

# Mapping the Poles

An editorial project presentation

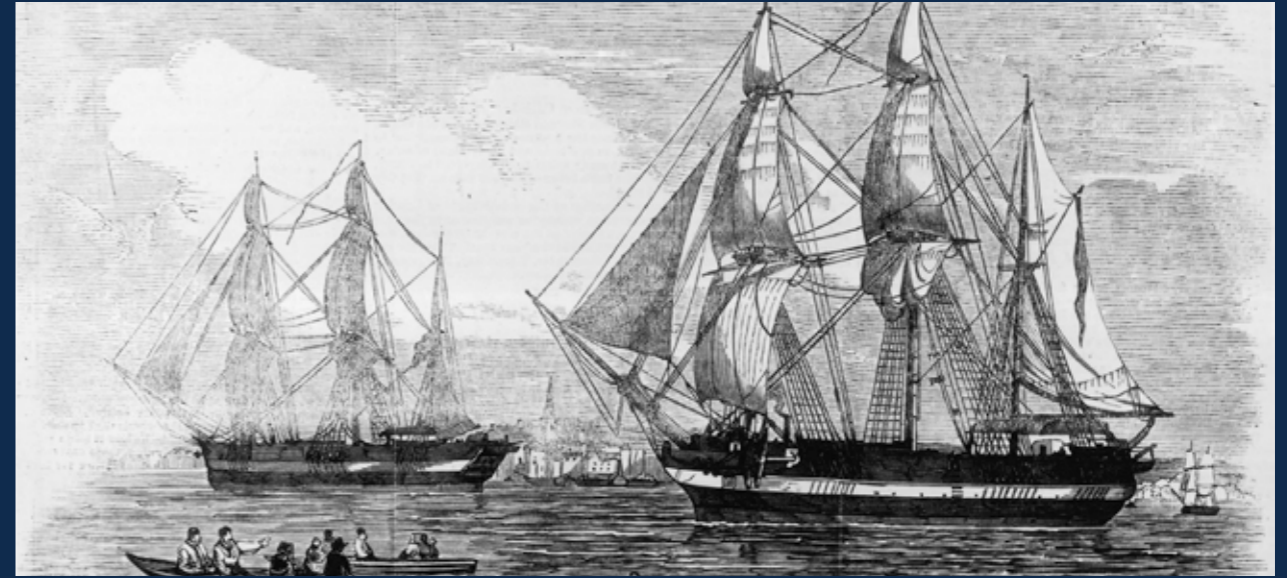
Take a closer look at the books in the link down below !



*Mapping the Poles* (*Au-dessous des Cartes* in its original French) is my final art school project. It is a collection of three editions, each focusing on a different historical polar expedition.

The first part of the project had been deciding on which expeditions to focus on. I first wanted to focus on a single one, before realizing that making a collection of books had more potential for a project. I decided to settle on the Franklin Expedition, along with Charcot's second expedition. Later on, I added the *Belgica* expedition in the mix.

A few things were interesting to me about this trio. First, it was three expedition remembered in very different ways (the FE as a tragedy, Charcot as a high adventure and the *Belgica* as a chain of bad decisions), which would lead to differences in how I would treat each of them. Second, all the sources I had access to had a big focus on space and time. Sources about Franklin would often mention the rescue missions, Charcot's second expedition followed a very similar route as his first and the *Belgica*'s drifting was a iconic moment for it. Third, these three expeditions were dear to my heart and I was very excited to share them with people thanks to this project.



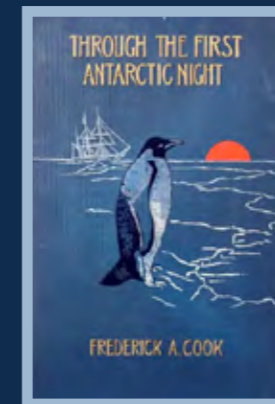
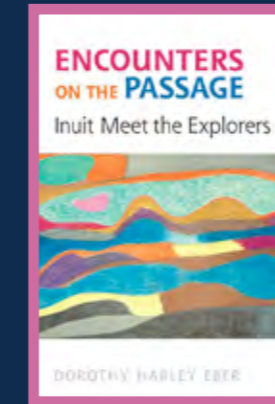
My speciality being in non-traditional book forms, I decided to draft a couple ideas and landed on the idea of a map. Unlike a book you can read while sitting comfortably, a map requires you to be physically involved : opening it, laying it down on a surface, looking for informations on it... The map is also a key element of polar explorations, both as a navigation tool and something to fill in.

