquires the requisite knowledge and skill. These are important ingredients in the ideas whence cartozoology sprang forth.

In cultural history, we find several cases of discovery and examination of emerging animal shapes that have so much in common with modern cartozoology that they rightly may be described as examples of proto-cartozoology. A clear example is the surveying of celestial constellations. However, a critical examination of a fairly typical example, the constellation Cygnus (the Swan), juxtaposed with an image of an actual swan should illustrate that this is not particularly fruitful from a cartozoological point of view.

The format of this article prohibits a detailed treatment of all proto-cartozoological precursors of the modern science; such a project should be reserved for a future monograph. In this short article we jump instead to contemporary literature.



An early example of cartozoology: the constellation Cygnus the swan, and for comparison, a swan.

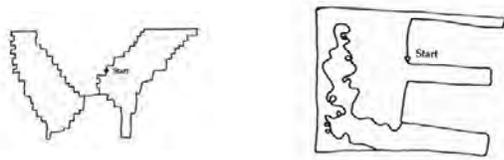


Cartozoology continued >

Cartozology (continued)

Cartozology and the Humanities

Inasmuch as cartozology finds its research material exclusively in cultural landscapes it has at least one foot firmly planted in the humanities. It should come as no surprise, then, that we find recent cases of proto-cartozology⁴ in literature. Maybe the most striking example is found in Paul Auster's novel *City of Glass* from the New York Trilogy.⁵ The protagonist plots the apparently aimless wanderings of a certain Mr. Stallman around New York and finds that he seems to be writing "THE TOWER OF BABEL" in the city streets. Thus Auster ends up in a kind of cartotypography.



Fictional examples of cartozology, from Paul Auster's novel *City of Glass*.

Nevertheless, this literary example illustrates important aspects of cartozological research: The raw materials—cartographic representations of the cityscape—rarely yield clear, unambiguous images. Cartozological research is often meticulous: only in exceptional cases is a cartozological contour successfully drawn in the first attempt. Innumerable iterations may lie behind even the simplest observation. In parallel with this contour tracing, actual species determination takes place in a hermeneutic interaction. The discovery of recognisable antlers or a characteristic auricle at one end of an animal may well result in the nether extremities at the opposite end being redrawn according to a different set of streets, and small paws may easily be transformed into larger hooves.

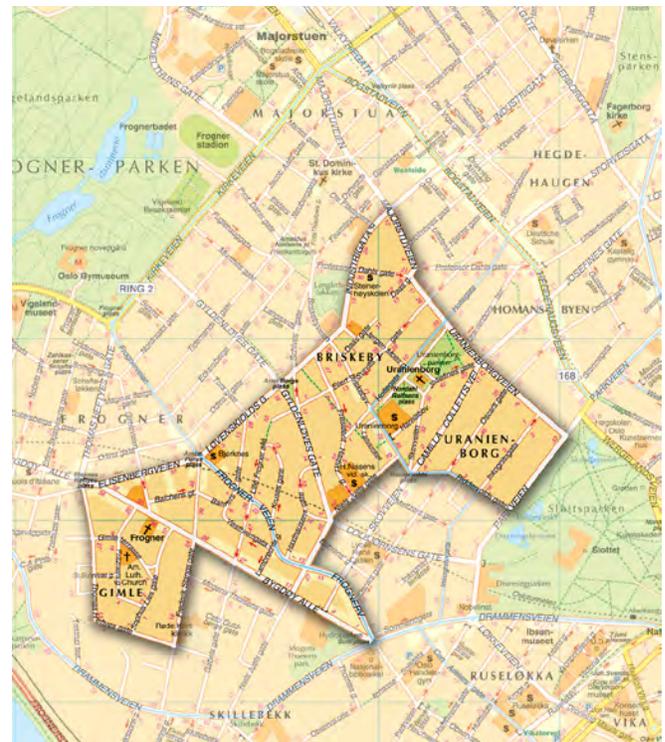
Con-tours in Hammerfest

Here are some con-tours in the city of Hammerfest, Finland.

