

Excerpts from the Personal Journal of Magnus Cornario

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

My house, Barony of Cornario

It has been a long and eventful day. I had Celeris search out the seagulls early in the morning for more information on this sea monster and to make sure they were not referring to Christshon. Celeris brought back a rather adventurous gull, named Ioannes Vitalith, who said the monster had huge tentacles. I "paid" the gull for his information with some fish heads.

After Ioannes was sent on his way, I tied a note to Celeris' leg and sent it to Christshon, warning him about the monster in his water. I also sent a messenger to Sigurd, as he has a great interest in mythical beasts and his lands also have a sea border.

Sigurd and Christshon arrived within an hour. I conjured a steed of shadows and mist, while Christshon flew and Sigurd rode Thrud. We went out sea, whereupon we saw two long tentacles jutting out from the water. Sigurd convinced me to ride pillion on Thrud, so I sent my mount back to shore.

The tentacles appeared to be some fifty to sixty feet long. I have heard of giant squid before, but this can be none other the legendary kraken. There was a note at the end of Wondrous Creatures of Greece that said the kraken would be covered in the second volume.

I have checked – no second volume was ever written.

I returned to my house, planning on Scrying upon the creature in its lair later in the evening. It must have a strong will, however, as the spell failed upon both attempts. This lends credence to the theory that this is a/the kraken, as I should have succeeded against an ordinary beast, no matter how large.

Sigurd returned after a couple of hours. He had searched out the local sea creatures in order to gather information upon the kraken. He found a hippocampus – another legendary Greek sea creature, one with the head and forequarters of a horse and the tail of a fish.

Sigurd spoke with the hippocampus (apparently he can communicate with magical beasts) and the creature warned him about the kraken, saying it was "bad news." Sigurd asked me to accompany him to speak with the hippocampus tomorrow. Sigurd did note that the sea-horse did talk in a most strange manner, though he did not specify how.

I do wonder if the hippocampus has damaged Sigurd's mental faculties. I would swear that when he took his leave of me that he called me "dood."

In the afternoon, I discussed the situation with my new librarian and architect. I told them that I might be unavailable for much of the next couple of weeks and to continue on with the plans for the library/school. Andrea and Adephia informed me that would be no difficulty; they would spend the time investigating suitable sites for the building.

I was not the only one who had an eventful day. Wulfgar stopped by for the evening meal (and to pick up a cask of wine). He informed me that there was a peasant near-uprising upon Caliph's lands.

Apparently, many of the local Turks were displaced by Italian immigrants as the local head farmers. These new head farmers (most working for Haldar) were preventing the Turks from farming the land. Fortunately, Haldar and Caliph managed to get the issue sorted out. I will speak to my reeve to make sure nothing like this happens here.

As I was getting ready for bed, Celeris informed me that a couple of crows had told him that there were rumors of dragons in Jean-Claude's barony. I asked him to confirm the rumors. I'll let Jean-Claude know about them tomorrow.

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

My house, Barony of Cornario

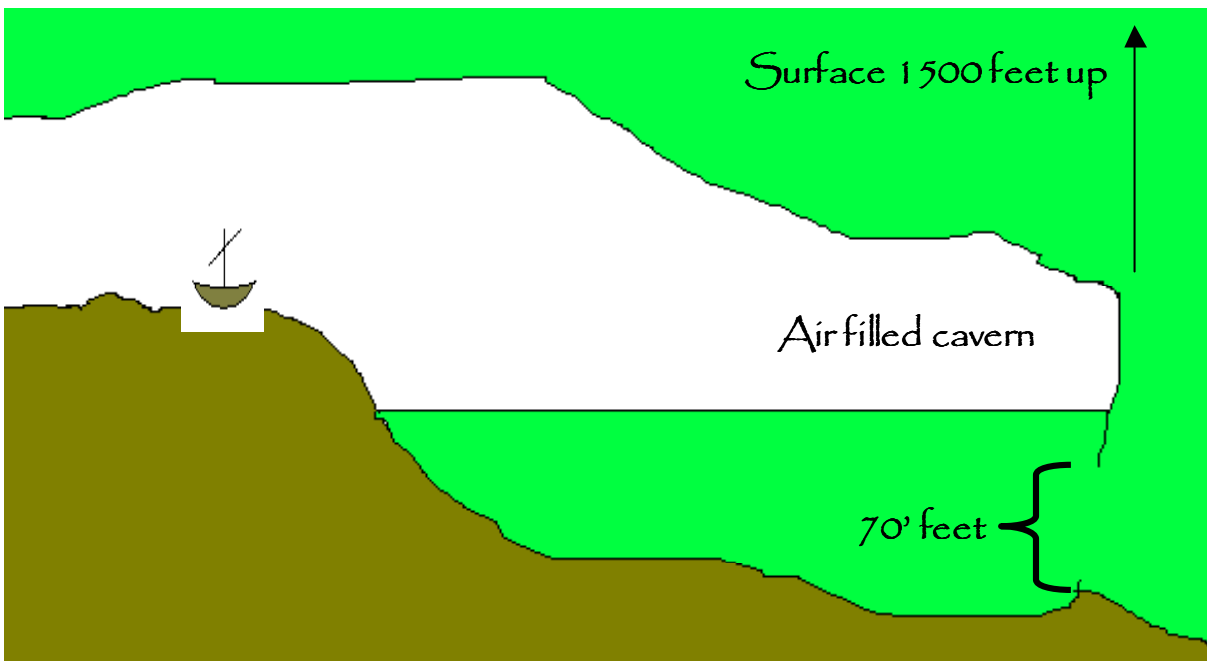
I received a note early this morning from Jean-Claude. Apparently, Jean-Claude's peasants also were spreading rumors of dragons. He wants us to stop by tomorrow to investigate.

