

TRANSCRIPTION/TRANSLATION NOTES

A segment of each of the ten pages from the actual manuscript has been completely decayed away and a substantial amount of information is therefore missing. In this transcription and translation, each such lapse in text is denoted by ellipses.

Transcription

- Each case of antiquated spelling or misspelling has been changed to the modern standard version.
- Capitalization has been changed to modern standards.
- Grammar and punctuation have been left unchanged, even when incorrect.
- In some instances of a partial word before or after a lapse, a reconstruction has been attempted or a corrected spelling of the fragment has been guessed, either one in brackets.
- Where difficult to read, the most likely writing has been given and a second possibility is shown in brackets.
- Any words that I could not identify within modern Portuguese have been given as they appear in the manuscript, and a possible correspondent has been given in brackets.

Translation

- Punctuation and grammar have been adjusted when necessary in order to create coherent sentences in English while remaining true to the sense of the original text.
- In some instances of a partial word from the manuscript, a possible translation is given in brackets.
- Where multiple translations seem likely, the most likely is given first and a second possibility is shown in brackets.
- For any words that I could not identify, the translation of a possible correspondent is given in brackets.
- A few clarifications of matters in the translation are given on the last page.

MANUSCRIPT 512

Relação histórica de uma oculta e grande povoação, antiquíssima sem moradores, que se descobria no ano de 1753. Em a América.....nos interiores.....contíguos aos.....Mestre de Campo.....e sua comitiva, havendo dez anos...viajava pelos sertões, a ver se descobria as decantadas minas de prata do grande descobridor Muribeca, que por culpa de um governador se não fizeram patentes, pois queria usurpar-lhe esta glória, e o teve preso na Bahia até morrer, e ficaram por descobrir. Veio esta notícia ao Rio de Janeiro em o princípio do ano de 1754.

Depois de uma larga e importuna peregrinação, incitados da insaciável cobiça do ouro, e quase perdidos em muitos anos por este vastíssimo sertão, descobrimos uma cordilheira de montes tão elevados, que parecia chegavam à região etérea, e que serviam de trono ao vento às mesmas estrelas; o luzimento que de longe se admirava, principalmente quando o sol fazia impressão no cristal de que era composta, formando uma vista tão grande e agradável, que ninguém daqueles reflexos podia afastar os olhos: entrou a chover antes de entrarmos registrar esta cristalina maravilha, e víamos sobre a pedra escavada correr as águas, precipitando-se dos altos rochedos, parecendo-nos como a neve, ferida dos raios do sol, pelas agradáveis vistas daquele cris-.....-uina se reduziria.....

.....das águas e tranqüilidade do tempo nos resolvemos a investigar aquele admirável prodígio da natureza, chegando-nos no pé dos montes, sem embaraço algum de matos, ou rios, que nos dificultasse o trânsito; porém, circulando as montanhas, não achamos passo franco para executarmos a resolução de acometermos estes Alpes, e Pirineus Brasileiros, resultando-nos deste desengano uma inexplicável tristeza.

Abarracados nós, e com o desígnio de retrocedermos no dia seguinte, sucedeu correr um negro, andando à lenha, a um veado branco, que viu, e descobrir por este acaso o caminho entre duas serras, que pareciam cortadas por artifício, e não pela natureza: com o alvoroço desta novidade principiamos a subir, achando muita pedra solta, e amontoada, por onde julgamos ser calçada desfeita com a continuação do tempo. Gastamos boas três horas na subida, porém suave pelos cristais que admirávamos, e no cume do monte, fizemos alto, do qual estendendo a vista, vimos em um campo raso maiores demonstrações para a nossa admiração.

Divisamos coisa de légua, e meia uma povoação grande, persuadindo-nos pelo dilatado da figura ser alguma cidade da costa [ou corte?] do Brasil; descemos logo ao vale com cautela...-aria em semelhante caso, mandando explorar-.....-gar a qualidade, e.....se bem que reparamos.....fuminés, sendo este, um dos sinais evidentes das povoações.

Estivemos dois dias esperando aos exploradores para o fim que muito desejávamos, e só ouvíamos cantar galos para ajuizar que havia ali povoadores; até que chegaram os nossos desenganados—de que não havia moradores, ficando todos confusos: resolveu-se depois um índio da nossa comitiva a entrar a todo o risco, e com precaução, mas tornando assombrado, afirmou não achar, nem descobrir rastro de pessoa alguma: este caso nos fez confundir de sorte, que não o acreditamos pelo que víamos de domicílios, e assim se arrojaram todos os exploradores a ir seguindo os passos do índio.

