

The Object was a Pottery Jar from the Ruins of Pompeii

In 1958 Mr. W. H. Belk arranged with Professor C. J. Ducasse to find out how much information Peter Hurkos could get from an object sealed in a cardboard package. The object was furnished by Professor C. J. Ducasse of Brown University. Professor Ducasse sent the following letter after the reading by Hurkos was completed: "The object contained in a sealed package I gave Mr. Loring to submit to Hurkos for psychometrizing is a small pottery jar, that was broken but mended, which was given to me in 1922 by the late Dr. Stevenson Smith, Professor of Psychology at the University of Washington. He said that it came from the ruins of Pompeii, in Italy, buried in 79 A.D. in the ashes thrown up by the eruption of Vesuvius. I think, but am not positive, that Dr. Smith said he had bought the jar on a trip he made to Pompeii excavations. So far as I can remember, this is all the information I have ever had concerning that little jar." Dated May 10, 1958, signed C. J. Ducasse.

The sealed package was brought to New York City by Mr. Paul Loring from Providence, Rhode Island. There were several witnesses present at Mr. Belk's apartment when the package was handed to Peter Hurkos, and his statement concerning the package was tape-recorded. I give below the

reading by Peter Hurkos. The order of the statements has been rearranged for easier reading since his sentences were repetitive.

This is what Hurkos said about the sealed package: "This object blew up—an explosion. There was an explosion—a long time ago. I hear a strange language. It is very old. It had to do also with water. I don't know what it is. I see a dark color. It is not straight, not regular. It is very jagged, sharp points. It belonged to three people. I am sure of this. Dr. Ducasse didn't buy this. It was given to him, and it was repaired. A souvenir. I am sure that the owner of the cylinder is dead. I do not mean Dr. Ducasse, he is well."

As the reader may judge for himself, Hurkos' statements are a fair approximation of the contents of the sealed package. He was not able to specifically state that it was a jar. He seemed to sense the object more as it existed when it was fragmented in connection with an explosion. However, he does state that it was repaired and therefore it would appear that he should have been able to guess that this was a container or jar. In general I would say that he did have knowledge about what was in that package, and more so of the people who had owned it. For example, he was quite certain that Dr. Ducasse had not bought this, but that it had been given to him; that the person who had given it to Dr. Ducasse was dead; that the object was very, very old. This indicates that he knew things about the object that could not be known from visual inspection of the object itself. However, we can say that he knew no more about the object than did Dr. Ducasse. It is my opinion that the object in this case acted as a tuning device which allowed Hurkos to tap, in an approximate way, the mind of Dr. Ducasse with specific reference to the object in hand. This in itself is a most interesting phenomenon in that we would have to ascribe some sort of relay function to the object, as we did earlier to the unconscious participants in a telepathic triad.