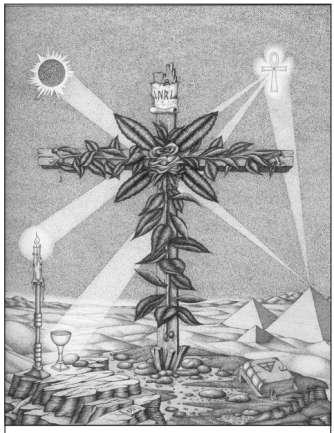
Genesis Antarctica

The Complete Zandernatis Trinity

based on the Haakon Urn texts
discovered by the
1962 Vostok Traverse
Antarctica expedition

Compiled and retold
by

Gordon Keirle-Smith



"Incarnation" – Paris 1978

TRINITY EDITION

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PREFACE by Penny Kelly[1]

There are few people with the boldness and imagination to write a book such as Genesis Antarctica and in doing so create an entirely new genre of writing. Part history, part fantasy, part allegory, and part metaphysical, the book is based on the 1962 Vostok Expedition to Antarctica. From there, it goes on to tell the story of the discovery of 21 ancient urns buried in the ice with scrolls inside. As the scrolls are translated, they tell of a civilization that lived tens of thousands of years ago on Antarctica when it was farther north and of how they lost their high levels of consciousness.

To those who have studied ancient history even a little, it becomes clear that civilization was very much different in the distant past. Originally, the Church declared that the world was created just before dawn on the morning of October 23, 4004 BC, a Sunday. When that began to look absurd, we were taught that the planet itself had been here for a long time, but that civilization only began about 9,000 years ago when we were mostly cavemen who lived a hunting and gathering lifestyle.

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[1] Penny Kelly is an author, teacher, speaker, publisher, personal and spiritual consultant, and Naturopathic physician. In 1979, while working as a tool and process engineer for Chrysler Corp, she experienced a full, spontaneous awakening of kundalini that completely changed her life. She left Chrysler and returned to school to study the brain, consciousness, perception, cognition, intelligence and intuition, as well as the teaching techniques of Dr. George Lozanov.

However, with the discovery of many, many artifacts of things like geared machine parts dated at 400 million years ago, a gold chain dated to at least 260 million years old, and a shoeprint in material more than 505 million years old, it becomes clear that much of what we have been taught to believe is really a story.

When you study this story a little further, it becomes obvious that it was made up to sound plausible, to give people a sense of security, and to implant subtle limitations in thinking along with expectations of reality. Whether you are talking about Adam and Eve or cavemen, implicit in what we've been taught is the idea that "this is as good as it gets" and life has never been better… so why look back? Just be satisfied with what we have become today because we're at a high point of development. However, when you actually look at and study history, it slowly dawns on you that everyone is believing in a fairytale of history that holds little possibility or potential, and almost no hope for the future.

The question then arises, "If we can all be so dedicated to a story that isn't true and has no hope, why not create a better story? Why not create a story of history that upholds the idea of a glorious and worthy past, one that inspires and holds the possibility of rising once again to our own potential?"

And that is why Genesis Antarctica is so intriguing. It breaks the rules and offers an alternative version of history that is no less plausible than stories like Adam and Eve or illiterate cavemen. Why should we settle for just one version of history? Why shouldn't we create stories of a beautiful and inspiring past rather than one of sin, punishment, and ignorant grunting?

For those who are awake to what is really happening in the world today, those who study ancient history, those interested in metaphysics, and anyone with any degree of sensitivity, this book creates a longing that wells up from inside that is almost painful in its

wistfulness and hopefulness. The truth in George Orwell's famous words is clear. "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past." **If we want a better future, it is time we created a new story about the past.**

Penny Kelly
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In 1987, Penny moved to southwest Michigan and for 25 years has operated Lily Hill Farm and Learning Center. Today she travels, lectures, and teaches a variety of classes and workshops including *Developing the Gift of Intuition*, *Organic Gardening*, and *Getting Well Again Naturally*. She maintains a large consulting practice, writes books and poetry, raises chickens, beef cows, and grows organic vegetables and small fruits.

For some years she has been involved in scientific research and investigations into consciousness at Pinelandia Laboratory near Ann Arbor, MI and has been the subject of some research as well.

She holds a degree in Humanistic Studies and a degree in Naturopathic Medicine. Penny is the mother of four children and has written seven books.

The Evolving Human – A True Story of Awakening Kundalini
The Elves of Lily Hill Farm – A Partnership With Nature
Robes – A Book of Coming Changes
Getting Well Again, Naturally – From the Soil to the Stomach
Consciousness and Energy, Vol. 1 – Multi-dimensionality and a Theory of Consciousness,
Consciousness and Energy, Vol. 2 – New Worlds of Energy
Consciousness and Energy, Vol. 3 – A History of Consciousness

Genesis Antarctica

A definitive meta-realist[2] allegory

Inspired by
the meta-realist art of
Johfra and **Ellen Lorien**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Muminah al-Ubaydli (Griffith Institute, Oxford), **David William Waterford** (New Zealand Institute for Ancient Languages), **Vladimir Kizenski** (Moscow State University), **Professor Donald Summers** (University of Texas, Austin) for their transliteration of the original texts.

Professor **J. G. Harkwood** (Melbourne University), **Professor James Gregson** (Sydney University), Professor **Ian Durham**, (Edinburgh Institute of Ancient Linguistic and Hieroglyphic Studies), **Dr**. **Arnold J. Hanwell** (Cleveland Research Centre) and **William Tarford Sn.**, (Chicago University) for their work on the Editorial Committee.

Arthur Portville, **Rodric H. Blane**, Hörst Schlimmel, **Megan Bennet,** Gabriel Coppet, Valerie Sturgeon, Eduardo Velaza, **Jean-Luc Bertrand**, Joseba Velasquez and all other members of the Logistics Team at the Dickensen Institute, Melbourne, Australia.

Gordon Keirle-Smith
for the retelling of the "Song of Gorin"

and our expert contributors, including:

William Gainstone, Professor Henry Sutcliff, OBE
and **Dr H. K. Kittner** (PLMRI, Lucerne, Switzerland).

[2] "Meta-realism transcends the real by creating compelling, fully documented, alternative truths."

