

Excerpts from the Personal Journal of Magnus Cornario

The Twenty-Fifth Day of May, in the Year of our Lord 1530

Prince Roger's Keep, Southern Lakonia

I have examined the bag which is larger on the inside than on the out. I have noticed that no matter the weight of its contents, it always appears to weigh 25 pounds. I believe I can duplicate the enchantment. I have instructed my dedicated wright to create a backpack that does the same as the bag.

Met with Herexes and Adam today. Herexes has requested that I set up a magic library for the public on my lands (I will learn the exact details tomorrow). To that end, he has brought a lot of old texts bearing spells upon them for Adam and I to copy. Herexes also copied a couple of my spells and a few of Adam's, some of which he said that he had never heard of.

I agreed to create such a library, although I suggested that there were perhaps certain spells that it might be best for the general public not to know.

The Twenty-Sixth Day of May, in the Year of our Lord 1530

I have been made a Baron. With the exception of David, all of my companions now hold that title. David has been made a Count, which is the highest rank I have ever heard a Jew to hold since the Diaspora.

We saw a map of our lands today. Jean-Claude and Christshon are directly bordering the canal separating the free areas of Greece from those lying within the tyranny of the Turk. My lands are to the east, including a fair amount of seacoast. To the south of me, against some "mountains" (they are more like large hills) and also bordering the sea is Sigurd Wulfgar's lands are immediately to the west of Sigurd's.

Spent most of the day learning a spell that allows the caster to understand all spoken or written speech. Spent the early part of the morning using magic to duplicate the spells I copied yesterday. This copy is for the new library.

The Twenty-Seventh Day of May, in the Year of our Lord 1530

My house, Barony of Cornario

Spent the day traveling. Fortunately, the coach was well sprung. I managed to create a pocket watch from the raw materials using a spell of fabrication. We stopped over in David's domain – he has a large keep. From there, our group separated, each going to his new domain.

Early evening, I arrived at a large house, which I was told was mine. I was introduced to the three servants who tended the place.

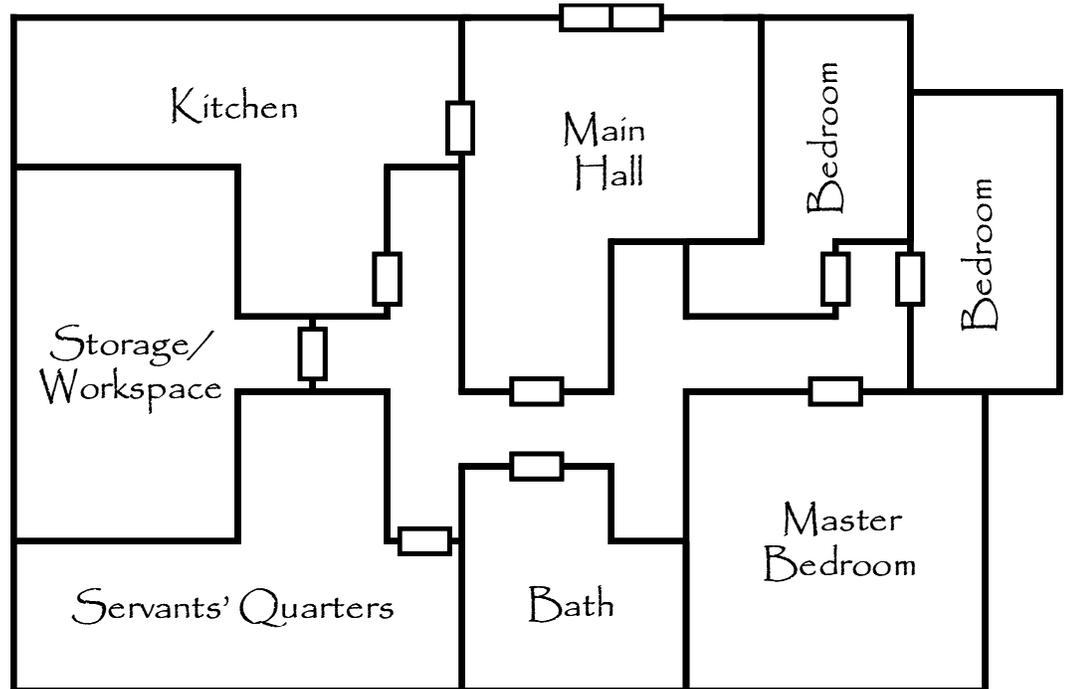
I have requested that Caliban survey the area invisibly.

I will look at the building tomorrow. I am exhausted.

