

# THE RQ-CON 2 COMPENDIUM



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Section	Page
THE BROKEN COUNCIL .....	2
The Glorious ReEntry of Dayzatar .....	2
The Rolls of Honor .....	3
Report of the Great Tree .....	5
The Herka Bonegnasher Papers .....	6
Osentalka, A God For All Beings .....	9
Atheoan Tells a Bedtime Story .....	11
Lokamayadon: My Final Peace .....	13
Mathiman the Impaler, Emperor of Dara Happa .....	14
Relevations of the Iron Vrok .....	16
The Burning of Wahnakar .....	19
A Letter from Haradangian to Arstor .....	20
Of the Years in Which Osentalka Was Created .....	22
Report from Martaler the Blazing Forge .....	25
Interview with Kwaratch Kang .....	27
Final Report from Yuko Dostipikis .....	29
The Recollections of Arstor of Varstolar .....	31
Draconic Letters to Charmilla .....	34
Saratin Seomale's Story .....	36
Working Notes on the Genesis of a God .....	38
Dearest Daughter .....	43
The Song of the Sixth Day .....	48
The Dreams of a Dragon .....	50
The Myth of Osentalka .....	53
HOW THE WEST WAS ONE .....	54
USC PS783.24: The Pelinorius Papers .....	54
Sog City Majoral Weekly Report .....	56
Mimgill Ormswood's Report .....	57
The Annotated Sir Leperon .....	58
Note on a Soiled Cocktail Napkin .....	60
A Tale of Heresy and Madness .....	61
The Mystic Writings of Gaiseron .....	65
The Memorandum of Sir Sangsouche .....	66
The Journal of Sir Sieglinde .....	67
SEMINAR TRANSCRIPTS .....	69
Stafford's Address & HeroQuesting Seminar .....	69
Gloranthan Lore Auction .....	85
The Imther Seminar .....	94
GMing in Glorantha .....	101
Lunar Tunes .....	110
The Nick Brooke Cultural Exchange .....	118

*I'd like to take a brief moment to thank those of the Glorantha-tribe that journeyed to and participated in RuneQuest-Con 2. I would especially like to thank the GMs of our games and those who ran and participated in the seminars. I'd also like to specifically acknowledge the extreme amount of work done by the writers and judges of the two live action games. Lastly, thanks to our special guests for entertaining and enlightening us during the entire convention.*

Eric Rowe

# Tales of the Second Council

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In 1597, the publication of *Numismatics of Old Dara Happa* led to a resurgence of academic interest in the reign of Mathiman the Impaler, and the entire history of the creation of Osentalka. What follows is a compilation of writings concerning the birth of Osentalka, as originally collected by Loccuta the Seventh, Priest of Irrippi Ontor. As in Loccuta's original compilation, two additional sources are included here: *The Rolls of Honor*, a listing of the greatest members of the Second Council, and *The Myth of Osentalka*, a precise rendering of the creation myth of He who is She. -P.A

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## *the glorious reentry of dayzatar*

by Hans Van Halteran

### **From the Memoirs of Estorex, High Priest of Osentalka**

You ask me what was the best time of my life? Well, the birth of Osentalka of course. You want to hear all about it. No problem. I have time today.

It all started here, back home in Yuthuppa. My life had been full, studying the stars, striving to be more like Dayzatar. People called me "Holy" and all said I had surely reached the most perfect state a man could ever attain. But yet something was missing. I had never seen my God, Dayzatar. Such contact was ever impossible, since Dayzatar had, as you surely know, retreated from the lower realms. He had been forced to choose between contact with his followers or contact with his father Aether and, through him, with Ezelveztay. Rather than risk pollution of the One, Dayzatar left the world.

Then, one day, the stars told me that I might yet find that experience I had been missing all those years. I saw that a new Light was growing in a land called Dorastor. At about the same time I received a message from the Emperor, saying that there was some kind of God-making project sponsored by a council we had just joined and bidding me to go check it out. I checked the stars again and saw that indeed a God would come into the world. Since I saw the Light in that God and knew that all the old gods of Light had already returned, a great hope came into me: would the world have regained sufficient purity to allow the return of Dayzatar. Surely I had to do all in my power to make it so and see, yes even help, the return of Perfection. And whoever the new God would be, I was certain that at his Birth Dayzatar would be there and that even if it was not Him, I would see Him at that moment. So I went to far- away Dorastor and did what I could to further the creation of the new God of Light.

What? You need help with your astrolabe? Of course I can help. Excuse me for a moment. One of the novices needs help. I'll be right back.

Well, that's done. These young ones need help every once in a while. And I make it a rule to keep in touch even with the novices. One shouldn't be sitting alone in one's tower all day. I hope I didn't keep you waiting too long. Let's go on with the story.

So there I was, at the Birth of the new God, Osentalka they were going to call him. And at the Birth the sky cleared and a pure shaft of Light shot through the air. And my life's most fervent desire was fulfilled, for I recognized the Light of Dayzatar. I had now seen my God.

About my other hope I wasn't too sure. The God was a God of Pure and Harmonious Light and a child of Aether, but wasn't the Dayzatar I thought I knew. For one, the God was born a female. Of course, it later turned out, during the Initiation of the God, that She was also male, but it did start me thinking. Was it my own imperfection that had polluted Dayzatar's return into the world and brought impurities in this most Pure of Gods?

This journey to Dorastor and the work on this God project had opened me up to so many influences that I had always been safe from at home behing my telescope.

I met with followers of the barbarian Gods, who the Emperor told me were now allies. In talking to them I learned of the many strange beliefs they hold. But these were still recognizable ideas even though they were based on the belief in strange Gods. Another man, I think it was a man but he had a strange third eye in his forehead, didn't seem to pay attention to any God at all. His whole life seemed to made up of making and selling things. At first, he seemed friendly to our beliefs but later I started to suspect it may just have been to get the Darra Happa court to become customers.

I swapped many stories with that enormously friendly Gold Wheel Dancer, Speaking Wheel. Emboldened by that contact, I even discussed the Stars with a sorcerer from the Western lands, one Raltosar. He told me many things about the sky in his land, which seems to be different in a number of respects.

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## The Rolls of Honor

**Angarko the Golden Diamond**, who reunited the Mostali. Mostali. Ruler of Greatway. Robert Wolfe.

**Arstor of Varstolar**, who bargained for the seat of storm. Theyalan. King of the Somarin. Golden Tongue. Greg Fried.

**Atheoan**, who spread his people to the safety of the mountains. Wind Child. Ruler of the Storm Hills. David Cheng.

**Charmilla**, who embodied the peaceful darkness. Troll. Speaker for Halikiv. Xiola Umbar. Jennifer Piatek.

**Cragspider**, who brought Dara Happa back to the Council. Darkness. Queen of Cliffhome. Arachne Solare. Anne Merritt.

**Eriayalaia of the Veil**, who assassinated the Only Old One. Troll. Queen of the Blue Moon Plateau. Steven Barnes.

**Gita Flatsnout**, who became a dragonewt. Hsunchen. King of the Reptile Hsunchen of Ormsland. Chris Van Horn.

**Golden Overseer Seventh Diamond**, who reunited the Mostali. Mostali. Nidan Ambassador. John Holmes.

**Gonn Orta**, who saved Dorastor twice and guards the new god. Elder Giant. Rob Mace.

**Haradangian of the Stravuli**, who united the storm followers. Theyalan. King of the Heartlings. Orlanth. Gabor Bartha.

**Herka the Bone-Gnasher**, who hurled the gorp hordes. Troll. Speaker for the Elder Wilds. Karrg. James Frusetta.

**Holy Estorex**, who turned Osentalka's dragon gold, sometimes. Pelorian. Yuthuppan High Priest of Dayzatar. Hans van Halteran.

**Sir Homaltan**, who kept the peace in the West. Seshnelan Observer. Mark Mohrfield.

**Iron Diamond Voice**, who was the greatest warlord of the Council. Mostali. Warlord of Greatway. Doug Lenat.

**Iron-Skull Fanak**, who found great wealth in ruin. Mostali. Foreman of the Council. Rob Moser.

**Isidilian the Wise**, who was the sun dwarf. Mostali. Foreman of Dwarf Mine. Mike McGloin.

**KanOra the ManaAlkElsor**, who spoke for Earth in the end. Pelorian. Priestess of Naveria. Pam Carlson.

**Kestinelm**, who as the Bright Eagle Lord spoke for Dara Happa. Pelorian. Governor of Kestinaddi. James Polk.

**Khorzanelm the Magnificent**, who died for Dara Happa, as did his son. Pelorian. Emperor of Dara Happa. Yelm Imperator. Nick Brooke.

**Kwaratch Kang**, who slew the Emperor of Dara Happa. Troll. General of the Kingdom of Night. Zorak Zoran. Michael A. Derry.

**Lestus Creeping Ivy**, who defeated the Zebra Hsunchen. Aldryami. Great Tree of the Ballid Forest. Flamal. Dave Pearton.

**Lokamayadon of the Bilini**, who united the storm followers. Theyalan. Chief of the Talastari Tribes. Orlanatus. Richard Fenner.

**Maklaman of the Otkorioni**, who crushed the hill barbarians. Theyalan. Speaker for Dari. Humath. Michael Strathearn.

**Martaler the Blazing Forge**, who survived the great siege of error. Mostali. Ruler of Gemborg. Al Petersen.

**Master Herds Allosaurs**, who dreamed of many new dinosaurs. Dragonewt Ruler of the Elder Wilds. David Chapin.

**Mathiman**, who became the Drunken Emperor. Pelorian. Governor of Darjiin. Antirius Manimati. MOB.

**Mind of the Golden Dragon**, who built the new dragon city in Dorastor. Dragonewt Ruler of Saird. David Gadbois.

**The Only Old One**, who unified. Troll. Ruler of the Kingdom of Night. Argan Argar. Sandy Petersen.

**Palangio the Iron Vrok**, who alone wounded the Scarlet Bat. Pelorian. Governor of Alkoth. Shargash. Dennis Hoover.

**Penemara**, who married two Emperors. Dorastan. Priestess of the Erinflarth and Speaker for the Oslir. Jim Ausman.

**Raltosar the Ambassador**, who was privy to the meetings of the Council. Brithini Observer. Kevin Jacklin.

**Rastazar of the Penetelli**, who gave peace to the Theyalans. Theyalan. Heartling High Priest of Elemalus. Peter Hentges.

**Roostin Trueheart**, who showed the elves the ways of peace. Aldryami. Healing Water of the Tarinwood. Michael Gilbert.

**Saratin Seomale**, who guarded Dorastor from the North. Aldryami. Light Son of the Talastar Forest. Neil Robinson.

**Seri-Phy-Ranor**, who brought the dragonewts to Dorastor. Dorastan. Governor of Dorastor. Randy Tomaszewski.

**Sharan Cho**, who gifted the Dragon Emperor. Kralorelan Observer. James Chapin.

**Sibilant Tongue of Ouroboros**, who found his true self as the Great Dragon. Dragonewt Ruler of Kerofinela. Bill Thompson.

**Speaking Wheel**, who spoke for fire and became one with the new god. The Last Gold Wheel Dancer. Harald Smith.

**Tahada Red Bison**, who single-handedly defeated Cwim. Praxian. Khan of the Bison Tribe. Waha the Founder. Jim DeGon.

**Taris Sharpthorn**, who was the eyes and ears of the Council. Aldryami. High King Elf of the Talastar Forest. Curtis Taylor.

**That Which Cracks Eggs**, who sacrificed his power to free the dragon. Dragonewt Ruler of Ralios. Mark Gilles.

**Thorktor Thon**, who liberated Dagori Inkarth. Troll. Speaker for Dagori Inkarth. Kygor Litor. George Harris.

**Throna Silverleaf**, who saved the Blue Moon Plateau. Aldryami. Speaker for the Elf Sea. Aldrya. Kristi DiClemente.

**Toral the Golden**, who gave up his Council Seat for the sake of unity. Mostali. Aide to the Council. Mike Ciempil.

**Varonal Zor of the Kitori**, who first befriended darkness. Theyalan. King of the Kitori. Zolan Zubar.

**Vyrope**, who spoke for all and cares for Osentalka. Dorastan. High Priestess of Dorasta. Barbara Koln.

**Wahnakar the Bison Heir**, who was the most loyal man in Dara Happa. Khan of the Hungry Plateau. Arraz. David Hall.

**Yuko Dostipikis**, who dealt in the tools of death. Third Eye Blue. Jeff Okamoto.



But his stories contained many strange concepts, and afterwards I doubted the wisdom of speaking to him.

Even more harmful were my dealings with my own Court. I had seen in the stars that the Emperor Khorzanelm was moving towards his doom, brought about by his blindness for his Other. When in his presence I tried to talk to him about this, but he just wouldn't listen. In fact he seemed to turn against me after that. I should have taken that as an omen to stay away from the court. Unfortunately, I didn't and later on was forced to compromise my peacefulness by assisting in the release of Shargash. I could have refused the Emperor this service, but then all hope of Dayzatar's return would have been lost. Later I had to witness the murder of the Emperor Khorzanelm by the hand of a foul creature of Darkness. However, as the creature explained, the Emperor had brought this upon himself by some foolish action. My fears about his fate were confirmed. Things got worse when this murder led to the usurpation of the throne by the Emperor's seemingly loyal servant, Mathiman. When it became clear that Mathiman was turning into a power-mad drunk - this was the infamous Mathiman the Impaler - I turned away from the court as much as possible and concentrated on the God project.

And it turned out that it was high time, too, since the God did not contain enough Light by far. In fact, Darkness dominated. But the determination of the God's Self was yet to come and this was the critical bid. In order to help the cause of Light I confronted my most overwhelming aversion and engaged Cragspider, the bidder for Darkness, in a theological discussion so that she would not be in the project hall in time for the bidding. I was already at the edge of my sanity by this close contact to a digijelm, so when something cast Dark magic at me to break my concentration I went utterly mad. I still don't know what I did during my time of madness. Fortunately, my sanity returned to me and I was told that we had indeed succeeded in adjusting the creation of the God sufficiently so that his True Nature, that of Light, could come about. However, what effects had my madness had on the Perfection of Dayzatar?

Yes? He has made a mess of the alignment again? No, I'll come. Excuse me yet again. Responsibilities, you know.

Here, that didn't take long, now, did it? Where were we? Ah, yes the ReEntry of Dayzatar.

So Dayzatar returned to the world, but it wasn't the Dayzatar we knew before. While in retreat Dayzatar had come to know his Other. He had reconciled and joined with his Other and, in this joining, had become even closer to Perfection and to the One.

I always hope that my finding of my Other during the God project has helped in some way to bring this about. I left my solitude behind my telescope, where I never thought anything but fixed thoughts and went out into the world. I

talked to many people, learning about other beliefs and recognizing that these, too, were true beliefs.

When the Emperor didn't want to learn about his spiritual side, I started to realise that I myself should avoid the same trap and should also pay attention to the world down here. The second time I helped releasing Shargash, I still didn't like it, but I did it voluntarily to help keep my people in Yuthuppa safe.

When the bidding for Osentalka's Self threatened to fall into the hands of Darkness because the Light was divided, I put my hand to politics to bring the opponents together. There were two factions. The one that had had my sympathy so far was led by Kestinelm and contained Speaking Wheel, whom I had already befriended. It contained many more, also some women, such as Kanora the ManaAlkElsor and Penemara, the Wife of the old as well as the new Emperor. About Penemara I feel I must say that I mistrusted her at first, even so far as to subject her to a Detect Truth spell on asking her if she really supported the cause of Light. When I found she did, I was ashamed and trusted her from then on. The other faction was led by Palangio, the Iron Vrok, and had the support of, among others, an Elf called Saratin and the leader of the Kralorelan delegation. Kestinelm's faction wanted a peaceful God. Palangio's faction wanted a violent God. This major difference was further complicated by the fact that there seemed to be hatred between the two cousins. It took me all my patience and tact to bring these two together and make them agree to a peaceful God who could turn wrathful on being attacked. I myself had already accepted such a compromise. Had I not acted in the same way when releasing Shargash when it was necessary?

The reunited faction of Light won the day and so we came to gain the presence of the Pure Light, Osentalka, who before has been Dayzatar.

What do you mean, I told you two stories and which one do I really believe? No, you don't understand. They are both true, or rather, it is all true. It is just as with that Dragon companion. There never was a Black Dragon that I then turned Golden. There always was an ever-changing Black and Golden Dragon. My use of the Divine Power of Enlightenment did not change the Dragon. No, it showed the Council and the world that the Dragon was both. Some digijelm actually tried to "change it back", but that was nonsense. I guess some people just cannot be enlightened.

No, Osentalka is not Impure or Pure, but is Whole. Osentalka is not Male or Female, Light or Dark, Peaceful or Violent, or whatever choice you may want to force. Osentalka is all these things, is always both sides of any choice. Osentalka is not the One, but is as close to the One as anything can get, by always being both of the Two. And this is the Perfection of Osentalka, the reason that I say Osentalka is indeed Dayzatar returned.



## Report of the Great Tree

by Dave Pearton

*The following fragment represents a transcript of a report by the Great Tree of Ballid forest to the combined councils of Ballid and Erontree forests on the Osentakalta project:*

Light and Growth to all.

We have gathered under the great tree in the sight of mother Aldrya to hear of the great project to regrow Flamal. You know me well, I am Lestus Creeping Ivy the Great Tree of our beloved forests. I was here during the eternal summer of the Green Age and fought the blight of the great eater when the forces of the taker were ascendant. I rejoiced with our mother when Voria danced the flowers awake and stood with clear eyes to welcome the dawn. But my joy was soon withered as the new summer soon turned to dark and I saw our lives were trapped in an eternal, sterile cycle. I resolved then that we must see a return of the green age and the rebirth of our father Flamal.

To this end I have worked to rejoin the great forest so that all aldryami should be united behind this great goal which represents our only hope for a new age. Through the long seasons I have worked tirelessly while others have slept and stagnated or striven like weeds to choke the new growth. But slowly and patiently, as the mighty tree grows, spreading its beneficent shade to all, has the great scheme flowered and the ancient forests of Ballid and Erontree are now as one. Yet there are still forests that resist the new growth. Just to the south lies the Tarinwood - this once proud forest lies stagnant and is choked with old and rotten growth - none more so than their leader Roostin Trueheart. To the north lie yet other forests that have yet to see the light.

It is for this reason that I saw the "World Council of Friends" as an excellent opportunity to further our goals - the attempt to create a new god could become the rebirth of our father Flamal. If I could gain enough influence then I could ensure the safety that we require for our seeds to sprout and grow and clear out the dead wood that has been choking out growth.

Alas my high hopes were soon dashed. Like a self-strangling clump of weeds the council members wrangled and wasted the seasons in sterile and pointless debate. The construction of the god was dominated by the forces of the taker while the forces of life and light wasted their energy on meaningless squabbling. Much as I strove to

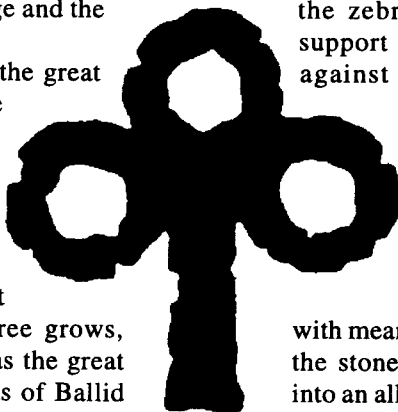
overcome the pitiful whinings about "balance" those who would sell out to the taker and darkness were too numerous. Their collaboration ensured that the new god would be a hateful thing of cold darkness and sterile stone.

I realised then that the council and the new god would be a hindrance rather than a help to our dream of new growth and resolved to work from within to ensure that the council was weak and divided against itself. To this end I persuaded the forces of earth and the other aldryami to vote for me as earth speaker for the inner council - persuading the deluded fools that I would work for balance and the common good. While on the council I managed to remove the prime avatar of the taker, Karawatch Kang, from the position of warlord. His replacement, Iron Diamond Voice, is a much less effective and deadly foe. I also gained council help to destroy the zebra riders while withholding effective support for the heirs of Dari in their struggle against the hill barbarians, thus potentially weakening them. Unfortunately the hill barbarians proved hopelessly inept.

While weakening the council from inside I worked at strengthening the forest. The zebra riders were crushed and the heirs of Dari and the reptile men were put off with meaningless words. The potential threat from the stonemen of Nida was removed by entering into an alliance - all they required was that I should not allow the third eye blue access to the forests.

What fools, as if we would allow the death-metal lovers into the living lands? The iron-clad humans to the south are no threat and will be compost for the forest's expansion.

The birth of the new god heralds a new opportunity for us. This so-called god is a creature of stasis and darkness. It is a new avatar of the taker and thus has no hold over us. There is no doubt that chaos and turmoil will engulf the lands of the council. We should therefore have nothing more to do with the new god and the council is so weak and divided that they will be incapable of withstanding the new growth. The heirs of Dari believe that they have secured our friendship but there is no faith with humans. Even now the ground has been prepared for the new forest that will spring up around their feet. The forest will stretch as far as the Tarinwood and then we shall be able to prune the deadwood from there as well.





# The Herka Bonegnasher Papers

by James Frusetta

From *Unity Council Records Relating to Political Relations Between the Elder Wilds and its Neighbors*, 355 - 375

Representative of the Elder Wilds Uz during the Genesis of the Perfect One, Herka Bonegnasher left behind a significant body of correspondence with the rulers of the Troll Hills. Herka Bonegnasher Karrg's Son was notable as a minor actor within the Unity Council, as well as a spokesman for harmony between the races of the Elder Wilds. His diplomatic role in the post-Genesis period was a periodic annoyance for the greater forces of Darkness, from whose policy he deviated with on occasion. Surprisingly, he sought neither to be Warlord or a Council Member, yet his career is noted by positions as Ambassador to Cliffhome, Ambassador to Halikiv, and Ambassador to Greatway. Note Donar Rauzzon's *Darkness Representatives at the Birth of the Perfect One* for additional detail.

As a religious figure, Herka was responsible for the Inclusion of Karrg's Myth within Osentalka. Although having little appreciable affect at the time, Osentalka has since proven to favor the path of Karrg over other gods of war, slowly weakening the power of Zorak Zoran over the centuries away from near-dominance among Uz warriors to the status of a secondary cult. Gerak Saladstomper's excellent *Karrg and Zorak Zoran Mythos* is the best source of detail regarding this gradual transformation. Herka enjoys a small but respectable place as a hero of Karrg for the act, and there is minor cult worship of him among Elder Wilds Uz warriors (Ibid).

The following abbreviated letters all date from the period of the Unity Council. Following the disappearance of Herka in 482 S.T. (either as a product of assassination, heroquest or failed adventure, depending on the source), his papers and correspondence were sealed and deposited with the Unity Council. This marks the first general translation, indexing, summarization and reproduction of the materials. A discussion of the materials and a biography of the individual will be presented in my text *Herka Bonegnasher: Renewer of Karrg*.

All Hail the Perfect One, Osentalka!  
Greysky Orangeguy, Council Archivist

## DOC.GROUP.UCR.UZ.H11

Windsday, Truth, Dark Season, 357

Herka —

The Council of Kyger Litor is eager to hear of news about the Unity Council.

As you recall, there are five deeds of significant importance

to us. First, we agree with you on the importance of undermining Zorak Zoran's power, and filling the new gods with the myths of Karrg. Second, aid Thorktor Thon in securing greater autonomy from the Only Old One. Third, protect the Elder Wilds. Fourth, weaken the insidious evil of the Dara Happan empire, and reduce the Sun as much as possible within the Perfect-One-to-Be. And fifth, bring back some of the de-licious dinosaurs. ...

With the blessings of Kyger Litor,  
Kawaz Tor, Priestess of Kyger Litor  
Bazaki Stronghold, Troll Hills

## DOC.GROUP.UCR.UZ.H29

Godday, Harmony, Storm Season, 357

Kawaz —

Yes, I have arrived at the Council grounds without problems. Unfortunately, early approaches to Master Herd Allosaurs proved difficult: what does one say, "I'd like to buy some of your brother dinosaurs to snack upon?" We must reject the replenishment of our herds. ...

The Only Old One is pleasant enough, though I admit I do not trust the smooth-talking, smooth-headed son of Argan Argar. Kwaratch Kang is surprisingly pleasant, considering the obnoxious runner of a god he worships. The remainder of the Darkness delegation all seem trustworthy.

The Mostali of Greatway and the Aldryami of the Elf Sea are neutral, but seem friendly enough. I urge the Kyger Litor Council to foster better relations with our fellow elder races. I am resolved to avoid Palangio, and although I am encouraging others to turn Wahnakar the Bison Heir back to his roots, I have little confidence in the success of the matter...

I am saving most of my abilities and goods for later myths; with cunning, I should be able to overwhelm Kang and seize the combat myth. In doing so, the power of Karrg will be increased, and he will sit at Osentalka's side, while Zorak Zoran skulks in the shadows.

All hail the God to Be!  
Herka Bonegnasher, Karrg's Son  
Dorastor

## DOC.GROUP.UCR.UZ.H71

Clayday, Death, Dark Season, 363

Herka —

We are saddened to hear of your continued failure to obtain a new herd of delicacies. Our palates may become mundane because of the unpredictability of Dragonewts, but at least our bellies will be full.

Be careful of the machinations of the Only Old One, and



secure the friendship of Earth, Storm, and Water to guard against future disloyalties...

We have every confidence in your abilities, of course.

The blessings of Kyger Litor be yours,  
Mother of All, Priestess of Kyger Litor  
Bazaki Stronghold, Troll Hills

#### DOC.GROUP.UCR.UZ.H89

Wildday, Illusion, Sea Season, 364

Mother of All —

Boring matters, of late. A few weeks spent in the Only Old One's citadel, listening to the whines of the Storm worshippers. Yawn.

The Only Old One requested a self-defense alliance against the Dara Happans, which I was happy to agree to; however, we will not be required to fight either elves or dwarves here in the Elder Wilds. The Only Old One has set out upon a bold course of action, securing much of the form of the Perfect One early in the rituals. I keep a wary eye on the proceedings, as it seems to be creating animosity among others. He has suggested a pre-emptive strike against the Empire, which I

would be glad to see. But the reaction of the other kingdoms and races to such a move would likely be hostile, and preservation of our tenuous links with Aldryami and Mostali are more important to me than the eradication of the Burning Hate...

Yuko Dostipikis, of Third Eye Blue, has interesting propositions regarding weapons, but I have neither the inclination to use them or the resources to purchase them. I have brought him out to the Only Old One; let his troops use them against the Empire if they wish.

I have promised Charmilla, the Xiola Umbar priestess and representative of Halikiv, our support if hostilities arise from the Hsunchen. Perhaps the Elf Sea Aldryami could mediate?

Both Silverleaf and Iron Diamond Voice are pleasant enough, and I mourn the day that such graceful personages were trapped in Aldryami and Mostali husks.

All Hail the Darkness' Early Lead!

Herka Bonegnasher, Karrg's Son  
Greatway

#### DOC.GROUP.UCR.UZ.H104

Waterday, Fertility, Enemy Season, 366

Herka —

We direct your attention to rumors that Kang of the Hat of Many Worms makes plans to invade the Elder Wilds; we have heard nothing of your plans to defend the Wilds in such a case. The Council was moved to vote regarding your actions, and while supporting you we are alarmed about your inactivity on this matter.

Furthermore, you have failed to provide either action or intention regarding dealing a blow to the Empire of the Burning Sun. Explain your actions immediately, please.

Karrg bless your Arm,

Klazad Krin, Karrg's Son

Drazowl Stronghold, Troll Hills

#### DOC.GROUP.UCR.UZ.H153

Freezeday, Death, Sea Season, 367

Klazad —

It should be a time of great rejoicing, now. I have secured the future of Kyger Litor and Karrg by seizing the creation myth of Ostentalka.

*"When her foes of Chaos, disorder, disunity and disloyalty came upon her and her people, Ostentalka became the Valiant Protector. With her winds she tore at her enemies, into the earth she swallowed them. But she was merciful, and forgave those foes who realized her truth."*

The myth is subtle; although it is acceptable to most within the Council (many who were surprised at its mild content), it is clearly a Karrg's son myth. Further, it helps to equate Zorak Zoran (disorder) with disunity and disloyalty. With this, we are committed; even if the other Darkness



Herka Bone-Gnasher preparing for war





representatives withdraw from the council, I will remain. Cragspider was most helpful in the matter, and although her offers of aid were unneeded I press the matrons of the clans to remember this debt. Charmilla was helpful as well.

Even better, Kwaratch Kang managed to get bushwhacked by the Gemborg Dwarves. Kang is a fine warrior, a friendly comrade and a fine, if blunt, Uz, but he has little luck in war. His first moves were countered by a Zebra Hsunchen ambush, and a later move to destroy the Monster Kwim was humiliated when Praxian nomads valiantly slew the monster before Kang approached. I still am wary of his strong arm and personal might, but a peg-legged duck would make a better Warlord. Fear not, if Kang approaches the Wilds I will beg every elf and dwarf to harass his flanks; I'll beg help of the Dara Happans, if need be. Zorak Zorani are worthless outside the ambush, in any case, with little stomach for a real fight. Let him do what he does best, namely assassinating Dara Hapman emperors.

I will be Leader of the Darkness for the next period, but I fear the pretensions of the Inner Council, and was happy enough to relinquish the Darkness Speakership to the Only Old One for the duration of the council session. I am happy enough to receive the myth and the title; let the trader soil his hands in scheming and council work.

The Dara Happans continue to make trouble, although they have (on the most part) been civilly quiet around me. Perhaps my majestic aura intimidates them.

All Hail the Gemborg Dwarves!  
Herka Bonegnasher, Karrg's Son  
Dorastor

#### DOC.GROUP.UCR.UZ.H216

Painday, Stasis, Earth Season, 369

Herka —

We have reconsidered our earlier admonition; although it is unfortunate that you were not able to achieve all of the goals set forth, you have achieved the greatest and most important.

On a disquieting note, we received complaints from the Dara Happans and the Dragonewts regarding a "... gorp [you] sent to harass our armies." Um, have you been listening to the Riddlers? You would never stoop to allying with Chaos, we assume.

All hail the Perfect One!  
Gorttakka, Beloved of Yurrig  
Bazaki Stronghold, Troll Hills

#### DOC.GROUP.UCR.UZ.H290

Freezeday, Stasis, Dark Season, 370

Gorttakka —

No, I don't know any damn riddles.  
It was all an unfortunate mistake. I had agreed to commit

troops under Throna Silverleaf's command to combat a broo invasion near the Blue Moon Plateau, threatening Eriayalaia. Suddenly, an army of broo invaded from the east, and closed upon the Elf Sea. I mustered further armies to march to the Aldryami's defense, and striding into the bulk of the foul Chaos slime I picked up the largest, foulest gorgs in my hands.

Casting my eye throughout Genertala, I noticed that the Dara Happans and Dragonewts were engaged in battle against nomads. I hurled the Chaos at the nomads, figuring that the two would annihilate each other. Tragically, I underestimated the strength of Chaos — as has happened since before Time — and the foul gorgs engaged our Council allies.

Oh, well, it could have been someone important. Next time, I will hurl the Scarlet Bat or Kwim rather than stoop to the level of gorp.

I will be participating in the final sessions of the ritual soon, but as far as I am concerned, the creation of Osentalka is already a success. Zorak Zoran has been weakened, the Dara Happans embroiled in succession crises, and the Perfect One formed with a good balance between the elements.

I have surrendered special powers traded for to Yuko Dostipikis, who was cruelly set upon by the Inner Council.

Unfortunately, the Dragonewts are off on some strange dragonewtish path, and the best efforts of Charmilla to intercede on their behalf to the Council came to naught.

All Hail the Protecting One!  
Herka Bonegnasher, Karrg's Son  
Elf Sea

#### DOC.GROUP.UCR.UZ.H293

Waterday, Fertility, Earth Season, 372

Kawaz —

Although mighty battles were fought in Dorastor between Council armies and the forces of the Dragonewts, victory lies in the hands of the Council.

As an addendum to my last correspondence, the Only Old One has been slain by an assassin. Although I am saddened by the loss of this fine figure, I am none-the-less relieved that the strong-man of the Darkness delegation has departed the ritual. Thorktor Thon can now declare independence or autonomy from the rule of the Shadow Plateau, and a more equitable balance of power within the Darkness can be created.

All hail the Perfect One!  
Herka Bonegnasher, Karrg's Son  
Dorastor

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Additional and related documents can be found in the the Council Archives under the following document groups: *Elder Wilds and its Neighbors*, 375 - 390, *Internal Affairs of the Elder Wilds*, 355 - 375, and *Internal Affairs of the Elder Wilds*, 375 - 475.



## *report on the creation of osentalka a god for all beings*

*by Pam Carlson*

**To:** High Council Of the Naveria  
**From:** KanOra the ManaAlkElsor

Wise Ladies:

I know we have long lamented our goddess' choice of Brightface' as the god to set an example for our men. But take heart, and witness that in spite of the greed and brutality of Brightface and minions, the men of Peloria are still our sons; they can still remember the wisdom of the goddesses.

As we so voted twenty years before, I went to Dorastor to help instill the wisdom of the goddesses into the new god. We wanted a god for all beings, both male and female, and a wise leader, concerned for the welfare of all, not a god of power, conquest, and greed. But because Naveria was a land subject to the Dara Happan Empire, I had to achieve these goals from the confines of the court. I feared the Emperor would try to make the new god much like Brightface, who slew the High Goddess and enslaved our people.

When I recieved a clandestine letter about controlling Dara Happa's power, I was elated that I might have some allies on the project. I assumed the letter was from the Dark Folk, a wise and ancient race who still recognize the value of female leadership. But hardly had I arrived at Raibanth, when I heard a copy of the secret note being read to the Emperor himself! I was horrified that the secret had been discovered, but soon realized it was little secret that Dara Happa had many enemies. It has long been the nature of Brightface to alienate all.

I quickly suggested to the Emperor that I could be of more use in Dorastor, ferreting out the source of the conspiracy against him. He agreed, and off I went, free from that oppressive atmosphere.

In Dorastor I met with Wahnakar the Bison Heir and Tadaha Red Bison, the Khan of the Bison People of Prax. I told them of our Pelorian deity Bisos the Bull, son of Kereus, son of Naveria, searching them for some Earth solidarity. Wahnakar seemed unswayed from his devotion to the Emperor. The lonely Praxian looked intrigued, but he found other allies with the Storm Folk and the Only Old One.

I soon met Vyrope, Priestess of Dorasta. She dearly wanted the new deity to be female. I felt that a god who had the wisdom of both sexes would be preferable, but that seemed difficult to achieve. I agreed to back her in creating a goddess. Penemara, priestess of the Erinflarth, agreed with us too. Prior to the vote, the Emperor ordered me to arrange to make the god male, but I have never been much interested in orders.

Because I was trying so successfully to absent myself from court, I heard of the Emperor's marriage to Penemara after

the event occurred. I was afraid that she would betray our cause, but she had little power over earth worship. After speaking with her, it became apparent that she still agreed with us, she just felt that she could be more effective from within the court! She has a stronger stomach than I.

Vyrope and I prevailed, and Osentalka was female. The Emperor was furious, He summoned me back to Dara Happa, and demanded that I turn over all my Naverian armies to Palangio the Iron Vrok, a hopelessly violent man. I tried to reason that the move would leave Naveria defenseless, but the Emperor merely offered to move Palangio's thugs into Naveria for protection. So I surrendered our armies to the Emperor. I had no choice.

Such is the ruling wisdom of Brightface.

The Emperor was also angry about the weight of Darkness in the embryonic deity. Palangio asked to release Shargash to teach the Dark Folk a lesson.

Holy Estorex and I argued against using mindless destruction to solve all one's problems. Then a messenger reported chaos attacks in Dragon Pass, and gave the Emperor the excuse we wanted. But Palangio still needed the blessing of Holy Estorex to release Shargash, and that wise and gentle man was still reluctant - Dragon Pass was a long way from Peloria. But the Emperor was by now obsessed with power and greed. Khorzanelm made that most holy of men bow to the floor, placed his foot on that poor old man's neck, and forced Holy Estorex to allow the release of Shargash. It was then I knew that this Emperor did not deserve his position. He would have to be replaced, but how?

The goddesses provided. Kwaratch Kang strode into court to present a personal challenge to the Emperor. Because he was unjust, Khorzanelm was weak. The false Emperor easily succumbed to the Dark Warrior. When Penemara heard that the Dark Magic used to slay the Emperor prevented his Return, she threw herself at her husband's murderer. Kang slew her, too. Holy Estorex later aided her Return.

Mathiman, Darjiin to the core, quickly usurped the throne. Loyal Wanakher the Bison Lord stood ready to back the claim of Khorzanelm's young son, but after Penemara's Return she married Mathiman, and the Usurper swore to uphold the boy as his heir. Mathiman announced that marrying the wife of the former Emperor would legitimize his claim. Even Emperors remember the supreme legitimacy of female rule!

Mathiman was posturing on the Footstool, Shargash was loose, and everyone was scrambling for political cover. The Emperor withdrew Dara Happa from the God Project. I took advantage of the confusion to return to the God Project. Just outside Dara Happa, Kestinelm, Bright Eagle Lord of



Rhinliddi, approached me cautiously. He was grasping for a hint of discontent. I dared not trust him, and returned some senseless drivel about the *Justice of Yelm* to make him look elsewhere for treason. When I next spoke with him, I implored the help of the goddesses to know his true heart.

I saw that his people were also slaves of the Dara Happan Empire, and he had as little love for them as I. We agreed to flee Brightface's empire, and look for political help against the Emperor.

I was still concerned with balance in the growing godling. There was little light in the venture. The Dark Folk, allied with the dragonewts, the Mostali, and the Storm Folk, had dominated the rituals so far. I had heard that the Only Old One was a wise and selfless leader, so I went to speak with him about the imbalance. To my dismay, he said that he cared most about the welfare of the Elder Races, as they have been in decline. He urged me to join his alliance, and then he would address my concerns. Because I had no reason to trust him, I had to reject his offer.

Next it was time to vote on Osentalka's initiation myths, the last chance to change the sex of the godling. I feared that the god would be changed into a Vogmarinized<sup>2</sup> male being. I couldn't make anyone understand my fears of a male god. The dwarves and the dragonewts said that the sex of the god was irrelevant, but then male gods hadn't destroyed their civilization. Eventually, I realized that if the god became male, it would still have been born female, and thus would be both!

When Penemara told me that the Emperor insisted that the god be male, it became obvious that the god would have to become male if the Dara Happans were to return to the project. I then agreed to support Dara Happa for the initiation myth. Poor Rinliddi had been surrounded by Palangio's armies, so to spare his people Kestinelm was forced to rejoin the Empire. Ironically, Kestinelm's talent for organization made him Dara Happa's voice on the God Project.

Then, tragedy struck. Emperor (and I use the term only in its political sense) Mathiman sobered up long enough to notice that I had pulled Naveria out of the Empire! He drunkenly threatened to overrun us. Thinking quickly, I promised him that I would arrange to change the sex of Osentalka if he would not invade Naveria. The vote was already going to go this way, but Mathiman was far too drunk to know that! Mathiman further raved about his latest insane personal agenda - to place his young stepson into the Egg, so that the boy might become the god's willie. I thought this was rather a keen joke, until I realized that this aspect of Osentalka was quite important to them! I negotiated a deal with the Emperor: I would help his stepson become part of the god, and Mathiman would agree to leave Naveria free of Dara Happa for as long as the empire shall exist. I did spare them a lecture on the irrelevancies of an earthly reproductive

organ to a divine being. I figured that becoming a useless appendage was an appropriate fate for Dara Happa Emperor!

Now it was time for the final vote - Osentalka's self and the blessings she would bestow. Dara Happa was back in the rituals, with their largely unspent power finally mustered for the Self Myth. I had to join their coalition, hoping I could modify its influence. Their members included Saratin Seomale, a Light Son of the Plant Folk, Kestinelm, Holy Estorex, and Wahnakar. Most dangerous of all was Palangio. Until now the general had been busy playing with his armies, but now he hoped to include Shargash's appetite for gleeful destruction into the core of the new god!

We carefully compromised on a self aspect: fearsome (Palangio) protector (me), made of pure (Holy Estorex) light (Seolame and Kestinelm). Then we wrote the self myth down and all signed it - so no one could change it. Then Kestinelm led the voting. I used my remaining Earth Powers to forge a blessing of fertility to plants and animals. (I included the animals for poor Tadaha the Red Bison. He had been abandoned by his allies, and he gave me his remaining Powers because of my Naveria's ties to the Bull God.) Kestinelm had enough light power to triumph over the Only Old One and his allies in the bid for the Self. Kestinelm also finaged the Writing of the Blessing to include the Paradisal Aviator when no one was looking - a born politician, that one!

When the turmoil of the voting was done, I joined the final Council as Speaker for Earth! Also present were Good Kestinelm for Fire, and Wise Cragspider for Darkness, Faithful Penemara for Water. Our first challenge was to end the the War With the Dragonewts, which we did by electing Gita Flatsnout as the seventh member of the council.

Our most important task was to choose a tutor for Osentalka. I wanted the position myself, to ensure the new god learned the benefits of Balance in all things. But the Dara Happans wanted a male tutor, Cragspider wanted an Elder Race guide, and several council members insisted that Vyrope would be an excellent tutor. Still elated by the spirit of compromise, we chose two tutors: GonnOrta, a male of an Elder Race, and Vyrope, a priestess of the good earth and a woman.

When all was done, I had helped create a balanced deity of both sexes, and given her the two best tutors I could think of. Speaking Wheel, who long had been the only reasonable voice of Light, had become part of the god. Kestinelm, Holy Estorex, and even Palangio had proven themselves to be reasonable men, able to see the wisdom of the goddesses and come to a compromise. And, best of all, Naveria is free.

1. Brightface. Pelandan name for Yelm
2. Vogmarinized. A Pelandan term referring to the obsession with power, status, and greed displayed by unwise rulers, and, unfortunately, most males.





after that.

"But we have our allies, too. Gonn Orta and his kin are friendly to our people in the Greatway mountains. And the Nidan Mostali leave us alone, which is more than most can say."

"And you helped spread our people to those other aeries, right uncle?"

"Yes, Pindoe, that's right. Back in those days, the Elders and I knew that the tribe here on Stormwalk was getting too large. There's only so much hunting to be had, especially with all those humans down in the valley. I led the settlers across Genertela."

"And Pindoe, don't forget your mighty uncle single-handedly defeated the Praxian Chaos horde which threatened us back then."

"Well, we had a *little* help. Kwartch Kang, Warlord of the Council, understood the importance of keeping us appeased. He sent a force of trolls to guard the foothills. I was going to call the scouring East Wind down on the foul broos, but they were so feeble that the Trolls crushed them without Kolat's aid."

"And the Trolls are still our friends, uncle?"

"They leave our folk in the Mislari mountains at peace."

"Not like those Pteranodons. Didn't they appear around the time of the Council?"

"Yes Hyldegaard, you're right. It's strange. Before the Council they were only creatures of legend, from before the Calm Time. I asked some of the dragonewts about their existence, but none knew anything. Soon later, flying lizards started stealing our children as they learned how to fly. They just appeared out of nowhere. Probably created by Osentalka."

"And I suppose you're going to tell the child that you were the midwife at the birthing of that unmoving sun."

"No, nothing doing. I contributed the fertile South Wind for Osentalka's breath. But I soon saw that he was not the New Wind of prophesy. Our people are still strong today because we kept our strength. So many other peoples regret the sacrifices they made. There sits Osentalka in Dorastor, fat and shining. People from across the land gave so that he could live. But he gives nothing back to those people. We gave little, so we still have much. We will be strong in the times to come. Mark my words, Osentalka will bring great pain to the world."

## Archives of the Inner Council

Most of the extant writings from the period of the Second Council were written by the participants of the Council, those legendary folks whose names are now inscribed upon *the Rolls of Honor*. However, no matter how much we respect those heroes who brought Osentalka to us so long ago, the knowledge of their biases and prejudices has caused some to doubt their accounts of the Councilic period. Following are some of the documents found in the Archives of the Inner Council, which were unearthed in Dokat in 1138. They support the common tales of the Second Council, and lead credence to much of the writing from the Councilic Period.

*Loccuta 7*

○/III/ ✎/355

### Minutes of the Inner Council Open Session

As Recorded by Ortal Scrollbreath

After the closed session of the Inner Council was complete, the doors were opened to petitioners.

Arstor of Varstolar spoke first. He expressed concern over a dispute between himself and Lokamayadon. Arstor contended that Lokamayadon was failing to meet the requirements of the marriage customs of Brolia, and that the fertility of the land was suffering as a result. Even after the Inner Council summoned Lokamayadon, Arstor was unable to explain the exact implications of Brolia's customs, and as a result the matter was tabled.

Atheoan was the second to petition the Council. He asked simply that he be made the Herald of the Council. The Council listened to his bold plea politely, though the

next Herald will not be appointed until 360.

During these proceedings, Raltosar, the observer from Brithos, was seen near the Council. The Herald, Taris Sharpthorn, was sent to discover his purpose. He returned to report that Raltosar wished to watch the proceedings of the Inner Council. After careful thought, Raltosar was granted permission to attend the Open Session of the Council.

When no more petitioners appeared, the Council returned briefly to other matters of concern. Due to rumors of pending expansion, Lestus Creeping Ivy was summoned to the Council and reminded that no members of the Council should attack each other. In addition, the matter of replacing Iron-Skull Fanak as the Foreman of the Feldichi Ruins was briefly discussed. Ultimately, the matter of Iron-Skull Fanak was tabled, and the 355 meeting of the Inner Council was called to an end.



# Lokamayadon: My Final Peace

by Richard Fenner

Document # 618:DSMVAM:003. Foreward by Jorak Greymantle, Wandering Grey Sage. 618 ST. ...my expeditions into the edges of the Talastar forest have led to wide a variety of discoveries. Some are curious, as their validity is impossible to substantiate. In the southeastern edges of the forest, in an underground chamber was this letter, or address, apparently signed by the Bilini Priest Lokamayadon.

## My Final Peace - Lokamayadon, Wind Voice Orlanatus

I write this, that my children and people may understand choices made to shape their world.

Graced with a vision from Orlanatus, I have sought to understand the images, and then to achieve this most important vision given to me. My purpose, my life, has been dedicated to re-uniting the peoples of the Storm so we may be the most powerful of winds possible. Only by doing this can we bring the storm to its proper status in the world.

Much of the work in achieving this was done as a member of the project surrounding the Cosmic Egg. The creation of Osentalka provided opportunities to meet with worshippers of the Storm. Many things have divided us; personal interests, misunderstanding, personal goals, and personal mistrusts were too common and too important to us.

First, guided by the Winds and the Wisdom of Orlanatus, I spoke to Maklaman Ironblade, Lord of Umath, King of the Otkorioni. We had had little contact and I knew of no personal disagreements that challenged an alliance with him. Maklaman approved and our friendship was quickly forged. Knowing I would have great difficulty in convincing Haradangian to join us, I asked Maklaman to approach him and arrange a meeting. He quickly agreed. Next, I sought the leader of the Wind Children, believing this would strengthen my position. I explained my dream as honestly and as powerfully as I was able to him, pray that Orlanatus chose my words well. Atheoan agreed to join me in creating the Brotherhood of the Storm.

Before the council met, I spoke to Rastazar of the Pennetelli, who was enthusiastic about what I proposed. I was sure that he would publically announce his support if Haradangian joined.

After a while Maklaman returned with word from Haradangian. He wished to meet me. Cautiously I prepared to meet him, when I was summoned by the Council. I went, confused. My brother-in-law Arstor, had been speaking to the Council, raising concerns that my marriage has not been properly performed. I explained to the Council that this was a personal matter and I felt that it should not have been brought to them since Arstor has not spoken to me as yet.

(By the Trickster's beard! Arstor's action is an example of our scattered winds.) The Council asked that I speak with my brother. I complied and the Council excused me. I sought out Haradangian, King of the Heortlings. With Arstor causing problems I needed to get peace with Haradangian, to pressure Arstor.

Haradangian described a different series of events than were related to me. He insisted that he did listen to his Ring and advisors. Without Arlastor to support my arguments, I saw that I would not take this day. A vision of the dying Wind forced me to choose. I knew that Arlastor received aid from the Sun and I admitted to the possibility that Arlastor may have mislead me. I apologized to Haradangian who publicly announced his support for the Brotherhood shortly after our initial discussion (we spoke again to be sure of each other and then agreed.)

I knew then that The Brotherhood had a chance, praise be to Orlanatus' guidance. His examples, the legends of His glorious leadership as King, the virtues he extolls were all exercised by all involved. The Brotherhood is an exercise in wisdom, humility, generosity, as well as courage. Only by remembering and emulating Orlanatus can we achieve what once was. Only Rastazar and Arstor were yet to join.

Rastazar, High Priest to Elemalus and leader of the Pennetelli tribe, then announced his support for the Brotherhood. He has been an advocate for peace and healing, and as the last Speaker for Storm on the Council, his support was very important to the success of my purpose.

Arstor was the only one not included. First we had to make our own peace. Arstor was a hard negotiator, he asked much and provided little information for the creation of a compromise. I asked that he speak to his spiritual advisors to seek a middle ground to satisfy his religious needs. Arstor and I finally negotiated an end to the dispute; I felt the hand of Orlanatus guiding us together. Though it worries me that my people may suffer for my choice, I gathered my courage and returned the Brolian Armies dowered by my wife to Arstor, my Brother-in-law. With the Dara Happans in turmoil, the continuing support of the Council, and the support of my Orlanathi brothers, I believe my people can survive this.

Meeting with the Brothers, we formed the Brotherhood of the Storm, fulfilling my childhood visions. We agreed to rotate the leadership every few years and maintain more direct communication amongst the Brotherhood.

The Storm has been gathered for you Orlanatus, King of the Gods. I pray we can achieve your Wisdom as a whole now, that it may never be diminished again by our mortal flaws.

All hail the Gathered Storm!



## mathiman the impaler emperor of dara happa

by Michael O'Brien

Coin Portrait of the Emperor Mathiman I, known variously as "the Impaler", "the Drunkard" and (erroneously) "the Usurper". Reigned 371 - 388 S.T.

*Excerpted from Numismatics of old Dara Happa, an anonymous treatise published in Darjiin in 1597. Whatever its academic merits might be, the document was obviously written to honour the memory of Manimat and his descendants. It was suppressed by the Lunar authorities following pressure from the Raibanth senate.*

The coin depicted here is a fairly mediocre example of the Dara Happan *solidus*, an immense gold coin used more as a unit of exchange than actual currency. Examples of notable artistic merit are sadly lacking for the reign of Mathiman (371 - 388 ST), for the Impaler's hold over the northern province of Kestinaddi (whence came much of Dara Happa's gold) and the southern city of Alkoth (whose senatorial mint was acknowledged the finest in the Empire) was nominal at best. Indeed, only the Emperor's personal charm and diplomacy - now conveniently forgotten by most historians - prevented these wayward provinces leaving the Dara Happan fold altogether during the critical period following the assassination of Mathiman's ill-fated predecessor, Khorzanelm the Magnificent.

Although remembered as "the Darjiin Usurper", Mathiman's accession was in fact legitimate - his great-great grandfather was none other than the god Vantestos the Red King, sent by Emperor Manimat to allow his heir to sit upon the Dara Happan throne. Indeed, during the early days of the High Council Mathiman even styled himself as "King" rather than "Governor" of Darjiin, though only to to impressionable foreigners. Meanwhile, at Raibanth he continued to profess his loyalty to his master Khorzanelm and was privileged to serve as the Emperor's footstool.

It was in such a supine position, with the golden sandals of Khorzanelm pressed upon his neck in the traditional gesture of domination, that Mathiman was so close to the throne when the Emperor was slain by the troll warlord of the Council, Kwaratch Kang. Pausing only to kick aside the

destroyed remains of Khorzanelm, Mathiman immediately surmounted the *Kalestan* (the sun-throne), taking up the Orb of Might and the Sceptre of Command. Then, the King of Darjiin crowned himself and proclaimed to all that he was Mathiman the First, legitimate Emperor of Dara Happa.

Despite this unorthodox route to the throne, Mathiman's coin portrait is utterly conventional, depicting him as Emperor of the Cosmos and Lord of the Four Quarters. Only the lack of moustaches gives away his Darjiini antecedents; other than this, there is no attempt at a realistic portrayal<sup>1</sup> or anything to suggest an illegitimate accession. Although the 5-year-old son of Khorzanelm was prudently proclaimed co-emperor by Mathiman soon after, the late Emperor's heir is nowhere

to be seen on the coin. Mathiman legitimised his hold on the throne by marrying the boy's mother, the beautiful and resourceful Penemara, widow of Khorzanelm, and then schemed to be rid of them both.

Just before he attained his majority, Mathiman had the younger Khorzanelm strangled by the silken cord at the hands of his most loyal follower, Wahnakar the Bison Heir. It is said the lad went willingly to his death, for Mathiman had promised him that by doing so, he would be bodily incorporated into the new god.

The reverse side of the coin depicts Mathiman and a general, impaling their enemies. The general has erroneously been identified as Palangio the Iron Vrok, who continued as General of the Armies of Dara Happa into Mathiman's reign, but was soon supplanted by Wahnakar, whom Mathiman named first, the "Iron Bison" and then, to gall Palangio further, the "Adamant Bison"<sup>2</sup> (After an unsuccessful attempt to slay Mathiman in personal combat, Palangio withdrew to Alkoth and remained in a state of simmering discontent, yet afraid or unwilling to face the Emperor openly again). Who the enemies on the coin are is debatable - the age of the Broken Council was a tumultuous one, and the Impaler warred with many of those around him throughout his reign. Suggestions include the Council itself (the Dara Happs briefly withdrew after Khorzanelm's assassination), the trolls, and the dwarves (Mathiman had an irrational dislike for the Mostali and had a whole delegation hoisted onto the stakes





until talked out of it by his wife). Mathiman also pronounced a sentence of death on the whole of the Third Blue Eye People in his lands for some imagined slight by their leader Yuko Dostipikis, though no Blue Eye folk in fact lived there<sup>3</sup>. It is also possible these enemies might be a depiction of the rebellious Kestinadians or Alkothi, for Mathiman had no qualms about impaling those of his own - Holy Estorex and Kestinelm of Kestinaddi were reportedly dropped onto poles (with blunted ends) for their incompetence and failure to follow Mathiman's dictates during the God Project.

Mathiman has been called "the Drunken Emperor" by some, but one could argue the only thing the Impaler was drunk on was power itself. This is exemplified by the crowning glory of his reign, when he forced to the great Trollish demi-goddess Cragspider to prostrate herself before him, licking his golden sandals in a gesture of submission and contrition for the slaying of Khorzanelm. Although the Dara Happans could later chose to conveniently forget the "Darjiin Usurper", such a prestigious event could not be passed over, which is why in most standard histories it is placed in the otherwise unremarkable reign of Mathiman's successor Radaidavu, another son of Khorzanelm.

1. A contemporary account describes Mathiman thus, "...as for his personal appearance, it betrayed the natural nobility of the man, for his eyes were light-blue and fiery, the eyebrows not overhanging nor sullen, nor yet extended in one straight line, like a woman's, but well-arched and indicative of his pride. The eyes were neither deep-set (a sign of knavishness and cunning) nor yet too prominent (a sign of frivolity), but they shone with a brilliance that was manly...." Such would be difficult to capture in a coin, especially in profile.



Emperor Khorzanelm, Mathiman's ill-fated predecessor

2. Later, during a temporary fall from grace, Wahnakar was briefly called the "Jelly Bison".  
 3. Wahnakar placated his master by rounding up some criminals, painting third eyes on their foreheads and impaling them for Mathiman's pleasure.

## Archives of the Inner Council

### Correspondences of the Inner Council

As recorded by Ortal Scrollbreath

The following letter was received from Raltosar of Brithos by the Inner Council shortly after the Council meeting of 355. It has been forwarded on to all seven members of the Inner Council, and the Herald, as is appropriate.

*Esteemed Members of the Council:*

*I was grateful for the opportunity for the chance to listen at the open session. I would trust that my presence did not disturb you.*

*In the interests of brevity, I would request you to*

*consider my presence be allowed at the closed session also, in the interests of harmony among people of all lands. My discretion, naturally, will be assured. I put at your disposal the great libraries of Brithos - which some of you have already consulted through my offices.*

*I remain, humbly your servant,*

*Raltosar*

*Ambassador*

Addendum: Per Council Vote, this correspondence has been added to the open archives, available to all council members in Dorastor.

Unless otherwise directed, further correspondences from Raltosar shall be likewise deposited.





## *revelations of the iron vrok*

*by Dennis Hoover*

I, Palangio, Son of Shargash, Governor of Alkoth, Governor of Henjarl, General of the Armies of Dara Happa, trusted advisor to the Emperor Khorzanelm the Magnificent, First Ambassador from Dara Happa to the High Council of Genertela, who am called the Iron Vrok, was present for much of what happened during the creation of the Great God Osentalka by the High Council in Dorastor. Nowadays, of course, everyone knows the general facts surrounding this event: that the peoples of the hundred lands and the ten races united to create the Perfect One, Osentalka. Most people also know of the turmoil in Dara Happa at that time: that his Imperial Majesty, Khorzanelm the Magnificent, was assassinated; that the Governor of Darjiin usurped the throne; and that I was exiled from holy Raibanth for many years. Many of the details of these events, however, are still shrouded in darkness. I will now enlighten you.

I set out for Dorastor full of confidence and bright expectations. Under Khorzanelm, the Empire was whole again. The High Council had begged to him to join, wooing him with rich gifts and promises. I was fresh from my successes at the Treaty of Lakrene, where I had bearded the worshippers of the Rebel Gods, ending the threat to our Southern border. And just before leaving for Dorastor, I had a dream, sent by Shargash and Veng, of a huge iron bird of great destructive power, an Iron Vrok, that I believed could be constructed if I could find someone of sufficient skill and power.

My party were six. I, as First Ambassador, was in charge, assisted by my counterpart from Yuthuppa, Holy Estorex, high priest of Dayzatar. Next were the Governors of Darjiin and Kestinaddi, the latter being my deceitful cousin, whom I had brought so I could keep an eye on him. I also brought Wahnakar the Bison Heir, Khan of the Hungry Plateau and KanOra the ManaAlkElsor, a woman, Priestess of Naveria.

Just before we departed, a vile tract was discovered that claimed to be a plea for 'balance' at the Council, but singled out Dara Happa as the enemy and advanced the darkness rune, in the form of a clenched fist, as the symbol of this balance. Balance indeed! It was, however, no worse than I have come to expect from the foul Digijelm and the worshippers of Rebellus Terminus. The tract made a great impression on the Emperor, who shredded it in a fit of rage.

No sooner had we left the Emperor than Penemara, a Priestess of Oslira, somehow trapped him alone and beguiled him with magic, for she wished to marry the Emperor. Now Penemara, though a Pelorian, was not of Dara Happa and could never be a suitable match for his Imperial Majesty. Khorzanelm, however, was completely besotted with the

woman and married her forthwith. Now this, in itself, was not bad, for the Emperor had many wives, and satisfying the Emperor's generative urges is a fitting position and a great honor for any woman. Still, it was an ill omen and, like Philekka before her, Penemara was destined to be the ruination of an Emperor of Dara Happa.

In Dorastor, I set about trying to shore up my old alliances with the Dwarves. I spoke with Iron Diamond Voice about my dream. He thought he could find a suitable artisan and offered to make inquiries on my behalf. I attempted to speak with the Greatway dwarves as well but was unable to gain a suitable audience. One of the dwarves, Isidilian the Wise, had recently been graced with an audience before his Imperial Majesty in Dara Happa, at which he was permitted to kneel, rather than prostrate himself as is customary. Apparently the impertinent fellow took offense at this honor and resolved to make Dara Happans kneel in his presence. Needless to say this was unacceptable, and I departed Greatway immediately. I also made contact with a smith of the Third Eye Blue people, one Yuko Dostipikis, who claimed to be selling magical weapons of great potency. I did not want such weapons to fall into the hands of my enemies, so I offered him protection from the Dwarves, whom he claimed had threatened him, in exchange for an arrangement to sell exclusively to me. He claimed to be very interested, but wanted to think it over. I was suspicious, but agreed to wait and discuss the matter later.

Elsewhere things went poorly. The Digijelm were organized and threatened to dominate the first phase of the God Project. The Emperor had arrived in person to participate, but he was disorganized, doubtless still under the influence of Penemara's glamour, and gave little direction to the rest of our party. My treacherous cousin was off advancing his own goals. Without direction Holy Estorex, Wahnakar, and the Darjiin accomplished little. Worst of all, KanOra, one of our own, was conspiring with the Vyrope of Dorasta to fix the sex of the new god. Osentalka was to be born a woman!

The Emperor was outraged at this. He recalled the entire mission to Dara Happa, and we set about planning to withdraw from the Council and create our own god to rule in despite of the Council. The Emperor asked me to prepare for war. I asked for and received direct control of all our armies, especially those of KanOra. KanOra protested that this would leave Naveria defenseless. I offered to move some of my own troops in to ensure security, but she declined my offer. Penemara, having got what she came for, offered me what troops she had, and I took them. She claimed also to have the ability to weaken one warrior to the point that he would



be easy prey. Given what she had done to our Emperor, I had no reason to doubt her abilities. Since war with the Council seemed likely, I suggested she attack Kwaratch Kang, a bloodthirsty Digijelm and the Warlord of the Council. Kang was the only warrior of the Council who stood a chance against me in battle. If he were weakened, I could destroy him at my leisure should the need arise.

I also asked to release Shargash from His confinement in Alkoth. To do this I required the consent of the Emperor and the assistance of the Governor of Yuthuppa. Holy Estorex was reluctant. He is a man of peace, and Shargash is the soul of war. The Emperor commanded Holy Estorex to assist me, and Shargash was freed. Glory to Shargash! Full of His wrath and hunger, I went forth.

I journeyed to Snakepipe Hollow, where an incursion of Chaos had been reported. I called upon the power of Shargash and attacked the foul Broo army, slaying and devouring many of them. To my surprise, out of the carnage and destruction, the dead Broos arose again stronger than before I had attacked. Cragspider was there, and she upbraided me for making the situation worse. Woe to her that she did not profit from my lesson! For she and the Council attacked the Broos again in force, and from this attack the Broos came back doubled, even trebled in power. Reports came to me then that enormous Scarlet Bat had been sighted in Dara Happa. I hurried to the scene and confronted the bat, a chaos monstrosity too horrid to describe. Again I called again upon the power of Shargash and met the bat in combat. I sorely wounded the bat, but I did not destroy it. My last memory is of its enormous maw closing around me. My personal guard carried my body back to Dara Happa, where the priests of Yelm could resurrect me.

While I was pursuing the bat, Penemara had gone to Dorastor. There she sought out and attacked Kwaratch Kang. Alas! She overestimated her power. Instead of crippling the Warlord, she merely pricked him. Penemara quailed in the face of Kang's anger. She denied personal responsibility, claiming that the attack had been commanded by her Emperor. The damage having been done, Penemara returned to Dara Happa. There she came across the procession bearing my body. Her magical powers included the ability to restore the dead to life, and this she did for me. For this I am grateful, though in truth the priests of Yelm by then were quite close at hand.

What happened after this I discovered later. Kwaratch Kang journeyed to Raibanth, where he approached the Emperor and slew him with magic. How he was able to get close to the Emperor is still unclear to me. Only poor, tragic Penemara tried to stop him, and she paid with her life. The Governor of Darjiin witnessed the murder, and it is to his everlasting shame and infamy that he did not give his life for his Emperor. Having failed in Khorzanelm's defense, he

should have hurried the body to the priests of Yelm so the Emperor could be restored. Instead, he usurped the throne.

We of Alkoth hate Darjiin Usurpers. When word reached the city that the Emperor was dead, and a Darjiin Usurper stood upon the Footstool of Yelm, I had to forcibly restrain the people of Alkoth from marching on Darjiin and the Usurper. The Usurper, of course, made his claims of legitimacy, but these claims were hollow and false. He could not trace his descent from an emperor within four generations. Nor was his enthronement legitimized by Alkoth and, since the time of Eusibus, no rightful emperor has, nor ever could be, legitimized without Alkoth. I am convinced that in time it will be discovered that the Darjiin Usurper cheated on the ten tests, thus stripping away his last vestige of legitimacy.

