

Echoes of the Labyrinth

Volume 9a-d: Winter Solstice 384 YE, Autumn Equinox 385 YE

A collection of notes on the experience of
Pure Liao Visionaries, collected by

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by the direction and authority of the Assembly of Nine
given to the Seer of the Gateway,

Livia of the Celestial Cascade of Urizen

Edition 2, printed after Spring Equinox 386 YE

Winter Solstice 384 YE account and writeup by Alcuin.

No visions occurred at the Spring Equinox or Summer Solstice 385 YE.

Autumn Solstice 385 YE accounts by Livia and Alcuin, writeup by Alcuin.

Information contained here is incomplete; future editions of this pamphlet may contain more information as the authors consult again with the visionaries and their guides.

These notes were taken from verbal testimonies of witnessed events, so spellings and exact pronunciations of names should not be considered definitive.

Winter Solstice, 384 YE

Introduction

One visionary experienced a vision induced by Pure Liao at the Solstice.

Following their vision, the visionary and guide priest were questioned by the authors. Their stories are recorded in the following pages, in the order that the visions were received.

* **Landon von Holfried** (the League), accompanied by Pontus Figures (the League)

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Accompanied by Pontus Figures (the League)

The visionary procured his dose at the public auction; he is the first repeat visionary recorded in Echoes.

The visionary awoke bound to another person; forced to lead their two captors through the woods at swordpoint. They were referred to as an Elder by their companion, but did not feel the weight of advanced age.

Their captors – arrogant Terun in green, style unchanged from contemporary Navarri, but no tattoos visible on anyone – were eating, but insisted the “primitives” stop at a glade with a roughly hewn curved stone pillar/spike/tusk without markings which stuck up at an angle of 15 degrees from vertical, reminiscent of some miasma pillars; a stone near that pillar bore a symbol that could be Mawrig with a line above.

The Terun taunted the pair with food; the colleague and the visionary responded with “your bread is bad”, and “the food where we’re going is better”; there was also boasting about how Terun mages were the best ever.

The visionary learned that the Terun wanted to be led to the god of the “primitives”, but did not know the identity of this, and speculated wildly to themselves; the Terun could not navigate the woods, didn’t know where they were going, what they were going to or where they were.

The Terun packed up the camp but put their swords down leaving an opportunity for

the visionary to take the sword; he was unable to move towards the swords due to being tethered to his partner. His actions were seen and the visionary raised his hands in the air.

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After walking for a few hours, they arrived at the “god”; a troll at a forge. The Terun identified it as such, saying they were rare, and they themselves had never seen one. It was ten feet tall, with shaggy fur on the face and arms with a large hammer and a knife.

The companion was apologetic to the troll for bringing the Terun into the presence of the god-troll, who seemed to be on friendly terms; the troll was pleased to see them. The companion was reverent towards the troll.

Bargains were available for arcane knowledge and magical swords, but there was always a price to pay: “my gifts come with a cost”, said the troll. The Terun mocked the troll and their followers and were blasé about it: “we understand all magic; the cost won’t affect us”. There was the implication that they (either the individuals, or other Terun) had done this sort of thing before.

The troll dropped a knife, and the Terun advanced, and the tethered pair backed off, but the visionary's companion was able to grab a knife and pass it to the visionary. The visionary had the feeling of wanting to stop the Terun, but knew he was outclassed, but that he’d die anyway if he didn’t try.

The visionary’s leg was swiftly chopped out from underneath him, and he fell to the floor.

“It won’t matter anyway”, he said. “If you are who I think you are, you’re about to make a big mistake.” The vision swiftly ended, leaving the visionary with a headache.

Divinations

Both before and after the ritual, the visionary had a prosperity dedication and a testimony of Loyal Servant.

The Night ritual *Secrets of the Soul's Desire* gave:

All my kin died; it’s my fault. I attacked them and that was punishment.

The Terun captured the Guardian, all as punishment.

Because of the attempt on the lives of the Terun scouts, the Elder is dead.