Sigurd, Christshon and I went out to speak to the hippocampus. It was most amusing hearing Sigurd translate. The hippocampus was willing to point out the general direction of the kraken's lair but was too afraid to accompany us. It was very happy to hear that we were planning to get rid of the monster, because the kraken was "harshing his mellow." The hippocampus did warn us that the kraken seemed to have power over the weather and had taken down a ship just yesterday (which was news to me).

We flew over the general area where the lair was supposed to be - it looked just like ordinary sea. I cast *Orcvision* upon myself and then conjured up an invisible eye of arcane force, which I could see through as it were my own. I sent the eye down through the waters, looking for the kraken's lair.

The lair was an underwater cave filled with air, approximately 1500 feet below the surface. The mouth of the cave is approximately 70 feet in diameter.

Apparently, the kraken has taken prisoners. We saw some seamen who were working on a keelboat. My guess is that this is the ship the hippocampus said the kraken pulled under the waves yesterday. There were also some lizard-like humanoids working on the vessel. They did not appear to be hostile to the humans. Neither group appeared to be happy.



Kraken's Lair

I also attempted to Scry again upon the kraken. Failure, both times.

I met with most of our group at David's keep. Adam was not there, but he can be hard to find. We discussed what to do about the kraken. We decided that we would need to beard the kraken in its lair, but that it could wait a few days while we prepared. Between Haldar, Haldar's new leman, Sheila, and myself we intend to create potions that may be used to breath underwater as well as a series of scrolls that will allow freedom of movement beneath the waves.

Haldar appeared upset about something. I attempted to ask him what it was, but he just shook his head. He said that we would speak tomorrow.

We also discussed the rumors of dragons upon Jean-Claude's lands. We agreed investigate tomorrow.

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

My house, Barony of Cornario

I started the day a little earlier than usual as Haldar was due early in the morning. When he stopped by, I set my dedicated wright to inscribing a scroll with a spell of freedom of movement that Haldar cast. The initial plan was for me to head to Haldar's home to assist Sheila in creating the potions of water breathing, but apparently Haldar had already done that.

We traveled to Jean-Claude's domain. The peasants told us where the "dragons" were and we headed to the area. Near where the peasants said we could find the dragons, Wulfgar and Sigurd picked up the tracks of a couple of large, multi-legged lizards. We could find no evidence that they could fly, however – the tracks didn't just disappear.

Wulfgar said that the tracks were a couple of days old, but he followed them to a cave. Once again, I used an invisible eye to investigate the cave. What was inside were not the dragons of legend, but these creatures may be responsible for some of those myths. The two creatures looked to be a cross between a snake and a lizard. They were some forty feet in

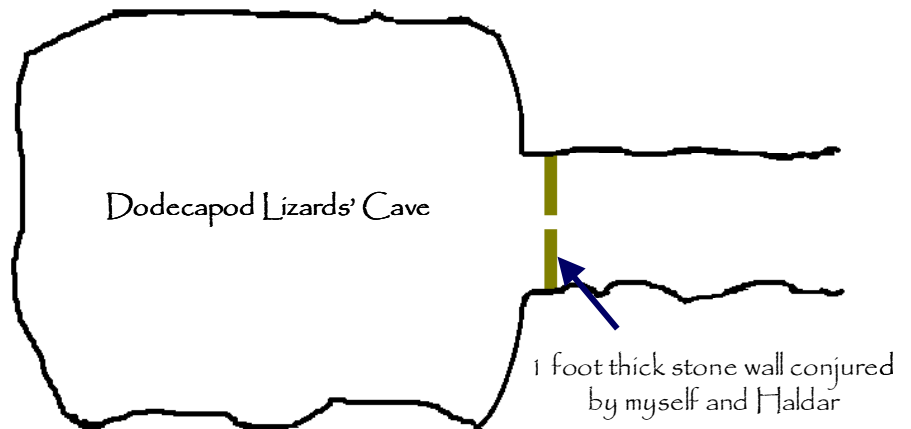
length, had deep blue scales and had a dozen legs each. The legs seemed almost retractable – the lizards could wriggle like a snake or scamper like a lizard.