For a time I remained in Alkoth, venturing forth only to crush a rebellion of Sable Riders on the Hungry Plateau. The Darjiin Usurper withdrew from the Council. This prompted my treacherous cousin to approach me about becoming emperor himself. Failing that, he would support me, he said, if I were to give Kestinaddi its independence, with him at its head, of course. I rejected this out of hand. Though a foul usurper may have sat upon the Footstool of Yelm, still I would crush any attempt to break up the empire. I made this perfectly clear to my cousin and dismissed him. Shortly thereafter the Usurper made an about face and rejoined the Council.

The Darjiin Usurper then called me to Raibanth. I assumed he would ask for the support of Alkoth to legitimize his usurpation. Instead he tried to strip me of my offices, recalled Shargash, and promoted Wahnakar in my place. He even ordered that Shargash be released for Wahnakar. This was intolerable and quite beyond his rights or capabilities. I resolved then to kill the Usurper. I attacked, but without using magic. As Kwaratch Kang had succeeded in killing our beloved Khorzanelm, I assumed the Usurper, as a lesser man, would be easy prey. I did not find out until later that Kang had used death magic rather than arms to slay the Emperor. The Usurper had, of course, pilfered as much of the Imperial Regalia as he could lay his hands on; he also launched a Sunspear at me. With these magics he was able to fight me to a draw, and I retired to Alkoth. I needed time to think. I could always return later with magic and kill him then.

It was now late in the third phase of the God Project, and there was civil war in Dara Happa. I considered marching on Darjiin and Vonlath, where sits holy Raibanth, and liberating the Tower of Yelm. I had the troops and, with me in command, victory was assured. I was approached at this time by Kwaratch Kang with an offer of alliance, which I seriously considered. Kang was a great warrior, second only to myself, and worthy of respect. Oddly enough we became friends of sorts in later years. He was, however, a Digijelm. I was approached at this time also by Holy Estorex and KanOra, appealing for peace in the name of Dara Happa



unity. The God Project was proceeding with or without us, and we would either be with the new god or against it. I found this last argument compelling. I would take no action that would weaken the empire. Dara Happa was, after all, my first and foremost obligation.

At this time I spoke again with Iron Diamond Voice. He said he had found a smith great enough to build my Iron Vrok. It was Yuko Dostipikis, the smith of the Third Eye Blue people. Iron Diamond Voice said I would need iron, which he could procure for me. Later we came across the ubiquitous Dostipikis. He agreed in principle to create my Vrok, but his price was the necklace of Kero Fin, which was currently in the possession of Seri-phy-ranor, who would never have given it up willingly. This price was too high, and neither Iron Diamond Voice nor myself would have any part of it.

I was then approached again by Holy Estorex and KanOra. The Darjiin Usurper, realizing the weakness of his position, had sent them to sue for peace. If I would end hostilities, he would give back to me what he had tried to take away before. Of course these things were not his to give back any more than they were his to take away. Nevertheless I agreed to the truce for the sake of Dara Happa. Shargash was freed again, and the civil war was ended.

The God Project was drawing to a close. There were a number of military situations facing the Council, and I had offered my support to Iron Diamond Voice, who was now the Warlord of the Council. I spent some time devouring enemies of the Council, and Iron Diamond Voice provided me with the iron I had requested. I found Yuko Dostipikis, who was now willing to construct the Iron Vrok, if I would provide him with the necessary iron and my dragonskin shield. I agreed to this, and the Vrok was soon ready.

With it I winged my way to the City of Miracles in time for the final act of the God Project. There I discovered that my treacherous cousin was attempting to bend Osentalka to his own ends. He had acquired a large number of votes; most were likely gained from the incompetent Darjiin Usurper as well as other, more innocent dupes.

I made an alliance with an Elf, one Saratin Seomale, a lightson of Yelmalio, and the ambassador for Kralorela, Sharan Cho. None of us wanted Osentalka to be born a simpering coward, weak and ineffectual like the disgraced Kestinendos of whom my cousin was so fond. Saratin controlled a large block of votes, and together the three of us could block my cousin's designs. It was my plan to control the final myth, the myth of the self.

I know how to deal with my cousin. He was plotting with Holy Estorex and KanOra when I approached him. I began to dictate terms. The soul of Osentalka would be fierce, implacable, and warlike against his foes. I would contribute the power of Shargash to the new god. The seat of the new god's soul would be in his eyes, as is proper for a god of

light and fire. The six of us together would write the final myth, regardless of who was light speaker for the Council. My cousin meekly agreed to all of this. I also wanted the Elf to be the new light speaker, but Saratin claimed he was not eligible to hold the light seat. I later learned this was not true, but at the time there seemed to be no good candidate. I decided I could be generous in victory, so I allowed my cousin to have the seat. Besides, with the birth of Osentalka the Council would be rendered irrelevant.

Just then the loathsome Digijelm attempted a foul trick. One of them lured my cousin away and trapped him with magic to cause him to miss the vote, ensuring the forces of darkness would gain the soul of Osentalka. I slew the Digijelm, freeing my inept cousin from the glamour. Which Digijelm it was I cannot say, for they all look much alike.

During the bidding Holy Estorex performed the first of his great deeds. He approached Cragspider, who represented Darkness, and cast the same glamour on her that had been cast earlier on my cousin. But Holy Estorex did it with perfect timing. The Digijelm were out of the bidding. In truth this did not affect the outcome, since we had already outmaneuvered the Digijelm, but it was good to see Cragspider get her comeuppance.

At this point we had won, and yet I saw that my treacherous cousin still held back some contributions. I suspected he was trying to renege on our agreement to contribute the powers of Shargash to the soul of the new god. I commanded him to contribute everything, which he did. We wrote the self myth for Osentalka, and the great god was born. It was then that Holy Estorex performed the second of his great deeds, changing the dragon companion of Osentalka from black to golden, from a creature of darkness to a creature of light.

My work at the Council complete, I returned to Alkoth. There was work to be done in Dara Happa. We still had a mad Darjiin Usurper on the throne and treacherous governors in all directions. I needed to hold the Empire together till a proper heir could be found. But that is another tale.

*Notes on the translation: In translating this document, I have tried to remain as faithful to the original Dara Happa text as possible. The only substantial deviation lies in my eliding many of Palangio's titles, leaving only those that were pertinent at the time of the Council. Throughout the document Palangio refers to the Trolls as 'Digijelm', a derogatory term for the Uz still in use in parts of the Heartlands today. I have left this untranslated to convey some of the feelings of First Age Dara Happa towards the Trolls. Also, Palangio refers frequently to 'the Darjiin Usurper' and 'my treacherous cousin'. The former is Mathiman the Impaler, who ruled Dara Happa for a brief time after the reign of Khorzanelm the Magnificent; the latter is Kestinelm, the Governor of Kestinaddi and Palangio's cousin. Nowhere does he refer to them by name.*



# the burning of wahnakar the adamant bison emperor of all dara happa

by David Hall

*When the evil darkmen killed Emperor Khorzanelm and butchered his wife, our Lord Wahnakar stood over their son and shed his own blood defending him. Wahnakar was the Faithful Bison.*

*When the Sable Riders asked our Lord Wahnakar to spare their lives he spat upon them and ordered them torn to pieces - all of them, man, woman, and child. No Sable scum now defile Our Plateau. Wahnakar was the Wise Bison.*

*When the stinking horse-riders asked for mercy, our Lord Wahnakar ordered them killed swiftly with their own bows and arrows. Wahnakar was the Merciful Bison.*

*When the Scarlet Bat attacked the City of the Emperors, our Lord Wahnakar stood against it and killed it with his mighty blows. It has not returned since. Wahnakar was the Iron Bison.*

*When Wahnakar rose above the Iron Vrok in the eyes of the Emperor, he commanded the Dara Happan Armies in their victories. Wahnakar was the Adamant Bison.*

*When Mathiman the Impaler ordered that the Silken Cord be used, our Lord Wahnakar used his own girdle to serve the God Project. Wahnakar was the Selfless Bison.*

*When the squabbling and disorderly subhuman members of the Old Council attempted to deform our goddess, Osentalka, within her Egg, our lord Wahnakar stayed aloof. Wahnakar was the Sensible Bison.*

*When the people with the Blue Third Eye showed their true nature, our Lord Wahnakar hunted down every last one of the treacherous dogs and had them impaled. Wahnakar was the Just Bison.*

*When the scrawny Bird Men of Kestinaddi foolishly defied the Emperors commands, our Lord Wahnakar led us to pillage and plunder their rich lands. No birds now fly over barren Kestinaddi. Wahnakar was the Generous Bison.*

*When Estorex of Esvuthil denied the divinity of the Emperor, our Lord Wahnakar was the first to cast his spear into the heretic. Wahnakar was the Pious Bison.*

*When Osentalka ordered Mathiman the Usurper thrown to the snakes, our Lord Wahnakar did not stint from his duty. Wahnakar was the Loyal Bison.*

*When Gbaji the Deceiver came to these lands, our Lord Wahnakar led us in our glorious fight. Though he fell in the service of the Bright Goddess his spirit guides us still.*

*Wahnakar was Our Emperor Bison!*



Emperor Wahnakar before his ascension



# A Letter from Haradangian to Arstor

by Gabor Bartha

Most Honorable Arstor of Varstolar, High King of Brolia,

My 78th birthday has recently passed and I feel compelled to put my current feelings in writing to you. While my body is still well, my mind is not at ease. The events of the past two decades have troubled me greatly and I fear for the future of the Heortlings and the Brotherhood of Storm. It seems that in spite of my efforts, which at the time appeared to be for the best, I have failed. My grief at times is intolerable and I wish I could relive those days. Before I discuss what I think should have been done, let me recollect for you what I did during the making of Osentalka.

As you recall, before the Council even met in 355, we both received a note calling for balance and darkness. While I was sympathetic, I decided not to act on it lest it prove to be a trick. My first objective when I arrived at the Council was to bring together the Orlanthe. This was central to all my plans. Initially, I sought you out because I knew of your troubles with Lokamayadon and thus I suspected we would have much in common. Of course this proved true and hence our friendship and this letter. As you know, I backed your petition to the Council against Lokamayadon and you helped bring other Storm leaders to me. When we reviewed our military situation, it became clear that violence was not a good option for any of my goals and that we were quite vulnerable to treachery. Our weakness was frustrating and limited my plans. At this time the Herald, Taris Sharpthorn, came to ask my view of the inclusion of Dara Happa into the Council. I begrudgingly welcomed them in peace as there seemed to be no choice.

Even more frustrating was the theft of Kero Fin's necklace. This proved to be a major distraction because it is a sacred artifact of the Storm peoples and especially of the Heortlings who have possessed it for nearly the entire history of the Council. Therefore I felt a special obligation to search for it to the detriment of other objectives.

Next I met with Maklaman of the Otkorioni. He was receptive to the idea of an alliance and I felt he was trustworthy. In spite of the great confusion concerning the god-making process, I backed him during the first phase of the God Project. With my support, he was able to gain the Storm seat on the Council in 360. At my request, he also agreed to chose Kero Fin Mountain as the Birth Place of the new God. This was one of my few successes in the entire God project.

At about this time I began meeting with Lokamayadon and Rastazar. This proved to be fruitful as it began to dispel the lies spread by that traitor Arlaster Eye-tooth. I also met

with Tahada Red Bison but we never found time for an extended dialog. Nevertheless, we somehow managed to develop a strong bond of trust. This proved valuable later when Atheoan tried but failed to convince Tahada to attack my people. I never did learn what treachery caused Atheoan to attempt an action against me.

By the time of the Council meeting of 360, we had managed to bring together many of the Storm peoples including Maklaman, Lokamayadon, Rastazar, and Tahada Red Bison to a meeting with the Only Old One in the Kingdom of Night. We agreed to pool our resources to control the second phase of the God Project. This succeeded in our gaining three seats on the inner circle of the Council in 365. I was chosen for the Storm seat on this Council. In spite of all this representation, we were unable to restore Kwaratch Kang to the Warlord position because he killed the Emperor of Dara Happa and his wife after she had attempted to assassinate him in response to the Emperor's orders. The misguided Council chose to coddle to the Dara Happa's even after their treachery was proven once again. It is hard to believe that we had a Council that would remove its own Warlord because he defended an attempt on his life. Indeed, I was outvoted on all issues except the sending of Council troops to defend your lands from the Snow Trolls and I even sent some of my own troops to assist you as you know. I raised the issue with the Council that the recent outbreak of chaos may be related to the God Project as I was already concerned with imbalance and malign influences, including the mechanism of creation. But then word came in that the God was balanced and the issue was dropped. I also raised the issue of the theft of Kero Fin's necklace but the Council was surprisingly unconcerned. So this too went without action and I was left with a sinking feeling.

Further meetings occurred with Lokamayadon, Maklaman, and Rastazar, and so the Brotherhood of Storm began to take shape. But our lack of resources and ongoing confusion with the God-making process resulted in little action on our part in the third phase of Osentalka.

After all else failed, I divined from Lankhor Knowing that Kero Fin's necklace had been traded in Dorastor. I approached the Governor there, Seri-phy-Ranor, but he denied any knowledge of it. Shortly thereafter and just before the Council meeting of 370, we learned from Yuko Dostipikis that Seri-phy-Ranor was lying and did have the necklace. Rather than take it by force, which I thought was a reasonable option, you convinced the Brotherhood of Storm to let you use your cunning trading skills to recover it. Thus Lokamayadon and I gave you valuable artifacts with which



to make the trade. In retrospect, I think violence would have been a better option because the artifact was rightfully ours and we should not have had to buy it back. Of course you succeeded in the trade so that you possessed the Kero Fin's necklace for the Council of 375 and made the Brotherhood of Storm possible in which the necklace is rotated among you, Lokamayadon, Rastazar, Maklaman, and I.

In the final Osentalka phase, once more the Brotherhood of Storm tried to influence the God but failed utterly. We simply had nowhere near enough resources to compete. And so it ended with the new God containing less Storm than any other element.

While I am pleased that great progress was made in uniting the Orlanthi, we still have not included Varonal Zor or Tahada Red Bison. Even with them, our people may never attain the oneness we had before the chaos age. It is the great compromises I made which will ultimately lead to our weakness and our vulnerability to our enemies. In particular, the menace of Dara Happa looms large. However, I was pleased to see that not all Dara Happans are alike thanks to you in part. Although I believe that no Dara Happan should be included in the inner circle of the Council, Kestinelm is perhaps the best choice. But the inclusion of Dara Happa will still cause the destruction of our peoples eventually. This I know from the prophecy of the Three Goddesses and from Orlanth himself. Kestinelm just gives us more time. Perhaps there is still a way to correct the past but I don't see how. Nothing short of resurrecting Orlanth is likely to help now and that opportunity is gone with the end of the God Project.

In large part, I see our demise coming from the new God. Most obviously, the new God barely represents us because of the lack of Storm. But much more seriously, the God was created by a chaotic process and chaos breeds chaos. So hidden in the fabric of the God itself is chaos in an insidious form that surely must have strained the net of Arachne Solara.

Only after much consideration did I realize what I should have done. First, rather than support Maklaman in contributing to the God, I should have convinced him not to. Then, after bringing together the Storm peoples and the Kingdom of Night, we should have peacefully withdrawn from the Council. At this point none of our resources would have been wasted on the God Project. We then could have started our own God in a Lawful way. Both the Only Old One and the Brotherhood of Storm would have agreed to a Lawful approach. Once others saw how sensible our God Project was, then I am sure they would have quickly joined us.

May the greatest blessings of Orlanth be upon you and your Kingdom,

*Varadangian of the Stravuli, King of the Oeortlings*

## Archives of the Inner Council

⊙ / III / ♀ / 360

### Minutes of the Inner Council

As Recorded by Ortal Scrollbreath

Present at the Council Meeting of 360 were: Speaking Wheel (⊙), Iron Diamond Voice (♠), Sibillant Tongue (⚡), Vyrope (□), Maklaman (⊙) and Thorktor Thon (●). It should be noted that Thorktor Thon spoke for The Only Old One.

Attention was first turned to the matter of elected Council positions. Throna Silverleaf was named to the III seat, and Atheoan was named the herald, each in the name of racial balance. Iron Diamond Voice petitioned to be the warlord, but he was turned down because he is a member of the Council. Several members of the Council expressed concern over the possibility of one of their number being put in such danger. As a result, Kwaratch Kang was reelected to the position.

With these matters completed, the doors of the Council were opened to petitioners.

Roostin Trueheart spoke first. He expressed concern over the way that Osentalka was being made, proclaiming that the bidding process would only lead to Chaos. He stated that the recent nomad raids into Dara Happa, and the increasing chaos incursions were signs of impending disaster. The Council listened very carefully to Roostin's concerns.

Seri-Phy-Ranor, the former seventh of the Council was the next petitioner. He was granted permission to have a Dragonewt road built through Dorastor.

Next, Arstor returned to the Council. This time, though, he was more clear in his exact complaint against Lokamayadon. He said that Lokamayadon's marriage to the earth priest of Broliia required him to die for the good of the land. He asked the Council to either force Lokamayadon to meet his religious obligation, or return Broliia's dowry: two of the Brolian tribes. The Council expressed concern, due to the military importance of Broliia, and promised to look into the matter.

The final person to petition the Council was Lestus Creeping Ivy. He asked that his censure of 355 be removed, but was denied.

Due to the fact that there were no more petitioners, and no more open matters, the Council Meeting was at this time called to a close.



## *an account of the years in which osentalka was created*

*by James Polk*

*As dictated by Kestinelm, Bright Eagle Lord of Kestinaddi and Light Speaker of the Council*

**355 - 359**

His Imperial Brightness, Khorzanelm the Magnificent, was much given to the practice of Imperial Court Ceremonies. Sometimes these ceremonies were practiced more to humiliate certain Dara Happa lords rather than to impress and humiliate those from outside Dara Happa.

Fortunately, the Emperor ordered me to travel to Dorastor and participate in the creation of Osentalka. Unfortunately, he did so a result of the lies whispered to him by the traitor, my cousin Palangio.

In Dorastor, I met several people who were to be of use to me. First there was Speaking Wheel, last of the Gold Wheel Dancers and Light Speaker on the Inner Council. For some reason we forged a bond of friendship which would last throughout the project. Next, there was Tahada Red Bison, Bison Khan of Prax. It would be through him that I would obtain Sun Hawk, a lost relation of Vrimak. Then also, there was Atheoan, Lord of the Wind Children. His great wings told me he, too, was kin to Vrimak. Finally, there was Penemara, Priestess of the Erinflarth. (But I did not realize at that time how important she would become.)

I now shudder to remember how ignorant I was about how to create Osentalka in those days. None of the Dara Happans knew what to expect, and so we were totally outmaneuvered by the Trolls, the Earth worshippers, and just about everyone else. The only intelligent actions we took, as I remember, were to support Speaking Wheel as the Light Speaker and to begin to concentrate the resources of the Empire in my hands.

The most interesting action I remember was the refusal of Kanora the ManaAlkElsor, Priestess of oppressed Naveria, to assist us in creating Osentalka as a male. This "betrayal" of Dara Happa was to help me in future years.

**360 - 364**

During this period I had a number of discussions with Kanora the ManaAlkElsor of Naveria. She and her people had been punished by his Imperial Brightness for her refusal to do his bidding during the creation of Osentalka. I wished to see if I could gain an ally for my plan to free Kestinaddi, for it is said the enemy of my enemy may be my friend. But she was distrustful of my overtures, fearing a plot to further punish her, and so our conversations bore no fruit.

Also during this period, His Imperial Brightness, Khorzanelm, expressed unhappiness and frustration with our ignorance of how Osentalka was being created. And so he

began to consider leaving the project. The Emperor's other significant act was to marry Penemara, Priestess of the Erinflarth.

I felt that if I could learn more about how to create the god, I could lessen the Emperor's suspicion of my loyalty and would have a better chance of shaping Osentalka as Vrimak. My friendship with Speaking Wheel helped in this aim because he informed me the god's gender could be changed by whomever controlled the Initiation myth.

Alas, I (and the other Dara Happans) continued to be confused about how to control the creation of Osentalka. I continued to cast my votes in the name of Speaking Wheel (as commanded by the Emperor), and continued to control the Imperial voting resources. I was glad that the Initiation Myth was still to come and I resolved never to be so unprepared again.

**365 - 369**

The first thing I did was to approach one of the officials overseeing the creation of Osentalka. We spent many days together with me asking questions and he answering them. At the end of this time I knew much more than I had (and much less than I realized).

Fortified with my new knowledge, I went to speak to the Emperor. He was busy speaking with Cragspider, Queen of Cliffhome and so I had to wait. Then, before I could speak with his Imperial Brightness, terrible Kwaratch Kang, Warlord of the Council, entered Raibanth and slew the Emperor! I believe Penemara was also slain, although she was brought back to life by Holy Estorex, Priest of Dayzatar. Unfortunately the traitor Palangio was not present, else he too might have died.

Immediately, and without thought to the terrible carnage in the throne room, Mathiman, Governor of Darjinn proclaimed himself Emperor. But I, seeing a chance for the freedom of Kestinaddi, left Raibanth to seek allies.

I quickly found Kanora the ManaAlkElsor and urged her to declare Naveria independent. I pointed out that the disorder created by the Khorzanelm's assassination was Naveria's and Kestinaddi's best chance of breaking free from Dara Happa. She agreed and I then introduced her to Seri-Phy-Ranor, Governor of Dorastor, so that she would have an ally if Dara Happa invaded her lands.

But Dorastor was too far away from Kestinaddi to provide military support and I could not find anyone else to help our people. First Wahnakar and then the traitor Palangio threatened Kestinaddi if it did not rejoin the empire. Both claimed the title of Warlord and neither would listen to my



just claims and righteous arguments. At last, realizing that Kestinaddi could easily be destroyed by the armies these oppressors commanded, I agreed to rejoin the Empire on condition it continued to participate in the Osentalka project. (Subsequently I have heard stories that Cragspider brought the Dara Happans back to the project. This is a false claim.)

As I mentioned before, both Palangio and the Bison Heir Wahnakar claimed to be the Dara Happan Warlord at this time. I do not know exactly what transpired between the new emperor and Palangio (although I have strong suspicions), but the result was that Palangio was Disgraced and stripped of the office of Warlord. I consider this act to be one of the Three Wise Acts of Mathiman.

A number of people, recognizing my position as the chief Dara Happan architect on the project, began to seek my company. I do not remember the names of all those who spoke to me, but I do remember Vyrope, Priestess of Dorasta, and Arstor of Varstolar, King of Somarin. Arstor acted as a go-between for me and the Only Old One. (I had been seeking a firebird said to be held captive and the Only Old One thought he might have it. I felt my life would be short should I be seen speaking directly to him, so our communication was difficult.)

Many told me they were concerned at the lack of Light in the new god and the imbalance such a lack represented. I certainly concurred, but held fast to the point that I, as the Dara Happan representative, should be allowed to control the Initiation Myth, or else one of two things would occur; another Dara Happan, much less reasonable than I, would

replace me or Dara Happa would pull out of the project for good. I also pointed out to various Earth priestesses that a god which starts out female and becomes male is well set to be a fertility god. By such arguments did I advance my cause.

But then I was called back to the Emperor in Raibanth. He doubted my competence and wished to replace me on the project. I pointed out that our disorganization on the Osentalka project was due to lack of proper leadership and that if I wasn't allowed to go back immediately, the deal I was engineering would fall through and the god would remain female! Mathiman saw the wisdom of my words and let me return to Dorastor and gave me his voting resources. This was the second of the Three Wise Acts of Mathiman.

When I returned, I was informed that the Only Old One had agreed not to oppose my bid for control of the Initiation Myth. It was the only myth I tried to control (due to the agreements I had made) and I wrote it as promised: in order to understand all peoples, the goddess became a male. (I should note that Penemara, now wife of the new Emperor, cast her votes in an interesting way. For the purposes of writing the Initiation Myth, she cast them with my name. For the purposes of hold a seat on the Inner Council, she cast them with her name.)

370 - 374

I spent this entire period in Dorastor, wheeling and dealing. (Often there were so many people trying to speak with me, I could hardly have a private conversation!) On occasion Wahnakar visited me to find out how and what I was doing.

## Letters from Across the Sea

This is the first of several letters found in the far West. It is clear that they are copies of letters written by the same Raltosar who attended Council Meetings during the God Project. **Loccuta 7**

To: Lord Talar  
From: Raltosar

Lord,

I have just attended my first session of the Open Inner Council. If the creatures were not playing at building "gods" then it would be laughable and I could return to Brithos' sceptred shore. However, I sit and listen to their petty squabbles and babbling, in the hope -vain possibly- of drawing order from inevitable chaos.

(1) Pent Nomads will not give up their bloody raiding lifestyle - to the discomfitore of Trolls + Dara Happans

(2) Roostin Trueheart requested a "fair" way of building Osentalka, which would certainly have resulted in a

random, weak thing. It was voted down; but I suspect the eventual result will be little different if they had not.

(3) The Governor of Dorastor spoke for the Dragonewts, who wished permission to build a road from Dragon Pass to Ralios. Dorastor being overcrowded, the Council were originally reluctant, but were won over by the defensive advantages. One of the Dragonewts later spoke of a Dragonewt City in Dorastor. I'm surprised they asked permission.

(4) King Arstor was upset with his brother-in-law (no)

(5) Lestus Creeping Ivy asked to lift his censure. (no)

Mostly petty stuff as I said. Expect more petty requests from me; they seem to like it.

R





I pointed out that I was agreeing to those who sought balance, since Light was so underrepresented. After all, I reasoned, we must achieve balance before we can achieve dominance. As I recall, he then gave me all his voting resources.

I agreed with Atheoan, Lord of the Wind Children, to place the final slot on Osentalka as wings. I still regret I was unable to fulfill this agreement. It was the only one I made which I was not able to honor.

It was also during this period that I ended my long distance negotiations with the Only Old One. He wanted my subservience; I wanted cooperation. (I must admit I felt much better when I didn't have to work with him.) And right after I broke off negotiations, a Dragonewt informed me they had pulled out of his alliance and would support me against him.

But my attention was primarily focused on the Blessing and Self myths. In this I was ably assisted by Holy Estorex, the High Priest of Dayzatar.

Speaking Wheel turned out to be the key to controlling the Blessing myth. He greatly desired to be a part of the god, and I agreed to arrange it if he gave me all his voting resources. This he did, giving me even himself by changing into a fiery, golden, singing trumpet while I held him!

Controlling the Self myth was much, much more difficult. After long and tense negotiations, a group of six (including myself) agreed to pool our voting resources and vote as "Kestinelm et al". We drew up and signed an agreement that we would write the Self myth to our mutual satisfaction. I required all the strength of Vrimak to fashion this agreement since this group included my traitorous cousin Palangio, a stubborn Elf Yelmali named Saratin Seomale, the Empress Penemara, Holy Estorex, and Sharan Cho, the Kralorelan Observer. With the exception of Penemara (who had earned herself a place through her actions) each member contributed Light voting resources. We knew not how many resources the trolls would have, but we knew we would need much to defeat them.

And then the time came, the culmination of many years. But it was not easy to accomplish my goals. I was suddenly accosted by a troll who droned on about something or other. I was desperate to leave but could not! However, the Emperor ordered a troop of soldiers to carry me back to the god's room and thus righted the situation. (And this was the third of the Three Wise Acts of Mathiman.)

This crisis having passed, I easily controlled both the Blessing and Self myths, and thereby ensured that Light would be the dominant element in the new god. Both times I shocked the onlookers by bidding against myself after I had outbid the trolls.

Alas! The Emperor had descended into madness and commanded me to place the final slot on the god's male member. But I could not do this, both as a proper worshipper of Vrimak, and as an honorable man. Instead, the final slot

was placed on the eyes of Osentalka, as agreed by the six I mentioned above.

Finally, I wrote the Blessing myth. This was the only myth I wrote which was not constrained by any agreement. Although someone handed me a myth mentioning Third Eye Blue, it seemed clear to me that the only proper blessing must come from the Paradisal Aviator.

### 375

My votes claimed for me the Light Speaker (then known as Fire Speaker) position on the Inner Council. To my great pleasure, Penemara was the Water Speaker, Kanora was the Earth Speaker and Arstor was the Storm Speaker.

As per my agreement with the earth priestesses, I supported Vyrope for Tutor of Osentalka. But I was much relieved when Arstor proposed two tutors, one male and one female and readily supported him in this.

The resolutions of the Inner Council were these: - Invite a Dragonewt as the 7th speaker (unanimous) - Give Osentalka two tutors, one male and one female (unanimous) - Gonn Orta to be the male tutor (unanimous) - Vyrope to be the female tutor (six for, one abstention) - When one tutor dies, both positions will be voted on (unanimous) - Council to meet again after Osentalka is born to vote on the Herald and Warlord of the Council

This last decision was important since it effectively made the members of this Council permanent members. (And although it was not discussed at the time, subsequent events showed most of the members of the Council understood the implications very well.)

But the most important decision by the Council was to agree to protect me and Kestinaddi from retribution by my mad Emperor.

### Aftermath

Those were turbulent and exciting times. Sometimes I wonder how I managed to survive and even flourish. I later learned that all my efforts to create Osentalka might have been for naught had it not been for Penemara and Holy Estorex. Their work behind the scenes kept me from being recalled and executed. Penemara had risked death to speak directly with the Only Old One. Holy Estorex had tempered the effects of the Emperor Mathiman's growing madness and had aided me even when I was not polite to him. (Truly, his wisdom and patience are greater than any other's!)

Once I realized how much the three of us had worked together, I was both humbled and thankful. We then determined to continue guiding the Empire, Osentalka and the Council and our success has become a part of history. (With three such as we, how could it have been otherwise?)

May the blessings of the Paradisal Aviator, Vrimak and Osentalka guide you to truth, purity and wisdom.



# Report From Martaler the Blazing Forge

by Al Petterson

*Translator's note: It should be noted that Martaler is something of a self-aggrandizing hothead.*

**This report is prepared for the Great Foreman Of Us All, His Gloriousness Mostal, may we honor His Machine.**

I am considered, by the close-minded of the Nidan Decamony, a heretic. Worse: a pagan, for I see Mostal as the deity He is, rather than as the mere demythologized builder of our race, as the rest of the Mostali would consider Him. For this most important of all the works in which His children have participated, the creation of a Perfect God to restore the World Machine to flawless operation, I considered it the better part of discretion to conceal my Decamony and Mostali holy symbols beneath my robes and play the part of a more orthodox Dwarf.

My old friend and great mentor Isidilian was at the conference. Perhaps he and I had been apart for too long, for I found myself doubting him and seeing his words as those of a diseased mind, no longer in the proper mode of functioning. But by the conclusion of the Council, I saw the order hidden beneath the chaos of his forge, as he chose a crucial time to bring the Light Children of Dara Happa back into the Council and thwart the nefarious schemes of the Only Old One and his Darkness minions.

The Mostali of the conference were, as is right for the only Unbroken race, of grand unity of purpose — except, so it seemed at first, for Isidilian. Angarko the Golden and Golden Overseer Seventh Diamond were, in the main, blind to the threats posed by the Darkness creatures, but then this was expected, as they did not live near the foul things and could only imagine the deprecations they purveyed.

I was always certain the Only Old One bore a grudge still for our war of two centuries before, and I was proven right.

My first thought was to see to the provenance of the mysterious note sent, so it appeared, to all the Mostali by some unknown agent. While I naturally suspected the broken and corrupt Only Old One or one of his ilk, I did eventually conclude that the words were likely penned by the servant of Disorder with the unnatural third eye in its head.

(Once I had found that this creature was responsible for much of the misunderstanding and rumor flooding the Council, I determined to see its schemes undermined at the least. It offered to trade "information" with me,

and I, knowing the quality of its goods, repaid in kind with false rumors that nevertheless I hoped to use to distract the troll creatures at a crucial time.)

Many at the Council overheard my words warning of Osentalka's impending corruption by Darkness, and by the overbearing weight of the evil and deluded Shadow Council formed by that creature Only Old One before Osentalka's Second Auction. The forces of darkness were aided greatly by the terribly damaged social structure of the Dara Happa human creatures, and though I traveled to Dara Happa to plead personally with their emperor, their bizarre social customs and nearly impenetrable accents defeated even my best efforts at diplomacy.

Angarko and Golden Overseer seemed determined to pursue their vendetta against Iron-Skull Fanak. I saw no profit in such a venture, and while I mouthed words of support to their plots, I departed when they told him of their idea to unseat him from his place as Foreman of the Council. While never a capable politician, Iron-Skull has always been a dwarf of means and quality, though possessed of a slightly broken tendency to keep secrets too close to his hauberk.

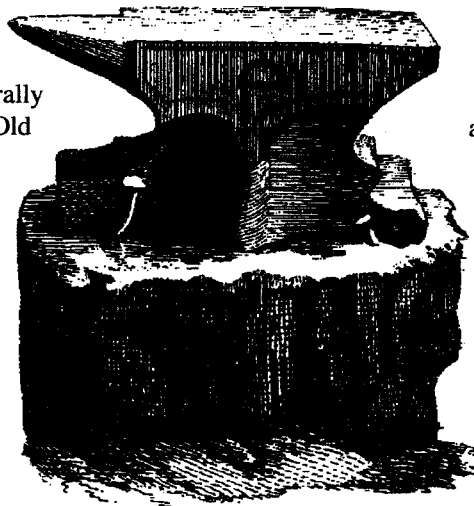
I am ashamed to admit my panic at the news that Darkness was in control of the majority of Osentalka's essence after half Its myth had been constructed. I was ready to quit the Council and petition my fellow Mostali likewise to abandon this mangled project, but at the last moment word came that Osentalka's accountant was discovered to be defective and had been replaced.

Thus reassured, I turned my attention to other matters for the time between Its second and third Auction.

One of the Theyalan human creatures approached me, seeking weapons of war. I do not recall which one, for all humans look alike.

I am a peaceful dwarf, though I am capable of constructing some powders of small incendiary ability, and of course the Decamony would forbid such a trade. Naturally, I was cautious and asked the Theyalan what it offered.

How the surface-living humans had come by Falangian diamonds was beyond my skill at natural philosophy, but there they were, spilling carelessly from the human's paw, or palm, or whatever it is humans have on the inside of their forefeet. When I heard my powders would be





used to drive off Darkness creatures in the far north, I assented, and the diamonds were, as is rightfully so, mine.

I parted also with a helm of some insignificant work. The Theyalan seemed to consider it important.

I had thought I had relieved the humans of all their no doubt ill-gotten Falangian diamonds, but when that human came to me again, seeking a further demonstration of my Openhandism, it flashed a further handful of Falangian diamonds. This unfair demonstration of temptation could not go unpunished, and I asked it what it wanted for them.

Iron, it said. The diamonds called to me from its paw. I said I would look for iron.

When a construction project is proceeding well, things fall into place one after another. The Decamony wished to reopen trade with the Greatway, and saw me as an intermediary. I was only too happy to oblige, especially after a large shipment of iron tools was offered as a gesture of goodwill. The diamonds were mine.

Word later reached me that the Trolls held yet more Falangian diamonds, but this was no doubt mere rumor-mongering by the creature with the third eye and large hammer. Even were it true, Openhandism has its limits. To walk knowingly into the den of the Only Old One would be to meet my doom, knowing his continued hatred for me, and I was not a fool who would tempt this fate.

And then the humans asked for more iron. Another shipment was arranged from Nidan, though Golden Overseer was becoming suspicious as to the disposition of all this metal. My disappointment was profound when the humans were unable to procure any further Falangian diamonds, but I accepted as payment instead the remainder of the kegs of powder originally traded to them for use against the trolls. When I showed Golden Overseer that I had used the iron to trade for a device that should rightfully belong to the Mostali, his good will knew no bounds. I believe by this time even this most orthodox of my brethren was seeing benefit to a limited trade with other races.

Isidilian's words continued to confound me, though from my perspective today I know he was merely teaching the rest of us a lesson about the importance of opening one's mind to new ideas to assist in fixing old, broken ones. He professed to me privately that he was of the heresy of Octamonism, rueing the day that Iron Dwarfs were ever made, although I knew well he was one of the authors of the original Work Project that first built these war weapons. To my shame, I repeated these heretical words to Golden Overseer and Angarko, though I know now this was all one with Isidilian's sublime intent.

And it was just this sort of "insanity" — a sort of playful co-opting of other ideals — that was needed to return the Dara Happans, through the offices of their unfinished larval emperor, to the Council at the climax of Osentalka's creation.

Let none claim this achievement for others. Truly my friend Isidilian remains the wisest of all the children of Mostal.

I can only piece together the events that must have occurred at Shadow Plateau in the latter years of the Council. The insidious Kwaratch Kang must have somehow despicably overheard my comments to others regarding the imminent threat posed by the massive movements of troll armies about the Kingdom of Night, and brought this to the attention of that scion of evil himself, the Only Old One. The Old One agreed to commit troops to a treacherous and unprovoked assault on Gemborg, and that was enough for his warlord lackey.

Just as the Council's final meeting ended, armies of trolls burst forth from the Shadow Plateau, and, as I had feared and expected from the very beginning, surrounded Gemborg, demanding access to my forge like so many odious, defective vermin.

I of course immediately demanded that they withdraw. The Only Old One proved intractable, and so I brought my fellow Mostali nearly to the point of agreeing to leave the Council rather than permit this outrage. But it was agreed that before such a dramatic step was taken, at the least we should match our superior technology against the howling masses of Darkness.

I was skeptical, putting no faith in the tools of war, for I am a peaceful Mostali. But using every weapon at the combined disposal of the Greatway, Decamony, and Gemborg (brought to the siege through the newly rebuilt trade routes), the valiant Iron Dwarfs of Gemborg won the day and broke the siege, vanquishing the foul, deformed beasts.

A feast was declared. Forevermore, so long as I rule Gemborg, unlimited rations of Canned Uz will be served on Clayday, Stasis Week of Dark Season, in defiance of the creeping darkness that still threatens to engulf us all, should we let down our guards for but a moment.

And then, at that moment, when the World Machine was falling into place, came the final piece. During the confusion of the assault on Gemborg, the Only Old One himself had met his death, possibly at the hands of one of his own lieutenants. Such is the way of those treacherous, broken creatures.

And so I was victorious in all I set out to do. The Essence of Osentalka was purest Light, confounding the creatures of darkness. The military pride of the Kingdom of Night lay in ruins about me, the Only Old One dead and his minions feuding. Isidilian was vindicated, parading about proudly in Dara Happan regalia.

And tucked away safely in a purse next to my internal ichor pump were two king's ransoms of the finest Falangian diamonds.

Truly I have shown myself a worthy cog in the great machine that Mostal built.



# Interview with Kwaratch Kang

by Michael Derry

*Included are the contents of Greybeard Raball's interview with Kwaratch Kang as later transcribed by his assistant Morich Goldquill.*

## Background

The high priest of our temple of knowledge has been trying to recreate the events of the Second Council. He told my lord and I to visit the brother of Kwaratch Kang and, if possible see Kwaratch. -Morich

This interview occurred 200 years after the work of the second council in which the god/dess was created. Kwaratch Kang is a Zorak Zoran Deathlord who is the General of the Kingdom of Night, Loyal Assistant to the Only Old One, and was the Warlord of the Council for part of the project. His most famous exploit was the assassination of the Dara Happan emperor which caused the withdraw of the Dara Happans from the project temporarily. Unfortunately, Kwaratch Kang killed and ate my lord, Greybeard Raball, during the interview. -Morich

## What have you done since the creation of the god?

I have only agreed to speak with you because of the good words of my brother in your behalf. I will not stand for any insolence and I only answer you questions to dispel these inaccurate accounts that have circulated about my activities during the Second Council.

To answer your question, I went to find conflict in Pamaltela. I conquered many tribes of giant trolls [Kwarach has been building a bodyguard of mountain trolls, styganthropus snagus. -Morich.] I have been working with Cragspider on several quests to get them to take orders better and not be such blithering idiots.

## How do you feel about the creation of the god?

Certainly I believe in unity and the wonderfulness of the great age that has followed, but for a warrior such as I, it has been unrelentingly dull, even in Pamaltela.

## Why did you change the color of the dragon companion of the God?

What kind of stupid question is that. Like I would want the dragon companion of the god to be a yellow dragon. I changed it to a balanced black and white (without any yellow.)

## What happened during the two inner council meetings when you were Warlord?

I cannot remember, just a bunch of drivel. I did meet the

Brithini ambassador there first and it was then that he first partook of my wonderful Hat of Many Worms.

## Why did the council decide to have Iron Diamond Voice become Warlord?

Who knows? Iron Diamond Voice told me himself, he gave up a council seat to be Warlord of the Council. I guess he fancied himself some kind of warrior, hah!

## Did you try to become Warlord again?

Sure, I threatened and cajoled many factions. I even told the Only Old One's ambassador to tell the council that I would commit general mayhem if I was not Warlord again. As time went on and each faction pressured the council, I realized what a waste of time it was to sit around in the council room, when I could be out in the field leading armies.

## What parts did you contribute to the god project?

I contributed Ironbreaker and a few other trinkets at the beginning. Later on, I did not bother to even attend all that ritual crap.

## Describe the situation that led up to your assassination of the Dara Happan emperor and his wife.

It was not an assassination. As the greatest warrior in the world, I did not assassinate him, I just went into the emperor's palace and boldly struck him down in front of his entire council. As for sequence of events, the emperor sent his wife to kill me while I was in the field with the troops fighting the forces of chaos. I guess his intention was to let the forces of chaos win, but she failed miserably, and I let her go. I then went to see the Only Old One during his Council of the Night [Kwaratch is referring to the council run by the OOO that did much of the actual deal making that made the god. -Morich] I asked him for permission to kill the emperor and he allowed me to. I wanted to kill the Dara Happan emperor so that my lord, the Only Old One, could decide the direction of the god project during the crucial second round of construction (for the emperor and his wife were being resurrected during half of the following construction ritual.) At the time I was not sure what the Only Old One intended to do in the god project, but I wanted to make it possible for him to do as he pleased and I succeeded.

The actual killing went as follows. Earlier, a Dara Happan made available to me a Dara Happan document that allowed me to enter the palace. I entered the throne room and asked the emperor if he had tried to have me killed. He arrogantly boasted that he had. In front of his entire council, I told him



that as a personal matter between us two, I would kill him. I explicitly told everyone that this was a personal matter, and that I was not acting as the General of the Kingdom of Night or as the Warlord of the Council. I then easily dispatched the Emperor and used magic to prevent his immediate resurrection. Of all the brave Dara Happans of his council, only his brave wife tried to face me for the killing. It was pitiful how I then killed her and again used the magic to prevent her immediate resurrection. I then marched out the Dara Happan empire.

As a weird postscript and a comment on the total depravity of the Dara Happans, several told me in later years that I energized their empire by killing their drunken emperor and that they admired and feared me for the killing him.

**So you feel that you were and are still the greatest warrior of all Glorantha?**

Yes. Some say that Palangio was a equal of mine, I guess because of our friendship after the creation of the god/dess. But, of all the contenders for the title of greatest warrior he is the only that comes close. As solid proof that I am the greatest, Palangio later tried to kill the emperor and failed (where I easily succeeded.)

**Rumor says that you and Palangio were going to fight each other.**

Far from the truth. I had spent many times talking with him at the City of Miracles. After he tried to kill the emperor [during the third round of the project. -Morich], I spoke with him again. Years later he told me that he was very close to joining me against the rest of the Dara Happans. Just think of how things would be different he had joined us.

**Your brother tells me that you thought of killing all the Dara Happans.**

Yes, I was getting bored and I wanted to run around Dara Happa and kill each of them as they feebly tried to heal and resurrect each other. I figured that I could keep them out of commission during the entire third round. I was also ready to follow through with my threat to cause massive destruction if I was not Warlord. But several events caused me to not rampage. The first was that since the Dara Happans pulled out of the council, many were concerned about the strength of the Kingdom of Night. I did not want to damage the position and bargaining power of the Only Old One. I also did not look forward to sitting around the council chamber and listening to them babble on again if I did get to be Warlord. I did also not mind seeing Iron Diamond Voice embarrass himself on the battlefield as the Warlord of the Council. So I decided being Warlord twice was enough to establish my position in the minds of the council attendees and impress the historians.

**Your brother also tells me that you thought of taking the Elder Wilds for yourself.**

My brother speaks with a large tongue, I think I should go beat him. [At this point the interview stopped for about a half hour and then Kwaratch returned. -Morich] I never thought of depriving troll brother Herka of his lands, especially not when he had to face the forces of chaos that appeared in his lands.

**What did you think of the assassination of the Only Old One?**

I was prepared to use healing to bring him immediately back but his assistant told me that he wanted to spend more time with some of his old friends in the land of the dead. He had already made arrangements to have Cragspider handle our affairs in the final construction. The assassination only shows the narrowness of vision of the Blue Moon trolls at the time. They have since again been a solid ally of the Kingdom of Night.

**Tell me about your resounding defeat at the entrances to the mines of Gemborg.**

[At this point in the interview, I heard much activity in the darkness and Kwaratch attacked and killed my scholarly lord. Then, while eating him, Kwaratch yelled at me in Darktongue. After listening to his explanation, I decided that the most prudent thing to do was to return to the temple and deliver the interview to the High Priest. -Morich]

Martaler once insulted the Only Old One. I vowed at the time to teach him respect for the Only Old One and the Kingdom of Night. My lord had long since forgiven him, but I would not let the insult pass without action. I gathered my forces and some of the Only Old One's forces outside the Mines of Gemborg. I gave them time to see that we were marshaling our forces. I not only wanted to teach them a lesson without angering the dwarves of Nida and Greatway, I also wanted to blood my own troops more. The Gemborgi blew many barrels of black powder when we entered the caverns. After all of the troops had a chance to face a competent enemy (as opposed the broos we had fought during the council years) I withdrew them back to their garrisons. Using the Horn of Healing, I quickly brought them back to strength.

Had I continued down into the caverns and wiped out the Gemborg dwarves, the Kingdom of Night would have lost all those dwarven craftsmen, angered the other dwarves, and I might have actually lost some brave troll warriors. We did get to feast on the charred bodies of the weak ones we had weeded out by attacking. The tasty feast included Gemborg dwarves, and aldryami and humans of the Kingdom of Night. I have not feasted like that before or since.



# Final Report from Yuko Dostipikis

by Jeff Okamoto

To the Ten Tribes of Third Eye Blue:

Brothers!

As you are no doubt aware, I have spent the past twenty years in attendance at the High Council of Genertela, which has been working on construction of Ostentalka, the Perfect One.

Although you have read the reports I have sent which detail my attempts to sow Disorder and War, I feel it is worth summarizing my entire Council experience for you.

The first years were spent merely introducing myself to the various peoples who were in attendance in Dorastor, and assessing their worth as customers or competitors. Many folks seemed to have goals other than the creation of the Perfect One, and refreshingly, many Mostali did not seem overtly hostile.

Early on, Palangio Iron Vrok, the General of the Armies of Dara Happa, told me, in an antechamber of the Emperor's own palace, that he wished to obtain an exclusive contract with us. I calmed his eagerness by mentioning that I would have to speak with others, and warned him that the price of exclusivity would be high. I got the impression that he wanted our services for his own use, and not that of the Emperor, Khorzanelm.

However, I quickly learned that Palangio was in alliance with Iron Diamond Voice, for what goals I knew not. An exclusive contract with one already so powerful, and now allied with the Mostali would be disastrous, as his troops would quickly conquer all of Peloria and beyond.

It was time to visit the Only Old One, the leader of the Kingdom of Night (and honorary High King Elf). He was properly alarmed at the prospect of such an alliance, and I offered him my services, to restore weapon parity. I told him of Palangio's offer, and agreed to continue to negotiate with him, in exchange for protection from the still-mysterious Mostali. The Only Old One said that either Kwaratch Kang or Herka Bone-Gnasher would keep an eye out for me, as they could clearly not accompany me should I venture into Dara Happa.

Returning to Dorastor, I met Mathiman, the ruler of the Dara Happan province of Darjinn. He too was alarmed at Palangio's alliance with Iron Diamond Voice, and invited all Third Eye Blue to settle in Darjinn, where we would be live under his beneficent rule, enjoying his protection, and producing weapons for him. I felt it best to play along, sensing a possible schism within the Empire of Light. Receiving permission from Khorzanelm to do so, I told Mathiman it would take time for us all to migrate to Darjinn. Nevertheless, I gave him a small set of weapons, which would

assist his armies, as a token of appreciation.

I next spoke with King Arstor, the ruler of Somarin, whose territories were vast, but whose armies were relatively powerless. He was fearful of the Dara Happans, but fortunately he bordered on Darjinn. I introduced Arstor to Mathiman, partially to assist the Only Old One in building an anti-Dara Happan coalition, but also to reduce Mathiman's worries about one of his borders, should he decide to rebel against the Emperor. I made an excellent sword for him from iron he gave me.

I spoke with others, generally telling them what they wanted to hear. Finally, though, the process of creating Osentalka began. The cunning forces of Darkness managed to put a lot of Darkness into Osentalka, including Ironbreaker, the Sword of the Warlord. This ploy ensured that if Kwaratch Kang were removed as Warlord (which seemed likely), that the new Warlord would not be able to use the Sword against the Darkness.

Once the new Inner Council reconvened, I continued to negotiate with those I had not met before. All were alarmed at the amount of Darkness placed on Osentalka, and I was able to honestly tell the Dragonewt and Earth forces that I wished Osentalka to be balanced.

Invited into Dara Happa by Mathiman, I found myself accused of consorting with trolls, and my loyalty to the Emperor questioned by one Wahnakar, an effete lackey to Khorzanelm. After providing Palangio two trivial items, my loyalty was proven. I was ordered not to negotiate with any more trolls, and I agreed, once my people had passed through troll territory on their way to live under the beneficence of Khorzanelm through his loyal servant, Mathiman.

I bantered with the various Mostali, none of whom seemed inclined to accost me, and with Gonn Orta, who I was unable to convince of my harmlessness. He must be watched, especially given the powers that the Inner Council have since ceded to him.

I also traded with Varonal Zor, who had encountered a cache of Falangian Diamonds that had somehow been parted from its owner. I sharked him in the deal, but later felt bad and gave him a war machine.

From a distance, I could see the Only Old One's coalition appeared to be succeeding. He had successfully allied with almost all the Storm worshipers to counteract the "evil Empire of Sun and Light". I was chortling with anticipation of profitable sales and the sowing of Disorder when I heard the most disastrous news: Khorzanelm had been assassinated, and Mathiman was the new Emperor!



This was not pleasing to hear! Although I might be able to incite a civil war in Dara Happa, power might be irrevocably tilted towards the Dark Storm Alliance. I approached Mathiman who introduced me to Wahnakar the Iron Bison, the new War Leader of Dara Happa. Congratulating them both, I bespoke of ill tidings should Palangio decide to revolt. Sadly, these warnings were unheeded, for Palangio was depressed and in no shape to lead a counter-revolution.

My only choice now was to distance myself from the Dark Storm Alliance in an attempt to maintain the balance of power. This went unnoticed by the Only Old One, who was busy entertaining ambassadors from various places.

It was at this time that I began a search for the missing Necklace of Kerofinela. Apparently Rastazar had lost it, and the possessor of it would sit as Storm Speaker on the Inner Council. I took it upon myself to seek it out and possibly sit on the Council myself! After a conversation with Sibilant Tongue of Ouroboros, I learned that Seri-phyranor now possessed it. I sought him out, but was unable to convince him to let me have it. I know now I should simply have broken it then and there. We have never sought open power, and rightly so.

Creation of Osentalka had nearly completed, and the critical final phase was approaching. Now was the time that the Third Eye could be given.

To do so, though, I would require an artifact that would make my voice heard and allow me a Moment of Creation. Finding the necessary iron was a difficult task and I was unable to acquire any until it was almost too late.

One day, Wahnakar casually approached me and just as casually told me that the Empire had instituted a pogrom against Third Eye Blue within Dara Happa. He was nonplussed when I told him that none of us were in Dara Happa, and left me muttering something about "rounding up the usual suspects."

Just after Osentalka had received more gifts, I heard the terrible news that the Only Old One had been assassinated. Who would aid me now in placing the Third Eye on Osentalka?

I began to court Cragspider. A member of the Dark Storm Alliance, I knew she could help me get the Third Eye placed on Osentalka. At the time, she was frantically searching for the components to make a Black Dragon. I decided to help her. As it happened, I had two of the five components she needed: Falangian Diamonds (from Varonal Zor) and Minerals (traded, unbelievably, from Martaler himself!). I also knew who had the third item, the Dragonskin Shield. I approached Palangio and asked him what he wanted. He wanted me to make him an Iron Vrok, which had been taken from him when he was stripped of his rank by Emperor Mathiman. In an amazing display of synchronicity, no doubt

brought on my the help I was giving Cragspider, Palangio had some iron. I created an Iron Vrok for Palangio and received the Dragonskin Shield. I traded that to Cragspider for one use of her Entanglement powers. She was then able to acquire and Link the last requirements, and created the Black Dragon.

It was at this moment that Gonn Orta loomed over me. In a voice of thunder, he announced that the Inner Council had decreed that I should turn over all my weapons to the Council. With little choice, but no regrets, I did so.

Arstor came to me with two batches of iron. I used one to make Arstor some armor, then constructed an artifact to assist in the final phase of creating Osentalka.

It was now time for the culmination of all our efforts. In a strange, but mutually agreeable alliance, Penemara, former wife of Khorzanelm, Erialaiya, Queen of the Blue Moon Trolls, and I combined our powers to place the Third Eye, Blue Moon Rocks, and Healing Powers onto Osentalka. It turned out that Cragspider was not able to assist us, but I had no regrets in helping her. Her favor will give us a powerful ally.

We basked in our triumph, but it was short-lived. We believed KanOra, the governor of Naveria, was to write the Myth of Osentalka's Blessing, but Kestinelm, the governor of the Kestinaddi, managed to convince the Project Coordinator that he should be allowed to write the Blessing, when in fact he should have written a second Myth of Blessing.

The entire myth was read to the multitudes, and not a thing was mentioned about Third Eye Blue. Perhaps in the end it will be better, for Osentalka will still have the power of the Third Eye, yet those who were not privy to Kestinelm's meddling will know nothing about it.

With Osentalka created, my work at the Council was done. I retired from the Council chambers with no one noticing, and began the long journey home.

### Action Items

The Council will need to be watched, as they have possession of some war machines of our manufacture.

The Mostali, now allied, will need to be dealt with most carefully. Despite my not being molested, their attitude will most certainly change. Expect renewed hostilities and take appropriate protections.

Dara Happa should be declared an Interdict Zone as personal safety cannot be guaranteed. However, the bad feelings between the Emperor Mathiman and Palangio should be exploited. If civil war should break out, the opportunities are endless.

Ambassadors must be sent to Cragspider to continue to court her. She could prove to be a very powerful ally in the future.



# The Recollections of Arstor of Varstolar

*by Charles Gregory Fried*

I, Arstor of Varstolar, King of the Somarin, High King of Broliia, set down here my recollections of the great events surrounding the creation of the god Osentalka. I do this for my children and for my people, that they may remember what part the house of Varstolar played in these extraordinary times. My hand grows weak, my eyes, feeble, and my memory, slow, and before I pass on my crown, I wish to secure my recollections for posterity.

I came to Dorastor for the first meeting of the Council in 355. At that time, I was angry and resentful — although I did my best to hide my feelings. My wrath had been stirred by the previous machinations of the council, which had weakened the Kingdom of Broliia. But most of all, my anger was directed against one man: Lokamayadon of Biling, Chief of the Talastari tribes. Years before, Lokamayadon had courted me for his Brotherhood of the Storm, but, on careful consideration, I had refused to join, for I feared that the ways of the people of Broliia would be swept aside and that Orlanatus would overwhelm the worship of Sarius Goldentongue and Lanatum the Thunderer. Lokamayadon and I had parted in peace, but then he married my half-sister, Erilindia, high priestess of Broliia. Together, they seized the loyalty of two of the four Brolian tribes, and I was no longer High King. But worse than this loss of title was the fate which this new rule brought to the people of Broliia: nearly all of the men in one of these two sundered tribes died fighting for Lokamayadon, putting down a revolt among his own people. This outrage roused my furor, and I came to the Council more eager to reunite Broliia than to contribute to the creation of a god! Still, passion had not thoroughly clouded my wits, and I knew that if I would seek my goals on the path of peace, Goldentongue would guide me, for, despite the adversities, Sarius had led my people into the prosperity which only peaceful commerce can bring.

When I arrived in Dorastor in 355, I knew I would have to seek out strong friends. The only man I trusted was Haradangan of the Stravuli, King of the Heortlings. We shared suspicions of Lokamayadon, and we both feared the Dara Happans, who traded unfairly and who lusted after the lands of the Theyalans. Both Haradangan and I had received secret communications from an anonymous source which spoke of a distorting of the God Project by the Dara Happans. Haradangan and I agreed: if we and our peoples were to survive, we must seek out powerful allies immediately, and whoever sent us this message might share our interests.

And so, at the time of the First Council, Haradangan and I sought out the Only Old One. He convinced us that he sought Balance in both the God Project and in temporal affairs. We

sealed a defensive military alliance with him and agreed to consult each other on our contributions to the God Project. In particular, we agreed that the overweening Dara Happans must be countered.

At this time, I also sought audience with the Inner Circle. When I addressed them, I informed them very diplomatically that I was concerned that Lokamayadon had such great responsibilities that he had neglected to fulfill the full rites of the marriage to my sister. I petitioned the council to urge Lokamayadon to fulfill these rites, for the good of the Brolians. I said no more than this, but of course, the full rite of marriage to the high priestess of Broliia by a devotee of Lanatum the Thunderer involves that ritual death of the groom, for the sake of the fertility of the land. I could well understand that Lokamayadon would avoid this rite; nevertheless, since he claimed the unity of Lanatum and Orlanatus, it was his duty. Although I knew that the Inner Circle would not know all this, they agreed to bring the matter to Lokamayadon's attention.

Later, the Inner Circle summoned both Lokamayadon and myself. Lokamayadon insisted that he had indeed been properly married to my half-sister. I found myself in an embarrassing situation. I prevaricated before the Inner Circle, who knew nothing, it seemed, of our ways. I said I had received only vague oracular intimations that Lokamayadon had not properly fulfilled the rites and that I would seek further proof. The issue was tabled.

At this time, I played almost no role in the creation of Osentalka. My friend Haradangan did his best to make the presence of Storm felt in the god, but his influence was slight.

At the Second Council in 360, I began to seek out partners in commerce. I made good trades with several individuals, some of whom were interested in my cheap goods, and I made a good profit. But of more lasting import, I made friendly contact with Yuko Dostipikis, of Third Eye Blue, who sought the iron I had (or could get), and I established relations with Martaler the Blazing Forge, the Mostali ruler of Gemborg, who sought Falangan diamonds.

I also approached Seri-phy-ranor, the governor of Dorastor. I had heard that he was a man of the people who shared my distaste for thoughtless and incautious leaders. I told him of my concern for the Brolian people under the rule of Lokamayadon; again, I was diplomatic and restrained, but I insisted that Lokamayadon had not served the Brolians well — probably because his many concerns divided his attention. Seri-phy-ranor seemed well disposed to my complaint.

I knew that Haradangan had the mystical power to know the truth about all matters of Storm, so I went to him to gain







dealt with the threat.

Around this time, the Necklace of Kerofin was stolen. As everyone knows, the possession of this necklace confers the right of the Storm seat on the Inner Circle. All the Theyalans, who were now united by Lokamayadon's spiritual leadership, were dismayed by this event. Through all my trading contacts, I put out word that we sought the necklace. Finally, through Yuko Dostipikis of Third Eye Blue, I learned that Seri-phy-ranor, governor of Dorastor, held it! We Theyalans felt betrayed! But how to get it back?

I developed a plan. Outright violence would not serve us. But I was an expert in trade. I approached Seri-phy-ranor and spoke of our mutual need to enrich our people. We began to discuss various commercial arrangements. Suddenly, the seats on the Fourth Council were announced! It was too late — at least for this sitting! But I knew there would be a fifth and Last Council, so, furiously, I continued to bargain with Seri-phy-ranor. The governor of Dorastor was distracted, and I used all the power of Sarius Goldentongue our god: Seri-phy-ranor "decided" he wished to trade the Necklace of Kerofin! Lokamayadon gave up much of his magical strength to close the bargain. But the necklace was ours!

The Forth Council thus began in 470 with triumph for the Brotherhood of the Storm. Still, my friends were distressed: it seemed that Storm was woefully underrepresented in the Being of the god-to-come. We realized that even if we pooled our resources, we would never have had any serious impact on the God Project. What should we do?

We decided that we would petition the Inner Circle to make it a rule that only a member of the Brotherhood of the Storm may rightfully bear the Necklace of Kerofin, so ensuring us a place on the Inner Circle. This way, we hoped, we would have a continuing influence over the god-to-come once he-she had come. We also petitioned that it be a rule that the possession of the Necklace must rotate from session to session among the members of the Brotherhood equally. The Inner Circle tabled our request, but we knew we would have a seat in the Last Council. Given the powers of my god, the Brotherhood agreed that I would hold the Necklace for the final session, so that we could have as much diplomatic impact as possible. Despite all my own expectations, I had been thrust into the center of grand politics! I used the powers of my god to lock and preserve the Necklace, and with the iron I had traded for, I had Yuko Dostipikis forge me nearly invincible arms and armor. We would not be defeated!

The final bidding for influence upon the god was a disaster. Storm had no influence, and we were glad that we had secured our role in another way. Seri-phy-ranor sought me out. Greatly distraught, he accused me of dishonesty and challenged me to a wrestling match, unarmed. I said that I had merely worked in the way of my god, and that there was nothing dishonest about Goldentongue's way. I agreed to

meet Seri-phy-ranor in combat, but only with weapons. He refused. I assured him of my good will for the people of Dorastor, that the Brotherhood would not misuse our position, but that the necklace was ours by right. Seri-phy-ranor was, alas, inconsolable, and he parted from me with bitter words.

Meanwhile, the dragonewts attacked Dorastor, and I was summoned to use the powers of the Necklace against them. Happily, the dragonewts were mollified, and the Council went on to the Last Sitting united.

I joined the Last Council in 375. I was much gratified to see my friend Kestinelm of Dara Happa there. The Last Council agreed to the petitions of the Brotherhood of the Storm, and I was pleased. Indeed, all our decisions were unanimous, and I saw this as a good omen for the god-to-come. Our best decision was to name Gonn Orta, the great giant, and Vyrope, High Priestess of Dorastor, as the twin tutors of the god, to match the twin genders of the divinity. This, I felt, served the cause of Balance and Unity.

Praise be to the god who has come, and long live the Kingdom of Brolia and the Brotherhood of the Storm!

## Letters from Across The Sea

To: Lord Talar  
From: Raltosar

Lord, in an effort to ingratiate myself with these people, I drip feed them useful information which they misuse or ignore. It tries my patience sorely.

Distrust and disagreement is still the order of the day, but they shamle on:

(1) King Arstor's Brother-in-law refuses to be placated.

(2) Third Eye Blues are apparently disrupting the Dara Happans (although there is no proof for this) - that area is apparently in civil turmoil.

(3) The balance of the "god" seems to lean towards dark; however the process is so random I am loathe to interfere.

(4) They are obsessed with "Kero Finn's necklace", an apparent item of power.

(5) Hrestoli ambassador Sir Homaltan has just been given permission to attend the public sessions.

(6) My attempt to be admitted to the private/closed Inner Circle continues; although I unwisely entrusted a Dara Happan noble as my main conduit to achieving this end.

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through until That Which Emerges becomes Real.

There is but one obstacle. I have learned that the gifts which I received from the gathered ambassadors have entangled me into their Dreams. I must quickly free myself from them, and them from me. I shall return these gifts with no apologies, no regrets, with only the memories of better understanding and friendship remaining. Although entangled, we have learned from one another and will remember.

Just as I have remembered what you have done for me. Although we are apart and always will be, your generosity and compassion at the time when The Dream was Saved, is what has allowed me to grow and remain, unlike so many of my brothers who could not change and hence have returned to the Void. I can only hope that I was able to give a part of myself to you, as you gave of yourself to me, so that we always will remember each other.

And as another example of change for the good of all, it is my privilege to announce an occasion of great joy, and an omen of the Great Dragon's wisdom.

Gita Flatsnout has transformed into a Dragonewt. We brothers are very happy for him. We are glad that he can now lead his people according to the Left-Handed Way.