The West Side Riesenterrier is the first cartozological specimen to be properly documented. As the name indicates, it is a formidably large beast. Crossing the embassy area and one of the main shopping streets in Oslo, it boasts a particularly rich habitat. Amateur explorers should, however, note that some properties along the con-tour have restrictions on photography. Failure to observe these restrictions may result in police reprimands, as the secretariat general have learned at some cost.



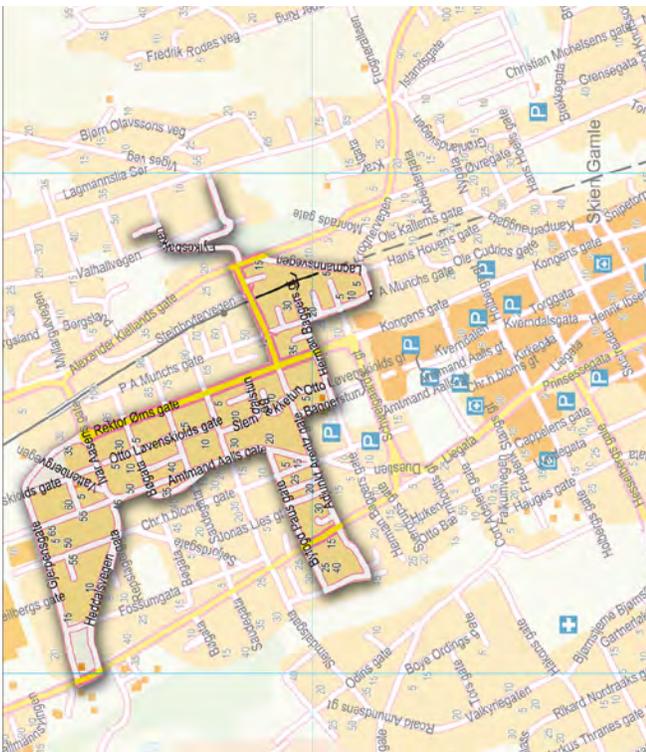
The Nose-Ringed Dala Horse spans the distance from the Norwegian parliament to Oslo City Hall. Interestingly, at precisely the point where the underside of its lifted tail joins its hindquarters, we find the parliamentary information service. Being an iconic Swedish figure, the presence of a Dala horse in the centre of the Norwegian capital is something of a mystery.





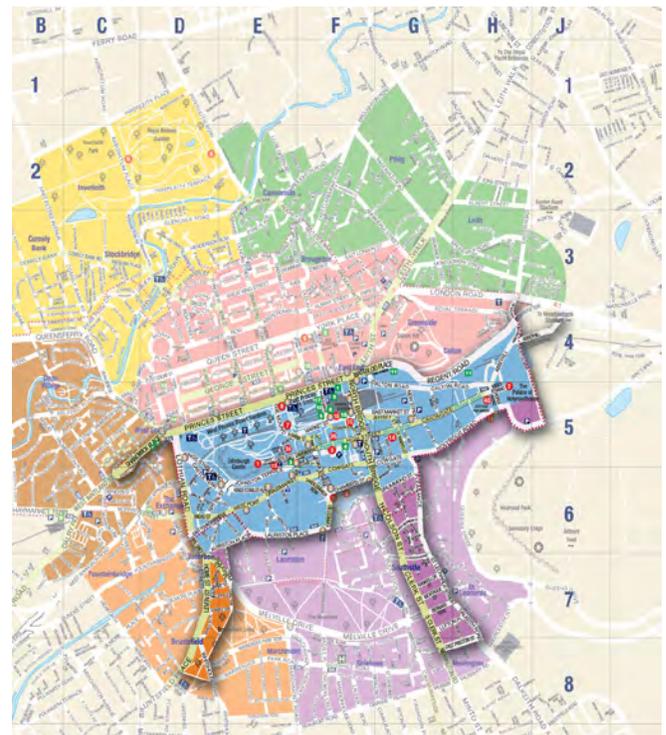
The Ugly Duckling is a living testament to Danish storyteller Hans Christian Andersen's life and work in the streets of Copenhagen. An entire book has been published to document the richness of this con-tour alone.⁶

