

Politics

In recent months, the Church of Efferd demonstrated vividly how quickly a gentle breeze could turn into a full-fledged storm. Apparently, the Warden of the Circle is finally fed up with the hostilities evident between the Horasian and the Al'Anfan divisions of the Church.

Magical Theory and Mechanics

Sylphorico, an alchemist from the Red Salamander Society, filed a report on his recent investigations. As the object of his studies was a demon ark lying in the port of Mendena, his research is truly unique.

Regional News

With his Efferd-granted powers, only the local Blessed One of Efferd was able to communicate with the man who washed up on the shores of the Risso Archipelago.

Khôm Divided!

WNAU/KEFT. Astounding things happen these days in the Khôm Desert and the other lands of the Caliphate. It almost seems as if faith in the desert god Rastullah is nearing a crossroads. It remains to be seen if the aggressive raids of the brave Novadic riders will soon turn inward against their own brothers and sisters.

After the turmoil in Almada, I followed the alleged troublemakers in order to get you, dear reader, a picture of these preachers' statements. Apparently, the trigger for these events was a pilgrimage of a small group of only eight persons who were led by a Tulaydian religious scholar known as a mawdli, this according to a traveling Tulamydian storyteller called a haimamud. However, other witnesses stated that the pilgrims had provoked the mawdlis in Keft. Unfortunately, I was not able to find out which of these statements was true. Generally, it is difficult for an *infidel* like me to speak with the Novadi, and I think that this only becomes more difficult as one gets nearer to Keft.

In any case, most people here disagree with the views of this small group, whose members are viewed at best as confused, at worst as evildoers and heretics. But why then do they still enjoy such popularity, especially in the fringe regions of the Khôm? The domains of the Beni Schebt and the Beni Erkin in particular seem to be strongholds of this new (or, more specifically, changed) faith.

Sermon about a False God

In the oasis of Alam-Terekh, which lies in the domain of the Beni Ankhar tribe, I had the opportunity to listen to a stirring and haunting speech given by Lulzim ben Harkim. I tried to reproduce some of his speech in the following article so that you, dear reader, can get an idea of what it sounded like to be there:

"... And thus, it is certain that he will finally awaken. After centuries, which are but an instant to him, Rastullah will return and

renew his pact with the Novadi people! *"As it once was in Keft, I have seen the blazing tent, and it stood in water, moist and life-giving, not on desert sand. Now that he is awakening, Rastullah will grant us fertile soil, so that we need not live on stringy goats any longer, but may let our proud steeds graze on blooming meadows!"*

"I have seen his wisdom, his power, his glory, and I cannot express with words how perfect it is. It was so wonderful, I feared almost that I would lose my mind. Thus, I had to close my eyes, and for the first time in my life I understood why we can only imagine portions of Rastullah—the mind of a mortal can grasp no more! Yet he gave me a sign so that all of you can see his glory! This is his tear, shed for us! It is a promise that he will return to us, his loyal followers, and shape our future! ..."

At this point, a commotion interrupted his speech, as he had produced a gem which I recognized as a transparent diamond with a perfect octagonal cut. Indeed, something was very strange about this stone. Although Lulzim was speaking in the shadow of a palm tree and no sun reached the stone, it seemed to emit a pure, white light. Upon seeing this, many Novadi rushed forward to get a better look or even touch the stone. Soon after that, some Novadi began calling out, demanding to spill the blood of infidels for Rastullah. At that point, I decided to

leave.

It is said that a sharisad (one of the few women permitted independent decisions, for they are dancers, which is pleasing unto Rastullah) at the Manesh Oasis in the southern Khôm tells a similar story and has a similar gem. Also, it is rumored that there is a hermit who belongs to the group of pilgrims. Since a few weeks ago, he can be found north of the Wal-el-Khômra. According to reports from neighboring tribes of nomads, he spends his days digging in the sand with a folding shovel. Unfortunately, no one has been able to tell me what, exactly, he hopes to find, and I did not have the opportunity to meet him myself.

Troubles in the Desert Sand

Pilgrims and self-styled prophets are well-respected in the Khôm's fringe regions, particularly among the common Novadi, who embrace their teachings gratefully. However, a majority of mawdlis, particularly those of the orthodox School of Keft, label their teachings dangerously evil and heretical unto Rastullah. They rile up the loyal earls (*hairans*, in the Lands of the Tulamydes) of the central oases against the preachers and their followers. It may be only a matter of time until we see clashes between the various followers and opponents of the preachers.

Thus, we await a statement from the

Caliph or his chief mawdli with bated breath. So far, however, no such statement has been issued. However, rumors have been circulating that Kasim ben Mustafa, the younger son of Malkillah III, converted to the new faith. Is it possible that, under the influence of the new faith, he could set himself up as a competing Caliph? Or even break with the Caliphate entirely?

It seems that the Novadi have difficult and troubled times in store for them. One cannot yet estimate the implications of these internal conflicts for the neighboring realms, especially since it remains to be seen whether there war will erupt between the different schools of faith, or whether the Caliphate will be reunified. Currently, both factions are trying to win over the important and influential hairans. The Caliph and his representatives so far remain silent, but you can count on them to keep watching matters closely.

In any case, traveling through the Khôm will probably become more and more dangerous for infidels and Novadi, and many a caravan could do worse than circumnavigate the desert or cross it with a powerful, armed escort.