The Day ritual *Eyes of the Soul's Past* gave:
Elder Neithon, wise person for my people;
I commune with the Living God for my people.

The visionary theorises that perhaps the trolls had something to do with the crafting of the blocks at the centre of the Vallorn. They also surmise that the troll provided boons to the folk who worshipped it, granting magical power that might have been a sorely needed lifeline.

Spring Equinox and Summer Solstice, 385 YE

No visionaries experienced a vision induced by Pure Liao at the Spring Equinox or Summer Solstice.

Autumn Equinox, 385 YE

Introduction

Four visionaries experienced a vision induced by Pure Liao at the Solstice.

Following their vision, the visionaries and guide priests were questioned by the authors. Their stories are recorded in the following pages, in the order that the visions were received.

- * **Friar John of the Mourn** (Marches), accompanied by Jared of the Suns of Couros (Highguard)
- * **Leif Dreambinder** (Wintermark), accompanied by Melchior of Adina's Charge (Highguard)
- * **Tiberius Ankarien** (Urizen), accompanied by Maximillian Ankarien (Urizen)
- * **Herminius of the House of the Wanderer (Urizen)**, accompanied by Ourania of the House of the Wanderer (Urizen)

Friar John of the Mourn (Marches)

Accompanied by Jared of the Suns of Couros (Highguard)

The visionary was an Ombudsman, named Nurum who decides wisely, and had been tasked with making decisions at a trial. A draughir co-adjudicator with the facts of the case was guiding the visionary in their judgment. It was the visionary's responsibility to assign culpability; the culpable person would be responsible for ensuring that a similar incident never happens again, with their insight and labour, and would make reparations to the families of the deceased – it was less about punishment, more about making things right. The dead cannot be held culpable; they cannot solve the problem, fix the mistakes or pay for damages.

The first person interviewed had come to the weltsilver mine to evaluate the situation in the 23rd jurisdiction of Jade Hold; the mine had collapsed and there were four fatalities, including Zinna the Swift Handed, and Runip or Runnock the Deft Artisan. Two survivors would face trial.

The investigator

The first witness was the initial investigator, a woman in a grey dress with a necklace. Two people had died when the minecart's automatic braking system

had worn out, and it had gained speed going down the tracks, come off the rails and collapsed scaffolding, killing two more and causing a cave in.

Argyle

The second witness was Argyle, who was unlineaged and wore a chain of webs with white gemstones and pewter spiders at the centre. Argyle had been pulling the minecart up the shaft using a rope. He had slipped and let go of the rope; he had cried out to people down track, but they didn't hear.

The visionary asked if he'd been tired or overworked. Argyle responded that all his colleagues were tired too; they had a big quota to fill and worked harder to keep up with demand.

The visionary asked if it was hard to bring up concerns – Mertha would be the person to speak to; and whether their livelihood would be compromised if they reported something – no.

The visionary asked whose responsibility was it to check the brake? Unsure, but thought it was Runip's.

Mertha of Efficient Works

Mertha of Efficient Works was the cambion foreman. He wasn't in the mine at the time; went into the fourth shaft of the mine afterwards and shut it down after the incident.

When asked about the workload - why the high quota? - he responded that the price of Weltsilver had risen because the Empire had recently abolished slavery (suggesting this vision occurred no earlier than the late 320s), so couldn't provide as much weltsilver to Axos, and so demand had risen here. They were working hard, but not unreasonably so.

Was there anything other than the braking mechanisms that could be done to improve safety? Mertha was not sure, but he wasn't an engineer so wouldn't know; the co-councillor seemed confused by the detail the visionary was going into on the engineering.

In response to questioning, Mertha said that it was every miner's responsibility to check the brake for damage or wear, every time they used the cart, and that the mine was owned by the state. Mertha had been put in charge by Morris or Maurice who Appoints, who had seen a good leader in Mertha, who had been on the job for 4 years.

The Consideration

The visionary said that it was a tragedy that had occurred; lost colleagues, and must be resolved.