The Dragonewt road is nearly complete, which also brings me great joy. My people will finally have an Inhuman King. With this task accomplished I will better be able to concentrate on the Hatching, and nurturing of That Which Must Be.

I also watch with amazement as The Only Old One works his magics to form coalitions of followers to further the goals toward balance. For even if he himself becomes stronger, the opposing forces are pulled taut and then pull back, for they are strong also and will not break.

We have only a few short years remaining until completion, with still much work to do. The tension level seems to be rising. I can only hope that this is in anticipation of the Blessed Event, and not from some self-serving desires beginning to form. Our work has gone on for quite some time.

I will resume my Dreaming in preparation of the Hatching. Soon all our questions will be answered and we will be that much closer to the True Dreaming, and the banishment of the powers of the Void.

**370th Cycling of the Powers:** I am the *Inhuman King*. I always was. This has become clear to me now.

But being the leader of my people wasn't enough. The beings of Shadow and all other Real people, all belong in this world. And we must strive for all of our survival. The powers of the Void are hungry and strong. But with our combined strength we shall defeat them.

All I have done was in preparation for the Hatching. I sensed the Egg before it was even revealed to the world, and once sensed, I knew that my one true goal was to see that That Which Emerges becomes That Which Must Be. So I have set aside being the Inhuman King for the greater good.

But alas, the tension has been broken, and splintered, and now it seems that the wait has been too long. For although we brothers have long been devoted supporters of the project, our influence has waned and our voices are no longer heard as they once were.

Gita desperately tried to gain a seat on the council, first by intimidation, then by force, and then by treachery, but failed each time. He was then in turn freely offered a seat, through friendship, by the one he tried to usurp, "as an example for him to learn from and emulate".

Mind of Golden Dragon, our Inhuman King, foiled an assassination attempt upon himself. He Who Herds Allosaurs's people are surrounded by enemies. And Sibilant Tongue of Ouroboros has gone to war with the Council, and has the City of Miracles surrounded. We have no choice but to withdraw from the Council, for the blood-lust which has come upon Sibilant has affected us all.

In his battle lust, Sibilant has risen up and transformed into a True Dragon. He is both wondrous and mighty, yet his powers are not enough to destroy the city, for Gonn Orta has also risen to the occasion and called forth a True Giant to battle Sibilant.

They cannot defeat one another, but soon enough they do defeat Sibilant's lust for blood. Sibilant is repentant and the Hatching continues.

It is at this point, my dear Charmilla, that I made a great blunder. Instead of continuing upon the True Path, I allowed the lust for power to overcome me. I became caught up in what was best for the Dragonewts, forgetting what was right for the world. Why couldn't I help myself? There is no time left. The Hatching is upon us. No time left to Dream. I don't know if I can change paths again. I need to Dream...

**375th Marshalling of Moments:** I was destined to be wetnurse to That Which Emerges, but in my weakness, in my lust for blood, I was not considered for this position by the Council. Those that are chosen are worthy, but my destiny and purpose have both been destroyed by my own hand.

Do I return to the Void? Is this the end of my Dream? What remains for me to do? My people have a King. That Which Must Be will be tutored without my help. What is left to give?

Alas, I seem forsaken, but the essence you gave me, Charmilla, gives me respite, and the ability to change once again. There IS something left that I can do.

That Which Must Be will have many protectors, teachers, benefactors and worshippers. He/She will learn and grow under the guidance of all those that helped in the Creation. The balance has been achieved.

But who will teach our god how to Dream?

I have found a new destiny... Are there mountains where you live, Charmilla... Mountains are excellent places for Dreaming...



# Saratin Seomale's Story

by Neil Robinson

Yes children, you wish to hear about the ascension of Osentalka, and my humble part in it. There were times when all came to me for advice, but now it is just you coming for stories. Ah, but that is just a part of the cycle of life. Soon it will be my time to return to the soil that I sprang from so many, many seasons ago.

Back in the Green Age, Yelmadio shone brightly, providing his wonderful light for all Aldryami and Flamal's children to enjoy. I was one of those. It was a glorious time for all, full of peace and harmony. Unfortunately, that blessed time was not to last. Evil entered the world with the Black Eater, that which you call Zorak Zoran. Unable to face the pureness of Yelmadio's light, the Eater rose up and consumed him. A foul darkness covered the world, and I lay down for what I expected to be my final sleep.

No, no child, do not cringe so. That time is long, long, ago. Yelmadio and Osentalka will ensure that you will never have to face such evil. Now, where was I? Oh, yes, thank you. Cryanon isn't it? A noble name, I remember another who bore your name. He was... oh, sorry, my mind tends to wander at times.

After a long sleep, I woke in a strange forest. Above me in the sky was a pale image of Yelmadio. Yes, he had returned to give his wonderous light to his people again. But the Black Eater had stolen much of his strength, and his light seemed dim to me. Still, he was back, and I travelled the lands looking to help Aldrya's people. The darkness was not kind to us. Those like Lestus Creeping Ivy braved the darkness to keep our forests safe, but they could only do so much. The forests of the Green Age had sadly dwindled.

The cycles before the time of the council went quickly. I travelled from forest to forest to aid those I could, and finally settled down in the Talaster Forest as their Light Son. Taris Sharpthorn, High King of the forest, made me welcome. I tried to expand the forest, but was hindered by new creatures. Fire people, who lives seem like a flicker, settled and grew like wildfire. They even tried to cut down our forest. Darkness people, foul slaves of the Black Eater, led raids on my people. Only, with the strength and light of Yelmadio could we beat them back.

Then I had a vision. A dream of peace and harmony, where Yelmadio was restored to his former glory and the forests covered the land as they once did. Enlightened, I entered into the Second Council, and was given the position as the Earth Speaker for the council. I hoped to reunite the Aldryami and the forests that each came from. Alas, that is one thing we never truly managed.

You must understand, children, that the fire people, the

dragon people, the stone people, and especially the darkness people think differently than we do. All were in great haste to accomplish the deed. The meetings took place over a mere twenty cycles, and I found it difficult to keep up with the pace. The fire people and darkness people united to remove me from the inner council, and Taris lost his position as the council's Herald too. We Aldryami had united to try and get our voices heard, but were unsuccessful. Disheartened, I moved away from the council politicking. I needed to clear my thoughts and think about how I would make Osentalka a god for light and harmony.

I travelled to the Dara Happan court to meet fellow worshippers of Light. There I met Mathiman, a true friend. He fully understood the glory of Yelmadio, though he named him Antirius. In my vision, I had seen us united under a restored Yelmadio, and I offered him my aid. Mathiman served the Emperor Khorzanelm, but revealed to me that he was actually the true heir to the Empire. An honourable man, he served the emperor and the light, even if he deserved the post himself. When Khorzanelm was foully slain by a darkness person, Mathiman stepped in and took his rightful place as Emperor thus putting to an end any potential disorder. I rejoiced, for as the Dara Happan emperor, he could use his strength to help create a most glorious Osentalka.

What, you haven't heard of Mathiman? Oh, they called him Mathiman the Impaler. I think that had something to do with the way he ate his food. Anyway, his vision was so true, that a stone person, or Mostali, named Isidilian the wise, converted to the worship of the radiant sun. Any bad actions attributed to him are just the ramblings of jealous Emperors who tarnished his noble name.

While I spent time supporting my Dara Happan allies, the Uz, or darkness folk, defined that Osentalka was to be born a woman. All this argument about gender was beyond me anyway. Like Aldrya and Flamal, both males and females must work together to promote harmony, too much of one and we will suffer.

In the years between the council sessions, I travelled the lands, even venturing near the darkness lands to speak with trolls. With the light of Yelmadio inside me, and the vision of a reborn sun to come, I felt an inner strength I never knew I had. I tried to discover which darkness leader controlled the Uz of Yolp, for they were to blame for the raids into our forest. Meeting with each in turn, I managed to wrest agreements to leave our lands alone. I wielded the Golden Bow, and carried the Prism of Untainted Light, and I knew that those foul creatures of darkness could not harm me.

I also visited the fire people that lived in the surrounding



lands, offering my support, but warning that further incursions into our forest would not be tolerated. At times the fire people are as wild as new-born runners, and must be shown a firm hand. Even the oft-times-wild Lokamayadon of the Biling and Arstor of Varastolar accepted my terms, and we were able to keep our forest free.

My old friend Seri-Phy-Ranor was worried. Dragonewts wished to build a magical road through his lands, and he feared that they would try to build a city too. I pledged my support if he needed it, and when the Dragonewt armies attacked, they were ready. Oh, but I get ahead of myself.

The dragonewts were a strange lot, doing one thing and then another. In fact, they even allowed Mathiman and I to determine Osentalka's Transformic Journey, even though the Dara Happan lands were struck with civil war.

Yes, child? Yes, they all worshipped the light, but the fire people have strange ideas about which light, and that always tends to set them fighting. As they fought, the Uz and Mostali battled for control of the council, and only the incomprehensible movings of the Dragonewts helped make Osentalka what she, or he, is today.

The other aldryami were busy. Throna Silverleaf seemed to spend much of her time with creatures of darkness, despite my objections. The members of the Inner Council realized Taris' worth, and he was re-elected as the Herald for the council. I talked often with Lestus, but he stood as stiff as an oak, unyielding on his

expansionist goals. It is fortunate that Osentalka is able to control his urges, for he means well. And Roostin's common sense helped move more of the earth faction to support the cause of peace.

As the council neared conclusion, the stress of ruling an Empire must have been hard on Mathiman. The fire people have lives like sparks, glowing brightly, but are all too soon extinguished. I'm not really sure why, or how, but I ended up being in charge of many Dara Happan troops and magics. I would not fail my ally and spiritual twin.

The Dragonewts quickly turned from allies to enemies, as they suddenly started moving troops to Doraster. I had a chance to talk to one of their leaders, and he began babbling about a seat in council, and stopping the god from having a 'self', or soul. I knew that a crisis was at hand. Taris and I moved our Aldryami forces to stop them, and with the mostali and others, we did. I used my control of the Dara Happan forces to ready them as well.

As the dragonewts attacked, the council was getting into its final session. We were going to determine the most important part of Osentalka, the self. Leaving the troops in

the capable hands of their leaders, I headed in to vote. If the self wasn't a self of light and harmony, all my work and dreams would fade to darkness.

I had been talking to a few other worshippers of the light, including Palangio, a former warlord of the Dara Happan emperor, and Sharan Cho, an ambassador from Kralorela. They both realized that we must unite to prevent Osentalka becoming a deity of darkness. Palangio urged that the god be a strong fighter, and I agreed. The god must protect the people in times of need, and destroy those who oppose us - a defender of peace and harmony.

My fellow Aldramyi and other earth worshippers realized that the creation of a darkness deity would be their undoing, and agreed to support us in the creation of the self if we were to guarantee that Osentalka stood for harmony. Together with Kestinelm and Holy Estorex, other Dara Happan, we negotiated how to define the Osentalka's self. Later I learned that Kestinelm was not fulfilling all the demands of his emperor and my kindred spirit Mathiman, but at the time I was too rushed to check. It was a hectic, hectic time indeed.

As the final vote arrived, our enemies began showing their true form. My light allies were being pulled away in attempts to prevent us from voting. I took charge of our votes until the others managed to return. And, as the final vote was tallied, the votes for light were as numerous as leaves on this oak. Praise Yelmalio!

True to our agreement, Kestinelm acted as our representative and defined the myth of self.

While we created Osentalka's self of light and harmony, the fighting outside grew worse. Our troops were holding the dragonewts and their fire people mercenaries at bay, but the Sibilant Tongue of Ouroboros transformed into a full dragon and attacked. Twice did the dragon attack, and twice was he repelled by an elder giant summoned by the giant Gonn Orta, another champion for peace. In recognition of his acts, he was named one of the tutors of Osentalka. The other one was Vyrope, high priestess of Dorasta, and a very deserving lady.

So, there you have it. That is why Yelmalio regained some of his former glory, and why the darkness folk and fire people do not fight us. The peace and Harmony of Osentalka watches over us all.

No, no more stories today. I am tired, and wish to enjoy Yelmalio's glow before it sets once more. You young ones still have the energy of Flamal. And I expect to see all of you tomorrow to celebrate the rising of Yelmalio. Now run along, and may his light shine on all of you.





# Working Notes on the Genesis of a God

by Robert Breck Moser

*As dictated by Iron-skull Fanak, Foreman of the Feldichi Ruins.*

**355** - Disaster has struck! I am told that the Inner Council has voted to change the method of determining its own membership to one based on the sacrifices made to the Perfect One, yet this will almost surely mean the loss of the Seat of Fire by my friend Speaking Wheel to the Dara Happans. If this is allowed to occur - as seems nearly inevitable since Speaking Wheel is the last of his kind and has not the resources of the Dara Happans to draw upon - then I have lost a true friend on the council and a vote in my favour should they attempt to relieve me of my position as Foreman of the Ruins. This cannot be allowed. On the one hand I am clearly the only one of sufficient skill to properly excavate and explore these ruins, and on the other I am obviously the only one currently involved in the project who has no political agenda to distract me from the creation of the perfect repairman for the world-machine. Alas, I believe I shall have to put aside my work once more and enter into the world of politics that Dorastor and the Glorious God to Come might be saved.

I shall have to keep my brethren of the Greatway and Nida at odds, for the Nidans are still jealous of my abilities and vengeful for my revelation of their thieving plots - were they to join with the Greatway they could be my ruin. There has also been some talk of moving the Council from Dorastor which would be catastrophic both in that it would remove many of the council members from my influence, and that it would remove the Perfect God from his ties to Dorastor and unbalance him towards one of the many factions. I must prevent this. Finally there is this "secret note" from a conspiracy of Darkness seeking to stop a conspiracy of Light. I must determine if either group exists and, if so, keep them from unduly influencing the God.

**356** - I have spoken with the pawn of the Nidans and he is cold and unrelenting. He will seek my removal. Unfortunately an unhealthy friendliness appears to be forming already between him and Lord Angarko of the Greatway.

I met also with Speaking Wheel, expressing my worries over the loss of his wisdom to the Inner Council and pledging the support of my abilities and, if necessary, the artifacts of my own collection.

**357** - In meeting with Vyrope, priestess of Dorasta, I think that I have found an ally. She agrees with my feeling that the God should have ties to Dorastor, and has great hopes of becoming the tutor of the God. She also desires to see it be female, or at least not wholly male, and while I had not

thought much on this particular subject I do not see how it is of great import. I have agreed to support her coalition in this matter in order to insure the ties to Dorastor and in hopes of receiving support of my own on the council; she and her allies seem certain to win the Seat of Earth. Believing me to be of the Greatway, she warned me of Nidan plots against "us" and I implored her to take these tidings direct to Angarko that they not be tainted by my reputation. I have little hope for their effect, however, as Angarko and the Nidan seem to have become good friends and have been inseparable these last few months.

**358** - I exchanged pleasantries with Gonn Orta the giant, Yuko Dostipikis of the Third Blue Eye peoples, and the ancient demi-goddess Cragspider, among the many delegates. Though none had much to ask or offer at this stage, all three seem worth developing; Cragspider made the proper countersign for the conspiracy of Darkness, but there was no time nor privacy to speak of it.

I am approached by the observer for the Dragon Emperor of Kralorela, Sharan Cho. His emperor desires an artifact from the Feldichi ruins, which I have told him is plainly impossible since it is my duty to turn over the devices which I find to the Council. Upon hearing, however, that many visitors to the ruins find souvenirs to return home with - mere baubles not worthy of the Council's notice - we entered into an esoteric discussion of appropriate gifts of thanks, in our various cultures, for favors received. While his mention of a stone called lapis luzuli was interesting, for instance, I informed him that it would be inappropriate in our culture which prides itself greatly on utility. We promised one another to continue the discussion at a later date.

**359** - I traveled to the court of the Dara Happan emperor to seek out the human Mathiman. Knowing the history of unrest and brutal suppression of his people in the empire, I hope to determine the extent (if any) of his involvement in the revolt which I have heard rumored. This could be a useful tool, either for blackmail or to put an indebted friend close to the emperor, and possibly be used to effect Speaking Wheel's retention of his Speakership of Fire. Alas these fools are embroiled in endless protocols and I was unable to get to see him before I was forced to return to my work.

**360** - How the years fly by! Five years gone and, while I have many potential allies, no true agreements have been made for the voting. In a piece of great news, however, Speaking Wheel has told me that the Dara Happan Emperor will support him as the Speaker for Fire. His seat, at least, is assured.

Despite lack of preparation, the bidding went well. The



myth of Perfect God's birthplace was hotly contested, with the Only Old One wielding his might like a hammer and I had no chance to influence the decision. However, many of the factions appear to be bidding too strongly in these early sessions and to be working mostly toward the political gain of seats on the Inner Council, so there is hope that careful working will keep the God in balance and allow him - or rather her - to be a proper tool of the world-machine. After the smoke had cleared the myth of the birthplace had been won by a united coalition of the Mostali, shattering my hope of keeping them at one another's throats, but they at least understand the workings of the great machine of the world. I myself placed the Dragon's Tail, a curiosity of my own from the ruins, into the myth of the birth gifts, and then united the giant Gonn Orta and some others with myself to control the creation of this myth. In the sands of Ruby Harbor with the trunk of a mighty tree the giant wrote while I helped him craft the words: *"On her birth the Perfect God was given the strength and stature of a giant, and a mighty hammer from the ruins of the Feldichi to be both her weapon and her tool"* The sex being female because, of course, the coalition of the

priestess Vyrope had indeed won the myth of gender with my help to stabilize and focus their artifacts of power. I interrupted the ramblings of the Inner Council for long enough to deliver unto them the cloak of shadows which we had unearthed from the ruins and repaired, and I was gratified to see Speaking Wheel sitting in his proper place there. The other artifact found, a powerful figurine of some sort, needs further study before I surrender it to the politicians, who know nothing of the Art and would use it only as a gamepiece in their machinations.

362 - After spending some time with Gonn Orta in the crafting of our myth (it being, after all, a decision of some import) I have travelled to the Greatway to make my peace with the rest of the Mostali. It seems clear that Golden Overseer 7th Diamond of the Nidans and Lord Angarko are inseparable and too great a force for me to overcome alone; I have fought back the bile in my throat and come to ally myself with them. Indeed, when I spoke with them they could not deny the obvious fact that there is no other who could properly explore the ruins of the Feldichi, and questioned only my loyalty to the "Mostali cause." While I know not what they mean by this clever politician's phrase, I professed my undying loyalty to my office as the Foreman, and to the creation of a Perfect Goddess capable of repairing the broken world-machine (which I grow to believe is the most important issue at stake here.) I very nearly ruined all and struck the Nidan dog when he implied that I lied about his people's thieving ways, but he relented and admitted only that he knew nothing of it. I think that I believe him in this; it is possible that he has been kept in ignorance of the perfidy of his people and is true to the cause of the Perfect Goddess. No matter. It is his influence I seek, not his philosophy.

Having won their trust and pledged to be loyal so long as they worked in the best interests of the Goddess to Be and the world-machine, I have exacted their promise to cease their attempts to oust me from my position as Foreman and instead support me. I learned that they had, in fact, initiated a vote in the Inner Council for my removal, but that I had been defended by Speaking Wheel, whose curious friendship is for once justified by his own best interests. Some day I hope to understand him, but for now it is enough to know him a friend.

363 - On joining forces with the united Mostali I was introduced to their other supporters: my old ally Gonn Orta, Martaler of the Blazing Forge, and the artificier Isidilian the Wise. This last I still do not trust but his talents are undeniable; he takes iron or gold and crafts objects of power from them. It is odd though, that he seems to only half understand what he does, as I can fine tune his creations in much the same way that I repair the ravages of time on the enchantments of the Feldichi; like the music created incidentally by the workings of a complex metal machine,



*Iron-Skull Janak bearing a Feldichi artifact*





the magics seem almost a byproduct of his craftsmanship rather than the goal. Wherever the truth lies, it is sufficient to note that he can create objects of magic from stones and metals of worth and that I can further stabilize and enhance these enchantments. Suddenly lapiz luzuli seems more than decorative and I think I shall have to have further words with the observer from Kralorela.

364 - And indeed, Sharan Cho has walked in my ruins and it may be that he found some token to take back with him to his emperor - I cannot be expected to oversee every foreign dignitary personally. As a measure of the Dragon Emperor's thanks, he has sent to my workshop four large chests of the lapiz luzuli (a pretty stone, but sacrifices must be made) which Isidilian has crafted into a miner's hat and a wrench. I still cannot say if the enchantments are science or happenstance - though he speaks like a man of science - but nonetheless I can tune them and make them proper gifts for the Goddess. I have also somewhat reluctantly allowed Toral the Golden to search in the ruins (it is curious how different people can sense the presence of different artifacts in the ruins, so that Toral can find something in ground I have already myself searched. I shall have to make a study of this phenomenon when time permits. Still, there is no use in allowing more searchers within the confines or I should have no time to work myself what with all of the escorting I would be forced to do.) He did indeed find an artifact - a

moulded foot composed only of shadow and contained somehow in a jar. While it was of little power, I convinced him that it was necessary for me to hold an item in order to increase its enchantment, so he left it in my care. I myself have found two items of little note: one being a crown of fire and the other a thong of silver which I shall give over to the Council to appease their appetites for trinkets.

365 - The Council met again to further the making of the Perfect Goddess, but this time all was prepared. The Mostali alliance had agreed that the myth of the tools was the only one of definite import, and I was able to convince the others to use mostly their troops in our successful bid. Meantime, the Dara Happans withdrew in turmoil, the emperor having been assassinated. I wonder what happened to Mathiman, who owes me a favor, and what side he was on. Nonetheless, with their force absent Speaking Wheel should easily retain his Seat of Fire, though I still offered my assistance, should he require it. Once again the shadow of the Only Old One looms large in the bidding, but we have gained that which we sought - for the rest we shall see. While Lord Angarko took his Seat of Stone on the Inner Council, and Martaler and the Nidan were embroiled in politicking it was an easy thing (and indeed necessary) for me to step in and write the myth of tools myself; I gave the goddess a forge and anvil from which to make tools, and a plow at the request of mistress Vyrope, though this latter was overruled by the

## Archives of the Inner Council

⊙ / III / ✘ / 370

### Minutes of the Inner Council

As Recorded by Ortal Scrollbreath

Present at the Council Meeting of 370 were: Speaking Wheel (⊙), Lord Angarko (△), Penemara (✘), Seri-Phy-Ranor (□), Toral the Golden (⊕) and The Only Old One (●). Toral the Golden spoke for Seri-Phy-Ranor, who controlled the ⊕ seat due to his possession of the Necklace of Kero Finn.

The first order of business was the matter of the elected positions: Vyrope was once more chosen for the III seat, and Iron Diamond Voice again became the Warlord. Gonn Orta was chosen to be the new Herald, replacing Lestus Creeping Ivy.

Resentment against Third Eye Blue has been rising in recent years; as a result, this was the first matter that the Council considered. After careful consideration, the Council decided to protect its members by confiscating all of Third Eye Blue's weapons, and proclaiming that Third Eye Blue could only sell future weapons to the Inner

Council itself.

While the Council considered this matter, word came that the dragonewts were preparing to revolt, due to their lack of representation on the Council. It was Toral the Golden who selflessly gave up his council seat to the dragonewt Gita Flatsnout, in an attempt to prevent war.

Afterwards, the Council turned to Arstor of Varstolar, the first of the petitioners for the session. Through his mercantile skills, Arstor had managed to reclaim the Necklace of Kero Finn, and he asked that in the future, ownership of the Necklace of Kero Finn, and thus the ⊕ seat of the Council be given only to members of the Brotherhood of the Storm. Despite Seri-Phy-Ranor's protests, the Council began to consider the matter.

The issue was tabled, however, when word came that the dragonewts were still unhappy. Apparently, they had sought not only a seat on the Council, but also the warlordship. Now that they had been denied, they were preparing to march on Dorastor. With this news, the Council meeting of 370 was called to an immediate end, and the members rushed off to confront impending war.



Project Overseer as being unrelated. We settled on a spade, with which to gather the materials for the forge (and indeed seems more fitting to me, though I had hoped to further win the support of what appears to be a strong Earth coalition with Vyrope at its head.) The Inner Council was given its silver thong of magic, though Speaking Wheel convinced them to return it to my care.

**366** - Mathiman is the new Dara Happan emperor! Upon hearing this news I travelled immediately to their capital to seek audience with him. He appears somewhat unstable and obsessed with the trappings and proper protocols associated with his new, slightly bloodied throne, but he did recognise me and his honor, I think, compels him to remember the gift which I gave to him so long ago. When I mentioned that Speaking Wheel was wise and experienced and would make a good choice for a representative on the Inner Council - should the emperor wish to spare himself such irrelevant tedium - he immediately declaimed that he would support my friend in his continuing bid for the Seat of Fire. Once again his seat seems to be assured.

**367** - Martaler of the Blazing Forge urges us to split from the God Project and start our own, due mostly to a misunderstanding with one of the Overseer's assistants which led us to believe that almost 3/4 of the myths to date had been controlled by Only Old One and an alliance of the Dark. Martaler seems to have been too easily convinced that we should leave, however, and I suspect that he may have some past hatred for the Only Old One or possibly some ulterior motive for wishing to split from the project; I shall watch him closely.

**369** - The last several years have been spent almost exclusively in the search for more raw materials for Isidilian to craft into artifacts. Alas, such trade goods appear to be scarce; the most promising lead was the Cragspider, whose people also delve beneath the mountains, but it seems she eats the stones she finds - the more precious the tastier she finds them - and I have no time to journey there in person to bargain with them. Of the goods we did acquire some were used by Angarko to bribe his way out of the obligation to remain in his homeland. This seemed a waste to me, but it had already been done by the time I had heard of it. The rest were crafted into various objects of power (one of them being a pet dog made of iron that follows Isidilian wherever he goes now.)

**370** - When I spoke with Speaking Wheel before the Ceremony of the God he seemed almost surprised that the new Dara Happan emperor had decided to support him, but I resisted the urge to tell him of my part in events. Meanwhile, the Mostali alliance had decided to save the largest part of our voting power for the final myth of the self, to be determined in five years time. We did, however, gather together what offerings did not fit with the theme of our final

bid (which is Stone, of course, having both the troops of the Mostali and the artifacts of Isidilian to work with. We could mount a similarly impressive bid with only artifacts, but this would gain us nothing over the other and require the sacrifice of more of the artifacts from the ruins) and used them to gain the honor of writing the myth of the movement. Once again the task of the actual writing fell to me, though the others had been quite clear on their wishes; that there be no journey at all. The Project Overseer reminded me that this will mean that the dangers that the Goddess will face must then come to her home, but every Mostali knows to meet the enemy in one's own place of power. Likewise, the priestess Vyrope urged that we reconsider based on the fact that the creatures on the land must move about, but the land itself does not move and all things come to it. So the myth of the movement became a single word: stasis.

Of the artifacts from the ruins - a bag of ever-flowing wind and a jacket made from plates of stone, plus an exquisitely crafted heron of ruby found by Toral - I could not bring myself to part with any until I had further examined them. In their stead, I presented the Inner Council with the globes of night, potent weapons of war, from my own collection.

**371** - The Mostali alliance met to pool our resources for the final vote, and when all of the artifacts had been gathered together I made two startling discoveries: the first was that all of the artifacts crafted by Isidilian were missing! Eventually it was discovered that Isidilian had left them in the court of the Dara Happans for the last several years. It is lucky for us that they are an honorable people, and I feel much safer now that the devices are safe in my hands. The second discovery was a small set of crystals belonging to Golden Overseer Seventh Diamond which, when I examined them, turned out to be a powerful magical amplifier. Now, when I use my magical talent to enhance the power of the artifacts that Isidilian has made and that I have found, I can channel that power through the crystals, greatly increasing the effect. Then, using my other skills, I find that I can duplicate the enchantment of the crystals to expand their potency yet again! There is a heady feeling of immense power in knowing that I can take devices of little note - mere toys, really - and through the working of my skill transform them into blazing gifts worthy of a god. I shall retreat to my workshop and practice my art.

**373** - Golden Overseer Seventh Diamond came to visit me in my ruins to check on my progress. So giddy was I with the spectacular success of the work that I may have made a grave error; I allowed the Nidan into the ruins of the Feldichi. Still, though I have not forgiven his people for their defiling of the ruins, I find that I trust his commitment to the Perfect Goddess - though not so much so that I didn't watch him closely. Indeed, when he found in a hidden chamber a crimson crystal bat he turned it over to me



immediately, though I was distracted by the blazing aura of the Torch of Lictalon, whose warded vault I finally discovered while we walked together through the ancient halls. This torch I have seen depicted in murals and is meant to have power over darkness; it is certainly the strongest artifact I have ever seen, even without the benefit of my skills.

374 - The final council draws near and it seems many plots are coming to fruition. Martaler of the Blazing Forge demands that the Mostali withdraw from the council and the project since The Only Old One has sent the armies of the Kingdom of Night to besiege his home in Gemborg. That ancient son of gods says that he will withdraw his troops only if all of the Mostali agree to vote for him in the final stage of the Goddess' creation, which we of course refused to do. Finally, just before the ceremony was to begin, we convinced Martaler that the best revenge would be to defeat Only Old One in his attempt to control the Perfect Goddess to Come, and he remains with us. I do not think this bodes well for the Goddess to Unite All Peoples, however. In the meantime, traveling on the new dragon road (which was built without my knowledge), a massive army of dragonnewts arrived to besiege Dorastor! The council goes to meet one final time with the threat of imminent war...

375 - Confident that the strength of our final offer of Stone to the Goddess would carry us, I set about once again to win what influence I could in the earlier stages with sacrifices that would not fit with that theme. With the sword and crown of fire and a newly unearthed glowing scroll of light, all suitably enhanced by my skills, of course, I won the right to craft the myth of the Goddess' curse and thus further strengthened her tie to the land of Dorastor with items from the Feldichi ruins. Yet when the final moment came, and I proudly declaimed our offering for the myth of the Perfect One's self, I found to my surprise that we were beaten by an alliance of Light in large part led by my friend Speaking Wheel! It seems that his race the Fire Wheel Dancers, of which I have always known very little, were a race of living artifacts of sorts, who transmute upon their "death" into an artifact of light. Speaking Wheel had decided that the time for his final transformation had come, and had determined that he would become an integral part of the Perfect Goddess, which he accomplished through the vast store of devices which he held; no less than the final forms of all his lost people. Ahh... what masterful things we could have done together, my friend, if only I had known!

Outside, the battle raged. My friend and ally Gonn Orta stood at the center and rallied the defenders against the seething horde of the dragonspawn. Though I saw it not, I hear that he used some great magic to bring peace to the field of battle, that all ceased fighting. Then, when Sibilant Tongue of Ouroboros, now become a great dragon, would have carried on the battle still, the giant woke the very

mountains to come forth and defend Dorastor. These titanic struggles were beyond my ability to affect, I thought, and I wept to be helpless to defend my blessed Dorastor... Or perhaps not helpless after all! Leading a train of my Dwarven miners laden with firearms and kegs of powder from our stores of unused artifacts, I came to Gonn Orta in the silence after the mountain walked and gave him these tools for his troops. Then, because I could see the hurried plotting of the dragonnewts, I gave to him the Torch of Lictalon to carry into battle. When the wizards of the enemy stood forward for a final effort with triumphant sneers and flickers of confusing darkness and mist spreading out around them, Gonn Orta only smiled. There was a small flash of light, tiny against his mighty palm, and the shadowy mists faded away in the sunlight. The enemy turned and fled in dismay, and Dorastor was safe.

Returning to write the myth of the Goddess' curse, I went to seek the advice of my friend Speaking Wheel only to discover that he had become one with the Perfect Goddess. Yet, while we had lost the final myth of the making I found that things had worked out as well as if I had planned it myself; the coalition had named as the tutor my sometime ally the priestess Vyrope, who shares my views on balance and the necessity of a tie to Dorastor. My friend Gonn Orta, for his valiant defence of Dorastor, was named the god's protector. So I crafted my final contribution to the project, the curse of the Goddess; *that she would hurl her enemies from the world-machine, like grit swept from the cogs, to be doomed forever to the cosmic junkheap of chaos*

And now I look upon what we have wrought and I find that we have shaped it well. The various factions struggled for control of inconsequential things only to negate one another and achieve a desirable balance; the god is of all races, the goddess is of all sexes, she is neither of darkness nor of light, he is all things to all people. Yet some things do not change with the god, and among them are the gifts which I have helped to bring to her. A birthplace in the heart of a mountain, like a true Mostali and a worker of stone and steel and magic. At his birth, a hammer of the Feldichi that she not forget her tie to that ancient land Dorastor - a hammer that can be used for craft as well as war. The mighty stature of a giant will allow the god to fix those parts of the world-machine too large for we Mostali. All things will come to her where she stands at the center of her power and there she will make with her anvil and forge all that she needs to fix the world-machine out of the earth that she collects with her spade - for we have given her the Toolmaker's tools. And finally, that which he cannot reconcile to the proper working of the world he shall have the power to cast out from it entirely. Truly have we made a Goddess to unite all people in peace and harmony with the workings of the great world-machine.



# Dearest Daughter...

by Barbara Koln

*A Letter from Korana, Tutor to Osentalka to her Daughter, Vyrope, High Priestess of Dorasta*  
Dearest Daughter,

You have asked me to chronicle the happenings of the council during the Goddess Project for the archives of Dorasta. This letter is my response. You can take whatever part of it you deem suitable and have it Written.

As you know, by the time we started the Goddess Project, the council had been many years in Dorastor. In those years, the fruitful and benevolent Dorasta had been able to provide for our own people and all who came for the council. With the advent of the Goddess Project and the huge influx of peoples that accompanied it, even our glorious Dorasta's ability to provide was strained.

My objectives in participating in the council and the Goddess Project were many. First and foremost, I had to do whatever I could to stem the flow of people into Dorastor. Our limits had been reached. And I had to do whatever I could to keep the peace. With so many races and factions in one place, there was always the possibility of war in Dorastor. This, of course, would not do. As history has shown, I was generally successful, although without Gonn Orta's spectacular success against the dragons at the very end of the Project, who knows where we would be. (It's hard to believe that this same giant is at this moment behaving like a 12-year-old and egging O. on to greater mischief. It's like having two charges instead of one!). My other goals concerned the Goddess Project itself, that it would be a Goddess, that she would be born in Dorastor, and that I should be her wet nurse. (I've often wondered, Daughter, that if you had been Vyrope then, could you have done better for us? You are very skilled at building coalitions. I'm afraid that I had very little success at this. But then, I was Dorasta's Choice; She would not be mistaken in such an important thing as this.)

While the Council met the first time, I spoke with many people, listening to their concerns and telling them of mine. I sought out KanOra, the ManaAlkElsor, the priestess of Naveria. I hoped that we would have much in common, although she was a Pelorian. Surprisingly, she seemed very sympathetic to my position on the Goddess, and on several occasions gave me good advice. (However, Daughter, just between you and me, I believe in the end she gained exactly what she wanted, a dual-sex deity. My proclaiming a goddess in the sex myth so outraged the Dara Happans that her "compromise" was all the more palatable. Had she proposed it earlier, the Dara Happans would have sent her straight back to Naveria.) KanOra seemed to be either indifferent or

opposed to the wishes of the Dara Happan Emperors on most issues, and at one point during the project she feared for her life.

I also spoke with Penemara, the priestess of the Erinflarth, about my hopes for our goddess. She was sympathetic but, as is her nature, her support ebbed and flowed as she pursued her own goals in the Council. (Daughter, I found Penemara to be very charming and delightful. Apparently, the Dara Happan Emperors agreed! She asked me to be present at the birth of her child and, of course it would have been a delight but, as it turned out, I was on the Inner Council when she gave birth and could not be present).

I spoke with some of the elves, mostly with Roostin Trueheart, in an attempt to form some kind of Earth coalition. Roostin was very strongly in favor of "balance", which of course I favored in principle, since we were building a goddess for all peoples. (Roostin was something of a "Johnny one-note", balance, balance, balance - important but not everything!) I was unsuccessful in building a coalition, and in the end, gave up my hope of controlling the birthplace myth to concentrate on the sex myth. On the advice of KanOra, I approached The Only Old One in my search for support for a goddess. He was at that time withdrawing from that stage of the Goddess Project, but asked the lady Cragspider to assist me in any way she could. As it turned out, since we had so little in common in the way of worshippers and runes, all she could offer me was moral support. This was much appreciated and in the end, I was able to control the sex by myself. KanOra had offered some runes, but they were not necessary. To my surprise, I not only controlled the sex myth, but also became Earth Speaker on the Inner Council.

Before the Second Council convened, I had the opportunity to speak with Iron Skull Fanak. I had heard a rumor that the Greatway Dwarfs were going to attack the Feldichi Ruins. (As it turned out, the Greatway Dwarfs assaulted him in Council, but I was there to speak for him).

When the Inner Council convened, we were Maklaman (Air), Thorktor Thon (Dark), Speaking Wheel (Light), Eriayalaia (Water), and Iron Diamond Voice (Stasis). Seri-Phy-Ranor also came to advance himself as Seventh Speaker. I suggested that he remove himself so the council could discuss the nomination of the seventh speaker without restraint. Seri-Phy-Ranor was nominated, and I spoke in support of him. Eriayalaia nominated a young Elf, Throna Silverleaf, whom she had been impressed with. She spoke for diversity on the Council and the others concurred. My only objection (other than my support for Seri-Phy-Ranor,



who was, after all, the Governor of Dorastor) was that she was very young, especially for an Elf. (Daughter, I have always liked Throna Silverleaf — in fact, she reminded me of your youngest sister - but her prophecy made me nervous.) I supported Seri-Phy- Ranor, but Throna was elected 5-1. I was not unhappy with this and in the end, she was a thoughtful and serious Council member.

We elected the Wind Child, Atheoan, as the herald without dissension. There was much deliberation about the Warlord. Maklaman and Iron Diamond Voice were very unhappy with our Warlord, Kwaratch Kang. They gave a critique of his military leadership, which I'm afraid I cannot remember. When I asked for an alternative candidate, Maklaman had none, and Iron Diamond Voice proposed himself. There was general agreement among the Council members that Iron Diamond Voice should not hold his Council seat and be Warlord at the same time. I expressed my feelings that we should think long and hard about replacing a Warlord who had served the Council with distinction for over 100 years. Kwaratch Kang was reappointed.

We had a report from the Warlord about a problem with chaos incursions. I contributed some troops to the defense of Dorastor. (There was a lot more information about battles and wars, Daughter, but you know that I did not have the energy for these things. I admit that in military matters I bowed to the more knowledgeable Council members and, in general, followed their advice. Probably not the wisest course, but at the time, my resources were stretched very thin.) Iron Skull Fanak, the Council Foreman, presented the Council with an artifact from the Feldichi Ruins - a cloak that protected the wearer from attack. We turned this over to the Warlord.

The last issue brought up in the closed Council was a concern by Maklaman about Lestus Creeping Ivy's plan to completely reforest Ralios and threaten the Dari Alliance. The Council declined to take military action, but we did issue a declaration that Council members should refrain from attacking other Council members. We had Lestus Creeping Ivy specifically informed of this.

When we turn to the open Council session, Roostin Trueheart was the first petitioner. He was very concerned about the disharmony in the first phase of the Goddess Project. He proposed that everyone line up randomly and the Keeper pick a starting point. Each person would then select a slot to fill. The Council was also concerned about the disharmony but felt that the solution that he proposed introduced too much randomness. We also did not feel that we had the power to change the process. We instructed the Herald to draft a pronouncement, to be read before the next phase of the Goddess Project, proclaiming our desire for harmony and good will.

Next, Seri-Phy-Ranor came before the Council to petition

on behalf of the Dragonewts. They wanted to build a nest and way station on the Dragonewt road through Dorastor to Ralios. I had grave misgivings. Seri-Phy-Ranor assured the Council that the Dragonewts would be using marginal land and would not put a strain on Dorastor's resources. We had a long discussion with him and Mind of the Golden Dragon about exactly how many Dragonewts were in a nest. Since we had no common frame of reference, we, of course, failed to determine exactly how many Dragonewts we were talking about. I was not forceful enough on this matter, and I was outvoted. (I might have prevailed, Daughter, but since it was the Governor of Dorastor who presented the petition, I did not. I never found out what Seri-Phy-Ranor's motive was in this matter, but I confess that I never again completely trusted his judgment.) If there were other petitioners, I do not recall them.

When the Council adjourned, I removed myself to write the sex myth. I was very disappointed in the keeper of the Goddess Project. When he announced the myths from the first phase of the Project, he assured the Council members that the sex could still be changed when the initiation myth



Vyrope, Eternal Priestess of Dorastor





Kwaratch Kang. I also asked Palangio, the Iron Vrok, from Dara Happa, whose reputation as a great warrior was known to me. Since Kwaratch Kang had killed the Emperor, it was possible Palangio was biased against him. Perhaps Maklaman and Palangio were not the best people to ask for this advice, but I was not inclined to reinstate Kwaratch Kang for political reasons; only praise of him from men such as these would have carried enough weight to make me change my mind. As it turned out, both Palangio and Maklaman praised both the warlords but favored Iron Diamond Voice as the better tactician. If given the opportunity, I would support Iron Diamond Voice over Kwaratch Kang.

As the Fourth Council began to convene, several issues came to my attention. Things were not going well in Dara Happa. The new Emperor had his stepson, the son of Penemara and Khorzanelm, killed. It could not be good for our Goddess Project for one of the major Council members to be in a constant state of uproar and uncertainty. Also, Charmilla and another Troll, whom I did not recognize, were desperate to speak with The Only Old One, who was in the Inner Council meeting. I didn't find out the cause at that time, but they were very distressed.

I was again honored with the Seventh Seat on the Council. The other members were Seri-Phy-Ranor (Earth), Toral the Golden, who had been the scribe in the other council meetings and had the Air seat from Seri-Phy-Ranor because the Governor had the Necklace of Kero-Finn, The Only Old One (Dark), Speaking Wheel (Light), Lord Angarko (Stasis), and Penemara had the Water seat.

When I entered the Council, I told The Only Old One that some of his people were outside and anxious to speak with him. He left the Council, saying that we should continue without him. He would trust my judgment to let him know if something came up that needed his attention. I also informed the Council of the happenings in Dara Happa. I was horrified when I realized that I had so bluntly informed Penemara of the death of her son. She took it quite calmly and sent someone of the Council staff with one of her magics to resurrect him. We heard later that it had not worked, and that her son was indeed dead.

At this point The Only Old One returned with the news that the Dragonewts were threatening the council. If they did not get a seat on the Council or the position of Warlord, they would attack. I said the Council should not allow itself to be held hostage, even though this went against my wish for peace. Angarko pointed out that the Goddess Project was almost finished and we should do whatever we could to ensure peace. He suggested adding an eighth seat. We decided this was too dangerous, since this would be an even number. Seri-Phy-Ranor suggested that Toral step down and resume his position as scribe and have a Dragonewt take his seat. After much pointless discussion, this was the course we took.

Gita Flatsnout, who had been transformed into a Dragonewt, took the seat. He seemed to have more in common with the rest of the Council than Mind of the Golden Dragon. We, at least, were able to communicate.

Lord Angarko nominated Gonn Orta to be council Herald. Taris Sharpthorn was not adverse to stepping down, so Gonn Orta was appointed. (I must say, Daughter, I always like Taris Sharpthorn, both as Herald and on a personal level. He struck me as both gentle and strong, and I was glad, later, to be able to get him to the Cleft of Dorasta and resurrect him after he had been murdered.) With Gonn Orta as our herald, you can be assured that people stood up and took notice when the Council spoke!

Iron Diamond Voice was reappointed with little or no discussion. He reported that the main chaos incursion, that had previously been doubling, had in fact died of its own accord when left alone.

We got word that the Dragonewts outside the Council were still unsatisfied and Gita Flatsnout went to find out what was happening. He reported that one of the Dragonewts had blood lust. We sent Iron Diamond Voice to find him and set him on one of our enemies. That did not work out as we had hoped, but I don't remember the details.

Angarko proposed that Iron Skull Fanak be replaced as Foreman of the Council. He noted that we were not getting nearly as many artifacts as in the past, as if that were some evidence of wrongdoing on the part of our Foreman. I pointed out that this was natural, since the easily-found artifacts were found earlier and now each artifact had to be laboriously worked for. (I was not surprised by this, Daughter. As I said, I had heard that the Greatway Dwarfs were against Iron Skull Fanak from early on. You understand that I had to support the foreman; his concerns for the Ruins coincided with mine.) I gave the Foreman my full support. He was retained.

Lord Angarko wanted the Council to do something about the Third Eye Blue people. He felt that they were trying to incite troubles among the Dwarfs, the Trolls, Dara Happa, and the Council. (I had the feeling, Daughter, that Lord Angarko was taking the opportunity of being on the Council to get rid of his rivals. First Iron Skull Fanak and now the Third Eye Blue people. Don't get me wrong, I didn't trust them either, but it seemed that Angarko didn't miss a trick. I bet if the Third Eye Blue people hadn't made such great weapons and threatened the Dwarfs' trade, he wouldn't have been nearly as concerned. I had come across Yuko Dostipikis earlier, sometime after the second Council. He seemed to think that he was the logical holder of the Necklace of Kero-Finn, since he was a neutral party. He professed a fear of it being in the hands of the light or the dark. It was clear to me that he was up to something, but since at that time I had no idea where the necklace was, I was of no use to him. He seemed a real salesman type.) The Only Old One said that



the trolls had been approached by the Third Eye Blue people. They had not bought anything and were stringing the Third Eye Blue people along. Penemara said that the Dara Happans had purchased some quite excellent weapons. There was a long discussion of this matter. One proposal was to ban the Third Eye Blue from selling to members of the Council. I pointed out that if the Third Eye Blue could not sell to us, they would undoubtedly sell their excellent weapons to people outside the Council. Did we really want the enemies of the Council to be so armed? The next proposal was that the Council should be the only customer. It was pointed out, that since the Third Eye Blue people had been so successful at bidding up the prices, the Council really could not afford to pay the market value for all the weapons that they produced. The final decision was to confiscate all weapons that were on hand and forbid the Third Eye Blue people to sell to anyone but the council. Before the end of the Council session, a pile of weapons had been surrendered.

At the open session Arstor came again. He reported that his problem with his brother-in-law was settled. Lokamayadon had abdicated in favor of Arstor. He had come to protest that Seri-Phy-Ranor was the Storm Speaker. He felt that the Storm Speaker should be a storm worshipper. I will admit that I had some sympathy for his position. Seri-Phy-Ranor pointed out, however, that the necklace was an artifact from an Earth Goddess. (He supposed that my natural prejudice would make me susceptible to this type of argument. It didn't.) We discussed perhaps separating the seat on the Council from the artifact, but in the end, we did what we did best - we tabled the matter.

Someone (I can't remember whom) came before the Council to ask that we turn Kwaratch Kang over to Dara Happan justice for the murder of the Emperor. Although we were not happy with our former Warlord, there was no support for this proposition. After a short discussion, we tabled the motion for 100 years. We pointed out that we had shown our displeasure with Kwaratch Kang by removing him as Warlord and had not reinstated him.

I believe the Council adjourned then and we moved on the final Goddess Phase.

I again tried to gather the forces of the Earth in an attempt to control the self myth, but it became very clear that Kestinelm would not be bested in this.

I had had a divine revelation early in the Project that I would be wetnurse to the new goddess. I had worked for 20 years, putting myself forward for this important position. That the creators of the Goddess Project in the end called this the tutor rather than the wetnurse was significant. (Can you see Gonn Orta being appointed Wetnurse to the Goddess!?) I had some support in the final Council and was appointed co-tutor of our mighty and magnificent Osentalka.

There you are, Daughter. Now you have the official musings of Vyrope, Priestess of Dorasta, during that most interesting time of the Goddess Project. Now I must get back to my charge, but if I had Speaking Wheel here where he could hear me, I'd give him a piece of my mind. Why not a flute? Because I'll tell you, that child with her trumpet is getting on my last nerve!!!

May our loving Dorasta grace you with her benevolence.  
Your Mother, Korana of Dorastor

## Archives of the Inner Council

⊙/III/⌘/375

### Minutes of the Inner Council

As Recorded by Ortal Scrollbreath

Following the birth of Osentalka, one final meeting of the Council was called. It was attended by: Kestinelm (⊙), Lord Angarko (⌘), Penemara (⌘), KanOra (□), Arstor of Varstolar (⊙) and Cragspider (●).

In order to try and bring the dragonewts, who had so recently warred with us, back into the Council, Gita Flatsnout was given the III seat. May it bring us Harmony in the future.

The next issue to be discussed was: who would be the tutors for the new god. Many names were suggested, but it was finally decided that the god could gain even more balance if her tutors were balanced as well. Thus, both Gonn Orta and Vyrope were chosen to tutor the new god,

balancing man and woman, elder races and young ones alike.

With these issues decided, the Council voted to be the standing Council, for the rest of Osentalka's days, ready to provide aid to those who might need it.

In addition, they vowed that they would forever stand together, to help each other in the long, golden days that lay ahead.

Thus ended the last of the Council Meetings of the God Project. It should be noted that every one of the votes of this last council was unanimous; after many years of strife and opposition, the people of Genertela had finally found balance and cooperation.

Thus began the era of Osentalka, he-she who shall bring peace and a new Golden Age to the entire world, and all the people therein.

Here ends my time as the Scribe of this great Council.





# The Song of the Sixth Day or: Last Dance of the Gold Wheels

by Harald Smith

*The following text comes from the inspirational work of Mez-an-adus of Dorastor, who heard the words of Osentalka, She Who Is He, and compiled them into the Song of Osentalka. It is the most complete account extant of the deeds of Speaking Wheel, last of the Gold Wheel Dancers.*

We waited at Dawn on the Sixth Day for our beloved Osentalka to reveal her next form. And when she came from the cave of her birth, she was no longer herself. Instead she bore the image of one known only to us as the Speaking Wheel. She was he and his form flickered as if it contained the very essence of his celestial father Aether, but bound only for the moment. In his left hand he held a golden key and in his right hand he held a fiery trumpet of gold that sang even though it was not raised to his lips.

We waited then for our beloved Osentalka to reveal his next words. And when he did, his voice was like harmony and song, as if he spoke for not One but for Many. He spoke of the Sixth Day, which was the Day of Transformations.

'In the beginning, the Elements formed out of the Void in a matrix of power and these Elements were good for they were

both something and everything and not the nothing of the Void. The Elements

rose or descended as they

desired until they achieved a Harmony and Peace. The Powers formed out of the Void within the matrix of elements and these Powers were good for they were something and everything, not the nothing of the Void. But the Seed of the Void also formed within the matrix of the powers and the elements. It grew to become the Dragon that is nothing but the Void contained. Though in its nothingness, the Dragon too is something and part of everything.

'The Elements and the Powers were called the Celestial Court and they came before all. They formed helpers for they recognized that the Dragon was contained within and must be contained within lest it return all to the Void of nothing. So the Elements and Powers fashioned the two Ancient Races. You know the first Ancient Race as the

Giants, those formed of all Elements and given the Power of Size; such a one is my hero and tutor. You know the second Ancient Race as the Gold Wheel Dancers, those formed of the Aether, but bound by the greatest Power, the Power of Transformation, such a one is my Form of the Sixth Day and contained within my Self, for they are my siblings.

'I sing of my siblings for they are gone, but here. I bear a key for they are the key of the Transformation. I bear a trumpet for they are the song of the Transformation. From the moment when Pinchining, called Spinning Wheel, danced the first dance for the Celestial Court, to the moment when Harlmalia Parrania, called Speaking Wheel, spoke the last words for the Unified Council, the actions of the Gold Wheel Dancers have moved the world to its

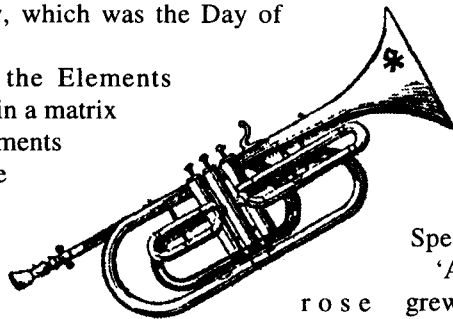
Inner Transformation. Now that the Inner Transformation is within and part of the matrix and machine it is within each of you as well.

'May the blessings be upon my siblings for they still sing to me of great deeds. Think upon the actions of he you called Speaking Wheel.

When the Elements appeared again within the world, as they had appeared within the Primal Void, Speaking Wheel spoke of the harmony of the elements.

'All looked to the north then and saw that two storms grew there, clouds darkening a land to spread disorder. The heads of those clouds spread south even to the land of the Unified Council. The first storm said "Behold, the new storm does not bless the earth. You must ask it to embrace death." The second storm said "Behold, the earth I knew before is blessed without my death. Therefore I should not embrace death and so deprive the earth." But Speaking Wheel said to each, "Go again to the north and think upon your forms, for they are but mirrors of each other." And the clouds went north again to examine their forms.

'All looked to the center then and saw that the ruins of the ancient realm were tended by one who understood their purposes. But many voices called for a new tender for they too wanted to understand the purposes. Speaking Wheel said to all, "Is it the way of the machine to replace a good part with a bad one? No, harmony is achieved





when the good part is kept in place.” So all thought upon these words and agreed that the harmony that existed should continue.

‘When the light of Aether touched and giantess of the moon, Speaking Wheel walked the great basin and met those of light and dark, of growth and stone. He spoke of ancient battles to the giant, Gonn Orta, and told him of the birth to come. Then did Gonn Orta come south to Kero Fin, for I still lay within the womb of birth and saw not the world beyond.

‘All looked to the center then to find that confusion darkened the mighty rituals. For chaos comes with competition and it must be recognized and dispelled. The priestess of Dorasta said, “Behold, the ways of competition are the food of the Void. How shall we break these ways?” Though there was much concern, Speaking Wheel said to all, “Within the dances of the Celestial Court were many who sought to show their forms. Yet all still achieved a Unity. We must speak to all of this Unity.” So the words of Unity were brought to all and the path of Harmony cleared.

‘All looked to the west and to the south and saw that the forms of the Dragon crawled again upon the land. And each time the Unified Council faced the forms of the Dragon (the very seeds of the Void) the forms grew and multiplied, threatening the sheltering womb. Some stood and said, “The seeds grow for their is no Balance. Darkness brings chaos and we must fight it.” But Speaking Wheel said, “Go forth to the west and the south and meet the forms of the Dragon with harmony and peace, for they are but nothing if met without fear. Know that Darkness is an Element and all Elements come from the Void and do not precede it.” And the Unified Council went west and south and proved that the Dragons were but illusions.

‘When the walls of the womb were tore aside, I met my companion, a Dragon of the Void. As I was formed from All, I could not see the nothingness of the Void until taught by one of the Void. As I stood I called the Other, the forces that would oppose me, to myself, for I must stand as One within the world.

‘All sought wisdom then and they learned that the sun of the north had changed and that Darkness alone could not prevail in the south. In the west, they saw that the seeds of Growth threaten the world harmony. And they learned that the seeds of the Void sought the center. The Council was disturbed and they made changes in their minds. One came to the Council who had long been of the Council, but was no more. This One was now of the Void and advised greater changes. But Speaking Wheel knew that Transformation was still to come and said, “We have waited long for these events. Our goddess stirs and

sends ripples through the world. We must have patience and protect the Egg of Transformation.” Though the Council listened and waited, the seeds of the Void were still planted and grew.

‘All looked then as the world grew and the seeds of the Void took root, but only in the center for those that blew across the world failed and died. And where a new sun rose in blood to the north, a new light rose upon the wings of an eagle to reach above the blood to the stars. This was a holy light that touched even upon Aether. Below, the waters of the light were released and the blood was cleansed and purified. Then was my path laid before me.

‘When the gates of Dorastor were opened, I saw the growth of the Void, for the dragonkind lay about me in vast multitudes. But Speaking Wheel knew that the day of Transformation approached. He called the powers of Aether unto him, the stars and the eagles, radiant waters and the iron vorks. The stone speakers also came at his summons with their machines of change. And at his word the Unified Council acted as one, calling all the Younger Species and the Elder Races together to form the true One. There united, Speaking Wheel changed and took his final form. Raised by the light towards the abode of his father, Speaking Wheel sang. Though only I could hear, his song was clear, “We are at the brink. There is Darkness and Water. There is Earth and Stone. There is Breath and Sight. There is Balance. Open your Heart for you hold the Keys.” I heard and around me the Unified Council acted. The aberrant machines of Falsehood, fashioned within the Third Eye, were cast aside. The seeds of the Void, in their Dragon forms, were held in check.

‘All looked then as the fiery trumpet that was and is Speaking Wheel raised another song to Command Silence. The Egg of Transformation cracked and opened. I was One and Many then and knew the Void. With the fiery trumpet that was and is the song and substance of Speaking Wheel, I called forth the Blessing that is the True Power of Harmony and brings the True Power of Vengeance to those of the Void. With the fiery trumpet that was and is the song and substance of Speaking Wheel, I uttered the Curse of Wrath so all who are cast out into the Void know the true Power of Emptiness. With the fiery trumpet that was and is the song and substance of Speaking Wheel, I revealed the Truth of Transformation that was the power of the One and is now to be found by All.’

So we heard the song of Osentalka. He raised the fiery trumpet that was and is Speaking Wheel so that we, too, could hear the full song. He raised the golden key so that we, too, could unlock the transformations still held within our hearts. We were blessed for we heard and learned the Song of the Sixth Day.



# THE DREAMS OF A DRAGON

by Bill Thompson

From: Locuta Errata; Brown Sage of Irrippi Ontor, Chief Ambassador of His Majesties court to the Anali of Garsting, and Heir presumptive to the High Seat of Darleep and surrounding lands.

To: His Imperial Majesty, Takenegi; Lord of Five Quarters, Son of the Moon, Glorious Light of Heaven.

Greetings:

Recently while traveling on your behalf to Garsting I had a chance encounter, the nature of which, I felt to be in your interest to hear. I was traveling through the Jord Mountains with my entourage. My destination was, of course, the diplomatic summit at Mt. Daffyd in Garsting.

We had penetrated deep into the Jord Mountains, searching for a pass which our guide (an Imther hill tribesman) had assured us was there. When we had arrived at the location where the pass would supposedly grant us easy passage to Garsting we found nothing but impassable hills and mountains.

The guide and I were embroiled in a conversation in which I was explaining that his failings as a guide were truly not his fault. Rather, that he should blame his parents and single set of grandparents.

It was then that the ground beneath us began to toss and convulse. Verily would we have fled for our lives but the shaking was of such a violence that our legs did fail to support us and we fell. Our terror in such a strait should have been nigh onto over whelming. I say should, for such was not the case. Instead, a wave of pure benevolence swept o'er us and left such a feeling of utter peace and contentment that even now as I draft this note my spirit cries out to recapture that moment.

I lay there and watched in silence as the hills tore themselves free of the ground and reared up above us. Clouds of blinding choking dirt fell upon us and three of my envoy expired beneath it.

When at last I could see and breath again, I looked to Dayzatar's realm and saw before me the massive visage of a true Dragon. A Dragon which was returning my gaze with its immense silver orbs. I knew then that I was soon to stand in Yelms august court. Yet I was powerless to move and so I lay there and peacefully awaited my fate.

It spoke to me then. Not in words such as men use, but in pictures and feelings which I experienced in my mind. Its thoughts carried a depth of meanings, all intertwined and interdependant. I was, for an endless moment, transcendent.

"You are Locuta Errata, sage to that being, Irrippi Ontor."

I will admit to being more than slightly overwhelmed. I

had known that my name was well known within the bounds of the Empire. That in foreign ports it carried some weight among scholars and kings. Yet to have my fame acknowledged by a true Dragon itself, ... well, high praise indeed.

"Tell me of the Empire," it said.

Compelled by the Dragon peace which lay upon me I could do not but speak the truth. "The Empire stands fast."

"Tell me of the Redlands and this creature like you, Sheng Solaris. Tell me of the war and the armies that move into the heartland."

"It is true," I said, "that the nomads have penetrated deep within the Empire. We stand against him though."

The Dragon swung its head towards the Heartland. "I see that the storm stands beside you."

"It is true. The Orlanthi tribesmen have been staunch companions."

"I see that the Forestfolk and the Nightborn fight side by side with the Children of the Light."

"Yes Lord Dragon. Long have we been allies and strong are the ties that bind us together."

Its head swung back and pinned me with that luminescent stare. "Where then are the Dragonewts?"

I could see then where this conversation was going and I attempted to answer as diplomatically as all my years allowed.

"They are not with us," I said. "They have not been with us since their great betrayal at the Osentalka Project. Since they brought their armies into Dorastor and sought to o'er take the world council."

"Are they not your allies. Do they not share your God?"

"Technically yes. Our trust though was damaged and is not easily won back."

A wave of sorrow washed o'er me and I could almost believe that the Dragon sighed.

"You will carry a message for me," it said imperiously. "You will deliver it to that creature which rules your kind and you will deliver it to the council of races, that all may know the truth and this rift between Men and Dragonewt may be healed."

Suddenly this Dragon absorbed my mind within its own. Like a twig cast into the fires of Enverinus, my mind was burned bare. Leaving me open to the secrets that the keeper held in store.

My soul was aflight, my being carried high by the wind of its passage. Far below me was Genertela. Clouds sang out to me as I passed over them and my spirit sang with them.



I was and had always been, Keeper of Secrets. In another time, however, I was and would always be The Sibilant Tongue of Ouroboros. As the Sibilant Tongue I had tied myself to the material and fought the Powers of the Void.

When the time was right I found that I had become and had ever been the Inhuman King. I stood as I had during the Darkness with lesser creatures on all sides. Some faces I knew of old. That son of Argan Argar with whom I stood in the Darkness. That ancient Nymph, she has changed much but I knew her before she embraced darkness and fire.

The Cosmic Egg came into the hands of the council at that time. I alone recognized it for what it was, an undamaged egg of the Ancestral Dragons. I knew then that if the egg were brought to fruition and if the forces within and without the egg were in balance, then forth from the egg would ascend Mover of Heavens. The living incarnation of the cosmic Ouroboros. Most importantly, if my timing was correct and my balance impeccable, then I would be the avatar that would emerge from within the shell.

And my spirit shook at the thought of what could emerge if the egg were not in balance, and the destruction which would surely follow.

So it was that I entangled myself further with the council. I played the games of these creatures and made ties with those who knew me before. Meeting me there were the other leaders of my kind: Master Herds Allosaurs, Mind of the Golden Dragon, and That Which Cracks Eggs.

The game was beyond me though, and I found that events took shape too quickly for me to control. These ephemeral creatures manouvered the council such that the inner council was controlled by those who contributed the most to the project. At first the significance of this escaped me. Soon I came to realize that this was merely a method of allowing them to secure their positions by playing their game.

I sat back and observed the first round of the project. Trying to understand these short lived creatures and the methods that they were using to acheive their own ends. All too soon I realized that in standing back and observing I had lost my place on the inner council. For the first time in the history of the world council, there was no Dragonewt on the water seat.

It was then that I understood. By opening the inner seats these creatures had made them subject to control through alliances, threats, and bribes of material items.

Tomorrow spoke today. I began to have dreams of swords and blood. Open battle in the halls of the Tower of Justice. I saw myself surrounded by conflict. Death on all sides.



*Sibilant Tongue at the Time of the Council*

I went to the egg and sent forth my self. I found that the core of the egg was as black as Polestar's mantle. The nightborn had dominated the first round. I flew to the Palace of Black Glass in the Kingdom of Night and sought out The Only Old One. He recognized me from that space when we stood side by side against the Darkborn.

This son of Argar sought an alliance with me and I agreed, accepting the ties to flesh and form that such an alliance brought. The condition I lay down for my participation was this: that the nightborn would seek to advance the Storm and hold back the veils of Night. He agreed and all went well. The next round of the council found that the Storm was brought much into balance. The Nightborn controlled the inner council, but true to their promises they brought in diverse races to seat the council. As was only proper Mind of the Golden Dragon took the seat of water for he was and had always been the Inhuman King.

I returned to the egg and once more sent forth my inner self to feel the balance. Perturbed I was to discover that the balance still lay heavy to the night. I singled out some of



these short lived beings and asked my questions. Strange it was to discover that there were some of these human things that also followed the night. They had disrupted the balance I sought by playing this game that I so little understood.

My focus changed at that time. I saw that I must stand against the dark in order to achieve the balance that I sought. It was proper then, that I should seek out the Forest Born and the Children of the Light. Together we stood against the Night Born. Together we achieved some success. Some, but as I checked the egg, not enough.