Cordovan Munter
(Anni Dürr, with thanks to David Lukaßen)



Aventurian Herald, Peraine 1038 FB

Northland Bank Branch to Open in the Risso Archipelago

Brabak. Lately this group of islands clustered between the continents has been an oft-mentioned subject in the royal city on the cape. Very recently, several important Brabakan dignitaries traveled to the Risso Archipelago, ancient homeland of the Risso lizardfolk. Prince Peleiston made the voyage with Perval de Sylphur-Hardebrand, chief justice of the Manorial Court in the royal city and son of Chancellor Guelmo de Sylphur-Hardebrand. Perval was given the honor of accompanying the future king to check on the administration of justice in the Risso Archipelago, even if hecklers in the streets of Brabak wondered loudly what there was to check. It is said that Perval de Sylphur-Hardebrand also offered some explanation concerning the royal presents (copies of the *Codex Mizirion*). It should be mentioned here that, on the day Perval's elderly father retires or finally meets Lord Boron, Perval is considered the most likely to succeed him in the Royal Brabakan Chancellery. Perval's trip to the archipelago at the Crown Prince's side

should serve to lend credence to this idea.

According to sources pleasing unto Phex, Bosjev Larinov himself, an important Bornlander and branch manager of the Festumian Draft and Deposit Hall in Brabak, will soon travel to the Archipelago on board a ship of the Brabacian Amalgamated Occidental Company. It is said that he intends to meet with Wilbur Zenkauskas. However, neither Larinov nor Dario Zeforika from the BAOOC offered to comment on this trip or any rumors. Informed sources nevertheless claim to know that Larinov is toying with the idea of opening a branch in Porto Korisande on the island of New Ranak, in order to participate in the growing commerce with the southern continent of Uthuria. It should be mentioned that several merchants question the wisdom of operating a branch in Uthuria. They are of the opinion that sailors' wages are too low to justify the expense of operating such a branch, and at any rate, they feel that most sailors would waste their pay either on drinks

or the brothel of Inarés du Berilis in Porto Korisande. Similarly, free traders operating in the area reinvest their profits immediately in other goods and thus don't have much cash on hand to deposit.

Reeve-Vicar Orelia Kalanduez is of a different mind. He sees the plan as pleasing unto Phex and as a way to strengthen the kingdom of Brabak's importance and role as a commercial and financial center. Kalanduez argued that Brabak would become a fixture of commerce with the southern continent as well as with the whole Aventurian south. It is said that Lessandro the Younger, the Horasian envoy at the Royal Court who comes from the banking and mercantile family ya Strozza, has labelled Larinov's business acumen "astute and, indeed, forward-looking." However, when asked why his cousin's family, which already owns a counting house in Nagra, did not secure land for the Northland Bank, he remained silent.

Muliro Larekos (Christian Bender)

Aventurian Herald, Phex 1038 FB

Warden of the Circle Tries to Calm the Waters

Bethana/Vinsalt/Al'Anfa. In recent months, the Church of Efferd demonstrated vividly how quickly a gentle breeze can turn into a full-fledged storm. Apparently, the Warden of the Circle is finally fed up with the hostilities evident between the Horasian and the Al'Anfan divisions of the Church.

Well-informed parish sources told the Aventurian Herald that the patriarch of the sea god's Church community vented his displeasure concerning the goings-on—even if he did so only to a few confidants. Once again, the Church of Efferd was unavailable for comment, but it did not go unnoticed that the Church messengers rode from Bethana to Vinsalt and Al'Anfa.

No one knows the details of the message they carried, but some information was announced publicly: Efferdan ui Bennain decrees that all quarrels between the two temples are to cease immediately. Additionally, their public vilification of Blessed Ones must cease so as not to risk schism in the Church of Efferd. If these quarrels do not end, the Warden of the Circle will intervene personally. However, considering the history between the temples in the Horasian Empire and Al'Anfa, one can only wonder if the Church Patriarch's letter will really be able to defuse the tension.

Muliro Larekos (Martin Schmidt)

Aventurian Herald, Peraine 1038 FB

News from the Symposium at Lizardmoss

Considerations about the Possible Uses of the Ark Wood *lignum daimonicum*

Lizardmoss. As reported previously, the barony of Lizardmoss played host to the Derial Symposium Regarding Contemporary Theoretical and Applied Magic and Related Sciences. Abstracts of its working groups will soon follow; once again, we distance ourselves from their contents.

Sylphorico, an alchemist from the Red Salamander Society, filed a report on his recent investigations. As the object of his studies was a demon ark that sank in the port of Mendena, his research is truly unique.

At the behest of Haffax, and in collaboration with the Heptagon Academy and the Narthex of Victory, he experimented with the ship's wood for over two years. At the symposium, he presented his insights into its properties and peculiarities:

In general, it has the essence of an entity of the Seventh Sphere and thus takes on its properties, but it is also an anti-element anchored in our Sphere. Protracted experiments were necessary in order to fit it into the paramanthic system of elements.

As expected, exposing the wood to Ore, Ice, and Air resulted in a slight reciprocal influence.

However, things became very interesting while examining the wood under conditions of exposure to elements that have known interactions with Charyptoroth's domain. As a side-note, it should be mentioned that the influence of Agrimoth's domain is also measurable, but less so on the alchemical side. Treatment with Fire showed evidence of resistance, albeit side effects of demonic interactio elementorum occurred: creaking sounds issued from within the wood, and the flames assumed a black color and a sulphurous smell. Cauterization with vitriol verified classification as fire-resistant wood.

Affinity to Water was examined by

submerging the wood in various fluids, such as pure and polluted water, alcohol, and Unau brine. This series of tests showed how strongly the wood perverts the liquid element. All fluids transformed into a poisonous frothy sludge, although alcohol and pure water resisted this effect the longest. For its part, the brine attacked the wood and extracted mhaglibanum, or ark resin, from its fibers. The wood sample undergoing submersion tests coincidentally was obtained from a horn of the ark (the only known source of the resin), which proved significant in subsequent tests.

The most exciting test results stemmed from exposing the wood to Humus. From an alchemical perspective, Charyptoroth is not ascribed any affinity, whereas wood has a special affinity to Humus. Even when bathed in earth pitch—which displays only weak Humus properties—the wood melted and exhibited none of the regenerative abilities bestowed upon it by the ark. When buried in soil from untainted forests, it decayed to a stinking, amorphous mass.

