

Inscribed House

Part Two:

Outdoors



As time went by, the house grew too small for inscriptions, so they had to be taken outdoors. I'm not saying that every available piece of furniture, wall, and square centimeter of flooring had their own inscription; far from it. What I mean is that I assume some people in the house decided if one more inscription was scribbled on one more piece of paper and hidden behind mirrors or in desk tops, or one more scratching or carving of letters, numbers, pseudo-cow silhouettes, and other graphic symbols popped up anywhere within the edifice, that sole scribbling or scratching or carving would be one too many; it would obstruct the free movement of folks from room to room, for people would be prone to becoming entangled in wistful thinking due to vibes coming from all those written words and drawings and carved marks.

Exposing one's thoughts (in the form of graphic characters) to fresh air was believed to be the solution. Consequently, carvings began to appear on objects in the yard, in the form of concise inscriptions like the one stating 1978 [↑] at the entrance to my brother's cottage. It was meant to indicate the date of completion, and did not pretend to be a place for any kind of artistry to be displayed: the inscription was purely utilitarian and to this day it can be used to dispel any confusion with regard to chronology, and to reinforce the idea that the cottage was built in no other year but the one shown (see Figure 11).

The arrow, too, can be demonstrated to carry about the same amount of significance, in that it was meant to show the innocent visitor where the entrance to the edifice was and still is, and what direction to take if he or she wanted to step inside: he/she had no choice but to walk straight ahead through the door and into the house. I mean, other arrows may mislead one by pointing in the wrong direction, or even in two different directions simultaneously; not this arrow, though: it is an honest, straightforward arrow and it shows the honesty and straightforwardness of the person who carved it.

This was a very successful enterprise, but our back yard incorporates perhaps the most magnificent inscribed monument ever to be found in a private garden on Paris Street: it was built by Father and my brother and christened *Rest-and-Smoking Area*. The *Rest-and-Smoking Area* consists of lots and lots of boulders of various sizes and shapes held together by layers of mud and endowed with a sitting bench put together from elements of a rejected concrete fence topped with wooden planks. On these planks one rests, and on these planks one also smokes, carefully discarding the cigarette butts in the provided ashtray.

More to the point, the *Rest-and-Smoking Area* displays an astounding variety of carved inscriptions, and those are a great addition to the above-mentioned magnificence of the whole composition. The earliest decipherable inscription dates back to 1977 and is surrounded by the

names and/or initials of family members. There is an arrow, too, carved on one of the boulders to direct the weary traveler to the correct entrance to the *Area*, lest he/she misses it; should the traveler still be in doubt, the word *Entrance* carved next to the arrow will dispel any confusion. These inscriptions, just like the arrow by the cottage, are a testimony to the constructors' thoughtfulness and show deep understanding of the traveler's needs (see Figures 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16).



Figure 11. Cottage Entrance



Figure 12. Rest-and-Smoking Area Entrance



Figures 13, 14, 15, 16

Pious reader, I have now reached the end of the road: if there are any more inscriptions in or around the house, it will be some other historian's task to uncover them and make them known to the public at large. Some of the identified inscriptions were enigmatic and needed unraveling; some others were clear and straightforward; others, although by no means mysterious, still required some amount of investigation.

This research does not include evidence that may be found through slashing open mattresses, pillows, and old comforters, for such slashing was **not** performed; however, old blankets were vigorously shaken and thoroughly examined, and they proved to be free of inscriptions. Furthermore, no secret messages were found to have been woven into the Persian carpets throughout the house, or the lacy window dressings.

Not an inscriptionist myself (except in the early stages of my childhood and teen years), I have made every effort to draw a truthful inventory of all identified inscriptions associated with the Paris Street house, and I did so to the best of my abilities.



Unnumbered figure. Florimontes Dux B.M. Coat of Arms by the Artist of the Sundial

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Unnumbered figure. Entrance to the Front Garden. Stone Carving by the Artist of the Sundial

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Unnumbered figure. Entrance to the Artist's Cottage. Wood Carving by the Artist of the Sundial.

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Pious reader!

Forgive my inadequacy—if I have failed in some things—as it is difficult for the human senses to comprehend everything.

Yet I shall always bless my grandma, grandpa, Good Mama, mother, and father (all of whom I have personally known and loved), as well as a long line of unknown but certainly no less esteemed ancestors of mine extending all the way to Flora Pop de Pogacsfalva (a Romanian man from Transylvania knighted in 1666). Each of them individually and all of them collectively I acknowledge to have been responsible, at least partially, for the patience which enabled me to complete this little work.

Therefore that which I conceived in my mind I have put in writing to honor the Houses of Florea and Maïor reunited; and for the benefit of my own descendants.

It goes without saying that all shortcomings are mine. But I'll say it, anyway: all shortcomings are mine.

Vale.

(Loosely based on John of Tewkesbury, *Quatuor principalia musicae*, 1351; MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 90, colophon)