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Enclosed documents

Report from Agent Couros, Nemoria (Asavean Archipelago)

Report from Agent Umshalla, Sarcophan Delves (Sarcophan)

Report from Agent Vassa, Robc (Iron Confederacy)

Report from Agent Scorrero, City of Jarm (Jarmish Principalities)

Report from Agent Gancio, Port-city of Leerdam (Commonwealth)

Report from Agent Nepenthe (Axos)

Report from Agent Serpes, (Iron Confederacy)

Report from Agent Alephan,(Faraden)

In each case, reports are compiled by local agent-handler (per code name) and dispatched by winged messenger.

Report compiled by Estéban i Feducci i Riqueza

Spring 381YE



Report of Agent Couros

Synopsis: Plenum broadly pro-Empire. Concerns among priesthood being mollified by reports of pro-Nemoria synod judgements. Tarquinius family powerful and influential – and still angry – heading an anti-Imperial faction primarily of minor houses.

Commentary: Asaveans have quelled rebellion in one of their satrapies, but rumour is suggesting that relations with at least two others are starting to deteriorate. Way still argued to be part of the problem – but increased understanding from new temple might help defuse these concerns.

The Plenum as a whole is very happy with the Empire. Several smaller Plenum families (specifically Heraclien and Rangabe) are seeing opportunities to take advantage of the failures of the Tarquinius to engage in trade with their Imperial counterparts.

Minor house called the Jiuvianna are still interested in permanent trade route dealing in orichalcum – in return for a grant of land and the construction of a compound for their exclusive use. They have a reputation for being fascinated by the Empire and its history – several collect Imperial items – as well as being dissolute pleasure seekers. They're popular and somewhat influential in the Plenum.

Tarquinius remain problem. Their complaints against the Empire also based in the loss of several ships as a result of magical storms near Spiral – they are trading white granite to the Grendel orcs. This is not illegal in Asavea – indeed, there is now a Grendel embassy here. Interestingly, we have a snippet of information that might be relevant. The Grendel ambassador and the Tarquinius have both independently claimed that the Asaveans are not trading their white granite in return for mithril. Allegedly, the Grendel are trading their mithril elsewhere at the moment.

Lady Madrianna of the Blue stones is actively encouraging opportunities to strengthen trade ties with the Asaveans – so it is likely the Ambassador will know more.

Relations with the Sumaah Republic remain disastrous – its hard to see how they could get worse – Asaveans appear to be aware of their diplomatic efforts to destroy reputation of Empire and occasionally act in support of Empire – though this is likely to be more about their dislike for the Republic than for any affection for the Empire.

Trade: Over the last year, Imperial trade with Nemoria has declined slightly. The Nemorians are a little concerned about this, and have been discussing ways to encourage more Imperials to visit the eastern archipelago.

Report compiled by Agent Couros Nemoria Asavean Archipelago 381 YE



Report of Agent Umshalla

Trade fluctuates – Summer and Autumn last year saw twice as many Imperial ships visiting the Delves to trade as in Spring and Winter.

Sarcophan now has an embassy, and the Bedelaar Huisbaas are notionally happy with the arrangement – but as always their first interest is in ensuring their own prosperity.

The Grendel have been cautiously received, and our reports suggest they have arranged an agreement to trade mithril from the Broken Shore to the Sarcophan in return for weirwood. The Sarcophan look very dimly on anyone fighting in their waters but there are reports of a few fights between Imperials and orcs in the waters of the Sea of Teeth outside Sarcophan sight.

The Axou embassy continues to seek closer ties – there are regular fleets of black sailed ships now, primarily sailing from Kantor but representing all four of the Axos citadels. They trade herbs, grave goods, beggar's lye, and several rare narcotic concoctions (especially one called Blackened Key) that appear quite popular here in the Delves. In recent months, the attitude of the Axou ambassador has mellowed – previously the woman was quite anti-Imperial, complaining about their arrogance and sneering ways – but since the Empire secured their own Axou embassy, she has become significantly more well inclined to us.

The Sumaah continue to undermine the reputation of the Imperial Synod. There aren't many influential pilgrims in Sarcophan but they do exist – but the conflict between Sumaah and the Synod just seems to be discouraging them.

Report compiled by agent Umshalla The Delves Sarcophan 381YE



Report of agent Scorrero

Relations with the House of Princes are reasonably cordial. With the Senate formal declaration of the importance of closer trade ties et al, we've seen significant interest in exploiting opportunities to work with Imperial captains.

We know that there have been a lot of one-on-one deals with Imperials, some brokered by Lord-Magister Anton Trescher, some by the influential Minsiter Boteslaw.

Politics are volatile as usual – the Northern and Southern alliances, initially united by their disdain for the Eastern Faction, have ended their short-lived detente. Now both sides are seeking to dominate or secure assistance from the Eastern Faction against the other Alliance. Magician-Prince Barbara Radz has been having her own problems as a consequence – without the constant threat of the other two factions, her own supporters are becoming increasingly fractious. All very much par for the course in the Principalities.

