

## REPORT

The order to destroy the pest—and the State Department of Ecology certainly used neither the word destroy nor pest—came down the chain from the trailers at the job site, and there was little thought about whether it was the project manager or construction manager who made the call. The permits would already have been in place, everyone indemnified, permissions transmitted from the providential cloud of corporate headquarters, dispensations granted by the corporate proxies, powers of attorney, legatees and interested creditors, officers, engineers and, let it be admitted, lower-paid, specialists in the irregular perplexities of the law where construction and nature meet and contend.\* There was no audit trail in the decision taken to remove the nest—the exact word escapes this reviewer for the hillock or mound created by this animal—it was believed that a salience in the topography was to be treated like any other, since there was usually little call to suspect a hillock hiding, in a yard underground, caves of down-projecting encrusted channels, regions of industry, designs pursued in darkness, obsessive with one end and not sparing of lives or effort, admirable but yet unergonomical from a management point of view. We were to follow a line parallel and fifteen yards to the south of the existing roadway that ran adjacent the wheel-ruts of a buggy trail that itself overlay the Salish trade route into the mountains. Hours of operation were to be limited to the morning to avoid disturbing the riders and their animals making use of the bridal trails that now characterized the latter route. Ahead of the operator a relay team of twelve extended far up the highway, and when the first car lights came over the rise behind them, their reflector vests bristled in fluorescent x's and y's, annealed in a flash of orange vestment as the car passed by each of them. At around eight o'clock a slowing stream of cars passed the relay team that by then had gathered at the mound setting up cones around the footplates of the operator while the foreman waited for permission from the site engineer, who had been so unsatisfied with the description given over the truck radio by the site manager, who was the foreman's manager, of the characteristics of this animal, that he insisted a hundred samples be collected and measured in sixteenths of an inch, the standard measure of that time, and an average individual work unit length (drone length) be calculated and transmitted to him before he consulted with the corporate reference librarian. The site engineer's voice was smooth even over the radio. At five-minute intervals he called that he was standing by for the data. But the site manager sat in the truck, unmoving, with the black plastic transceiver in his hand, looking down to the right of him on the seat at the lists he was making in the logbook of the ways to divide twelve into a hundred with symmetry and fairness, while the workers mingled at the foot of the mound. He stayed in this attitude until the foreman came over to find out what was he was doing. But the site manager did not look up from his paralyzed calculations,\*\* the streaking condensation on the window a fair screen for his perplexity; at the foreman's rap on the window the site manager merely poked at the smaller complimentary angle of the wind-wing to let in comments. The report submitted to the labor tribunal makes only passing reference to the site manager's math anxiety, which we consider decisive in this case and in his favor, betokening equity rather than assorted other phenomena linked

generally to math psychosis. The remainder of the report documents complaints and jokes made by the workers as they sat on the mound to eat their lunch at noon watching the passing cars while they waited, as for example the expectation of one to the effect that their “Polish bones” [sc.: polished] were to be found in two hundred years distributed through the pile of chewed cedar grown so much the larger by the mound’s excremental successes, to play a role more essentially structural than that they ever played for flesh and blood.

\* “An edge of proliferating ambiguities and uncertainties that are casuistically adjusted to the law by that tribe of jejune underpaid and over-punctilious environmental engineers whose business is with the ramifying obstructions that throw up endlessly like so many pricks to the kicking foot of a project managed tendon and nerve by a documented chain of responsibility,” the words of a commentator for whom a stubborn nature never quite keeps pace with the project but always finds a burr on which to hang for a free ride.)

\*\* The problem having been incorrectly posed in the headlamps as that of a quadric equation, unless the men and the women were to be assigned the task disproportionately.

## COMMENT

The directive to destroy the past was formulated as a purchase order issued by the Office of Corporate Archaeology to recover from that place the modest cache of iron shackles, lately become a non-negligible commodity upon conclusion of the 666<sup>th</sup> and final orbit of the Comprehensive Numismatics Survey undertaken by the Katamari Damashii/Lanzhou University Department of Remote Sensing Joint Venture GmbH\*, and with the widely-publicized beginning of its pilot survey known familiarly as “Millennial Material Culture (Fe)”, an inventory of all non-numismatic instruments of human resource management and governance (so-called “classic ferrous cybernetics”). The suppression of the centuries-long activities of cognoscenti and vulgar collectors alike in their quiet assembly in private houses of such instruments\*\*, and the promise to put a definitive end to such Satanic desires to scour the earth for them, will perforce fill the heart of every acolyte of Total Information with joy.

\* The satirical daily *Cynosure* noted on its Hindquarters page that this was the same company (Kuai Hun Yuangan, J.V.) that capitalized on the public frenzy to locate offshore the osseous remains of the severed “giant’s hands” in the alluvium of Antwerp (Belgium), historically thrown there by *Brabo*, “Liberator”, lieutenant of *Julius Caesar* and eponym of the *Brabant* Collectivity, after he had cut them off of the giant *Antigonus* blockading the river *Scheldt* until his tax had been paid, said act of dismemberment memorialized in the name *Antwerp*’s meaning of “hand-throwing” (“*hand-werpen*”) as well as in certain gold-foil-wrapped chocolates, shaped like hands and given as gifts even into the 1990’s (making no mention, however, of the use of severed hands, smoked and dried, as an accountant’s device to keep track of spent bullets during that Regent’s commercial adventures in the *Congo Free State*). Remote sensing of mineral calcium was inconclusive, and public interest waned. But the efforts of *malcontents* to represent such stories of tax-extracting chthonic creatures as distorted memorials of feudal trauma must not be allowed to curb our enjoyment of such children’s classics as *Geoffrey of Monmouth* or the rowdy undoings of a *Geomagog*, delight of generations. So much the

less should these *Goropian* animadversions\*\*\* color our enjoyment of *Hezekiah Butterworth's* greatest Ode, entitled "The Banquet on the Sea", presented to the King of Belgium's representative upon the royal opening of the International Peace Congress in Antwerp on August 30, 1894, the full text of which can be found the standard *Butterworth Delectatus* [OOOF].



La borne géodésique à Djamakeli (geodetic survey mark at Djamakeli, near Katanga), Charles François Alexandre Lemaire

\*\* That attitude of perverse fascination and indeed horror with which such a project might once have been contemplated must now give way to an indulgent smile when once we incline our eyes to the benefits accrued to the world's general ledger by the latest advances in macroergonomics made theoretically possible in the wake of the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Ergonomics* by Max Factorowicz published in the last decade, happily to bear in mind as we look forward to the new centuries dawning upon the world.

\*\*\* Johannes Goropius Becanus, *Opera* (Antwerp, 1580), note 6, pp. 138, 26 and 178 ff, dismissed these wonderful stories as "*absurda fabula*", a pernicious conceit of what once went by the name of Enlightenment that sadly could still be found almost four hundred years later in Baronet Hans Sloane's 1728 treatise on elephant bones (*Philosophical Transactions*, vol. 35, p. 503), citing as authoritative the very Girolamo Magi (Hieronymus Magus) whose book on torture devices (*De equuleo*), written from his personal memories in an Ottoman oubliette and often found conveniently bound together with his book on antique bells (*De tintinnabulis*), was itself the object of a lively trade alongside that of human shackles. The latter may now take their rightful place in the Inventory.