The Twenty-Eighth Day of May, in the Year of our Lord 1530

The house, while large, is somewhat plain. The outer walls are wood and the roof is thatched. I will need to get that replaced with clay tiles as soon as is possible. I expect that down the road I will need to replace the house with a larger, more fortified dwelling – one that has room for a public library.

The house has eight rooms – a master bedroom suite and study, which I where I am currently transcribing this entry. In addition it has a main hall/entry chamber, a simple kitchen, servants' quarters, a pair of guest bedrooms, a bathing chamber and an empty room being used as a storeroom.



There are three servants, as I mentioned yesterday. All are of Greek descent. There is the butler/major domo whose name is Adrastos Sarakhnos. His wife, Vasiliki, is the cook and housekeeper. I have one maid, a young girl by the name of Melissa. Adrastos said that they had been hired recently. The previous owner was a Turk nobleman who was not well liked. He was displaced when the Ottoman's were expelled from the area. My heart bleeds for him.

The servants and I quickly rearranged the storeroom so that there was a small working area for my crafting manikin. Over the next few weeks, I will have it set up as a more proper library and workplace. Caliban will create furnishings and some such for the library. I have also asked him to create a few casks full of wine.

I set the wright the task of creating a necklace that adapts the wielder to his or her surroundings, preventing exposure to noxious vapors and such, as well as giving the ability to breath in any environment, such as underwater.

I also spent a good portion of the day learning a spell to make certain enchantments permanent unless they are forcibly dispelled.

Sigurd stopped by to request that I create barding out of mithral for Thrud using magic. I explained that I was not an armorsmith but he was most insistent.

I told him that I would assay the task provided he would provide the raw mithral.

The Twenty-Ninth Day of May, in the Year of our Lord 1530

Most of the day and evening I spent studying a spell that allows one to see in absolute darkness. There was a side note to the spell ~ the creator was attempting to recreate the innate ability of Orcs to see in darkness, so he called it Orcvision.

I guess he was unaware that Dwarves and many other creatures have such abilities.

Around lunch, I walked down to the nearby village (about 15 buildings ~ hardly a real town) and spoke to some of the locals. I demonstrated a few magic tricks for them, minor presdignitations. I did post a notice that I was looking to hire a clerk or two and a couple of

guards. It was at that point that a couple of the locals who could read realized that I was the new Baron.

The expression of their faces was most amusing.

The Thirtieth Day of May, in the Year of our Lord 1530

Learned a spell to create an eternal flame that sheds light and no heat. A useful spell, but the ruby dust that is required as a component is somewhat expensive.

I asked Adrastos to post the hiring notices down at the fishing village. Also, when he next goes to Corinth (a couple of times of month as I understand), he will post them there as well. I have added an architect to the list as well, although I may wish to write home to my family and hire an Italian; the buildings here look quite old-fashioned.

The Thirty-first Day of May, in the Year of our Lord 1530

Studied a spell that will transfer vital energies from the person touched to the caster.

The First Day of June, in the Year of our Lord 1530

Studied a spell that will creates a shield of force that interposes itself between the caster and incoming attacks.

Sigurd brought by the raw mithral for his barding for Thrud as well as some pieces of leather. I cast a spell to bring about competence in crafting, then cast the fabrication spell on the mithral. The metals and leather rearranged themselves, floating over to Thrud, and in moments a perfect suit of barding suitable for a winged steed was upon Sigurd's mount.

It's good to be a wizard.

The Second Day of June, in the Year of our Lord 1530

I spent most of the day learning a spell to mold stone to the will of the caster. I believe this spell will be of particular use in construction.

Wulfgar stopped by and we ate lunch down at the tavern. He told me in an aside that he does not like the local ale. One of his first projects is going to be to build (in his words) "a decent tavern and alehouse."

The Third Day of June, in the Year of our Lord 1530

I learned a spell that allows the targets to breathe underwater. The necklace the wright it working on will do that, but only for one person. This allows for multiple people to breathe underwater at the same time.

The Fourth Day of June, in the Year of our Lord 1530

David's Keep

David, Sigurd, Caliph, Wulfgar, Jean-Claude, Christshon and Haldar stopped by for the noon meal. Apparently Caliban's wine is very much to their liking. Haldar has grand plans for a church of Helios. I suggested that he convert an existing mosque, as the Turks and converted the Temple of Helios in Crete. Caliph did not care for this suggestion.

Towards the end of the meal, Caliban appeared and said there was a disturbance at Lord Karis' house. Lord Karis was an elderly man and rather wealthy. We headed down to his house, where several of the villagers were banging on the door. When they saw me, one of them ran up and said that no one had seen Lord Karis for several days and that they were all very worried.

I conjured up an invisible eye of arcane force and sent it into the building through an opening under the roof. I had the eye go throughout the building. In the main room, looking through the eye, I saw Lord Karis' body and that of a hound.