I still included a booklet with each map, providing context and informations about the expeditions. The goal was to make the map and the booklet work together without making one useless compared to the other. The reader would have to go back and forth between each, and thus take their time to piece together the story.



The booklets are a collection of extracts from both secondary and primary sources. I decided to keep each extracts in its original languages instead of translating as I am not trained to translate accurately, but also because of a fun fact I noticed. My Franklin sources were all in English and my Charcot sources were in French, but my *Belgica* sources featured both languages. I thought it would be a fun nod to the variety of language aboard the *Belgica* (as the crew were from all over the world and didn't speak the same language) and allow the reader to experience part of it.

I also tried to showcase multiple points of view in my choices of sources, especially for the Franklin expedition. While all these expeditions are rooted in colonialism, the Franklin expedition is even more intertwined with it as it affected native population of the Arctic. Inuit testimonies (found in *Encounters on the Passage*) were included in the booklet. I also included a map of King William Island drawn by Innookpoozheejook, found in *Narrative of the second Arctic expedition made by Charles F. Hall*. The topic of First Nations is hardly considered in Europe where I live. It felt important to me to mention it, despite not being an expert on it.



Charcot's 2nd Antarctic expedition

Primary sources

Secondary sources

Franklin Expedition

Belgica

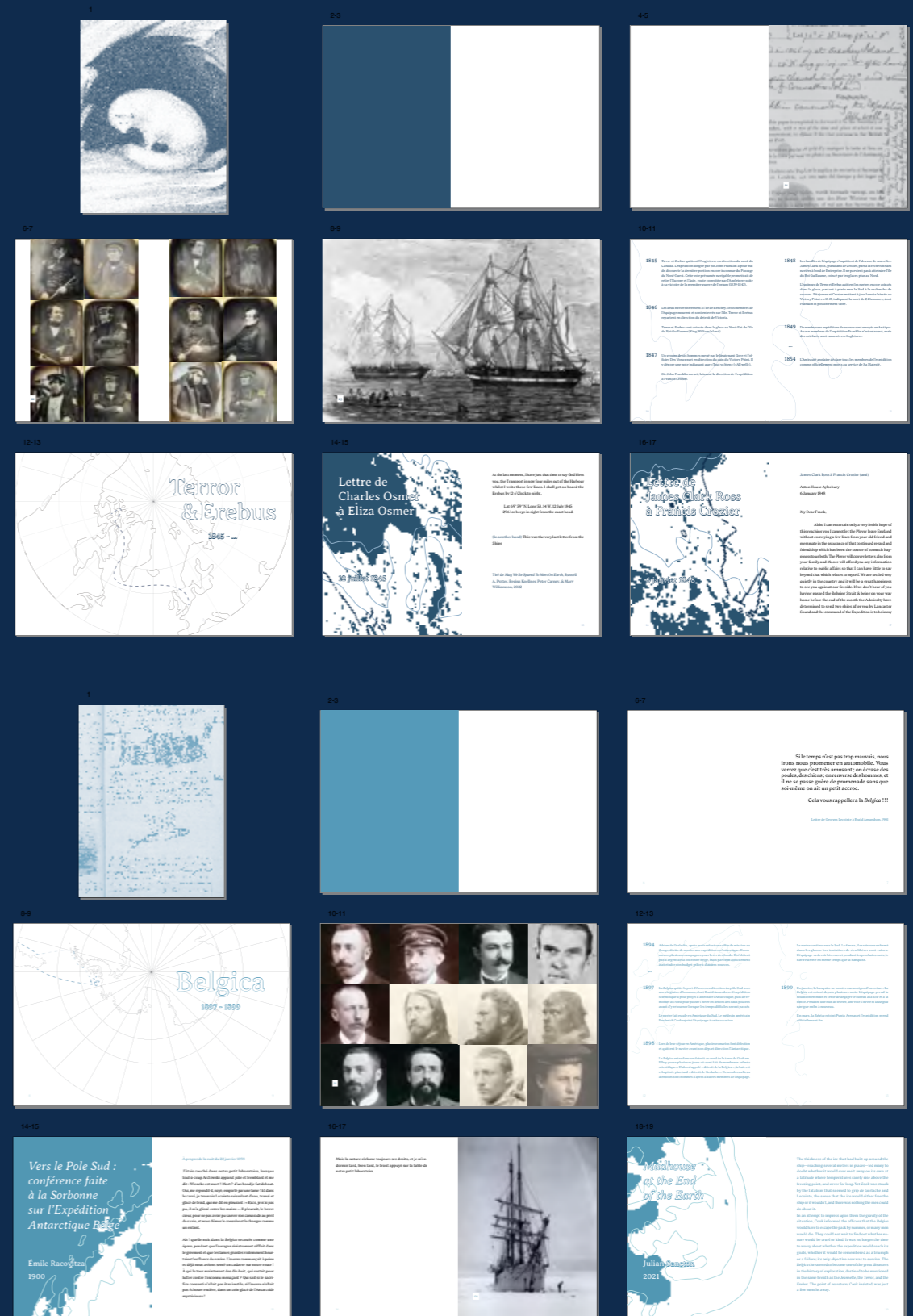
I wanted the booklets to not just be a bunch of information, but also an adventure of its own. Most book collection tend to have the same structure : title page - foreword - first chapter - etc. While it gives the books a sense of familiarities, I felt like it was too static for my project. Polar expeditions tend to be unpredictable, so why wouldn't my booklets also be ?

