

La Esmeraldine, Guadeloupe

7 August 1917

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Your recommendation was a fine one. I have found for myself a kind of serenity here--a brief cessation of the yearning that is within me (within us all, I think) that comes through both prayer and trust in one's best instincts.

When last we corresponded, you inquired about the stories that lay within stones and posed the fascinating question that perhaps the Earth itself is but an egg that has yet to hatch. I suspect it is much more likely that we find ourselves crawling about on an egg sucked dry by parasites, but that is not a comforting thought.

I will tell you that in my excavations at my place of work (that "library" you so rightly dread) I have found a great many stories laid within stones. Here, if you will, are the striations of Knowledge I have unearthed through my careful excavation.

Root Period - during the Lithic and Archaic stage, a great many beasts made their nests in the Andes. The peculiar microclimate of the peak where the H-m would eventually be constructed made it tolerant of a great many trees, though the queñua seems to have set down the deepest roots, which wind deep into the mountains. In flecks of amber, I have found fangs and fossils that have confirmed a great many mysteries I feel deep in my own soul. My earliest preanthropological find has been of a sacrifice, some eight thousand years ago.



Incubation Period - the first cut stones in the central Frustum of the complex date from four to three thousand years ago. This structure seems to have been built for ritual. I find in this heavy foundation a deep resonance with the things I seek within myself. It is here that I begin to see less of roots and more of a shape I cannot help but see as an egg; a motif that confounds me to this day. My colleagues do not all see eggs, however. Were you brave enough to come call upon me in my office, I would greatly wish to know what you see in these ovoids.

Wayfinder Period - As the Fourfold emerged and consolidated in the thirteenth century, a sect of roadbuilders began journeying to what they called the Ruins of the Roots. (One of the things I must persistently explain to you fools across the Atlantic is that much was already a ruin here centuries before the conquerors arrived.) These wayfinders laid many stones and built out the complex, even establishing gardens and erecting more conventional shrines.

Anchorite Period - The stones only begin to tell of the Catholic and Curicuillorian presence once Bahamonde began inviting students. These are to me the ugliest stones, hauled from far away and cut crudely, with excessive mortar. They do, however, make up most of the easternmost wing and have preserved much of the older structure from the worst of the elements.

Metastatic Period - the stones don't speak of this time, except in a rot that I must always scrub away with the fiercest arts I know.



Hospitable Period - I am unsure if you are aware that my initial contract with Dottore Robigo involved consulting on how best to restore the structure after the earthquake with respect to the place's history. Much can be said of the Protector's moods and aims, but I have only praise for the care he has placed in ensuring that every stone laid since 1840 has been consistent with the architecture and spirit of the surrounding place. It has been fulfilling work.

My vacation will soon end and I will be back to digging. Please remember, should you wish to reply, that all corrodible or delicate materials (such as ink and paper) should be tightly sealed so that the words remain on the page by time I receive it. The journey up the mountains and through the halls tends to be quite harsh on my correspondence.

In trust,

Valenzuela