The Skien Stag marks the birthplace of the highly acclaimed father of cartozooology, Tor Åge Bringsværd. The stag was also chosen as the emblem for the Norwegian city of Skien's recent 1,000-year anniversary,⁷ making the cartozooological find all the more fitting.



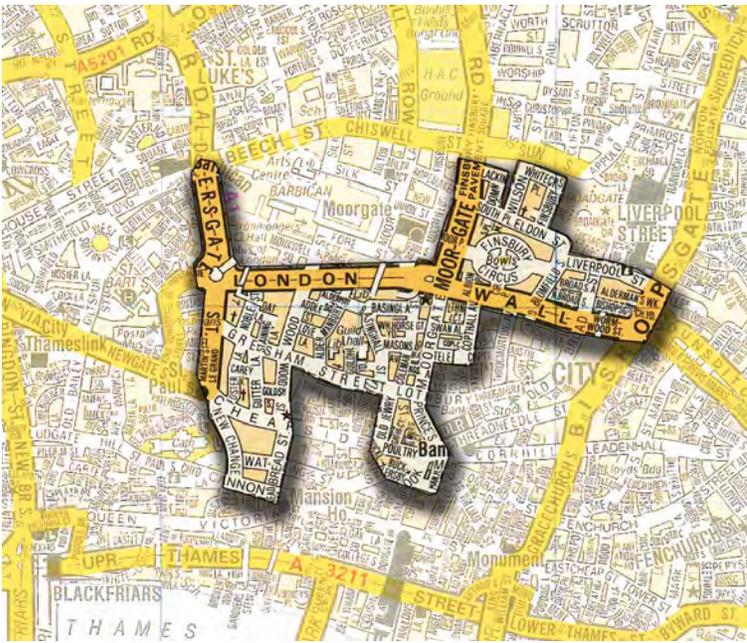
The Obese Stamshound bears witness to surprising secrets hidden in the small Norwegian fishing village of Stamsund, involving space exploration and the first dog in orbit.

The Scottish Culture Cow is the Everest of cartozooology. With a contour length of roughly 21 kilometres (or half a marathon) through the streets of Edinburgh, it is rarely completed in one day.



Cartozooology continued >

Cartozology (continued)



The Mercantile Mongrel Dog prowls the heart of the City of London. Given the sheer variety and denseness of detail that is characteristic of London, this con-tour is best explored in the company of friends.

The Danish Mountain Stork is situated near one of Denmark's most impressive mountain plateaus, Ejer Bjerge, and its con-tour makes for a pleasant walk around the charming town of Skanderborg.

A Call for Research Contributions

The Norwegian Cartozoological Society was founded in Oslo on 19 June 2003, with a mission to map the hidden two-dimensional animal life in our close surroundings. The society is led by (and consists of) a secretariat comprising three secretaries general: as of this writing, they are Tor Åge Bringsværd, Roger Pihl and Eilert Sundt. In order to further cartozoological research worldwide, we call upon the readers of the *Annals of Improbable Research* to examine their local surroundings for cartozoological specimens.

A cartozoological exploration takes place in two phases: First the animal is discovered by scrutiny of a suitable street map. Then the contour of the animal is traced on foot in the corresponding terrain, and all animal life en route is documented by notes and preferably photographs.

As an aide to novice cartozoologists, we publish the society's tips for Cartozoological Expeditions:⁸

1. Do not set out on longer expeditions without necessary training. Many cartozoological expeditions are long and arduous and require the participants to be in good physical shape.



