

[1]: Si Monumentum Requiris Circumspice:

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Si Monumentum Requiris Circumspice. It was the last remaining vestiges of a long dead language. It was a singular phrase scratched into a scorched stone. A stone fallen from the very masonry supporting the summit this world had once achieved. And it was the entirety, the summation of the remaining knowledge, that could be obtained by those external to the events that had been unleashed upon this planet.

They had originally thought this heavy set; lichen encrusted hand of man had been a quote from the scripture of this world. Their previous exposure to the language, the culture, the species, had primed them for a world of theistic construction, of both poly- and mono- deities, a civilisation built in equal measure upon the suffering of generations past and a desire for a personal path, a purpose, a *raison d'être*. They knew of the arts, music and science of the civilisation that once claimed this burnt world as its home, its creation. They knew of the religions that had propagated that society and they had enough experience to speculate how this civilisation had fallen.

The stone had been removed from its original resting place. It had been dated and tested. It had been analysed for residual traces of the long dead civilisation, and its language had been discussed. They knew not of the reason for the scorching of the stone, but they knew its cause, for they had seen this behaviour in other civilisation, other species and other periods they had investigated. The stone now rested, protected from further degradation and decay, while its original placement on the planet continued to corrode, and crumble into dust.

They had compared the language to the medical and scientific documents they had found near the stone. They had discovered the great library of this civilisation, similarly burnt and destroyed, similarly decaying as the passage of time ticked on. They knew the civilisation had not had time to prevent their eventual end, they knew that a similar fate was within the possibilities for their own culture, and they knew that they too would have little hope of preventing it.

Slowly they pieced together a translation of the stones inscription.

Si Monumentum Requiris Circumspice, it had been a language of ancient times upon this world. A language adopted by the more modern peoples of that world as a common base for future languages, as a common base to their sciences.

If you seek his monument, look around, it seemed simple enough. Surely it referred to the deity that formed the principal of many of the religions of this world. Some readers suspected this to be too simplistic in view of the secular nature the civilisation had adopted prior to its demise. Some argued that it must be scripture, in that in their dying moments, some remaining survivor of this world had chosen to refer to a singular creator. Still some argued that by looking around, this survivor was observing the devastation levied by this creators free will.

Few, if any of them, considered that the phrase was a product of the civilisation prior to that cataclysmic end, or in fact may not refer to a deity at all.

They had discovered other buildings near the great library, one evidently the crumpled remains of a domed church, the name of its saint only just visible within the keystones. Documents within the reasonably preserved crypt had confirmed its identity as St Pauls Cathedral, a pillar of mono-theistic religion and the height of architecture surrounded by the detritus of a civilisation that had preferred outright personal gratification and the allure of cold steel, to the warmth and respect of old.

Si Monumentum Requiris Circumspice, it had been carved into the very stones of St Pauls, but it was no message to the dwindling congregations to respect Gods creation, Gods world. Those same documents that had identified the cathedral, had identified the roots of that phrase. *If you seek his monument, look around*, it was known now to refer to the architect of St Pauls, if you seek the architects prowess, his monument to his own glory as a proxy for the Lord, look around you, as you stand beneath the vaulted, domed, man-made heavens.

Why then would this phrase be replicated in the library of all places? In a place purposely designed to be secular, to indiscriminately store and archive the outputs of man, not deities. A place storing the theories of mono- and poly- theistic religions, and of the sciences aiming to probe the fabric of nature and remove all vestiges of those scriptures from the equations and understanding of the world?

Still, some academics suggested that *His* referred to the humans of this world, as an assumed dying writer knew the end had been caused by his own civilisation. Was this the ultimate message then, that Humanity had transcended all prior humility and had become so arrogant, so self-righteous that they deemed the world their creation, their monument. A monument to themselves, their combined, societal genius?

Yes, *If you seek humanitys monument, look around you*. As the external viewers they were, they now suspected this was the one true message. If this had been within the library at the heights of the long dead society, it surely had been to demonstrate their own power, their own control over all aspects of the world, and their redefinition of their current geological epoch as the *Anthropocene*. However, if as some suggested, the phrase has been written in the last moments of the society, then a different message could be the correct, fundamental and most extreme interpretation.

If you seek humanitys monument, look around you. Yes, it referred to humanities own power, own dominion over all, but it referred not to their glorious summit but to the devastation humanity had caused to its own assumed rock-steady foundations. The damage the civilisation had levied upon itself, the decay they had brought forth through self-entitlement, greed, outright personal gratification, the allure of cold steel and pretentious arrogance.

It was a message, a warning to all others. If you require evidence of ones own power look around you, see the devastation that can be caused by being fixated with ones self, of being disrespectful to the world that is your home, of being presumptuous enough to state that you are the creator and owner of all you survey.

If you seek humanitys monument, look around you, it was a singular phrase scratched into a scorched stone, a stone now preserved within the museum and central library of those external to the events that had previously been unleashed upon this planet. This heavy set; lichen encrusted hand of man had now become a quotation, a new scripture, telling of an ultimate warning, an ultimate lesson to be heeded at all costs. They kept it in mind, they ensured their future generations were informed of its discovery and the implications it must have in their society. They kept it as a principal proverb, handed from father to son and mother to daughter.

If you seek his monument, look around, it was a singular phrase perfectly carved into a polished, smooth, defect-free keystone. It was placed at the pinnacle of their central librarys main arched entrance, a continuous reminder to all those that entered the physical representation of the summit their world had achieved.

The End....