It was then that we began to consider leaving the council and preparing for war. I knew that if the being within the cosmic egg emerged unbalanced we would need all the space we had to prepare. Then, as I was heavy with these thoughts, Saratin Seomale stood before me and displayed the might of the Children of Light. Somehow this Forest Walker had united the tribes of light and was now about to dominate the council. This was the final sign for I intuited that the outcome would move balance beyond my efforts.

Mind of the Golden Dragon informed me that he would remove us from the council if we were not given a seat on the inner. I understood that a seat there may have allowed us to sway the other leaders. At the same time Gita Dragonewt told us of his dream, that if he was not on the inner council the project would fail.

Suddenly the bloodlust came upon me. The cost of holding my self in check while dealing with these impassioned epherimals had finally claimed its price, and the price was to be blood. I strove to control this bloodbeat and informed the inner council that I must be given the position of warlord, for only there could I slake this thirst which lay upon me.

The council, not understanding my need, refused me. I had to lead, to stand at the forefront of mighty battles and see the lands covered in blood, smell life fleeting past me as death claimed its own. The warlord came to me and asked me to take some of his troops into battle, but he had no way of knowing that if I could not lead, I would not follow.

So I sought out allies, the Pentian Nomads and the Pralorelans. I offered them fresh hot blood and the death of the council. They agreed. The Pent creatures I took through the Dragonplinth road directly into Dorastor. The Pralorelans traveled across land and attacked the mustered forces of Dorastor in Kartolin Pass..

During this time the other Dragonewts came to me. They had forsaken the Council. Balance was impossible. Together we went to war.

It was there in Dorastor that our armies clashed. Knowing that the time of emergence was soon to hand and believing that the egg was unbalanced, I acted hastily and manifested the might of my future self. Unknown to me

## On the Myth of Osentalka

Throughout the God Project of 355-375, the people of the Second Council bid for the right to define the myths of the new god. When project neared completion, and all the people had promised their resources and constructed their stories of the god, the entire Council was brought together for one last meeting. There, they heard for the first time the complete story of Osentalka, their new God. What follows is the complete Myth of Osentalka, as it was originally presented by Locuta the Seventh. Powerful spells of Irrippi Ontir have been used in an attempt to ensure that every single word appears as it was originally spoken in the Ruby Harbor so long ago.

was that the giant Gonn Orta stood against me. When I called forth Keeper of Secrets it was Gonn Orta that raised up the mountains against me and kept me at bay.

Unable to maintain my link to my future self I fell back into the Sibilant Tongue. Looking around I saw that the armies had been stilled by the aura of my future self. There would be no battle that day. Numb I turned to the Inhuman King and he cast me forth from my body and wove the strands of now with the ties of the future. I was risen and was now and always would be, Keeper of Secrets.

Still caught up in the final fog of my past self I threw myself at Gonn Orta once more. Again he held me at bay. Seeking distance I came into my own and at last I understood. Coming down to the Tower, I felt inside and examined the egg. Somehow, balance had been achieved. I looked around myself and saw that in all the endless todays, without the participation of all races, the project would in time fail. So I spoke with Mind of the Golden Dragon and bade him to return to the council that all would be in balance.

It was then that I returned to myself, my Lord. Lying there in the dirt with this Dragon looming above me. I examined what he had shown me and I realized that he was correct. Osentalka was being weakened by our exclusion of one of the founding races. Thus it is that I have turned aside from my summit with the Anali and am journeying to the Council that I may share that which I have learned.

I pray that Antirius sooth the assembly that they hear my words with their hearts as well as their ears.

Ever your most loyal and Humble servant,  
Locuta Errata



## The Myth of Osentalka

We give our thanks to all the gathered races, those who are mortal and those who do not die, that have come together to perform this thing. The world will look back forever and remember this moment in time and place when the world was made into a better thing for all things that live. We gathered together here twenty-five years ago. When we remember these things, we will remember them until we die; we will put them in our songs and our legends, that those who come after us will know these things too.

We remember when all the forces of the universe gathered together and there was a place under Kero Finn, that great mountain that stands in the center of the world, from which all the wind blows, in the darkness caves, and around its icy peaks, and in this place is where the birth of Osentalka the Great began.

Here was gathered together the energies of the great celestial union, from Father Aether, the great encompassing sky, and her mother, the great blue moon, that manifests the powers of immortality into the mortal world. They are the ones that brought forth this new life of Osentalka, the perfect god, into our world under the Mountain of Kero Finn.

When he is born, there will be a great burst in the sky that will swirl like a matrix of time. It will be visible to all of those who have magical vision or not. It will be like a sunburst of fire, as all the sky joins together in the final moment for this creation. Gonn Orta will be there. The Great One. The Great One who saved our land of Dorastor, not once, but twice, from the external foes of our world that have come and tried to crush and stop this project. We give our thanks to Gonn Orta. Redeemed at the birth of Osentalka is He that came forth with a hammer that is the great gift that is both a tool and a weapon, and opened the way in the mountain for her to come forth and be born. Osentalka, the perfect goddess.

When she steps forth, she shall be all things to all people. On one day, she shall take the form of each of the creatures that have joined together here to create her. On one day, she shall be a dragonewt, and on another, a troll, another, an elf, another, a wind child, and yet another, a gold wheel dancer, and even a human being, and she shall be all these things on each day that she shall be able to rule and understand all the races of the world completely.

When she is born, she shall be given the tools by the dwarves, the great tools that will make her the tool maker. She will be given the tools to fix the world machine: the shovel and the forge and the anvil, the tools that make tools.

And at that time, she shall be given the greatest companion that any immortal being could ever want, for she will be befriended by a great curling black dragon. For she will be befriended by a great curling yellow dragon. The powers of

this dragon will be those to end strife and to destroy her enemies by making them into friends. This dragon shall be, like her mistress, a master of transformation, capable of being all, like her mistress, black and white, for her powers are those to end strife and make friends by transforming them.

When she is born, she will be assigned the two greatest and wisest tutors of all who live. That would be our hero Gonn Orta who has saved our land twice in the time that we have taken to make this, and the great Goddess Vyrope, the priestess of the great goddess of this land, who has birthed us all, and brings the life to Osentalka, the perfect god.

As Osentalka matures, he will have the sufferings and misery of all people that grow and mature. Yet, when troubles come he will stand in the strongest place, and all friends and foes will come to her, for she needs no travel.

When the foes come, Osentalka will be aided by that greatest companion assigned to aid her forever, that he who is Khorzanelm, the nephew of the emperor, who has ascended bodily into heaven during these proceedings. He is the guardian aide to our great god Osentalka, the perfect goddess.

When the goddess is confronted by the foes, these foes will be those of disunity, those of chaos, those of disorder, all of those things that would have torn this Council apart if we were living in more evil times. And, those forces will force her into confrontation and into transformation. She will be transformed. She will gain the greatest knowledge possible in the world, for she will learn that she is not only a woman, but also contains within herself all the powers of mankind, and in this way she will be able to understand not just all creatures, but all genders, even those without gender.

For all these things, she is going to be known as the Merciful Protector.

The blessings that this great goddess and god all in one shall give to us will be those that the Paradysial Aviator has given her, that she shall be able to see into the heart of the mystery, and it will be the power to heal and all of the bountiful blessings of the great earth.

He will also have the curse. She will have the curse to harm those who would harm us who love her, by casting them forever out of the world machine, and into the junkheap of chaos.

Finally, upon the total apotheosis of She who is He, the Self shall be revealed, as the peaceful and pure light and lights which bear retribution to foes, blessings to those who love her, and blessings to those who love.

All hail Osentalka! All hail the perfect one! All hail he who is she! All hail the mother who is our father! Hail he who is all races! Hail she who is all genders! All hail each other! All hail us!

# How the West Was One

At best, accounts of the Seventh Ecclesiastical Council must be considered fragmentary. This is due, at least in part, to the war that immediately followed the Council, as well as the purgings of various heresies that continued within Sog City afterwards. What follows are a handful of writings which have miraculously survived to this day. They tell of the miracle of Notslar, the mystery of Arkat, the great battle with the Kingdom of War, and many other things which are now a part of our everyday mythology. -P.A.

## USC PS783.24: The Pelinorius Papers

by Harald Smith

*The following writings are part of the USC (University of Sog City) holdings on Business Studies and the Performing Arts. They apparently date from the founding of the new school in 1625 S.T. immediately following the completion of the 7th Ecclesiastical Council. They are thought to have been written by Pelinorius Staarki, then Vice Chancellor of the University. That this same Pelinorius is also cited as the founder of the Ship and City cult, the New College of Popular Astrology, the New University of the Common Trades, and the College of Far Eastern Studies, either indicates that this was a man of extraordinary vision or that popular mythology has erased the truth.*

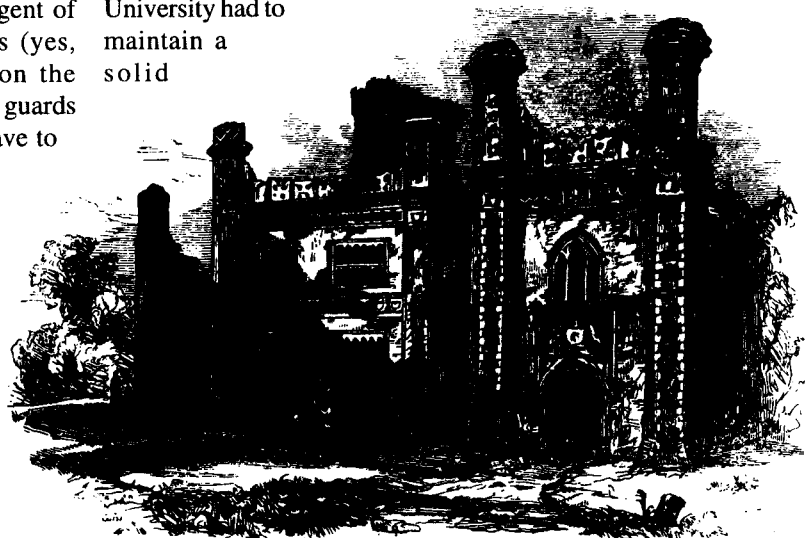
At first I was greatly disturbed by the decision of our Brithini Masters to convene the 7th Ecclesiastical Council, particularly since they insisted on holding the council upon University grounds! However, I was not one to argue with their decision and they seemed to favor this form of entertainment.

Of course, the expense of hosting such a contingent of diverse and antagonistic churchmen and knights (yes, knights!) would surely put a severe strain upon the University's resources for years to come. Additional guards would have to be hired, food and servants would have to be found, and the Council would have to be monitored for inappropriate behavior. The costs could be astronomical.

Gradually, it dawned upon me that there was also an extraordinary opportunity here for this Council to benefit the University. Surely, this was the reason the Brithini Masters had decided to hold such an affair, if only I could seize the opportunity when it was presented. So I developed not only a short-term plan to provide the usual University tours, but I conceived a long-term plan to develop the School of Business Studies and Performing Arts.

Why I had not thought to do so before, I am not sure. Certainly the space was available on campus in the form of the old and ruined School of Performing Arts. The long-term association of that building with certain unsavory and banned performances undoubtedly was the main reason no one could see its potential use. All that was needed to put a new face on the building was money. And as I thought about money for the Council and for the building, it came to me that we had no school or college devoted to the study of money, its use in the mundane world of trade, or its use in the esoteric world of ritual. Then the realization came (while conducting discussions at the docks no less!) that trade and ritual were both mere aspects of performance. A School of Business Studies and Performing Arts made perfect sense and the new design would certainly clear up all lingering fears related to a school solely based on "art for art's sake".

I realized that there were five keys to the success of this endeavor. First, the University had to maintain a solid





reputation throughout the Council so as to encourage all notables to send their children or relatives to USC. Second, an initial outlay of money was needed to overhaul the old ruins. Third, a steady stream of money was needed to keep the School lively and vigorous (unlike our School of Necromancy, so mired in out of date practices!). Fourth, the School required a prominent name to immediately lend credibility to our efforts. Finally, the School required a professor of vision who could easily see new opportunities for growth.

With the arrival of the multitude of delegates to the University, my tasks began in earnest. Unfortunately, most church delegates were too busy discussing arcane and obscure points of Comparative Theology (though my colleagues in that faculty had a field day and claim that they have enough material to last a good century!). The knights were no better, being concerned with a trivial war in the east or with the tournaments (though the latter proved to be a good moneymaker and certainly defrayed the costs of University upkeep).

The one exception I found early on was the Lunar Ambassador who was looking to establish a new line of trade with Sog City. What luck! I thought. Surely the hand of the Invisible God himself had brought this to be. With appropriate formality, the Ambassador and I were able to forge a formal and binding agreement that would require all trade goods coming from or going to the Lunar Empire to pass through the new School of Business Studies and Performing Arts for review by the faculty and students. These goods would then be released as part of particular doctoral studies with express approval of the Vice Chancellor, the Mayor, and a representative of the Watchdog Council. That the Mayor, Judge Grudd, responded so favorably to the treaty proved my instinct in this matter.

So, with a steady stream of money and goods assured to support the School, I went looking for a patron. Though several individuals offered promises, I could not find an actual donor. Though I began to think my efforts would go for naught, a particular incident proved to be the keystone for my success. With the help of the Watchdog Council, one Igora Cleanhands, a promising student within the Faculty of Healing Arts, had undertaken a new study involving the use of a homunculus. Early attempts proved somewhat faulty however and several complaints were made to myself, including one from the University Chaplain. It appeared that the homunculus had acted in a manner similar to Tapping and that such had occurred on University grounds at the request of Gaiseron the Mystic. I was shocked, of course, and expressed my outrage to Gaiseron himself. He was clearly affected by my discourse and promptly turned over 200 crowns to allow the University to clear its name. Naturally, the First Chair of the new School was named in

Gaiseron's honor.

An unfortunate incident regarding Bishop Fidele and another bishop, the first female bishop that I could recall within the Rokari church, gave me further opportunities to advance the new School. In their somewhat agitated state (the woman proved to be pregnant), they readily saw the benefit to be derived from having a school devoted to Business Studies and the Performing Arts. Their donation of 100 crowns to my efforts was most pleasing and allowed me to immediately fund more faculty positions.

Having accomplished the foundation of the School, I only had two more tasks at hand. The first, ensuring the solid reputation of the University, proved the more difficult for my colleagues were busy getting themselves into trouble. The most notable incident occurred after the prophet Notslor spontaneously combusted. The relics were seized by Gorian Stridyard, esteemed Professor of Necromancy. Unfortunately, he placed them in his own College tower and refused to make them available for general viewing (which surely would have proved more profitable). Of course, certain bishops decided that they wanted the relics for themselves. I finally had to intervene and enter the tower of the Necromancers myself (no sense in having churchmen wandering all over the University raising a hue and cry). I brought the relics out and delivered them to the 7th Council so that they could decide themselves how to deal with Notslor's remains. That they chose to carry them off to battle, I found a relief—they were certainly nothing but trouble to have on hand (keeping people from overfeeding the titanothera was difficult enough).

Finally, I had to find a Professor who could truly lead the School of Business Studies and Performing Arts. And I did! A person of definite vision and insight—none other than Igora Cleanhands. Her further efforts at refining the use of the homunculus and in creating the first live undead performance piece (with the aid of the College of Necromancy) showed me that she was indeed the person for the office. Though I had to obtain some extremely rare oysters for a colleague (which proved surprisingly easy—merely requiring me to allow the Dragonship to dock) and ensure that another colleague understood the arrangements I had made with her lover (the Lunar Ambassador no less!), I was able to obtain the necessary approvals and majority needed to raise Igora to the Gaiseron Chair in Business Studies and Performing Arts.

Altogether, the 7th Ecclesiastical Conference could not have been more beneficial to the University. With a new School underway and cheap land available for expansion (many of the nearby buildings had unfortunately washed away when the Dragonship docked), I knew the future held great promise. Clearly, the University of Sog City was poised for bigger and better things.





# Sog City Majoral Weekly Report

by Neil Robinson

Sog City Majoral Weekly Report for Harmony Week, Dark Season, 1625. Judge Grudd, Mayor

## Opening Remarks

Without Law, there is nothing but Chaos. I am the Law.

## Issues

1. **New Fine Structure.** The new fine structure was instituted to deter offenders from committing crime. This operation proved so successful it enabled the outfitting of 100 additional twenty-man squads. Complaints about the harshness of the new tax have been made by several citizens, and street judges have been assigned to watch these potential offenders. Those who don't support the law, are against the law.

2. **Judge Brutality.** There have been some rumors suggesting street judge brutality. A recent inquiry has ruled that the street judges have operated within the law,

using only the necessary force to apprehend offenders.

3. **Waertagi Ship.** A Waertagi ship has arrived in the city. Judges have set up barricades to ensure orderly contact with the merchants and citizens.

4. **Street Riots.** In the fishing district, a riot was effectively quelled by the dispatched street judges. The cause of the riots is under examination, but is believed to be based on the arrival of the Waertagi ship.

5. **The 7th Ecclesiastical Conference.** The meeting can be considered a success, with only 11 bishops being evicted during the proceedings, and a single suicide. The suicide occurred when a Rokari bishop was shown

how to vote on the final ballot. After losing the final vote, the Rokari extremists began unlawful gatherings in the streets and had to be broken up by the street guards with only minor injuries to the offenders.

6. **Kingdom of War Invasion.** A successful campaign by the united Malkioni forces defeated the Kingdom of War invasion force. The newly-recruited street judge militia stayed to protect our city.

7. **Lunar Alliance.** Sog City has just signed a mutual defence treaty with the Lunar Empire, and 20 moon boats with elite lunar soldiers are being assigned to the command of the mayor. These troops will be used to help keep Sog City safe and peaceful.

8. **Increased Theft.** Rumors of an increased rate of break-ins and thefts has been greatly exaggerated. Statistics show that Sog City is still the safest city to live in, thanks to the work of the street judges. A reward is offered for turning in the offenders that are spreading these foul words.

9. **Death of Notslor.** The immolation of the Holy Monk Notslor has been deemed a miracle, and is not under investigation.

## Announcements

We are pleased to report the upcoming marriage of Mimgill Ormswood, daughter of retired street judge Ormsgood, and congratulate her on promotion to knighthood.

## New Edicts

1. After the riot and unruly demonstration by Rokari bishops, all gatherings of more than five citizens are hereby declared illegal. Necessary force will be used to enforce this action. This includes bodyguards.

2. The drawing of weapons in Sog City has been raised to a capital offence. This does not extend to the weapon practice yards and the tourney field. Of course, street judges are exempt from this edict.

3. A recent theft by the head of the Faculty of Necromancy has forced the withdrawal of the curfew passes for University faculty members. A checkpoint will be installed at the University entrance for inspection purposes. Judges manning the checkpoint will have full majoral authority to deal with suspicious citizens.

Obey the Law, and the Law will Protect you.

*Judge Grudd*





## Mingill Ormswood's Report

by Diana Chapin

The recent Council sure held a lot of surprises for me. I thought I would never become a knight after that rat, Cardinal Galleron, said that no woman was fit to even try. Not only did I become a knight, but a bishop! When I didn't even know for sure they existed before the Council! And I, who didn't even have a boyfriend, got married to a foreigner! Archbishop Gwydion of Sklar, who is an Aeolian from Heortland, is fairly radical and hates the Lunars and Chaos. He shares my views on tapping and castes and he has a really enlightened attitude about women. (They even have two women bishops in Heortland.) When Portin fell apart as a result of overimbibing during his wedding celebrations, I had to take over the whole Council for a while. Wow! I'm still walking around in a haze of good feeling.

Of course, it took a lot of work to get there, and I'm not sure we did the right thing in electing that strange Ecclesiarch. I don't know what Arrolians really stand for and he looks and acts weird. Besides, I mistrust people who are converted back and forth. He is certainly nothing like Notslor. Notslor was a real mentor to me, and he represented the true Hrestoli faith and our commitment to one god.

I am afraid Notslor was poisoned. I thought Gaiseron the Mystic was going to become the head of the church, but he surprised me by just backing out of it; maybe he wasn't up to it; he never really showed a lot of leadership during the Council.

It was really tough keeping track of everything at the Council. Portin had me running errands for him all the time because he was tied up behind the scenes. And I had my own duties, besides my wish to become a knight and find out what had happened to my parents. I felt very important, but sometimes a little worried that I could handle it when Portin told me that things like getting the major people to talk to him or lining up troops to protect the City were "up to me". Of course, my father's old friend, Judge Grudd, was a big help all the way through. He was one of the few people I felt I could trust. Later on, I began to worry that Portin was being influenced by the Lunars; he's any easy touch for a pretty woman.

I managed to run my two committees pretty effectively, though the first one didn't come out much to my liking. It was stacked by the Rokari and they were against the caste advancement system. At that point, I was sure that I wouldn't ever become a knight. But I had to run the committee fairly and there was no way I could change their vote. In the end, the floor vote came out much better since leaving it up to the religious to decide about caste advancement means it can happen, even if only in special cases.

The other committee, which was on woman's role, came out better than my wildest dreams, affirming that women are equal and that they can become priests! I was glad that I decided to let the new Rokari woman bishop serve on it. Though I mistrusted her, I felt that I could not exclude our newest woman bishop. I did have to deal with that arrogant lout, the Bishop of Borin, pretty sharply. However, I will say that his opinions on the women's issue, to my surprise, were extremely helpful. I was willing to compromise if we had to, or come out with a minority report, but after a few tests of faith, everthing came out perfectly.

My one big disappointment was that I wasn't able to discover anything about the death of my mother and the attack on my father. I didn't know anyone I could trust to ask except the Judge, and he said he didn't know anything. When they were questioning Professor Stridyrd of the College of Necromancy, I believed that they might discover something because I think they had something to do with it, either them or the Alchemy Faculty; I'm sure black magic was involved.

In any event, I now am responsible for the religious guidance of the Castle Coast. They will have some real adjusting to do since they put women on a pedestal, but don't think they can be knights or priests. However, their new Ecclesiarch, Sir Sangsouche Cuivre-Casque ai Loteries (what a mouthful!) insists that, like him, they will follow the decision of the church loyally. I agreed to serve as bishop because of his assurances and also because it helped him to gather support for our defense of Sog City.

I was delighted to see King Gundreken return, but I was not sure that his nephew Vadalon was loyal to him. However, they seem to have been happily reunited. Glisandour, the Daughter of king Gundreken, is a terrific lady. I couldn't believe that she was so willing to help me. She and her friend, Cardinal Sieglinde, the first woman of that rank, were going to make me a knight and were looking for a second knight to endorse me. In the meantime, two other Hrestoli, Cardinal Malgrim and a friend of his did it while Sieglinde was busy winning the tournament and Glisandour getting engaged to Prince Romaine. I was really impressed that all these people wanted to help someone who was not really that important to them.

Well, now I have to figure out how to be Bishop of Castle Coast and the wife of the Archbishop of the Heortland! I'm not going to let anything stop me know that I've finally got my chance to show what I can do and I've got that love charm from the Queen of the Kiss to keep my lover's interest (in addition to the eight hours of on the job training she gave him as a wedding present).



# The Annotated Sir Leperon

by Dan MacDonald  
and Mike Mittmann

*This is the commentary of the Knight Sir Leperon on the seventh Ecclesiastical Council, transcribed by myself, Bishop Bistraup. Before the council I would have given my report myself, however, the events of the council have convinced me that there is a purity which one loses when one engages in politics, and I am afraid that this impurity has clouded my memory, as it warped my thought during the council.*

It is hard to believe that the messenger from USC could find Bistraup and I here on the battlefield. They seem to think that my recollections of the seventh ecclesiastical council could be of use to their scholars. Since those who would read this are already on the road to heresy, being that they can read, Bistraup has agreed to transcribe a letter detailing my opinions. I hope this can prevent others from repeating the blasphemies committed by this council, which the inquisition, in our weakness failed to stop.

*Reading being a step on the road to heresy is a bit extreme, but is supported by the fact that all of the heretics we found could read. At the moment I believe that it is like many other powerful magics, in that it provides many more temptations to sin.*

*Thus it is important that weak souls, like women and peasants never be allowed to read.*

Sir Alverius and I arrived in Sog city expecting that the inquisition would have some work to do, with all the Rokari bishops in close quarters with the bishops of other sects and outright heretics. We never expected the prevalence of sacrilege that we encountered. I don't think any of the three of us [Alverius, Leperon and I] got any sleep during the eight days of the council meetings.

At the first meeting of the Rokari party we were all surprised by the woman, Tarltemona, and her ridiculous claim of being a bishop in the Rokari church. After questioning her we found her claim was based on being the daughter of a bishop; a totally fraudulent claim since bishoprics are not inherited. Imagine our surprise when Theoblanc supported her voting.

*This odd claim provides additional support to the position that priests and bishops should not marry, and gives support for the orphanage method of propagating the religious caste*

We immediately talked to Theoblanc, the ecclesiarch, and he claimed that she was being considered a temporary bishop, which seemed to make some difference to him, but I feel this heresy started the destruction of the Rokari party.

*In fact the reason Theoblanc gave for the bishopric at*

*the outset was that it would give us one more vote. This corruption of principles was demonstrated more and more strongly as the council continued.*

At the time we did not have the power to override Theoblanc, the inquisition being independent up to the ecclesiarch, and so had to accept that woman as part of the party. Alverius immediately began an investigation into her past.

With a number of rumors coming to us about that woman's [Tarltemona's] questionable past we decided that we needed another talk with her, this time in our chambers. It took an amount of threatening to get her to come with us, but they all do eventually come. She was questioned. With all the activity at the conference, Bistraup was left to the questioning of the woman while Alverius and I both looked into other rumors. I returned to our chambers to find Bistraup unconscious and the woman missing. We eventually found Bistraup a healer [I was healed by Saint Notslor!] and found that he had been assaulted from behind. Even after hearing this, Theoblanc still refused to have the woman declared a heretic. We decided that the inquisition needed to be made independent of Theoblanc's office and we were reduced to giving the woman over to Judge Grudd. She was sentenced to some jail time for her complicity in the assault on Bistraup.

*The assault was most horrible, I was bludgeoned by several men who came out of nowhere, who spoke with strange accents, and were never found, in spite of careful watching of Tarltemona. I suspect she consorts with demons.*

We then began casting for proper ways of removing the Inquisition from under the ecclesiarch's power. Which I'll tell you about later.

Along with the ecclesiastical council there was a tournament, the winner of which would be declared the Champion of Malkion. Although Alverius's position didn't permit him time to join the jousting, I was able to make time to be in the Rokari elimination round. It surely was the will of Malkion that I did not win our position in the final round of the tournament; I had too much of his work to do in stamping out sin. I did have a chance to joust with my old friend Prince Romaine, his old habit of striking too high with his lance was his undoing. The victor of our elimination Sir Guy de Loimbard was not fated to win the tournament but fought honorably and for the greater glory of Rokar.

*Sir Guy de Loimbard is a great and just knight, who*



*saved me from a band of thieves, led by a woman, who attacked me as I was on my way to the council.*

After the tournament, a book - almost by definition a heresy - was brought to us containing a number of lies about Rokar's position on tapping, so I'm told by Bistraup. The author of this irreverent book [*Sir Leperon insists that calling the book heretical is like calling a sword sharp, so insists on the additional adjective, as the first is assumed*] was Meritocranse the Learned. After some searching through the university we found Meritocranse and had a chance to interview him. A considerable amount of time, better spent purifying the Rokari devout, was spent trying to get the bishops out of the council chambers and the meeting rooms where the honest servants of Rokar were not permitted, and were even attacked when trying to perform their duties. [*Neither of the Knights of the Golden Lance had votes, which upon reflection is a good thing, as votes lead to corruption. I urge any who are Inquisitors in future councils to discard your votes from the start, and pay attention to your business.*] I suppose that Bistraup will comment on that in his letter to the university. Still those of the inquisition should not be restricted in their mission to root out sin. It only weakens Malkioni everywhere to have the disease of heresy in our midst.

Back to the questioning of Meritocranse the Learned. When we first brought him into the chambers, thoughtfully provided by the USC, he immediately denied any knowledge of the heresy included in his book. When confronted with the evidence he agreed to swear that the writings in the book were both false and heretical and disavowed writing them, although I still have my doubts. He was willing to swear to all of this before the fires were even stoked, which I found somewhat disappointing. We enlisted the help of Judge Grudd in determining the coarse the book took from Meritocranse to us. This uncertainty in the authorship of the heretical writing was a very disturbing loose end which haunted us throughout the council meeting. Once again Theoblanc took no action after finding a heresy in our midst.

The bishops seemed to be more than happy to give evidence against each other, much of it false. From the beginning these people tried to use the inquisition to further their political ends. This sin of politics was rampant throughout the council, it even infected the inquisition. Our submission to this sin led to the downfall of the inquisition and the Rokari mission, but that is later in the story.

Not wanting to let go the thread we found in Meritocranses book, we interviewed Lepet Meulpele who originally brought it to us. He turned out to be a most honest and helpful person who had gotten on the bad side

of Judge Grudd, whom we convinced of Lepets sincerity. Lepet had a talent for hearing rumors which, of course, as an honest Rokari he passed on to us.

We contacted the king who agreed that to truly allow us to perform our purification of the faithful the inquisition should be independent of the ecclesiarch. His men gave us documents to present to Theoblanc declaring our independence. I wanted to take Theoblanc and question him at once, but unfortunately, the inquisition fell to the heresy of politics. I do now believe that politics is a heresy as severe as tapping or blasphemy. We decided to wait to take Theoblanc until after the vote on tapping, assuming in our arrogance that he would vote against its use. He didn't. [*Actually we were waiting for the vote on the place of women, but his vote on tapping should have told us that he would do anything needed to maintain power.*] The discussion of the tapping of peasants was so shocking that Lepet passed out. I didn't blame him.

The woman was now openly flaunting her consortion with heresies. She was seen in the company of the heretic Abdelcar shortly after being engaged to the bishop Fidele, which in itself borders on blasphemy. This ensorcelment of otherwise exemplary Rokari such as Fidele is just another reason why women should not be allowed to become bishops. [*This also shows the fickle nature of women.*]

Our descent into the heresy of politics finally brought us defeat, and failure in our obligations to Rokar. The king, who tired of our waiting to declare our independence, rescinded his order. We were left under the order of the now most definitely heretical Theoblanc.

The final measure of the influence that devils had in the Rokari party was the last vote, on women. Aside from Bistraup all the Rokari bishops voted that women were equal in all ways to men. Preposterous.

*More interesting was the statement given by the unholy Theoblanc when he realized that the heretical view might have a majority. He said "I can't be in the minority" then told all the bishops to come with him as he walked into heresy. I believe that the good Sir Leperon is mistaken, in that one other bishop, Meritocranse, kept his morals in that vote. Theoblanc made his reasoning clear when he attempted to become the bishop leading the whole of the Malkioni Church. He based his appeal on being the only one of the candidates who was in the majority on each vote. The one good thing that came of the council was that the heretic who now leads the Malkioni church at least appears to believe what he says, as opposed to Theoblanc who believes that the Invisible God who was revealed to us by Malkion and Saint Rokar changes his mind as to what is right according to the whims of what the most people believe.*



That vote was more than any sane person could bear. We all realized that our honor could not be reconciled with the new position of the Rokari church. Lacking the power to remove the entire party as the heretics that they were, we could only resign as members of the inquisition. We decided that the only honorable course would be to join the united armies, and fight the foes of Malkion on the battlefield where they were not cloaked in the guises of bishops as they were in the council. My friend, Prince Romaine, commissioned me to lead his personal guard of 100 knights. Bistraup came to give spiritual guidance to the knights in battle. I understand that after we left for battle the council declared the Rokari party anathema. I would guess that it was with good reason.

It is sadly I have to recount the corruption of my mentor Sir Alverius who was so seduced by the demons of politics that he accepted a bishopric from Theoblanc, who was giving out bishopries to anyone who was standing nearby. I was even offered one. I admit that the idea of power is a tempting demon, and one which I had to exorcise on the battlefield.

*Evidently God was speaking to Theoblanc a great deal at the end of the conference, as the second vote did allow people to change caste when God, as interpreted by the priests, said that they should. Or maybe Theoblanc is a corrupt power hungry heretic garbed in the robes of a bishop, using that power as he sees fit, and corrupting many of the church of Rokar on his way. The position I voted for in the second vote was wrong. No one should have the power to change anyone's caste.*

That battlefield is where I am now. The disaster of

the Rokari sects decent into heresy, I must admit, is on the shoulders of the Inquisition. If we had taken more forceful steps earlier, and we had not been tempted into politics, we could have saved the church from the depths it has sunk. *[Yes this is True.]* I can only hope that others will find this new council's pronouncements so unholy as to renounce them as well as the members who created them. I have had little time for delicate work, such as I enjoyed in my days in the inquisition, but I have been able to convince some to make last minute conversions to Rokar's true flock. Even here I can make a small contribution to Rokar's plan.

Sir Leperon of Estau, Knight Commander of Prince Romaine's Personal Guard, formerly of the Inquisitional Order of the Golden Lance.

*Respectfully submitted by Bishop Bistraup of the Church of Rokar, Bishop of Voi. Grand Inquisitor of the failed order of the Golden Lance*

*Post Script: There is one additional image which continues to disturb me from the council, and that is the unholy Theoblanc's assertion that the law rune, when being represented by hand gestures is to be represented with one hand held up, with three fingers out forming a Triangle, as opposed to the form Saint Notslor used, two hands held together at the thumb and forefingers to shape the Law rune. It occurs to me that the representation chosen by the unholy Theoblanc better represents the Illusion rune, and should have been an early warning to me that he was not of the True Church. Any who claim that the Law rune is represented by this one handed gesture should be questioned most carefully.*

## Note on a Soiled Cocktail Napkin

by Curtis Taylor

*Professor Pelinorius Starki:*

*A soiled cocktail napkin with writing on it was delivered to your office this morning by a young harlot. This is apparently a message from Gorian Stridyrd, the Professor of Necromancy, and is addressed to you. I have transcribed said message for your perusal.*

*Septuria Inkwel, secretary.*

Dear, dear Pelinorius. I have decided to partake in a sabbatical of sorts for the next year. The charming Queen of the Kiss, Nesselina, has provided me with an open invitation to visit her city of Zoria. Please do accept my apologies at not making the appropriate social appearances for the University while I am gone, but I am quite sure that my former medical student, (and the now current

Professor of Art and Business Studies) Igora Clean-Hands, will be able to handle any and all of my social duties.

PS Please do not believe any of the rumors concerning the damaging of the iron band on my tower the Steeple of Necromancy during that fierce lightning storm which occurred during the Seventh Ecclesiastical Council. I am sure that you can come up with the funds to repair it, as it is vitaly important to further research to be conducted during the next twenty or thirty years.

PPS I have taken the liberty to hire one of the pagan storm priests for the University...you never know when you need to control a storm! Be a good chap and please do pay him his retainer.

Gorian



## A Tale of Heresy and Madness

by David Millians

"So! You wish to hear the story of my sinful days as a leader of the Perfecti? It's a dark tale, full of fools and ne'er-do-wells! Ay, more likely you come to steal from me, me who has never done harm and wishes simply to end his aged days in peace. Off with you! I'll have none of it! You're all spies, sent by my enemies who lurk with fang and claw!"

Great, black, bristle-haired rats and other vermin scurried and fed in the scattered trash, living and unliving, that lay scattered through this impoverished neighborhood of venerable Sog City. It was the home of poor, common workers and vicious alley lurkers, washer women and painted girls of little means, laborers and thugs.

So much had changed in so few years. The Ban was no more. The Kingdom of War loomed ever menacing. But the lives of the simple folk seemed little altered by the tumultuous events which had gripped the city and the land. They suffered, and they died by the thousands in each upheaval, but they benefited little.

Tenements leaned crazily over the muddy lane, filthy with standing water, discarded food, the bloated carcass of a dog, and waste spilled from innumerable night baskets. A wary carter hauling vegetables to the nearby market drove slowly past. Ragged, thin clothing hung limply in the breezeless heat of the sticky summer that lay thick and nearly opaque over the entire city. Bored lads stared from darkened doorways and small, menacing gatherings.

"Fine, fine, then! You have the necessary payment! Gather around my little fire, and I'll tell you of your supposed elders' foolishness."

Several grimy, grinning children were finding seats atop bits of debris that had tumbled from mounds ringing what was obviously a semi-permanent camp. A cadaverously thin man in a tattered robe crouched beside a fire fueled by what, only the saints knew. His curled, cracked fingers wielded a knife, which he was using rapidly to skin and clean some small beast.

"Excellent! Felix, you grow better each day at catching these evil-wrought vermin. Best they serve us in death better than they did in life, neh?"

The old man clutched the gory knife to his face, leaving a grayish smear and a light line of standing beads of blood across his cheek, as he gasped in asthmatic laughter.



Though he moved with harried speed, he was obviously very old, perhaps aged beyond his natural years. A few threads of gray-brown hair swirled atop his head, and he had only a thin, filthy beard, stained darkly below his fissured lips. His eyes were sunk deeply within their orbits, framed by his gaunt skull. A tilted nose had been broken more than once, perhaps by the youths listening at a distance from their roosts. His skin was blotched, wrinkled, and worn, like old discarded leather that has sat exposed to the harrowing of the wind and salt of the sea. Numerous scars bespoke running sores and other painful ailments in his past.

"I was an honored member of the Seventh Ecclesiastical Council of Malkion, held at the great University on the hill, just below the steaming walls of the Citadel of the Ancient Ones!"

Who was this madman?

A muddy missile struck the debris beyond the old man's head, causing him to flinch and glance with nervous hostility at the nearest group of dark-browed young men. They glowered their challenge in return. The old man turned back to his butchering and his story.

"I, Cardinal Sulfraginius, was summoned from my newly designated diocese at Bregsborg as a representative of the New Hrestoli Idealist Church!"

The man was proving to be an engaging storyteller, throwing himself so fully into the characters of his tale. Perhaps the meeting with the other Holy Observers could wait a few minutes.

One of the attending urchins rolled his eyes, and another, perhaps a girl, dug in the dirt with a muddy bit of shell. They had obviously heard this tale many times. It may well be that they requested it simply to hear the aged beggar rant or to induce a confrontation with the bored toughs.

"In my heart, though, my now weak and dying heart, I was a Perfectus, advocate of a grand, individual faith, simple in its practice and beliefs."

Such rumors had circulated concerning the Cardinal, especially after his mysterious illness and disappearance following the divisive Council. More serious, though, was the tone with which the old man spoke of the Perfecti movement, an ongoing distraction for the thinly stretched leadership of the Church. To have even a nearly blind spinner of yarns speaking of it so openly and comfortably within this warren of despair and mob attitudes could be dangerous indeed. Their hope fired by false prophecies,





the people might well riot, causing further destruction and misery and imperiling their souls during such troubled times.

This man required further attention, he and anyone else associated with him. Yes, the meeting could be delayed a bit.

“Traveling in the distant land of Pamaltela, far across the sea, serving as a missionary of the Loskalmi faith, I found spiritual union and genuine brotherhood with the strange peoples dwelling there. But most importantly, I discovered that they are just people, much like us. We were in no way superior, though I did have much to teach to them.”

It was remarkable how familiar with the lost Cardinal’s own story was this old man.

“But the greatest truths I was to learn from them... Eh, what? No, I do not mean Titanother mating calls! You Impudent bratling! No, I mean the secret enlightenment of personal perfection.”

Murmured comments came from a few of the listening youths.

“I was cast into prison by greedy Vadeli who had established themselves as gods in some coastal settlements. Fearful of my criticism, they cast me into their dankest chambers. It was there I met the Silent Ones, followers of the Wordless Prophet, a contemplative prophet of long ago. Their persecuted faith had barely managed to survive through the ages, and the last few devotees were mostly in cells such as this. Eh? Yes, we were fed in prison, fool. No, I wouldn’t go back for a decent meal. Stop interrupting, bratling. Guided by their example and humbled in my faith, I plumbed my own heart, and after many years - yes, I said, many years - achieved insights previously unknown in our own land: Like Hrestol, we must perfect our outer and our inner selves. The trappings of the church hierarchy cloud our vision and bind us to a worldly path, forever cut off from Solace.”

These were the rumored beliefs of the Perfecti, preached - for all intents and purposes - on this Sog street! Were it not for the fact that the story was receiving a reception that wavered between amusement and hostility, the old storyteller should have been silenced then and there. As it was, perhaps further attention would provide more information.

“Eventually gaining my freedom, I returned to Loskalm bearing the seeds of salvation for those able to hear the message within their own hearts. I began to seek out likeminded men and women.



Yes, women too, for they are men’s equals in all things and have equal hope of achieving eternal Solace. And so, I established the Perfecti movement.”

Was this true? How highly placed had Sulfraginius been in the Perfecti movement? All else in the tale rang true with known records. Was the Cardinal actually the founder and leader of these teachings, brought it seems, from the mysterious Southern continent?

The old man had finished cleaning the small carcass. He ran a length of splintery wood through it, then settled it over the odorous fire, where it soon began to crackle and spit with greasy juices. Several urchins wiped away their openly hungry looks.

“Working my way through the Church, I achieved the heights of power, knowing them to be false glories, thereby freeing myself from their cloying limitations. I used my power and access to further the movement and to protect my followers.”

This explained a great deal concerning the Perfecti’s ability to elude pursuit and prosecution. Some had long suspected sympathizers within the Church, but none had guessed how highly placed they might be.

“It was with the highest hopes that I attended the Council. My hopes were in vain. The University thronged with delegates and issues. Even some of those fiendish Vadeli from Pamaltela were there. While several important questions lay before those so assembled, clearly little actual thought was given to spiritual matters. Clerics cut trade deals with foreign merchants, lining their pockets instead of contemplating important topics. My own pocket was emptied by an unknown sneak, perhaps one of your own fathers, during that first day.”

The children and even a few toughs snorted with laughter.

“The so-called prophet Notslor - no, not Snotty-Lore, but that’s a clever twist, bratling - preached and urged self-righteously, calling for unity and direct challenge of the Kingdom of War. I could soon see, however, that he lost sight of all else in his drive to form political and military unity. His concerns were worldly, not those of God. I saw he was no saint but merely a man, a man gripped by his own vision, inspired in part, perhaps, by God, but nevertheless failing





to achieve meaningful insight.”

Blasphemy! To so denigrate the memory of Holy Notslor was a capital offense! To preach the same was powerful sedition!

“I spent most of my days in silent introspection, seeking personal peace amidst the cacophonous bargaining. I met with my followers, among them the chaplain of the University itself. He was nearing enlightenment, and we agreed to hold a vigil in the chapel.”

So, now we are learning some names that may prove useful.

“We submitted a proposal - calling for the abolition of castes, the Church, and the kingdom - to the Council in the name of the Ecclesiarch.”

So, the Perfecti were the origin of that mysterious, troublesome document! The possibility certainly existed that this had been the case. Whence came the old man’s information? Was he really a Perfectus? Did he really know others?

“Naturally his holiness denied it, but it embarrassed him and raised these issues to a brief prominence they would otherwise, heh, not have achieved.”

The children guffawed along with the ancient fool. Such impertinence and disrespect could not be tolerated, but the presence of so many locals prohibited an immediate confrontation. A well coordinated purge could seek out those truly at fault.

“I was seized for questioning by the Inquisition early in the Council. They suspected me of knowledge of the Perfecti, possibly knowing already of my allegiance. Yes, yes, boy, they seized me anyway. I was tortured. Why, if they knew? Because they enjoy it, bratling. Now, as I said, I was tortured, magically tortured. They drew forth from my body the most sickly sensual feelings within their repertoire, forcing me, yes, forcing me to undergo repeated, unwilling pleasures of the flesh. Yes, it was horrible! No, it wasn’t a good time. Nothing wrong with honest pleasure, but this was wrong. I have no idea how much you would have to pay for a few minutes. It’s easy to volunteer, bratling, just say the wrong thing! But reconsider, for you would not enjoy it, for as I was bound and secure, they Tapped me! Yes, I say, they Tapped a pious man! Aged, I became faint, and they were barely able to revive me.”

This embarrassing incident was rumored during the Council, and accusations continued in some quarters for a short time afterwards, but the troubles that followed greatly overshadowed such minor concerns, and the Ecclesiarch was able to assure all that those techniques involved - apparently magics known as Kumm-Fee - were no longer in practice. What truth did the madman know of this?

He had begun to nimbly pick bits of flesh from the small, blackening carcass over the fire. He munched with obvious delight and vigor, pointedly ignoring the hunger of the urchins.

“They would have continued, though perhaps in a more gentle vein, had not the Ecclesiarch then arrived. I was able to make my escape with the help of friends within the Church, and I am proud to say I revealed nothing and betrayed no one! Long hours of silence proved themselves when I ignored their demands to speak. Yes, I did resist, bratling! I may not have expected the Hrestoli Inquisition, at least not so soon, but I knew how to handle myself in their presence! These frail bones carry more bravery than it may appear.”

The boy rolled his eyes again, for this whole exchange seemed to be part of the telling of this tale.

“My doom came by much more mundane agency. Over the years, having maintained my health and youthful vigor through subtle magics, I required occasional renewal. No, I won’t cast a spell now! They don’t teach spells to affect that part of the body at the University. Yes, stupid, and love potions are right out! How old are you anyway, bratling?”

The lads in the doorways perked up for the first time with some nudges, winks, and a few references to various past, no doubt imagined sexual exploits.

“This time was come due, and all that I required were a few ingredients. Arktani Oysters, however, proved devilishly impossible to find. I soon realized that there was a conspiracy, yes, a conspiracy, to keep them from me in order to hinder my life’s work! At every turn I found myself thwarted. Clearly many were involved! I realized later I should have been able to recognize them by their features shared with their masters, those lurkers within the alleys and kitchens of this very city! Their slitted eyes and unnatural grace of movement! They sought to curtail my teachings! They think they have! The fools! I shall devour them!”

What was this? The old man was sinking into a fit of his madness! The children drew back, and even the thugs looked on apprehensively as the ancient one turned his meal over the fire and coughed spittle into the air.

“I realized then that I had a new teacher! I was to cast off the concerns of the flesh, perhaps die soon as a martyr of God! I was to teach openly in what I thought were my last days, to teach others to carry on after my death! I moved among those of the







Council, speaking of the Perfecti. The chaplain I joined in all night vigil, helping him in his own spiritual growth, later corrupted by the evil ones though I suspect it to have been. My mind began to wander, I remember little of the last days of that foolish Council and its many meaningless proclamations and actions."

Meaningless! Surely he forgets the great pronouncements of unity and the great battle led by so many noble lords in which we defeated the forces of the Kingdom of War?

"The chaplain came to me with news that he had finally come into possession of Arktani Oysters. While I was beyond the need of such recuperative intervention, I agreed to use it in order to still my fogged mind and weakening frame in order to carry on our movement in the future. It was then that they struck, the evil ones! The cats of the city, of the land - I now realize the fundamental incarnation of the forces of darkness, despair, and damnation - surged forth to snuff the path of purity."

As he worked himself into a frenzy, the enjoyment of those assembled grew. They listened to this tale only at the madman's expense. Pitiful. Perhaps he was no threat indeed. But the glances of the toughs told me they were beginning to suspect wealth or opportunity lay beneath the cloak of this stranger who had joined their audience. Best to be aware.

"These cats, who live among us even now, seemingly innocent of all wants other than a bit of milk or fish, they were bent on my destruction! My own kitten, given to me by my grandmother - perhaps she too was among the conspirators - this kitten I had nurtured since I was only five years of age, it led the assault, seizing the oysters and the chaplain, though I think now he may have desired the oysters for himself! They devoured the oysters, every single one! Dooming me to near senseless days and endangering the future of the movement and the salvation of the world!"

His rant was nearly incoherent. He slumped over his meal, a few trailing bits of shiny meat dribbling from his mouth. All those gathered craned forward.

"But they failed!"

He surged up and sat back on a mound of rags, drawing his robe about himself. His audience grinned in satisfaction. They were getting the show they desired. Pitiful. Several youths had stood.

"I remember, as I said, little of those last days. I was incoherent, wracked by age and pernicious magics. The beasts tormented me, appearing and disappearing, as I pursued them about the University. The Ecclesiarch was killed. My fellow Hrestoli dragged me into voting sessions, caring little for my pain or my addled

mind, simply wanting my support, if only in body. Ridiculous. The Rokari broke with the Council, battles were fought, and nothing was achieved."

Nothing?

"I came to my senses among these lanes, having evaded my pursuers, mundane and magical. I am frail as you now see me, but I will continue my life's work."

Does his rant never stop? The meeting should begin.

"First, however, I must regain my vigor! The demonic cats of this city have eaten my precious oysters! I will eat them! Every one of them! I will have those oysters and the power to carry on even if I must eat ten thousand thousand feline Krjalki!"

He was on his feet, and so were most of those observing. He thrust his withered limbs skyward, holding aloft the grizzled cat haunch on which he feasted, and his audience capered about, emulating his frenzy and moving in obvious parody of holy ceremony. Whatever his actual beliefs and teachings, this storyteller's presence in this slum was a great threat to the Church and any future peace.

"Another tale? Hrestol Beds Uleria? Siglat's New Clothes? Bah! I am worn and weary! Flee from me. Another cat? Yes, yes, yes, bring me another, for I grow very hungry! I must eat them all!"

It was then they came at me and him. Two youths moved to grab the rest of the madman's dinner, and half a dozen lunged toward me, intent on relieving me of any wealth or at least enjoying themselves in the attempt. Outnumbered, I leapt toward safety, landing beside the mad storyteller. He looked me in the eye.

It was then I saw!

His robe! It was no cast off garment but instead the sacred, ritual robes of a Cardinal of the Church, worn only at holiest ceremonies and meetings, now faded to dullness, absent its rich, purple collar and embroidery of gold thread.

Unmistakable!

True! All true!

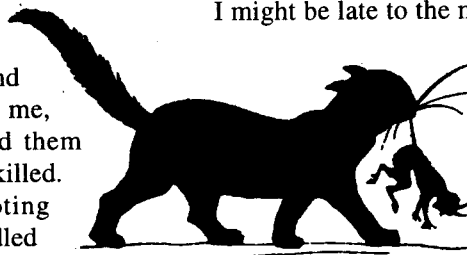
I scrambled over the mound of debris lying to the rear, clawing through scraps of roof slate, bones, and dead sea gulls. My pursuers slid and scrambled but soon fell back to harass, maybe beat, the old man.

I fled rapidly down the lane.

I might be late to the meeting, but I bore news of great import!

Sulfraginius lives! And though he's obviously mad as Malia, he comes as a great menace to the Holy Church!

May Malkion and Hrestol guard us in all things.





# The Mystic Writings of Gaiseron

by David Dunham

*Supposedly Gaiseron the Mystic dictated these notes a few weeks after the Council, although they seem both more prosaic and comprehensible than most of his other writings, and many believe they were actually written by his scribe.*

The Seventh Ecclesiastical Council was something of a disappointment — I ended up so busy that I was unable to engage in pure thought, because I was embroiled in many day-to-day details. There were so many of these petty details that even I am unable to remember all of them. I will attempt to describe some of the more important events of that most unusual week in Sog City.

I was just a baby during the Sixth Council and thus was not in Leplain, so I cannot speak from my own experience, but surely the Seventh was much grander. The golden beacon of Malkionism had drawn notables from throughout Glorantha, all dressed in their finery or barbaric splendor, according to their place of origin. Due to an unfortunate shipping accident, my own regalia was lost (I was told it had been sent to Princess Glisandour's estates), and I wish to commend the seamstress Erisu Quickneedle for making a replacement only two days before the Council, which managed to outshine the raiment of all the other gathered ecclesiarchs. The hat she constructed according to my design brought gasps of awe from the citizens of Sog City.

Although the particulars of our King Gundreken's absence were known only to a few, he was definitely missed at the Seventh Council. In fact, he was off on another of his quests. To keep the public from becoming alarmed, I had informed them that he was staying at my humble abode in Southpoint, holding a vigil to discover a way of stopping the Kingdom of War once and for all. The King's nephew, Prince Vadalon, tried to pressure me into having the High Council of Loskalm declare him as King. However, when I resisted, he spent great effort at determining where Gundreken actually was, and managed to raise large sums of money to ransom him from some bandits. Although he was tempted, Vadalon remained loyal to his kingdom.

On the first day of the Council, Sieglinde, Cardinal of Northpoint, approached me and asked to fight in the tournament as the Champion of the Hrestoli. Of course, I agreed — what a great triumph of the Hrestoli way if a woman, to say nothing of someone who advanced through the roles of society, were to win. In later days, others in our delegation complained, but I was not about to go back on a decision. In any case, a Hrestoli Cardinal must of

course have considerable skill with weapons, and I knew the outcome was not in doubt. I did secure magical aid from Varnaro of Riverjoin, for I knew that Sieglinde's rivals would be likewise aided.

As I had predicted, Sieglinde did indeed triumph over champions of the lesser faiths, to the greater glory of the New Hrestoli Idealist Church, and became Malkion's Champion.

I was also pleased to bless Cardinal Sieglinde's marriage, to a Ralian I believe it was. Shortly afterwards, a petitioner came in, most agitated, and urged me to excommunicate the Ralian, saying he was in fact Arkat. Of course, I had to deny his request.

Unfortunately, various falsehoods have been said about the Gaiseron the Mystic Chair. When I heard that the University wished to establish a new School of Business Studies and Performing Arts, I immediately begin the process of endowing a chair. Unfortunately, the Watchdog Council had some sort of accident with what is colloquially known as the "comfy chair," and had somehow inadvertently Tapped a witness. News of the endowment was delayed lest wagging tongues believe these a connection between the two events, but I assure you there was none. Anyone who can believe for a moment that Gaiseron the Mystic could condone the evil and morally repugnant Tap spell is doubtless capable of believing any number of impossible thoughts, and perhaps should be questioned along these lines by the learned philosophers of Easval.

Although it may seem heretical to those who do not truly analyze the situation, the presence of the Holy Monk Notslor at the Seventh Council was a great inconvenience. Though he spoke of unity, he was of no help in persuading any of the lesser faiths to adopt Idealist precepts. In fact, despite his pleas for unity, he ignored a resolution unanimously crafted by one of the subcommittees, and rammed his own resolution through! But although he was an impediment to the workings of the Council, none can deny he brought the Council together, and his death and miraculous spontaneous combustion are proof that he served Malkion's will.

Notslor's wishes for unity allowed the Council to pass the various resolutions without serious dissent, but at the cost of ambiguous or meaningless language. It was with difficulty that I convinced the younger members of the Hrestoli delegation to vote for them, since they were unable to see the long-term advantages of not splitting the Council.



It surprised many, but it should have surprised no one when I threw my support behind Senechorius as the leader of the Malkioni Church.

Senechorius was a recent convert to the Hrestoli way, but I saw him out-debate one of the Rokari who tried to shake his faith. At the moment of his conversion, he gifted me with St. Xemela's Left Anklebone (a holy relic which surprisingly, seemed equally efficacious as my own St. Xemela's Left Anklebone) By these signs I knew he would not disappoint the Faith.

I knew a candidate other than myself would be acceptable to the majority of the delegates, and indeed, Senechorius's name was on many lips even before I nominated him. Needless to say, Theoblanc the White had no such political acumen, nominated himself, and lost. Unfortunately, despite the fact that I had widely publicized

my support for Senechorius, I was struck down with foul magic by Bersules, who exercised the ancient right to attain the sacred office of Ecclesiarch. However, the spell could not keep me down for long, and once I explained to Bersules that I had no intention of abandoning my duties in Loskalm, he withdrew his challenge, and I pardoned him.

King Gundreken's return was of course the occasion for great rejoicing, and with a strong Hrestoli leader to unite around, the military forces of Malkionism, aided by the blessings of the Council members and numerous holy relics (including Notslor's) were able to drive off the depraved forces of the Kingdom of War. All praises to Malkion and Hrestol his Prophet!

I left the Council with but one regret, that I never had a chance to feed the titanother.

## The Memorandum of Sir Sangsouche

by James D. Chapin

*Memorandum of Sir Sangsouche, Ecclesiarch of Frowal and Keeper of the Bones of St. Barthelme*

**Warning:** the reading of this text by any other person than the duly appointed Ecclesiarch of Frowal shall be considered an act of heresy most foul, punishable by public impalement.

I address these words to myself, and perhaps those who may succeed me, as thoughts for the future, and hope only that the Invisible God may show me how I may help his cause bset, as he has already granted me the powers to do so.

I now have a female bishop, and the conference has approved the notion of women in priestly positions. I have fought against a woman knight, and she has bested me. I must be wary in the way that I expose my flock to these changes.

*Note: Write a letter to the council folk, perhaps that Dunbar fellow — or perhaps his assistant, my new Bishop, Mimgill — to find the exact wording of the determinations of the Council. Perhaps I may be able to leave women without caste, but allow exceptional members of the sex to become priests and knights.*

I can only hope that the compromises which my now-heretic predecessor Ethilian allowed to come about do not add to the resentment which i may now incur simply by being from the soldier caste. The knights may plot something...

*Note: Double the allowances of the Soldiers and allow them more freedom of action.*

I plan to create new orders of knighthood to which

Soldiers and Farmers my aspire. It has been proven that not only Lords can be exemplary in conduct and action. If only I could have men whose only loyalty was to the Ecclesiarch...

*Note: Issue edict that all children captured in border raids on the heretic Rokari be turned over to the Ecclesiarch for training in the ways of the true Hrestoli and Knighthood in the Order of Hrestol's Purity. Provide encouragement for such raids on the heretics.*

I shall issue an edict for a general celebration, a new annual St. Notslor's Day, beginning with a grand parade of the troops who defeated the infidels of the Kingdom of War, and thankfulness of the Rokari as heretics.

*Note: remember to point out that it was my personal speech which made the Council declare the Rokari heretic, and point out that I was the only one of our delegation to hold fast to the true faith. Also remind all that Theoblanc was the only one not to kneel at the death of St. Notslor.*

Lastly, I must make inquiries about the Vadeli. They seem to possess oysters which are in much demand. Even Ethilian searched for these oysters. Could it be that these oysters help provide important folk with charisma, vitality, and even long life? This at least requires further investigation, as loathsome as dealing with the Vadeli again might be.

Praise Hrestol!

Burn the Rokari heretics!

All glory to the Invisible God!

*Sir Sangsouche*



# The Journal of Sir Sieglinde

by Karen Lo Priesti

*The following writings are believed to be excerpted directly from the daily journal of Sir Sieglinde, a participant of the Seventh Council.*

## Wild Day, Disorder Week

Well I arrived. The trip wasn't bad; I'm just glad I'm finally here. I met some nice people today, people that want to talk with me further about women's issues. I'm too tired tonight to talk with anybody. Tomorrow things will really get going I have to be ready.

I asked Gaiseron to let me represent the Hrestoli in the tourney. He said he would consider it. At least he didn't refuse me.

## Freeze Day, Harmony Week

This afternoon I received a note telling me that someone needed to talk with me in private and to come to the library at midnight. The note said to come alone and to tell no one. What I want to know is who's playing a joke on me. I guess I'll find out at midnight.

I can't believe what just happened to me.

I showed up at the library and a Brithini was waiting for me. God, was I scared. I wasn't sure exactly what to do. He told me that I had been selected to become one of them if I could tell him what the question was. I was confused, a little irritated, and still very scared, but I was able to ask why I'd been selected. He said, "You were chosen because you have strong faith." I told him I had no intention of becoming Brithini. He and I began to argue and my faith was truly tested. In the end I triumphed over him. I was about ready to become the aggressor in this confrontation and put his faith to the test when my little voice inside shouted, "drop it and leave him alone!!" So I just let him walk away. I wonder what would have happened if I had decided to push him? I guess I'll never know. But I do know that my faith

has become stronger because of this encounter. If this is the way the rest of the council is going to go, then God help me, because I'm really going to need it.

## Water Day, Harmony Week

Gaiseron, Jurgen, and the rest of the watch dog council appointed me as the representative for the Hrestoli in the tourney. My first round will be tomorrow.

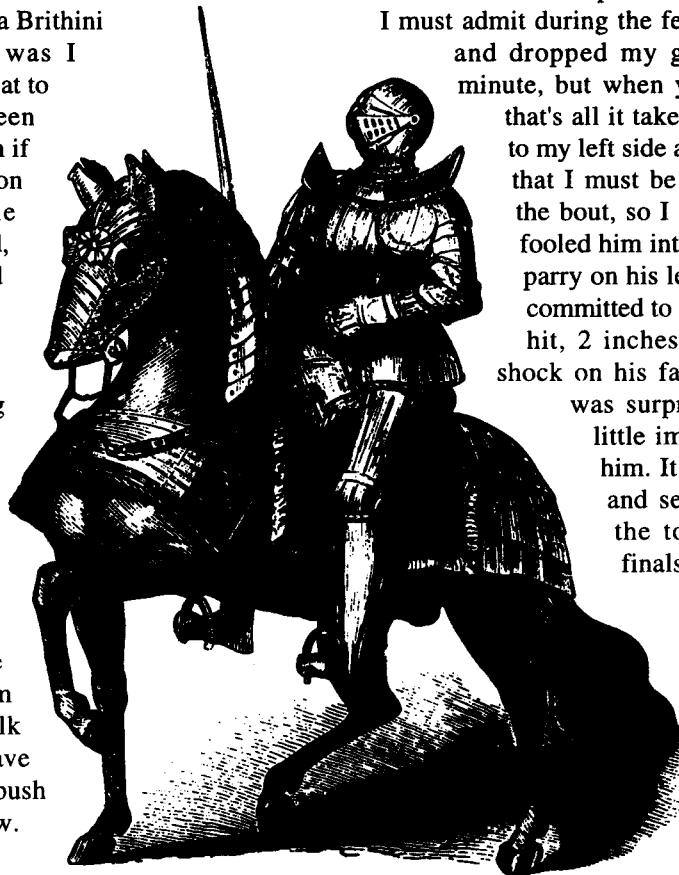
## Clay Day, Harmony Week

My first bout was to be with a tall man with an evil look in his eye, but there was a question to his claim to represent his people. The man who questioned his claim was Count Foyalfine. In a very short duel, Count Foyalfine proved himself the better man and took his rightful position in the tourney. Foyalfine and I are to meet in the first round.

Foyalfine's jousting was a little rusty and I knocked him from his horse using a move I have been working on for a long while. I don't think he was expecting my point to be so low and come up so fast.

I must admit during the fencing I got kind of cocky and dropped my guard. It was only for a minute, but when you are fighting a master that's all it takes. He delivered a good hit to my left side and down I went. I realized that I must be very conservative to win the bout, so I went back to the basics. I fooled him into committing his sword to parry on his left, at my faint, and I fully committed to the right. It was a beautiful hit, 2 inches below the arm pit. The shock on his face was worth seeing. He was surprised, and also at least a little impressed that I had beaten him. It was a good round for me and set the tone for the rest of the tourney. On to the semi-finals!!

This council is getting very strange. The Count Foyalfine has been so impressed by my fighting abilities that he sought me out after the first round was completed, and we ended up talking all





afternoon about everything. We started talking about the council, Notslor, all the issues that are to be brought forward during the council, and our views on each of the topics.

I was amazed to find our views were the same in almost every aspect. His ideas on women's issues were the same, his thoughts on where the church was headed were the same, everything fit into place. We found ourselves compatible in every way. He is the sun to my moon. He is the night to my day.

I have written about being lonely many times before. I just assumed it was going to be a part of my life. I've seen many of my friends with their mates going through good times and bad times, but going through it together. I have never had that luxury. I have never found a mate that I knew was the one for me. I've had my fun but I always knew it would never last. I stopped looking for a life time mate a long time ago and resigned myself to being alone and was okay about it.

All that changed today. I found my soul mate.

#### **Winds Day, Harmony Week**

During the semifinal round of the tourney Foyalfine cheered me on and helped me to focus on winning. He gave me inspiration and confidence. I'm amazed at how much more complete I feel now that we are together.

This round was very easy. I think that the Knight was having an off day. His jousting was off enough that I unseated him easily from his horse by using my standard thrust and turn maneuver. His fencing skills were equally off. He fell for the second intention trick completely. He parried my first fake thrust and couldn't get back across his body fast enough to parry the real thrust. It was an easy hit straight to his chest. His mind must have been elsewhere that day. I have seen him fight better in the earlier rounds.

Count Foyalfine asked me to marry him after I won my round. I said yes! I can't believe I am going to be a married woman soon. We want to be married where we first met, on the field of battle. Seems appropriate.