Vieram, confirmando o referido depoimento de não haver povo, e assim nos determinamos todos a entrar com armas por esta povoação, em uma madrugada sem haver quem nos saísse ao encontro a impedir os passos, e não achamos outro caminho senão o único que tem a grande povoação, cuja entrada é por três arcos de grande altura, o do meio é maior, e os dois dos lados são mais pequenos: sobre o grande, e principal divisamos letras, que se não puderam copiar pela grande altura.

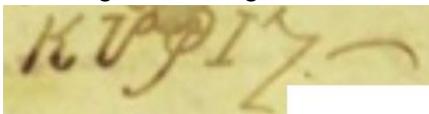
Faz uma rua da largura dos três arcos com casas de sobrados de uma, e outra parte, com as fronteiras de ped-...lavrada, e já denegrada.....inscrições, abertas todos.....-ortas são boas [boas?] def-.....-as, notando que pela regularidade, e simetria com que estão feitas, parece uma só propriedade de casas, sendo em realidade muitas, e algumas com seus terxados [telhados?] descobertos, e sem telha, porque os tetos são de ladrilho requemado uns, e de lajes outros.

Corremos com bastante pavor algumas casas, e em nenhuma achamos vestígios de alfaias, nem móveis, que pudéssemos pelo uso, e trato, conhecer a qualidade dos naturais: as casas são todas escuras no interior, e apenas tem uma escassa luz, e como são abóbadas, ressoavam os ecos dos que falavam, e as mesmas vozes atemorizavam.

Passada, e vista a rua de bom comprimento, demos em uma praça regular, e no meio dela uma coluna de pedra preta de grandeza extraordinária, e sobre ela uma estátua de homem ordinário, com uma mão na ilharga esquerda, e o braço direito estendido, mostrando com o dedo indexo ao polo do norte: em cada canto da dita praça está uma agulha, à imitação das que usavam os Romanos, mas algumas já maltratadas, e partidas, como feridas de alguns raios.

Pelo lado direito desta praça está um soberbo edifício, como casa principal de algum senhor da terra; faz um grande salão na entrada e ainda com medo não corremos todas as casas, sendo tantas, e os retret-.....-zerão [-zeram?] formar algum-.....-mara achamos hu- [u-?].....massa de extraordin-.....-soas lhe custavam o levantá-la.

Os morcegos eram tantos, que investiam as caras das gentes, e faziam uma tal bulha, que admirava: sobre o pórtico principal da rua está uma figura de meio relevo talhada da mesma pedra, e despida da cintura para cima, coroada de louro: representa pessoa de pouca idade sem barba, com uma banda atravessada, e um fraldelim pela cintura; de baixo do escudo da tal figura tem alguns caracteres já gastos com o tempo, divisam-se porém os seguintes.



Da parte esquerda da dita praça está outro edifício totalmente arruinado, e pelos vestígios bem mostra que foi templo, porque ainda conserva parte do seu magnífico frontispício, e algumas naves de pedra inteira: ocupa grande território, e nas suas arruinadas paredes se vem obras de primor com algumas figuras, e retratos embutidos na pedra com cruces de vários feitios, corvos, e outras miudezas, que carecem de largo tempo para descrevê-las.

Segue-se a este edifício uma grande parte de povoação toda arruinada, e sepultada em grandes, e medonhas aberturas da terra, sem que em toda esta circunferência se veja erva, árvore, ou planta produzida pela natureza, mas sim montões de pedra...-as [algumas?] toscas, e outras lavradas, pelo que entendemos ha [há?].....-verção [subversão?], porque ainda ent-

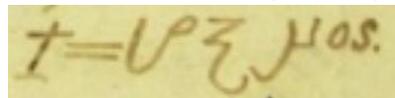
.....-a de cadáveres, que.....-eparte desta infeliz.....-da, e desamparada, talvez por algum terremoto.