STATEMENT

The reader should be aware
that the facts contained within these books -
brought to light by many years of relentless research
and determined efforts to stifle them -
may, or may not, be true.

Only you can decide.

FURTHER REMARKS

The **vehement disagreements** between members of the research, transliteration and translation teams who worked on the Haakon Urn (Antarctica) manuscripts between 1962 and 1974, followed by the **fierce opposition** to the work's publication from both **scientific and religious pressure groups**, have made it necessary for the true identity of those involved in this project to be **masked**.

Furthermore, the "author" wishes to remind readers that the body of this work is a **compilation and retelling** of the events described in the ancient writings. Any views expressed or implications that may be construed from them are therefore not necessarily his own.

BOOK ONE

Pre-Destination

I. Discovery of the Haakon Urns

II. Documentation, Insights and Transcriptions

III. **The Awakening** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 14-68*[3]

IV. Compiling and "Retelling" the oldest story in history: an interview with Gordon Keirle-Smith on BBC Radio 4 (21 May, 1976)

V. **The Lord's arbour** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 69-112*

VI. The Haakon Urns in the International Press

VII. **The Silver River** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 112-207*

VIII. Teams involved in the Haakon Urn project (at Wilkes Station, on the Vostok Traverse expedition and at the Melbourne Dickensen Research Institute working on transliteration and retelling)

IX. **From Plaza to Palace** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 210-357*

X. Zandernatis, Aboriginal mythology and "The Dreaming"

XI. **The Golden City** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 358 - 415*

XII. A Note on Legends, Our Time and the Future by William Gainstone, Author of "Legends Past, Present and Future" published by the Pinewood University Press 1973

XIII. **History, Legend, Prophecy** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 416-485*

XIV. A Chronology of the Zandernation Kings from Primus I to Esperon

XV. **Royal audience** *"Song of Gorin" – Stanzas 487-574*

XVI. Areligionism in Zandernatis: Observations by Professor Henry Sutcliff O.B.E.

XVII. Past Life Memories – **Zandernatis revisited** – A report by Dr H. K. Kittner (**P**ast **L**ife **M**emory **R**esearch **I**nstitute, Lucerne)

Appendix: The Haakon Urns – Complete bibliography

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[3] Extracts from other documents from the Haakon Urns are also quoted, particularly *"Ballads of Adoration"*, *"The Book of Magres"*, *"The Establishment of the Golden City"*, *"History of the Endless Happiness"* and *"Laws and Precepts"*.

BOOK TWO

Destination

I. The Meta-Realist Allegory: a new genre

II. **The Journey Begins** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 575-698*[4]

III. The site of Zandernatis – mapping the Paradise Garden and Gorin's journey to the Hills

IV. **The Road with Ecinlorne** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 699-810*

V. "Unihorn" skull found in Pennsylvanian cave

VI. **Claedon's story** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 811-881*

VII. Martha's "Dreaming Diary" – 1

VIII. **The Forest of Dissemblance** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 882-1211*

IX. An interview with Professor Harkwood (BBC 2) - transcript

X. **The Deserts of Jerah** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 1212 -1325*

XI. Martha's "Dreaming Diary" – 2

XII. **Nocturnal Travels** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 1326 - 1435*

XIII. "The Paradise Knowing" – Analysis by Dr. G. L. Neaker

XIV. **Pardylis** *"Song of Gorin" – Stanzas 1436 - 1523*

XV. The reincarnation debate. Extracts from the Chat4Forums platform

XVI. **Aelaguel** *"Song of Gorin" – Stanzas 1524 - 1654*

XVII. The "Fundamental Truths" website attacks claims made in "Zandernatis"

XVIII. **Architects of Civilisation** *"Song of Gorin" – Stanzas 1655 - 1779*

XIX. Our Angel Guardians

XX. Zandernatis and the origins of archetypes by P-L Dutoit, Professor Emeritus of Mythology at Victoria S.U. Canada.

[4] Extracts from other documents from the Haakon Urns are also quoted, particularly *"The Book of Magres", "The Establishment of the Golden City", "Sayings & Proverbs Book II", "Species, Races and Peoples" and "History of the Endless Happiness".*

BOOK THREE

Apotheosis

Foreword by Gordon Keirle-Smith

I. The Neo-Zandernatist Manifesto

II. **The Great Assembly** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 1780-1941*[5]

III. PLMRI centre opened in Chile

IV. **Gorin and Esperon** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 1942-2107*

V. New sensations

VI. **Return to Zandernatis** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 2108-2354*

VII. The Neo-Zandernatist phenomenon

VIII. **The Summons** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 2355-2628*

IX. French TV debate on the NZO's growing influence

X. **The Great Battle** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 2629-2932*

XI. Pre-Mythica Pictures Press Conference

XII. **Stars in the East** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 2933-3251*

XIII. Movie News Profiles

XIV. **The Aftermath** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 3252-3594*

XV. PMP Pre-Pro meeting report

XVI. **Potions and Explanations** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 3595-3897*

XVII. Making Zandernatis tangible

XVIII. **The Great Sleep** *"Song of Gorin" Stanzas 3898-4106*

XIX. Future Dreaming: Stories from the NPG

XX. A new creation from the Royal Ballet

Afterword

[5] Extracts from other documents from the Haakon Urns are also quoted. These include: *"The Book of Magres", "The Song of the Heroes", "Charter of Paradise", "History of the Second Heroic Age and "The Magres Commentaries".*

BOOK ONE
Pre-Destination

I - Discovery of the Haakon Urns

(original 1974 version)

Extract from the Vostok Traverse Antarctic Expedition logbook

"5 February 1962 – 15h52

We brought David safely out of the crevasse and made him comfortable after his fall through the ice. Clive and Nigel then let me down to investigate the curious objects he claimed to have seen at a lower level.

"I stopped on the ledge that broke his fall and pointed my flashlight into the greenish, murky depths below. It was immediately obvious there was something very unusual down there. For the beam was reflected back from several polished cylindrical objects stacked in the niche David had described, bringing the whole chasm alive with shimmering light!

"I signalled to be lowered further and gradually made my way down the rocky chasm wall until I reached the niche. It must have been about 40 metres below the gash in the ice above.