Conclusion: *When processing this wood, it is of primary concern that, when separated from the actual ark, it suffers tremendous damage when exposed to that most ubiquitous of elements, Humus. However, resin obtained from the ark horns by means of Unau brine can lessen this vulnerability.*

Sylphorico announced proudly that, based on his research, he succeeded in the creation of the prototype of a new class of golem in the workshops of Yol-Ghurmak. He added that it is crucial to treat the outer shell with mhaglibanum in combination with a stabilizing and potent crystal geode which mends the elemental imbalance.

The lecture inspired animated discussions concerning the ark wood's suitability for use in individual artifacts of the various

Traditions of magic. Interested magicians clustered around Magister Alrik and Sienaya, the Daughter of Satuarra, the academy's two self-appointed experts on the analysis of magical weapons, seeking their insights. Magister Alrik reported on examinations conducted with some colleagues concerning the use of wood from the demon ark in the creation of mage's staves. The Magister stressed that, due to a significantly increased risk of *occupatio*, the use of this wood is only advisable for experienced magicians. On the other hand, a wand created from this special wood served as an extraordinary tool for mages who associate with demons—whether for summoning or banishing them. Additionally, a staff enchantment with the property focus of demonic was not only much easier to cast on the wand, it also shows more potent effects than those seen with wands made from other kinds of wood. Likewise, demonological spells stored in the wand need less power than usual.

Dame Sienaya corroborated Alrik's observations with her own concerning the demon wood's use for witch's brooms. According to her experiments, prolonged contact with such a broom renders spells containing a demonic component easier to cast. Additionally, the wood can focus the emotions of a Daughter of Satuarra

much stronger when said Daughter tries to intensify the spell's effect. However, when queried further by confrontational mages of the Gray Guild, Dame Sienaya was unwilling to elaborate. In the end, she had to admit that such a flying broom would be severely limited, as if the wood itself were trying to avoid contact with the air. Obliging, the witch presented a test item she had crafted out of wood from a Mendonian shipyard.

(Dominic Hladek & Rafael Knop)



Aventurian Herald



This section contains
spoilers concerning
the adventure *Arivor's
Doom*.

Special Edition

Aventurian Herald 173

Arivor in Ruins!

VINSALT, HORASIAN EMPIRE—In a recent special edition, our readers were informed of a mysterious disaster that had struck Arivor. Now, more details are available. It is with sad certainty that we report the destruction of the city of Arivor, stronghold of Rondrianic traditions and home of the famous Bosparan vinyards.

The Disaster

23rd Rahja, 1039 FB, noon. The annual joust is in full swing and all of Arivor buzzes with excitement. No one suspects the dark fate that approaches. Knights in dazzling armor compete in the joust, families take their midday meals, pilgrims and peddlers of devotional objects haggle over prices, crafters take orders for new commissions, and a play of epic proportion is staged in the renowned Theater of Arivor.

Suddenly, a vast, deep rumble and tremor makes the stomach lurch as if one is listening to a dwarven kettledrum concert. Then, all the Netherhells break loose, and the very ground upon which Arivor stands begins collapsing!

Towers, temples, and fortified townhouses collapse like houses of cards and tumble into the depths! Crevices of enormous width and depth form in the streets. Sumu's body is bursting and cracking, as it did when Los wounded her in battle. The noise is deafening, and soon, thick dust fills the air. Through a veil of haze, one sees the silhouette of Hotel Sevenstrike as it tumbles roof-first into a precipice. The Kuslik Gate stands enthroned on a lonely spire of rock above a crater of rubble. The shattered towers of the Ardarites' Castle and the outline of the Golden Helmet jut out of the dust like the hand of a dead man reaching out from a pile of rubble.

"Fissures in the ground appeared everywhere, swallowing entire houses. I saw buildings crack in half and watched as people fell a hundred paces into the deep. I'll never forget what I've seen. May the gods have mercy upon us! Arivor will never recover," says Bascanai Lorian, a miller from Arivor. She hears the cries of the wounded and sees bodies everywhere—buried under rubble, smashed by rocks, lying in what is left of their homes. The boroughs of Old Arivor and Morgunora are no more, and the Field of Swords is now a deep pit. Even outlying districts like Saladania and Kingsland didn't escape the destruction. The Golden Helmet, now merely an island of rubble, juts out of the chaos.

Thus went the survivors' accounts of the catastrophe, Arivor's last and longest day.

Desperate scenes of survival play out long into the night. Aftershocks cause further damage, bringing down homes that somehow withstood the first quake. Refugees try to flee the city while looters have a field day.

Those who remained within the city after nightfall tell tales of ghostly apparitions that replay gruesome death scenes over and over, or of strange creatures that issued from their burrows to crawl forth in the dark of night.

Even amid these tales of woe, hope still lives: Horasian legionnaires and mercenaries of the Bandiera Bianca help pull survivors from the crater's edge, and it turns out that many children survive only because the Temple of Tsa relocated to an outlying district just before the disaster struck.

On the Road to Arivor

28. Rahja. Arivor had a population of about 12,000, but due to the tourney holidays, pilgrims and visitors had doubled that number. So far on the road to the city I have met a few hundred refugees, and I thank the Twelve for each soul that escaped this sad fate. Many seem to be leaving for Kuslik, Pertakis, Silas, and Sibur as the Arivorians scatter in all directions. Some say that only a few thousand survived, but it is too early to speculate. The evacuees seek shelter before the beginning of the Nameless Days,

their numbers swelling constantly as they are joined by residents from neighboring villages who fear that the same disaster will strike their homes.