De frente da dita praça corre um caudaloso rio, arrebatadamente largo, e espaçoso com algumas margens, que o fazem muito agradável à vista: terá de largura onze, até doze braças, sem voltas consideráveis, limpas as margens de arvoredo, e troncos, que as inundações costumam trazer: sondamos a sua altura, e achamos nas partes mais profundas quinze, até dezesseis braças. Da parte dalém tudo são campos muito viçosos, e com tanta variedade de flores, que parece andou a natureza mais cuidadosa por estas partes, fazendo produzir os mais mimosos campos de flora: admiramos também algumas lagoas todas cheias de arroz; do qual nos aproveitamos, e também dos inumeráveis bandos de patos, que se criam na fertilidade destes campos; sem nos ser difícil o caçá-los sem chumbo, mas sim as mãos.

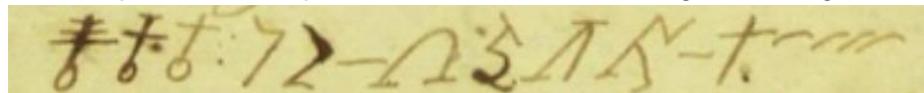
Três dias caminhamos rio abaixo, e topamos uma catadupa de tanto estrondo pela força das águas, e resistência no lugar, que julgamos não faria maior às bocas do decantado Nilo; depois deste salto espria de sorte o rio, que parece o grande oceano: É todo cheio de penínsulas, cobertas de verde relva; com algumas árvores dispersas, que fazem.....-dável. Aqui achamos.....a falta dele se nos-.....-ta variedade de caça.....-tros muitos animais criados sem caçadores que os corram, e os persigam.

Da parte do oriente desta catadupa achamos vários socavões, e medonhas covas, fazendo-se experiência da sua profundidade com muitas cordas; as quais por mais compridas que fossem, nunca podemos topar com o seu centro. Achamos também algumas pedras soltas, e na superfície da terra, cravadas de prata, como tiradas das minas, deixadas ao tempo.

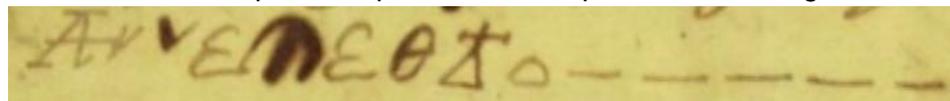
Entre estas furnas vimos uma coberta com uma grande laje, e com as seguintes figuras lavradas na mesma pedra, que insinuam grande mistério ao que parece.



Sobre o pórtico do templo vimos outras da forma seguinte designadas.



Afastado da povoação, tiro de canhão, está um edifício, como casa de campo, de duzentos e cinquenta passos de frente; pelo qual se entra por um grande pórtico, e se sobe por uma escada de pedra de várias cores, dando-se logo em uma grande sala, e depois desta em quinze casas pequenas, todas com portas para a dita sala, e cada huma sobre si, e com sua bica de água.....qual água se ajunta.....-rmão [-rmam?] no pátio exte-.....colunatas em cir-.....-dra quadrada por artifício, suspensa com os seguintes caracteres.



Depois destas admirações entramos pelas margens do rio a fazer experiência de descobrir ouro e sem trabalho achamos boa pinta na superfície da terra, prometendo-nos muita grandeza, assim de ouro como de prata: admiramo-nos o ser deixada esta povoação dos que a habitavam, não tendo achado a nossa exata diligência por estes sertões pessoa alguma, que nos conte desta deplorável maravilha de quem fosse esta povoação, mostrando bem nas suas ruínas a figura, e grandeza que teria, e como seria populosa, e opulenta nos séculos em que

floresceu povoada; estando hoje habitada de andorinhas, morcegos, ratos, e raposas, que cevadas na muita criação de galinhas, e patos, se fazem maiores que um cão perdigueiro. Os ratos têm as pernas tão curtas, que saltam como pulgas, e não andam, nem correm como os de povoado.

Daqui deste lugar se apartou um companheiro, o qual com outros mais, depois de nove dias de boa marcha avistaram a beira de uma grande enseada que faz um rio a uma canoa com duas pessoas brancas, e de cabelos pretos, e soltos, vestidos à Europeia, e dando um tiro como sinal para se-.....para fugirem te-.....felpudos, e bravos.....-ga a eles se encrespam todos, e investem.

Um nosso companheiro chamado João Antônio achou em as ruínas de uma casa um dinheiro de ouro, figura esférica, maior que as nossas moedas de seis mil e quatrocentos: de uma parte com a imagem, ou figura de um moço posto de joelhos, e da outra parte um arco, uma coroa, e uma seta, de cujo gênero não duvidarmos se ache muito na dita povoação, ou cidade desolada, porque se foi subversão por algum terremoto, não daria tempo o repente a pôr em recato o precioso, mas é necessário um braço muito forte, e poderoso para revolver aquele entulho calçado de tantos anos como mostra.