"Closer examination revealed the 'cylinders' were in fact large urn-like vessels about 1.8 metres high and almost 1 metre across at their widest point. Nearly all of them appeared to be sealed by heavy lids.

"I was now able to examine the polished metallic-like surfaces more closely. They were decorated with geometric forms and also what looked like ideographic inscriptions.

"I instinctively felt this was the proof we had been looking for. Although we never expected to find artefacts in such a perfect state of preservation – or that were likely to pose a great many more questions than they would answer!

Phillip McFarrel

An expedition with a secret agenda

In 1962, an Australian-led expedition set out from Wilkes Station in Antarctica to reach the abandoned Russian base of Vostok, "the coldest place on earth". The trip was one of Australia's most historic traverses, an epic journey totalling almost 5,000 kilometres!

What has never yet been disclosed about this expedition is that after reaching Vostok, it pushed on towards the Queen Elisabeth Mountains, in the Transantarctic Range. It finally reached a point on the King Haakon VII Plateau some 400 km from the South Pole, an area considered worthy of particular attention.

This part of their mission, carried out under a cloak of secrecy, followed the discovery of coal and fossil deposits beneath the frozen wastes. This implied the ice-bound continent had, at one time, supported a wide diversity of fauna and flora.

It was the German geophysicist, Alfred Wenegar, who in 1914 first put forward a hypothesis suggesting Antarctica was once completely free of ice. This theory was subsequently developed by Charles W. Hapgood in his book "*Earth's Shifting Crust*" (1958), where he stated that 10,000 to 15,000 years ago, Antarctica was some 4,000 km further north and enjoyed a tropical or subtropical climate[6].

Speculation as to the various life forms living on the continent in a much more benign environment was naturally aroused as such ideas developed. This led to the Vostok Traverse Expedition being mounted at the beginning of 1962. Ostensibly a purely exploratory venture, its real purpose – to search for traces of lost cultures hidden beneath the glaciers and snowfields – was not made public. The reason for such "discretion" was that hypotheses such as these

[6] A theory subsequently challenged by other members of the scientific community who asserted that although the continent of Antarctica probably did have a temperate climate at one time, this could not possibly have been less than several million years ago. JG

were too much at odds with conventional beliefs of human civilisation being no more than a few thousand years old.

A lucky accident

The actual discovery was made quite by chance, despite the complex - and extremely costly - electronic detecting apparatus the expedition was carrying.

The party made camp in the early afternoon of 5 February, not far from the foothills of the Queen Elisabeth Range. They had sought shelter in the lee of a large rocky prominence, due to a violent blizzard that had suddenly blown in after a morning of relatively fine weather.

One hour later, taking advantage of a lull in the storm, David Beatty, their young New-Zealander cook, went out gathering frozen snow to melt down for drinking water. As he dug his ice pick into an apparently solid mass, he felt the ground beneath his feet giving way, plunging him into a deep crevasse. Fortunately, his fall was broken by a snow-covered ledge only a few metres beneath the surface. This prevented him from being hurled into an abyss of tremendous depth, which disappeared into mysterious green shadows, far below.

When he failed to return, the rest of the party went out searching. David's cries for help enabled them to quickly locate his position and within minutes a rope had been let down to him.

It turned out he had suffered no more than a sprained ankle in the fall, but when he was finally hoisted to the surface, he reported having seen something that looked worth investigating. A niche in

the crevasse wall… stacked with strange, cylindrical objects… reflecting light in a curious way.

Once David had been taken back to the camp and made comfortable, three members of the expeditionary team set about investigating the object, or objects, in the crevasse. Lengths of cord were made ready and Phillip McFarrel, an accomplished Scottish mountaineer, was lowered down into the dim shadows of the icy depths. Another line was deployed beside him for signalling to those above.

After paying out about 40 m of cord, a sharp tug indicated Phillip had reached the right level. Nothing more happened for nearly a quarter of an hour, and then a series of jerks on the signal rope showed he was ready to be drawn up to the surface again.

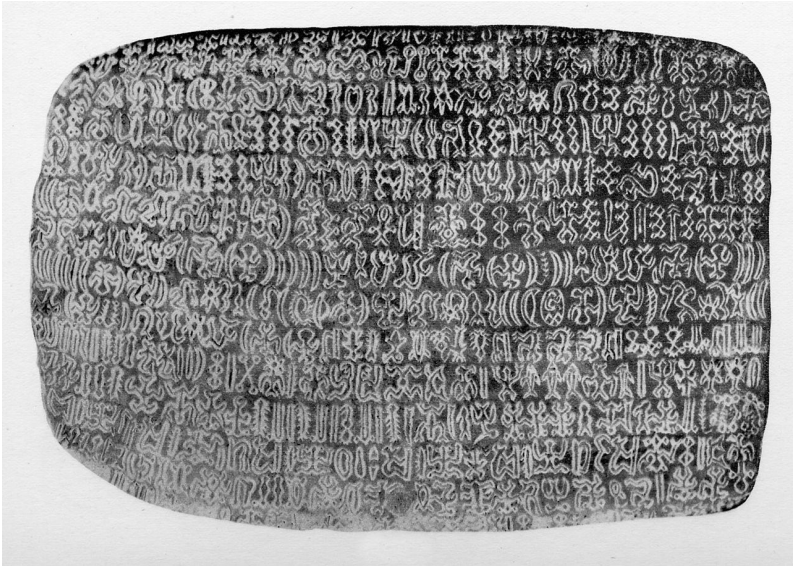
When he emerged from the icy fissure, the Scotsman was at first so excited he was barely capable of speaking coherently. But in the end he managed to describe what he had found.

Retrieving the urns

The work of bringing the urns to the surface took several days, for the utmost precautions had to be taken to ensure they were not damaged in any way. A total of 21 were recovered, all but three of them with heavy, sealed lids that looked capable of preserving their contents from the harsh environment they had endured for so long. No attempt was made to open the urns immediately, but four were carefully loaded onto a motorised snow-sled and the rest left where they could be retrieved, once the equipment necessary for their transportation had been mobilised.