Mondino Chababieni, a vintner hailing from Taresello in the hills east of Arivor, said, *"On the eve of the disaster (and I swear it by all Twelve, Rahja be my witness), a thundering echo sounded and the horizon was lit by fire. Then a crack burst open in the ground. It started at old Balliguri's house and cut a swath through the village square, straight through the temple!"* This reminded me of something I had overheard earlier in Vinsalt. Kusmina Pirras, a den mother from Castarosa, said, *"A shooting star destroyed the city. It fell from the heavens with a blazing tail."*

On the Causes

All of this leads to the question of what caused the disaster. There is a chaotic mix of hypotheses, beliefs, and (seemingly) authoritative conclusions drawn by the residents of Arivor.

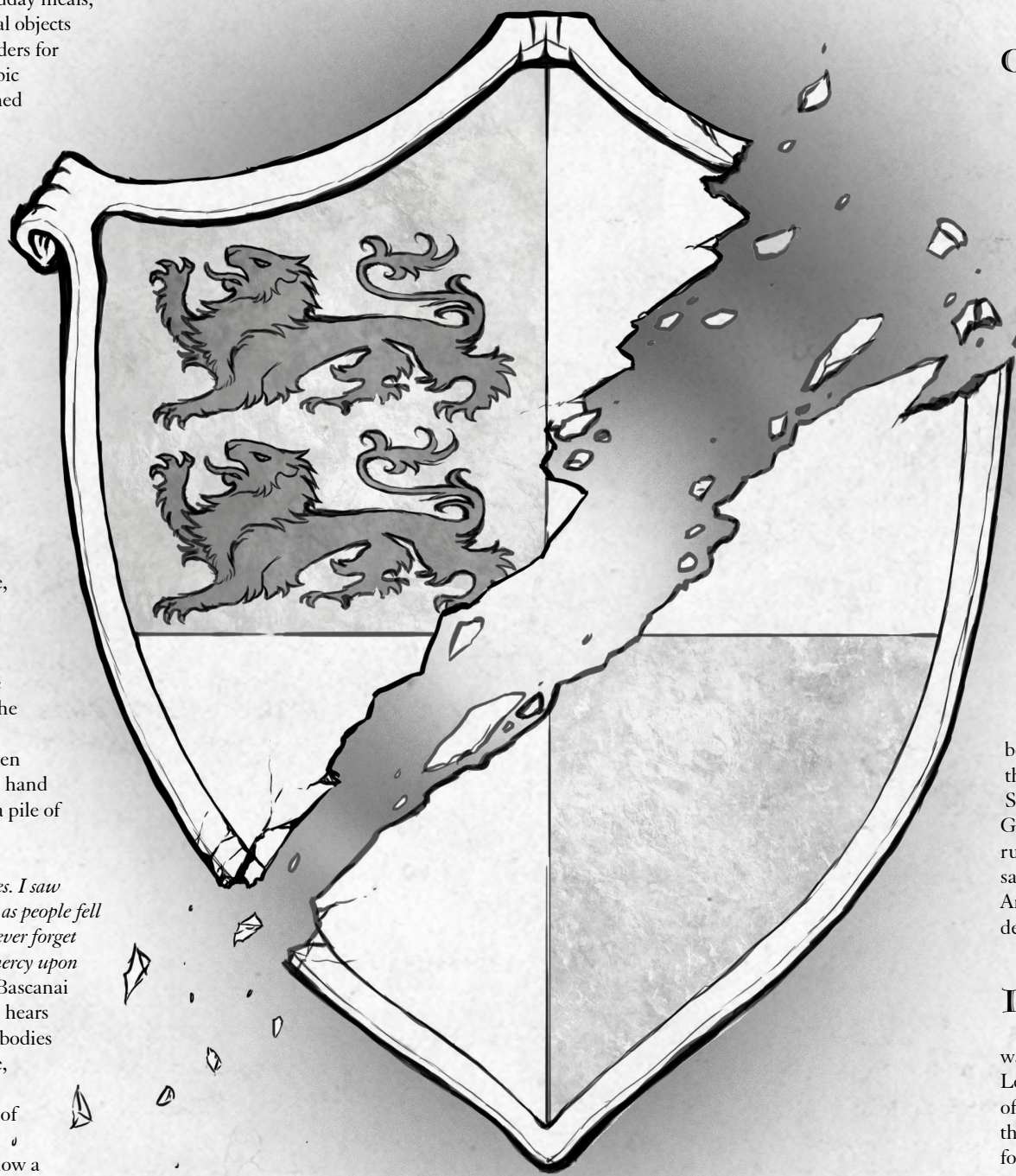
However, all agree that the catastrophe involved some kind of tremor, but one that caused the ground to collapse in on itself. Cracks and sinkholes appeared as if the city had lost its foundations. Contrary to some reports, no star fell on Arivor, but several people seem to confirm Signor Chababieni's observation. On the eve of the disaster, they say, the spectacle of a shooting star was followed immediately by a loud bang to the east of Arivor that could be heard for miles. Rumors even say that a hamlet named Aquiliano was destroyed by the impact of this falling star. Several times in the history of Aventuria, shooting stars have been viewed as instruments of divine punishment. Was this the case in Arivor, too?

We must not forget that the night sky has been undergoing profound changes. Already, the star that marked the tip of the blade in the Sword Constellation can no longer be seen. Given these signs, is it any wonder that sad rumors begin to make the rounds? The worst says that Nepolemo ya Torese, the archruler of Arivor and Grand Master of the Ardarites, is dead, having inspired his subjects to the last.

In Arivor

I am greatly disappointed that, in the end, I was not allowed to reach Arivor. The Horasian Legion had cordoned off the area, "on orders of the Comto Marshal," as they said. I learned that no one had been observed leaving the city for days. The Legion is discouraging looters and curious onlookers from entering the ruins, and I had no other choice than to turn back.

Arela Whiteleaf (Dominic Hladek)



Underlying Causes of the Catastrophe

The Theory of Sumutonic Porosity!