Taking inspiration from cinematography, I worked each booklet separately. As if I was editing a video, I carefully chose which elements I included and in which order to give the ambiance I wanted.

For example, the Franklin booklet has a long introduction before its title, giving it tension. This was partially inspired by the introduction of *The Terror* which struck me as very effective. The text segment and the James Clark Ross segment work together to build anticipation.

On the opposite end, the *Belgica* booklet starts with a silly Lecoqte quote (which consistently got a chuckle from my readers) before diving right in.

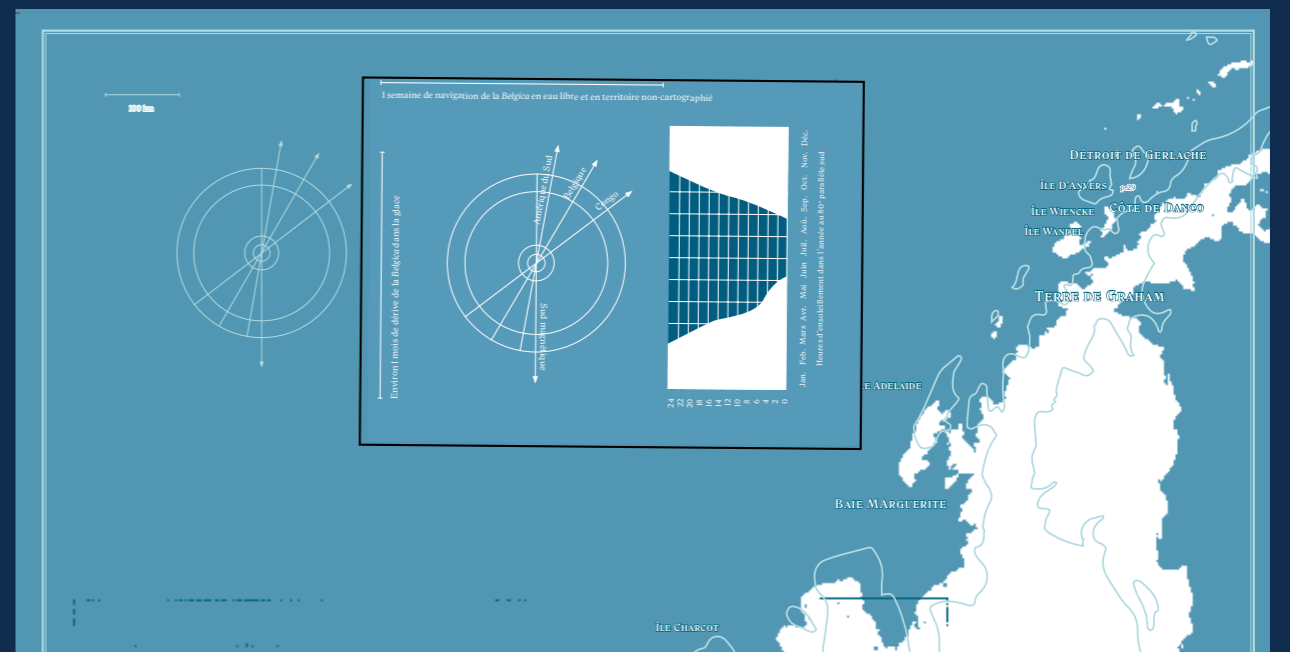
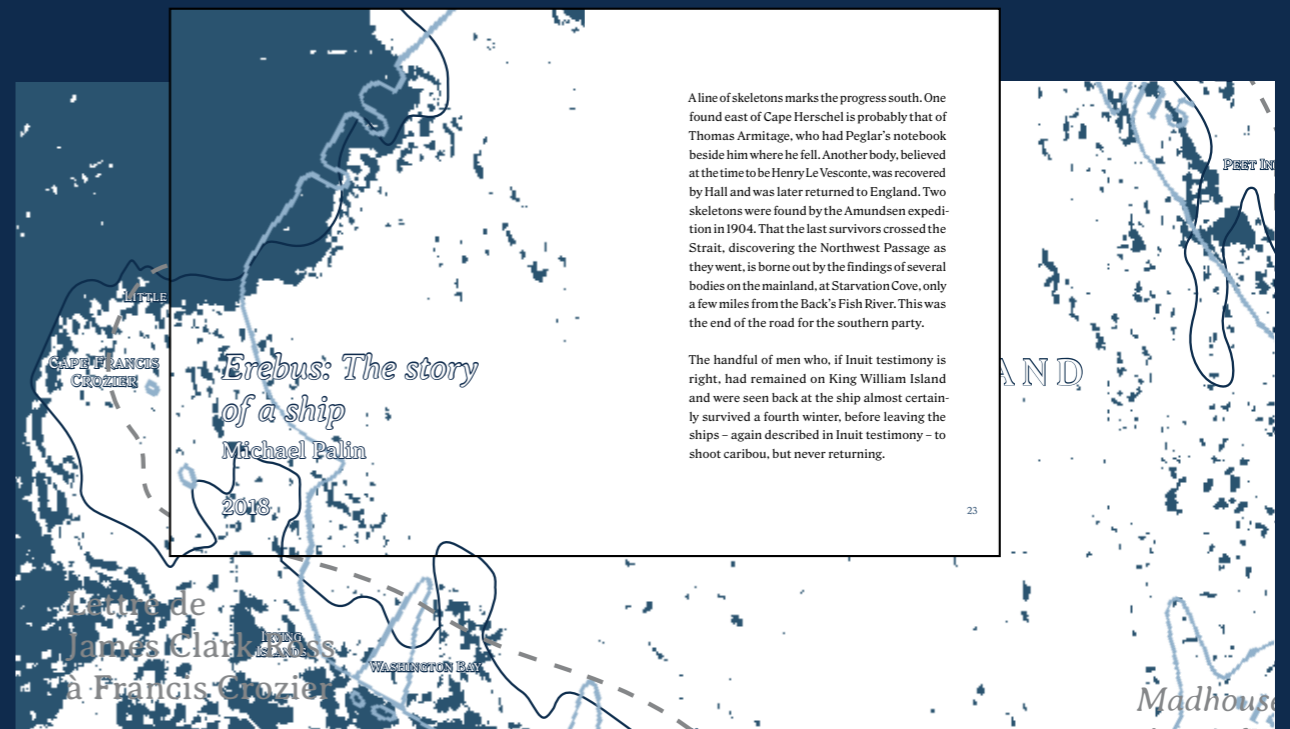
My Charcot book features lots of pictures. Both his travels have been heavily documented. I was able to parallel the same places during his first and second voyages. I was also able to convey what seemed to be the spirit of the crew, combining Charcot's poetic melancholy and the crew's high spirits.