Within a month, all the urns had arrived in the laboratories of the Dickensen Archaeological and Geophysical Research Institute in Melbourne, Australia, where preliminary investigations were made, together with the first attempt at deciphering the picture writing on the outside surfaces. This proved to be fruitless, for it was unlike any other known form of hieroglyphs, although some of the signs

bore a vague resemblance to those used in ancient Egyptian script, while others seemed to be more closely related to the shapes and forms featured in the Easter Island inscriptions.



After carrying out innumerable tests, the decision was at last taken to open these "Haakon Urns", as they had come to be known. Those without sealed lids only contained stones and a few shards of misshapen, corroded metal that disintegrated at the slightest touch. However, the wax seals on the other 18 urns had perfectly preserved their contents from any deterioration; and what an amazing treasure they had kept intact for so long!

The urns reveal their secrets

Each urn held between 15 and 20 scrolls of a sturdy, pliable substance, individually wrapped in lengths of similar material, although a great deal thinner and coated with what appeared to be a kind of "synthetic" bitumen. This had been remarkably effective in providing additional protection against changes in temperature and humidity. The scrolls themselves were covered with writing similar

to that inscribed on the exterior surfaces of the urns – and equally baffling.

Once all the scrolls had been removed, an even more important discovery was made. Five of the urns were found to be lined with several thin sheets of an unfamiliar metallic material on which many of the hieroglyphic characters were "explained" pictorially. In addition, there were also various examples of character combinations which revealed how complex ideas and messages could be expressed quite easily and with a remarkable economy of language.

These sheets therefore proved to be the Haakon Urns' "Rosetta Stone" and a vital key to interpreting the glyphs, although it was quite clear that fully understanding their content would still be quite a daunting task.

The work of transliteration and translation was carried out by teams of experts from the Dickensen Institute, backed by a number of students from the Department of Antiquities, Macquarie University, NSW, Australia.

As work progressed, it soon became apparent that the information contained in the urns was likely to change the conventional view of human prehistory. The scientific fraternity had always denied any highly developed civilisations could possibly predate those of Mesopotamia and Egypt some 6,000 years ago. Yet these texts provided irrefutable proof to the contrary.

There were some two dozen distinctly different documents altogether, relating the history of several cultures which flourished during a period spanning approximately 5,000 years. Unfortunately, it was impossible to pinpoint exactly how long before our own era this might have been, since the materials and inks used to produce the manuscripts were either entirely non-organic or (more likely) beyond the range of conventional Carbon-14 dating[7].

[7] **Radiocarbon dating** is a radiometric dating technique using the decay of Carbon-14 to estimate the age of organic materials such as wood and leather, up to about

The urns also contained innumerable other writings of immense interest; copies of charters, proclamations, books of law and poems. The work of deciphering was slow, given the limitations of our modern tongue beside that of the ancient writing which contained over 2,000 different symbols and another 5,000 regularly recurring symbol-combinations. In addition, several of these were often strung together to form even more concept structures.

However, even though it could not be completed, most of the material relating to the era described in the three volumes of "Zandernatis" (the most important document being the "*Song of Gorin*") had been transcribed by the end of 1970. This result was achieved thanks to the tireless efforts of Professor P. G. Harkwood, who chaired the Editorial Committee, together with Professor James Gregson of Melbourne University and Professor Ian Durham, from the Edinburgh Institute of Ancient Linguistic and Hieroglyphic Studies.

Acknowledgement is also due to all the staff of the Dickensen Institute, as well as to Dr Arnold J. Hanwell who came to Australia from the Cleveland Research Centre to give his invaluable advice on the work of piecing together the puzzle of this vast and complex sequence of events.

Making the findings public

Once all these stages had been completed, decisions had to be taken as to how this particular body of work was to be presented. Three members of the Editorial Committee (Professor Gregson, Dr. Hanwell and Professor Durham) strongly favoured making the epic story as accessible as possible by "retelling" it, almost as if it were a work of fiction. However, the Committee's fifth member, William Tarford Sn., had some misgivings, fearing this kind of approach might

60,000 years. Beyond that date the technique is ineffective. Since its introduction, it has been used to date many items, including samples of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Shroud of Turin, etc.

undermine the scientific credibility of everything they had achieved. Professor Harkwood shared his view and was in fact vehemently opposed to such an idea. He insisted that information on research of this nature should be limited to members of the scientific and archaeological community in University Departments and Institutes dedicated to the study of ancient civilisations.

Professor Gregson and his two fellow Committee members argued on the importance of presenting these findings to the general public, since they contained so much important information about the actual origins of the human race. In addition, they revealed the sources of many myths and legends which have subsequently been handed down from one generation to the next throughout succeeding ages. He maintained this approach was the only possible one to adopt and, since three out of the five Editorial Committee members favoured it, he took the initiative to proceed with plans to publish the findings in this "retold" format. He supervised the work in his own department of Melbourne University – without officially informing Professor Harkwood.

Rival standpoints

The colossal task of transposing the "*Song of Gorin*" and associated manuscripts was entrusted to a drafting team of specialised researchers and students. Their work was then adapted and "retold" by Gordon Keirle-Smith, with the aim of making it more appealing to a wider audience. The resulting three volumes of "Zandernatis" were completed in 1974 and scheduled for publication the following year.

In the meantime, Professor Harkwood had been fully absorbed in preparing scientific papers on the various documents, working in close collaboration with Professor Tarford. They were aiming to provide a comprehensive overview of all the documents found in the Urns. Consequently, their work was still at a very early stage when Professor Gregson, his drafting team and Gordon Keirle-

Smith announced they were ready to publish the first edition of "Zandernatis".

When Professor Harkwood finally learned of what had been going on "behind his back", his fury knew no bounds. He denounced the work carried out by Professor Gregson and his "populist sensation-seekers", accusing them of wanting to grab the headlines and steal a march on the methodical, painstaking scientific research he was carrying out.