To provide the inquiring reader with more background concerning the disaster, this article looks briefly at the theories of Dottora Fulminia Meissini, with many thanks to Vitus Bresefinck, a scholar from Vinsalt. He stated that for years, his colleague “has been teaching about the sumutonically porous rocks found below Arivor. It was only a matter of time before a purely natural event would plunge the city into the vast caverns that lay beneath the ground. No act of the gods, just applied Derology.” In my opinion, this answer is much too simplistic and leaves open the question as to whether Arivor’s downfall was caused by the gods or by other, more sinister powers. But getting back to that theory....

Background

As I mentioned, Meissini has been researching the peculiar derological features of the Gerondrata for years. In her writings, she says that it is essential to know that Arivor is situated on a sumutonic vent (a volcano) that last erupted eons ago. The hills to the east of the city, in the direction of Sibur, also consist of volcanic rock (which is very beneficial for agriculture, as I can attest firsthand). Thus, in essence, the rock between Sibur and Arivor is very porous.

Among other things, Meissini’s theory extrapolates from the small to the large and calls this conclusion the “Maraskan effect.” According to her theory, Arivor and its surrounding area stand mainly on ancient magma chambers. Thus, she suspects that vast lacunae lie under the surface, becoming bigger, more spacious, and more numerous in the Arivor valley. She states that the arrangement of these caverns is due to the fact that the Golden Helmet, Arivor’s local

mountain, is itself a former volcano. In Meissini’s opinion, these roughly disc-shaped caverns are former magma chambers that spread across several miles.

Principles

Of course, the principles supporting Meissini’s theory are considerably more complex. Apart from the Maraskan effect, they build not only on the body of derological knowledge accumulated by the Duke Eolan University, but also on dwarven sources. Angroshim petrology differentiates between at least 4,603 types of Aventurian rocks, of which more than 800 occur within the Horasian Empire. These are broken down into further subdivisions and schematizations, and the rock groups murbrom, magambrom, and bromsom play a particularly important role. Angroshim scriptures always mention these rocks in the context of volcanic mountains of a certain Age, during which the dwarves discovered both active and inactive magma chambers while constructing their tunnels. The former are precious but dangerous sources of heat, whereas the latter are often large enough to be excavated, and thus form some of the greatest halls of the dwarven people. However, time and again the scriptures mention previous inhabitants of such caverns whose names are not known to surface dwellers. Chambers of this kind can be found in the Gerondrata, as well.

Nonsense or Truth? — The Lacuna Theory of Yagomil Montazzo

At this point, please allow me a digression to the lacuna theory of Yagomil Montazzo. This popular (albeit belittled by experts) ethnologist and scholar of sagas, who holds no Aventurian university degree, builds his theory upon

Dottora Meissini’s theory. Montazzo attracted previous attention by publishing ancient writings about hidden enemies from bygone Ages—writings which are disputed in scholarly circles. In his lacuna theory, Montazzo claims that the magma chambers beneath the Gerondrata are inhabited by monsters of all kinds. In this he sees a connection with Geron’s heroic feats, which, according to Montazzo, took place in the Gerondrata for a reason. Those monsters, he says, originated in the depths. Creatures such as Ranafan the water lizard (which rose from a subterranean lake), the Chimerical Ogre, and the so-called siburinxes (according to legend, Geron slew seven times seven of these beasts at Sibur).

The Effect of Various Theories on the Populace

While Montazzo has a large audience for his popular and legendary (some would say *sensational*) books and lectures, Meissini’s theory generally elicits no more than a shrug, for it is difficult to prove and hardly spectacular. Because of this, the scholar’s ideas meet with disinterest and skepticism, particularly when she described the inconvenient truth of the potential for collapses. The disaster of Arivor surely has changed opinions. Recently the Dottora left for the Sibirian uplands, which are said to be suffering an unusual drought. This drought had fueled Meissini’s concerns about possible cavern collapses since, in her opinion, Sumu’s earth could become even more unstable due to the lack of water. The Dottora was last seen in Taresello, a small village east of Arivor, accompanied by a few swords for hire. Unverified sources claim that she was present in Arivor on the day of the disaster. She is now considered missing.

act of the gods, just applied Derology.”
—Vitus Bresefinck, lecturer at the Efferd School of the Duke Eolan University in Methumis

“This is the beginning of the wars of the gods! The unity of the Twelve is at an end! The other gods of war—yes, you heard right!—knock Rondra off her perch and carve out their place in Alveran. And with blood and insect legions, at that. I myself saw the insect warriors crawling from the earth! They tore an Ardarite apart and devoured him! Shimxir vult! SHINXIR VULT! KOR DRINKS YOUR BLOOD!”
—Confused man from Arivor, as he was being led off by temple guards

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Paglim, Pirbalash, and Peschinkosh, the sons of Pogolosh, offer you their expertise. Whether inspecting the condition of your houses and town walls, examining the soil and rock under your town, or bracing your tunnels and cellars with proven Angroshim methods, the Pogolosh Brothers are prepared for every task!

The Pogolosh Brothers. Dwarven craftsmanship with more than 520 years of combined professional experience!

Aventurian Herald, Peraine 1038 FB Silence in Keshal Rohal

NCHOPAL, AT THE EDGE OF THE GOR DESERT. Two years after two Grand Masters of the ODL died in a cave-in at Keshal Rondra, the matter has been put to rest. Even though some Gray Guards recently descended into the depths, the investigation now seems to be over and the cave has been filled in.

The Order remains silent about the reasons for these actions. Are they hiding something? Unfortunately, we could not induce Grand Master Faredeon ibn Aylanora to grant us an interview.

Raminja saba Telbaresh

Aventurian Herald, Phex 1038 FB Brabak Reaches for the Stars

RABAK. Our beautiful Brabak has always been a stronghold of free science, of which our friends of the Red Salamander and the Academy (where people are not afraid to cast a glance at the beyond) are proof. Now, with funding by the Brabakan Amalgamated Occidental Company, their attention shifts to the Sixth Sphere. From near and far, scholars come to Brabak to unlock the secrets of the night sky, so that our ships can find new colonies and return safely to their home ports.