#### **Wild Day, Harmony Week**

The final round was by far my hardest bout. My opponent was tricky both on and off the field of battle. Before we walked on to the field, he tried to seduce me. Because of my beloved, his seduction attempt failed. I was able to meet him on the field of battle with a clear mind and keen eye. Men, sometimes they'll do just about anything to win.

I have to give credit where credit is due. My opponent was my equal at the joust. We both unseated each other, I have a few choice bruises from the fall. During the

fencing I got incredibly lucky. As he lunged forward he slipped slightly. I was able to land such a solid blow that the judge called it 2 points and I won the tourney!! I can't describe how it feels to be the first woman ever to have the honor of being the Knight Champion of Malkion.

I don't feel the need to prove myself over men as much as I feel the need to demonstrate to women that whatever you truly desire you can obtain. My God has truly poured his love upon me during this council session. I feel as if I am living a fairy tale.

Our wedding was simple. Gaiseron did the honors. I still am having a hard time believing all of this.

During the council we had been kept abreast of current news. One very distressing piece of news is that the Kingdom of War's army was on the march. Unfortunately they are marching right toward us.

We have put out a call to arms and have already gotten an incredible response. Foyalfine has pledged many of his own troops. He also told me that tomorrow he is going to meditate on some deep personal issues that have been nagging at him.

#### **Gods Day, Harmony Week**

Foyalfine gave me a gigantic shock today. He told me that during his meditations he realized he was a facet of Arkat, he was Arkat the Destroyer. My first coherent reaction after I regained my ability to speak was, "Well life's going to stay pretty interesting now isn't it?!" To go from many years of being single, to married, to married to Arkat the Destroyer is just a little overwhelming and I'm still totally in shock. I just have to remember he is still the same man I'm in love with.

The Kingdom of War is almost on our doorstep. After the close of council we are going to march to meet them. Foyalfine and I decided it would be a great morale boost for the troops if we were to lead them into battle.

Another Knight, also Arkat, has offered to join us in this craziness. So, at the front of our army we will have two Arkat heroes, and the Knight Champion of Malkion, not bad even if I do say so myself. We march tomorrow.

#### **Clay Day, Death Week**

It's been a long time since I've been at war. It was bloody, it was nasty, and it was glorious. We defeated the Kingdom of War's army, which really gave our people something to cheer about.

Foyalfine and I have decided to spend the first half of the year in his lands and are now traveling there. We will spend the second half of the year in my home lands. I'm not too sure how all this will work out, but there is one thing I am very sure of - My life will NEVER be dull again.

# A word from the scribes...

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Semprini.

## A few more words from the scribes...

We'd like to recognize Eric Rowe, Shannon Appel, and the rest of the organizers of RQ Con 2, for providing yet another opportunity for the RQ Tribe to join together. We'd also like to honor Greg Stafford, Harald Smith, Mike O'Brien, Mike Dawson, Nick Brooke, and all the rest of the people who spoke up at the seminars. It is they who nurture the spirit of the RQ Tribe by sharing the new thoughts and ideas which you, the reader, are hopefully about to enjoy. We'd also like to thank Hans van Halteren for his willingness to assist us. We greatly appreciate his help.

As always, please know that we did our best to be true to both the words and the intent of the words as we understood them from the tapes. We again apologize in advance for anything we may have misunderstood. Our guiding thought continues to be to present as much information as we can from the tapes, in a manner as clear and consistent as we are able. Some words and syntax were changed for clarity.

*-Peter Michaels, James Polk, Martin Crim & David Camoirano*

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## Stafford's Address & HeroQuesting Seminar

**KEY:**

**GS:** Greg Stafford (host)

**AM:** Audience Member

**GS:** Good morning, and welcome to the Greg Stafford Address.

950-A 56th Street  
Oakland, CA 94608-3129

Thank you for coming! (laughter)

Well, is there something in particular you would like to hear me rave about, hear me embarrass myself and say things that I'll undoubtedly retract later?

**AM:** Heroquesting.

**GS:** Heroquesting. Now there's a unique subject. (laughter) I could tell you the secrets of the Lunar religion, as I currently understand them. Is that more interesting than Heroquesting?

**AM:** I want to hear about the Lunars!

**GS:** The Lunars; then I'll also have to touch on Heroquesting. So that's what I'll start off on. I want to say that what

I'm going to tell you is not even written down yet. And that means it may be... 40% correct. All right?

*The Fortunate Succession* is available in the Dealers Room.<sup>1</sup> You can take a look at it to get an idea of the progress of the Lunar religion in Glorantha, as we currently understand it. One of the important things to understand is that so far nothing that has been written or published about the way the Lunars work and think has been as clear as I would like to have made it. I also want to confess up front that much of my current inspiration and understanding of this has come from currently available Terrestrial sources. Specifically, Hindu mythology, which is extremely sophisticated and complex. It is all encompassing. In fact, it's tenets are exactly the same as those of the Lunar Empire. At the current time the Lunar religious beliefs are based on the fact that we are finite mortal beings. They recognize that there is an infinite and transcendent aspect to the world, which people are not normally in contact with. Some of the Greater Gods are in touch with the transcendent

aspects of the world, but many of the gods are not. When we look at the old RQ stuff, we can consider that any of the deities in the old list that had "doubled" runes are connected in some manner with the transcendent. We call them the originators of the runes, and that is because they are in touch with the transcendent.

The Lunars believe that there are three major ways of viewing the world mythologically. And that they are all completely correct. And that they are all completely harmonious, even though they may appear to clash directly with each other. The reason for this is in our limitations and in our mortality. We are incapable of understanding everything, because we are not everything. We are incapable of logistisizing it out, and of reaching the ultimate end. Or even of intuiting or feeling the Ultimate, and maintaining our affinity within the transcendent.

A couple of things to start; the Lunar philosophy says that all myths, all religions, are true. And if we discover a myth that doesn't fit within our framework, we will redo the

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framework. Another basic tenet is that mythology is a reflection of reality, in a manner which is not clear in any of the other mythologies you've read. Yelm mythology has no interest in reflection

at what we can call "the destructible world." Anything that can be measured, felt with your five senses, is part of this realm. The creation of it, and the understanding of it, and the study of it,

be studied. This is the divine world; "the unchangeable world." And I don't mean "unchangeable" in an absolute sense. The first category is the destructible and changeable mortal world. Anything that dies is in the first world. Anything that dies is in the second world too, but in a different sense.<sup>2</sup> We know that the gods can be changed. Or, that they can appear to be changed. In *The Fortunate Succession*, there's a history of Dara Happan religion that shows some of the different ways that they viewed and looked at Yelm at different ages, because of the historical or temporal influences that were in their lives. They said, "Well! He's not that god after all! He's also this!" or, "He's also not that!" Again, they can look at a deity and their understanding of him changes and his nature changes. So, the second world is the unchangeable or cosmic world. The chief god of the second realm is Yelm, King of the Gods. The gods are in the second realm, and that's their domain, and the tool of this world is magic.

***"The Lunars have three main ways of looking at the world: the destructible world, the unchangeable world, and the unknowable and the changeless"***

what-so-ever. If Yelmic followers cannot see it, and it is not illuminated truthfully and properly for them, it isn't true. "There's something wrong with it." But, in fact, the Lunars know that's not true. The saying is that whenever someone reaches for the transcendent, whenever someone reaches for the infinite, "Whenever someone reaches for the Goddess, she reached down and meets you half way." As far as you can reach up to touch her and understand her, she will reach down and meet you half way. The thing is, we're different individuals, and our half way may be different. And if we all look at the same place, we're all participating in the same ceremony and talking to the same deity, he [points to an audience member] may look at her and see a beautiful woman who has terrific seductive abilities and is a very likable entity, while he [points to another audience member] may be over on the other end of the spectrum and look at the same being and be terrified of her devouring aspects because he knows she's going to eat him alive. This is why certain deities look different to different people. It's why one group of people can look at the sun, and they see a burning orb of infinitely fueled fire, while another people sees the divine Cosmic Lord of the Universe that leads us to liberation. Is one of them wrong? No. Is one more right than the other? Only if you're an Orlanthe. So, the Lunars have this understanding of a dichotomy, of a potential conflict, within an entity. And I want to say again, it's because the entities are often greater than we are. Some of them are finite as we, and some are less finite. But, in large part, the purpose of the Lunar religion is to bring an individual closer to the infinite reality.

is what's important to understand infinity and is one of the ways of viewing the world. This is the study of the material realm, of the destructible realm. It's tool is logic; anything that you can think of logically, and follow through logically, is a part of this realm of understanding. The main god of this is Malkion. I don't exactly know what his Lunar name is, but he is the First Measurer, the one who first started using logic and understanding in order to make sense of the world. His manifestations (that is to say, his magic) would be applied in ways that use the material world as its tool and as its objective. In other words, sorcery. What we call Western sorcery, in my current thinking and understanding, would be a system that draws from and affects the material world more than anything else. I think the present RQ3 sorcery system goes some way [towards] doing that. Tapping is clearly a way of interacting with the material world. So, their spells would be the tool of the first realm. Some people didn't like the idea that a Malkioni sorcerer could theoretically stack his spells and affect someone all the way across the continent, for instance. I believe, if he could see his target and he had enough magic, this is exactly what he could do, because Malkion is the Lord of Measure.

The second method of understanding and viewing the world mythologically is the study of the infinite and cosmic laws of the universe. Not the destructible world that we live in, of our physical selves, but the immortal part of the world. The cosmic laws, like the fact that the sun rises every day. The fact that the moon goes through changes, that the stars move in the sky, and that people live and die, are all cosmic laws that are always true. There are other cosmic laws beyond these, that we just have no interest in as mortal beings but that can

The third view of the world is "the unknowable and the changeless." This means absolutely unchangeable. This is going on the assumption that we as finite beings are incapable of understanding the transcendent, but that the transcendent exists. Anything that we can understand is outside the category that I'm now defining; "the unknowable and changeless world." It is the cosmic laws that underlie even what the gods do and know. Orlanthe would call this thing "chaos," of course. They have a limited understanding, and they by definition keep it out of their pantheon. It's necessary for an Orlanthe to not embrace chaos; if he does, he's no longer an Orlanthe. Now, the "changeless world" can be touched by mortals, and the tool of the third view is Illumination. Illumination is knowing, or having experienced, or in some manner having integrated, the infinite. If someone is Illuminated, they have in some manner touched the transcendent and been changed and transformed by it. Of course, the deity in charge of this realm is Nysalor, and his method is meditation or inspiration or, actually, Illumination, which can come to someone by any of those means.



Any deity can be looked at with any of these three methods and discover what he or she has in it. You can almost imagine a deity as being made up of three parts, like with a little pie chart. And they all have some part of the cosmic transcendent realm. Yelm, of course, is lowest in the material realm and highest in the divine realm.

Within these different categories are other subcategories of understanding and maintaining the world. In *The Glorious ReAscent of Yelm* is the story of the creation of mankind.<sup>3</sup> Three gods (Yelm, Lodril, and Dayzatar) and three goddesses (Oria, Dendara, and the Other Goddess) got together, and each contributed a portion to the first man and first woman. These six things are what make up a Dara Happan entity.<sup>4</sup> He has an immortal soul. He has a physical body. He has a reproductive force. He has an animal-like life force. He has an intellect. And, he has a shadow. All of these are required to be a Dara Happan being, and any of them can be modified in some manner. And the ways in which something can be modified changes over the years. For instance, the Emperor of Dara Happa (who is Yelm's representative on Earth) has six parts to his being. One of those six parts is exactly the same one that Yelm has. In other words, the Emperor shares one-sixth of his essence with the Sun God, the Emperor God Yelm. That's his Antirius-self, his "inner light." And that's what makes him Emperor. That's what the Ten Tests do; they prove that this person is in fact Antirius embodied. Sometimes you read about Avatars or Incarnations of entities. The Lunars understand these things to be when different parts of an individual's six pieces are divine, or some such thing. And there are different ways of doing it, and I've not quantified them all yet. I just know that that's what it is. And if you've got all six parts that are divine, of course, then you're a god and you've not been constructed the way humans have.

Now, the Seven Mothers lived in a time when the Solar Empire was taken over by foreigners. The Empire was being run by a dynasty of Carmanian Shahs, who had been misruling the Empire of Dara Happa for many many

years. (I don't think it's a century, but there have been three Dara Happan Emperors who are actually Carmanian citizens, and not Dara Happans at all.) And they're really nasty people, this dynasty of Carmanians. And the Seven Mothers, and perhaps some others, got together in secret and decided to perform the most outrageous and destructive act that they could in order to bring down the evil Emperor. They had decided they would animate the Other, they would bring to life the Other of the Emperor. In Dara Happan mythology, there is an important aspect of life that is called the Other. The mythology, in *The Fortunate Succession*, is almost continually of the Dara Happan Emperor having to contend with his Other. His Other is those things that he can't see; the Sun has never seen it's Shadow. He is incapable of seeing his Shadow, because once he's there, of course, there is no Shadow. The Shadow is Yelm's Other. All the Underworld Deities are, in some way, his Other. And Yelm's story, even in *The Glorious ReAscent of Yelm*, is of him trying to deal with and understand his Other. That is to say, that early in the stories he has to deal with Water, and the Water Entities. This is something that is outside of himself. And then he has to deal with the Earth Entities. And then he has to deal with the Darkness Entities. And this whole continual process of Yelm understanding the Cosmos, and the parts of himself, and the parts of the world that are not himself, is of course the Life Quest of the deities and of ourselves.

So the Seven Mothers, as I say, got together and decided to perform this ritual. They took a foreign ceremony, called on their worst enemies, and went upon a quest to recover the six portions of the deity whom they believed would be able to save them from the Carmanians. Over their questing, these Seven Mothers went around and gathered from across the Cosmos the pieces of their Goddess which had been missing, which had been taken apart, dissembled, scattered over the universe at some earlier time. These six parts, of course, are the same six parts as make up a Dara Happan. Somebody had to

reconstruct her body. They had to regain her soul, and her spirit, and her senses, and her reproductive self, and magically bring these things back together so that she was whole again.

Once she was whole and intact, the Red Goddess was not content, and went on and found her Seventh Part. The main difference between the Lunar religion and the Dara Happan religion is that the Dara Happans believe that there are six parts to the human entity, while the Lunars know there are seven. And the Seventh Part is the Nysalor-part. The Red Goddess was the first person in this area of the world who went and contacted the Infinite; she talked to Nysalor. In other words, she contacted the Cosmic Consciousness and brought it back into the world as part of herself. This is her contribution to mankind's enlightenment and progression to rejoin the Infinite. And, as I say, that's Nysalor. That's Illumination, which the Orlanthi call Chaos.

So, then she set up the Lunar Empire. Another way to understand Nysalor in this is in how he was attempted to be made the first time, as Ostentalka, the Perfect God. As the *Broken Council* scenario will do, they reconstructed the deity.<sup>5</sup> And the Lunars say they failed because they did not actually incorporate the Seventh Part properly. Or, that's the current Lunar version of what happened.

If you read *The Glorious ReAscent of Yelm*, you see that there is a whole story about how Yelm was perfect, he disintegrated, then came back to life, and refixed the world. And in *The Glorious ReAscent of Yelm*, the author declares that the year Khordavu became emperor was the year the Yelm was reassembled and rose again; 111, 221. He started the Empire and for a while they believed that this is when the Perfect Sun had risen. But, much to their chagrin, the universe wasn't perfect, so they figured they had miscalculated. So when they learned of the God Project, they said, "Ah! This is the way to do it properly!" They said, "We're going to make Nysalor, and this will complete Yelm, so then he'll be the Perfect God and everything will run perfectly after that." And they contributed to the





process, and afterwards the world wasn't perfect so they were distressed once more about their theory.

But here's what they believed Nysalor was in 111,375, at the Reconstruction of Ostentalka. Or, what the later people believe occurred. And this is one of the ways they look at Nysalor. When Yelm was in the Underworld, and he was dead and faceless, just like everybody who's dead, then he was no longer the One. When he was created, he was the initial contact of the divine world with the transcendent, which they call the One. (That's incorrect, by the way. The transcendent is not One, it is not Zero. It is beyond understanding, it is beyond categorization. It's Not-the-One. But, they need some kind of picture to cope with it at all, so they call it the One.) And the One was born, he was perfect, he disintegrated, he was polluted by outside forces, went to the Underworld, and became part of the Many. He lost his status as the One. In other words, he achieved the impossible; he understood something that was totally outside of his being. He had to be dead to do it, but... "But he planned that!" (laughter) He planned that, because he was perfect, and he wanted to do it to exercise his power over Orlanth, and make that recalcitrant rebel come bow before him in the Land of the Dead. "It was all in the plans!" (laughter) He sat down there in the Underworld and sent out his servants, tributaries, and assistants, to get the world ready for his return. And, of course, this is Orlanth, and Shargash, and Lokarnos, and all the planets coming back, and Kargzant, and.... They were getting the world ready for Yelm's return. And he came back to the

We were still all trapped down here at the bottom of the devolutionary scale. What Nysalor did is to bring this awareness that Yelm had of how to be One and the Many at the same time, and teach it to the Many. So that, whereas previously the One had been Illuminated, by understanding the Many, now was presented the opportunity for the Many to understand the One. And this was through the teachings and understandings of Nysalor.

The old Yelmites believe that this is actually what purified Yelm. Having gotten rid of this 'nasty' part of himself and sent it to Earth, once again the Sun was Pure and could do it's job better. That's why the Dara Happans turned on Nysalor after the Gbaji Wars, and savagely suppressed the cult every time it showed up. Up until the Lunars, of course, who showed them that Illumination was a good thing, that Nysalor was not a purging and purification of Yelm, but a gift given to the world.

There was no Heroquesting in the Lunar Empire before the Seven Mothers. Heroquesting is a type of magical interaction with the magical plane, that depends on a psychology that is alien to the Dara Happan psyche; they don't believe in individualism. You know, Orlanth is the god of individuals. "Do anything you want!" "No one can tell you what to do!" The Dara Happans, having a large population base and the need for social order, do not believe in this what so ever! And, after the Nysalor Incident, after the Gbaji Wars, after the Arkat Evil, after that evil man Arkat Gbaji came from the west and destroyed everything, then ...

of the normal religious patterns. That's what Harmast did. "That's what Arkat Gbaji did! It's that kind of individuality that destroyed the perfect plans of Ostentalka!" I think at this stage that the Dara Happans in the early days did not have what we as RuneQuest players would recognize as rune magic. They just didn't have it; that's something that an individual does. It's how the god manifests itself through the individual. In Dara Happa, the gods do not manifest themselves through the individuals, but through society. So that, if they had an enemy, if they were going to war, it's not like all the priests would go to the temple and pick up a casting of Sunspears. That's not the way they do it. Instead, the priests all go to the temple, call all their people in, and they say, "We're going to attack the Kingdom of Sartar now, and we want them to starve to death. We're going to pray for the destruction of their crops, calves, and children." And they would do it that way.

Now, this is not to say that they do not have magic! I do a lot of studying and reading on this stuff, and I got some insight recently about magic and religion. It was really an interesting thing to me, that I had not quite considered. You know, religion and magic overlap, especially today when they've been stuffed into the same hole by the establishment. But, in the old days, there was an established religion. And people used it for important things, like making sure the sun came up, making sure they had babies, making sure that they didn't starve to death. And, there's also magic, in most societies, that is different from religion. The book I read put it the best way. It said, "People used magic for the things that we use insurance agents for today." (laughter) They would go to church and pray for the sun to come up, and to pray to have children. But, when the baby was sick, they were likely to go to a magician, a sorcerer. (I'm using these terms in non-RuneQuest ways here.) They would go to somebody who could handle the short term immediate concern. Of course, this was not Yelmitic social magic. This is where they go to the Mother Goddess, the Healing Goddess, and get some

***"The One had been Illuminated because he performed the impossible. The One had become the Many."***

world in 111,375 and performed a wonderful, tremendous, and previously unknown gift, and gave it to mankind. And the gift he gave is called Nysalor. Now, what it was is that, the One had been Illuminated because he performed the impossible. In other words, he was all things! He was in this world and in the other world. The One had become the Many. But, the Many was hopeless!

Damn! I lost my train of thought!

**AM:** You were talking about individualism and ...

**GS:** Yeah! Thank you! And the fact that they don't have Heroquests like we understand them to be.

By Heroquests, I mean Experimental Heroquesting in which you go outside



assistance. So that during the High Holy Days, if you're a hunter, they would go to the Church of the Great Hunt and they would participate, and go to the Hero Plane, and do their thing. But, when they came down to shooting that arrow at that deer, they probably put a spell on it. A spell that the Hunting God, or the Hunting God's Little Brother, or something, gave to them. So there is magic, but it's a different kind of thing than what we currently have been exposed to in RuneQuest.

Well, that's a whole mouthful, and I'm going to stop and answer some questions.

**AM:** In what you're saying about how Yelm went to Hell, are you identifying Orlanth as Rebellus Terminus? Is that current Lunar theology, that Orlanth is Rebellus Terminus in the Dara Happan myths?

**GS:** Some people believe Orlanth is Rebellus Terminus. Some believe he is Umatum, that is to say Umath. Umath is a much more important deity in Dara Happan religion than he is in the Orlanthi. According to some people, the cultures of Genertela have been distinct since the beginning of time. Other people say that that's not so. Some people say that they are actually much more closely related in some prehistoric and forgotten period, that I was reading about last night.<sup>6</sup> There are some people in Dara Happa who say that the entire Orlanthi religion is nothing but a perverse form of Shargash worship, and they are prepared to prove it to you! (laughter) The thing is, experience has proven that sometimes when we look at Rebellus Terminus, he looks just like Orlanth to you [points to audience member], and like Umatum to him [points to another audience member], and like somebody else entirely to him [points to another audience member]. And again, I want to say, "Who is wrong? Who is right?" [shrugs shoulders, looks puzzled]

But, I do want to say, "Is it possible to be wrong in this thing, if everything is subjective?" Yes it is! It is absolutely and totally possible. If we look at an entity and he [points to audience member] sees the Earth Mother, and he

[points to another audience member] sees the Grandmother-who-bestowed-all-life-to-lesser-creatures, and he [points to another audience member] sees the Mother of Animals, and he [points to another audience member] sees Ernalda, and he [points to another audience member] sees Dendara, and he [points to another audience member] sees the Lord of Utter Chaos (laughter), one of these is at least more likely to be more wrong. Now, we can't condemn him and say he is absolutely and totally wrong. Although most secular people in Glorantha would do that in an instant! Because they don't want the Goddess polluted in this incorrect way. And there are methods where they can sit down and try to prove who is more right. Now, that's a real real bad trap, mythologically, to be in. And it happens all the time, even in Glorantha. So, there are these continual efforts to "correct" or "improve" the worship of a god, or to "adapt to our current needs."

The multiple number of points of view is one of the reasons why people go in groups when they perform Experimental Heroquesting. Say the Lightbringers are out someplace, and they are wandering across the Land of the Dead, and they can't look behind them to find the tracks where they have been, and something is approaching them. There are seven people there, seven points of view. Flesh Man says, "Aaaa! It's going to destroy us," and runs away! And Humakt looks at it and says, "Well, I can't kill that one!" And Orlanth says, "It's not in my Rule, so it must be an enemy." And Issaries says, "This thing has no trail, and is nothing I have met before." And Eurmalk says, "I could heat up it's feet, if it had any!" And Lhankor Mhy says, "I know nothing about this thing." And Chalana Arroy says, "Wait a minute. I think that if I can help this thing, it'll get us out of here and show us our footprints!" Then they have to have an opportunity, no matter how brief it may be (depending on the speed of the approaching creature), to discuss this and decide who is "right" and to make a group decision.

Remember that some people are incapable of understanding and seeing some things. Although this is less of a problem when the society has a tribal

organization like the Orlanthi, it is a larger problem once you get into a stratified and codified society. A Yelmite, for instance, is forbidden to look upon Darkness, or is incapable of it. He might like to have somebody who is "less pure" than himself to protect his back. And that's why, in Experimental Heroquesting, people go in groups.

In Individual Heroquesting, going in groups is not so important. If you're an Orlanthi and you want to tame the Storm Bull and get that power, you do it alone! Anybody with you is going to mess you up! They'll try to help you, or they'll cheat. Or maybe they'll see you cheat, or something. A group is not necessary for this, because it's not a power you can share. You've got to go and tie up the Bull by yourself to get that power.

So, back your question, there's a lot of stuff about Rebellus Terminus, Umatum, and some of the ramifications of that, in *The Fortunate Succession*.

**AM:** You were talking about the Red Goddess finding the Seventh Part of herself and becoming Illuminated. Is this what is supposed to have happened to the Seven Mothers and other humans who have been apotheosized as Lunar gods? They found their Seventh Part and become Illuminated, therefore going from human to god?

**GS:** Yes. If you look at the Lunar pantheon, almost all the deities worshipped were once human beings. Issaries is replaced by Etyries. Humakt is replaced by Yanafal Tarnils. These were human beings, who have awakened their Seventh Part. That's exactly correct.

**AM:** You said that to understand the Lunar religion, you had to go backwards to understand what came before. So, last night you read us some of the very early mythology that came before. And, in the beginning of *The Glorious ReAscent of Yelm* there are some very difficult metaphysical origins. I was wondering if you have done any research in the other direction? A Lunar escatology. What is to come, where the Gloranthan universe is going to go rather than where it came from?



**GS:** Who was asking about the White Moon? “What’s this shit?” (laughter) No, I have not. The Lunars don’t believe that it’s possible. They believe... Well, lets talk about prophesies for a second.

I’ve written again and again in the RQ rules that there is no divination, no prophesies and so on in Glorantha. And you know, that’s all just game stuff. You know, we modern people have a real skewed point of view of what it prophesy is and what it’s supposed to be, because we don’t have a mythological understanding of the way things are. You need this to understand what prophesy is about. One of the points here, in mythology and ancient religion, is that things repeat themselves. This is the nature of the cosmos. The Sun comes up every day. The spring starts again every year. And the more that you understand the cosmos, both it’s gross and it’s subtle aspects, the more you will understand what is likely to occur. That is to say, if every morning that you have got up and you had a splitting headache, your eyes made everything look blue. And every time this happened, when a blue bird flew by, your best friend made a pass at the Queen. And you got up this morning, and you had a splitting headache, and everything looked blue, and a blue bird flew past you, and your friend said, “Hey, I’m going to the palace,” you can be pretty sure that he’s going to go make a pass at the Queen. But if you didn’t have the understanding and the experience of these things that had happened in the past, you would not be able to make that prophetic statement. The point is, that as you become more and more aware of the subtle things, you can become more and more aware of what is likely to occur. And a prophecy, even on Earth, has never really been intended to say that something that is certain to appear, but most likely to appear. That’s why the stars repeat themselves, and they believe that you can read the future in the stars. Because, you’re an educated person and you know that when Mercury moves into this sign, these kinds of things are likely to occur. And if you’ve got a number of influences that say, “Instability reigns,” and someone says, “Tell me, how’s the war

going to go,” you can say, “Well, I think it’s going to be a tough one! I’m not sure! I could be touch-and-go the whole way!” And you’re likely to be correct. And if you’re right, of course, everybody thinks you’re wonderful.

**AM:** Would anybody have been able to prophesy the coming of the Red Moon Goddess?

**GS:** Now, here’s the thing. I’m telling you that nobody can prophesy accurately. But, just like on Earth, people try to do it all the time. Was there a prophesy of the coming of the Red Goddess? Maybe so. They knew that the moon was gone, and that in the past the moon had disappeared and reappeared. And so, some people could have prophesied that it was so again.

In fact, one of the things in aggressive Gloranthan Heroquesting is to assemble all the clues of something you want to occur, and then make it happen. The morokanths have a secret quest that they are trying to do, and it’s to get thumbs back. It’s a pretty tough thing, because all of history and mythology is conspired against them to prove that they don’t have thumbs. But they could gather the story of when the morokanth lost their thumbs, and then get a story of how the morokanth overcame an impossible chore, and then have stories that weaken all of their opponents in this contest. And if they then bring all of these things together in the magical center, at a sacred time, in a sacred place, with the sacred tools, with all their sacred energy concentrated in order to do this, they could attempt to perform a Heroquest to redo history and make it so that they do have thumbs. Something of that nature is likely to always fail.

**AM:** If they were successful, then to the rest of the world they would have always had thumbs?

**GS:** That I’m not entirely sure about, I want to say. I’ve played legitimately with both sides, and I can’t decide at this time. At the moment, probably.

**AM:** Wouldn’t it be easier for them to do a quest saying that morokanth had

thumbs, lost them, and got them back, instead of saying that they always had thumbs?

**GS:** Probably. But then not all morokanth would have thumbs. Only the morokanth that went on the Heroquest would have thumbs, and he could teach that to other morokanth who could then go off, repeat what he did, and get thumbs. But the previous way would, in essence, rewrite history and they’d all have thumbs.

**AM:** Back to the Emperors, is there a clear line between Dara Happan Emperors and the Red Emperor?

**GS:** Absolutely! Definitive and clear, and *The Fortunate Succession* is the document which lays it out. The Red Emperor is the seventy-seventh Emperor of Dara Happa. He was appointed by the seventy-sixth Emperor, passed the Ten Tests, was given gifts which allowed him to overcome his humility, and was installed as the seventy-seventh Emperor of Dara Happa. This is an important thing to understand, because the entire Dara Happan Empire is not Lunar. They are ruled by Lunars, the Lunar faith ties all of their separateness together, but they are not all Lunar people. And they are not all Illuminates. And they are not all anything. “Except a single Empire, united perfectly under the rule of the Living Son of the Moon.”

**AM:** You just spoke about the Transcendent, and Illumination. Does that relate in any way to the mystical religion of Eastern Glorantha?

**GS:** Probably. At the moment I am putting together notes for my infinitely unfinished Lunar novel, which is at, at the moment, written by a number of people in the Fifth Wane. Post Sheng Seleris, when the Empire has been ravaged for a century. They are trying to reconstruct the Dara Happan Empire from the pieces that are left. One woman, who had had a particularly adventurous career, was, towards the end of her life, eating dinner once in the same room as the Lunar Emperor. She explained some of her understanding to



the other people dining at her table, and the Emperor said, "That's right! Write it down!" So she did. And that's what this book is. It's her and her friends explaining how they each rediscovered the Red Goddess. One of the women gives an explanation, and I'll just tell you that she's spouting Kralorelan philosophy. I'm not going to say that so overtly in the book. Kralorelan thought was brought to Dara Happa by Sheng Seleris. Sheng Seleris didn't just rule the Lunar Empire; he ruled all of Pent and a good part of Kralorela as well. And, when he wanted to surprise and upset the Dara Happans, he'd bring some weirdo magicians and creatures and people in from Kralorela. And, when he wanted to mess with the Kralorelans, he'd bring some pikemen in from Dara Happa. He didn't care if they wanted to do it or not, of course. That's not Sheng's problem. And in this way, a certain amount of Kralorelan knowledge entered, always through the filter of culture. When this woman talks about Kralorelan philosophy, she will use almost no Kralorelan terms. It will be interpreted in Dara Happan terms. But I think that that's where her ideas are from, at the moment.

**AM:** You said something earlier about how someone's belief that the Goddess was a chaos deity would "pollute the Goddess." Would that pollute the Goddess, or just the worship of the Goddess? Or are they the same thing?

**GS:** The two are inseparable. Reality is only a reflection. The Goddess does not exist without the worshipers to worship her and to receive back. Neither does Orlanth.

**AM:** So, does that mean that a god is a reflection of what the worshipers think the god is? Without any Heroquesting? So, in the Ernalda example, if someone believes that Ernalda is the God of Chaos, then he represents a threat to us, because if he convinces enough people that Ernalda is the God of Chaos, then she will become the God of Chaos?

**GS:** The Goddess is not what people believe her to be! The Goddess is what people perceive her to be. It's much

more likely that all of these deities have aspects that are totally unknown to their worshipers, but the deities are not capable of manifesting an aspect if their

***"It's likely that all of these deities have aspects that are totally unknown to their worshipers, but they are not capable of manifesting an aspect if their worshipers aren't aware of it."***

worshipers aren't aware of that aspect. Ernalda can't go to her worshipers and say, "You know, I can help you hunt." Her worshipers can try to worship Ernalda for the hunt, and see if she'll give them something. And if it works, they may get some benefit. But that's unlikely if hunting is not already perceived by her worshipers as being within her aspect.

On the other hand, all deities ultimately include everything. Now, this is an ultimate thing. If there is an absolutely unknowable transcendence that surpasses all things, it includes everything within it. This is the Container-of-the-Universe.

"Everything."

"The thing that came before everything."

"The thing that came before a thing."

"The before."

"No, the before the before!"

It contains everything! And so, it is possible, I would suppose (although I don't yet know of circumstances where it occurred), where they could pollute the cult of Ernalda. Not necessarily the Goddess herself at first, but eventually it could bring her down as well. Because, there is an aspect of the Earth which is chaotic and corrupt, and \*that\* could replace her. If people begin to understand the connection between \*this\* chaotic aspect and Ernalda, it could change her worship and expose a new part of her. And, by they way, that part could be excised later. People could come back and say, "Wait a minute! We made a mistake. That's not really Ernalda. That's... Chaos Ernalda! A different deity!" She could then separate and isolate that aspect of herself.

**AM:** Is the Compromise a law that governs the Second World now?

**GS:** Yes. But the Compromise has no

part in Dara Happan mythology, so you're asking a question that is irrelevant. But I understand what you're saying anyway. The Dara Happans

don't have the Cosmic Compromise, they have Orlanth's submission to Yelm. And that is the formation of the Second World, which led to the reformation of the First World. The First World being the "measured world," the concrete world of Malkion. The Second World being the world of Yelm, the realm of the infinite deities.

To look at this in another way too, if the - Orlanthi believed in this classification system (which they don't), they would say that the Great Compromise is the deities recreating the world in the Second Realm. And I Fought, We Won is the human, mortal, finite beings recreating it in the destructible First Realm. It's the same event in two different realms. Just like the Reconstruction of Ostentalka is the reconstruction and rediscovery of this other form of thinking. And it's the same story in different worlds.

**AM:** You mentioned that if an Orlanthi accepted the transcendent, the Third World, he would no longer be an Orlanthi. Is that merely a rejection of Orlanthi values, or is there a deeper dimension to that?

**GS:** The Orlanthi way of life requires that you loathe, fear, and despise chaos. You're not an Orlanthi if you don't. If you are willing to compromise with this in any way what so ever, you're a BAD Orlanthi!

**AM:** But you're still an Orlanthi, you still worship Orlanth.

**GS:** Yeah. That's right.

**AM:** It's just that you're going to have a bad day every day.

**GS:** And that's what I mean. It's not that you're unable to worship the god, it's just that you'll have a bad day



because you know that what you've been taught is false.

**AM:** But what if you're Illuminated and don't really believe what you've been taught?

**GS:** That's not what Illumination is about. You're still gonna have a bad day unless you change. One of the great errors that most RuneQuest gamers make is the same error most modern people make when studying ancient history or religion. What I'm talking about here is freedom of choice. Freedom of choice is so deeply ingrained in our culture that we take it for granted. And it's a grievous oversight on our part, because it's never been this way until recently. And recently it's changed so much that we're obliged to make choices, where in the past we never had the opportunity. Orlanthi don't have a choice about being Orlanthi or not. They don't go to school and study comparative religions!

***"Orlanthi don't have a choice about being Orlanthi or not. They don't go to school and study comparative religions!"***

They are taught something, and this is what they understand the world to be. And if you don't like being an Orlanthi, this means giving up everything you own and know to change your ways. And when I say "Orlanthi," I mean the culture, which includes all the deities and ways of life. The type of bread they eat is an Orlanthi bread. They way they talk, the way they drink, the friends they have, the greetings they make, they way they piss and wipe their ass, is all done by the Orlanthi way! And if you're suddenly told "This is wrong,".... You've got to try to imagine what that means! It's hard for people now to imagine what "outlawry" meant, say to the Vikings. You read about someone being "outlawed from Iceland forever." And that doesn't seem like such a hideous, terrible thing to us, you know? "I can't go to California. But, I've got friends in Illinois!" But these people didn't have friends elsewhere! In fact, they didn't know how to fit into a different culture. Ancient people believe that their way is the only correct way. And if... if they see you picking up

a cup with your left hand to drink, "It's a bad omen!" And the fact that you've been trained all your life to drink with your left hand,... well, you've got a real problem. If you're a hard-core Orlanthi and you're instantly Illuminated by some nasty zen-dude who comes along, this doesn't liberate you. Well, it liberates you, but it doesn't tell you what to do. You've still got the problem of figuring out what to do!

**AM:** Oddi the Keen is a perfect example. He stops being a child, in the sense that he no longer has the simple joy of being an Orlanthi. Now he has the complex joy of being an Orlanthi, and everything else, and that makes him a wonderful character! And yet not an Orlanthi that a simple Orlanthi would want to have dinner with.

**GS:** Correct. Being Illuminated doesn't give you the answers. All it does is give you the problem and the opportunity to find the answers. If you don't, you're

pretty darn unhappy.

**AM:** But it makes you smug because you're Illuminated!

**GS:** No, it does not necessarily make you smug. Oddi has some understanding of what this is about. He's been hanging around Lunars for a while. But just try to imagine waking up one morning to discover that everything you know is wrong, and not knowing what else to do, never having been exposed to another thing!

**AM:** But you know that everybody else knows less than you do!

**GS:** Well... not right away! Everybody else knows something else.

**AM:** And, I [unintelligible]. It's the ultimate [unintelligible] of Illumination.

**GS:** But here's the thing. You've been told that this is evil, and therefore you are wrong. Your smugness is not

necessarily—

**AM:** All your loved ones may tell you you're wrong, but still, in your heart, your Quaker "inner light," you know you're right.

**GS:** I don't think so.

**AM:** Otherwise you don't keep moving! The guys who [unintelligible] stopped moving. And Oddi keeps moving, therefore he's got that smugness.

**AM:** It's not that you know you're right, it's just that you know that everybody else isn't right.

**GS:** That's right. He said it right; could you please repeat what you just said?

**AM:** I said, "It's not that you know you're right, it's just that you know that everybody else isn't right."

**GS:** That's right! Yeah! And that's a big difference. And that's not something to feel smug about. Well, not automatically to feel smug about.

**AM:** Sort of like this joke about Unitarians (that I'll tell since I grew up Unitarian): "How do you really get a Unitarian?" "Burn a question mark on his lawn." (laughter) An Illuminate, he knows that everyone else is wrong, but he doesn't know that he is right.

**GS:** He doesn't know what is most right for him, yes. In fact, he feels guilty for looking for something that's right!

**AM:** Being Illuminated destroys your world view, but doesn't it also replace your world view?

**GS:** No.

**AM:** That's why Illumination is so dangerous! Because it doesn't replace your world view with anything new!

**AM:** It means you've got to find another world view! And there may not be one out there!

**AM:** It's not that you have to find one,



it's that you want one. The question about whether you ought to be looking for one or not, that's still open. But you feel the emptiness, the wanting.

GS: Right. Yeah.

AM: How does all this relate to postmodernism in our existence, in terms that now we're all sitting around trying to figure out exactly what we're going to do next, because what we've been doing isn't working? And with Illumination, with that same sense of all these models failing, and not having any answers? And how does that reflect on Glorantha, perhaps, as a postmodern world?

GS: We'll totally reject the vocabulary, and then use it because it's one we'll understand. What I mean by that is that "postmodern" is not a Gloranthan term.

AM: Post God Learner! (laughter)

GS: That's good! A point for you! (laughter) The God Learners, you know, were Illuminated. They struggled with this dilemma on a large scale, and they failed in Gloranthan terms.

Today, as I said before, we are generally unaware that people in the old days had no choices. And they didn't! We've gone through a transition period. And today, in the postmodern world, we are at the opposite end of the spectrum. Today we are obliged to make long and short term decisions in our everyday life which in the past were not possible. In fact, it was impossible for us to make decisions in the past that are a necessity today. In the old days, you had no choice. Today, you must make choices about what you believe. It's obliged, otherwise you go mad. And if you make a choice to make no choices, that is still a choice. If you grow up on a Lakota Indian reservation, and you decide that you want to live the traditional Lakota life and to reject all of modern society, you have made a very significant choice that no Lakota was ever required or had the opportunity to make until this century. And this is the postmodern dilemma. We generally feel that the old answers aren't good and don't work, but we don't know what the new answers

are, but we're compelled to make a choice. And that, in large part, is the dilemma of people in the population centers of Dara Happa. They have amassed enough people to reach a critical threshold of this dilemma.

So this is a Gloranthan dilemma in certain parts of the world, where people have that postmodern outlook. Within the Lunar Empire now, they feel obliged to make choices. That is to say, the Illuminants feel obliged to make choices. This is not everybody. Most people are just happy to go out and stomp those rice fields every three seasons.

AM: Basically, if you think about it in terms of an Orlanthen becoming Illuminated, he may be having a bad day every day, but he may go through his life trying to understand it, questioning why he's having a bad day and why he feels this way. How do you see somebody existing that way?

GS: With utter and total misery. You've got to stop and think. What do people normally do under the circumstances of their lives?

"We've got a problem on the farm."

"What kind of a problem is it?"

"Well, it looks like spirits."

"Go talk to the priest. Go talk to your god. Go talk to your shaman."

Whatever. So you've got to decide. There are normal procedures that are done.

So if this guy goes to his spiritual mentor and he says, "You know, I've got this problem and I want to do the good thing, the right thing. But, when those broos passed by the other day, I didn't think they were evil. I didn't vomit, like everybody's supposed to, and I'm concerned." And what does his holy man say?

AM: "Burn him!" (laughter)

GS: That's right. He says, "Because your father saved my life, I'll give you five minutes to get out of town." Otherwise...

AM: And yet, on the day to day basis of living his life, he's still going to go to the shaman to get rid of spirits on his

farm. He's still going to call out the guard when the broos attack.

GS: Probably so.

AM: So in the practical aspects of day to day life are going to pretty much stay the same.

GS: Probably.

AM: He's going to still be unhappy, perhaps, but...

GS: Yes. I think that's correct.

AM: If a priest becomes Illuminated, he can still call on his rune magic. Because the god doesn't necessarily know he's Illuminated.

AM: But the thrill is gone.

AM: Yeah, essentially. But he can still do it. And if he's a good priest, he's feeling very guilty about even calling upon this god who hates what he's become. But he can still do it. Which further gives him more questions to ask. Because of the way he's been brought up to believe, he's still going to have a sense of obligation to his friends and family, he's going to want to continue calling on that magic and leading the services and doing all the priestly stuff.

AM: He's deceiving his own god, too.

AM: But the black sheep of the family is still loved! He's still part of the family, there is still that relationship.

AM: Until they know he's a heretic, at which time they burn him!

GS: That's right. Until some point. But the point here is, the issue of Illumination is the type of issue that will divide a family. It doesn't have to, but it probably will.

AM: "I don't believe we should keep slaves!"

AM: Yeah, that right there divided a lot of families!

GM: And that's exactly what I was



thinking of.

**AM:** There was a comment that came up several times about, "I've become Illuminated, and I realize that everything I had to do before was wrong."

**GS:** No. It was just not necessarily right!

**AM:** That's what I'm trying to get to. Because I kept hearing, "Everything I knew was wrong," blah, blah, blah. Why does it all have to be wrong? Why can't it just be, "The way they're looking at it doesn't work for me"?"

**GS:** Because that is an extremely modern point of view, and one which is probably not present. You know, the pollution of our idea pool is permanent. Once we have an idea, we can never get rid of it and it will always affect our thoughts. And when you want to think about some of these ancient and prehistoric things, it's absolutely necessary to reject a large segment of modern thought. But you're assuming that he has this modern thought. Now, if he's the very first guy who feels this and thinks it, that's quite possible. I mean, new ideas are made. But that's basically my answer; he's probably never been exposed to that kind of thought. Now, if you go to a big city, it's much more likely. Social situations inevitably break down in large populations.

**AM:** You mentioned that the God Learners were Illuminated, and that they tried to struggle with Illumination on a large scale and failed. Does that imply that Illumination is more a personal thing, and struggling with it is more a personal struggle, rather than a social struggle?

**GS:** Yes. And what I mean when I say they failed, and the reason they failed, is that they applied cosmic principles to the mundane world. They took the laws of one realm and applied it to the other. "If ultimately all women are the Great Goddess, then why not fuck your mother?" That's an application of the cosmic rules to the wrong realm. The

cosmic rule is, "All women are the Goddess." That's not a rule that you use in your family life, which is within the mundane and material realm. And that's the God Learner's error. There's an actual name for it: monism.<sup>7</sup>

**AM:** In terms of the seventh parts, how does this affect what you were just talking about, the "destructible world?" How does that affect those societies and their structures? You've got the Dara Happans and the Pelorians right next door to each other. Does that Seventh Part that they perceive, how does that impact on their day to day social life?

**GS:** Very little. It would depend upon how they were instructed and learned to deal with Cosmic Consciousness. The consciousness I'm talking about is what those Krishna guys are trying to do, you know? That's a wonderful way to do it, and that's their life, to only concentrate on that essence and entity in order to strengthen it and make it real. Those guys come down the street, looking funny and making noise. We all, trying to read books and stuff, think, "Aaaaa! Krishna, Krishna! Damn Krishna!" But Krishna is Cosmic Consciousness. He's exactly this aspect of the image. I haven't mentioned this before, but the most prevalent way to portray the unknowable is to present it as the Cosmic Being. Because ultimately we are humans, and the most intimate understanding that we can obtain is human. And although Nysalor does not have a physical self (except when he incarnates, of course), we can talk about the Cosmic Body. That's one of the images used for Nysalor. The Ultimate Self, the Self-That-Is. The most ultimate understanding that we can obtain is not of the transcendent, because we can't understand the transcendent, but is of the human form. The Cosmic Body is as far out as we can project our human understanding. And so long as you understand that the Cosmic Body is not a complete picture, it's a legitimate way to think about the transcendent. And it doesn't have to affect everyday life for everyone, but it may.

And that's the sort of thing that the different schools of Illumination will

teach you. One school says, "No, once you've touched this consciousness the object is to get out of this world. So we only want to concentrate on the Nysalor-being within us, and shed these other six parts so that we can reboot our godhead." Another school says, "Illumination is good because it allows us to tolerate even those evil, vile Orlanthi people. And therefore, we can go about our daily lives without that hassle." And it's the sort of thing that's very opposite. It can be applied to obtaining peace in your every day life, all the way to the other end of attempting to transcend your everyday life. So, it's not a rule.

**AM:** You mentioned earlier that different cultures have different views towards Heroquesting. Can you give a broad perspective of different Gloranthan cultures, and how they see State Heroquesting, Personal Heroquesting, whatever?

**GS:** I'll try. [pause for thought] I don't know about Kralorela and Heroquesting at all. Heroquesting in the West and Seshnelan lands is not generally done. This is because Heroquesting generally requires interaction and communication with the Second World, the world of Yelm, the cosmic divine world, and the Malkioni don't mess with that. It's not what they do. They use it, they don't go there and interact with it. And so, Heroquesting in the West is a minimal kind of thing. They don't do it very much. That's why Arkat was so unusual. He did do it, and he introduced it to them, and they had a great burst of it, and everything Arkat did turned to dirt! And they didn't like that, so they don't do that anymore. They say that Heroquesting is a system that failed, same as the Dara Happans did. Nysalor brought Heroquesting to them. And they said, "Hey, look what it brought us; the destruction of our people, our land, and everything that we hold dear! We're not going to do this." And it was the Orlanthi who carried it through and did it the most. By "Orlanthi," I mean the people who inhabit the Rockwood and Nidian mountain chains, and the hills to either side. Their form of Heroquesting was established by



Harmast Barefoot, at the end of the First Age, who made the first Lightbringers Heroquest. And I call this “Experimental Heroquesting” now, to differentiate it from some other types that I’ve talked about in the past. And this is the creative use of, and willingness to change, your inner and outer mythology. The Orlanthe believe in change as a way of life, that it is the only permanent thing. So, they are willing to extend themselves and change the world. The Lunars did not Heroquest until the Seven Mothers, but they’ve begun it in earnest since then. And, because they have an entirely new set of Heroquest tools, that is to say Dara Happan and Pelandan mythology and religion, they have sort of an edge over the Orlanthe, who have never seen these things before. When the Orlanthe have done Heroquesting in the past, they will go to the place where Yelm the Emperor is about to be assassinated. And it’s necessary for Orlanthe success to kill the Emperor, as we know. And it always worked, for centuries, until the Lunars came along. The Lunars said, “You know, we can do like the Orlanthe do!” And so, when they learn that the Orlanthe are going to perform a Heroquest in which they go and kill the Sun, what the Lunars are likely to do is to play with the myth. For instance, they may take one of their Solar champions, and Heroquest to get him things that Yelm did not have in the original story. For example, there is a point when the Orlanthe say that it is time for the Bat Goddess to blind the Emperor, and normally she flies up behind him (because he can’t see his Shadow) and puts her wings over his eyes. That’s when Orlanthe kills the Emperor. At this point, the Lunars might have done something clever, such as get Yelm a helmet that can see behind him or a helmet with a third eye or something, which would totally mess with the Orlanthe plans. And this kind of thing keeps happening to the Orlanthe, which is one of the reasons they are so bad at Heroquesting at this time.

AM: And Yelmalo being....?

GS: And Yelmalo being... You know, I want everybody who is distressed by

Yelmalo to stop and think about looking at god, and how he reaches back, and that is what’s happening with Yelmalo as far as the change of Elmal and the discovery of Elmalio, and so on.<sup>8</sup>

AM: I was just wondering about the temporality involved here. Like, let’s say the Orlanthe are doing a Heroquest, and they come across someone in the

***“The Lunars did not Heroquest until the Seven Mothers, but they’ve begun it in earnest since then.”***

role of Yelm. Does that someone have to be from their same time period, or can it be someone from the First Age, Second Age, the Fifth Age?

GS: Yes it could. Normally the Yelmite would come from the current age you’re in, unless he’s been around a long time. But one of the rules of Heroquesting is that you will generally attract back those with whom you have previously interacted. So, once the Orlanthe Heroquester has created an enemy Yelmite, whenever he does his Heroquesting he’s likely to meet that same individual as an enemy. He will be attracted back into his field of mythology to interact with him. And once you start Heroquesting, you are doomed, because you can never stop! You’ve made enemies, and if your enemies aren’t dead (and sometimes even then), they will drag you back into their story. Like with that Yelm guy, if you achieve your objectives and say, “We’ve got a good crop! We all have twins! I’m done Heroquesting!” And you retire, and about eight or ten years later you are literally dragged back onto the Hero Plane against your will, to play the part of Orlanthe surrendering to Yelm in the Underworld, because your old enemy who you killed in effigy as Yelm many years ago hasn’t quit Heroquesting. And you are linked to him.

AM: Can you discuss the implications of Illumination on the culture scale, as opposed to the personal scale?

GS: Um... Do you have a specific question on it?

AM: Well, you said that the God Learners as a culture were Illuminated.

GS: No. They were not Illuminated as a culture. I misspoke if that’s what I said. Individual God Learners were Illuminated, but not the whole culture, and the culture permitted and encouraged Heroquesting.

AM: Have you thought about how

aggressive certain cults or religions would be in converting others, or isolating themselves from others?

GS: Proselytization is not generally a characteristic of pagan religions. There’s no need to proselytize because the deities are natural entities, and it’s an organic process. It’s not a problem. If you need a new way to plow, you can go and find a new deity and bring her back to teach you new farming methods. There’s a way of integrating it, so that there’s no need for that farming goddess to go out and tell you to proselytize. So, as a rule, proselytization doesn’t exist in Glorantha.

AM: But the Malkioni have crusades.

GS: “The Malkioni are perverted!” (laughter) Yes, proselytization is a characteristic of monotheistic religions.

AM: Such as the Lunars!

GS: No, the Lunars are not monotheistic! They are henotheistic.

AM: But they are proselytizing!

GS: Ah! Yes. The Lunars do proselytize, because they feel it leads to a better world. Certainly, within the Dara Happan Empire. And the cult of the Seven Mothers is the cult of proselytization. But, you know what? I think that there are probably the Gloranthan equivalent of people who stand in airports and hand out leaflets for some of the Lunar things. And they’ve proselytized in the past. When Sheng Seleris had exterminated the men





from a quarter of the Lunar Empire, they sent in missionaries. It's something that they're used to. They sent in teachers and instructors to bring this land back to normalcy. So, it is part of what they do. It's not the main thrust of their religion, it's not a necessary part of their religion, but it is well accepted because people are moved by it. And the Seven Mothers cult provides a vehicle for people to proselytize through.

**AM:** In terms of faith, and reason, and logic... When you believe in God, or at least when you used to believe in God, you had faith and you were sure, but you had no proof. In Glorantha, you always have proof.

**GS:** You can have proof.

**AM:** You can find proof. You can find workable miracles. And you can say, "There's proof! See! It exists!" Does

***"As a rule, proselytization doesn't exist in Glorantha."***

that lead to a quicker jump where you don't need faith? "That's there! Now I can start to think about it. And now I can start..." And this is where the God Learners started. This is where reason starts a bit quicker in Glorantha, maybe, than it starts here. Because we don't have to give up on faith and find logical ways of thinking. So, what I'm asking is, are these people in a faith-based world, or is that only the Orlanthe that are out there doing it?

**GS:** No, I think most people operate on faith. I think most people on Glorantha, just like on Earth, don't think very much at all. They accept what they're given. They struggle through whatever they have to deal with personally. They don't really care about transcendence. In fact, they don't care about politics. They don't care about... Serbia, you know? They are just worried about their children, and their job, and everyday existence. So, I think most people operate on faith. And they go to the Sacred Time ceremonies, and they briefly touch Ernalda and Orlanthe, and that's enough for them.

**AM:** I was thinking that perhaps faith

is actually replaced by fealty.

**GS:** <sigh> Yeah. Well, you know, the whole idea of "faith" makes me stop. I don't know what that means. I'm not sure that I know what people mean when they say they "have faith in God." It's not an experience I've had.

**AM:** Well, I'm just saying that it's very hard in this society to still do that. And we can't just sit here, and watch The Plague come, and say, "Well, I'm going to be fine!" And people, when they do it now, they get taken to the courts and say, "No, you must have the surgery!"

**GS:** That's right. And, see, faith is something that you have when you don't have a choice. Or when you choose it. It's much easier to have faith when there are no other alternatives.

**AM:** You were saying a minute ago that

the Lunars went out and proselytized. I was always under the impression that they didn't go out and "bang a drum", but sort of set up a tent and said, "Come! See what we have! If you're interested, we will show you!" And if someone were having a problem they might come around and help them, saying, "See how our way works? Maybe you'd like to come and learn?" I didn't think it was anything aggressive, like the Moslems going out and converting people by the sword.

**GS:** You're right. There are some people, who are fanatics, who convert people by the sword. But most of the time what they do is, they come to a place and set up a Seven Mothers temple. And they say, "Anybody who is too poor, and has no connections, is welcome! You can come here to get free food if you are starving, and free healing if you are hurting. All we ask is that you listen to our stories when you eat." And that's all they do. That's Teelo Norri.

**AM:** You talked about the morokanth using Heroquesting to change history. Are the Lunars perhaps engaged in mass

Heroquesting to change history to their viewpoint, as a way of conquering the world?

**GS:** Guardedly, and with some reservations (of which I am presently unaware of the specifics), yes.

**AM:** You talked about them going and obtaining tools to defeat the Orlanthe as they went on their Heroquests. That seems like a way to disband the Orlanthe way completely at some point.

**GS:** And, as I say with reservations, yes they are. Dara Happan history and mythology and religion all begin with the... In *The Glorious ReAscent of Yelm*, which is their book of dogma, begins with Yelm coming down from Heaven and beginning the Empire. What the Lunars have done, through Heroquesting, is to discover a whole period of existence before Yelm came down and ruled the world.

**AM:** And, as everyone knows, "Older is better," when it comes to philosophies! (laughter)

**GS:** That's right! "Saurintology. Older is better." (laughter) And, this kind of discovery inevitably brings about a change in world view. So, yeah, they're revisionists.

**AM:** What relationship is there, if any, between the seven parts of a person or god, and the fact that there are seven Lightbringers? Were they trying to find the Seven Parts of Yelm to bring him back together?

**GS:** Well, there's a theory that's been proposed in some places (though it's still a vast and great Lunar secret) that, in fact, the Seven Mothers performed the Lightbringers Heroquest. There's been some evidence in some Gloranthan documents to support this, although the Seven Mothers deny it. All right?

But, what they did is very similar to what the Seven Lightbringers did. We do know that the Seven Mothers performed a ceremony which was a foreign rite, and the one that they thought would be the most harmful to



the Dara Happan Empire. Sounds like the murder of Yelm to me! (laughter) Or, something like that. In fact, I believe that they were attempting to get the death of Yelm, and then resurrect the Goddess. I have a map in my office that shows the path of the seven places that they performed their rituals, and if you draw a line \*this way\*, it draws a perfect spiral Air Rune. Of course, if you draw it the other way, it looks like nothing, so... (laughter)

**AM:** When you say that Gloranthan religions don't generally proselytize, wouldn't they still proselytize to the extent that if the State takes over another area, they would expect the people they had conquered to admit that their gods are better than the gods they had before? They could go on worshipping them, but, "Our gods are obviously better. We won!"

**AM:** What's a "State"?

**AM:** A culture.

**GS:** I don't think that they would "expect" that. "Expect" is the word that's throwing me off here. At times, it would be a natural process that this would occur.

**AM:** But, if a group of Yelm worshipers conquered a group of Orlanathi, they'd go and they'd build a Yelm temple there. And they'd expect the Orlanathi to pay taxes, and those might end up being sacrifices to Yelm, and so forth...

**GS:** You're confusing the political with the religious here, which are not always hand in hand. If the Yelmites conquered, then yes they'll build a temple for their people. But they don't necessarily expect the Orlanathi to come to the Yelm temple. They do expect the Orlanathi to admit that Yelm is the King of the Gods, and is greater than their Chieftain. Or, the Emperor of the Gods, greater than their King. But, it's not necessarily that they would expect the people to convert. They would expect any right-thinking, intelligent, worthy, good citizens to join the Yelmic way, rather than the Orlanathi, but it's not that they would insist upon it.

**AM:** But when you consider the political dimension, anybody that wants to rise in that new society is of course going to have to embrace the new gods!

**GS:** Correct. But that's not proselytization! It's not!

**AM:** But it is a choice!

**GS:** Yes, it is a choice.

**AM:** So whenever these cultures are coming together, now they are making choices!

**GS:** That's right! There is a choice available.

**AM:** So they're growing up, and they're changing from the ancient perspective that you were talking about to-

**GS:** They could change. They don't have to.

**AM:** They're not necessarily growing up, they're just growing differently.

**AM:** Yeah, well when I say "up," I don't necessarily mean "better!" (laughter)

**GS:** But understand that the imposition and change of the Yelmite consciousness for the Orlanathi consciousness is still both within the Second Realm I was talking about.

**AM:** I visualize the Rokari going out and slaying the pagans so that they don't follow the old way. Probably about every three years .

**GS:** Yeah, I think they would.

**AM:** Maybe not so much the other Malkioni, but I think the Rokari would. I just wondered, though, when the Lunars conquer the Orlanathi areas, maybe they might do a certain amount of sword-point proselytization, on the grounds that the Orlanathi way is [unintelligible].

**GS:** But you cannot force someone to change their beliefs at sword point. And you cannot be initiated into the Orlan

thi cult if you are not an Orlanathi. You know, it's not something that you can dupe the God about! It just doesn't happen in Glorantha, I'm sorry. I know that in some games people join the Orlanthe cult when they're really Zorak Zoran in attitude and so on. But that wouldn't happen in Glorantha. If you had a Zorak Zoran attitude and you were an Orlanthe, when you became initiated they send you to the Storm Bull cult. You see what I'm saying? Does that answer your question?

**AM:** I was thinking particularly about Lunars conquering the Orlanthe.

**GS:** So, when the Lunars over run an Orlanthe area, they don't really insist that people join the Yelm cult, because you can't join the Yelm cult. It's a hereditary thing. You have to be of a certain blood line, OR you have to have a certain religious position. If you're a Priest or a High Priest of a cult that's associated with Yelm, you can join Yelm. If they actually ran over an Orlanthe area, they would set up a Yelm temple for themselves and they would set up a temple of Entekos, the Dara Happan goddess of weather and the atmosphere. They would set up a temple to her, and those people who attended that temple would get more favors than the Orlanthe people who did not. And it could be something as simple as, "The tax for \*these\* people is two sheep per year, and \*these\* is one a year, and it's up to you to decide where you worship.

**AM:** The Lunars -

**GS:** The Lunars would do this. The Yelmites probably wouldn't do this. They'd just suppress them. They'd say, "You're evil Orlanthe, just pay us extra money." They wouldn't necessarily set up the Entekos temple. And, again, I want to cover my tail and say it also depends upon the period of history you're talking about.

**AM:** Is there any schism in the Yelm cult right now regarding the Seven Mothers, and how much they like them or resent them?

**GS:** The Yelm cult in Dara Happa has



been relegated to a position of minimum authority and power. And, yes, some people in the Yelm cult do not accept the Lunar rule. Or "sharing," as the Lunars prefer to say. The Lunars do not say the Red Goddess rules the Universe. "Yelm rules the Universe, so what do they have to complain about? Just because he has to share everything below a certain level with the Red Goddess..." You know, the way to imagine the Yelmites is that they are these ancient hereditary groups who are very much interested in maintaining whatever power and prestige they have. And, over the centuries, their power and prestige has gone from everything to a very narrow band of obligations. "If they don't perform their ceremonies, the sun will fall down," and that's almost all that's left to them. But, I don't think they have enough people and energy to have a serious schism that's going to overthrow the Red Moon at this stage. They tried that, and they failed.

**AM:** What exactly is the Glowline, in terms of the Lunar religion?

**GS:** Specifically, it is a dividing line between the realms protected by the Goddess of the Reaching Moon and the realms not protected.

**AM:** Would it seem to be easier to reach up to the Goddess within there?

**GS:** Oh, yeah!

**AM:** So, it's cutting down the distance that you're reaching, right?

**GS:** Well, "the Temple of the Reaching Moon," that's the whole point. "She reaches down as we reach up." Those eight arms she has, they are different methods of reaching down. Only four of them are interested in destroying nomadic barbarians (laughter), the other four are a little more benevolent. So, at the moment, I'm not entirely sure what the effect of the Glowline is inside and outside the Lunar Empire. I'm thinking that it may not be such that, in RuneQuest terms, "their rune spells are at full strength all the time within the Glowline." That might be a misinterpretation from my own Orlanthi

point of view. And I may change it, and I regret any agonies that this would cause. (laughter) But, the Glowline is the definition of what's inside and what's outside of the Lunar Empire.

**AM:** If the Lunars link Chaos to the Third Realm of the Cosmos, what's their interpretation of the Chaos Gods and the Chaos Wars?

**GS:** I believe the Lunars actually link Chaos to the Second Realm. These are gods. And it is the Lunar knowledge and experience of the Third Realm which allows them to encompass this apparently evil and destructive force within their zeitgeist.

**AM:** There are a number of parallels between the Lunar Empire and the God Learners, as far as the Illumination and these things. What do the philosophers within the Lunar Empire who know something about the God Learners? What can they, if not learn from the God Learners (which would be bad), what can the problems that the God Learners encountered tell them? What do they know?

**GS:** First of all, there was almost no direct contact between Dara Happa and the God Learners. The God Learners were not a phenomenon that was active in Dara Happa when the God Learners existed, during the Second Age. The reason is that there was the entire Empire of the Wyrms Friends between the two. So, what the Lunars know of God Learners now is what they have in documentation, relics, ancient people, spirits, and memories drifting around. All right?

**AM:** But, there are people who do know something about them!

**GS:** There are documents that exist about the God Learners that are in the Lunar Empire now. The current Rune System, in RuneQuest, is a God Learner artifact. And when the God Learners Way was destroyed, "and everything that they concocted was purged from the World," they still kept the Rune System. All right? Because it was a nice, practical thing. And, "It really was

an Orlanthi thing before it was a God Learner thing! Honest!" (laughter) What they have are stories of people who abused Heroquesting. And so they have these moral lessons, and say, "If we misapply these rules from Realm to Realm, \*this\* is what will happen to us."