2. Let someone know where you are going. As cartozoological expeditions almost always follow paths less well trodden, it is essential that any rescue operations know where to look.
3. Respect the weather and the weather reports. Many have been surprised by inclement weather, even in big cities. If the expedition takes place on a Sunday or public holiday, the range of available shelter in nearby shops will, in many parts of the world, be limited. Convenience stores and churches often provide adequate shelter.
4. Listen to experienced city folk. We encourage talking to whomever you meet along your way before you venture into unknown territory. This can yield a lot of useful information when observing the cartozoological contour.
5. Be prepared for inclement weather, even on short expeditions. Always bring an umbrella, credit cards, a camera, and whatever the city in question demands. Wet is wet, wherever you are, and an expedition may well end in failure if you fail to take basic precautions. Some establishments do not accept credit cards, and you may have to resort to cash ("money").

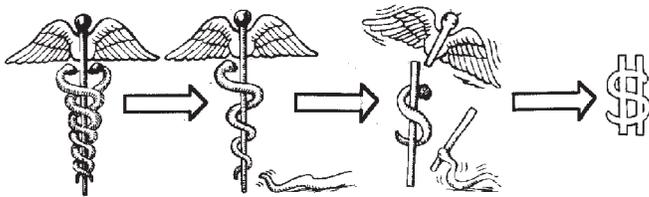
6. Remember your map and compass. Even though most city streets are sign-posted, it is all too easy to get lost.
7. Never walk alone. Four cartozoological eyes see better than two. Six see better than four, and so on. And besides, any coffee stops en route are much nicer with company.
8. Turn back in time. There is no shame in turning. The city will in all likelihood not be demolished tomorrow, and will still be there to be explored another day. The city planners are not that efficient.
9. Save your strength. Seek a café if necessary. It may be wise to divide an expedition into several stages (see tip #8). Check into a hotel or other suitable accommodation if rest becomes vital. Be aware that sleeping in parks is illegal in many jurisdictions.

“The city planners are not that efficient.”

Notes

- ¹ *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011.
- ² First published in *Gateavisa* (1975) and in *Nazar 1: Timeglass* (1975), a science-fiction anthology edited by Bing & Bringsværd.
- ³ Bringsværd, T.A. *London*. Oslo: Spartacus, 2003.
- ⁴ *proto-* because the cartozoological sketches are not recognised and described as such.
- ⁵ Auster, P. *The New York Trilogy*. London: Faber and Faber, 1987.
- ⁶ Bringsværd, T.A., P. Pihl, and E. Sundt. *Det dyriske København*. Oslo: Galrof forlag, 2007.
- ⁷ An event, interestingly, celebrated 42 years after its 600-year anniversary.
- ⁸ Translated and adapted from ”Kartozoologiske ekspedisjoner” by Roger Pihl in *Håndbok i kartozoologi*, Oslo: Tibe Forlag, 2004.

HMO-NO News



Health care advice to pass on to your patients

Healthy Directions!

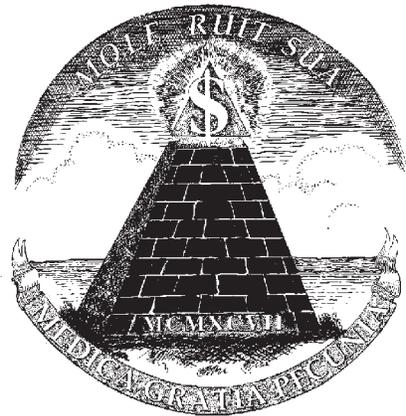
Every year several people die or become confused because they got lost and drove, bicycled, or walked in the wrong direction. **HMO-NO's Healthy Directions™ program*** is designed to prevent just this kind of death or confusion.

Sign up for this program and we will give you a GPS (Global Positioning System) receiver,** and a 360-page manual*** explaining the effects it can have in preventing you from dying or becoming confused.* The health benefits from this are incalculable.

* Extra fees apply.

** Monthly rental fee applies.

*** Extra fees apply.



HMO-NO The very final word in health care