Aldario Salmoranes

“The dwarves of Silas delved too far and too greedily. They are behind Arivor’s collapse. The dwarves will undermine us all!”
—Tizzo Cordayo, farmer from the village of Heroicum

“A shooting star destroyed the city. It fell from the heavens with a blazing tail. In Arivor, only ashes remain. The temple school taught us that Phex once threw a star at Selem, a cesspool of vice. I wonder if he wanted to punish Arivor, too, for the honest pilgrims that were deceived and robbed there...”
—Kusmina Pirras, den mother from Castarosa

“It was an earthquake, and who, apart from Ingerimm, has the power to rend the earth?”

Everyone in Arivor knows why he did it. The weapon manufactories of Saladania shun the blessing of the Heavenly Blacksmith. They produce shoddy products only with quick profits in mind. If I had to lose my smith in order for Ingerimm to kill them off with his earthquake, then so be it.”
—Alricio Menderath, blacksmith from Arivor

“One must counter the rumors of falling stars and divine punishments with rationality pleasing unto Nandus. I refer to my venerable colleague, Dottora Meissini, who for years has been teaching about the sumutonically porous rocks found below Arivor. It was only a matter of time before a purely natural event would plunge the city into the vast caverns that lay beneath the ground. No

Aventurian Herald, Ingerimm 1038 FB

The Stars Stand Favorably

USLIK. Watch for a rare stellar phenomenon during Rahja. As every astronomically inclined reader of the Hesinde Mirror should know, a special spectacle will appear in the nighttime sky at the end of Rahja. Already, one can see that some of the wandering stars (Horas, Simia, and Aves in particular) are on the verge of forming a linear constellation. It is too soon to predict whether the other wandering stars will follow suit. Nandus appears to be coming into line, but the others—as astute readers should know—move in extremely erratic orbits, and even

Rohal the Wise and Niobara of Anchopal could predict their movements in the night sky for only 58 days in a row. The latter’s famous works about the night sky tell us that such an alignment of wandering stars is extremely rare. Regretfully, we could not obtain comments from the astronomers of the Golden Peaks Observatory before the editorial deadline. We advise you to keep your eyes on the nighttime sky over the next few days, for the sensational views they will offer. And don’t forget that a falling star was observed recently near Havena.

Surina ter Brook

Aventurian Herald, Tsa 1038 FB

Construction at the Academy

WAGENHALT. In our previous edition, we reported on the planned construction of an academic branch of House Stoerrebrandt. Our further inquiries revealed that a delegation arrived in Wagonhold from Gareth and has already begun the groundwork. A tent city for the crafters and workers has already been erected. Only time will tell how this news will be received by the guilds.

Firunjan Ismountain

Aventurian Herald, Phex 1058 F8

Sensational Birth Among the Dwarves

KOSCH. Whether it is the time of year for sowing, for fruit trees to bloom, or for driving cattle to the pastures, you can almost always enjoy a feast in the uplands of Kosh. The area's hill dwarves miss no opportunity to celebrate, and naturally they are very fond of the art of cooking.

Thus, they hold cooking competitions in honor of Travia throughout the year. The largest and most esteemed competition is held by Nirwulf son of Niromon, the hill dwarves' chief justice himself. The most recent competition was hosted by Mutola daughter of Rabaga, a feisty Angroshna and renowned cook who lives on an alp that overlooks Angbar Lake. Rumors hinted that she planned to select a husband and make the announcement at the competition.

However, events turned out quite differently.

Among the guests present at the competition were numerous Angroshim and humans, which, as readers know, coexist peacefully in the Kosh. A second Angroshna, Garasha Applehut, accompanied the hostess and occupied center stage. She was heavy with child, but had insisted on taking part in the competition.

Much to our regret, we would not be treated to her famous beer soup. Instead, everyone was stunned silent when Garasha went into labor.

Concern for the well-being of the mother-to-be was immediate and sincere. However, she quickly withdrew to a private room. Attendees took the chance to try some of the

excellent food on hand and talk about their children and those of friends and relations.

Three hours later, the father announced that all was well. The crowd gave him three cheers and drank a toast to his family's health, downing copious amounts of beer in the process.

Few noticed that nothing was said about the children, even though dwarves are ever so proud when someone is born to carry on the name of the clan. The new father dodged all questions concerning the children and would say nothing further.

Your Aventurian Herald, however, is committed to the truth, which is pleasing unto Praios. And the truth had to be learned! It took three days—the duration of the cooking competition, great amounts of good food and drink, and all of our powers of persuasion—to learn what had happened.

Garasha had given birth to twin girls!

The new reader may view this as a rare occurrence, since twin births are uncommon among humans, too. Anyone who knows about dwarves, however, will realize that this news is exceptional because dwarven boys are always born as twins, whereas dwarven girls—at least according to what human scholars have heretofore presumed—are never born as twins.

Apparently, the Angroshim have always been able to keep this a secret. However, readers of the Aventurian Herald need not puzzle their heads over the reasons for this. A few days after the cooking competition, we were able to interview Nirwulf son of

Niromon directly about the matter. The 170 year old hill dwarf contemplated our questions while he quietly finished his pipe.

"Little child," he said (and a man like the Chancellor of the Kosh is gladly forgiven for using this form of address), "little child, that is right, we do not like to talk about it. This is a particularly generous gift from Angrosh and his wife Travia, and they do not like us bragging about something that is not our achievement. It is not good to discuss such great fortune. No Angroshim in his right mind wants to risk the chance of such a wonder happening again. However, if you biglins now know about it, perhaps the time for it has come."

One cannot assume that all dwarves share this opinion, since the hill dwarves are considered very amenable and tolerant. But we thank Lady Hesinde in her infinite wisdom for this new insight into our neighbors.