**AM:** So Experimental Heroquesting was a God Learner activity?

**GS:** Yes, Experimental Heroquesting was a God Learner activity.

**AM:** And continues to be today? So that when the Orlanthi -

**GS:** God Learners do not exist today.

**AM:** No. So, an Orlanthi who is Heroquesting in an experimental fashion and perhaps gains powers that is "a little bit outside the box" is a heretic?

**GS:** No, because Experimental Heroquesting is also an Orlanthi function. Harmast Barefoot is the one whom they believe to be the original Heroquester. After all, Harmast brought Arkat from the Land of the Dead back to the Land of the Living. "Without Harmast's superior knowledge, then Arkat's bumbling experiments (which should have been left undone, of course) wouldn't have even come to the conclusion they did."

**AM:** When I think of the Lunar Army, I think of a bunch of guys standing in front of a city, and a bunch of Heroquesters going out and tactically screwing around, and compromising things, and changing things. Is that a real Lunar activity, in terms of conquest? "We're going to hang out here, and you can think you're winning a few victories, but the reality is that you're losing the war. You're losing in the Second Realm."

**GS:** That's one of the things they do. But, Heroquesting is not a casual thing! It's not like the Army pulls up in front of a fort or city, and says, "Ohhh man! Look at that! They've got iron gates! Well, we'll just go Heroquesting and get



in there that way instead,” and then go and do it right then. They’re going to have to say, “Well, it can’t be done. We’re going to have to Heroquest” and then pack up their army and go home. Because it takes a year of preparation to do these things, to be active and conscious on the Heroplane. So it’s not a snap decision. But, they may beforehand say, “Look. We’ve got this war coming up, and here’s what we’re going to do. We’re going to take the Army, march it down, and lay siege to the city. And we want them to keep the pressure on them, and keep them interested, because Jareel and her Three-legged Companions are going to go through the Heroplane and destroy the protective deity of the city. So, you just keep them busy!” And that takes a long time to prepare for. Or, they may just say, “Well, we’re going to fake them out. We’re going to pretend we’re sending these Heroquesters through, so that they have to direct their attention and energy there. But, I really want to send a triple dose of sappers to this city, and they won’t even know we’re digging!” You know? “Bring the large gnomes!” (laughter) And, it’s a tactic.

**AM:** Isn’t that what happened when she killed the Pharaoh?

**GS:** Well, nobody exactly knows. <sigh> But, yes. The Pharaoh had a routine ritual that he was used to going through, and the Lunars loaded it against him. There’s one stage where the Pharaoh had to negotiate with the Men in Red to cross the river. He knows, from all the stories he’s done, that he has to give them each a gold coin from a foreign land. And this time, the Men in Red are all Lunar agents with their own agenda. And they say, “This has to be a gold coin from the Realm of Khordavu!” And suddenly the myth doesn’t work for the Pharaoh, and the Men in Red say, “You don’t know the end of this story, do you? Well, we do!” <mimes drawing a sword> (laughter) And they grabbed the Pharaoh, and cut him up into his Portions, just like the Red Goddess had been, and hid them scattered throughout the universes.

**AM:** This strict division of the Logical

World and the Divine World and the Transcendental, is that acknowledged or even known by cultures other than the Lunar?

**GS:** Maybe it’s acknowledged and known by the Kralorelans. I’m not sure. But it is not known, or understood, or recognized, by anyone else.

**AM:** Would other cultures even think that such a division is a natural thing, or do they have a more holistic view that the Three Worlds are all the same?

**GS:** The Lunars believe all three worlds are the same. It’s three perspectives of,

***“The Lunars believe all three worlds are the same. It’s three perspectives of, three methods of understanding the One.”***

three methods of understanding the One. And, basically, the Orlanthe must be placed in opposition to the Lunars. So they don’t believe in the different perspectives.

**AM:** Does that mean that Lunars think you have to use just one of the ways to understand the whole?

**GS:** No. They very much know that you can have three stories about the same thing, which seem to not be congruent at all, but all contain truth.

**AM:** I have a question relating back to the Malkioni not doing Heroquesting, apart from all these [**unintelligible**] sects in Ralios. There is the apparent big exception of Loskalm and the Reform Hrestoli, who were told to do these gigantic Heroquests to gain enormous powers, etcetera. And of course, there’s Snodal.

So, what’s their view of the Second Realm? The Rokari sort of want to wall themselves off and be blind to it and say, “Those are evil spirits. We don’t want to deal with them!”

What’s the Loskalmi view of the Second Realm?

**GS:** They recognize the existence of the Second Realm, and -

**AM:** And they actually go into it and do things there as good Malkioni?

**GS:** I believe their attitude is that they can go there and plunder it. They do not go there and work intimately with Ernalda to change the way the world is shaped. Instead, they go off and steal stuff from her. It’s more of an external thing.

**AM:** “It’s a pagan demon to be conquered, and their stuff taken.”

**GS:** That’s right.

**AM:** This “dividing up into parts” seems to be a cross-cultural thing. There’s a comment, I think in the Dorastor book, about Gbaji being cut up

“the way trolls do it.”

**GS:** That’s right, like with Gbaji. It’s the same thing. That is what they did.

**AM:** In a troll fashion, or in a Yelm fashion, or...?

**GS:** I couldn’t tell you, exactly. But I bet it was in a troll fashion. Which means it’s probably not the same six pieces. That’s probably why the Red Goddess was the first person to rediscover him. Other people were probably looking in the wrong places and for the wrong pieces. Makes sense to me. Thanks for the insight.

**AM:** Exactly how does one prepare for a Heroquest?

**GS:** You take all the variants of one story that you know and you sit down with your powerful friends, and in a sacred manner, in a sacred place, you reenact your own version of the tale. You perform a ritual drama, much like a worship service. And in this, you gain the knowledge and experience of what’s going to happen. So that, when you go to the ford, and Raccoon Man is there, and he’s going to ask you some riddles, you’ve been practicing your riddles! And if you have records, and 150 times people have crossed the stream and answered the riddles of Mr. Raccoon, you memorize all 150 stories, because



there's probably only 30 (or so) riddles that he asks. One of the things that you want to do is to memorize as many variants of the story that you can. Orlanth didn't always cross the ocean on the back of a turtle. There's a couple of stories where he flew, or he swam, or he was bourn by a wave, or a bird carried him. These are minor variants of the myth. Are they false? No! (Well, if they're lies then they might be false. Such a thing is entirely possible.) But, when you get to the seashore, and you're an accomplished Heroquester, if you only have the one story that Orlanth crossed the ocean on the back of a turtle, and Trickster doesn't have a chance to rescue the baby turtles on your story, .... Imagine it, incorrectly, as a percentage chance. The Turtle-Story has a 55% chance of success. And if Eurmal has rescued the turtle babies, then it's an 85% chance of success. So if you're in a hurry and you haven't learned the story about how the seagull carried Orlanth across the ocean, and it's the seagull that shows up, then this becomes the experimental part of the Heroquest. You say, "Seagull... seagull.... what seagull stories go I know? Aaaaa! I don't know any! OK, what bird stories do I know? I know \*this\* bird story!" So, you try to perform \*that\* story, and do it \*this\* way, because at the end of it you know Orlanth is carried away by a bird. And, ultimately, that may be what you have to do.

But, you asked how you do a Heroquest. First, you set it up and you practice a dry run. Then you've got the knowledge. Then you go to the same sacred place and you do the same sacred thing, and through the magical ceremony you transcend this <knocks on table> Material Realm, and your consciousness and awareness and abilities are active in the Divine Realm. And the Mundane Realm is left behind. And then, you go through the same activities. You go to do \*this\*, you go to do \*that\*, and you go to where you cross the stream and see Mr. Raccoon, and you talk to him. And you have to succeed. If you fail, you suffer the consequences.

It's time to end. Who has the one question that will illuminate everybody in the room?

**AM:** Is there a connection between the Third Realm and Solace?

**GS:** Probably. Probably. That's the best I can say today.

**AM:** That sounds like an Illuminated answer. (laughter)

**GS:** "It depends on how you look at it!" I missed my roll! (laughter)

Hey, thank you all for coming! Keep asking me this stuff over the weekend; I'll be happy to chat with you! Thanks!

<sup>1</sup> Both *The Fortunate Succession* and *The Glorious ReAscent of Yelm* can be mail ordered from Wizard's Attic, PO Box 718, Hayward, CA 94543-0718. Phone: 1-800-213-1493

<sup>2</sup> Transcriber's Note: It seems to me that in the First World death is a complete separation from life (which means there is no afterlife), while in the Second World death is a transformation, with life and death being linked together as part of a larger cycle (which means there is a rebirth of some sort at some time).

<sup>3</sup> The First People, p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> After the convention, Greg provided a chart of the Disintegration of Murharzarm (see box).

Greg also says: "Please remember that these are rough approximations, and that the latter terms are terrestrial and not Gloranthan. They do not say 'His Life Force is gone.' They say 'His Bijiif is gone.'"

<sup>5</sup> A live action role-play (LARP) by Eric Rowe, Shannon Appel, Stephen Martin, Paul Reilly, and Greg Stafford, which was played later that weekend at RQ-Con 2.

<sup>6</sup> Earlier that weekend at the RQ-

Con 2 Stafford Reads seminar.

<sup>7</sup> A Terran doctrine taught by the Hindu Vedanta philosopher Sankara, which says that all things—God, the world, and the individual soul—are composed of only one substance, in spite of appearances.

<sup>8</sup> After the conference, Greg passed on this clarification:

What I meant was that this is a good example of how gods change and grow. Elmal was a rather limited entity, and when his worshippers were exposed to more information which could be used to define their god, they explored and experimented along the lines which were suggested, and they discovered new aspects of their deity, who revealed himself to be Yelmalio.

Mythically, Elmal then can be seen as the son of Yelmalio. To the Yelmalio worshippers, Elmal inherited a small part of Yelmalio's powers. In a similar manner, Yelmalio can be seen as the heir and son of Yelm.

<sup>9</sup> Got a favorite dinosaur?

*Sure you do.*

*Everyone does.*

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## The Disintegration of Murharzarm

Creator	Makes	Yelm's Part	Murharzarm's	Equivalent Of
Dendara	Shapes	Enverinus	Corpse	Physical Body
Lodril	Warmth	Bijiif	Core	Life Force
Oria	Beast	Berneel Aras	Snake	Reproductive Force
Dayzatar	Birds	Vrimak	Bird	Intellect
Other	Shadow	Kazkurtum	Double	Mystery
Yelm	Fire	Antirius	Sight	Self Awareness



# Gloranthan Lore Auction

## KEY:

**GS:** Greg Stafford (host)

**SP:** Sandy Petersen (host)

**DC:** David Cheng (host)

**#:** Audience Member

## NOTE:

Questions about similar subjects have been grouped together, and are not in the order originally asked at the seminar.

**DC:** Please remember that there are several questions that will not be answered by Greg and Sandy. "What is the secret of the God Learners?" "What is the parentage of the Red Goddess?" "What are the other questions?" Also, remember that there is a difference between questions that WON'T be answered, and questions that CAN'T be answered.<sup>1</sup>

## General Questions

**1:** I've noticed that the Gloranthan year has about 80% of the days that a Terran year has. This doesn't seem to show up when we speak of a character's age, or something. Is that an oversight, or do humans mature more quickly on Glorantha, or are the individual days longer?

**SP:** Everyone says that after the Sunstop, time was different. Humans in Glorantha do live less days than human on Earth. And it's always attributed to Gbaji. Time was different after the Sunstop.

**GS:** But to answer the question: the number of days is irrelevant, it's the number of years that's relevant. You know, I could make something up and say the Gloranthan hour is actually 20 percent longer than the Terran hour. It's irrelevant in the long run. But, if you're gonna do things by less than annual, yeah, Gloranthans mature faster. But, at age 16 they qualify physically as

adults, as much as Terran 18 or so. But it's the annual count that is most significant, not the hourly or daily. I used to make up all kinds of excuses but now I say it doesn't matter.

**2:** The Orlanthe have been presented as being blond barbarians. For contrast, are lowland Pelorians supposed to be darker, or dark haired, or something like that?

**SP:** I've never thought of the Orlanthe as being particularly blond.

**GS:** Me either. I'd say the Fronelans are much more likely to be blond than the Orlanthe. But, yes, the Dara Happans are in general more brown than... well, the Fronelans anyway. I think of most people in Glorantha as being different shades of brown. Some are very very light, some are much darker. At least on the northern continent. By the way, I also want to say that a true Yelmite is likely to have blond hair. But that's that elite royal house, that's nearly extinguished. You know, they marry their sisters and stuff.

**SP:** Well, blond hair and blue eyes...

**SP:** Yeah. 'Cause they have blond hair and pretty eyes! (laughter)

**3:** In the Avalon Hill edition of *Dragon Pass*, the Lunar legions and the Sun Dome Templars are presented as having very different fighting styles. But, recent stuff has suggested that they both fight in the phalanx. Do they fight in the same style, or do they have very different styles?

**GS:** More similar than different.

**SP:** They would probably both look the same to the Orlanthe.

**GS:** Yeah. The Lunar Empire is composed of units that are phalangites

and hoplites. And this is lowland stuff, and not the usual Orlanthe way. The Yelmalian are people who have adopted Dara Happan ways into their society, so they're now much more similar than they once were in the past.

## The God Learners

**4:** Are the inhabitants of the Islands of God Forgot actually secret God Learners?

**GS:** No.

**5:** Who or what were the God Learner Outer Atomic Explorers?

**SP:** I believe that the Outer Atomic Explorers were individuals that attempted to penetrate through the wall of Glorantha into the chaos beyond. And the great majority of them made it, and never came back.

**GS:** I think that that's probably a good understanding.

**SP:** They had a number of different goals, like seeing Glorantha from the outside to see what shape it really was.

**GS:** Yes.

**6:** Would it be reasonable to you that the name "Outer Atomic Explorers" comes from the "atoms," the building blocks of Glorantha, being not little physical atoms but philosophical atoms? From the God Learners point of view, the basic underlying assumption of Glorantha? And they get outside by tweaking the assumptions. They change the philosophical atom that makes up the universe until they get to a slightly different universe. Or, out towards the Void.

**SP:** Here is my belief on the subject. Whether the atoms in Glorantha are philosophical, or physical, or whether



they are the runes, they are by definition “the thing that cannot be destroyed, that cannot be rendered down any further” The Outer Atomic Explorers attempted to not be destroyed by chaos by rendering themselves, or their vessel, down to it’s simplest possible form. By making it very difficult for them to be destroyed, they could get into chaos. The more complexity you have to you, the easier it is for chaos to get at you. Unless of course you reach the critical mass of having all contradictions within you, like in the story of Ethelrist and Keener Than. When they are eaten by Hungry Jack, they were able to turn into each other.

**7:** I guess I’m confused about the Outer Atomic Explorers and what they were attempting to do. My understanding is that Prince Snodal traveled out of Glorantha and then came back—

**SP:** No, no, no. He traveled out of Loskalm,—

**GS:** — out of the Human World, out of the Center World,—

**SP:** — and a lot of people have done that.

**GS:** He traveled to the edge of the world, where the heroes and gods live. He went to the threshold, but not outside the world.

**7:** That’s what I wanted to know.

**SP:** The Outer Atomic guys were attempting to actually leave the entire cosmos.

**GS:** I wonder what a Gloranthan spaceship would look like?

**SP:** I think it would be cool!

### The EWF

**8:** Who or what were the EWF “waltzing and hunting bands” mentioned in *King of Sartar* ?

**SP:** Missionaries.

### Orlanthi Culture & Deities

**9:** The Orlanthis tell of Kolat as having six sons, with the sixth son being the magical Lower Wind. Did the God Learners consider the Zorak Zorani spirit of retribution Hell Roar to be this sixth son of Kolat.

**GS:** I’m sure some did. (laughter)

**SP:** I don’t think the Lower Wind is the spirit of retribution Hell Roar. Or if it is, it’s only a tiny aspect of it.

**GS:** What are the six winds again?

**SP:** The four directions, upper, and lower. And then there’s no wind, which is of course Brastalos. I would guess that, in the sense that the winds from Hell are all aspects of the Hell Wind, Hell Roar might have some trace of him in it. But I don’t think they are the same thing at all. I do not think the Lower Wind is a subsidiary spirit in the Zorak Zoran cult.

**GS:** I agree. The Lower Wind is not the Zorak Zorak spirit of retribution.

**10:** A light-hearted question. It is my contention that the Orlanthis find belching a sign of manhood and strength, a “showing of your inner wind.” I think belching is a very positive thing in Orlanthis culture.

**SP:** I think they’re attracted to women who belch too, frankly. (laughter)

**10:** OK. Do you think the Orlanthis would find farting to be a positive thing, and a sign of your “inner wind,” or would they see it as more of a negative thing?

**SP:** It’s clear to me they have contests of breaking wind, but I’m not sure if they do it in mixed company. (laughter)

**GS:** After all, the Secret Wind —

**SP:** — the Lower Wind!—

**GS:** —the Secret Lower Wind! “The power inside!” But I’m not sure if, as you once suggested, they actually play bagpipes out of their ass! (laughter)

**10:** Hey, that was never my suggestion! I just read that somewhere!

**11:** I was wondering if there is a secret Orlanthis myth about a time when Orlanth, persecuted by his foes, took his “secret seventh inner wind” and hid it in the humble bean? (laughter)

**SP:** Hey! It’s a secret! (laughter)

**GS:** It just occurred to me that there is a well know Storm Bull story which honors and respects farting above all else. It is the Storm Bull story of how he rid himself of the Little Brother. I remember that now. Scott Schneider tells it very very well.

**12:** Who are Vinga’s parents?

**GS:** It depends on which version of the story you understand. Sometimes it’s Orlanth and Ernalda. Sometimes her two parents are from a dynasty of Heortling chieftains, whose names I don’t recall at the moment.

**13:** What was Vinga’s previous role, before she was the Goddess of Adventuresses?

**GS:** None. She was just a member of the society, without a distinct niche.

**14:** Who raped Thed? Was it Storm Bull? Was it Ragnaglar?

**GS:** It depends on the story you hear. The Lunars say it was Orlanth. The Orlanthis say it was Ragnaglar.

**15:** To what extent are Malia and Chalana Arroy aspects of the same deity or principle?

**GS:** Minimally. They are opposite sides



of the same coin, and in that respect they are aspects of the same thing, but that is not the point of view embraced by the Orlanthi.

**SP:** Nor the Pelorians!

**GS:** But the Carmanians might.

### The Lightbringer's Quest

**16:** Did Ikadz the Torturer have anything useful to contribute on the Lightbringer's Quest? And, if not, what purpose has he ever served?

**SP:** Well, if there weren't obstacles in the quest —

**GS:** — then what's the point. Ikadz is not necessarily part of the original Orlanthi mythology, and may not have had anything to do with the original Lightbringer's Quest. I think it was Paul Reilly who's come up with the most insight into what Ikadz might have done that was good. He's the Surgeon of the Gods. He's the one who cuts away those parts that are unacceptable, and rids the Cosmic Body of it's infection.

**17:** According to the Lightbringers story, each participant failed at one point in their greatest strength. What strength, if any, did Ginna Jar have?

**GS:** It's a mystery.

**SP:** She's not with them all through the quest. It's not like she's with them all along. Neither is Eurmal. In fact, none of them are.

**GS:** Ginna Jar is a number of things, and one of the things she could be is a collective entity. That is to say, the group spirit of the Heroquesters: she's a little bit of everybody, she's the common ground that they hold together. Alternatively, she's a blank spot on the Ring, and her place can be filled by a Humakti, or perhaps even a sorcerer. Perhaps a Yelmalion, or someone who they feel has a particular talent to meet

a particular need, and they just say, "You will take Ginna Jar's seat." So, whatever that individual's greatest strength was would determine what Ginna Jar's weakness was for that part of the quest. All right? I want you to understand that there are different versions, and they are each correct. Sometimes it's Ginna Jar the composite identity, sometimes it's Ginna Jar the single identity, and sometimes it's Ginna Jar the blank spot waiting to be filled.

### Dead Basmol

**18:** Who killed Basmol, if indeed Basmol was killed?

**SP:** Everyone!

**GS:** And their dog!

**SP:** Everyone and their dog killed Basmol. He was killed in Seshnela, he was killed in Ralios, he was killed in Maniria, and he was killed in Prax. Everywhere there is a legend about someone killing Basmol, they did! That's why he's not found in Seshnela, Ralios, Maniria, or Prax. He was killed, and it's his bad luck that he happened to be killed everywhere!

But it is my belief that the legend of Basmol being killed in Prax, by whoever it was who killed him there, and the legend of Basmol being killed in Seshnela, by whoever it was who killed him there are, are not two different views of the same legend. (Except in as much as they are both about the killing of a Lion God.) It would have been possible for him to NOT be killed in Prax, and be killed in Seshnela, much as the God of the Silver Feet was killed in Fronela but not elsewhere. But, it's just that Basmol got killed everywhere. Especially once it started to become such an obvious mythic reality, that the cat god's gonna take it on the chin.

**GS:** That's nice. "Cats are losers! Line up!" (laughter)

**19:** If it's true that Basmol is dead in all the places where he was killed, why does he not then exist in Pamaltela, where he just went north and they don't know what happened to him?

**SP:** Who says he doesn't exist in Pamaltela?

**GS:** Well, me, for one!

**SP:** Then he could be killed there too.

**GS:** No, no, no. The deity of large predatory cats in Pamaltela is not Basmol. The God Learners said it was Basmol. All right? But it's a different mythology, different ecozone, different consciousness. And I say it's not Basmol, except in a God Learner sense. Sandy? Do you agree?

**SP:** Basmol may have been a descendent of his.

### The Seven Mothers

**20:** In the previous Heroquest Seminar you talked briefly about the viewpoint that the Seven Mothers' Heroquest to create the Red Moon was really an Orlanthi recreation of the assassination of Yelm, an Orlanthi quest to get rid of the Dara Happan Emperor. I want to ask what you think about the possibility that it was a combined Heroquest, including both that heroquest to get rid of the Dara Happan Emperor plus the Lightbringer Quest to bring back the Light of the World, thus giving the Light of the Red Moon.

**GS:** It is not an established fact that the Seven Mothers performed the Lightbringer's Heroquest. But, if it were, it would almost inevitably include the assassination of the Emperor as part of it.

**SP:** There being no point to doing a Lightbringer Quest unless the Emperor is killed first.

**GS:** Right





**21:** According to the sources I've read, there was another Mother who no one knows anything about. Even Lunar initiates don't know who she was. Who is it?

**GS:** She Who Waits.

**SP:** That's not another, that's one of the Seven. You're talking about one of the Seven Mothers? Or an eighth Mother?

**21:** It says that there was a Mother that even initiates don't know about. They don't know who it was. They know the existence of it, but they don't know anything else.

**GS:** I think it's talking about She Who Waits. Unless, of course, it's the Ultimate Great Mother, but I don't remember writing about her.

#### Lunar HeroQuests

**22:** Seeing as how the Lunar Empire does some weird things like enter into other people's Heroquests and other things like that, are they using God Learner secrets?

**GS:** No. But they are using some of God Learner techniques. The difference is between driving an automobile to go to work, and driving an automobile to run down people. They are both using the automobile, but in different ways for different purposes.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Moons of Glorantha

**23:** In the mythos, there is a Blue Moon, and there a Red Moon which has been reassembled. Are there possibly any other moons that have yet to be reassembled?

**SP:** There is the White Moon.

**GS:** There is? (said with surprise) (laughter)

**SP:** Well, there is the rumor of a White Moon.

**GS:** There is a persistent rumor of the coming White Moon, "which will bring peace and prosperity, and at last bring back the true Godtime that's been lost!" I've heard people talk about the Green Moon, which was the moon that existed during the Green Age, when everything was green and there were no other colors. I don't know about these things, however. There are stories, and there are rumors, and there is the fact that there is more than one Blue Moon in Gloranthan mythology.

**SP:** Also, there are stories about a Black Moon. And that's all we're going to say for now.

#### Chaos Taints

**24:** Is the Wild Healer of the Rockwoods a true broo that was healed of his chaos taint? Or, if not, what is he?

**SP:** My belief is that the Wild Healer of the Rockwoods is a broo that is not in the least cured of his or her chaos taint! It's pretty much as chaotic as any broo that you meet, but it's just also a Chalana Arroy Healer.

**GS:** Correct. I concur.

**SP:** The next question might be, "Well, maybe it's Illuminated?" Well, who can tell? You know? (laughter)

**25:** Other than the Cleansed One, can you tell us about a born chaos monster who has had it's chaos taints removed?

**SP:** Well, personally, I'm very suspicious of the Cleansed One!

**GS:** So am I, and I'm not sure —

**SP:** — that there is a confirmed case anywhere in Glorantha —

**GS:** — of someone's chaos feature being removed.

**25:** Would that apply to an acquired

chaos feature as well as to an inborn chaos feature?

**SP:** Well, here is what one scholar might say: There are really two types of acquired chaos features. There's the one that grows out from within you, like a cancer. (An outward sign of inward "grace", as it were.) And then there is an imposed one, like a magic spell. If a Lunar priest is able to cast a chaotic spell on you, that wouldn't necessarily make you chaotic.

**GS:** The spell which gives you a chaotic feature, the Curse of Thed, that's not the same as having a chaotic feature that you're born with as a broo.

**25:** Is the Pocharngo 5-point divine spell Corruption the same as having an inborn chaos feature?

**SP:** Hard to say. It depends.

**GS:** I think that such a thing would be greater than a 5-point spell, but it's probably possible. Another thing about chaos... Sandy mentioned about it being imposed upon you, or growing out from within you. If you're a serial rapist in Glorantha, you will start to turn into Ragnaglar. This is something that grows out from within you. This is a true chaotic feature. And if you perform this to such a degree that you actually manifest a physical feature, you know...

**SP:** You're not any more chaotic than you were before you manifested the feature.

**GS:** Right, because you were actually chaotic before that. If you grow an octopus tentacle out of your neck, getting it excised surgically does not remove your chaos feature.

#### Trolls & Trollkin

**26:** We all know the Trollkin Curse, after the Broken Council, was cast upon the Uz by Nysalor/Gbaji. We also all know that Nysalor/Gbaji is the





were probably told about her and her interactions with either Elmal, or Yelmalio when he was only an elf deity.

### The Trickster

**32:** Does Trickster have a chaotic aspect that is worshipped by chaotic beings?

**GS:** No.

**33:** You just said that there aren't any Trickster gods associated with the chaos pantheon.

Yet in *Wyrm's Footnotes* Issue 7, the "Pavis Notes" issue, Steve Perrin had a Trickster cult that was associated with chaotic creatures of the dark (goblins and hobgoblins).

**SP:** Yes. Tokaz Varaz, the Wild Dark.

**33:** Is that simply non-canonical and excised, or is there room for such a cult in Glorantha? Or is there some mystical reason that there aren't any chaotic Tricksters?

**GS:** The cult is probably there, but has changed its form as our continuing education allows us to evolve a better understanding and vocabulary for determining these things.

**SP:** And saying that there are no chaotic tricksters is not the same thing as saying there are no chaotic trickster deities.

**GS:** It's not saying that chaotic deities are not Trickster-like. When I say there are no chaotic trickster deities, what I mean is that all chaos breaks the rules. And that, in a sense, makes them all Tricksters, because that's what Tricksters do.

**AM:** Wouldn't a chaos trickster then wear a three piece business suit and be rather boring? (laughter)

**GS:** Yeah, probably! If he could.

**SP:** If there is a chaotic Trickster, maybe it's Nysalor.

**GS:** Or maybe it's Yelm. (laughter)

**34:** Earlier today you talked about Illumination, and about how it causes your world view to dissolve. I'm wondering if an Illuminated worshiper of Trickster could see this as a massive shim that was pulled on him, and wrap his own philosophy around Illumination?

**GS:** Sure. Yeah. If he wants.

**SP:** Even an Illuminant needs something to give his life structure. Even if it's a lack of structure.

**35:** You've said, "There is no change without Trickster," and that the essence of Trickster is to break all rules. Does that imply that Trickster is not as bound by the Compromise as the other gods are?

**SP:** He's breaking rules now, just like he was before. He's not changed since the Compromise. He still breaks the rules.

**AM:** Is he trapped into breaking rules within the Compromise? He can't break the Compromise?

**GS:** His part of the Compromise is to break the rules.

**SP:** And if you're asking if he can break the Compromise, my guess is he probably can but I don't think he has.

**GS:** What he'd have to do is act consistently, be selfless, care for others at all times, and do all the things that are in fact impossible to his nature.

**35:** So he can't defeat his own nature?

**GS:** No, not by using his nature.

**SP:** That's why people in Glorantha are better off than the gods.

**GS:** Right. Because people can change their nature.

**36:** The Malkioni God Learners called the Trickster "Eurmal", and even had a major temple to him in Slontos in the Second Age. Are Eurmal worshipers still found in the monotheistic West in the Third Age?

**GS:** Only if they are well hidden.

**SP:** Do you think there are holy madmen-saints? Trickster saints?

**GS:** Yeah, but they're not Eurmali.

**SP:** No, not Eurmali, but they could serve the function of a Trickster.

**GS:** They might. A madman might be a holy man, and serve the function of Trickster. But they don't have temples, and they're not Eurmali.

**SP:** I was thinking of the Arab... uh...

**36:** Hodja? Nasr-Eddin the Hodja?

**SP:** There might be some kind of Trickster-like saint, that is not the same as Trickster and is not viewed in the same way. Like the Sufis! I was thinking of the Sufis. The Sufis are Trickster-like, and yet they're not mad and they're not Tricksters. But, to a Theyalan, a Malkioni trickster (if they have them) would seem very much watered down. Whereas the Malkioni would see the Sufi as a wise and clever guy that can expose things, yet doesn't sit around drunk all the time or steal stuff.

**GS:** The focus of the Westerners, though, is to maintain and understand the Cosmic Order. I think that in the West they do not have respect for Trickster figures.

**SP:** I'm saying that the tricksters of the West would be like a Zen monk, or like a Sufi, or the Western equivalent of that.

**GS:** Or a madman.

**SP:** Or a madman. Yeah.



**GS:** And without any position. I don't think they're all considered to be holy.

### Malkionism & The West

**37:** The basic underlying philosophy of Malkionism, as I see it, is that the world is now imperfect. It used to be perfect, but now it's flawed, and it is the goal of all good Malkioni to achieve Solace, which is to leave the world of imperfection and all it's misery. This basic philosophy seems to coincide very closely with that of Buddhism, wherein the basic goal is to rid yourself of all the desires of the world and all connections to the world because the world is the source of all misery. And once you have done that you can leave the world, the cycle of reincarnation, and you will achieve Nirvana, which is a type of pseudo-nonexistence very similar to Solace. Would there be room for, or the possibility of, the presence of a Malkioni sect or heresy that views existence in the way that Buddhism does, with a cycle of reincarnation, and Solace as something that is not so much a reward as an achievement?

**SP:** Well, in the first place, I can't off hand think of any Gloranthan societies that don't view the world as imperfect. The Orlanthei, the Pelorians, the Praxians even more, even the Kralori, all think the world is imperfect and has many bad things. Yet--

**GS:** I would say, to answer your question, probably not. There's a vast difference between Oriental and Occidental thinking. And Buddhist thinking is not native to Western thought. The Westerners in Genertela are much like us. Occidental. They don't think of depersonalization as the objective of their religion.

**SP:** They think of perfection of the personality,—

**GS:** — and Solace for the individual. NOT the dissolution of the Self. That's not to say that in your campaign such a

thing is impossible. But, it doesn't come to me naturally within that realm.

**SP:** You might find a Malkioni who says, "To find yourself you must lose yourself." That sort of thing. But that's not the same as a Kralori who says, "You must lose your Self, and become One with All."

**38:** Is it true that the Brithini philosophy came first, then the Rokari philosophy, and then the Hrestoli philosophy? Is that the correct order?

**SP:** The Brithini claim to have had the same philosophy forever.

**38:** Right. That's why I said they were first. Hrestol was the Idealist; he said you could move between castes. That implies that the castes existed, so Hrestol came after the Brithini. My question is, did the Rokari come between the Brithini and the Hrestoli?

**GS:** No.

**SP:** No. The Rokari are Second Age. Hrestol instituted a radical change from the Brithini beliefs during the First Age. The Loskalm Hrestoli today claim the radical change was mobility between castes. The Rokari contend that at one point they rolled back some of Hrestol's changes, to make them less radical.

**GS:** And reinstated what they believed was the Brithini practice.

**38:** And that happened in the Second Age?

**GS:** Yes. After the God Learners.

**SP:** Which is not to say that the modern Hrestoli Church and the First Age Hrestoli Church have very much in common.

**GS:** Right. The Loskalmi Hrestoli Church is not exactly the same as the church that was found in First Age Seshnela.

**SP:** It is the matter of a radical alteration and then a retreating.

**AM:** A going back, retreating from the radical ideas. A reaction.

**GS:** Right.

**SP:** A "perfecting" of them.

**39:** When did the Seshnagi colonies of Akem become the Kingdom of Loskalm?

**GS:** The name "the Kingdom of Loskalm" was probably introduced in the Second Age. They probably changed from being "Akem" to being "Loskalm" when they were resisting the God Learners.

**40:** At one point in history a bunch of Luathans came to Seshnela, put a giant metal spike in the ground, and started doing a ritual around it. What were they doing?

**GS:** They took an adamant spike that was coated with iron and hammered it into the Heart of Seshnela, the goddess. Then they took their great hammers and started pounding on the spike sideways.

**SP:** Every time they pounded it, all the land would shake a little bit. And every time they pounded it, it would shake more and more.

**GS:** They pounded on the spike until they broke her Heart, and she rolled over, turning her face from the world, and went underground.

**SP:** And in the mortal mundane realm, Seshnela shattered. You can see all the islands that were left behind.

### Kralorela

**41:** Kralorelan names sound very Chinese to me, with one exception: the names of the Emperors, which sound Indian. Does that mean that the Emperors are not Kralorelan, but taken



from the outside, or what?

**GS:** The reason is that the God Learners wrote down the names, and they didn't understand the Kralorelan language. They interpreted it through their own method, and changed the way it sounds. But, just on that, it will not help your understanding to use a single Terrestrial analog for a Glorantha culture. It is not correct to say, "Kralorelans are Chinese." It's to say, "They're kinda like the Chinese, and kinda like the Hindus."

**41:** But my question was, is there a cultural difference between the origins of the Emperors and the rest of Kralorela, because the names are so different?

**GS:** No.

**42:** Approximately how many Kralorelan Emperors have there been? Some are named in Gods of Glorantha, but I'm wondering if there are more that are not named there.

**GS:** The official list of Kralorelan Emperors is correct up to the point it's given.

**SP:** There may have been a succession of a bunch during the False Dragon Ring, but they aren't real ones.

**GS:** They're not counted as real Emperors. So, yeah, Emperors are long lived.

**SP:** Yanoor, the Emperor that was kicked out when the False Dragon Ring came in, had been around for a LONG time. Godunya has been around since 1124, when the False Dragon Ring was ousted. So they don't change very often.

**43:** In the orange *Glorantha : Genertela, Crucible of the Hero Wars* box supplement, we have the Emperor worship in Kralorela. We also have the Path of Immanent Mastery, which is portrayed as a religion of perverted

dragon worship, probably instituted by the God Learners, which is pretty much for low-life losers who aren't up to—

**GS:** And foreigners!

**43:** And them too. Yet it also tells us that the Emperor has some elite body guards, the 20 Five Dragon Warriors, who can each summon or turn into a dragon at least five times. Does the Emperor have a body guard of disloyal heretics who follow the Path of Immanent Mastery?

**GS:** Yes. I'd say so.

**SP:** Yes! He has a body guard of LOYAL heretics who follow the Path of Immanent Mastery.

The Emperor of Peloria, in the bad old days, was a sun guy who was intolerant and purged the land of all forces of darkness, evil, and badness by displacing it with his own light. The Emperor of Kralorela uses everything at his command to bring together a harmonious whole.

**GS:** I'd like to offer a slightly different perspective, which is that Kralorelans can turn into dragons without being heretical.

**SP:** Yes. But, I think that the Kralori have a place for the heretics in their society, and I think that the Dara Happans don't.

**GS:** OK. I'll buy that.

**SP:** There's a place for everything. If you walk into a town as a drunken thief, they'll say, "Oh! OK, I know what you are. You're a Drunken Thief guy!" And you're typified into one of the little slots that they have for people, and they know how to treat you and behave around you, and everything works out.

**GS:** I think that the Five Dragon Warriors are draconic, but not necessarily from the Path of Immanent Mastery.

**44:** How are worshipers of the Path of Immanent Mastery perceived in Kralorela?

**SP:** With pity. "They keep the law, and they are clean, and they are weird."

**GS:** The way that we might look at Moonies.<sup>3</sup> "They're misguided, and it's too bad. But as long as they don't harm us, we'll put up with them."

**SP:** "Hey, look, not everybody's up to the truth!"

**GS:** "If they were up to the truth, they would have been born Kralori!"

**SP:** "Well, maybe they were, they just aren't Kralori anymore."

### Eastern Glorantha & The Isles

**45:** The people of Eastern Glorantha are from the yellow race. Most of them speak languages from the same group, but not the people of Teshnos and Trowjang, which form a separate language group. Where in pre-history did they split off so that they have a totally different language?

**GS:** So early that we don't know. There's a prevalent belief that Telios was actually the center of the world, and that's when they say they split off. They say. But, they don't think of those things in the same way that we do. So... it's not a question that's asked there.

**46:** Two or three years ago I posed a question to Greg about the source or nature of the god Tolat, who the amazons of Trojang Island worship. There are no men on this island, and once a year the god Tolat descends upon the island and has sex with all the women on the island. And they feel this is a good arrangement. My personal question to Greg was, was this some hedonistic God Learner who established this religion in order to have an island full of women who are all his and love only him, accepting no other men? He



said, “No, no, I don’t think that’s the case. And you should remember that Tolat is a planet.” I said, “Yeah, yeah, OK,” and skulked off to think about this. I feel unsatisfied with that answer, and I’m paying now in order to hear some more about Tolat. Because, I still like my theory. (laughter)

**GS:** I believe that this is a separate divine act by the diety that’s called Tolat, or Shargash in different parts of the world. The planet that we see traverse the sky in the south path, that’s called Tolat, is called Shargash in the Dara Happan Empire. This is a deity, a separate entity in his own right, and he has other actions and activities that are unrecognized outside of, say, Dara Happa. But I believe that, in fact, is was that great deity of plenty and fertility that comes down to earth every year and consorts with the women of Trojang in a positive manner.

**46:** Fertilizes.

**GS:** Yeah.

**46:** OK. I’ll go with that.

**GS:** Of course, you know the rule is, “The Game Master is always right. Greg’s wrong in times of conflict.” So, if you want to be a Game Master, it’s all right by me.

**46:** Yeah, but this is philosophy and mythology here. We’re reliant on you for the philosophical and mythological underpinnings of Glorantha.

**SP:** If you want to have someone be the Avatar of Tolat, that’s up to you. Symbolically, it’s still Tolat.

### Who Would You Be?

**47:** Which Gloranthan figure are you (Sandy and Greg) most like? And, which Gloranthan figure do you most want to be like?

**SP:** I think that the best way for us to

answer these questions is for each of us to answer for the other person. I think Greg is most like Trickster. He is the root of all the changes, and he can be really aggravating when he makes some of those changes, so... (laughter)

**47:** Not Nysalor?

**SP:** Well, Greg wants to be Nysalor,—

**GS:** So therefore Sandy will make me Trickster! (laughter) Well, I’m gonna make Sandy Malkion! (more laughter) No, no, that was a joke. Now, who would Sandy be?

**47:** Well, if you’re Nysalor and Sandy wants to make you Trickster, he should be Arkat, right? (laughter)

**GS:** A deity or a person? [to the person who asked the original question]

**47:** Anyone. But if you’re going to bring up someone we’ve never heard of, you have to say who he is. You can’t just say, “Bludge the Plumber in Pavis.” (laughter)

(long pause as Greg and Sandy think)

**GS:** I’m gonna say for Sandy, it may be Yelm. (Sandy looks surprised.)

**SP:** In that case, I’m gonna say for Greg that maybe he’s Glorantha’s fetch! (laughter)

**GS:** [said seriously] No, the reason that I would say that you are much like Yelm is that you have tremendous knowledge, superior insight, a very creative way of putting very diverse parts together in a harmonious manner, and—

**SP:** — very little tolerance for other points of view! (laughter)

**GS:** And no omnipotence. Without omniscience. That’s fine. But, that’s only two answers.

**47:** Yes. Now, who do you want to be

most like?

**SP:** What, if I lived in Glorantha?

**47:** No. Which person in Glorantha—

**SP:** — do I most want to pattern my life on?

**47:** No, not pattern your life on. If you were saying to yourself, “He’s really cool! I really identify with him!” Is there anybody in Glorantha that you feel that way about?

**GS:** That’s a slightly different question.

**47:** You can just answer whichever question you want.

**SP:** Who is our favorite Gloranthan hero? Is that what you’re asking?

**47:** No, no, no. In relation to your self—

**GS:** “Who do we feel most reflects us in Glorantha?” All right. I’m Arkat.

**SP:** (long pause) (laughs) This is not something I’ve ever considered before!

**47:** You can tell me after the con, and they can put it in the book, if you want to think about it.

**SP:** Yeah. I want to mull on it.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Transcriber’s note: Yeah. They’ll keep your money if they won’t answer your question, and refund your money if they can’t answer your question!

<sup>2</sup> Transcriber’s note: To continue the metaphore, God Learner secrets would be the equivalent of knowing how to drive at high speeds, elude police, do a “bootlegger’s turn”, force other cars off the road, mount weapons on your car, hit pedestrians for maximum effect with minimum damage to your car, etc...

<sup>3</sup> Followers of the Reverend Sun Yung Moon.

<sup>4</sup> One month after the convention, in response to the question again, Sandy responded, “Beat-Pot Aelwrin.”



## The Imther Seminar

**KEY:****HS: Harald Smith (host)****JP: James Polk (co-host)****IW: Ian Whitchurch****AM: Audience Members**

**HS:** As a starting point, my name is Harald Smith. I don't know whether all of you know where Imther is or not, but that is the subject of this seminar.

As background, I have been playing in and around the Lunar Kingdom of Imther for about eight years now. I started a campaign there quite a while back because I wanted to do something that was part of the Lunar Empire. For whatever reason, I happened to think that Lunars were OK folk and didn't like this idea of Sartarites thinking they were all bad guys - especially since a good part of the Known World happens to be part of the Lunar Empire at this point.

But when I looked at the whole Lunar Empire I thought that's likely to be an area that Greg was going to do a lot of work at some point or another. (It turns out he is doing a lot of work there right now and revamping mythos left and right.) I really wanted to find a place that was part of the Empire yet had sort of its own separate traditions. I looked around at the various provinces and the ones which looked as if they had possibilities were Imther and Holay. Both of them bordered on the land of Balazar. I happened to have the old *Griffin Mountain* pack and thought it would be a nice connection. I could develop something which would lead right into there. The description of Imther in *Griffin Mountain* appealed to me a little more. Imther had some mountains, some mines and some dwarves, while Holay just had some corn. So Imther was my choice.

Imther's location was north from Sartar. There was Tarsh, Holay and then Imther. To the East of Imther is the Elf Sea; Southeast you have Balazar. North you have the nice little chaotic area of

Tork, which no one seems to know about. Hopefully I'll have the chance to have someone explore it in the future. Then you have the Kingdom of Vanch off to the west. So it's an area surrounded by other provincial or more mysterious areas. It offered some good opportunities for gaming purposes.

As I've said I've worked in that area for about 8 years now. Some of my conceptions have changed as more stuff has come out on the world of Glorantha. When I started the only thing I had to work with was *Griffin Mountain*. That was the only thing which had much of anything plus a few histories on the Lunar empire which touched on it in a kind of passing fashion. And even the addition of the Genertela supplement added about two or three sentences. So really everything I've done has been my own work. It's something I tried to draw out of some initial concepts and that is really more or less where it got its genesis.

I'm not sure what people are particularly interested in hearing about, so maybe if there are some particular thought lines anyone has at this point, I'd be happy to talk about a particular item.

**JP:** Perhaps it would be helpful to us if you gave a broad overview of Imther.

**HS:** Well Imther is a mountainous area and even the areas which are not mountainous are hilly. It's not going to have a lot of intense farming going on - it's just not the right area for that - so the basis of society ends up being herding. I think there is a mixture of cattle and goat herders in the northern areas, with just goat herders in the other areas. (Originally there would have been cattle herders in the area that became Tork as well.) That seems to fit well with some stuff which came out in the *Glorious ReAscent of Yelm*, where the goat people disembark somewhere off in that area. Because it has metal,

there are mines and miners. But because the mines are run by the royal monopoly, a lot of work is handled by slaves. And there is also some connection to the dwarves in that area as well.

The hills that are around the area are more of a mixed farming area: orchard lands, small areas of grain, vegetables, etc. (It tends to be an area similar to Vermont.) The hill people produce cheese, cider and apples for export.

**IW:** Forgive me for not doing any preparatory reading. Could you give a thumbnail sketch of the culture and the people? Are they Orlanthi? Are they Dara Happan influenced?

**HS:** No. The initial conception I had was what I would call "mixed." They are not Orlanthi. One of the things I was trying to do was get away from Orlanth.

**IW:** Good for you.

**HS:** Partly because at the time I was writing, Sartar was Orlanthi, Tarsh had Orlanthi background, and there was still a lot of stuff that wasn't out on Orlanthi. Well, Imther is a hilly area and one of the initial things I had found in the *Cults of Prax* book was that the Yelmatio cult had started in Southern Peloria. Another was that he was sort of a Sun God in the Hills. So that became the basis of my conception of society. It was Theyalan in nature but with a Solar viewpoint as opposed to a Storm viewpoint.

Over time I've come to feel that the initial Dawn Age culture was a mixture of Earth worshipers and a sort of rural or rustic Sun god culture. Over time this base has been been overlaid by other cultures. The first of these overlays was from Dara Happa, probably starting during the period of Osentalka's creation and through the Second Age. Dara Happans introduced a lot of different ideas about Solar culture, so



Imtherian Solar culture became much more theocratic, and moved much closer to the Dara Happan viewpoint until it was all but wiped out in the Dragonkill war. There was a big crisis of faith at that time. All these theocratic people got wiped out and there was a tendency to go back towards the more rustic roots of the Sun god. Imtherian mythology was rebuilt so that the earth and solar cultures were tied together. More or less that's the basis of the society at this point, except that now the Lunar Empire has added an additional overlay.

As part of the whole effort of getting Imther into the Lunar Empire, the Lunars have reconstructed some of their own mythological framework to fit in and link the two together. The Conquering Daughter didn't actually invade Imther, she just tied it mythically to the Lunar Empire. The repercussions of her actions then spread throughout the kingdom, allowing Lunar influence to spread without having wholesale warfare against the people.

I don't know if that fully answers the question or not.

**IW:** Yes, pretty well.

**JP:** I think it's safe to say—I'm James Polk and I'm the Trickster of Imther—that the current Imther the countryside is still very Solar in their own unique ways, whereas the cities are much more Lunar now with some city gods. And so you really have two cultures side by side. Over the past 15 - 20 years, there's been more and more tension between the two groups.

**HS:** James was one of the early players in my campaign and helped develop some of the pieces as it came together. Since moving off he's still helped me develop some of the pieces.

But in terms of some of the gods, who is the rustic sun god of the area? Originally that was Yelm, but I always pictured a different Yelm from the one who ended up in *Sun County*. Imther is a very hilly area and

it's also close to Dara Happa, so there must have been some other influences there you might not get down in Sartar or Prax.

When the whole Elmal thing came out in *King of Sartar*, I was probably one of the few people who said, "For what I'm doing, that's good." The Orlanthi had a different Sun god, so this meant I could create something different. And so Yelm became Khelmal, the Sun god of Imther. Khelmal has a lot of similarities to Yelm. He is probably much closer to Yelm than is Elmal, but he's still a different Sun god. He is not Yelm and his magics are geared around a different mythology. He did not necessarily lose (in the same sense that Yelm lost) at the Hill of Gold, but he did fight there.

**IW:** What do the Dara Happan's theory of Yelm the Emperor think of this bunch of people worshipping the sun wrongly?

**HS:** I basically feel that they don't really like the area. They've come up with theories or mythologies to explain why these people have abandoned the true Sun god. I think it probably relates to the fact that these were people who disembarked too soon from Anaxial's boat. They didn't see the full truth play out. But the Dara Happans, while they integrated parts of the kingdom of Vanch into their empire, never got into the mountains. The mountains are not a good area to come in to fight, and that's one of the reasons why the area has remained independent.

**IW:** Especially not pike blocks.

**HS:** Yes.

**JP:** Or cavalry.

**HS:** Cavalry has not been good. The area was largely avoided by the horse nomads too. They swung around either north or south. In fact the southern prong of the horse nomads met one of their first major defeats as they went through some of the hilly areas. (I think

it was the Battle of Quintus' Vale.) And that battle was one reason why the Lunars didn't even bother trying to conquer Imther militarily, but tried to absorb it in a more mythical fashion.

**IW:** Which was by sending all the kids to your schools?

**HS:** Well, that's part of it. But they also stuck the Conquering Daughter into some of the mythos. A lot of Imtherian mythos deals with the husband and wife concept. The idea of a family around a hearth is really a centerpoint for the whole society. It's a binding aspect and villages are organized this way. Imther itself is ruled by a king and queen, not by a king alone (which is something the Dara Happans wouldn't like). When the Lunars arrived, the Conquering Daughter was seeking a husband aspect, as her husband was dead at that point. She ended up "marrying" into the Imtherian pantheon (or finding a husband aspect and getting herself in there). She also converted a pair of founding deities called Imthus and Aidea. She managed this by convincing Aidea either to convert to the Lunar view or to realize her own Lunar aspects. And that combination has helped to solidify Imther's place within the Lunar pantheon or a version thereof.

**JP:** How many people have read any of the Imther stories on the Internet? So some of you know that for the solar side Khelmal is the chief god. There is a sun, Yelm, who is insignificant really. Khelmal's sister is Khalana, whom the Orlanthi would call Chalana Arroy. But this is Khalana the Healer. There's Arahar and Teliska - Arahar is the Imther Pole Star and he's married in Imther to Teliska, the Goddess of Dance. (This pairing comes from early Gloranthan writings in *Wyrms Footnotes*, which were later changed. So we put it back in Imther.) And then there's another great - that's what you keep missing - there's another great god, a trickster. In Imther it's Orlantio. He's the Storm god of course and the





Dara Happans like that!

**HS:** There are certainly a number of trickster deities who pop up in Imther. Some of them are attempts to make sense of the Theyalan mythology that came North with the World Council of Friends. I think there was already an Imtherian mythos of the restoration of the world, but the Lightbringers idea got folded into it.

**IW:** What is the Imther version of I-Fought-We-Won, Sun Stop, the saving of the world after the sun went down?

**HS:** There's a cycle to which I refer as the Khelmal Cycle. He's the Son of the Sun and the person who is the most important figure in saving Imther. After the sun departs he, the Earth goddess Nealda (a different name for Ernalda in a sense - that's its root), to whom he is betrothed, is stolen away by Orlantio, who had decided he wanted her for himself. When Khelmal asks for her back, Orlantio refuses, so eventually they come to battle. Khelmal gathers his allies and marches off to the Hill of Gold. One of his closest allies betrays him and he loses certain powers. But he still has a core power, the Power of Hope. So he uses that to confuse and defeat Orlantio, who decides that he doesn't particularly want to deal with it and leaves the battle. But Orlantio has already traded away Nealda to his brother Orak, the Hell Wind, who has

story was something which came from the original Yelmatio stories where Yelmatio is forced to retreat wounded and limping from the Hill of Gold.)

In the hills Khelmal finds a people who are now lost in the Darkness. They don't know how to feed and care for themselves. (In the Cycle they ask, "How do we learn to heal ourselves again? How do we learn to tame some of the wild forces that are around us? How do we learn to hunt and get food? How do we learn to make cheese?") Ultimately, while these people have survived, they have no growth potential. So Khelmal has to go on a quest to save Nealda. He must trick the Hell Wind to bring her back. He succeeds and she is restored, although there is still no Sun in the Sky. So his final act, in the original core mythos, is for him to descend into the Pit of Chaos and, with the powers of his wife restored, to face the Chaos there and to restore the Sun.

In the more recent mythological overlay, a Lightbringers Cycle has been added, courtesy of the Theyalans. These people have a cycle of someone going off down to Hell to restore the Sun. And this is where a figure called Lagavar (who is the Lightfore planet) is sent off by Khelmal to find the Sun and bring it back. I've taken the Lightbringer mythology and turned aspects of it on its head. Orlantio is not the leader of the Quest. He thinks he is...

**JP:** Well, he ought to be...

to intervene as the Goddess of Kindness and Mercy. Orlantio is allowed to live, but Lagavar must still find the Land of the Sun in Hell and find the path back to life. His leadership comes through and he leads the group back to the world.

**JP:** What about the Lunar side? Tell them about Hwarin Dalthippa and her role, because all the light stuff is really early.

**HS:** At this point the Lunar goddess has been integrated as another option, particularly with people who are not satisfied with the classic roles. Khelmal is very much a man's god. If you are a woman you can't join his cult. Likewise Nealda is a woman's goddess and if you are a man you cannot join her cult. Part of becoming an adult is being initiated into one of those cults. But the Conquering Daughter offers an alternative. Although she exists within the Imtherian pantheon at this point, if you are a man you can join her cult. Men can learn the artisan crafts from her as well as the craft of warfare. And women can learn the crafts of warfare through her. That's part of what the Lunars have brought, a merging of the different sides of life.

What else do people want to know?

**JP:** What role does Lagavar have now?

**HS:** Lagavar is still the person who must go through the Underworld during the day and make sure the path of Yelem is still there. He must travel through the Sky at night to make sure that path of the Sun remains in the Sky - that Yelem can follow it to return the next day.

**JP:** Is he worshipped by anyone?

**HS:** He is the god of heroquesting. If you want to heroquest in Imther, you have to follow the path of Lagavar.

**AM:** So Imther has a heroquesting tradition?

***"The group goes off on the Lightbringer quest. They descend into Hell and Orlantio is the one who betrays Lagavar."***

carried Nealda off to a distance place which no one can find.) Orak then brings Valind the Glacier into the area, and the people are threatened with Darkness and Ice. This new threat forces Khelmal to continue the fight, and this is known as the second part of the Hill of Gold. But this time Khelmal has to sacrifice his Fire power to hold his foes at bay. This sacrifice leaves him wounded so he retreats into the Imtherian mountains. (This part of the

**HS:** ...but he can't. It's Lagavar who is the true leader.

The group goes off on the basic Lightbringer quest. They descend into Hell and Orlantio is the one who betrays Lagavar. Lagavar is left alone and Orlantio thinks he can then lead the way to find the Sun, but he can't. Eventually Orlantio is brought to justice before the Sun god in Hell. All his worthless actions are going to lead to his destruction except that Khalana decides



**HS:** I'm not sure how far it dates back, but it does have a heroquesting tradition. I think that is one of the things which came out of Theyalan contact.

**IW:** Is heroquesting for the spectacular powers of Orlanthe tradition, or is it the achieve-things-that-will-not-necessarily-bring-you-honor-but-will-still-bring-good tradition?

**HS:** I think the goal of it is really to do good for some aspect of your society or community. That's what you're trying to deal with. It's not so much an individual thing. Lagavar did not go and act as leader because he thought of himself as an individual. He thought he must undertake the quest because it was his required duty to his community and to his relatives. He gives up a lot undertaking that quest. He sacrifices his betrothed who is the Hearthmother because he has to leave her behind and he can never truly rejoin her.

**JP:** But there is the individual "I want things", etc., attitude in Imther. Of course, that is Orlantio (Orlanth). It exists in Imtherian society, but it's not treasured, at least not by most.

**AM:** How did Yelem die in the Imtherian mythos?

**HS:** Well actually there is a story I posted on the RQ Daily right before Christmas.

The mythos is that Yelem didn't actually die. Instead, he descends to bring Justice to the Dead. Yelem still has a place; he's the God of Judgment. He's not actually worshipped because he will not make any decisions before it is time to judge a person on their worth. So he sits off in the Sky, nice and aloof. (And that fits with Imtherians' whole concept of how to deal with Dara Happa as well. Dara Happans sit off over there aloofly making judgments. They're not actually part of society.) But Yelem is there at the end when you die. He is the one who decides what will happen to your soul -

whether you will rejoin a community of good people or whether your soul will be tormented and cursed eternally.

**AM:** I think maybe Mike Dawson's "happy apple growers" comment [made prior to the start of the seminar] was partly because there doesn't seem to be a sense of history in the stuff I've read so far. They've been there since the Dawn, and the Dara Happans sort of came by and the Lunars sort of came by. No armies have marched out of...

**AM:** I can't see Sheng Seleris sort of coming by and not [unintelligible]

**AM:** Well, there were far more interesting places to go across.

**IW:** "We don't like the booze they brew. They don't have any gold. They don't have any great treasures. They don't have any temples we can loot. Let's go raid somewhere else."

**AM:** ... content and sat there and didn't raid anybody else?

**HS:** Well, one of the things I'm starting to develop is what happens in the period after the Dragonkill War. I think they do have expansion. I think they do conquer certain lands that are part of Holay or Vanch. I think it reaches its culmination in the whole episode of Jannisor.

Jannisor going off to march against the Red Emperor. He joins the Dara Happans and helps them to liberate part of their land. Together they defeat the Red Emperor and finally reach a culminating battle at the inner gates of the city of Glamour itself. I think there are more militaristic aspects of it because the Imtherians have money to buy things, because they have copper and bronze in their mines.

**IW:** I think one thing is that they don't have a history of successful expansionism. They're batting zero. Dragonkill was a massive disaster.

**HS:** Yes.

**IW:** It sounds like 98% of the ruling elite went off to do this great and holy thing for their god and they didn't come back - any of them!

Then there's Jannisor's rebellion, which is successful at first. And we're fighting these [unintelligible] and they don't come back either. But you've still got a section within the mythos where the individuals who want to go off and do individually heroic things can follow the Trickster path, which isn't really socially acceptable. It's not like the Orlanthe idea "This is what you should do".

Has anyone ever heard the filksong, "Welsh History 101?" Basically, it's "\*This\* is my family and \*this\* person is trying to become king. But he's my second cousin's ex-brother's wife's sister's lover, and he did \*this\* to us, so every time he tries anything I stop him. And feuding with my neighbors all the time - we really should get together and fight the English. But!..." That's the traditional Orlanthe: going off, killing people, stealing their cattle, doing heroic things.

I think there is a definite role for happy apple growers in Glorantha. Not everybody are these big, expansionist, war-loving cultures. And Imther sounds like a great place for an adventurer to escape from.

**HS:** There is an aspect of that. It's next to Balazar. And, there are aspects of expansion. My current campaign is actually expanding east along the Elf Sea, and that is going to have significant consequences. Off to the Northeast is Garsting, the first Blank Land. I think there has been a constant history of raids, battles, expansion, and contraction against that whole area that I haven't really explored heavily, because that is a Blank Land and is a point where you can interject some of your own personal stuff.

**AM:** I was thinking more about the military aspects or something... how the



Orlanthi - their raids are completely clan-based in the way they go normally. And they group a couple of clans together...

**IW:** You and your mates go raiding...

**AM:** Exactly, it is you and your mates. Whereas...

**HS:** Imther has about nineteen clans at the moment and the clans are not all mutually nice, happy, apples growers. They have different traditions. There are clans which are very oriented towards goat herding. There are clans that are apple growers; there are clans that are cattle herders. There are clans that are exceptionally oriented towards hunting, particularly in the Eastern wilds where they have a lot of rolling forest.

**AM:** How does the idea of the Warrior fit in? Are you a goat-herder warrior or are the warriors specialized?

**HS:** Each of the clans has a clan leader and one of the aspects of the Dara Happan influence is that generally the families which are the clan leaders are hereditary clan leaders. Those families in particular draw a retinue of warriors around them and leave the rest of the clan to do what they need to do in terms of their basic existence but paying tribute to the clan leader.

**AM:** Its very much more the idea of the staunch defenders of the place that people come, as opposed to being the raiders.

**JP:** Yes, and in fact although Khelmal

***“The joke is that the Orlanthe have been duped by this Trickster, who claims to be the leader and King of the Gods.”***

is a fighter, he's not the one who generally initiates stuff. Arahar is the general, but the stories about how Arahar does this and Arahar does that are about protecting the Sky (which is where the spirits of the dead go). It's protection rather than expansion.

**AM:** Yeah, that's what I see of the whole place, which is good because everything else is expansionist.

**IW:** Well, the thing which is dominating is its geography. If a bunch of Imtherian riders go down into the flatlands they're going to get massacred. Right. Pike blocks will roll over them, cavalry will hit them and surround them. On the other hand, if they stay at home, they can do the things that mountain people have always done, which is the reason all across Europe why the mountain areas never really got feudalized. If you'll forgive a bit, because big men on horses don't work. The thing is, the culture is determined by their geography; their theology is determined by their culture. So their war gods spells will be very useful for the sort of things they'll doing in their own country, but will go very badly if they try to build a fort on the outside.

**JP:** But there's another thing which some people may not realize. When Harald originally created Imther, it was much larger than what you see on the map today. Suddenly, Harald was faced with "Imther is this tiny, little kingdom in the mountains, with a sterile King."

**HS:** Right.

**JP:** And then he had to say, "Hmm. How does that fit in with this big Imther that I've got right now?" And the answer is there was a civil war, which had a lot of influence, because the Lunars want to do certain things. It's an allied kingdom; it is not one of the provinces. It hasn't got a governor per

se, right? It's not like Darjinn, or one of the...

**HS:** It does not have a sultan or satrap or whatever..

**JP:** There's problems. The original

Yelmatio place is now a Khelmal temple, right?

**HS:** Yes.

**JP:** And it's now in Holay, while it used to be in Imther.

**IW:** OK. But is Imther defined as this area full of hills, mountains, goat herds, apple trees and stuff that isn't flatlands, grazing and river farms?

**HS:** That's probably a pretty accurate description of it. It has expanded into lower land, river valleys at points...

**IW:** Through historical accident. They're not Orlanthe. I could imagine in this situation you got this mob of Orlanthe that get crusaded against by the Dara Happans every 300 years or so, when the Emperor feels like it. They're desperately holding onto their traditions, but it didn't happen that way.

**HS:** No. Interestingly, in some of Greg's recent stuff, the Kingdom of Vanch, I think, would have been originally viewed as Orlanthe type of area. But it actually turns out it's much more Dara Happan in nature. The Sankorites, or whatever...

**IW:** You get beaten up every fifty or so years, you start to adapt! Just as an aside, that's why the Ukraine has put out so many damn many good pig products. They got raided by the Turks for six hundred years and all they're left with are the pigs! (laughter)

**AM:** Can you summarize how the Imtherians feel about their neighboring cultures? Do they think Orlanthe are barbarians, or kind of like us only...

**HS:** Orlanthe are termed Barbarians and I think the classic joke is that the Orlanthe have been duped by this Trickster, who claims to be the leader and King of the Gods.

**IW:** "He's convinced them that he's





he likes to you. There are a lot more rules about Orlantic tricksters in Imther.

**AM:** They're a little more responsible and civilized.

**JP:** Yeah, they are. And in wedding ceremonies - we were hoping to be able to run a wedding ceremony - but Orlantic tricksters (there's at least one per village), you expect them to try and play a trick on the married couple, but it's bad luck if nothing happens. So you have this balance between you'd better make sure it's not too bad. And that's

***“In wedding ceremonies, you expect Orlantic tricksters to try and play a trick on the married couple, but it's bad luck if nothing happens.”***

what the Khelmali, the groom's friends are saying, “Oh my goodness, we gotta make sure the Trickster is funny but not Real Bad. And on the other side, the Orlantic trickster is saying, “I want to top what ever anybody's done in this village. This guy will not dare show his face - or the woman.”

**HS:** Yeah.

**JP:** And it's a great tension, but it's got to be there, or you don't have any luck.

**AM:** A mundane question: What sort of language do they speak in Imther? Given they're an apple-growing, mountain society, how would you tell them apart if you suddenly transferred there from, say, Sartar?

**HS:** I've always basically assumed the language is a Theyalan-Pelorian tongue, much as, I think Talaster is a Theyalan-Pelorian tongue and Sylilan, I think, is the same. And Tarsh is another Pelorian-Theyalan tongue. So I think someone from Tarsh going into Imther would be able to understand a fair bit of the language.