Estas notícias mando a V.M.^u deste sertão da Bahia, e dos rios Paraguaçu, Una, assentando não darmos parte a pessoa alguma, porque julgamos se despovoarão vilas, e arraiais; mas eu a V.M.^u a dou das minas que temos descoberto, lembrado do muito que lhe devo.

Suposto que da nossa companhia saiu já um companheiro com pretexto diferente, com tudo peço-lhe a V.M.^u largue essas penúrias, e venha utilizar-se destas grandezas, usando da indústria de peitar esse índio, para se fazer perdido, e conduzir o V.M.^u para estes tesouros.....-charão [acharão?] nas entradas.....-bre [sobre?] lajes.

Primeira	—	—	—	—	+ III
Segunda	—	—	—	—	+ II
Tercera	—	—	—	—	+
Quarta	—	—	—	—	III
Quinta	—	—	—	—	+
Sexta	—	—	—	—	III
Setima	—	—	—	—	55
Oitava	—	—	—	—	31
Nona	—	—	—	—	±

MANUSCRIPT 512 (ENGLISH)

Historical report of a great and hidden city, ancient and without residents, which was discovered in the year 1753. In the Americas.....in the interior.....contiguous with.....Colonel.....and his company, having ten years...traveled through the hinterlands, to see if they could find the legendary silver mines of the great discoverer Muribeca which, by fault of a governor, were not made known, for he wished to rob Muribeca of this glory, and had him imprisoned in Bahia until his death. And they remained to be found. This notice came to Rio de Janeiro in the beginning of the year 1754:

After a wide-reaching and bothersome journey, prompted on by the insatiable lust for gold, and almost lost in many years through this vast hinterland, we discovered a range of mountains so high that they appeared to reach the ethereal realm, and to serve as throne to the wind, to the very stars. The shining, which we were able to admire from afar, principally when the Sun made impression upon the crystal which the mountains were composed of, created such a grand and pleasing sight that nobody could take their eyes off of those reflections. It began raining before we could enter upon a survey of this crystalline wonder, and we could see the waters running upon the bare rock, descending from the high cliffs, looking like snow stricken by the Sun's rays because of the pleasing sight of that crys-.....would be reduced.....

.....of the waters and tranquility of the weather, we resolved to investigate that wondrous miracle of nature, reaching the foot of the mountains without any encumbrance of bush or rivers to make our passage difficult. However, circling the mountains, we couldn't find a clear path by which to carry out our design of tackling these Brazilian Alps and Pyrenees—this disappointment resulting, for us, in an indescribable sadness.

Our tents pitched, and planning on turning back the following day, it happened that a negro, while out seeking firewood, gave chase to a white deer which he saw, and discovered by this circumstance the road between two ridges, which appeared to be cut artificially rather than by nature. With the commotion of this news, we began climbing, finding much loose rock heaped up where we figure there had been a walkway, undone by the passage of time. We spent a good three hours on the climb, though gentle, because of the crystals which we admired along the way, and at the peak of the mountain we halted. Looking out from there we saw, in a flat field, even greater displays for our admiration.

We beheld something at a league and a half's distance—a great settlement—its expansive dimensions causing us to believe that it was some city of the Brazilian coast [or court?]. We soon descended into the valley with caution...in a similar case, ordering.....the quality, and.....good that we noticed.....chimneys, this being one of the clear signs of settlements.

We waited two days for the scouts, to the end that we greatly desired, and we only had the sound of roosters by which to judge that there were people there—until the arrival of our men, undeceived; there were no residents, which confused them. An Indian of our company then decided to enter cautiously, assuming all risk. But, returning astonished, he affirmed that he did not find nor uncover a trace of any person. This matter bewildered us such that we did not believe it, based on the dwellings we had seen. And thus all of the explorers sprang to and went, following in the footsteps of the Indian.

They came confirming the aforementioned attestation that there were no people, and so we all decided to enter the city armed, by night, without anyone to come out to meet us and impede our passage. And we found no other road besides the one with the great city, whose entrance was through three arches of great height. The one in the middle is bigger, and the two on the sides are smaller. Above the great and principal one we saw letters that couldn't be copied down because of the great height.