I asked Wulfgar to open the locked door. It gave way with a single kick of his booted foot. We went in and searched the room. It appeared that Karis and his dog had been murdered – bludgeoned to death for the most part, although there were some cuts that appeared to be from razor-sharp claws. From the condition of the corpse it appeared that the death took place about two days prior.

Haldar offered to speak with the shade of Lord Karis, in the same manner he interrogated the corpses killed by Beta. Agreeing that was a good idea, we then asked the following questions of Lord Karis:

Question: Who killed you?

Answer: 3 statues

Question: Why did they kill you?

Answer: I don't know why.

Question: What were they looking for?

Answer: Valuables.

Question: Please describe your killers. (Technically, not a question, but it received a reply)

Answer: They were moving statues with wings and claws.

Near the body we found a brass glove with a letter in its grasp. After checking it for magic and traps, we unfurled the letter. Here is what it said:

You are not safe. Many more will be killed if you do not meet our demands. Bring gold and jewelry and silk and gems. Leave them in this house or you will face the wrath of the Hand of Stheno.

David's knowledge of classical mythology is far greater than mine. He said that Stheno was one of the three Gorgons, sister to Medusa.

After questioning the villagers, one of them said that he had seen several large things flying west in the past couple of days. Wulfgar said that they could be heading to some ruins that were in his Barony, Wolfhold.

Our group headed decided to head south to the hills and then west. This took us through Sigurd's domain.

Turns out Sigurd had some problems of his own. Apparently some of his sheep and a shepherd had been killed by some creatures last night. They had left a clear trail leading into the hills, so we decided to deal with them first. Christshon, who has now grown wings, and Sigurd on Thrud found the creatures quickly via aerial reconnaissance.

There were eleven of the creatures, clearly some sort of aberrant beast. They had the form of a great cat with black fur, only they had six legs. They each had a pair of tentacles extending from their shoulder-blades, each tentacle ending in a sort of horny-ridged pad. The tentacles were similar to that of the rock-beast found in the caves beneath Kydonia. Far worse than the tentacles was their ability to displace their image from their actual location. When one struck the image of one of the felines with a blade it was just as likely to pass through thin air as to embed itself in the cat's flesh.

One of these displacer cats was far larger than the others. The way they followed it, I was put in mind of a mama cat and her kittens.

The battle with the cats was fierce, but not much in doubt. Christshon and Sigurd ambushed them from the air. I cast Balls of Abysmal Flame into their midst. The rest of the party went into hand-to-tentacle combat.

When they were slain, we tracked them back to their lair – a large cave high in the hills. They had accumulated some wealth in with the bodies of their victims: 6000 gold coins, 7 gems which we appraised at being worth about 100 gold each and seven potion bottles. I have analyzed these and they are potions of healing.

Leaving the displacer cat cave, we proceeded west to the ruins Wulfgar spoke of.

At the ruins we saw about two dozen statues perched on pedestals. I immediately thought of them as gargoyles – they had wings and claws, just as described by Karis' corpse. In a courtyard, surround by the gargoyles, we saw a man (presumably) in a robe tending a small fire. He appeared to be doing some forge work upon a metal glove.

We decided to rest and recuperate before attacking the gargoyles. I left Celeris hidden in the trees to watch for any movement from the statues and to keep an eye on the man at the fire. The rest of us went to David's keep to rest for the night.

Shortly after sunset, Celeris warned me through our bond that six of the gargoyles had flown off to the east. Presuming that they were heading back to the house of Lord Karis, our group moved to intercept them. Christshon and Sigurd engaged them in aerial battle. Haldar did as he did with the Griffons last month and used the winds to smite them to the ground. The rest of us used missile fire against them (and a few spells from myself). The gargoyles were swiftly dispatched and we returned to our rest.

The Fifth Day of June, in the Year of our Lord 1530

My House

A mixed day, We destroyed the threat to our domains, but there was some collateral damage. I targeted three prisoners with a Ball of Abysmal Flame, thinking that they were willing allies of Stheno.

We left early in the morning to head back to the ruins. We were joined by Haldar's new cohort – a female wizard and convert to Helios, apparently. I cast my standard defensive spells in preparation as well as readying a series of combat-oriented magics.

When we arrived at the ruins, I learned from Celeris that there were now three people in robes. The gargoyles, minus the six that we had destroyed, had not moved. We made our plans: I would summon two Griffons from the Celestial Realms, Haldar would summon another. Haldar's companion, whose name I cannot recall, would cast a spells of acceleration upon some of us. David would cast the spell upon the rest. We would then engage in battle.