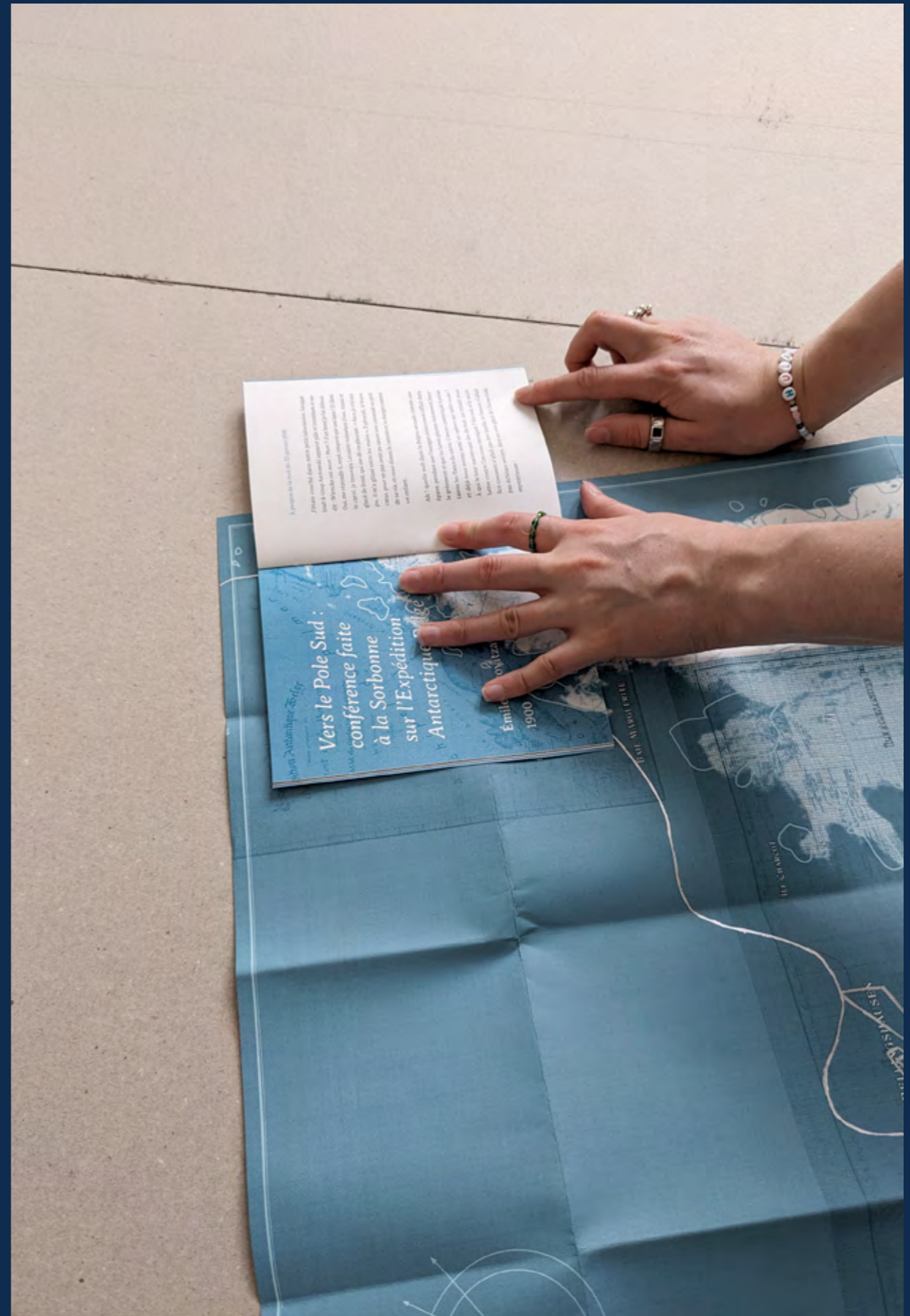
Pages sequences of the Franklin and Belgica booklets. Notice how the title page (the one with the circular map) is not at the same place.