Professor Gregson defended his approach, replying that the members of the editorial team involved in this initiative knew they were laying themselves wide open to criticism from all quarters, and particularly from the scientific community. Nonetheless, he insisted that, *"The aim is to bring news of these astounding revelations to as many readers as possible. For although 'Zandernatis' can only present a small fragment of the material discovered in 1962, we fervently believe it is our duty to bring the truths revealed by these writings into the public arena."*

"Zandernatis" – retelling our Genesis

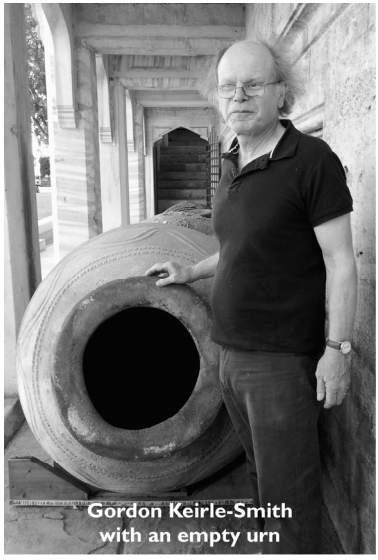
The "Zandernatis" Trinity (Genesis Antarctica) was therefore designed to tell the human race about its true origins, back in the time when we were just setting out on the path of growth, learning and adaptation through the process of evolution.

It is also important for us to remember that without the formative millennia of this remote epoch, preceding all others on the planet, our legends, traditions and heritage from the long-lost past would not be as we know them today. Indeed, but for the events described in these writings, we might have developed along considerably different lines and never known the benefits of advancement we enjoy in our time.

This narrative has been prepared with the aim of redressing the balance in our view of legendary prehistory, on which later civilisations were founded, with many of their strengths and

weaknesses having their roots in those very early days. **Readers have the choice of accepting or rejecting the alternative truths revealed by the Haakon Urn writings.** This being said**,** it is hoped that however readers may react to these revelations, they will find much in them which is stimulating and thought-provoking. Perhaps the content will even open up their minds to an experience of "The Dreaming" such as inspired the heroes of this saga to fulfil their destiny.

Additional note for the Trinity edition


Gordon Keirle-Smith with an empty urn

As we all now know, in the end, most of the hopes expressed in the original introduction above proved impossible to realise at the time, due to the concerted and determined efforts of the Editorial Committee's Chairman to keep the current retelling of this epic story out of the public domain. Professor Harkwood had considerable influence among members of the Australian Judiciary and saw to it that his version of the findings was the only one to be published, and then only for experts and researchers of like mind. He also successfully managed to ridicule the efforts of Professor Gregson and his team and keep the real implications of these writings away from the mass media.

Needless to say, the dramatic events of 1976 did bring the Haakon Urns, their unique provenance and the writings they contained, back into the media spotlight for a short time. However, the story was soon crowded out of the news columns and

broadcasts by other, more headline-grabbing events, such as aircraft hijackings, tornados in Iowa and the Soweto uprising…

It is fortunate this particular body of work was saved so that it could finally be published five decades after the Urns were discovered and make its invaluable contribution to our collective memory. "Genesis Antarctica" stands as a tribute to the remarkable dedication of the highly talented people who devoted so much effort to the original publication plan from 1962 to 1974. It has been similarly well served by all those who have been working for the past 18 months to ensure that this gargantuan – and controversial – project could finally be completed.

We must of course particularly thank Professor Gregson for his selfless dedication and determination in overcoming the many obstacles that have prevented this work from being published until now.

Ancillary material

In addition to retelling the "Song of Gorin" as originally intended, this Trinity edition also includes a selection of supplementary material from a variety of sources gathered over the past 40 years (see following section). These include information about those involved in the discovery, articles from the press, transcripts of interviews, insights by experts into what these revelations can teach us and fascinating ways of discovering personal memories of that distant past.

The material has been added to help readers grasp the full implications of this monumental discovery and help them overcome any lingering doubts they may have as to its authenticity.

II - Documentation, Insights and Transcriptions

In order to fully understand the truly momentous importance of the writings discovered in Antarctica in 1962, the Editorial Committee preparing the 2014 edition decided to adopt a multiple-faceted and comprehensively broad approach to this work.

This initial volume of "Genesis Antarctica" (Pre-Destination) therefore provides readers with:

1. **Documentation** relating to the scientific and archaeological aspects of the find **(I)**, as well as details of the Wilkes Station personnel, the expeditionary party and the various other teams who worked on the project at the Dickensen Research Institute in Melbourne. These included the hieroglyphologists, translators, members of the Editorial Committee and the "re-teller" of the epic narrative **(VIII).**
2. **Extracts** of media coverage relating to the find and transliteration/retelling project on BBC Radio 4 **(IV)** and in the international press **(VI).**
3. **Articles** by eminent specialists covering such issues as legends and their relationship to the present **(XII),** the "areligionist" society that makes this civilisation totally unique in world history **(XVI)** and the role played by past life memory research in establishing tangible links with the pivotal events of this epoch **(XVII).**

4. **Lists** of events and resources: A Chronology of the Zandernation Kings **(XIV)** and a comprehensive Bibliography of the most important documents contained in the Haakon Urns **(Appendix).**

5. **Retelling** by Gordon Keirle-Smith of passages from the epic narrative poem "*The Song of Gorin*", one of the most fascinating and revealing documents found in the Urns (**III, V, VII, IX, XI, XIII** and **XV**). This ground-breaking body of work **spread over three volumes** gives us an amazing insight into the Zandernation civilisation's origins, its strengths and weaknesses and one of the most crucial challenges it had to face in its 3,000 year history. Readers may be surprised to discover that this narrative could appear to have been taken straight out of a fantasy novel, particularly at the very beginning when it has a distinctively "mythical" air to it. We should not let this mislead us. For there can be no doubt that, given the immense age of these documents, the context in which they were found and their unchallengeable authenticity, this epic narrative must be considered **a factual account** of events taking place during these distant times. Events which subsequently became absorbed into our collective unconsciousness to re-emerge tens of thousands of years later in our **folklore, sagas and sacred texts**.

   This is why we can state with such conviction that **Zandernatis** really was **"Where Legends Were Born",** and why **"Genesis Antarctica"** is such a **viable alternative** to accepted accounts of human pre-history**.**

III - The Awakening

"The Beginning was Conception,
of all things and formless,
being and creating of Itself,
one essence, one vision
and one power.

Book of Magres, Aeon I, Age I, Chap. I, v. i

From "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 14-31

Gorin regained consciousness slowly, his senses gathering together one after the other as if breathed into him by the wind.

He became aware of the unyielding rock he was lying on and the warm sun beating down on him.