Someone coming from Sartar, where you have the Manirian family of language, will have more difficulty in the language.

**AM:** How about clothes and buildings and temple structures?

**HS:** Buildings typically in a village are wooden. They will have at least one building of stone and typically the clan chief's villa is of stone. The granary/storage area is going to be of stone. And probably the temples are of stone as well, because that has associations with the Earth Mother.

**IW:** Are there any trolls in Imther?

**HS:** I think rarely you will get some

trolls coming through, mostly from the Elder Wilds. I think there has to be some route for trolls from the Elder Wilds to go from where they are to the Yolp mountains, other than going up all they way through the Blue Moon plateau.

**AM:** What happens on the Blue Moon plateau when they run into more trolls, and don't have any [unintelligible]?

**HS:** It's a much longer way to go.

**IW:** They may have fights with trolls, and they may prefer a bunch of apple growing people who will chuck some spears at them, but as long as they don't get too serious nobody is that worried.

**HS:** There's a number of possibilities. They could venture into Tork, although I think they have problems getting back out if they're on a Chaos killing mission. Dwarves are always good targets, and you can find dwarves in both the Imther and Jord mountains. So that whole range is a nice...

**IW:** Good targets. They tend to be tough to get, but they taste good when you manage it.

**HS:** Exactly. I think they are found occasionally; they are pretty rare

though.

**AM:** The typical settlements are ...

**HS:** Typical village size is probably between 100 and 200.

**AM:** Made up of extended families, or...

**HS:** Extended families. I'm hoping in a future issue of this little magazine (because I've got to plug that)...

**IW:** Extended family is sort of nuclear families that live in the same village or under one hut, as the Orlanthi model?

**HS:** What it ends up being is a parent will have a building structure which is centered around a hearth. Their children will grow up in there and as their sons marry, they build an addition onto that.

**AM:** With the importance of the hearth - with their own hearth?

**HS:** With their own hearth, yes. It's part of becoming married - the groom to be has to construct his own hearth and arrange appropriate hearth gifts so that the first will start and will provide for that family.

Well, I guess at this point, we need to close up. I am on the Gloranthan Digest, so you can reach me there. You can buy the *New Lolon Gospel* downstairs in the game room, and I hope to come out with more issues within the year.<sup>1</sup> If people have an interest or ideas along the Imtherian line, let me know, because I certainly take ideas and develop those.

Thanks.

<sup>1</sup> The *New Lolon Gospel* is Harald Smith's fanzine about Imther. For more information, Harald can be reached via email at:

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## GMing in Glorantha

**KEY:****KR: Ken Rolston (co-host)****SP: Sandy Petersen (co-host)****PD: Philip Davis (co-host)****AM: Audience Members**

**KR:** Hi, and welcome to game mastering for RuneQuest/Glorantha. My name is Ken Rolston, author and RuneCzar emeritus. On my left is Phil Davis, who'll now introduce himself in some hopefully wholesome way.

**PD:** The worst I'll probably do is talk too much. My name is Phil Davis. I've been running Glorantha (except for one 18 month gap) every week since 1984. I haven't published anything, although I have written a lot of stuff. I tend to talk a lot. And, I have a grand reputation in my own mind. But, I have been doing this a long time!

**SP:** If you can believe it, what Phil really is known for is being a game master. He's famous just for being a game master!

**PD:** Well, sometimes you can do this and have a life, and sometimes you make it your life. \*That's\* Sandy Peterson, and this is all his fault!

**KR:** Well, his and Greg's. (laughter)

**SP:** Yes. I've been game mastering RuneQuest on and off since the first edition (in 1978 I believe). I bought it on the strength of *White Bear, Red Moon*, which I had played and thought it was a kind of cool boardgame. I first bought *White Bear, Red Moon*, then I bought *Nomad Gods*. Later I ran across the *RuneQuest* book, looked on the back cover, and said, "Cool! This is about the guys from *White Bear, Red Moon!*" So, I came into it in kind of a bass backwards way. I don't know how many people came into Glorantha from the boardgame first, but... So, I'm still actively game mastering RuneQuest, and like it a lot.

**KR:** To the degree to which we have themes, or that I've given much thought

to themes, the current theme that I'm concerned with (it's a personal theme) is the balkanization of styles in Glorantha. Because, there are so many different attitudes to how much rules players can tolerate. And I'm here, in my own mind, as a representative of the "rules free" campaign. Essentially. Because the last RuneQuest campaign I played actively in ended about nine months ago, when I moved down to Washington DC. But, it was a Pavis campaign with a family of Orlanathi children, ages 9 to 13. And, that included a pair of twin girls. And, there were many conflicts that could be resolved without using pointed objects. And that's my personal point of view. I don't believe we used rules more than one percent of the total time we were playing.

**SP:** Ken is really infamous in the wargame designing community as being someone who absolutely hates reading rules.

**KR:** Or writing them! I just hate them!

**SP:** I've been brooding on this darkly for a while. And, I have realized that I do use the RuneQuest rules, which are to some extent my personal "house rules" because I've helped publish the game. But I've found that, because I've been playing since 1978, I don't have to think to use the RuneQuest rules anymore. To me, using the rules is just like not using the rules. With me the players don't need to know many of the rules to play, and I just GM away. Anyway, with a RQ character sheet you can tell what a character can do just by looking at the numbers. My 12 year old son, who sometimes joins my campaign, still can't figure out which die to read when rolling a d100. But, that's the largest obstacle we have! And, we often spend many weeks of play without anyone pulling out anything pointy, except maybe to threaten somebody with or to open up a beer can. (laughter)

But, we do get combat. And every once in a while a pirate raid or whatever

is just what's needed for my purposes as a game master.

Now, what's this seminar called?

**PD:** "GMing in Glorantha"

**SP:** Oh. Um. Well, it's much like GMing in any other world. <Ken rolls his eyes and slumps onto the table.> (much laughter) With the additional threat of having the player know something you don't.

**AM:** But, that's a risk anywhere. There's always going to be someone who knows more than you do about something. Someone who knows more about beer brewing, or...

**SP:** OK. Yes. I suppose that's true. But in Glorantha you have all the same risk any GM has, plus the risk of some smart-aleck player saying something like, "But there is no King of Imther! There is only a Queen! Ha ha!" (laughter) Then you just have to—

**PD:** No. What you do is, you just blame it on Greg! You say, "Well, last week Greg said there is a King!" And then the smart-aleck looks at you, and then he goes and talks to Greg, and then—

**SP:** Well, what you have to do is to have a set number of tricks you use to wheedle out of something like that. OK?

**PD:** Yes.

**KR:** Right. A repetoir of things.

**SP:** Something else I have come to a conclusion on (that I will hold until I am shown otherwise) is that there are four styles of campaigns, that are all mixed together. You remember the Four-fold path?

**KR:** Rest his soul.

**SP:** Yes. Well, there are also three styles of game mastering, best exemplified by these three examples:

Player: When we leave the hotel,



we're going to stop at the Chinese restaurant along the way, get some food, and then head out to get the bad guys!

**GM Style #1:** I didn't say there was a Chinese restaurant along the way!

**GM Style #2:** Actually, it's an Indian restaurant, but that's fine.

**GM Style #3:** OK.

Essentially, it's how much the players are being GMed. If you're an extremely anal-retentive game master, who must control all aspects of the world, that's Style 1. And I've played in those campaigns, and there are players who like that a lot! And, there are players that don't.

I'll admit, I tend toward a mix of Styles 2 and 3. And the only reason I tend to say "It's an Indian restaurant" and not "OK" is because I sometimes have things I actually need to have in the campaign. If I always let the player invent everything they want, then when they hit something they can't invent (because I actually have something planned there) then they know they need to watch what they do. Like, if I say, "Well, no, there's no light down that alley," they'll go, "Aha! There's probably a bad monster down there!" or something. So, if I let them create everything, they can detect all my secrets.

**KR:** I have the same practice, but it's for a different general rule. The rule is that I always want conflict in the character. If the character wants "A", the best he's going to get is "A" with some strange twists that immediately generate some squabbling and fussing. Never is he going to be able to get exactly the kind of food he wants, for example. (laughter) If it is a Chinese restaurant, it's Hunan and not Schezuan. Whatever it is, it's a reason for him to chew the scenery and complain, and attack people.

**AM:** So, your players can't eat at Geo's?

**PD:** "Well, you can, but the food is bad today."

**KR:** Either that, or it's been bought out by a new chain. "Whaaaa? This is a Geo's?! It's run by the Lunars!!

Aaaaargh!"

**SP:** The next time my players ask to eat at Geo's, I'll say, "Eat at Geo's? Ewww!" And they'll say, "Oh, it's not good?" Then I'll say, "No one eats at Geo's except poor people!"

**KR:** "Poor and stupid people!" (laughter)

**SP:** My own style in running a campaign, which is admittedly not for everyone (and maybe even not for many people), is that I try to get a pretty complete campaign world with all kinds of things in it that I know are going on. And then I take the players, and I throw them into it and let them do whatever they want. I say, "OK. What do you want to do?" I don't lead them along paths, I don't lead them along stories. I have stories appear as they go along. I do have plots and stuff, but the players are very much left on their own without clues from me as to what they should do or where they should go next. And, I've played this style for many years.

And then, I moved to a different state, where the players weren't used to this. They were used to the game master kinda give them hints as to what was 'right'. So, I'd try to play with these guys. I'd say, "OK. You're in Sartar. What do you want to do?" And the players would say, "Well, maybe we should go to the Troll Woods?" and then look at me. And I'd say, "All right. That's OK." And the players would think I hadn't been enthusiastic enough and say, "Maybe we should go to the swamp?" or "What do they say in the bar about the swamp? What does our clan leader say about the swamp?" And I'd say, "They say the swamp is full of chaotic zombie ducks. What else would you expect?" (laughter) For a while I didn't understand what was going on, because I hadn't played in a campaign where the players didn't do whatever they wanted.

Now, I'm in yet another state where the players pretty much do what they want to do. The great nightmare now is that they somehow manage to single in on the one NPC with the very least background. (laughter) For example, all I have written down for someone is

"Bartender". And later, the PC's walk into the bar. I say, "Well, the bartender serves you some drinks." And they say, "What does he look like?" So I make something up, saying, "He's tall, balding, with an eye patch." And suddenly they're planning how to steal the eye patch off the guy, to see what's underneath! You know, "Maybe it's the Eye of Vecna!" (laughter) And I don't even know the guy's last name!! (laughter) The PC's want all these deep details; this forces you to think on your feet, which is a good thing, but still...

**PD:** One of the basic rules that I learned in game mastering is: complicate the players lives. And I find it works much better if you let the players complicate their own lives. And, as Sandy said, they'll pick on the oddest, most obscure, most unreasonably strange and tiny thing. Like a hole in the ground! Players will spend hours trying to get down the hole, to discover there's water at the bottom; it's a well. And, on the way, somebody will be drowned! (laughter) It's difficult to explain exactly why they do this, but I love it!

We're violently in agreement in style. My mechanics are as transparent as I can make them. I have players who have roleplayed for a considerable length of time who still don't know what their DEX strike rank is, or the difference between a melee strike rank and a weapon strike rank. But, the characters still manage to get into fights in my campaign. I have people who don't know the magic system. But, they still manage to have magic in my campaign. My PC's get to muck around, scream and yell and run in different directions, and all that; they sometimes survive and they sometimes don't. It's just that the players haven't had to learn all the rules. And that's OK with me. As a matter of fact, it helps me! Because they don't spend a lot of time thinking about the numbers, they can spend a lot of time thinking about what they're doing. And although I may get schizophrenic because they pursue NPC's remorselessly, asking questions like, "What color undergarments does the Inhuman King wear on Windsdays?" or "What fork should one use when eating fish with a



troll?"...

**KR:** You better find a troll and watch! That's the only way I know to find out!

**SP:** Someone I was talking to yesterday (I can't remember whether it was Nick Brooke or someone else) was pointing out the obvious problem is that the NPC you had done the least to develop seems the most mysterious to the PC's.

**KR:** Not only that, but for the players the payoff is the game master's dramatic reaction when he has to admit, "Well, I don't know that." Players instinctively go for the pleasure of watching the GM go <shrugs shoulders and looks puzzled>. (laughter) And it's a killer instinct!

**SP:** Yeah. "They always go for the sick and wounded!" (laughter)

**KR:** Right! And of course they gang up on you! But then, we encourage it by being such egomaniacs as games masters.

**SP:** And who do I play with? Well, there's one guy who knows a lot about Glorantha (Guy Hoyle, who some of you may know via the Internet), there's another guy who has played a little RQ before and knows a little about Glorantha, and then there's a bunch of guys who know have never played before and only know what they've learned in my campaign.

And, one of my guys, he's a pain! He's chosen to be a Humakti, although I have NO IDEA why! And he has already become "the Voice of Humakt" for the other PC's; when he wants to do something he will say (without the least bit of shamefacedness), "Humakt says \*this\*."

Like if someone else finds a sword, he'll say, "Humakt says that you should give ME the magic sword!" (laughter) Many players would at least go to the GM and ask, "What would Humakt think about this?" Not him! He knows what Humakt wants him to do!! (more laughter)

**PD:** I don't know. That sounds like pretty normal player behavior to me.

**AM:** My experience has sort of been the reverse.

I develop the characters I'm going to have to give the most details on over the course of the scenario. So, the players end up figuring out that they should go where there's more detail.

**SP:** Your players are obviously more disciplined and polite than mine! (laughter)

**AM:** I envy you in your campaign!

**PD:** You're lucky!

**KR:** That happened, I guess, when I started running convention scenarios with RuneQuest. It wasn't that way with *D&D* and other games, because I always knew pretty well what was going to go on. But (over a course of three or four RQ scenarios) I came to realize that if I laid out a length of things, I wasn't going to get the party through most of it. And, most of what was going to happen was that the players were going to begin to get into the roles that I'd given them, (because I always give complex characters. So, I just stopped having events that would automatically occur. All I would care about is having a beginning event and a final event. I needed an imaginative entry into the game. And, I needed something thing that would give them a good dramatic closure, that I just assumed that I'd have to weasel the players into at the end of four hours.

**AM:** Listening to you guys talk (and this is my first RuneQuest convention), I'm struck that you're not talking about a structured role-playing system where you have a set of "how things get done" rules. It's more that you provide an opportunity for a player to act out a character.

**KR:** But it's not necessarily always that way! It certainly wasn't in the beginning! Remember, although you're at a RuneQuest convention, you're listening to nothing but extremely aged balding pudgy veterans! (laughter)

**PD:** Well, two pudgy and everybody balding! (more laughter)

**AM:** What I'm saying is that it seems to me your styles have evolved from structure and rules to enjoying the role-playing aspect more than anything else.

**SP:** Well, Phil and I still both use the rules.

**AM:** But, you provide the dramatic entrance but the players go where they will. And you hope that they will get somewhere where you would like them to be to close it.

**KR:** Not in a campaign! I was just talking about scenarios. If I only have a four hours game, then I'll give the players a pay off. In a campaign situation, I have absolutely no comprehension of what will happen! I have what I think are "themes". I have some idea of some things that might happen. But I don't have dramatic episode closures, and I don't channel play at all. And, generally, things develop out of the drama of the characters. And that's because I cast my campaigns on the basis of two things; of characters who care very much about each other for some reason (that's why me last group played a family) and of character who had conflicts (within themselves and related to the outside world) that the players could improvise out of to build their own stories. And then I developed a theme, like 'Squidgy loses his puppy' (so they have to go find out if he got made into a "Bob's Bison" burger or something) or 'shopping for the Pavis Day roast' (because Mom won't take 'em shopping across the river, they have to go deal with a savage Praxian nomad themselves). Themes have nothing to do with what the player characters do. They're a broad thing; a way for the players to explore what their characters would do in that sort of situation.

**AM:** So, during play the characters develop?

**KR:** Right! One hundred percent!

**SP:** In my own campaign I don't have a dramatic closure either. What I will do is to have something happen at the start. For example, early on in my





current campaign I had fire rain down from the sky onto an island and it killed everyone.

**KR:** WOW! Dramatic entry!! (laughter)

**SP:** Well, the player characters were from this stupid god-forgotten little island in the middle of nowhere. Before the destruction, their island kin said, "We've been hunting bear all winter long. Here are all the bear skins. Using your boats, take the pelts and sell them. You'll be our link with the outside world!" (Or more like, "You're our young feckless guys who aren't important yet, so you can go do this. It's not like you're priests, or anything!") (laughter) So, the players took all the bear skins, and went off and traded. And when they returned, the island had been burnt to the ground. So, they had all the money from the skins, and a bunch of scorched dirt.

Now, my theory was, although I had no idea what they were going to do, I knew they were going to do something! (lots of laughter) And, the stuff they came up with is stuff I couldn't have dreamed up in a million years! To give you an example, one of the players (after his first character was killed and they were in Prax) rolled up an awakened herdman. The story was that he was a doted on like a pet lap dog by his Morokanth owner, and the Morokanth owner arranged that when he died his 'pet' would be awakened. The Morokanth's heirs were like, "I can't believe he spent the family fortune on a stupid herdman!" and kicked him out of the tribe. So, he was ambivalent about the Morokanth (although he kind of wanted to go back to rescue his mate). But then, he came up with this crazed plan! He was talking to the other players, and the conversation went something like:

"You know, we have this island with no one on it. Let's repopulate it."

"Hey! Let's get herdmen! They don't have any ancestors! They can be adopted into our ancestor worship!"

"Yeah! We'll awaken 500 herdmen, take them back to our island, and... well, the tundra's kinda like the desert! They'll learn to survive!" (loud

laughter)

So, my players are completely stark raving mad! (laughter) OK? I could NEVER have thought of doing this! (laughter) And they're now working towards that goal. Well, kind of. They're clear off in the East Isles or some horrible place right now, but they still say they're working towards this insane plan. And after this, I have another event planned for them in the near future, just to give them something else to think about. But the point is, I just throw things at them and then let them deal with it.

**AM:** This is about GMing in Glorantha, right? You [Sandy] said it's just like GMing anywhere, but you [Ken] put your head on the table. I want to hear more about what makes Glorantha different.

**SP:** What makes Glorantha different? OK. You have a whole lot of stuff already written down to use for campaign background. You have a really useful, complex, cumbersome, complete world full of stuff that you don't have to make up. (Not that making up stuff is bad! It's always good to make up your own stuff. But, there's only so much time you have to create your campaign world.) Glorantha has already had a significant amount developed for you, so that you can put all your effort into the stuff that will immediately matter to your players and their characters. So, in my opinion, the fact that you already have all this stuff written down is useful, if Glorantha is a fun place for you and your players to game in.

**PD:** The other difference that I have found is the depth Glorantha has. It's not so much that there's a lot of stuff written down, but there's stuff plotted out and developed for Glorantha that you just don't find in other publications.

The big thing that makes the difference is (I will now Become Pompous) the "mythic aspects" of Glorantha. I have tons of gaming stuff from all different sorts of sources. And most of them are like jigsaw puzzles; there's a pseudo-Egyptian culture \*there\*, next to a pseudo-Celtic culture

\*there\*, with a pseudo-<insert other> culture \*here\*. And they're all jammed together with no rhyme or reason. It doesn't make sense! It doesn't feel right. But, for whatever reason, Glorantha does.

Also, Glorantha tends to feel good because the edges are all mushy. Not everything is written down! And sometimes you have to go to obscure (sometimes unreliable) sources to get more information. "Always right, but never sure." It's just not cut and dried! People have to go to fanzines for information, or to people like Sandy and Greg for information, or people have to make it up themselves. It's not clear! And that's what makes it work, because people are looking at the soft edges of what's going on.

**KR:** There's also a cross-connection between game mastering and LARPS. In considering how Glorantha is different from other fantasy settings, I was thinking about the campaigns that I've played in or run. And the only thing I could think of that is vaguely like Glorantha is 'Historical Gaming.'

**SP:** And Tekumel!

**KR:** And Tekumel too (although I don't know it very well). And also, thinking about LARPS, why are Gloranthan LARPS so much better than any other fantasy setting LARP? I think it's because of the character themes. It's often in the mythic realm that Glorantha really shines. For example, in *How the West was One*, to have squabbling bishops being able to have "Tests of Faith" to convert one another! In almost any of the other published generic fantasy settings, you just can't work on that level. With the exception, I think, of *Vampire*. There are some recent games that have that same richness, with 'soup to nuts' detail built in to connect the character to the world. But, Glorantha has been around a lot longer than any of those, and it suits this mostly older audience. We're mostly people who grew out of *D&D*, and became a sophisticated, balkanized, pin headed, balding group. (laughter)

**SP:** I can think another reason that



Glorantha LARPS are better than other fantasy LARPS. I admit I've never played in a non-Glorantha fantasy LARP, but I've watched them being played. And I've encountered lots of people who say, "Boy, was that bad!" (I've also run non-fantasy LARPS, based on Casablanca and the Three Musketeers and movies like that. And they've all gone just fine.) I think one of the things that help a game to run well is for the players to know what the world is about. To know how to act, and to what to do. And if you're in a generic fantasy world, the fact of the matter is that you generally don't know that level of detail. Are elves friends with the trolls, or not? Who knows? But, if you know Glorantha and you're playing in a Glorantha LARP (and by and large, most Glorantha LARP players know Glorantha), you know how good friends elves are with trolls! (laughter) So, this level of meta-knowledge helps them to act in the right way. Also, any of the little gaps that you missed in writing the LARP can be covered over by the player's knowledge.

**AM:** That's actually one of my questions. One of the daunting things for me when I think of starting a Glorantha campaign is the level of detail. Without assigning the equivalent of a college course in reading materials, or becoming completely didactic and lecturing my players for 12 hours about Glorantha (which I could easily do)—

**SP:** Let them explore in play!

**AM:** Yeah. Well, one problem is that there's so much background, just growing up in an Orlanthi culture (for example), that is different. And, I really want to convey that feeling! What kind of tricks do you use? What do you do?

**KR:** Again, the most recent time that I took a bunch of new players was when I did this group of 9 year old to 13 year old characters in Pavis. And in doing that, I limited the amount that they had to fool with the mythology or anything. I basically had them treat the cults the way most kids treat their parent's church. They basically didn't like

going, because it was boring and it didn't make too much sense to them. They did what they were supposed to, but they'd rather be outside throwing rocks, catching frogs, playing games, and squabbling with people. So, all these issues of doctrine weren't important to explain. "You just know you hate the Lunars, and you throw rocks at them." (laughter) They don't necessarily have to have a real clear idea why, but they do know they do that! So it's important to have one or two characters in the group who know what they're supposed to do. In my game it was the 13 year old, and he was able to scold the other kids when they did things they were not supposed to do. So, that was my solution for how to deal with that. And, I agree. Glorantha's detail can be very intimidating to introduce!

**SP:** But you may not want to use preadolescent characters. I have three other techniques I've used.

**KR:** Yes. There are many different ways to introduce people to Glorantha.

**SP:** One technique I've used to to have the characters be cavemen. Anybody can play an ignorant caveman! Balazarings, or whatever. And they don't know anything about the 'outside' world, other than their little cave and the animals they hunt.

Another technique I've used is to have them play someone from a really big city. Because, they don't know anything about the way the world works either! They would know everything a 'modern' guy knows in Nochet (or wherever) and they think they're sophisticated and smart, but they don't really know anything about the 'real' world.

And the third technique I've used (which is what I used in my present campaign) is to take them from a society in flux. I said, "On your island, Ygg's Island, everyone has decided to stop worshipping Ygg (there's much "cooler" gods) and is looking for someone else to worship." They're trying to change into something else, but they're not sure which god they're going to worship instead or what the new culture will end

up like. The old culture is kinda like the Vikings, though. So, they could all be Vikings who didn't care about what their old culture was.

**KR:** An orphan train is another idea that just occurred to me. You know about the orphan trains in the United States? The government took orphans from the eastern cities and moved them out to the Midwest. So, maybe orphans from Alkoth get sent out to the Lunar Provinces where they get raised in some at least half-barbarian culture.

So, there are a lot of gags that you can use. (When I say "gag," that's not pejorative. It's a class of predictable payoffs.) But, the point is that you are right! You have to use a special narrow gag if you don't have players who are willing to invest the up front time to learn about Glorantha.

**PD:** I've been lucky. So far I've had groups who have been interested in Glorantha. What I've done is, I use my word processor until my eyes fall out, and I give them reading materials. And I tell them that it's necessary! I don't give them the Nochet Library, but I give them about an inch high stack of paper to read. That is what I did in my last campaign.

Recently, I've decided to change how I do this. I've come to a realization of what I think is a better way to do it. And, I take this inspiration from the White Wolf games: do a prelude with each individual character before the game.

**KR:** A very good idea! Great gag!

**PD:** It's absolutely the best thing! Take them off in a corner, and spend a one-on-one evening or two, whatever you need, setting the character up. Tell all the players it's going to take six or eight weeks to set the characters up and get the game going. Set it up with each of them, and do a one-on-one gaming session.

**KR:** Although, to talk commercial products, *River of Cradles* will do the job too. People will generally go through the trouble to read a supplement. Most of the people who



are sophisticated enough don't want the kind of a gag that you're going to give. People who want that kind of gag are going to take *River of Cradles*, they're going to smell the good food in there, and they'll be ready to play after they've read through it.

**PD:** To be commercial but obscure, the best thing I've ever seen along that line (as good as *River of Cradles* is) is still the old RQ II *Borderlands*.

**KR:** Yes. That's still wonderful.

**SP:** I agree.

**PD:** It's the best thing to use to introduce players to Glorantha that I've ever seen. But, I still like the use of a character prelude. It's intimate. It gives the GM an idea of what's inside the head of the player. It gives the player a look into the GM's brain too, and that helps.

**KR:** Yeah. <bit of silence> Does anybody else have any clever war stories or other questions?

**AM:** Yeah. I kinda do the flip side of what you've been talking about. I ask players who are creating new

***"One of the reasons I originally hated playing RuneQuest was that I could not play at the higher levels of the game."***

characters, for whatever reason, to write a prelude of their own. To take the time to write out something about the character; their background, their history, what they're hoping to do with their life. That way, walking into the game with a brand new character, the player already knows about their motivations. They don't have to 'wing it'.

**PD:** That works well if you have players who already know enough about Glorantha, so that you don't lose the Gloranthan feel. In my experience, when I've had people do that who didn't know enough about Glorantha, there can be problems. There's nothing like sitting down with someone who's written their own character alone and having to say, "Well, in Glorantha, it's

very difficult for a troll named 'Fred' to actually live in Sun Dome County." (laughter) And there are players who will take it personally! They'll say, "You gave me the right to write this stuff up. I want it to be this way! Why can't it be my way?" And then you can either go along and say, "OK" (which I did most of the time) or you have to say, "This is just not possible. You would be prevented by mythic, cultural, social, and political devices. And, if you still tried, you'd be killed!"

**AM:** Yeah, and a reasonable players will stand there going, "Yeah."—

**PD:** Agreed.

**AM:** And he wants to check with you, then that's OK. And it's not [unintelligible] character to live on.

**SP:** Right. That also is not necessarily the best possible choice, but...

**PD:** It's also the characters who, if you are in fact telling people, "Go ahead and write up what you'd like," you end up with these characters...

Well, one of the characters is an absolutely wonderful character who, after you look at him, is actually going

to sit in his house and hide under his bed all day. And, the next character is a very fine character, except he won't interact with the other three characters at all, ever, after about the first fifteen or twenty minutes of play.

**AM:** Well, you have to give them a societal structure to interact around!

**KR:** That's correct.

**SP:** I'm familiar with that problem. It's the syndrome where, if you're playing *Call of Cthulhu*, one of the players wants his character to be a professional baseball player or something. I've actually had this come up. I said, "Why would you go investigate the occult if you're a professional baseball player? Please, don't be a professional baseball

player! It would be incredibly hard to work you into my campaign, and I don't want to go through all that trouble. So, eat me." (laughter)

**PD:** "OK. So you're a professional baseball player who wants to hunt cultists? We'll just drop your SAN immediately!" (laughter)

**SP:** As a Cthulhu GM, I never have anyone start out wanting to hunt cultists (of course). So, part of my nightmare is that they have to have some reason to continually meet the occult. And professional baseball players, there's just not that many times that they interact with haunted mansions or anything. You know?

**AM:** Maybe he was just looking for a good luck charm!

**SP:** Well, maybe he was thinking, "I'll be athletic! I'll have a good baseball bat attack!" You know. (laughter) It was mad. I don't know what he was thinking.

**KR:** One of the reasons I originally hated playing RuneQuest was that I could not play at the higher levels of the game. I somehow felt that the players were entitled to the cheese that they sought (which was Rune-level power). And new kinds of problems and logistics were being created, with me having to learn more rules and places. And I guess I just came to the point where I intuitively decided I wanted to have extremely low level campaigns. Certainly, the recent 9 to 13 year olds campaign is an unusual expression of how much I felt that.

But I think that a low level campaign might be another way to go, if you're not certain about starting a Gloranthan campaign. If you make that theme clear to yourself, and perhaps even explicit to the players. (Although that I'm not clear on; a lot would depend on your players.) But, you can have an awful lot of fun playing in a culture without necessarily needing the little bits of cheese that other role playing games offer you.

**PD:** My first encounter with



RuneQuest, I just looked at it. I was running a *Dungeons and Dragons* campaign, and looking at RQ I said, “Oh! It’s a closed world! This is of no use!! Anyone who would make a close world is obviously too insecure in themselves to allow other people to try to switch it.” And I threw it over my shoulder.

A couple of years later, I looked at it again. I said, “Well! Look! It would be very difficult to have a RQ character who is described on one page of paper followed by seven pages of magic items! So, this looks really good to me!” (laughter)

As to the question of power levels, I like the ‘mythic’ aspect. So, I provide the opportunity for characters to become ‘movers and shakers’ and change the world. I like that a lot! I think adventurers are, by definition, crazy. And, crazy people change things. So, I go along with that. It makes for big threats and big difficulties, but there’s also big payoffs. And, it makes for players who have spent two to two and a half years really living a character to get to a point where that character just goes \*POP\* and disappears. And, that can be very frustrating. But, generally speaking, it works for me.

My first group was very nitty-gritty. They were escaped slaves. No gladiators. There were two housemaids, a farmer, and a little group of thralls who had been helping a blacksmith. And that was very nitty-gritty; they were occupied with getting enough food to stay alive, not being recaptured, and (although they didn’t know where “away” was) they were trying to get away.

My game has since graduated to something where I do things for which there are really no rules for at present (so I have to do that in my head), and it’s gotten very mythic. And, I enjoy that more. I think the players do too. I’ve never had any campaigns just fold, although I have had one person opt out of a game because she said it was too emotionally intense and was causing more stress than her job. So, she wanted to stop for a while. But, I think that was just a flavor difference. And, my players still don’t have characters with seven pages of magic items! (laughter)

**AM:** You were saying that what you like doing is getting things set up so that the players interact with the culture a lot. And, I’m thinking of restarting a RuneQuest campaign after a 5 year hiatus. What I was thinking I’d do is to take *Pavis* and *Big Rubble*, write down all the characters, and then draw one of those beautiful charts that White Wolf came up with for all the interactions between people. This way, I’d be able to see this huge network of connections. So, my question is, what else do you recommend for developing cities?

**KR:** Wow. Cities are heavy work. Since I’m a game designer, I end up making cities a lot for people. One great thing to do for ideas is to go to your local public library and look at the “J” section. “J” in the Dewey Decimal system. Get out all of the books on Roman cities or on Egyptian cities, and stuff like that. Those pictures and descriptions will give you a sense of place, so that you can improvise the setting when people do things in the city. That’s one gag.

**AM:** Are you suggesting that we use kids books—

**KR:** Yes. Precisely.

**SP:** Absolutely!

**KR:** “J” stands for “juvenile”. They are excellent! Kids like the same things that game players do. They like lurid action, they like magic,—

**SP:** They like instant gratification.

**KR:** Yes. And they particularly like the panoply and colour of warfare. So if you just take a look at any standard juvenile book, it has all of the same things you’ll find in a FASA game. (laughter) It’s a natural! They’re also real short, and they’ve got great big color pictures! QED. So, that’s one recommendation.

City campaigns are the most difficult campaigns for people making the transition from standard heroic gaming. Because heroic gaming ideally operates in a dark dungeon, where you can narrowly channel people. And then you

can build the dramatic nodes where there’s a big cave that’s got cool things in it, and then the bad things come it you in predictable ways.

Making that transition to a city is often a problem. And I think the best way to do it is to go to a convention and watch game masters who are running city scenarios and steal their “schticks”. Build up a collection of gags that you can pull from, that you are confident with. Kinda like the Anglo-Saxon literative poets, who basically built their poetry on the run because they had these “kennings”, these little things that always worked for them. So that you know that you will have these running gags that, whenever you don’t know exactly what to do, you’ll feel comfortable because you know these gags will work. So, that’s another thing that can be really helpful.

**SP:** I frankly found it easier not to start out in a city. It’s easier to start outside the city, and have the characters go there for Market Day. The, the players can have wilderness adventures on the way there and back. Wilderness adventures are less structured than a dungeon (which is good) and yet you still kind of know where the bad guys are, even if it’s only a bear who is stealing a sheep.

And, my player characters hardly ever go into cities. Of course, I run much more traveling than a lot of game masters. Many game master like to focus in on a single area of the world. My game has ranged from Ygg’s Islands on the west coast of Genertela to the East Isles, with my PC’s always traveling.

But, I think to be outside, in the wilderness, is the archetypal RuneQuest adventure in my campaign. My game almost always involves doing something outside. The city is like some hideous alien place! It’s easy to give the players the sense that the city is teeming with lots of intricate schemes, with different factions fighting one another. Like, you go somewhere and notice that Priest A is glaring at Priest B. So you say, “Ooh! The city! It’s bad! It’s full of intrigue! Get me back to the outside, where



there's broos and morokanth and good clean air!"

**KR:** "And you can sleep anywhere, not just on the streets! And you don't get rousted by the guards. And you know you can kill a chicken if you happen to find one."

**SP:** "And you're allowed to wear your armor!" So, wilderness is a good place to start. And then, after a couple of weeks of the PC's playing in the wilderness and visiting the city every once in a while, you [the GM] will have been forced to develop what's going on in the city by the player interactions with the city people. If you game master anything like we do (which is to have the players make up what's going on) you'll know the things they care about. When they've gone back to the Lhankor Mhy temple again and again, you'll have been forced to have figured out all the interaction of all the different factions there. So then, if they want to move into the city, you've got the areas they're most interested in completed.

**KR:** I'd have to say I'm hard pressed to think of a single example in any genre of the published introductory scenario for city play that I could use as a model. Oh! Actually, "Welcome to the City" from *Pavis*! Although, I wrote it. It's probably the only one I know, because I read it carefully enough!

**SP:** Oh! Sure! With the crippled bison guy outside the city gates, telling the characters how bad the city is! Yeah!

**AM:** What about *Vampire: the Masquerade*?

**KR:** *Vampire*, again, I'm not that familiar with.

**SP:** But there you're talking a different type of city. *Vampire* or *Call of Cthulhu* is urban, but it's a modern city. Players know how they work. (Or, at least they think they do.) *Pavis* doesn't work at all like that!

**KR:** There are great published things that we game designers think are cool,

but they're not necessarily good for beginners. Like *Sanctuary in Chaosium's old Thieves' World* supplement.

**PD:** Or *Carse* and *Tulan of the Isles*.

**KR:** But, I wouldn't say those are very good models for how to run a campaign.

**SP:** No. They're just tools for if you already have a campaign and you need a city fast.

**KR:** Are there any suggestions of published things that you can steal gags from for city play?

**AM:** My favorite city idea was in *Different Worlds*, which said to throw out all the maps and just draw boxes with "market here" and "two hour walk to the [unintelligible] merchants".

**PD:** The [unintelligible] adventure style.

**AM:** But you have to remember that most people in Glorantha don't have a very good conception of how the world is laid out. They don't know exactly where things are or how long it would take you to get there. And most people don't live in cities. Or, if they go to the city, all they see is a huge conglomeration of bricks and wood.

**SP:** Yes. A big maze.

**AM:** "So, how long is it going to talk to walk across town?" They don't know! They're lost, all the time!

**KR:** Also, there aren't that many Gloranthan cities to play in. *Pavis* is it, really, for me. I can't imagine playing in any of the other cities. So, you're kinda stuck, really.

**SP:** Well, I actually always give my players good maps, because I find that it impels them to go to obscure corners of the world where there's cool stuff waiting for them.

**KR:** "Here be monsters."

**SP:** Yeah. "Hey! Look at this. This

mountain range is shaped like a dragon's head! Let's go check it out!"

**PD:** Generally speaking, in my experience, a 'city' is still 'people'. What the players remember is not the lay out of the Lhankor Mhy temple, but—

**AM:** I'm not particularly interested in that. I am considerably more interested in... I'm probably going to actually keep the politics as written in *Pavis*, and draw that out first. Then what I want to do is to flesh out another two or three layers of people, so that I have that info.

**KR:** You need that information. Absolutely. Unfortunately, there are no published sources for that sort of thing.

**AM:** So I'll have 250 people, or something.

**KR:** Well, you need to know who the people are who will deal with the "regular people". And I bet that stuff doesn't exist commercially.

**SP:** I would suggest that you figure out who are the guys that deal with your player characters, and just do them. Figure that, "Sure, the Yelmadio priest has some goons working for him", but they'll be nameless guys (that are wearing eye patches or whatever) until the party starts to deal with them. And that's when you make those guys. Start out with just 10 or 15 guys detailed, and then create the rest as they meet your player characters.

**AM:** I have 3 by 5 cards just with names on them. And then, as people interact, I pull out a card and start writing down who that person is. "I need a bartender?" OK, \*this\* guy's a bartender!"

**KR:** I always have names! I try never to be caught GMing without a name. I have long lists of names, and if I've got nothing else to do I steal names from somewhere. And, as you say, you don't know anything at first except you need a bartender. But, none the less, you are at least never embarrassed by saying, "His name is Sargent Cardboard." (That's my generic title for a guy I



refuse to give the PC's any details about.) (laughter)

**AM:** But then, if it appears to me that this guy's going to be important, I've got some details of what I've already told them about him. And then between games I can go around and develop the additional detail that I'll need, because I know that the players will eventually go back and talk with him again.

**PD:** For that matter, look at plays for people. Individual characters out of plays. Individual characters out of history. Steal characters from wherever you can! Some of them may need to be twisted and turned, but generally speaking they're at least... Not necessarily the names, but the character.

**KR:** It would be amazing to me if there were no good role playing products that do that, that you can steal from, but I admit that I'm drawing a complete blank on it.

**PD:** There are some products out for physically designing cities, including some computer programs with built in notational data bases. But, I don't know of anything that's published that gives you a real—

**KR:** The Midkemia Press book *Cities*, which has been reprinted by Avalon Hill as *RuneQuest Cities*, gives you tables talking about the kinds of places you'd find in a city. So, it's nice to know that you'll find a very bad smell \*here\*, because there's a leather tannery near by. That kind of stuff adds texture to your sense of place. You want that.

**SP:** I often use that book and never roll any percentile dice. It's just nice to have the lists of stuff to put in a city. "Oh! A tannery! YES! The player character's hotel room HAS to be next to a tannery!" (laughter) Or a paper making shop. Stuff like that.

**PD:** Or a fish-parts dump.

**SP:** Or stables!

**KR:** That sort of thing creates so much

conflict! Because the PC's simply don't want to go to that hotel. And then your characters start squabbling, and find out it's too expensive to stay in the clean-smelling part of town... (laughter)

**SP:** One of the reasons I do this to my parties (and I really do put them in these bad places) is because when the players say, "We want to stay at an inn," and I ask how much they're characters are willing to spend, they say, "We want the cheapest place around, so we can save our money for useful things!" And so, then they find themselves in the hotel next to the tannery. "One penny a night." And that's when they say, "Right. I guess we're going to pay more!" (laughter) And then they do.

**KR:** My players would not spend an extra bolg, even if they're in the worst place! They're so cheap because they can't imagine that sleeping is actually worthwhile in a game. (laughter) They just don't see it! And you know, it just never occurred to me that they should have nightmares and constantly have fatigue problems!

**SP:** And the next morning they'd have fleas!

**PD:** And people walk out of the room when they walk in. "\*Whew!\* Something stinks!" And when they ask "What's for dinner?" they are told "Well, there's a few old boiled potatoes, and some 'elderly' cabbage. Here, just let me shave off a few of it's 'whiskers'!" "You expect us to eat that?" "Well, what do you expect for a penny a night?" (laughter)

**KR:** This is all true; it just never occurred to me.

**SP:** And then the troll in the party says, "But I like the smell here! I don't want to move!"

**KR:** I'm often uncomfortable with Greg, because while I love the mythic thing, I always feel like if I ask him for a slice of Gloranthan life he's going to just get a fishy-eyed stare at me. He has a fantastically grand sense of the broad sweep of things, but I often don't

think he considers what a guy does when he get up in the morning and walks out of his house. And I think that would have been the role of some other kind of game designer, that would have done materials for Glorantha, and that person's just never really showed up.

**SP:** Well, I think I did!

**KR:** Well, you in many ways, except you did cultures! It wasn't places! It wasn't "where people live."

**SP:** True. It wasn't places.

**PD:** Well, I've been able to get slices of life from Greg so long as I've been specific and Orlanthis about it. If you're specific to an Orlanthis culture and you can get Greg pinned down one-on-one, he'll answer you.

**KR:** But... Were you here for Harald Smith's seminar on Imther? Harald, I think, has a very strong sense of detail! And it's what I adored about reading his unpublished manuscripts! And this is what Greg's work lacks!

**SP:** He knows the names of the Imtherian cheeses!

**KR:** Yeah! He just cares about that stuff. And finding someone who can publish materials like that is what Glorantha needs! Mike Dawson cares about Galastar in a similar way, and he might have the same kind of detail there. So, there are many fanzines now that are producing that kind of material. You need to track them down!

**SP:** Yes! That's true.

**PD:** Yes. Look at the "fanatic" publications, because they can spend a lot more time on that sort of detail than professionals will. Because professionals think it isn't worth the money or the time.

**KR:** And it surely isn't. It just isn't. We can't afford to do this.

**SP:** Well, thanks a lot for listening!

**KR:** The mass is ended. Go in peace.



## Lunar Tunes

**KEY:**

**MOB:** Michael O'Brien (host)

**NB:** Nick Brooke (co-host)

**DH:** David Hall (co-host)

**AM:** Audience Member

**Warning:** There is information contained in this transcript which can potentially ruin playing the upcoming RQ product *Soldiers of the Red Moon*.

**MOB:** It's really exciting to have seen *Lords of Terror* finally come out. The next product that will be coming out is called *Soldiers of the Red Moon*, and will be about life in the Lunar Army. Much of it is currently sitting in this folder here, as I need to discuss it with Mike Dawson (who will be doing the developing work for it). I hope to have it finished fairly soon. It's taken me quite a bit longer than I'd anticipated. It's actually going to be a two book set. It'll have a cover that will link together to form one tableau, so I'm looking forward to that. The first book will consist of material specifically about the Lunar Army, and a number of scenarios to do with enlisting in the Lunar Army, and training, and so on. The second book is a fairly epic scenario, involving the player characters going down to Sartar and becoming involved in a tribal rebellion. It will include things like Lunar songs (as we've got here), and lots of local color. One of the things I'm really hoping to get in... if you've seen the Osprey *Men At Arms* series, which involves a color plate of various soldiers and a description of what they're wearing, we hope to do something like that in one of the books as well. It may not actually be a color plate...

**NB:** Well, the art's going to be in color!

**MOB:** We'll try our hardest with Avalon Hill on that one. But we hope to emulate something like that. I have here with me David Hall (who has put together a lot of the material about the way the Lunar Army is organized) and Nick Brooke (who is a very handy person to have on hand at any panel where you are discussing Glorantha, the

Lunars, or whatever). What I propose we do is, if you have some questions you'd like to ask about what's happening with the product, we'll see if we can answer them for you. And, a little bit later on, we might actually even sing some of the Lunar tunes that are going to be in the product. Well, we'll be singing! You can join in, if you wish. (laughter) I'll just warn you though, that I'm an elementary school teacher, and the only time that I use singing and music in my classes is as a punishment! I threaten to sing to my children if they're bad, so.... (laughter)

**NB:** So keep the questions coming!

**AM:** What are you doing with Lunar sorcery, as it relates to the Army?

**MOB:** That is a hard question. This product won't be featuring rules for large battles between different armies, and so on. If you remember the Cradle scenario in *Pavis*, it just told about Lunar magic descriptively without using game mechanics. That will be how it's done in *Soldiers* as well. We'll talk about how Lunar magic is done in the Army, on an individual and small unit level, but not as an overall thing.

**NB:** I have something to add further to that. A friend of mine, Chris Gidlow (who wrote *Credo*) is working on some ways that Lunar magic might work which would fit the descriptions. One of the things he came up with, which I'm actually quite keen on, is that you have spells that require several casters to get them off. Like, we were thinking of the Minor Class II spells. (We're keeping the Stalinist names from *White Bear Red Moon* straight. We think it's hilarious that they've got these numbers on their schools!) One of the Minor Class II spells we're thinking of calling "the Mask of the Red Death." So, one guy will cast the Left Eye of the Red Death, someone will cast the Right Eye, someone will cast the Tongue, someone will cast the Hair, and so on. You need seven people simultaneously casting spells for the whole thing to work. And,

you can't learn more than one spell from the school. They look at the enlistment record and see what you've taken, so you can't go back and take duplicate courses. So, you can make some pretty powerful spells! We're talking about Summon Founder rune level magic. But, because you need seven people around to cast the spell, you don't often need to write them up and they certainly wouldn't come into normal game play. That's just a model for one way it might work.

The other thing we've always thought is that it's very wrong to think there's only one kind of Lunar magic, that the Lunar College of Magic amounts to a one spell write up. They teach everything there! They're not just military magicians. They teach all kinds of Lunar sorcery, spirit magic, divine magic, chaos magic, weird stuff. Doing a full write up of the Lunar College of Magic would probably be about as long as the magic book from the RuneQuest III rules. All I know is that they walk around in red and black robes, and some of them are bald, and some of them have pointy hats, and they cast weird spells that alarm people!

**MOB:** And are known as "Lady", as well!

**NB:** Oh yeah! That's quite a good point! Everyone knows that the generic term for a Lunar rune priest is "Priestess". Now, this is because the magic side of the Lunar Empire is the feminine side. So, all members of the Lunar College of Magic are addressed by feminine titles. So, we have...

**MOB:** Lady Dushan!

**NB:** Lady Dushan, a Carmanian mage with a huge bristling beard! It's very impressive! (laughter) The counter side of that is that all military officers are addressed as "Sir".

**MOB:** Including women. And there are women in various parts of the Lunar Army, which is another thing we need to lead on to. There is no simple



monolithic description of how the Lunar Army is organized. Each of the regiments is organized in its own fashion. There is some uniformity, and there is in fact a movement going around trying to make the Lunar Army more uniform.

**NB:** Gray Stalinist bureaucracy! (laughter)

**MOB:** While that is going on, there are also others who are trying to keep it separated. The reason this is the case is, of course, that there are so many disparate elements within the Lunar Army. You have the Dara Happans, you have the New Lunars, you have the Provincials, and so on.

If you've seen *Tales of the Reaching Moon*, in Issue 12 there is a description of a regiment called the Granite Phalanx. Are most of you familiar with that? Read it, or at least seen it? O.K., that's a description of one regiment, and it's a fairly typical example of a Lunar Heartlands regiment.

Now, you could write up another Phalanx, which would have a completely different history and may have a completely different way it organizes itself.

**NB:** You could use a different language for the ranks of different officers and such, if you don't like the "Lochagos, Hoplite" business. You could use different rune magic. The Granite Phalanx is an example. You know, I'd be very happy if people thought the Marble Phalanx was identical to it, or very similar. But, you don't need to.

**MOB:** But you don't need to. In fact, what we'll be giving you in the product are some ideas for if you want to invent your own regiment yourself. And that way, it gives gamemasters the opportunity to create things on their own, rather than if we just present you with how the entire Lunar Army is organized, where every single regiment is stationed, and so on. We wanted to have it so that you have the opportunity to be creative yourselves and create your own regiments. So, we'll give you an example of the myth behind a particular regiment, the history behind

a particular regiment, the way a particular regiment is organized, and so forth. In fact, we'll be giving to you for two regiments. There will be either the Granite Phalanx or another similar Heartlands regiment and there will be a Provincial regiment. The Provincial regiment will be known as the New Lolin Foot.

**NB:** It's a very provincial regiment!

**MOB:** Extremely provincial! The New Lolin Foot is a brand new regiment that is being formed, and this is where the player characters come in. After they've been formed and trained, they get sent down to Sartar—

**NB:** To be killed! (laughter)

**MOB:** And in Sartar they garrison a fort inside the tribal lands of the Sambari, and they begin to find out what's going on. They'll learn that there's a real dichotomy involved with how people see the Lunars. Some people see them as good, some people see them as bad.

**NB:** "What have the Lunars ever done for us?"

**MOB:** Well, that's exactly right. "What have the Lunars ever done for us?" "Well, they've brought us roads!" "Drainage." "Civilization." "Culture." And so on. O.K., we've talked on again for ten minutes, so let's have another question.

**AM:** What are the functions of the Priests and Lords of the cult of Yanafal Tarnils in the Lunar Army? I'm asking specifically about Yanafal Tarnils, as that's the one you hear about the most, but this can apply to other martial cults. Because, if they're spending 90% of their time on temple duties, they're not necessarily getting a lot of experience commanding troops or anything!

**MOB:** Their temple duties are, in fact, serving in the Army. The way it works is—

**NB:** It's a full time job. You're an officer. The cult of Yanafal Tarnils is the officer corps of the Red Army!

**DH:** It is the officer corps, yeah.

**AM:** But your free time of 10% only equals two weeks a year!

**DH:** Yeah! Sure!

**NB:** So you get two weeks leave out of the year.

**MOB:** So, in other words, Yanafal Tarnils (which is probably the main officer's cult of the Empire) is probably the only way that you can actually get mobility between regiments, because it's something that all the officers have in common. You will be a member of your particular regiment and you will worship the standard of your regiment (or whatever you have). But, you will also probably be a member of Yanafal Tarnils. In fact, it's the only way that you can gain advancement to officer if you are a common ranker. If you think that you're an ideal candidate to be an officer, you join the cult of Yanafal Tarnils while at the bottom, lick boots until you got to where you were offered a position as an officer. Of course, you would still have to buy your commission, which might make it difficult. But, if you've served the cult well for a long time, they might help you out.

**AM:** You're talking about advancement through the army. What about someone who joins the cult and isn't a part of the Lunar Army? Do they get drafted in, or...?

**DH:** It's a war cult!

**NB:** That's very difficult. I mean, the cult is an army! That's like saying, "What's it like being a U.S. Marine without being in the U.S. Armed Forces?" When you join Yanafal Tarnils, you're in the Red Army! Now, you can wander around outside the Army structure if you're a player character, and in normal terms that's the normal game fuzz. The function of Yanafal Tarnils is to be the war cult of the Lunar Empire. If you're in that cult, and you're not participating in the wars of the Lunar Empire, you're a hero. Player characters are heroes.





**AM:** So, if you're a Priest of Yanafal Tarnils, then if you go adventuring and stuff it's because one of your superiors has cut you loose to do a mission? But most of the time you're with an army garrison?

**NB:** Exactly! Most player characters react to Army structure the way, say, Arnold Schwarzenegger would in a movie. (laughter) The player characters are the heroes; they're the exceptions. Most (85% - an Orlanthi "all") of Yanafal Tarnils guys are officers working full time in the Lunar Army.

**AM:** So, Yanafal Tarnils is not open to foot soldiers now? It's strictly officers?

**MOB:** No, no, no. You can actually join as a foot soldier, but you would never be a Scimitar of Yanafal Tarnils and be a common foot soldier. You would be a very high ranking officer in the Lunar Army to get to that cult position. But it's the sort of thing that, if you join that cult, you're allowed to turn up and, you would get the seat right at the very end and—

**NB:** It could be different. It could be like the cult of Mithras in the Roman Army, where everyone got together as comrades and they had their funny chapel they went off to. And the cult ranks weren't directly tied to the Army ranks. So you could have a sergeant being the Grand High Raven, or whatever they had in Mithraic ranks.

**DH:** As you can see, we're not entirely sure yet. (laughter) It may also be the Yanafal Tarnils is something by invitation only. They would invite potential officers to join.

**AM:** That would be pretty difficult to do, since one of the Seven Mothers should have to have fairly open for people to join if they want.

**NB:** Hey, the Seven Mothers cult is easy to join! The individual war cults of the Empire, like the Granite Phalanx or Char-un the Butcher, are also fairly easy to join. But, the officer's cult of Yanafal Tarnils isn't more easy to join than... She Who Waits. There isn't a

parallel between the missionary cult of the Seven Mothers and the individual cult specializations of each of the Seven Mothers. The Lunars embrace people into the Lunar Way through the cult of the Seven Mothers, but that doesn't mean that Yanafal Tarnils will accept any drunken slob into the officer corps.

**MOB:** Unless they buy their commission!

**NB:** That's true! (laughter)

**AM:** I guess what you're saying is that the descriptions that we've got from the information—

**AM:** *Cults of Prax!*

**AM:** Yeah, but that's the Yanafal Tarnils as a sub-cult of the Seven Mothers! So, that's where you're picking your ideas up from. And they are different, they're an exception, aren't they? From your typical Yanafal Tarnils?

**AM:** Bull!

**MOB:** The Seven Mothers is a missionary cult that operates on the borders of the Empire. We are talking about the Yanafal Tarnils cult within the Empire, and specifically within the Lunar Army.

**NB:** We're looking at the functions of the cult from an Imperial point of view, and not at the "nice goodies you can get out of it as a player character" point of view. It's different from the way a lot of cults have been looked at in the past. And, yeah, the thing is that Yanafal Tarnils can still behave a lot like Humakti if they're PC's. Humakti, if you read the cult write up, are supposed to be organized into centuries with officers and sergeants and everyone meeting in mess halls and hiring out as mercenaries all the time. We're not saying anything different from that; they're just in a standing army in Yanafal Tarnils.

**AM:** You mentioned the regimental system, with each individual regiment being organized differently. Is there a

higher organization, or is it very political or is it—

**NB:** The higher organization: the cult of Yanafal Tarnils!

**DH:** And also the cult of Pole Star.

**NB:** This is hilarious! We found out very recently that Greg's discovered this. We used to think that Pole Star has always been the general's god of Dara Happa. And that it's always led the Dara Happa armies, and is a wonderful thing; Dara Happa military triumphs owe it all to them. That's crap. Dara Happa had zillions of really impressive war cults: general's cults, strategists' cults, tactical cults. And the "final hurrah" for almost all of them was the Dragonkill War. The only war cult in Dara Happa that significantly survived the Dragonkill War with its command structure intact was the cult of Pole Star. What they did was to run the supplies, the trainings, run the base camps, supply drill sergeants, and make sure the uniforms were polished. (laughter) And after the Dragonkill War, they were the only guys left with a High Priest, who said, "Well, it's O.K. We'll run the Army!" (laughter) And, well, can anybody think of any prominent Dara Happa victories in the Third Age? (laughter) Pole Star is like... Sergeant Wilson from "Dad's Army" (Do you get that over here?), he would be a very good Polaris officer. But, on the general overstructure, that would be an overstructure for a lot of Dara Happa regiments. It would be something that they have in common which is separate from the Red Army structure. But, Polaris generals would almost certainly be at least initiate/comrades of Yanafal Tarnils. And at the upper levels of the Red Army, you're blending into the lower levels of the Satraps. Or at least paralleling them. Satraps command Heartland regiments, and then you've got the whole Lunar government, and atop that you've got the Moonson, and above him is his mother!

**DH:** And you've got Moonson Imperator, which is, um... potentially...

**NB:** Potentially so, yeah. The—



**DH:** The Imperial Cult, which probably has a lot of generals as members as well.

**MOB:** And a lot of the Dara Happans—

**AM:** What is the Imperial Cult you're talking about?

**NB:** Moonson Imperator. The Imperial Cult of the Red Empire. It's like a twisted version of Yelm Imperator. We initially wrote it up as a parody, and we're planning to fine tune it later. Do you remember Yelm the Youth? With this, you begin by joining the Lunar Youth Movement. You get your little red and black woggle, and you have to do a good deed every other day. From there you go off and do 5 years of military service in the Red Army. That's equivalent to Yelm the Warrior. Then you can become a Moon Lord; great job! If you're favored by Moonson, you can join the Red Satraps, and get your own Satrapy to run. That's equivalent to Yelm Imperator. And then, the highest rank of Moonson is the Lunar Senate. It's the equivalent of Yelm the Elder. You can join the Senate and sit around in a white sheet doddering all day.

It's great fun! We're going to polish all that up. We're going to get the jokes slightly more subtle, but you'll know they're there! (laughter)

**MOB:** Some more questions?

**AM:** Can you actually make money being a Lunar officer, or is it something to make a name for yourself with?

**NB:** Both.

**MOB:** Absolutely! Just as you could imagine! You actually have to buy a commission to become an officer, of course, and it's very expensive. So, no doubt, you have to make sure you get your money back.

**NB:** The other thing is, you have an expensive lifestyle to maintain as an officer. You have to have your mess uniforms kept perfect, you've got to pay for your own tent. The Lunar Army supplies equipment standard to the rankers, and deducts it from your pay.

But, if you go out into battle and your scimitar breaks... "Oh, dearie me!" Then the next scimitar is coming out of your next pay packet.

**AM:** For a Bronze Age army, the idea of "loot" is not like it is for the American army today. In today's army, if you loot something you get shot. In the Bronze Age, if you sack a city then whatever is there is yours! And if you're one of the commanders, you get a big cut!

**NB:** Yeah!

**DH:** But, the Lunar Army is very disciplined and will only loot for two days rather than the normal three. (laughter)

**AM:** After three days, there's nothing left! (laughter)

**NB:** The Lunars accomplish that in two days. That's not discipline, that's efficiency! (laughter)

**MOB:** At the beginning of the product there is a series of scenarios where the player characters are actually in training together, and go through a number of activities. It involves things like learning to eat Lunar gruel, which is a little more difficult than you may think. If you don't eat it the correct way, there can be problems.

Fortunately, there have been some veterans from other parts of the Army who have been brought in to help form the backbone of this new regiment, and to give the player characters some tips along the way. The veterans will tell you about such things as the rocks that'll be put in your pack for the long march. They'll also tell the characters that the contests are to find "the standard to which we all aspire;" trying to find the ideal hoplite.

**AM:** You're saying the veterans are soft-peddling.

**MOB:** Well, they do a little bit of soft-peddling, but—

**DH:** Well, maybe you can tell them. There's only a few people here.

**NB:** Yeah.

**MOB:** Since there's only a few, I'll let you into it.

**NB:** They'll still read it anyway!

**MOB:** They will. The thing is, they need to make a new standard for the regiment. And of course, the regiment needs to have a real spirit of esprit d'corps, doesn't it? (chuckle) It quite literally has an esprit d'corps. (Laughter) And, the esprit d'corps will be "the standard to which we all aspire;" the ideal hoplite, the hoplite that wins the most of the competitions. And this is why the veterans are telling you to come in second in most of these things! Not first! (laughter)

**AM:** You sick bastards! (laughter)

**NB:** When you're a training regiment, you're wearing the white "new recruit" tunics and you've got a white training standard. The Army standard is all red. Do you have the description? It's good stuff!

**MOB:** I'm looking. [shuffling papers]

**DH:** This is what Mike Dawson came up with.

**NB:** So he's sick. It's not us! It's all Mike! (laughter)

**MOB:** Yes, this is Mike Dawson. You can blame him for this. He is a sick man! (laughter)

"When it comes to the final award ceremony and the raising of the standard, it's a big celebration. A solemn ritual. The winner's family and friends are recognized. Those that didn't quite win are recognized and promoted, rewarded, given favors, and promised great careers ahead of them in the Lunar Army. They form a ceremonial honor guard. (We assume the player characters will be up there, as they usually do well in these things.) And, they've got the white training banner of the Legion, knowing it will soon be replaced with the new red banner of the activated Legion after the ceremony. The winner passes through the whole



host of the new Legion, shaking hands, hugging his friends. Each member of the Legion is expected to bless the winner in some way, with special things like spells or gifts. The winner ascends the dais, smiling and happy. Standing in a ring of ranking officers and magicians of the unit-in-training camp, he addresses the crowd and gives a speech. "You see before you what the Goddess had wrought within me. I am what I am because of Her. I am as you would wish to be, a reflection of yourselves, made up of you in part, making you in part. I am One, yet contain Multitudes! Multitudes dedicated to the Goddess! I am Legion! I am the standard to which you are all held! So I speak, so will the Goddess affirm!" With this, a red glow emanates from the magician, the officers, the winner, and the legionnaires themselves. You feel it inside your breasts, as you see him. This glow coalesces around the winner, raises him up over the dais and the white training banner he stood in front of. With great care, almost tenderness, the glowing force impales the winner on the standard. With supernatural force, blood erupts from the winner, showering the entire Legion with red. The winner's blood soaks the white banner, turning it a deep crimson. Eerily, only a single drop strikes each legionnaire, just at the shoulder where their white cloak is pinned on. With eldritch speed, this single drop spreads across the cloak of each soldier, causing the cloaks to turn red as well."

So, we've let you into a bit of a secret there, guys!

**NB:** Oh, in RuneQuest terms, you're also sacrificing one point of POW now to become initiated. (laughter)

**MOB:** So, make sure you come in second! The other secret is Lunar gruel. It's a special secret weapon to make the legionnaires strong. It's said to use dinosaur hearts, or something like that in it.

**NB:** Bronto spleen!

**MOB:** The gruel smells much better than it tastes, apparently. All the young

recruits, they sit down and wolf it down hungrily, but you'll see the veterans just stirring and stirring it. If you wolf it down hungrily, it forms a solid knot in your stomach all day. You've got to eat this stuff cold, so you'll see the veterans sitting there stirring it. So, this whole scenario will be full of the veterans sort of giving you an example of how to carry yourselves on in the army, and how the inexperienced guys will do it. So, the—

**NB:** Are we going to have the veterans come from different kinds of units?

**MOB:** Some of them, unfortunately, have had a few problems in some of the other regiments, actually. (laughter) Would you like to tell them about the New Lolin's mascot?

**NB:** Ah! This is something that we came up with yesterday! (David's going to faint now.) We were coming home from breakfast, and they had some steak and lobster claws on the menu. So we thought, "Hey! New Lolin is on the river and we need a regimental mascot. It's Pookie, the giant freshwater lobster!"

**MOB:** The size of a labrador, actually!

**NB:** He's a really nice guy! He's got a cute little lead, so you can walk him about. He's got lots of Protection spells on him, to keep him safe.

**MOB:** Graffiti from other legionaries throughout the years have been carved into his carapace as well. Unfortunately, even though Pookie is completely harmless, to the Sartarite Orlanthi he looks like a horrible chained chaos demon! (laughter) So, we have invented Pookie solely for a scene where a Wind Lord appears in the camp bollock naked but covered in woad, hair standing on end with ozone. (He's a powerful man!) And he'll stride into the camp, see Pookie, and go, "Foul slime! Curse of existence! Begone!" (laughter) To which, of course, the chinless Lunar officer will have to reply, "Why, that's just Pookie!" (laughter) The Wind Lord will of course then smite Pookie with his Lightning spell,

and there will be Lobster Thermidor on the menu that night. (laughter)

**NB:** This is also part of the "Ooh, lets get people scared of Sartarites" thing, 'cause this guy is a player character from the opposition. He walks into camp, through the Granite Phalanx's Warding spells, without blinking.

**MOB:** But he does actually steam and smoke afterwards! (laughter) There is an enormous battle at the end, which the player characters involve themselves in and have a chance to shower themselves with glory! This is all about showering yourselves with glory at various points. It also involves lots and lots of walking down roads in the rain, because that's what Lunar Army life in Sartar is all about. Walking down roads which go up and down lots and lots of hills. "They told you you would see the world when you joined the Lunar Army, and by the Bat you will! On foot!" That's the way it goes. Some more questions, before we go on to some singing?