The booklet and the map needed a way to be connected. I tried many ways, such as icons, texts or pictures. However, each attempts felt forced or too disconnected. I ended up with a way to make both objects intertwined : the booklet uses parts of the map in its « chapter pages » while the map includes folios of each time a place is mentionned in the texts along with the names of the sources in the booklet. That way, the reader has to opportunity to go back and forth to complete the puzzle, or study one part of the project and get answers about it later when they get to the second part.

I really like how interactive the project was getting and I pushed it even more. Maps need informations to be readable, such as scales and orientation. I decided to move these informations to the back of the booklet, making it a navigation instrument to read the maps. It also allowed me to lead the map toward a more illustrative look and highlight how like written and oral testimonies, maps are subjectives. I superposed multiple maps from multiple sources, showing their differences in how they represent the same place. I then used hot-stamping films to draw each path of the expedition on the map. The films are more-or-less visible depending on the light, allowing multiple timelines to coexist on the same space.



This editorial project was getting away more and more from the typical book and turned into something more interactive. Good ! But it did make me consider who that would be for. And I think this project has a lot of appeal to different people. It can be a fun and interactive way to discover polar explorations for someone who doesn't know anything about them. It can be an experience shared between multiple people of different level of knowledge on the subject. It can also be a collector's item for anyone very keen on the topic, as the booklet fits in a bookshelf and the map can be displayed. The more physical interactions I created, the more opportunities arose. And there surely are many more I haven't considered !



This project has been made, presented for my final exam and now presented to you through Terror Camp. So what next ? To be fair, I don't know yet. After working on it for six months straight, I needed a break from it and Terror Camp has been the opportunity to bring it out into light again. I'm eagerly waiting for everyone's reactions on it ! Due to its educational potential, I thought to present it to museums. Due to its format, I'm also considering sharing it with book and designs fairs. However, I do not have many contacts in these fields so these are only possibilities for now. As George Lecoq once wrote, *audaces fortuna juvat* !



My very DIY presentation table for my final presentation, including some mockups of the maps along with my «polar library» on the left and a previous posters project around Franklin and Charcot.