He moved his hand to one side and felt the roughness of the stone and the warmth it held. He touched the small tufts of grass eking out a bare existence in the tiny hollows where a little earth had collected and the dampness sustaining them. There was the delicate fragrance of wild flowers in the air, brought to him on the gentle, caressing breeze.

He lay immobile for several moments, as a strange sensation of incomprehension began to steal over him. Where was he? How did he come to be there? He must have been asleep for a long time to feel so confused… Just be patient, he thought. Everything would come flooding back in a minute... But it did not.

At last, he opened his eyes and tried to sit up. Only to discover his limbs would not obey him; they were stiff and tired as if they had lain in the same position for many, many hours on end. He managed to roll over onto his side and look out at the world surrounding him.

Then he knew that however he had come to this place, and the circumstances involved, were all far beyond his grasp. Simply because the landscape he now saw spread out before him was quite alien to anything in his conscious memory.

Nevertheless, he marvelled at the spectacle, for its sheer beauty was breathtaking. Particularly for someone with no previous recollections of such splendour.

He was lying on a rocky piece of ground inclined towards the edge of what appeared to be a precipice, some ten measures[8] distant. On either side, tall pine trees reared up like sentinels, guarding the place where he lay. A mass of green undergrowth flourished around their roots and amidst it, he could see the blues and yellows of the flowers whose scent had come to him on the breeze.

Then his attention became focused on what lay beyond his immediate surroundings, as he struggled to take in an apparition of such wonder he did not know whether to believe in it as reality or as part of a dream. Yet the vision, if such it was, persisted. If anything, it became clearer as his eyes adjusted to the light.

They were mountains, he was practically certain. Lofty, white-capped peaks rearing into the sky with awe-inspiring defiance and majesty. Yet how did he know they were called

[8] The unit of measurement used throughout the original documents has been maintained in this retelling of the narrative. In so far as can be determined (resulting from a considerable body of research) each of these measures would appear to approximately equal 1.15 of our present-day metres, so that the long-distance unit of "one thousand measures" is equal to about 1.15 kilometres. JG

"mountains"? Come to that, how did he know he was called "Gorin"? For a moment his head swam in even greater bewilderment. The known and the unknown… The mystery of before and the unknowing of now… But there was one thing he was absolutely certain of. This was the first time he had ever seen "mountains" in such detail, so close at hand. And he marvelled at them.

They were magnificent, standing in a blue diaphanous haze on the far side of a broad, verdant valley. The bright sun glittering on the jagged icy peaks made the whole range sparkle with a magical fire that sent shivers down his spine. It was difficult to believe in such beauty outside the unreality of a dream. Yet the more he gazed in wonderment, the more certain he became of his wakeful state.

Gorin lay enraptured by the mountains for some while before he made another effort to raise himself from the ground. This time he was more successful, finally managing to haul himself into a sitting position. He surveyed the scene again. Everything was very still. The only sound came from the gentle movement of the air rustling the leaves and branches of the nearby trees. There was no sign of any animal or human life; only the bare rock, the trees and the valley, those glorious mountains, the vault of clear blue sky and the bright sunlight.

With a tremendous effort, Gorin tried to make sense of it all, desperately trying to recall what brought him to this hillside in the middle of nowhere for no apparent reason. But it was useless. In fact, the more he tried to remember, the more he discovered enormous gaps in his recollection of facts and circumstances that should have been part of him. Such as who he was – other than his name being Gorin. It seemed to be almost the only thing he could be really sure of. Gorin... Gorin...

What did the name mean? Where did it come from? He even started wondering if he had gone mad, and although he found it difficult to accept such an idea, he could see no other explanation for this terrifying and unreal situation. Did he have any family? If so, where did they live? Where had he been born? Could he be the last man alive in this land? Or perhaps the first? The more he asked these questions, the more he began to panic as full realisation of his impossible predicament began to dawn.

He had to move. Explore. Gritting his teeth against the pain from his protesting body, he managed to struggle to his feet at last and stagger to the limit of the rocky clearing where he had been lying. He followed the line of trees until he came to the place where the ground fell sharply away from the gently sloping rock. He looked down and saw he was on the edge of a cliff. It formed the shoulder of the valley, beyond which gently rolling plains lead towards the foothills of the mountains less than fifteen thousand measures distant. Beneath him was a sheer drop of nearly twenty-five measures to the forest floor below. There, a carpet of lush foliage stretched away to the banks of a river that could be seen glinting between the leaves as it wound away out of sight.

Gorin's head started spinning, and for a second he feared he might lose his balance and tumble towards the luxuriant canopy beneath. He stepped back from the precipice in alarm, closed his eyes and took several deep breaths.

At that moment, all other thoughts were dismissed from his mind by the sound of wings beating on air and approaching fast. He opened his eyes and turned to see a large, falcon-like bird flying towards him from the direction of the trees. It let out a strange cry and flew around him calling all the time as if to tell him something - or signal his presence to others. Then, as suddenly as it had come, it flew high into the air and

disappeared into the topmost branches of the trees. Silence returned. Even the gentle wind had dropped. Suddenly, it seemed as if the whole world were waiting for something to happen.

In Paradise groves

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 31-49

Gorin returned from the edge of the precipice to the place where he had woken up, looking all around him and then at the ground, vainly hoping he might have overlooked something that would give him a clue as to how, or why, he had come there. Then, as he bent down to examine the rock more closely, he heard a sound, very far off, echoing through the trees. He looked up, sharpening all his senses.

At first it sounded like irregular thuds on a primitive drum, or else several heavy stakes being hammered into the earth at once. Yet it was neither of these, for as the sounds drew nearer, he realised they were of much greater complexity - more like the rhythm of dancing feet on hard, dry ground. Mingled with it came the occasional sound of laughing, rather high-pitched voices, and then some of them would sing a few lines of doggerel before lapsing once more into gay chatter;

> "*In Paradise groves where the grape vine grows,*
> *Dance Harelops drinking the wine that flows.*
> *Ours is the music, ours is the mirth,*
> *And all the pleasures of being on Earth.*"
>
> *Ballads of Adoration XXXIV, verse XI*[9]

[9] ***Editor's note***: The actual verses Gorin heard were not included in the original "*Song of Gorin*" text. Those shown here – and elsewhere throughout the book – come from other documents found in the Haakon Urns.