Our agents in Jarm do suggest that the Empire might think very carefully about their closeness to the Eastern Princes rather than taking a more even-handed approach. A clear alliance between the Empire and the Eastern Princes is significantly more valuable to the Rigians than to the Empire (which stands to anger North or South if they are seen as allies of the East first).

The Jarmish and the Commonwealth are engaging in a bit more saber-rattling than in recent years which is a matter for some concern. Open warfare between these two massive nations could be catastrophic – the massive, disciplined armies of the Commonwealth against the magical might of Jarm ... it would be hard to imagine anyone other than the crows being the victor. If war does break out, the Jarmish are likely to want to call on the support of their “good friends” in the Empire.

Trade wise, the last year has seen a slow increase in the number of ships reaching Vezak – more than three times as many in Winter as in Spring. It's without doubt the most popular destination for Imperial ship captains. Kavor is also popular, although not on the same level (maybe half as many captains in Winter, but still a dramatic number). Rigia on the other hand has seen a significant decline in the number of captains trading there – dropping to nearly a third in Winter of where it was in Spring and Summer. This has caused some serious concern in the East, naturally.



Report of Agent Gancio

There is not much to report - attitudes to the Empire remain cool. Increasingly close ties between the Empire and Jarm are matched by a commensurate lessening in warmth from the Commonwealth. The two great nations are close to open warfare, and there is a strong feeling in the Commonwealth that the Empire will support Jarm in such a conflict, leaving them loathe to engage in too much trade. After all it makes no sense to trade things that might be used as weapons against the Commonwealth.

Imperial ships still trade with Leerdam and Volkavaar, although there is little doubt that the number of captains visiting the Commonwealth are significantly lower than those trading with Jarm.



Report of Agent Nepenthe

Our embassy is now well established in the Towers of Kantor. It is reasonably civilised, if quite cramped.

The leaders of the people of Kantor are quite interested in trade with the Empire – and agreements are currently being made via Ilarch Maxatios. The priests of Axos in particular are keen to acquire liao from the Empire – although it must be noted that they are nowhere near as influential in Axos as their counterparts in the Empire.

There is also some interest among the *necromantia*, especially in Maykop, in having a regular supply of liao as it apparently has some value in their magical practice of talking to the dead. In Maykop and Kantor there is more interest in the possibility of somehow dealing with the vallorn that lurks at the heart of Axos. As near as we can surmise, there is an entire plateau or range of hills in the centre of Axos – the size of an entire Imperial territory – that is completely occupied by a Vallorn. It is the main reason that the citadels were build along the outskirts o the nation. If the vallorn could be weakened or destroyed, the vegetable wealth of the forest (as well as any *terunael* relics or secrets) would be of great interest to the Axou.

The people of the Chambers of Issyk remain critical of, and openly opposed to, the Empire. I have not confirmed the rumours, but it appears that Issyk has accepted an embassy of the Grendel orcs – although in doing so they have apparently outraged the sensibilitites of their neighbours. They are a lone voice however.

The people of Ipotavo are remain impressed by, and friendly to, the Empire. Were it not for their isolation from the sea, they would have made a much stronger play to host the Imperial embassy. Of all the citadels, they are (unsurprisingly given recent history), the most concerned about the Druj.

There is some interest in the Axou attitude to slavery. It is not actually illegal, but people who keep slaves are scene as uncivilised. If the Empire were to gain the confidence of Maykop and Kantor, and perhaps often a few incentives, the entire nation could formally outlaw it.

Trade wise, the port at Kantor has only been open for a few seasons but has seen a steady stream of Imperial vessels visiting Axos. Ideally, the Axou seem to favour the establishment of a land route between their nation and the Empire (most likely eastern Urizen), but lack the organisation or impetus to capture the intervening territory themselves.

Report compiled by Agent Nepenthe, Towers of Kantor



Report of Agent Serpes

Our presence at the port of Robec in the south-western Iron Confederacy is of limited use. The Suranni are not particularly welcoming, making it hard work to gather information. The main problem remains that the Suranni are not familiar with Imperial citizens – it's difficult to move around or make connections – and pretending to be Suranni is simply too risky.

The Suranni are extremely critical of the Empire. Both the Way (which they see as being a sybaritic drug cult) and the Empire's reliance on the magic (they consider all magic to come from their God of Evil and Magic). Diplomatic relations are further hampered by the way that the Suranni assume that we are ourselves witches, or drugged zealots. Anyone dealing with us also comes under suspicion.

I have no real suggestions as to how to improve relations. Opening the port of Robec to Imperial Citizens would be useful – it would give us some camouflage with which to move around, and get the Suranni used to dealing with us (in Robec at least).

One possible way to improve relations with the Suranni would be to get the priesthood on side – the Suranni build their temples from white granite, but their Dukes are clearly restricting access to this valuable material. Indeed, it seems their main focus is on building fortifications – specifically a castle in the northern border of their Lassambrian Hills territory.