Sigurd called the dodecapod lizards some Norse name which he said meant "armored wyrm" and said that they actually hated dragons.

As they were in their lair, I whipped out one of the scrolls found beneath the Temple of Helios on Crete. I used it to conjure up a wall of stone, trapping the dodecapod lizards inside. I left a 1' hole in the center through which I might cast a Ball of Abyssal Flame or two. Haldar also conjured a wall of stone, thickening mine to a depth of about a foot.

Thus trapped, I sent four Balls of Abyssal Flame through the hole. Christshon breathed fire through it several times. The lizards breathed lightning upon the wall, but were unable to break free and were soon burnt to death.

There was nothing of interest in the cave, other than the lizards. Having never seen such a creature, I began vivisecting them, much to the initial disgust of my colleagues. They quickly changed their minds, however, when I discovered that the creatures had ingested a quantity of valuables. Inside their stomachs, I found the following:



- 1,000 gold pieces
- 100 platinum pieces
- 2 jeweled bracelets – we estimated these to be worth 1,000 gold each.

We returned to David's keep, where Haldar then told us what had been bothering him. He had been having a dream whereupon he destroyed the bridges of the Corinth canal under the direction of Helios. This disturbed him so much that he cast a spell this morning to divine

the will of Helios. Did the sun god actually wish Haldar to destroy the bridges? According to Haldar, this was the answer of Helios:

"When Diana's standard falls, only Poseidon's bridge shall protect you."

Diana's standard is the moon and there is a new moon in eight nights (upon the twenty-third).

We agreed to meet at David's again tomorrow in order to discuss this further.

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

My house, Barony of Cornario

It seems we have enemies of whom we did not know. Sigurd, David, Caliph, Wulfgar and myself were discussing the situation with the bridges when we received a message from Adam. He was chasing four minotaur warriors through his domain - they seemed to be heading towards David's keep. David sent out ten warriors armed with the magical equipment we took from Zon's guards. Six of them died, three others were rendered unconscious and only one returned to warn us.

Upon hearing the news from the survivor, we set out after the minotaurs. There was no difficulty in finding them - Adam was fighting a running battle with them, making liberal use of a wand storing the Ball of Abysmal Flame spell. Sigurd and Caliph flew ahead on Thrud, while David cast a spell of celerity upon the rest of us and our mounts.

The battle was vicious. The minotaurs shot Thrud from the sky. Fortunately the fall did not seem to seriously discommode either Sigurd or Caliph. One of the minotaurs seriously wounded Wulfgar, and were it not for David's quick thinking and bravery, I expect my friend would have been killed. Another one of Sigurd's new pets, a four-armed ape, was killed by the minotaurs. Still, we prevailed.

There were carrying a vast amount of wealth:

- 12,000 gold pieces
- 4 diamonds we valued at 5,000 gold pieces each

- A scroll containing two spells of the first magnitude – one that conjures a horse, the other brings forth a disk of force which can bear large loads (I took this)
- A potion that blurs the image of the drinker, making them difficult to hit in battle. I wish Wulfgar had drunk something like this before engaging the minotaurs.
- A potion that restores the health of the wearer when it has been damaged by poison, disease, or similar such afflictions
- A mummified hand on a necklace. This allow the use a minor telekinetic cantrip three times per day. Adam took this – it seemed to fascinate him.
- A wand storing a spell of silence
- A wand that can shoot a bolt of acid over long distances (I took this)
- A wand that can levitate the target into the air
- A large wooden shield with the image of a lightning bolt upon it. In addition to bearing a standard defensive enchantment of the third magnitude, it also provides some resistance to lightning based attacks.

Apparently, the minotaurs were set out to assassinate David. We found the following note upon one of them:

"You will get the rest when you bring me the singer's head. – E"

Taken in this light, all of the items they were carrying would be helpful in an assassination attempt.

We did continue our preparations for dealing with the kraken. Haldar and I again set my manikin to inscribing another scroll of freedom of movement.