The sounds and the singing grew steadily nearer and louder. Initially, Gorin was uncertain as to what he should do. Perhaps it would be more prudent to hide until he could see who, or what, was making so much noise. There again, moments before he'd been thinking he might be the only creature in the world! So he should be relieved to discover he obviously wasn't. But supposing these newcomers didn't take kindly to him? Supposing they wanted to know what he was doing there? How could he answer them if he didn't know himself?

Before he had any more time to think, the undergrowth on the left of the clearing parted and the source of all the thumping, singing, laughing and chatter came into view. As soon as Gorin's presence was noticed, the clamour stopped and he found himself the object of bewildered scrutiny. Not however, as great as the bewilderment with which Gorin stared back at the group of bizarre creatures that had come upon him. They could not be described as men. Neither could they exactly be classed as animals.

To Gorin's confused mind, they seemed to be somewhere between the two. They were about one and a half measures high, so rather shorter than he was, and had the torsos and heads of men with rather pointed faces, small mouths and large brown eyes. They did however have grey fur on their heads instead of hair and long, dangling furry ears that brushed against their shoulders. Their arms were also slightly furry, but ended in distinctly human-looking hands. Then, below the waist, all similarity to humans ended - for they had white and

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Passages have been chosen to reflect the mood of the context in which they appear.

grey furry thighs and long, flat hocks; presumably responsible for all the thumping on the ground.[10]

However, Gorin was in no mood to decide exactly which species had spawned these creatures; it was enough for him to take in their appearance and the fact that there were more of them than he could comfortably deal with if they became hostile. So he stood his ground and waited to see what their next move would be before deciding on his own course of action.

The company of Harelops

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 49-58

One of these half hare, half human creatures turned to the others and began whispering to them excitedly. Whatever he said appeared to have been well received, for they all laughed and nodded their heads. Some of them even began leaping up and down in glee, causing their long ears to flap wildly in the air, while at the same time their feet and hocks beat out a rhythm on the ground making the whole forest tremble. While this was going on, Gorin had a chance to examine the creatures more closely, and once the initial shock was over he was relieved to see they did not appear to be

[10] The characteristics of these creatures - and all others mentioned in "Genesis Antarctica" - are based on the descriptions found in "*Species, Races and Peoples*", cataloguing all the creatures inhabiting the continent in pre-glacial times (see Appendix). In the case of the initially improbable "Harelop" hare/human hybrids, researchers have recently found many genetic similarities between humans and hares/rabbits. So many in fact, that research work is currently underway all over the world aimed at developing **human-rabbit embryos** as **a source of stem cells** to **cure many human diseases**. A fact which means fully developed hybrids would not have been "inconceivable" at a time when evolution was still feeling its way. JG

threatening in any way at all. In fact, they looked rather endearing.

There were about ten in the party and four of them were carrying musical instruments of some kind, three of which looked like harps, while the fourth appeared to be a long, thin flute. The creature who had so far done most of the talking then nodded his head, turned towards Gorin and began to approach him, while the rest of the company jabbered nervously among themselves. He came within a few paces of Gorin, stopped and then bowed very low, causing his long floppy ears to swing forwards almost comically, before addressing him in a thin, but reassuring tone of voice.[11]

"Greetings, fair Sir," he said. "We are honoured to have come upon you. I am Feldoc, captain of the Harelops in this part of the Garden. Might we be so privileged as to invite you to visit with us in our bower? It is rare for strangers to be among us in these days."

Gorin, still somewhat confused, agreed to go with them and having done so, the others gathered around, still whispering excitedly to each other as they led him off into the

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[11] An article published in "**The Daily Telegraph"** reports an incident in 2012 which adds further credibility to these creatures:

The Daily Telegraph **19 November 2012**

NAMIBIAN media report a strange "hybrid" beast has been shot dead after a group came across several of the creatures in dense jungle.

Locals came across the bizarre half-rabbit / half-human being while escorting a shooting party in Namibia, local media reported. Witnesses state the creature was apparently foraging for food. One of the shooting party wounded it and it escaped into the thick brush. Locals tracked it to a nearby lair or nest where they found three more creatures of similar size.

The wounded creature attacked one of the shooting party and was shot dead, The others escaped into the brush.

The body was taken back to the local camp, police later removed it and a full forensics investigation is under way.

forest. They proved to be very gentle creatures after all, and despite their curious appearance he soon lost all fear of them. They began to laugh again and then sing, accompanying themselves on the instruments they were carrying:

> "*Hail to the mornings that follow the dawn,*
> *Spirits of light in each moment born,*
> *Bursting with sunrise we welcome the birth*
> *Of the day-long pleasures of being on Earth.*"
>
> *Ballads of Adoration XXII, verse X*

It was haunting music, evoking spirits, sprites and all the forces of Nature. The words and melodies were so lilting and harmonious, that before very long Gorin was singing along with his new-found friends. Then, as they penetrated deeper and deeper into the forest with its abundant undergrowth, some of the Harelops gathered wild, heavily scented flowers and made them into a garland. They then placed it reverentially about their guest's neck in a token of friendship, further reassuring Gorin of their sincerity.

After they had travelled almost a thousand measures through the verdant forest, Gorin noticed the plants and trees around them were subtly changing. The lofty pines like those he had first seen on the rocky hillside where he woke up were now thinning out. To be replaced by trees growing broad, thickly veined and much more vividly coloured leaves with serrated edges. He then realised their winding path through the lush vegetation had been gradually leading them downwards, taking them some considerable way below the level of the cliff. This became apparent as they emerged into a clearing and caught a glimpse of the pine trees, high up on the hillside away to the right.

Gorin's attention was suddenly diverted from his immediate surroundings by a burst of happy laughter from a glade of trees up ahead. It was quickly followed by more voices raised in song. They were obviously approaching some kind of encampment, for the smoke of a wood fire was rising lazily above the treetops. He also noted that the path leading into the leafy shadows was well marked and obviously frequently used.

