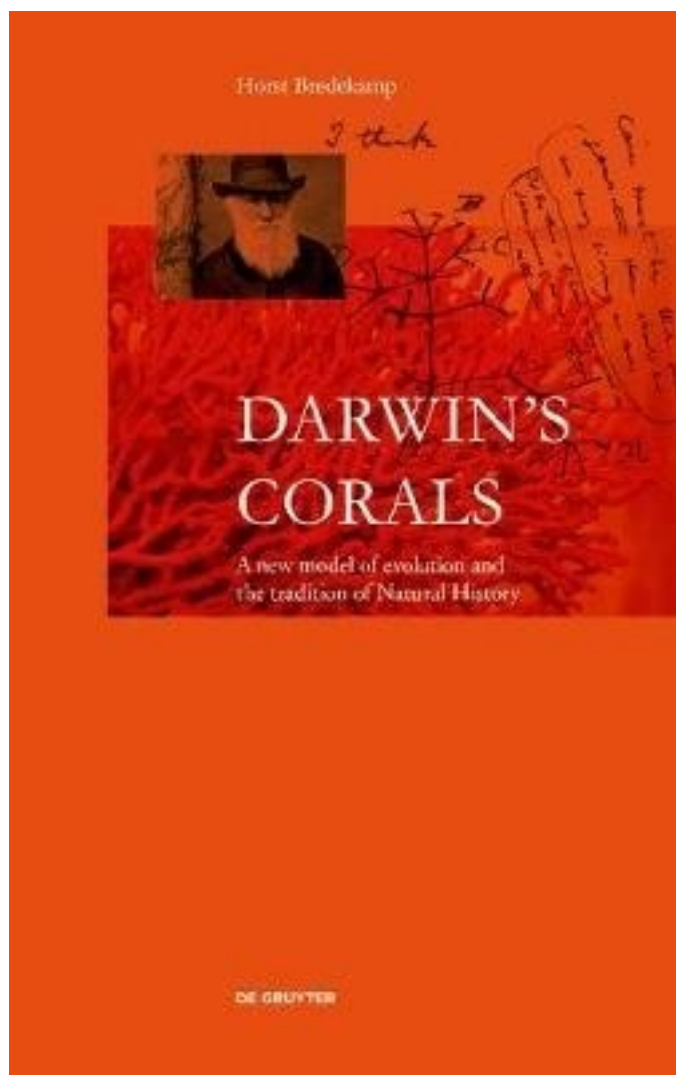


Darwin's Corals



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To this day Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory of the "survival of the fittest" has been visualized with the universal model of a tree of life. But early on in Darwin's thinking the coral provided a fascinating alternative to the tree as a depiction of the evolution of the species.

Horst Bredekamp shows how Darwin, a coral enthusiast and collector, found in it a more adequate illustration of evolution through natural selection: It grows anarchically in all directions and no longer upholds mankind as the "crown of creation." Using this example Darwin is proving himself to be both a destroyer and consummator of traditional natural philosophy. Since antiquity the coral had been a symbol of nature as a whole.

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