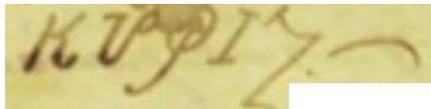
From there runs a street with the breadth of the three arches, with lofted houses on either side, with borders of smoothed [stone?], and already blackened.....inscriptions; opened, all.....are [good?]......noting that, by the uniformity and symmetry with which they are made, it appears to be a single property of houses, being in reality many, and some with their [roofs?] uncovered, and without shingles, because some of the ceilings are of fired tile, and others of slabs.

With great dread we scanned some of the houses, and in none of them did we find vestiges of effects or furnishings, that we might know, by their use and treatment, the quality of the locals. All of the houses are dark inside, and there is only a scarce light. And as they are vaulted, the echoes of those who spoke resonated, and their own voices frightened them.

Having walked and seen the entirety of this long street, we came to a square plaza, in the middle of which was a black stone pillar of extraordinary size. And on top of that was a statue of an ordinary man, with his left hand on his waist and his right arm extended, pointing with his index finger to the North Pole. In each corner of said plaza is a spire, in the style of those used by the Romans, but some which were damaged and split, as if struck by lightning bolts.

On the right side of this plaza is a superb building, as if the principal abode of some lord of the land. There is a great hall at the entrance. And, still afraid, we didn't scan all of the houses, there being so many, and the.....to form some.....we found.....[mass?] of extraordin-.....deprived them of lifting it.

The bats were so numerous that they flew into the faces of the people, and created such a ruckus that it evoked awe. Above the principal gateway of the street is a figure in mid-relief, carved in the same stone, and naked from the waist up, crowned with laurel. It shows a person young in age, without a beard, wearing a band across him, and an apron about his waist. Beneath the shield of said figure there are some characters which have already been deteriorated by time. One can clearly see, however, the following:



On the left side of said plaza is another building, completely in ruin. And the ruins clearly show that it was a temple, because part of its magnificent frontispiece is still preserved, as well as some naves of whole stone. It occupies a great area, and on its ruined walls one sees exquisite works, with some figures and portraits inlaid in the stone, with crosses of various styles, consoles^[1] [or crows?], and other sundries, which would take too long to describe.

Following this building is a large section of town, all destroyed and sunken in large and awful openings in the earth. And in all this vicinity no herb, tree, or plant produced by nature is seen, but only heaps of rock, [some?] rough and others smoothed, by which we

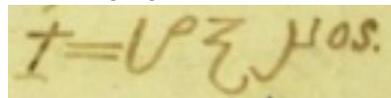
understood.....[subversion?], because yet.....of cadavers, which.....of this unfortunate.....and desolated, perhaps by some earthquake.

In front of said plaza runs a torrential river, rapturously broad and spacious, with some banks that make it very pleasing to the sight. It has a breadth of eleven to twelve fathoms, without considerable windings. The banks are clear of tree growth and logs, which floods tend to bring. We sounded its depth and found it to be, in the deepest parts, fifteen to sixteen fathoms. On the other side all is very lush fields, with such a variety of flowers that it seems only the most careful nature walked through these parts, bringing about the most delicate fields of flora. We also admired some ponds, all full of rice, which we made use of. And we made use of the innumerable flocks of ducks which feed on the fertility of these fields, having no difficulty in hunting them without lead, with our hands.

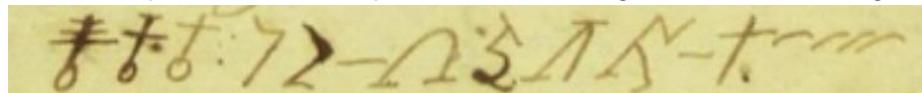
We walked downriver for three days and came to a waterfall of such thunderous noise, because of the force of the waters and the resistance in that place, that we figured it wouldn't be louder at the mouths of the legendary Nile. After this drop the river sort of splays out, looking like the great ocean. It is all full of peninsulas, which are covered in green grass, with some scattered trees, which make.....Here we found.....the lack of it.....variety of game.....many animals, propagated without hunters that run them down and pursue them.

On the east side of this waterfall we found various caverns and horrifying pits, and we tested their depth with many ropes, despite the length of which we never could reach the bottom. We also found some loose rocks on the surface of the earth which were infused with silver, as if removed from the mines and left to time [or the weather?].