The visionary considered if someone else might be culpable, for the message not getting through to the miners.

It was possible for the Observation Council to be assigned culpability; for them to make decisions of what was to be corrected.

The visionary made the decision that Mertha was culpable; he was frustrated and said he'd done everything he could, followed all the rules, but wasn't yelling.

The visionary wrote down Mertha's name on a form, which said it was Accident 4 of the Year of Orichalcum and Lye, and the vision ended.

A chance meeting in Anvil

After a discussion about whether this vision occurred in Skoura, the visionary spoke to a number of Skourans who were attending Anvil, who were surprised by the visionaries in-depth yet archaic understanding of these matters, pointing out that they use the term "accountable" now, rather than culpable, and mentioned that "Our laws are baked on the weight of tragedy".

They also suggested Argyle's jewelled chain may have intended to be identifiable jewellery in the event of a cave-in. They also clarified that the mines are run like sinecures; owned by the state but managed by one person. They also wondered why an artisan was in the mines.

Divinations

The rituals returned interesting results. The Day ritual *Eyes of the Soul's Past* gave that the visionary was "Nurum who decides wisely", who was born about a century ago. The Night ritual *Secrets of the Soul's Desire* returned much more factual and less obscured information than most castings: that the vision occurred in the 22nd Skouran Pacturact of Jade Fall Hold East (a minor governing body), that this was Investigation 4 into Lethal Accidents in the Year of Orichalcum and Lye, and that the culpable person was Mytre who knows Efficient Works, with the long-term consequences of changes to the safety policies of the mine.

Leif Dreambinder (Wintermark)

Accompanied by Melchior of Adina's Charge (Highguard)

The dose for this vision was provided by Sumaah to the ambassador Accalon, who presented it to the visionary.

The visionary awoke kneeling on a carpet in front of an altar flanked by pillars. The altar had a knife and a lantern with a horseshoe-shaped piece of ivory/ivy.

A fellow apprentice with a deep V-cut plain white robe with a stout leather pouch entered, who referred to the visionary as a friend. "Ah; I see you've already been praying, may I join you?" After the visionary made some space, the novice audibly invoked the High Divinities; the Sapphire Spear, the Emerald Spear, the Black Wyrms of the Onyx Orb and the Mistress of the Unblinking Gaze.

The apprentice stood; "the Master has need of us, he is close to codifying the ritual", he said, and added that Master Teth-Anon would need them both to complete his work.

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Teth-Anon entered, wearing a metallic gold collar and gold bracers with a sigil on the back, and a red robe. He was of moderate height. He had captured an emissary of the High Divinities to help with codifying the ritual on the advice of the Black Wyrms of the Onyx Sphere. The visionary questioned whether the Wyrms was trustworthy (believing it to probably be Sadogua) but Teth-Anon dismissed those concerns, saying that he must perform it, and left to make final preparations.

The apprentice said, "We have to stop him", explaining that the emissary could destroy everything and leave only ash, and that the power was too great to leave in one person's hands. It had no name, and therefore no will to resist the binding; it would need to be Named to give it the ability to resist Teth-Anon. They suggested the visionary distract it whilst the apprentice delivered the name.

The apprentice explained the name had to encompass what the being is; the visionary suggested "Oblivion", which was accepted by the apprentice.

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With the visionary standing in place behind Master Teth-Anon as the ritual began, the

High Divinities were invoked. Oblivion was a blue-faced humanoid, who knelt before them, with their head in their arms.

"Now!" shouted the apprentice. The visionary asked Teth-Anon if he is sure that he should be doing this. Teth-Anon turned to the visionary whilst the apprentice declared, "I grant you the name Oblivion!" and touched the being, then grabbed at his eye in agony. The apprentice drew a knife and struck both Teth-Anon and the visionary; the visionary was knocked to the floor, and Teth-Anon was dropped to his knees.