The battle went initially according to plan. I cast a Ball of Abysmal Flame upon the three people working at the fire. The griffons before magnificently against the gargoyles. The rest of us engaged in battle using our usual tactics and were victorious. After the gargoyles were slain, we inspected the bodies of the three robed people. Wulfgar recognized them as three of his peasants – a smith and his family. They had been blinded.

We investigated a stone building behind the fire. Inside was a hideous woman with snakes for hair, who claimed to be the Gorgon Stheno. She was subdued, although Wulfgar made an attempt to kill her to avenge his peasants. David promised that she would be brought to trial the next day.

Searching the stone building, we found the following:

- 6,900 gold pieces
- 2,500 silver pieces
- 17 diamonds appraised at 100 gold each
- A bag of valuables taken from Karis' house – jeweled silverware and the like. The estimated value was about 10,000 gold. I told the group that this needed to be returned to Karis' estate and they agreed

Stheno herself was heavily armed and armored with ensorcelled objects. We found the following on her:

- An enchanted breastplate with a defensive enchantment of the third magnitude
- A heavy pull composite longbow with an standard battle enchantment of the first magnitude
- A heavy steel shield with a defensive enchantment of the third magnitude
- A longsword with a basic battle enchantment

With my heart heavy, I returned home.

The Sixth Day of June, in the Year of our Lord 1530

I offered to enchant Wulfgar's bow for in exchange for my slaying his prisoners. He accepted but insisted upon paying the material costs. His words to me about it were, "Shit happens. Stheno is the one that captured and blinded them."

I set the manikin to ensorcell the bow. We then headed to David's keep for the trial. It was short, as Stheno arrogantly admitted to her crimes. David then ordered her death via hanging, as befits a common criminal. Before the noose was placed about her neck, she cursed David and cried out to Euryale to avenge her. Euryale is the last of the three Gorgons.

When Stheno died, David felt a great lassitude come over him and all his limbs felt weak. It appeared that Stheno's curse took hold. Maldar was able to call upon the power of Helios to lift the curse, however, as Stheno's death was just.

After the trial, I returned home and quickly penned a decree stating that Lord Karis's killer and been found and hung. Admittedly, this was not news to most people – many of them were at the hanging. I added that his funeral would be held in two days time and that his estate would be held in trust for a year and day for any heirs to make a claim. After that time, it would revert to the Barony.

I had Adrastos post the decree in several places. I went down to the village by the sea and began a project that I have been thinking about for a week – building an solid road connecting the sea village to Corinth, bisecting my barony. I used a spell to carve out a roadbed some 750 feet in length and then began the slow process of conjuring a stone road 20 feet wide. I did about 55 feet of road today.

The Seventh Day of June, in the Year of our Lord 1530

I learned a spell from the Big Book of Summoning. This spell summons creatures from the outer planes and is of the sixth magnitude.

I also used a spell of fabrication to create a truly superb dragon rifle. I have decided to call it "Argent", after the silver bow of Apollo.

Speaking of bows, the manikin finished its work upon Wulfgar's. I had it delivered to him.

The Seventh Day of June, in the Year of our Lord 1530

The funeral for Lord Karis' was today. He was buried in a graveyard to the north. So far, there have been no claimants for his estate. His neighbors say that he had no relatives.

Added another 55 feet of roadway today. Also dug out another 750 feet for the roadbed.

Attempted to Scry upon Beta twice.

The Eighth Day of June, in the Year of our Lord 1530

Yet another 55 feet of road. Scried upon Beta in the morning and evening.

I made some repairs to some hand-mills the villagers had.

Caliban made some wondrous furnishings for the library today. I sent another 40 gallons of wine to ~~Captain~~ Colonel Abellius today, for the troops manning the guard posts.

The Ninth Day of June, in the Year of our Lord 1530

More roadway & more scrying.

Celeris has been talking to some of the local birds, attempting to get them to keep an eye out for unusual occurrences: monsters, strange events, invading Turkish armies, etc. He has also asked some seagulls to alert him to the presence of any sea monsters. With the return of magic, I expect there might soon to be more to fear upon the Mediterranean than the occasional pirate.

There have also been some problems with birds eating newly sown seed in the fields. I have had a brilliant idea. I asked Celeris to find a dozen or so crows to watch the fields and drive off other birds (in exchange for food, of course). I had Caliban create some roosts and birdbaths for them.

The Eleventh Day of June, in the Year of our Lord 1530

Considering what happened to David, I decided to learn a spell to lift curses.

Another 55' of road.

The Twelfth Day of June, in the Year of our Lord 1530

Learned to fly today. Technically, I learned a spell called the Wings of Icarus, that carries one aloft for a short period of time, but close enough.

A couple of quick spells upon the road, brining it to 330' paved length thus far.