For those readers who are wondering about the winner of the cooking competition and the decision of the hostess, we will say only that a dwarf named Lanrix Smallwide, himself barely an adult, won first place. And Mutola daughter of Rabaga announced that she has no plans to marry and will continue living on her alp and honing her cooking skill. She welcomed her five suitors, who courted her in dwarven-style for decades, to continue on as friends and aides. Naturally, all five accepted her offer.

*Isadora Alrikshuber
(Marie Mönkemeyer)*

Aventurian Herald, Boron 1058 F8

It's a Good Life Wherever Beer is Brewed

PREM. What is the first thing that comes to mind when one hears the name of this Thorwalian city located on Dragon Bay? That's right, *Prem Fire*—the turnip schnapps that is known across the whole of Aventuria and recognized by connoisseurs for its salmon-red flame (only "true Fire" burns with such a glow). However, even the Thorwalers do not limit themselves to distilled drinks, nor do they want to drink barrels of Waskir spelt beer or the swill drunk by Middelrealmish sailors and city-dwelling Vinsalters. It took some time, but the ottajaskos and clans in Prem finally have their own beer, though it is not solely a Thorwalian product (it was Prem's community of dwarves, resident now for several years, who arranged to build the new brewery).

Last Travia, the first barrel of "Prem Lager" was tapped in celebration of the birth of the offspring of hetwoman Thora. Borgosh, the hill dwarf master brewer, passed the first mug of beer to the hetwoman, who by that time had recovered from giving birth. To the accompaniment of deafening cheers, she took a hearty swig. Additional barrels were tapped and served to the residents. The author of these lines was lucky enough to taste one of the first mugs of this rich barley beer, and he is clearly taken by it. This bottom-fermented dwarven-Thorwalian beer is related to the widely known Ferdok Ale but has a bit of a rough character—quite fitting with the residents of Prem.

Of course, the Angroshim did not build the new brewery for charity's sake. "Baroshem, we achieved a delicious thing, didn't we? But of course, to be perfectly honest, it's also about the money," the dwarven community's speaker, Brand son of Bugul, made clear. "Our cousins in Ferdok have become more and more shameless with their price demands, so we had to do something on site. After all, a good life far from home is only possible with enough brew!"

Barley for the brewing process comes from nearby Skjal. Under the supervision of master brewer Borgosh, Prem Lager will henceforth be brewed for personal use only. Except for the brewery and a few drinking houses in Prem, this beer will not be available anywhere. To get a taste, the common Middenrealmish beer connoisseur will have to undertake a daring journey to the city of traders and pirates!

*Thalf Thorgilson
(Henning Mützlitz)*



Aventurian Herald, Peraine 1058 F8

Mountain Spirit Frees Bear from Aldercastle

TENGE HOLM. This past winter was especially harsh in Kosh. Until the end of Phex, the snow in the valleys was two spans deep. Food became scarce for both man and beast, and in some places, hunger drove wolves into the villages. Things were not so bleak, though, for the residents of a village called Eaglewalk who discovered two starving and whimpering elderbears in the village square early one Phex morning.

These cute bears stand approximately as tall as a child and eat only plants, their favorite being the elderberry for which they are named. Villagers lured the animals into a barn and locked them in. Then they sent a messenger to Aldercastle, the home of Hereditary Prince Anshold of Boarstock, who collects all kinds of animals in his menagerie. When the snow had melted enough to drive a cart with a cage to Eaglewalk, Anshold sent for the bears and gave the villagers a barrel of Ferdok Ale in return.

By the middle of Peraine, when spring finally found its way to Eaglewalk, the villagers had almost forgotten about the bears (and also almost emptied their barrel of Ferdok). They were just finishing their round of mugs in the tavern when the tavern door flew into the common room with a loud crash. A huge, shaggy face appeared in the doorway.

"Troll!" a few men cried, but it was not a troll that shouted "My little ones!" in an angry voice. The Eaglewalkers had never heard of a troll who could become smaller, but that was exactly what the shaggy fellow did. He shrank until he could squeeze into the common room.

"Where are my lovely little ones?" he asked with wild eyes, his head pushing against the ceiling. It was the Ruckusman, the legendary mountain spirit who had played many a prank on the residents! But what did he want in Eaglewalk? Then it came to the innkeeper Ulwide Buckbeard's attention that elderberry sap was dripping from the spirit's belt pouch. The little ones it sought were in fact the elderbear cubs! "Pardon us, great Ruckusman," she cried, "your little ones are no longer here. They were so pitifully frozen and starving that we sent them to the valley where it is warmer! Hereditary Prince Anshold, at Aldercastle, is now taking good care of them!"

Without a further word, the Ruckusman resumed his natural height and climbed out of the now-demolished tavern through the roof. At first the Eaglewalkers consoled themselves with their last drops of Ferdok, and slowly it dawned on them that the Hereditary Prince could be in danger. They sent a messenger to Aldercastle with the urgent recommendation

to set the elderbears free in the woods immediately.

Late that same night, the castle residents were woken up by a great crash accompanied by cawing, grunting, and bleating. The startled guards came upon a scene of destruction in the menagerie: all the cages were broken open, and animals ran or fluttered to and fro. Huge footprints led to a breach in the curtain wall, beyond which the guards saw the figure of a shaggy giant in the moonlight. He was marching with a spring in his step in the direction of the mountains, and on each of his shoulders was a happy little bear. The guards then recognized with whom they dealt, and they abandoned their pursuit.

Most of the animals in the menagerie were harmless and were easily captured. Only a few birds of prey, a venomous basalt salamander, and two saber-toothed rabbits are still on the loose. According to sources at the royal court, Hereditary Prince Anshold reacted to the news with admirable calm. His six years old son Erlan, who was exceedingly fond of the saber-toothed rabbits, did not take the news very well. Every day he voices his demands for their return. It is rumored that some of the kingdom's knights have mounted a search for the missing rabbits

Stordian Mönchlinger (Stefano Monachesi)

Efferd's Presence in Brabak?