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The visionary came to where he was knocked down; Teth-Anon was dead on the floor where he was last seen. The apprentice was dying in a different herald's arms: blue stripes in a H pattern across the face; the visionary reported the herald identifies themselves as Ylenwe but the divination suggests Yeldesoi.

The herald said, "The thing you have named my mistress fights against even now. The apprentice is at peace but won't last long." The visionary asked to see him. The visionary and apprentice talked about how they've unleashed something, they have to warn people, and the apprentice breathed their last.

"My mistress will take this thing into herself. She will become Ylenrith; she can contain the fire, but it will be free again in future." (This was recognised by the visionary as being Cold Sun, an Eternal previously unknown before the previous summit, who wages war against the Empire.)

The ritual chamber was a small brick room, smokey with dim light and a throne with cloth on the seat. A stag emblem with red stripes was seen on the throne and the kneeler adjacent, eagles were also seen in other iconography.

Historical Note – On Teth-Anon

Teth-Anon is known primarily for the eponymous Garden of Teth-Anon ritual (Day 23), named after his garden of meditation for improvisational magical effects which seemed to slow time to permit precise ritual casting.

Teth-Anon is believed to have been a wealthy and powerful diviner in service to a king's court, from the vicinity of what is these days the Sarcophan Delves, in ancient times from an unknown civilisation most likely predating the construction of the current ruins.

He is known to have had a "Covenstone of Unremembered Days" we believe to be similar to the Siphon of Stars. The original text is claimed to call upon "forgotten, fictional deities", whose names may have been invoked here.

The author of the codified version of the ritual text suggests he was "an unpleasant fellow... revelling in exposing the weaknesses of the king's political opponents and wielding power over the weak in the name of his king".

Divinations

Both before and after the vision, Leif was dedicated to Wisdom, and bore the testimonies "Puzzled Life" and "Dreambinder", along with an anointing that oaths and commitments are important. Melchior was dedicated to Courage.

After the vision, both souls looked as if they had been stretched and put back.

No magic was detected on either participant before or after the vision.

The Day ritual *Eyes of the Soul's Past* revealed the visionary's name to be Tov-shei, that he lived over 8000 years ago, and he is the reason that a name of Cold Sun is the Obliviating Flame.

The Night ritual *Secrets of the Soul's Desire* revealed that this dream sees the eternal Yeldesoi, who became Ylenrith by incorporating the nameless power into herself. The civilisation the visionary was a part of lived for another 100 years; if Teth-Anon had succeeded, the civilisation would have been destroyed by the Purifying Flame.

Tiberius Ankarien (Urizen)
Accompanied by Maximillian Ankarien (Urizen)

The visionary's dose was provided by the gatekeepers.

The visionary found themselves in the spire of Ankarien late at night, late in the year, with snow on ground, huddled around a fire in a brazier with four Dawnish folk, all wearing a sash of a knightly order on their arms: the outline of a red shield on a white band:

- a draughir woman in the sun-on-blue of a Questing Knight, named Lady Elaine;
- a draughir man whose heraldry was a cross with rabbits in the corners, wearing a belt tag bearing the three moons of House De Rondell surrounding an unidentified beast; this man was the younger brother of Elaine;
- an unlineaged, unarmoured woman wearing a headcloth and wielding a staff; a Knight Errant who will soon complete their Test of Mettle; this is their last night as a Yeofolk;
- an unlineaged person in leather armour, presumed to be seneschal and aide de camp.

They bantered as soldiers and old friends, recounting old drunken escapades. The seneschal had gotten so drunk in Karsk that they didn't know which bed was theirs.

One talked about the visionary's family, a house of draughir living in a haunted castle, which the visionary assumed was a reference to House Remys.

The banter continued until the visionary called matters to order; the seneschal was asked to do a briefing, as it was their job. Axou had invaded Spiral and were moving in via a pass two hours from Ankarien. The gathered knights were to hold them at the pass for a day; the Eastern Sky would be here by then and could reinforce them if they could but hold the pass until then.

The plan had been accepted by all. They were eager for glory and the visionary had been described as the greatest living tactician.