**AM:** In the game *Dragon Pass*, the Lunar Army has the quality of sacrificing units for various things—

**MOB:** We can neither confirm nor deny that that actually happens. (laughter) There are actually various points where regiments do march off to various places and are not necessarily heard from again. But the dispatchers do report incredible victories against resounding odds, which may explain the large number of casualties. When you're a common ranker, you don't actually get told things like that. There are lots and lots and lots of rumors. In fact, at one point, the regiment is in fact decimated. Actually, septimated is the way it works. (laughter)

**AM:** So how do the officer corps deal with this? I mean, are there certain regiments that are raised solely to—

**NB:** They send the officers to the Bat! (laughter)

**MOB:** They have special field promotions just before those because



the officers... um... well, you were saying they get two weeks off a year, so... (laughter)

**AM:** So when there's lots of promotions, it's time to desert!

**AM:** I came in a little late and I didn't get the name or the predicted/guesstimated publication date.

**MOB:** O.K. The name of the product is *Soldiers of the Red Moon*. The second book will probably just be called *Soldiers of the Red Moon*. The first book has a working title (which I dislike intensely) of *In the Service of the Emperor*.

**NB:** Mike Dawson likes it though.

**MOB:** Yes he does. And, as he is editing and developing it, go and argue it with him and not me. The projected publication date... um... I think it was November 1994. (laughter)

**DH:** I've heard it's now March 1995.

**MOB:** Thanks Dave. (said sarcastically) (laughter)

**AM:** Is there a prayer that it will come out in 1995?

**MOB:** I hope to have as much of it finished as I can very very soon. It's very complete.

The actual scenario part of it, in Sartar, is pretty much done. It is epic! It involves lots of things. When it was play tested, lots of people were scared out of their wits. So scared in fact that they refused to build camp sites at night and things like that. In fact, correct me if I'm wrong Trevor (Trevor Ackerly has playtested some of this), Trevor's group was so scared that they did build camp sites and then hid away from them! (much laughter)

You actually find yourselves in the middle of a tribal rebellion, a long way away from any friendly forces. And, unfortunately, you somehow end up with the 10 year old daughter of the chief of the Firebull clan, who are your sworn enemies. And, as you saw the chief, earlier on in the adventure, tear

out the throats of various Lunar heroes with his teeth... well, this is part of the reason you make camp sites and then go hide 100 yards away from them. (laughter)

**AM:** Ten year old daughter?

**MOB:** Yes, she's the chief's 10 year old daughter. You have her as a very important captive. The Lunars need hostages, as well. The Lunars have hostages of all the Sartarite kings and tribal chiefs. It is actually going to take place in southern Sartar, in the Sambari tribe's lands, which are south of Boldhome.

**DH:** Near Caroman.

**NB:** Pretty high ground there. Lots of rain.

**MOB:** So, see if you can find it on your maps. Lots of hills, lots of rain.

**AM:** In the Avalon Hill edition of *Dragon Pass*, the Lunar Phalanx is presented as javelin tossing legionnaires. Since then, most products have suggested two-handed spear and shield. Which is it?

**MOB:** The New Lolins throw javelins.

**DH:** It depends where the regiment comes from.

**AM:** But the ones called "phalanxes" fight with spears?

**NB:** Yeah. They fight as phalanxes, not as legions.

**MOB:** "Legion" is just a very generic term.

**NB:** And, then again, as we said, there's all kinds of different traditions. So, whatever characters in your game have seen the local part of the army doing is still true.

**MOB:** Think of those 1960's "tits and togas" epics, where you have soldiers who seem to be wearing any sort of equipment. Just pick whichever ones you like the best, and use those when

you do it your way. So, really, we're giving you the opportunity to create your own regiments in your own way, doing whatever you'd like.

Apart from the regiments, there are other elements of the Lunar Army or the Lunar government involved as well. You have Lunar mercenaries, or Lunar auxiliaries (such as the Char-Un Cossacks), for example. You have the Red Dragoons. Tell us a little bit about them. [said to Nick]

**NB:** I still don't know that much about the Red Dragoons—

**DH:** —except that they can fight on foot as well.

**NB:** The Red Dragoons are basically like mounted infantry. They zip across the battlefield to where they're needed, and then deploy as a line of battle. It's a Yara Aranis thing, we think. It's combined arms. They're a uniquely Lunar thing. I don't think anyone else has started copying them yet. They're pretty useful against Pentans, cause you get the mobility you need to outmaneuver their cavalry and you've also got the stability of infantry to stop them in their tracks.

**MOB:** And we also have some fairly irritating White Moonie Peace Corps types, that will be confounding the player characters at various points as well.

**AM:** Does the cult of the Red Goddess have any standing in the army? Or is it so far beyond the army that it's—

**NB:** Way on beyond the army. It would be like a presidential aide showing up and trying to give direct orders to a military unit.

**DH:** Or they're political officers.

**NB:** Yeah. There's political officers in the Army as well.

**DH:** Who are probably on the feminine side.

**AM:** Speaking of the feminine side, are females in the Army treated equally?



**MOB:** It depends on the regiment. Some regiments have strict equal opportunity. Some regiments may even be completely made up of women or men that dress up as women.

**NB:** The Dara Happan regiments tend to have lip service to equal opportunity, but you have to be 6'4" tall with a long beard to join. So, "Women can get in!"

**MOB:** The Dara Happan regiments are, as Nick explained, as into equal opportunity as that.

**NB:** But then, they are always into cross dressing anyway, so... (laughter)

**MOB:** Yes, they are into cross dressing as well. I would just point out that, in the cult of Yelmadio, Rune Lords are forbidden to disguise themselves as women. Now, the only reason why you have rules like that is because it is a problem! (laughter) I can see no other reason to have a rule like that other than it is a rampant problem in the cult of Yelmadio! This had led various people to suspect that one of the characters in *Sun County*, Vega Goldbreath, a woman Light Son, is in fact a man dressed in drag. (laughter)

**DH:** That is so true!

**MOB:** No, it is not true! (laughter) Anyway, so, some regiments will be very into women being equal. In the New Lolin regiment women are considered equal, and in the unit that the player characters belong to there are three women.

**NB:** And, it's not just equality between the sexes. We've also got equality between the races in the Lunar Army. So, theoretically, just about anything could join. We had the 99 Red Baboons. (laughter) A special "moonling corps" of the Lunar Army. The Red Emperor, at one point, appointed a horse as general. It's complete equality, you see!

**MOB:** There is complete equality. The New Lolin is a newish regiment. It has mostly humans in it. There may be some very attractive humans with very sharp teeth, who you probably don't want to

share the same tent with. In the player characters squad or unit (we haven't quite decided on the name yet) will have about five or six NPC's. I think three of them are women. The idea is to have NPC's who can die horribly at various points without losing player characters. (laughter)

**NB:** Like Star Trek security officers!

**MOB:** Yes they are. Indeed. They can also spout views on various things, so your player characters can learn things. They're just very useful to have around. And, the idea is, because it is a new regiment, rather than having the standard seven in a squad, you can have oversized squads in a training regiment.

**NB:** And then whittle them down.

**MOB:** That's the idea. "Natural attrition," I think they would call it.

**AM:** What about Danfive Xaron?

**MOB:** Danfive Xaron runs punishment legions. When the legion gets septimated, one in seven gets sent off to a Danfive Xaron punishment battalion.

**AM:** And they're like suicide troops?

**NB:** Yeah. There's other things they do as well. Danfive Xaron galley slaves man the Imperial Fleet, what there is of it. The really unfortunate ones man the Lunar Black Sea Fleet in the Underworld.

**AM:** How much control do the provincial rulers have over the provincial army?

**NB:** They want more.

**DH:** And they already have a fair amount of control.

**NB:** You're going to find the princes of Tarsh getting officer rank in the provincial regiments.

**MOB:** All power, nominally, goes right back up to Moonson though. He's at the absolute top of absolutely everything.

And then his mum is above him. But, as Nick said, if you're a Tarshite noble, then you would probably be in command. Just like Prince Charles is a colonel of... oh, what's he a colonel of?

**NB:** Everything. All those medals the Royals wear? They earned all of those. Any trooper who had done the same things would have just as many medals.

**MOB:** Exactly! (laughter)

**NB:** Great uniforms too! They buy their own at that level. Fashionable regiments, you know. It's like banana republics. (laughter)

**MOB:** Provincial kings would be allowed to order their regiments around to do various things. Normally, and probably almost all the time, they would do it with the full consent of the Imperial authorities above them. Because, if they did it without permission, it could possible be construed as an act of rebellion or showing independence and they would be punished.

**DH:** Fazzur would report to the Tarsh governor, which is King Pharandros.

**NB:** And one of the reasons Fazzur Wideread is such a fortunate general is that large parts of the Tarshite Provincial Army under his control are officered and in part manned by members of his own clan and tribe. And, he's a tribal ruler in Tarsh as well as being a Lunar general. And his army is very loyal to him, and very easy to muster.

**MOB:** Well, shall we move on to some Lunar tunes?

**NB:** Yeah!

**MOB:** OK. [starts handing out song sheets] I don't have quite enough song sheets. The first song, "The New Lunar Anthem" is actually based on the national anthem of the USSR, or former USSR. I don't think the USSR had much chance when the first word of their national anthem is... [looks at paper]



**NB:** "indissoluble"

**MOB:** "indissoluble". Any national anthem that begins with "indissoluble" hasn't got much of a chance, does it? Of course the Australian national anthem has a line "Our land is girt by sea", which is probably another strange one. So, you might have to gather around the lucky people that I've handed a song sheet to. [MOB, NB & DH wave people forward]

**MOB:** We have the music to both of these first two songs. Then we'll be singing "Men of Lolin" which is the regimental anthem of the New Lolin Foot. It is based on "Men of Harlech". Do people know "Men of Harlech" at all? You probably will when it's actually sung. It's a wonderful song to sing. [much muttering and final preparations. MOB, NB & DH stand together and burst into song; audience joins in hesitatingly]

**Song: "New Lunar Anthem"**

Lunarised words by Chris Gidlow  
(to the tune of "The USSR National Anthem")

*Indissoluble Union of Satraps and Peoples,  
Guided by faith in our Goddess above,  
In fertile plantations, in workshops and quarries,  
Working together, inspired by our love:*

*Moonson the Emperor,  
Undying Conqueror,  
Saviour and Monarch  
We pledge thee our love.  
(x2)*

**NB:** Had enough yet? (laughter) Next is "The Red Vexillum", at the bottom of the page.

**MOB:** Join yourselves around the people with the red sheets.

**Song: "The Red Vexillum"**

Lunarised words by Chris Gidlow  
(To the tune of "The Red Flag")

*The Lunar flag is deepest red,  
It shrouded oft our martyred dead,  
And ere their limbs grew stiff and cold,  
Their hearts' blood dyed its every fold.*

*Then raise the scarlet standard high!  
Beneath its folds we'll live or die;  
Though cowards flinch and traitors sneer,  
We'll keep the red flag flying here.*

**NB:** That's the song you sing to cast Morale spells.

**AM:** Does it rhyme in New Pelorian?

**NB:** Yup.

**NB:** "The Imperiale", back page. We're not going to sing the song of the Oslir Boatmen! (laughter)

**MOB:** Here we go, "The Imperiale", everybody..

**Song: "The Imperiale"**

Lunarised words by Chris Gidlow  
(To the tune of "The Internationale")

*Arise, ye Comrades from your slumbers!  
Arise, ye prisoners of Time!  
Rise in unconquerable numbers  
From every race and clime!*

*Our Goddess rules the air above us,  
As Moonson rules the land:  
Arise from every tribe and nation,  
From the Glacier to the Sand!*

*So Comrades, come and rally  
And the fight then let us face!  
The Im-per-i-a-le  
Unites each sentient race!  
(x2)*

**MOB:** OK, and we'll not be singing the song of the Oslir Boatmen. Now turn to "Men of Lolin".

**NB:** You all got these? [hands out songsheets]. More, more. Freebies! Sing till it hurts!

**AM:** It already hurts!

**MOB:** OK, we don't actually have the music for this.

**NB:** Yes, we do. We have it in here. [hits own chest]

**MOB:** We'll sing it in our hearts. This

is the regimental anthem of the New Lolin Foot. When you buy *Soldiers of the Moon*, every time you have an important victory you should all stand and sing this together! It's a wonderful song. ... OK.

**Song: "Men of Lolin"**

Words by Mark Robins, Lunarised by MOB  
(To the tune of "Men of Harlech")

*Men of Lolin, march to glory,  
Dark-eyed Death is waiting for ye,  
Damned Stormwinds hover o'er ye:  
Hear ye not its call?*

*At your sloth it seems to ponder:  
Let thy death cry peal like thunder,  
Burst their horned helmets asunder,  
Every foe appall!*

*From the rocks rebounding,  
Let the war cry sounding  
Summon all, at Emperor's call,  
Our Stormwind foe surrounding.*

*Men of Lolin, on to glory!  
See, your standard famed in story  
Waves these burning words afore ye:  
"Lolin scorns to yield!"*

*'mid the fray, see dead and dying,  
Friend and foe together lying;  
All around, the rune-spells flying  
Scatter sudden death!*

*Maddened steeds are wildly neighing,  
Brazen trumpets hoarsely braying,  
Wounded men to standards praying  
With their parting breath!*

*See: they're in Disorder!  
Comrades, keep close order!  
Ever they shall rue the day  
They ventured 'cross our glowing border!*

*Now Orlanthi flee before us;  
Crimson Crescent floateth o'er us!  
Raise the loud exulting chorus,  
"Lolin wins the field!"*

**ALL:** Hurrah! (applause)

**MOB:** Finally we bring music to the world of Glorantha and RuneQuest!

**NB:** Well, we will someday...



# The Nick Brooke Cultural Exchange

## KEY:

**NB:** Nick Brooke (host)  
**PR:** Paul Reilly (co-host)  
**MOB:** Mike O'Brien (co-host)  
**FM:** Finula McCaul  
**DC:** David Cheng  
**MD:** Mike Dawson  
**DB:** Danny Bourne  
**MM:** Mike McGloin  
**AM:** Audience Member

## Of Satraps and Sultans

**AM:** The things that used to be sultanates and are now satrapies: my understanding was they used to be something introduced by Pentan nomads. Are they now something introduced by Carmanians?

**NB:** It's very funny. This is a good one. What happened is that for many years, right since the beginning in *White Bear and Red Moon*, the Lunar Empire was divided up into sultanates.

The other year, I was writing something about Carmanian government to Greg and I said the Carmanians set up a system of satrapies which became the later Lunar sultanates. This was in a letter but one imagines Greg going, [hits own forehead] "Satrapies! That's the word!"

He's decided, unilaterally, that, in fact, they were always satrapies in the Lunar Empire. And that's the word, so you get out your pens and you change every occurrence.

But that's boring and it's wrong! Because we've got so many printed sources around and we know what the image of a sultan is. You know, not many people know about satraps and they seem to be official government-type guys. Whereas everyone knows that sultans are bloated and corrupt and fed grapes and have their toes sucked which is, in fact, the popular image.

**PR:** Wear baggy pants.

**NB:** Yeah, that's it. All that kind of stuff.

**PR:** Eunuchs.

**NB:** Eunuchs, harems, all the apparatus of the Lunar state. So what we've done, in fact, is backfitted it. The old explanation was that they used to be called "X" (we don't know what) but the sultan came in with Sheng Seleris. That's got a couple of problems. I'll take it right back to the very beginning.

When the glorious Carmanian Empire conquers Dara Happa, they divvy up the conquered lands into satrapies. In charge of each of these satrapies is a satrap. Now, outside the Carmanian Empire, in the east, is the land of Rinliddi. This is on the borders of Pent. The Pentan word for a big strong guy who can kick your head in is "sultan".

So, the Red Goddess who, as we all know, in her mortal life was Teelo Norri (little orphan Teelo, the little red-haired waif from the streets of Torang who won the minds and souls of a vast Empire), she spoke Torangese, a nasty dialect, and her word for a big strong guy who can kick your head in was "sultan".

So when the Red Goddess, in her mortal life and in scripture, talks about the satraps, she says "sultan". But the real word, the governmental word, is "satrap". So, right at the founding of the Lunar Empire, you get this dichotomy. The priests in the temples talk about the sultans who run this land, and "render unto the sultan that which is the sultan's," and all this kind of rubbish. The official word in the books of the Empire they take over is "satraps". But, it gets worse.

In the third and fourth wanes, as everyone knows, the Lunar Empire is overrun by Pentan Horse Nomads, led by Sultan Sheng. And suddenly calling things sultans becomes official. Pentans don't know what "satrap" means. The guy running the state is now a sultan. The organization is a sultanate. If you say "satrap" you have your tongue cut out, which is a bit of bad news.

Then the Empire is refounded by Carmanians and they bring in satrapies again with a vengeance. So at the end of the day, whatever context you're in, you can justifiably use either of the

words. The old religious guys might use "sultan" because that's what the Goddess herself would have said, or they might use "satrap" because they hate horse barbarian words. The official organizers might use "satrap" because that's the officious word or they might use "sultan" because that's the religious word. The original word may have been "satrap", which is what they were called before the Goddess came along or "sultan" which is the first thing the Goddess called them or "satrap" which was what the official name was inside the Lunar Empire or "sultan" which is what it was changed to or "satrap" which is what it is now. Me, I usually call them "sultans" but that's only because I'm Carmanian in part.

**PR:** They're just big, strong guys who will kick your head in.

**NB:** That's what it means. Does that make sense to anyone? I prefer "sultans" and "sultanates" because that's what I grew up with. If I use "satraps" or "satrapies," I have to make a conscious decision to do that.

**PR:** "The Mad Satrap of Tork" just doesn't...

**NB:** It doesn't have the same ring as "The Mad Sultan", going "Oh, oh, oh!" with his pointy toed slippers and all that.

Another question? [Loooooong pause]

Hmmm, well, there's a great Cultural Exchange. (laughter) Thanks a lot for coming. Let's go out for a beer! (laughter) Satrap, sultan, Pent; is there anything else that connects to that? Carmanian conquest? Come on, ask some questions!

## Lions and Carmanians

**AM:** What's the relationship with Carmanian lions?

**NB:** The relationship with Carmanian lions. This is quite a good long question. Thank you.

Way back in the very beginning, as



everyone knows, at the dawn of time, the people of Seshneg were beset by evil Hsunchen who were trying to wipe them out. These are nasty pagan barbarians. (We're off in the West now: there is a connection.) They were fighting against these guys and losing heavily until good old Prince Hrestol decided that you could break every rule in the book, if that meant your people will survive, and founded a new religion based on that. The people he was fighting against were lion Hsunchen.

Now, Hrestol handily defeated these guys and then they were beaten in battle and driven off into the wilds. You can still find ruins of these people all over the West. In Seshnela, there's lion ruins in places called Basmol and Basim and things like that but they were basically driven out.

The most lasting remnants of these things is that it used to be a great chivalrous thing to kill a lion man or a lion and skin it and nail that to your shield as a covering. That's what all those Lions Rampant Gules of heraldry that you find all over Seshnela are. They're red for blood, you see. But it can be gold on red, red on gold; it looks pretty good, you see. I'm not sure if it's anyone in particular's coat-of-arms. Richard the Tiger-Hearted may have done something similar to what I'm about to come on to but it's all a bit icky.

Anyhow, the Hsunchen are driven off into the wilderness. They don't have kingdoms anymore. They don't live in great land. They're not conquering anyone and there are these irritating knights who keep riding out into forests on their dashing steeds running these guys down. Lions don't like horses; horses don't like lions. It's one of those ongoing things. But lions are also like cats; they don't like dogs. So, they're outcasts. So, what's more natural then, when Arkat is fighting against the chaotic Telmori people, he gets together the remnants of the Hsunchen Basmoli lion people and they help him fight.

Now, that's a long, terrible war. It's fought up over that pass between Ralios and Fronela. What's now called the High Llama Pass. But, in the old days, I believe it used to be called the Wolves' High Pass, because that's where it is. At the end of that war, there's a

regiment of these lion people which is part of the Loskalmi or the Akemi army of Talor the Laughing Warrior. Because, you remember, Arkat betrays everyone, he doesn't actually stay around to finish off the wolf people. Talor the Laughing Warrior has to do that. He's a cleanup man for Arkat.

So, the Loskalmi army now has this unit of lion people who do various things because they're a combination of all kinds of different traditions. Some of them are descended from the old Hsunchen Basmoli, some of them are from the old Seshnelan guys who used to kill lions and eat their hearts and get really strong that way. (This is something I think Richard the Tiger-hearted may have done. There's this lovely blurry line between western chivalry and Gloranthan nitty-gritty realism.) Some of them may have been some Yinkin worshipers; alynx worshipers from the Orlanthei, because this is the kind of thing Arkat did — find a whole load of people who believe something similar, and show them they can all do it the same way.

The tradition we have now is one of sacrifice. What happens is that... Everyone knows that Basmol is dead, but these guys: they're from Western culture. They know that it's inevitable that Basmol must die. It's part of the decree that in order to save the world, the best and greatest god must die. Is there any way we can save him? Yeah, sure. What we'll do is we'll eat bits of him and keep his strength alive in the world in our hearts. So, the Carmanian who kills a lion and eats its heart is in the, I think they're called the Bashkars, the Lion Guard of the Carmanian army.

I think the nicest phase of the Carmanian Empire (it has some pretty bad patches) is when they're in alliance with Dara Happa. They rule over all Peloria. (In fact, they are the emperors of all Peloria. The Dara Happa sources are very garbled on this point, understandably: it's a defensive work.) And they have a lot of lion imagery. There's lion thrones, lion standards, people dressing up with whopping great manes on. I think the Carmanian lion has a mane. (The indigenous Pelorian mountain lion may or may not, but certainly in Carmania, if there's any

surviving, which I'm not quite sure about, they're big shaggy maned creatures that roar a lot.)

The lions, in the end, they have a great decline and fall. I'll get back to that if anyone wants. They're driven out by bull people. The Bull Shah who kills the last feeble descendants of the... actually I think he tears his throat out with his own teeth. We've got a lot of that one in Glorantha. And for the last part of the Carmanian Empire, the bit that got a really brutal, barbaric reputation that you see in the Zero Wane history, is ruled by essentially barbarian usurpers with big horns on their helmets.

**PR:** Lots of darkness and...

**NB:** Yeah, darkness, bulls, and general nastiness.

#### More Carmanian Tidbits

**AM:** Where did these bull people come from?

**NB:** They came from the Tawari, the Orlanthei, and the Barbarian Belt. You know that the Orlanthei Uroxi, are all bull worshipers. Just beyond Carmania; Charg, Brolia, Talastar, all these places. There were big barbarian migrations after the Dragonkill War, unsurprisingly, as people moved to get away from where those nasty things with the fangs and the claws were.

One of the ways that these barbarians came up into Carmania... now, for several generations (or maybe a generation. I'm not sure of the exact time frame) they were serving as troops in the Carmanian army. They were tributary to the shah. At the end of them, the biggest one with the largest muscles pummeled the feeble last shah of the Carmanian line. This is in the generation after the Dragonkill War. Usurped horribly.

The question of whether there's an alliance between Carmania and Dara Happa at this point anyway is a bit moot, because basically all the leaders of both sides were in Dragon Pass when the big crunch happens. There certainly isn't one after the usurpation. It's a terrifying conquest. This is the time





when the Carmanians conquer Yuthuppa and Raibanth and incorporate those into the Carmanian Empire, which is its greatest extent. It never takes Alkoth. I don't think Alkoth has ever fallen to siege.

**AM:** What about the Lunar conquest of Dara Happa?

**NB:** No, it yields after a settlement. It never fell.

**PR:** Lunars go against people's weakness not their strengths. They don't take Alkoth militarily, they take it by negotiation. They're not good at it. Yuthuppa, they can march in with an army.

**NB:** There were terrible omens when the armies were coming to Yuthuppa. There were seven ravens dropping dead in midair and sick people throwing up all over the place and lions mauling little children outside the city walls. So they just surrendered. What happened with the guys that used to rule Yuthuppa is they shaved their heads and lock themselves up in the towers and the Carmanian administration moved straight in. With Raibanth, it looked like they were shaping up for a big battle but the Raibanth guys caved in when they saw how large the Carmanian army was. So, although there had been previous battles, the two cities were not hugely sacked. If anyone has a copy of the *Fortunate Succession* here, Greg's written a piece on what happens when the Shah takes Raibanth, which I find rather amusing. It isn't my own work; it's quite good.

**PR:** Let me ask, for anyone who's interested, how you might incorporate some of these ideas into actual playing of a game?

**NB:** Simple. No trouble at all. What it means is that any character who comes from Carmania can be a member of any of the mystery warrior traditions, which would be cults of sword worship, bull worship, lion worship, dragon worship, and the like. The Mithraic model is obviously present in all of this. I think that one of the predominant forms of

Carmanian Humakt worship is the idea of killing something to get part of its strength. It's not quite cannibalism, but it's very similar.

They used to do it to dragons, incidentally. And, of course, there's also "You are what you eat". When you eat bits of dragon, you're becoming draconic. The Carmanian Army, the pre-Dragonkill War, the one that finished in 1042 when the Empire of the Wyrms Friends ate itself, the Carmanian Army, towards the end of that, they had scales and wings...

**PR:** We still have degenerate Carmanian mystery cults.

**NB:** Yeah. They're still there. Carmania's a good place for survivors. The Carmanian mystery traditions: Paul has loads of stuff on these, I think.

**PR:** Yes. Let me say something about killing things, eating parts of them, and making yourself stronger.

#### Eating Things for Munchkins

**PR:** Most people here are probably good cultural GMs. But you may have players who say, "I want to kill things, take their treasure, get experience, and go up levels." You get this kind of player, and you want to guide them into Gloranthan roleplaying. So, say they're from a lion culture. You don't tell them, "You're getting Strengthening Enchantment," or "Someone knows Strengthening Enchantment. Do you want it cast on you?" or "Do you want to learn the Strengthening Enchantment spell?"

**NB:** "It's a thousand pennies."

**PR:** Yeah, "It's only a thousand pennies!" Instead, you say, "The heart of the lion will make you stronger." Instead of saying "Strengthening Enchantment" you tell them they will learn the proper ritual for killing the lion and then go out on a lion hunt. "You kill the lion, you eat his heart, in game mechanics you spend POW, and you come out with more hit points," or whatever. You use the lure of the more hit points. You say, "This is how

Strengthening Enchantment works in your culture. You find the lion, kill it, eat its heart, and you're stronger."

**AM:** And when do you pay the thousand pennies? (laughter)

**NB:** That's the hunter's license.

**PR:** You look on the table and it says, "Animals, wild, lion: one thousand pennies." (laughter)

**NB:** Well, actually, what we're saying here... we're joking, but the latest Lion Shahs were actually like that. Towards the end of the Carmanian Empire they were importing lions to an arena where the Shah would hunt them gloriously. Have any of you seen those Assyrian wall—

**PR:** Munchkin emperors.

**NB:** Yeah, munchkin emperors. You know, you'd be smiting down three hundred lions in a day from a safe distance behind very large amounts of protection.

**PR:** Like Commodus. The Roman emperor who killed a thousand men in the arena.

**NB:** Nero used to dress up as a wild animal and sexually mutilate people tied to pillars. That's Carmanian decadence, I think. (laughter)

#### Local Histories

**NB:** Carmania, though, is a very fragmented region. There's a lot of different traditions there so the Carmanian character in your game (if there is one) is doing things right. There's loads of different cultural parts of it, there's different faiths competing—

**PR:** How many people play in Carmanian period? How many people play in modern 1600?

**NB:** Nobody plays in Carmanian period, I'm sure. I want to, eventually. I'm planning on running some Pendragonesque game there, one of



these years.

**PR:** What you want to do with all this history is make your characters richer with it and make your game richer with it. You say, "I belong to a little group of cronies who are in this Carmanian mystery cult, and we all believe that the Red Goddess is great but we also hark back to our history..."

**NB:** "It's what makes us special."

**PR:** There's this little group of four or five friends, the cronies, who support each other. Carmania's a very vicious place where people backstab each other, so you form little coteries who are sworn to each other. They're like blood brothers and they absolutely trust each other. It's almost like a magical bond—

**NB:** If you can subvert one of those, you're in for some great things!

**PR:** —and these people have all these little beliefs about Carmania because the Carmanian history before the Lunar conquest; some of it is hidden, secret stuff that the Lunars suppressed. So they find out, "Ooh, we used to be dragon slayers! Let's learn how to do that!" It's kind of like the Lions Club or Knights of Columbus, where everyone has secret little rituals except that they work.

**NB:** Now, mind you, I think that's something everyone should be doing in RuneQuest. In our own house campaign, the Greydog games, the Greydog clan, where now most of us are members of the Great Newt cult, a cult that provides us with absolutely nothing of any use. (laughter) But, it does allow us to go around making bug-eyed faces and doing spawning-pool rituals, and we have a great laugh doing it. It makes us different and distinctive.

I would hate to be a straight Orlanthe from the cult write-up with no trimmings. I mean, sub-cults are not limited to just the whatever the four magic weapons are in the back of the thing. Anyone can create a sub-cult, and there's more to a sub-cult than the spell it gives you. There's a funny title, secret handshakes, special stories, the myths that only you know. The stuff that sets

you apart and makes you special.

**PR:** Put in local heroes everywhere, like Black Fang in Pavis, or the Black Squirrel. In a little Tarsh town, we have the Black Squirrel, who robs from the rich and gives to the poor. Except that he really doesn't give to the poor, he just hides it. But the local villagers know where all his hiding places are 'cause he's a spirit. He always hides it in the same place.

**FM:** Explain the suit to them.

**PR:** Oh, yeah. His spirit was enchanted into the suit he always wore. We believe enchantment is a formalization of a natural process. If you handle your sword all the time, you believe in it and what not, it gets stronger for you or whatever. And you can formalize that and make it a magic ritual but it happens gradually, naturally. So, the Black Squirrel was famous and his image was connected to this suit and now, when anyone finds the suit and puts it on, they get possessed by the spirit of the Black Squirrel.

**NB:** It's like the Mask of Zorro sort of thing. It's all good fun.

**PR:** Yeah, but the point is, it's a local tradition!

The local villagers know about it, and then when outsiders come in and see someone Black Squirreling, they're amazed at this and the locals make fun of them. Give your locals special little knowledges. Give your villagers special little things that makes their village the most special place in the world. Make it up yourself. Say, "This is the local tree spirit. We all worship her and she gives us the best hazelnuts in the world and no one else from outside our village knows that these hazelnuts are ten times more delicious. And you don't tell them".

**More on Cults**

**NB:** This may happen at any level. In *King of Sartar*, we know that there's parts of the Colymar tribe, about the most bog standard Orlanthe you can find, that worship Elmal the sun god

instead of Orlanthe. There's people who worship the Storm Boar, instead of the Storm Bull, as the god who fights chaos. I love this stuff. I hate standardized, cookie cutter, Chinese menu cult write-ups. Basically, I use those as a spur to irritate me into saying, "No, it's not quite like that, is it?!"

The only ones that might actually be very, very, very uniform are the Lunar Imperial cults, where it is actually a bureaucracy and people do have to do things a certain way. But that's only at the top level of the Empire, as we'd been discussing earlier at the Lunar army seminar. So Yanafali, by and large, will be wearing Yanafali uniforms and singing Yanafali songs and doing things a single way across the Empire. There will be some regional variation. There will be some variation depending on what your general wants. If he says everyone's going to dress up in their dress uniforms all the time, that's what that part of the cult does. And, of course, player characters can go outside the rules of anything, if that's the game you're running.

**PR:** The rules are there, the cult rules and such, are there to help you control players who want to get out of control. But other than that, make it up yourself. You know, if they're requiring a rune spell, make it a ritual. Make it something special. It's a big experience in the person's life. Take your player who doesn't know anything about Gloranthan culture and they say, "Oh, I want to learn the Lightning spell because this will make me a more powerful character." Now you've got that little bribe to give them and you can say, "You go to the Orlanthe temple and they put a mask on you and you have to rescue Lightning Boy from the evil..." you know, someone in a flame mask. This is the ritual by which you learn the spell. You can teach your Gloranthan culture with these little things.

**AM:** You're saying a major life experience should be a major life experience not a thousand penny mechanic.

**NB:** Yes, that's right. But we're not



saying that every time someone wants to start creating a character, you run through all of this.

**PR:** No, no, no. If people already understand it, you say, "You went through the Orlanthi initiations and whatnot and this is what you've learned." But if you're introducing new people, you can make these things into fun roleplaying experiences.

### The Grotaran Question

**AM:** The grotaran culture has almost no explanation to it.

**NB:** Well, I'm not going to give it an explanation.

**PR:** Finula, do you want to talk about grotarons?

**FM:** You mean, why they exist?

**PR:** Why they exist, and a little bit about their weird culture.

**FM:** They look the way they do because they're sort of far out there.

**PR:** They're towards the edge of the world, where the rules are floppy.

**FM:** They sort of have the Man Rune, but they don't seem to conform to it completely. You know, "This form works better, so what the hell?" I don't know if they actually reproduce—

**PR:** What do you want to do with grotarons?

**AM:** Well, I was actually playing one in a game.

**NB:** Whoa! I'm impressed. Oh, and in case anyone doesn't remember, grotarons live in these mountains way up in the north, near the glacier. They have three arms like that, no head, an eye on the back of each hand.

What they do is they hold the bow with that hand - that hand [gestures foolishly], pull the string like that and go \*fftoing\*! I think they're ludicrous and I would never permit one in my games. (laughter)

**PR:** But if you want to take one of these weird Gloranthan creatures where there's a paragraph-long writeup, like, "They hunt the sabre-tooth mountain mammoth - a creature no one else can see..." or something, you have to make the rest up. You start with that. You take a little clue like that and say, "They have a rich spiritual life. They live both in and out of the world, and they don't understand the distinction between the spirit world and the material world that other people see. So, now, they have a magical ability. They can see spirits." I'm just making this up as I go along but you can do the same thing... instead of saying "We have spirit combat," they just shoot spirits with their bow. That's their special magical ability. But that means also sometimes they're going along and suddenly they pull out their big bow and they go \*whang!\* and they shoot off the arrow, and nobody else sees anything and they think the grotaron's crazy. So, you just take a little thing and start fitting it in with other things. Make it up yourself.

**DC:** Ok, I'd just like to make the point, and this usually comes up every year at one of these question and answer sessions. There are literally hundreds of things that Stafford or Petersen have sprinkled throughout the published material where, maybe there's one or two sentences. That's really all they know. One that Stafford used as an example a couple of years back was the Guild of Chaos Monks. That just popped into his head, probably over a beer one day, he jotted it down then he remembered it when he was writing up the material for the orange Glorantha box. Guild of Chaos Monks. Stafford will admit to you to this day he doesn't know anything else about it, except he thought it was a neat idea to put in there for someone to flesh out.

**PR:** This is why the cultural stuff is so important. Like what Nick has done with Carmania, you can do the same thing with your version of Ralios or wherever you want to play. You make up a culture and then when you have one of these things, Guild of Chaos Monks...

If you say, "Ralios is like a weird

mixture of ancient Greece, Islamic Persia," and then add your own things, make up something that fits...

**NB:** I'd like to add something else here. This is not a Q & A session with me dispensing knowledge of the world. This is a seminar at which I will be very glad, if anyone has ideas they'd like to contribute, please say them. I mean, that's what these Cons are for. Of course, the fear, obviously, is that if we encourage everyone to make up whatever they want to, then everyone does, then the world's fragmented. Things fall apart, the center cannot hold, and our Gloranthan consensus goes down the tubes. Please, tell me something I don't know.

**DB:** [unintelligible]

**PR:** Please stand up and address everyone. This is Danny.

**DB:** I think you just need to ask yourself, "What do grotarons do?" Grotarons do whatever you feel they should do in your campaign. Because they're not going to the the same thing as they do in my campaign, which is they walk about being really weird and kicks the piss out of everyone they end up fighting.

**NB:** Yeah. And they're not going to do the same thing they do in my campaign, which is they are funny squiggles in the top left corner of the map which say "Here Be Grotarons." (laughter)

**AM:** Basically, what my friends and I ended up doing with it was, because it's such a big beastie and it's got so many abilities, we disabled it by having it be spiritual and searching the earth for the source of the mammoth.

**PR:** Excellent!

**AM:** And he was a pacifist, so he would defend himself but he wouldn't attack.

**PR:** The bow is for hunting. You don't want to ritually pollute him.

**AM:** So you had this character who was intimidating but, you know, still...



**AM:** Well, one thing you can look at too is Pellinore of Arthur...

**NB:** With the Questing Beast!

**AM:** ...because, to a large degree, Pellinore is superior, really, to Arthur and all of the other people but he has this huge problem. (laughter)

**PR:** He could beat up anyone he wanted, if he wanted to.

**AM:** But he can't take care of business because he's on this quest. Like Maidstone Archers! I mean, well yeah, they're really terrific and if you could co-opt them to walk around with you and kill your foes, it'd be great. But unless you can make your foes look like they are sabre-toothed mountain mammoths, you're not going to have any luck. (laughter) So, this is something that you experience in the same way that you'd experience Pellinore busting through the bushes. You have this crazy little experience and then he busts out through another bush—

**NB:** And he's gone!

**AM:** —and that's the end of it. You would say, "Oh, wow. That was great."

**NB:** You'd get to watch some weird magic being done, which you don't have to describe in game terms.

#### Ancient Sources

**DB:** The point I'd like to emphasize is that I think people shouldn't be scared to actually ditch the received cults and do the right thing.

**NB:** That's right. Yeah. I've ditched the received Esrolia. I'm trying to encourage other people to mutiny along with me. Received Esrolia seems to be an entirely Orlanthe land worshipping Orlanthe gods in an Orlanthe way wearing Orlanthe clothes having Orlanthe customs, except with the women on top. And I hate that.

My Esrolia is far more sort of ancient Egyptian feel to it. It's much more like Middle Eastern temple culture than like

the Sartarite Orlanthe. And the fact that there are myths explaining how they're all related is completely meaningless, because if you take these etiological myths seriously, us British people, like me, are descended from the Trojans.

**PR:** I use the Gloranthe sources for inspiration. I say, "Some Lhankhor Mhy scholar wrote a description of Esrolia." One of the best things you can do is find an ancient author: go to Herodotus, go to Apollonius, read their descriptions of other cultures. Tacitus describing the Germans: "This is the German Mercury, this is the German Mars, this is...", and you read things like, "The Libyans account Athena as the daughter of Poseidon and not Zeus," and this sort of thing, and you wonder: what is it they're actually describing?

**NB:** And that's what RuneQuest cult write-ups are doing. The best historian in the world, the one everyone should read, is a guy called Herodotus, who lived two and a half thousand years ago. The first historian who's come down to us at least. Absolutely hilarious. Brilliant book. It's one of my main Gloranthan sources of joy and merriment, in fact. Wonderful guy.

**PR:** Reading ancient authors is great, especially on things like natural history. You can adapt little events into Gloranthe. Where he says, "I've seen mice hatch out of the mud on the banks of the Nile and, you know, this may seem fantastic but I have seen it myself!" You know...

#### Taking Gloranthe Seriously

**NB:** You may not have guessed this, but I think it is a terrible problem if anyone starts taking Gloranthe seriously and codifying everything, memorizing everything...

**PR:** I think it's a definite mental problem.

**NB:** Yeah. There's peculiar German chappies out there doing linguistic dissections on Stafford's works. Greg makes it all up when he's drunk anyway. No, not when he's drunk. I take

that back. He makes it up spontaneously. Lesson number one.

**AM:** So, you say that you think it's a problem that people take Gloranthe too seriously. I think there are too many people involved in RuneQuest sometimes who do take it too seriously.

**NB:** Yeah. Anyone here take Gloranthe seriously? [someone raises their hand] Hey! A scapegoat!

#### Doing Something Wacky

**DB:** Some people are taking the whole codex of what Gloranthe is too seriously, in that they forget you can do something that's completely wacky and different. And they hate it when you do that. In my world, Nysalor and Gbaji are two different cults. I used the *Cults of Terror* Nysalor cult for Gbaji, and wrote my own Nysalor cult. And one group, the Gbajis, are Illuminating people. And then, Nysalors are Enlightening people. And they can both convert each other; you can Illuminate Enlightenment, and you can Enlighten Illumination. They are two completely different cults that are basically the same. And they hate each other, and have spent thousands of years fighting each other. And then Arkat comes along and destroys them both, not really giving a damn who they are. (laughter) Arkat is now hated by Stormbulls, because Arkat created Dorastor, where chaos lurks. So, now the Stormbulls can get cut to pieces fighting people like Plaguewalker and Howler and the Mad Sultan. And it's all Arkat's fault, for mucking about with these two really nice cults who used to not have anything to do with anybody else and would just tear themselves apart.

**PR:** But he's taken a bunch of arguing philosophers, and turned them into giant gorp! (laughter) This is a wonderful improvement! (laughter)

**DB:** And some folks would hear this and say, "That's crap!" And I can say, "Not in my world, it isn't!" And whatever the GM says—

**AM:** But it takes a lot to do that. And a



lot of people are worried about playing with the areas—

**NB:** Well, let's get creative.

**AM:** [unintelligible]

**NB:** Were you here earlier for the Lunar Tunes seminar?

**AM:** Oh, yeah.

**NB:** OK. All this impulsive stuff that we're sticking into the Lunar Army, like with the Russian songs and these Soviet customs and things; this is all deliberate subversion on our part. I think Greg wants none of it, but we're carrying on, digging away, because we enjoy it! It's a laugh!

**AM:** MOB said to me a few days ago that his Gloranthan Lore skill is about five percent. I think I said, "That makes it easier, the less you know about Glorantha, because—"

**NB:** —then you can create Sun County!

**DB:** Yeah! People say, "Well, the way the Seshnegi and the Waertagi do it is..." You can say, "Who are the Seshnegi and the Waertagi? They have nothing to do with my immediate focus!" They say, "They're these, these, and these." "Well, that's not important to my situation!"

**AM:** But it's not Greg Stafford's Glorantha anymore, once you own it.

**NB:** No. It never is.

**AM:** Once you're the GM, it's your Glorantha now.

**NB:** Yeah. Greg greps himself all the time.

**AM:** I think every game master should have his own comic relief device, if people start taking this stuff too seriously.

**NB:** Kill a few players!

**AM:** In our campaign, we have a teenage mutant ninja newtling who

serves as a comic relief sidekick. And it's quite enjoyable. Plus, on the notion of being Gregged or whatever, which some people don't ascribe to, basically it's that somebody has a successful or unsuccessful Heroquest. It's how the myths change.

**NB:** And you don't need to change stuff just because Greg does. I mean, for example, I'm getting deeply distressed with the cult of Yelmalio. The more I read it, the more upset I get. In my Sun County, everybody was always talking about worshiping Yelm. "Yelm, the Fiery Father. Yelm, who smiles down on us." We're thinking that maybe "Yelmalio" is some kind of bastardized word meaning "people who worship Yelm." I hate the cult write-up. We really don't enjoy it at all; it's so garbled and power-gamerish.

**MOB:** But, it does forbid Runelords from wearing women's clothes! (laughter)

**AM:** I'm one of those guys who has to put all those cults into cult write-ups, for game mechanic reasons. But, just like the rules which everyone gladly throws out the window—

**NB:** Strike ranks! <retch>

**AM:** Everything that's ever going to appear in one of these books can only be a guide. And, if you don't like it, toss it! I could never stand the Yelorna cult! I looked at that cult the first time and said, "This is a star cult? I can't find anything starlike about it!" So, we just changed it. And, that's what you can do.

**PR:** Yeah, you can rewrite the mythology and make it more starlike. "Unicorns came from the Stars."

**NB:** A lot of the "Golden Age RuneQuest" cults are abominations. The most recently published one, I think, was the Caladra and Aurelion cult. It is a whopping great power-gaming thing, packed full with *Jrusteli*/D&D magic items. And I have no time for that!

In my Caladraland, the local priests

are these big fat guys with shaved heads and lots of feathers who take you up to the volcano and chuck you in! They don't sit around running the OPEC/DeBeers cartel and playing harps. It's no fun that way.

**AM:** And, if you're going to do anything, do it and then put it on the Internet. That way, as many people as possible can see your work and—

**AM:** And ruin it themselves! (laughter)

**NB:** I love the Internet! Because, anything you get off it is immediately available for cut, paste, edit, delete. Assimilation! I'm sure there's going to be some copyright problems, and stuff like that, but I can live with that. I like people to use my stuff.

#### Of Baboons & Bottoms

**AM:** Where does Melo Yellow come from?

**MOB:** Melo Yellow began long, long ago. About 12 years ago Trevor Ackerly and I ran a club campaign for our roleplaying club at our university. We sat up all summer holidays writing the material for it, and then used it up in about the first two weeks. So after that we had to make up plots, for the next year and a half. And, I believe Melo Yellow began there. Is that correct? [to Trevor]

**TA:** Yes. In fact, he was your creation! (laughter)

**MOB:** I tried! I tried! (laughter) Yes. Poor Mello Yellow... well, if you play *Mad Prax: Beyond Sun Dome*<sup>1</sup>, you'll see what happens to him. He features in that. For some reason, both things I've written this year have had baboons in them. But, we don't have a fixation on them or anything.

**NB:** No, no, no, no. I love baboons! I use baboons the way Americans seem to use ducks. Baboons are hilarious people! They're really funny.

**MOB:** Baboons make great player characters! Say in a tournament, if you



have a player who knows absolutely nothing about Glorantha, or the way the cults work, or whatever, it's an ideal—

**NB:** Or who is drunk!

**MOB:** —because, if they know nothing about how the Yelmlio cult works, the baboon character can just say, “You see one of the other Player Characters as the epitome of a Sun Lord, so you copy whatever he does.” And, there you go. So, I think it's very important, when you're trying to get people introduced to RuneQuest, that you make it as simple as possible. And the less they need to know to play, the better.

**NB:** The other thing about baboons is that they are an extremely primitive spiritual people, with a wonderful oral tradition stretching back thousands and thousands of years. We had a game after Convulsion last summer where all the players were baboons. And, from the players' point of view, the point of the game was to sit around the campfire (or the non-campfire) at night telling baboon stories. The referee wanted us to go out and fight Sable Riders, but we were having so much more fun just sitting around talking about how Gorilla founded Monkey City, and how one day Monkey (the Trickster) went to a banquet of the gods and got them to all wear clothes... It was brilliant stuff! And then, in between that there were bouts of die-rolling, when my brain turned off. But, it was great, because the thing about baboons is, almost anyone can imagine a pack of baboons sitting around fighting, picking fleas off each other, and stuff like that. That's really good activity for role-playing!

**MOB:** And, don't forget, to show submission to a superior baboon you have to expose your bottom!

**NB:** Oh! This is Gloranthan trivia! Mooning: exposing your bottom to people. The baboons were there first! “All human worship stems from baboons,” the baboons say. “The Lunar Empire, if you go and look at them, what they worship is a big red round thing with a sort of line down the

middle. Now, look at a baboon's backside!” (laughter) “And, what do the Lunars do? Every Full Moon day, they all go out into the plains of Prax, and kneel down like this.” [Nick kneels down, hands stretched over head, bends over at waist] “And, whenever they talk to people, they're talking about ‘peace.’ So, we know what's going on!” So, mooning is a sign of peace and submission.

**Anyone for Nuts?**

**AM:** Does anyone want to hear about the Island of Trowjang? And why this island of women are so feared by the men around them?

**NB:** Sure! Tell us!

**AM:** You got me thinking about it, when Paul was talking about the ritual involved in killing the lion to eat it's heart. Now, I've been thinking of writing this up for over a year, but I've been too lazy to. And, if I ever do, I'm not going to publish it under my own name, just in case I ever run for elected office! (laughter) So, you can use this in your game, if you want.

The nations around the Trowjang are terribly afraid of the women of the island, and how they raid as pirates. They're afraid of what happens to the male prisoners who get taken back. And, I kind of have an idea about what goes on.

**MD:** There's a great story in *Codex* #3 about it.

**AM:** That's right! Mike Dawson had a great story about Trowjang coming out in *Codex*. There's no free men allowed on Trowjang, at least not unless they have a leash around their neck and they're heavily escorted. But, obviously, men are good for some things. Men are physically stronger. So, perhaps there's a ritual that women of power in Trowjang put male prisoners through, to make them even more useful to their society while also taking away their manhood.

**AM:** Is that called “marriage?” (laughter)

**NB:** That's the Trowjang translation!

**AM:** What I think is that there's a certain castration ritual known to the priestesses of Trowjang, where male prisoners are ritually forced to eat their own testicles. In doing this, the men become eunuchs. They're not ‘men’ anymore, so they're not much of a threat. And, in doing this, the prisoners get bigger and stronger, but they also get dumber. In game terms, I'd add +2d4 to STR, subtract 1d4 from CON (since they're eating their own vitality), subtract 1d4 from INT, and subtract maybe 2d4 from POW. Now, I think that there is justification for this, and I really took the inspiration from the use of steroids in Western society. The male testicles are symbolic of immortality, much as the Vadeli found out.

**PR:** And the Brithini too, but in a different way. As their little shriveled up organs indicate. (laughter)

**AM:** Anyway, through this ritual, the man is forced to consume his own future immortality, that he could have bestowed upon his children. By forcing him to eat that now, he gets bigger and stronger today. And that's also why he gets stupid.

**PR:** And aggressive too, maybe. But, they may have ways of controlling that. They drive the Sacred Spike through the temporal lobe, causing...

**AM:** I remember years ago hearing a line about how in ancient Byzantium, the man who was made a eunuch often fell in love with the person who forced them to go through this process. So, if we're going to translate that to Trowjang, I think the woman officiating the ritual on Trowjang magically enslaves the male prisoners. When they take their 2d4 hit on POW, they get a one time chance to resist that mental enslavement. And, because they're at minus 2d4 POW and she's a priestess, chances are they're going to fail the roll. So, the priestesses of Trowjang often have a bunch of devoted eunuch slaves. But, an exceptional male might make that roll, ending up as a pumped-up stupid eunuch with free will.



**PR:** This is excellent! It fits in with Tolat, the god of Trowjang. He and she is the god of both love and death, so the loss of the testicles while falling in love is—

**NB:** And, what we call the “Death Rune” is also separation. That seems appropriate here.

**PR:** Yes! And it makes me think that, in Alkoth, Shargash has temple guardians who are big beefy eunuchs.

**NB:** That’s interesting. But, I don’t believe that things are necessarily the same world wide.

At one point I was toying with the idea of Carmanian Humakti all being eunuchs. I do this to annoy people. But, I’m not sure it’s true. Maybe just the harem guards are.

**PR:** Any questions about Fronela?

**Hail Loskalm! (or is that “Heil”?)**

**NB:** I have a question about Fronela. Why does anyone think that the Loskalmi are the good guys?

**MD:** There is a certain ‘spin’ in the Genertelan book in that direction. But, it’s absolutely unnecessary to conceive of them that way. I am not convinced that Loskalm has made up its mind about whether its a ‘good guy’ or not. For example, I ran the *Galastar Conference* playtest. We had the Hrestoli bishop decide that, well, he’s really a Galastari and that the Galastari are all “Montagues and Capulets.” The day before the Conference, he wanted to arrange to have an assassin there. And one of the things he wanted to do was arrange it to be a Hrestoli assassin. I said, “Well, you’re not going to be able to go through official Church channels to do that. You’re going to have to deal with the ‘cowboy’ elements of Malkionism.” The ‘muscular’ Malkionism that they talk about. The ‘Iran/Contra’ Hrestoli. The ‘Oliver North’ of Loskalm can certainly arrange to have a—

**NB:** The ones with Hrestoli runes tattooed on their foreheads!

**MD:** Well, that might be gauche. But, to me it’s much more interesting if they haven’t made up their mind yet.

**NB:** And also, of course, I think the isolationism plays in. Loskalm was perfect when it was enclosed within the Ban. So... “We won’t do anything to the outside world. Why don’t we just sit here in our perfect kingdom with a strong border, and carry on like it was before?” Some silly countries actually believe they can do that sort of stuff, you know?

#### Boatloads about Brithini

**AM:** I have a quick question about the Brithini. I don’t understand how it is that they’ve been managed to be kept where they are.

**NB:** They don’t want to go anywhere else. The Brithini Way involves doing everything in exactly the same way. They don’t want to breed. If a Brithini has a child, the Brithini himself is probably aging and dying.

**PR:** But slowly.

**NB:** Yeah. Slowly. Brithini always do things the same way. My Terran parallel for Brithini would probably be office working commuters, except that they don’t have a social life or a home life. You know, every morning at 9 o’clock they catch the same train into work, sit in the same seat, open the same door into the building, do the same job, catch the same 6:15 train back home. But, we’re not just talking about that routine for a normal working life. We’re talking about that forever! Any Brithini who became ambitious, megalomaniacal, who wanted to go to new places and see strange things, would be aging and dying. Because he’s breaking his caste restrictions. Originality is a terrible sin for the Brithini.

**PR:** There are hints that the Brithini are going to go on military conquests, and stuff like that, if you look at the prophesies in the Genertela book. I think that’s true.

**NB:** As Greg does.

**PR:** But, I think that it’s true in that they’re trying to make the world exactly like some perfect model. You know, they want Brithini enclaves \*here\*, and they want forest outside of that, and no other civilization.

**NB:** “Like in the Good Old Days!”

**PR:** Yeah! They’re trying to get back to that. They’re not trying to conquer the world, they’re trying to make it just like “the Good Old Days.” And if that involves killing every human in Seshnela and Loskalm (because that’s where the old Brithini colonies were), that’s what they’ll do. If it involves destroying other people’s civilizations, well, other people “aren’t real people” to them! “They’re artificial constructs, made from other things like animals or mud, that look like people!” “Some sorcerer made these counterfeits. They have no rights!” “Their lives are so short! They barely live a century!”

**AM:** So... that’s why I question why it is the Brithini don’t expand.

**NB:** Because they don’t want to. They don’t have any population pressure. They have no desire to go to strange new places and meet new people.

**PR:** You could interpret it either way. Either they want to keep things exactly as they are now, or (if you want a Brithini menace in your campaign) you can have them wanting to expand to make thing just like they used to have. But, they don’t want to conquer the world. They’re like Republicans or something, with backwards-looking rose-colored glasses.

**NB:** They don’t want to talk to people. They don’t want to learn anything new. They don’t want to understand what else is going on in the world.

**PR:** They already have “All True Knowledge!”

**Secure Academic Tenure at Sog City University**

**NB:** Brithini who make contact with the “Outside World” are probably in mortal



danger of transgressing their restrictions and aging and dying. In *How the West was One*, we had a bit of satire. At Sog City University, all the real top nobs (the professors, the Chancellor, the University officials, the Deans) are Brithini sorcerers, zzaburi. They are all that is left after the rest of the Brithini in Sog City (\*ahem\*, “the City of Brass”) are killed, for whatever reason, over time. Now, if you’re a Brithini sorcerer, you’ve got a few problems. You can’t put on your own clothes in the morning, because that’s peasants’ work. You have servants for that. You can’t make yourself a meal. You can’t open doors.

We are taking an extreme line on this, but remember that these guys want to live forever. Turning a door handle and exerting yourself to open the door is a breach of caste. Over the millennia, these things add up. So, Sog University has in fact become a life support system for these zzaburi. All the flunkies, the porters, the students, and everyone are there in order to keep these guys alive, in order to keep things running the way the sorcerers expect them to run.

**PR:** There’s probably only a dozen, or twenty, sorcerers there.

**NB:** Yeah, something like that. And, the thing is, students go to the lectures, which are the traditional/scriptural Brithini sorcerer lectures. The Brithini would be teaching other sorcerers, lecturing students, demonstrating stuff. But, this means the academic year is completely out of kilter with reality (as I’m sure pretty much everyone here has experienced). It means there are meaningless University rituals. (I went to Oxford. I’ve seen all these.) It means that the real power of the University is wielded by the Vice-Chancellor and the Junior Dean, and all the ‘second step’ officials, because all the ones up top are figure-heads who can’t get involved in anything that is interesting, new, or different.

**PR:** <laughing> This is SO horrifyingly like real life!

**NB:** Exactly! (laughter) Anyway, that shows why I don’t believe that those

Brithini sorcerers in Sog City are plotting to take over the world.

### The Ancient Jokes of Brithos

**AM:** I think that the Brithini are sort of getting a bad rap. Sure, they’re amoral atheists that don’t care a damn about anybody else, but—

**PR:** But they’re not. They’re differently moral. They believe that they should live forever, and the rest of the world can go hang.

**AM:** Yeah. They don’t care about the rest of the world. But I think that within the Brithini culture there is some advancement, some enjoyment, some fun—

**NB:** “Enjoyment? It’s a sin!”

**AM:** Well, I sort of imagine them sort of like the German proletariat. They have an absolutely restricted life, and they can go no further, but—

**NB:** No. If you ever hear a Brithini laughing, he’s going to die.

**MOB:** Oh, I disagree! I think there are certain Brithini forms of entertainment, that they’ve done so many times, over and over and over again.

**NB:** The “ancient jokes.” Yeah!

**MOB:** There are probably seven or eight jokes that they are allowed to tell, that they are allowed to laugh uproariously at.

**AM:** Number six!

**MOB:** Like, “Why did the chicken cross the road?” “To get to the other side!” [Mike, Nick, and Paul laugh together loudly for 5 seconds, then abruptly stop]

**MOB:** And, that’s probably all they are allowed to laugh at. Though, I’d say cricket could possibly be another Brithini entertainment. (laughter)

**PR:** Only more incomprehensible, if that’s not an oxymoron.

### Surf or Die!

**PR:** Let me also say that I think that Brithini immortality is a function of the fact that they don’t age because they aren’t really “living” as we understand it.

If they’re out enjoying themselves, or whatnot, then the clock is ticking for them. As long as they live within their rigid caste restrictions, they’re sort of not really there. They’re like automatic machines. And that keeps “the Death” that’s out there from getting in.

**NB:** They’re living in ongoing, cyclical time, where everything is always the same. They go around, and around, and around. And linear time, the ages and the the seasons and everything, just crosses their path.

**PR:** Yes. So if they have advancement, if they learn new things, they’re moving away from their cyclical time. In cyclical time, every day is a repeat of the previous day, up to some limits. Every year is a repeat of the previous year. Or they may have a bigger cycle. But, once they try to enjoy things, learn new things, meet interesting people, then they’re moving out of their little tiny island of cyclical time that they’re desperately trying to hold on to. They move into the world of linear time, and they start aging.

**MM:** There was an interesting piece to my old Vadeli character, who talked about “not knowing Time too well, because them Time would get to know you.” And that seems like where the Brithini have it down, because their life is so repetitive that they couldn’t possibly remember three days ago, because it was just like yesterday and would be just like tomorrow. So, they don’t really have anything they can really remember as different. So, time really doesn’t matter to them.

**NB:** Yeah. A Brithini historian would be dead in weeks.

**PR:** But the Vadeli are different from the Brithini. I think they can participate in linear time and have fun, meet new people, do new things, but—





**AM:** At everyone else's expense!

**PR:** Yeah! At everyone else's expense. It's got to be paid for somehow! For them to be immortal, it's got to be paid for somehow.

**AM:** But the point is, a Vadeli doesn't have to try to remember everything, because it's not a good thing. They live in the moment!

**NB:** "Enjoy life!"

**PR:** The Indlas Somer cult<sup>2</sup> was just a joke, but it does have a point. If you live in the moment and have fun, you don't remember from year to year. You can still do different things; but if you just live in the moment and don't try to live an organized life, you can move from linear time into chaotic time. Or whatever. You're there, you're the Surfer King. Five hundred years later, you're still there. You don't remember the details of yesterday, but you're still there.

**NB:** Oooh! The whole culture clash between the Brithini and Vadeli is between commuters and surfers!

**Doomed! You're All Doomed! Hahahahaaaaa!**

**PR:** There you go! Also, about the Brithini and Malkioni, I think Brithos was dying in the Darkness; the World Machine had broken, and all these other myths, and Brithos was in danger of destruction. Individual Brithini looked out, especially the rulers, and said, "We must keep ourselves alive!" To Brithini, their whole world is them. The individual is all. They're the ultimate opposite of the Eastern 'communal self,' where everyone combines into the Great Dragon or whatever. In the extreme West of the world, everyone is an isolated individual. The whole point of existence there is for you, the individual, to keep going on forever.

Some Brithini broke away from that and said, "We have to save our culture." It's kind of an unBrithini thing to do. Either that, or the highest rulers saw what was going on and appointed people to solve this problem. So,

individual Brithini learned to break caste restrictions in order to fight against the Chaos and the Ice Age that was going to overwhelm them. They used things like "the spell forbidden by Urostio," which turns the peasants into a horde of ravaging lunatics who could defeat the chaos monsters. But, they didn't do their assigned work for the day. They stopped hoeing the vegetable patch.

**NB:** Don't forget, there was a glacier on top of it!

**PR:** OK, so they started hacking away at the glacier. Either way, it wasn't their assigned work. Now, all these people who broke their caste restrictions to save Brithos are doomed. Sure, they might slowly age and die. They might live for a few more hundreds or thousands of years, but "the Death" is in them. They are slowly dying! And, in Brithini philosophy, there is no life after death. When a person dies, the spirit is severed from the body. That's it. The person is gone. All you have left is a decomposing rotting corpse and a decomposing rotting spirit. A ghost is just a rotting pattern of information that repeats a few things (like, "Ooooooh! Go baaaack!") and eventually fades away as people forget about him. So, there's no afterlife. Then, the doomed get exiled from Brithos. They don't want them around because they could be contagious; they have "Death cooties." And, they might cause you to violate your caste restrictions, because they're not doing their assigned task.

**NB:** "He might sit in my seat on the train!"

**PR:** Right! And then, you'd have to sit in the wrong seat and then you get it

too.

**NB:** Right. The whole train car does. It's like the Monty Python "Jabberwocky" blacksmith shop scene. That's what happens when a Brithini starts acting out of place.

**PR:** So, the Brithini ship "The Doomed" goes off to Akem in Seshnela. The Colonies. And there they are, all these people are doomed to die, although they saved Brithos. Then Malkion comes and says, "Oh! These people saved us! We need to do something for them!" And he makes up the new religion for the doomed people, telling them, "Death is not necessarily the end." And they convert. The old Brithini have no reason to convert. (Why should they? They live forever.) "The Doomed" have a reason to convert to Malkionism.

#### Nick Monkeys Around

**NB:** OK. I've just been told it's noon, so if anyone has anything to get to, do. And, um...

**MOB:** What's going on at noon?

**NB:** Oh! Do I play in your game? Does it start now?

**MOB:** Yeah.

**NB:** Oh dear! I'm off to be a baboon, I hope! [Nick quickly (but clumsily) gathers up some loose papers under his arm and, with hunched shoulders and bowed knees, lopes down the center aisle - much to the amazement of the crowd]

<sup>1</sup> An adventure by Mike O'Brien.

<sup>2</sup> A cult in *Different Worlds* #16

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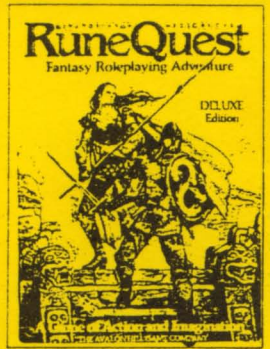
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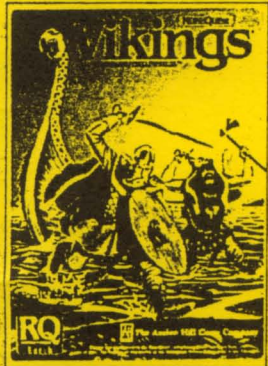


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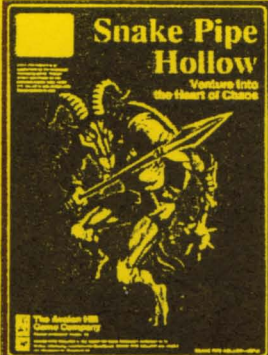
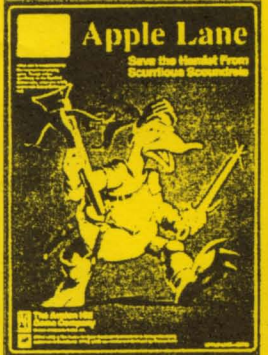
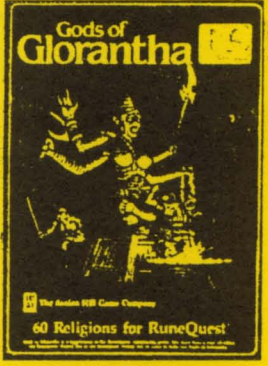
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