Kalino, the newly conquered, formerly Lasambrian, territory is being consistently settled by baronial houses. The houses of Guiscard, Valois and de Hauteville are forming solid power bases. There are definite rumours of de Hauteville having been granted access to a small mithril mine. The territory still contains a large number of bandits, but they are slowly being reduced in number by the knights of the noble houses.

As mentioned last year, it is imperative that the Empire ensures that no orcs are involved in diplomacy with the Iron Confederacy at this time – the Suranni despise all orcs. Likewise it is vitally important that the ambassador is never revealed to be a magician or a priest of the way – if they do it will be a significant diplomatic incident. The best choice for ambassador remains a high lineage naga.

Agent Serpes

Robec

Iron Confederacy



Report of Agent Alephan

The Embassy is still at the Court of Five Winds, and to be honest it is actually quite pleasant and civilised here. The Faraden have no ports, and most Imperial merchants these days are having significant difficulty reaching our western neighbour due to the Jotun control of the northern Lasambrian hills. We stand out a lot, but the locals are friendly enough – especially as they appear to be more than happy to involve us in their inter-familial rivalries. We are keeping a safe distance however – it is too risky to engage in politics in a land we don't entirely understand where Vengeance is a holy calling and Wisdom is seen as the vice of the indolent.

The Faraden treaty with the Jotun is holding strong. The Faraden have little interest in endangering it, although they would certainly not complain if the Empire seized the territory and put an end to the rather steep tariffs the merchants are paying to pass through the Jotun lands.

As I mentioned last year, there is an opportunity to secure trade would be to convince the Faraden to build, or let us build, a port enclave on the north-eastern coast. The Faraden fear the sea above all other things, but they are pragmatic traders and would welcome Imperial fleet captains to such an enclave – although the actual trade would take place significantly further inland. This would require negotiation with the Faraden obviously.

The Faraden are focused on land trade routes – and are pursuing options to secure access to the food of the Marches, the ores of Varushka, and the fine wines of Dawn. Faraden enclaves in these nations could spread prosperity across entire territories, especially for farm and mine owners, as well as improving Imperial-Faraden relations. There's also talk of establishing mercenary-hiring markets in Tassato and Temeschwar, with an eye toward employing Imperial soldiers to protect Faraden caravans.

Of significant concern at the moment is the blight currently killing their minimal populations of iridescent butterflies. Reports suggest they are dealing with the Empire and Iron Confederacy, demand for iridescent gloaming being very high indeed.

Internally, there are strong voices among the warrior-families (House Ogudai in particular) and the priest-families (Tsagaani are the loudest voices here) that believe the Empire will never be true, Loyal, friends to the Faraden – and that their religion will always divide them. Most of the merchant families have rallied behind Lady Saretta, who advises the Lady of the Five Winds on interactions with the Empire. The wizard-families for their part appear to be backing both “factions” – where they bother to get involved at all.



Trading Summary

All numbers represent significant fleets trading with the named port following the Equinox or Solstice in question.

Asavean Archipelago

Port of Nemoria

Spring Equinox 380YE – 11 fleets
Summer Solstice 380YE – 13 fleets
Autumn Equinox 380YE – 11 fleets
Winter Solstice 380YE – 8 fleets

Sarcophan Delves

Port of Sarcophan

Spring Equinox 380YE – 6 fleets
Summer Solstice 380YE – 12 fleets
Autumn Equinox 380YE – 16 fleets
Winter Solstice 380YE – 6 fleets

Principalities of Jarm

Port of Vezak

Spring Equinox 380YE – 13 fleets
Summer Solstice 380YE – 21 fleets
Autumn Equinox 380YE – 21 fleets
Winter Solstice 380YE – 50 fleets

Port of Kavor

Spring Equinox 380YE – 5 fleets
Summer Solstice 380YE – 15 fleets
Autumn Equinox 380YE – 22 fleets
Winter Solstice 380YE – 21 fleets

Port of Rigia

Spring Equinox 380YE – 40 fleets
Summer Solstice 380YE – 43 fleets
Autumn Equinox 380YE – 34 fleets
Winter Solstice 380YE – 15 fleets

Citadels of Axos

Port of Towers of Kantor

Spring Equinox 380YE – 0 fleets
Summer Solstice 380YE – 0 fleets
Autumn Equinox 380YE – 16 fleets
Winter Solstice 380YE – 16 fleets

Note: this port was not open to Imperial captains until after the Autumn Equinox 380YE.

Commonwealth

Port of Leerdam

Spring Equinox 380YE – 9 fleets
Summer Solstice 380YE – 12 fleets
Autumn Equinox 380YE – 13 fleets
Winter Solstice 380YE – 7 fleets

Port of Volkavaar

Spring Equinox 380YE – 8 fleets
Summer Solstice 380YE – 6 fleets
Autumn Equinox 380YE – 13 fleets
Winter Solstice 380YE – 6 fleets