They were interrupted by an Urizeni Seer in Ankarien red and gold, who asked to speak privately with the visionary. The others announced that they were off to bed, and left. The Seer had completed a divination ritual, which they emphasised was from the Emperor's personal ritual texts and as such infallible. It said that they could take the field and hold the pass, but everyone except the visionary would die; or they could

evacuate the spire, with the loss of the spire and a few books but very few fatalities.

The visionary cursed the rituals, saying that they were a curse; the seer agreed, saying that having seen the Emperor, she thought so too.

The visionary asked about the scale of the losses if they evacuated – these would be negligible.

Visionary gave the order to evacuate: “The people of Spiral believe that a spire is the people and the books, not the stone”; the party of knights would cover the evacuation. The vision ended.

The vision occurred in the courtyard two floors down from the junior common room of the School of Night in Ankarien, the visionary having recognised the location (being of Ankarien in this life) and noted it had been somewhat remodelled in the intervening time. Cooking equipment and vegetables and a wooden outbuilding were noted, as was a large door at the far end.

Divinations

Both before and after the vision, Tiberius was dedicated to Pride and had a testimony “Flying Medic”, and no marks were present on Maximillian’s soul; nor did either bear magic before or after the vision.

The Day ritual *Eyes of the Soul’s Past* revealed the visionary was the Dawnish draughir noble, Ser Isabeau de Remys, Knight-Commander of the Order of the Virtuous Shield; armed and armoured as a Dawnish knight; greatsword as long as she was, black hair in tight braids.

The Night ritual *Secrets of the Soul’s Desire* revealed the following: “They never forgave me, my friends, for not fighting. They believe that we could have won had we fought. The order becomes just another order, and we drift apart over the years. The only thing that I remain sure of – that I saved them, and that made it worthwhile.”

Herminius of the House of the Wanderer (Urizen)

Accompanied by Ourania of the House of the Wanderer (Urizen)

The visionary was an Ushkan bargainer of great respect and power; the Vard had attacked a number of Uskhan vales and the representatives of three different families had gathered the scattered clans to work out a plan for when the Vard attacked here.

The first wanted to flee as far as possible, with assistance of the Thorned Martin protecting them; they were sure that they couldn't defeat the Vard, who had fallen in their thousands from the sky. The second and third families had not believed them when they had told them, but they had to reconsider after they too were attacked by the Vard. They had intended to run to the east, but the others said they'd only be safe whilst they kept running.

The second wanted the visionary's aid to obtain the Deathless and to fight the Vard, which would make them able to fight and not die, which was implied to be a form of ritual enhancement. This would be in conjunction with another group of bargainers led by someone named Koshyev or Koschei.

The third one, who wore white furs, wanted to infiltrate the Vard and live as wolves amongst sheep, embracing a power where they would take their faces off and wear the faces of Vard. Over the years, they would kill the Vard and replace them. (It was suggested after the vision that this ability might be the origin of the Mora.)

The visionary had to choose one plan otherwise they'd have to scatter; the others might be disappointed that their option wasn't taken, but would follow the visionary's lead. The visionary chose to remain as Ushkans, and to stand and fight even if changed; to fight with Pride. As he spoke, the third representative made eye-contact with the visionary and muttered under their breath, but didn't seem to cast anything.

The visionary also said that the families should let their people hear the proposals and decide what they each wanted to do. Upon the visionary saying "Let's go", the second representative said he'd take the visionary to speak with Koshyev, and the vision ended.

The vision occurred outside a house with a big door and a small kitchen with pheasants, pots and pans visible, with snow on the ground and the windowsill. A ritual bowl containing white powder was by the visionary's right foot; there was also a skull and horn nearby.

Divinations

Both before and after the vision, nothing of note was detected on the visionary's or guide priest's souls.

The Day ritual *Eyes of the Soul's Past* yielded that the visionary was Eveirtti, the child of Olatto of family Kettanem, bargainer most wise in magic and rituals of the realms.