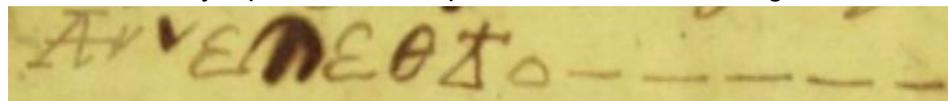
Among these caverns we saw one which was covered with a large slab, and with the following figures carved on the same stone, which suggest a great mystery it would seem:



Above the portico of the temple we saw others given in the following form:



Away from the city, a cannon-shot's distance, is a building like a countryside manor, of two hundred and fifty paces' breadth on the front side. One enters through a great portico, and ascends a staircase of stone, of various colors, landing in a great room, which then goes into fifteen smaller houses, each with their doors facing said room. And upon each, with its water spout [or gutter?].....which water gathers.....in the courtyard.....colonnades in cir-.....artificially squared, and suspended, with the following characters:



After these ponderings we entered by the banks of the river to conduct a test of finding gold, and without trouble we found good flecks on the surface of the earth, promising much abundance of both gold and silver. We wondered at the abandonment of this city by those who inhabited it, not having found by our exact diligence through these hinterlands any person who tells us of this pitiful marvel, of who this people was. Its ruins clearly show the form and grandeur it would've had, and how it would've been populous and opulent during the centuries

in which it flourished with people. Today it is inhabited by swallows, bats, rats, and foxes. These foxes, glutted on the many flocks of chickens and ducks, grow larger than a partridge hound^[2]. The rats have such short legs that they jump like fleas, and don't walk or run like those found in cities.

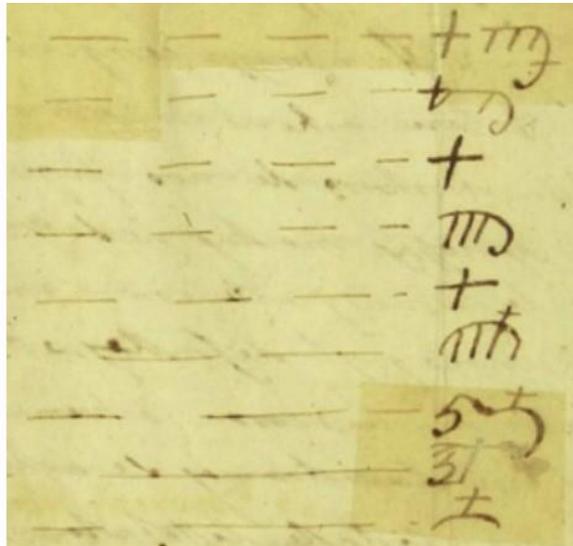
From this point one of our companions split off, with a few others, and after nine days at a good pace they beheld, on the shore of a large cove made by a river, a canoe with two white people, with loose black hair, dressed in European style. And, firing a shot as a signal to.....to flee.....furry, and wild.....all become irritated at them, and attack.

One of our companions, named João Antônio, found a gold coin in the ruins of a house. It was round, and larger than our coins of six thousand four hundred^[3]. On one side it had the image, or depiction, of a boy kneeling. And on the other side was a bow, a crown, and an arrow. We do not doubt that many of its kind can be found in the aforementioned settlement, or desolate city, because if it was subverted by an earthquake, the suddenness wouldn't allow time for putting away precious things. But it would take a very strong and powerful arm to overturn that rubble, settled by so many years, as is evident.

These notices I send to V.M.^u, from this hinterland of Bahia, and from the rivers Paraguaçu and Una. And we've settled to not give share in this to any person, because we judge that the villages and camps would empty out. But to you, V.M.^u, I give of the mines that we have discovered, remembering the much that I owe you.

Since a man has already departed from our company with a different pretext, I beg of you, V.M.^u, throw off your poverty and come take advantage of these great things. This Indian will use his adeptness at bribery to make himself hidden and lead you, V.M.^u, to these treasures.....[will find?] in the entrances.....[upon?] slabs.

- First**
- Second**
- Third**
- Fourth**
- Fifth**
- Sixth**
- Seventh**
- Eighth**
- Ninth**



ANNOTATIONS

1. The Portuguese word for crow/raven (*corvo*) also denotes the console-style corbel in classical architecture, usually S-shaped and scrolled at the ends. The author might have been referring to etchings of this basic shape. *Corvos* may also have been a misspelling of *curvos* (curves/arcs).
2. Portuguese Pointer.
3. Peça, a gold coin of the Portuguese Empire worth 6400 réis and measuring 32 mm in diameter.