

On the Discovery of a Certain Manuscript

Marginal Note: "Curiosity, though ancient, still finds itself poorly rewarded."

I must begin by stating, in the cautious manner required of all serious readers, that I cannot vouch for the authenticity of the text that follows, nor I suspect, could its author. What I can attest to is the circumstance of its discovery, which is itself sufficiently improbable to merit recording.

In the winter of a year otherwise distinguished by workshops, whiteboards, and strategic alignment sessions, I found myself wandering into a narrow antique shop not far from the railway station, drawn less by curiosity than by a desire to escape a discussion on "scalable ideation." The shop was poorly lit and smelled of dust, leather, and time mismanaged. Its owner, a man whose age seemed undecided, allowed me to browse without comment.

It was there, between a cracked astrolabe and a collection of ecclesiastical pamphlets of dubious orthodoxy, that I noticed a small bundle of pages bound in fading cord. The script was Greek, uneven but deliberate, interspersed with marginal symbols that suggested either mathematics or heresy, often indistinguishable in earlier centuries¹.

The title page was missing. On the final leaf, however, appeared a single line, written in a hand that betrayed either irony or fatigue: "*This was written for those who count*".

As a member of the self-appointed IdeaSquare innovation team, I was trained (if that is the word) to recognize opportunity where others see disorder. Yet I confess that my first reaction was not excitement but suspicion. Manuscripts discovered in antique shops are rarely innocent. They tend to demand interpretation, footnotes, and (worst of all) responsibility.

Over several evenings, I transcribed the text, resisting the temptation to modernize its language or soften its judgments. The story it told was clearly a fable, though of an unusually technical sort, populated not by foxes and crows but by committees, reviewers, and men whose names strained the patience of scribes. Its tone was ancient, yet its grievances were alarmingly familiar.

Whether the manuscript is a late satire masquerading as an early one, or an early warning we chose not to read until it was safe, I cannot say. I offer it here not as truth, but as a mirror, one polished by centuries, and therefore difficult to ignore.

The reader is advised to proceed with care.

Fables, like ideas, have a way of surviving their evaluators.

Chapter I: Of Two Disciples and Their Peculiar Habits

In the age when Greece had perfected the art of counting before understanding, there lived two disciples of Aesop whose names were long, inconvenient, and therefore rarely spoken with care: Einsteinokritos (E) and Schrodingeriakis (S).

Einsteinokritos wandered the hills, troubling shepherds by asking why light bent near stones and why time seemed reluctant to keep pace with itself. After many years, he carved an equation into a rock and announced that it governed the entire universe, space, time, stars, and the motion of all things.

Schrodingeriakis stayed indoors, troubling householders by insisting that matter could not decide what it was doing until someone looked. He wrote an equation delicate as spider silk and claimed it governed the smallest parts of nature, from which all larger tools would one day be made.

The city tolerated them until they asked for funding.

Chapter II: The Committee of Assurance

They were summoned before the Committee of Assurance, whose task was not to discover truth, but to prevent embarrassment. The Committee sat behind polished tables engraved with comforting words: *Predictability, Efficiency, Return*.

The Chair spoke first: "Einsteinokritos, summarize your proposal in terms we can approve."

He said, "I propose that space curves."

¹It is worth noting that the marginal symbols, some resembling algebra, some resembling ecclesiastical ciphers, may have been intended to confound casual readers. Whether for amusement or security, the purpose is unclear.

The Chair paused. “Does it curve within the current funding cycle?”

“Not noticeably,” said Einsteinokritos.

A scribe marked this as *insufficient progress*.

Another member leaned forward: “Can your equation be falsified quickly?”

“Yes,” said Einsteinokritos, “but not cheaply, and not soon.”

The Committee exchanged relieved looks and wrote *high risk*.

Schrodingeriakias was then called.

“Your proposal?” asked the Chair.

“I claim,” said Schrodingeriakias, “that certainty itself breaks down at small scales”.

The Committee stiffened.

“If certainty breaks down,” said one member, “how shall we file quarterly reports?”

Schrodingeriakias had no answer suitable for the minutes.

“How many devices will your work produce?” asked another.

“I do not know,” said Schrodingeriakias. “But many.”

The Committee underlined *does not know* three times.

“And what metrics will you use to demonstrate success?”

“Understanding,” said Schrodingeriakias.

The room grew quiet.

After deliberation lasting precisely as long as procedure required, the Committee issued its verdict:

“These works lack clear deliverables, rely on speculative frameworks, and cannot guarantee measurable impact within acceptable horizons. Funding them would expose the city to uncertainty”.

Einsteinokritos and Schrodingeriakias were advised to pursue safer topics or apply again when reality had become more cooperative. Their tablets were archived behind the Committee Hall, beside outdated forecasts and initiatives once labelled *transformative*.

Marginal Note: “It is remarkable how bureaucracy, when perfected, achieves exactly the opposite of its ostensible purpose.”

Chapter III: The Future Catches Up

Time, which does not attend meetings, passed.

Centuries later, a different committee larger, faster, and better funded, found itself troubled. Ships guided by sky-bound instruments were drifting. Information machines behaved strangely unless corrected by rules no one remembered approving.

An archivist, searching for precedents, uncovered the tablets of Einsteinokritos and Schrodingeriakias.

Engineers applied Einsteinokritos’ equation and discovered that without correcting for the slowing of time (mere tens of microseconds per day) navigation failed catastrophically. Entire systems of trade and transport, worth hundreds of billions, rested on that once-dismissed curvature.

Others applied Schrodingeriakias’ equation and found it governed the flow of electrons through crystals. From these flowed switches, circuits, and the vast machinery of computation. Economies measured in trillions traced their ancestry to that fragile, unfunded insight.

The committee reconvened.

“We could not have predicted this,” said one member solemnly.

“Nor funded it responsibly,” said another.

They voted unanimously to celebrate innovation.

The tablets were placed in a glass case, and a plaque was added explaining that visionary work is important.

Beneath the plaque, in smaller letters that few read, was carved the old Aesopian judgment:

Moral: *Societies that invest only in certainty inherit only the present.*

Marginal Note: Let this manuscript serve as a warning and a mirror: what is ignored today may sustain empires tomorrow.