BRABAK. Efferd's religious community is in turmoil. Only now is it becoming known that the Temple of Efferd recently gained a new resident. By itself, this is nothing unusual, but the newcomer's origin is what's important to believers. It seems he washed up in the Risso Archipelago during a hurricane, and only the local Blessed One of Efferd was able to communicate with him, using Efferd-granted powers.

The man was brought to Brabak, and it is said that even Southernsea, the experienced Master of the Surf, was at first completely mystified. Some believers reported that the foreigner lowered himself into the sea, transformed partly into a fish, and then breathed comfortably underwater. It remains to be seen whether these reports are true. Since this rumor came to light, attendance at Temple services has increased greatly.

Muliro Larekos
(Martin Schmidt)



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Fisher War Flares Up Again

VARNHEIM. A few days ago, disconcerting news reached us from the coastal region between Thorwal and Prem. Apparently, blood was shed there on the first days of spring. After the ice in the Gulf of Prem had broken up and the settlement's fishers began making their boats seaworthy again, a great mob of attackers attacked them by night. About two dozen burly, masked figures came to the shore to ravage. Panic-stricken at first, the Varnheim men and women soon rallied, took up their axes, and fought back against the attackers. A few older residents feared that orcs had dared to cross the Hjalldor Mountains and had come to Varnheim to ravage the town. However, the attackers did not stay to fight the residents, and in fact fled as soon as they saw the furious Varnheimers organizing themselves.

Still, the orcs managed to inflict a lot of damage. In a matter of moments, many of the fishers' boats took on water and sank to the

bottom of the shallow bay. The attackers had cut holes in the hulls! Desperate and helpless, the fishers could only watch as their means of support sank into the water.

No one in Varnheim had to think hard to identify the perpetrators of these disgraceful deeds. First it spread by whisper, but soon people cried it aloud with hate, 'Ottarjare! Swafnir-cursed scoundrels!' For centuries, Varnheim argued with Ottarjare, its neighboring town, over access to the best fishing grounds in the Gulf, but the past few years have remained mostly calm—apart from the occasional brawl in the markets of Prem or Thorwal. Until Varnheim can rebuild its fishing fleet, Ottarje has unfettered access to the big bass used in the famous "Varnheim Woodfish" dish.

Shortly after dawn, two drake ships were made ready to sail, and brimmed with furious Varnheimers (young Varnheimers who had already returned from their first Ottajara and were anxious to seek revenge

on the cowardly bastards). They returned that afternoon, and people could hear the sailors' triumphant shouts from a great distance. "We captured three of their damned cockleshells at sea," laughed hetman Skarl "Orc-hammer" Korjason. "They soiled themselves like little children. You should have seen their faces as we sank their bug-ridden tubs." When asked what happened to the Ottarje fishers from the cockleshells, Skarl answered, "They'll just have to swim." A blood feud that was long thought settled is now flaring up again—and no one knows how it will end.

Thalf Thorgilson
(Henning Mützlitz)

Lyria's Recipe Corner

DEAR friends of cuisine that is pleasing unto Travia, Some years ago, I began to record and collect recipes from my home in Albertain and many other regions. My collection grew into an impressive yet largely unappreciated pile of notes. After the publication of the *Culinaria Aventurica*, one of my favorite cookbooks, I turned to the Aventurian Herald to offer recipes from my collection and to surprise you regularly with terrific recipes of my own.

I'll start with delicious throwing discs, as they are called in Havena. As an added bonus, I'm including a brief anecdote explaining how this dish got its name.

Yours sincerely, Lyria

Albertain Throwing Discs

250 scrupulums flourl
4 eggs
3/8 mass milk
1/4 teaspoon salt
60 scrupulums clarified butter or butter for baking

Mix flour with eggs, milk, and salt to produce smooth dough and let it sit for half an hour. In an omelet pan, heat some clarified butter and cover the bottom of the pan thinly with dough. Toss the pan a bit so that the dough spreads out evenly. Cook one side for a short time until the edges look cooked and the downward side turns golden yellow. Flip the pancake and cook the other side until done. Do not overcook.

Skill Comes with Practice

Firunwin Maybell, son of the warrior Afangar Maybell, was all thumbs from the start. His mother accepted her son as he was, clumsy and always with one foot in his mouth, but his father turned a blind eye to his son's shortcomings. He wanted his son to learn the art of war.

Thus, he sent Firunwin to study at Ruada's Honor, the warrior academy in Havena. On his first day of saber practice, the boy stabbed his master's posterior instead of the straw target. Later, he stumbled and nearly injured a fellow pupil. Hardly a day went by without a mishap. Soon Afangar withdrew Firunwin from the warrior academy and decided to train him personally.

During the Maraskan Campaign, Afangar Maybell became particularly famous

for throwing flat metal discs with sharp, jagged edges—a weapon first used by the Maraskans, who call it a discus. However, after Firunwin had killed three chickens and wounded his own mother while practicing with those discs, even Afangar could no longer turn a blind eye to his son's lack of ability. How was he to teach fighting to Firunwin without risking injury to half of the royal court? In desperation, Afangar asked his old friend Aewyn for advice. Aewyn comforted him and asked that he be allowed to think on the problem until the following morning. The warrior agreed, but that night he could not sleep, and instead paced up and down in the yard.

When the sun had risen, his old friend came out of his door, followed by the cook, who carried a plate full of pancakes. "Now," Aewyn said, "you can practice with your son." Aewyn had found the solution. Father and son were able to practice several times with the soft discs, and nobody was injured.

Firunwin proved very skillful in creating these discs, and while it is said that he never became a warrior, he did become a great cook. This story is still often told in the taverns of Havena.

Lyria
(Claudia Dill)