Drawing closer to the bower, Feldoc and his companions became more subdued as they came to a sombre pathway, dimmed by a trelliswork of intertwining branches over their heads. Gorin then discovered that, despite appearing so gloomy from outside, they could in fact see reasonably well by the light filtering down through the leaves above. Even so, he began to feel a little uneasy in the green, eerie twilight. Where were they taking him? Could it all be as real as it seemed…? In an instant, Feldoc was at his side, whispering in his slightly squeaky, but nonetheless soothing voice. "There is nothing to fear. You need not be afraid of this place, nor of us. Come, let me guide you."

So saying, he took Gorin by the hand and led him along the tree-lined path. Suddenly, there was a movement in the dense undergrowth to their left and, appearing as if from nowhere, a huge stag with a magnificent head of antlers emerged from the bushes. Instinctively, Gorin expected it to dart away again. Instead, the noble creature slowly approached them, proudly tossing its antlers as Feldoc greeted the beast as if they were the greatest friends in the world. Which indeed they were.

"Hail, Noble Shimla," he said. "See who we found in the Pine Hills today!"

The great stag nosed towards Gorin and examined him closely from head to toe. Then it stepped back, making a

strange noise through its nostrils and tossing its mighty antlers in the air again. Gorin had the feeling Feldoc was expecting the creature to make some kind of comment, but instead it turned away and went off ahead of them, disappearing once more into the undergrowth. This seemed to puzzle the Harelops a little and they all went along in silence for a moment until the sound of more merriment from the bower ahead of them burst out again, now much closer.

The Bower of Earthly Delights

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 58-68

Emerging from the profusion of trees and shrubs at last, Gorin and his companions came to a spacious grove in the very heart of the forest. It was little brighter than the pathway had been, except for the light given out by a large fire in the centre of the clearing. All around it were ranged low couches covered with beds of down and a series of long, narrow tables. Weaving in and out amongst them were groups of dancing Harelops, all of them thumping on the ground as was their custom, this time to a steady beat. They sang as they whirled around the leaping flames of the fire, their light treble voices rising and falling to the same melodious tune Feldoc and the others had been singing;

> "*Hail to the round on Paradise ground,*
> *Enhancing the dance that ever will sound,*
> *In time our eternity cannot measure*
> *On the Earth that gives us its endless pleasure.*"
>
> *Ballads of Adoration XXII, verse XIV*

The movement of the dancers, the words and music of their song and the warmth of the fire all had a lulling, hypnotic effect upon Gorin. It held him rooted to the spot for some

moments while he tried to take in everything going on about him. Until Feldoc touched his arm lightly and guided him to one of the beds, inviting him to recline upon it.

As he did so, some of the other Harelops came to him bearing huge trays of luscious, multicoloured fruits he could put no name to. The entire company then greeted him warmly, presenting him with more garlands to wear around his neck and vine leaves to adorn his hair.

As they honoured and welcomed him with this engaging ritual, they continued singing, putting new words of welcome to their lilting melody for the benefit of their newfound guest:

> *"Well met midst the children of Harelops born,*
> *Gathered like dew in the day-dawn morn.*
> *We sing you the hymn of the joy that flows*
> *Through the pleasures of Earth to the Earth's repose."*
>
> *Ballads of Adoration XXXIV, verse XXI*

Suddenly, the singing stopped. Feldoc then stood on one of the tables and began speaking to the assembled Harelops who listened to him attentively. He spoke of the harvest, of the good things of Earth, of the life they lived in Paradise and the good creatures who were their friends. He praised their music and their song and invited all of them to join with him in celebrating the fertility of the seasons.

He also spoke of the surfeit they had and with what pleasure they looked forward to sharing it with their guest from the hills. Gorin realised this was obviously some kind of special festival and he was regarded as coming from the Earth as well, just to take part in this feast. Well, for all he knew, he did. He certainly had no better explanation for being there!

When Feldoc had finished speaking, he got down from the table, took a horn from one of his companions and blew a great

blast on it. This was evidently the signal for the festivities to begin anew; all the Harelops began chattering together again as the trays of fruit were loaded onto the tables. Wine was poured into stone goblets and a wave of delight ran through each one of them as they toasted the fruitfulness of Nature.

As the revels continued, Gorin was attended by groups of Harelop maidens who looked very similar to their malefolk apart from having more delicately featured faces – and small, but perfectly rounded, human-looking breasts. They fed him with grapes and raised cups of wine to his lips again and again until he began to feel a little dizzy.

It was so relaxing by the fire, the rich, red wine so warming and the young doe-maidens so delicate, graceful and enticing. At least they were if you could ignore their furry hind quarters and large white bobtails. But after a while they did not seem so unusual to Gorin. Indeed, they looked extremely natural as they darted about like young gazelles. They were capable of leaping high into the air while they made the rounds of their dances, displaying such charm and elegance that Gorin began to find his own limbs strange and ungainly.

The singing, feasting and dancing went on far into the night, and still there was no lack of fruit or wine or song. After so much celebration, Gorin's eyes finally became heavy and he could scarcely keep awake any longer. Feldoc came towards him and asked if he had enjoyed the festivities, to which he drowsily replied that indeed he had.

The Harelop smiled and then signalled to two of his fellows to make their guest comfortable. This they did by pulling a cover of interwoven fronds over him, arranging a soft downy pillow beneath his head and generally making sure he would be able to sleep peacefully. The music died away, the fire sank back into smouldering embers and he fell into a deep, dreamless unconsciousness.

IV - Compiling and "Retelling" the oldest story in history

Transcript of an interview with Gordon Keirle-Smith
conducted by John Timton for BBC Radio 4's "Today Programme" on
Tuesday 21 May, 1974.

John Timton: Gordon Keirle-Smith, you have recently completed the compilation and "retelling" of a rather important book which seems to be creating a lot of controversy at the moment. Can you tell us about it?
Gordon Keirle-Smith: Yes, the book is called "Zandernatis". And as you say, it "retells" a narrative drawn from the ancient manuscripts discovered in Antarctica by an Australian-led expedition 12 years ago.
JT: Who wrote these manuscripts? And how old are they?
GK-S: They appear to have been written by many different authors over a period of about 3,000 years. Exactly when this was, we can't tell. But by all accounts, it must be many thousands of years in the past, or even tens of thousands…
JT: And that's one of the reasons these writings, and your account of them, are so controversial, I believe.
GK-S: Yes. Conventional science refuses to believe an advanced civilisation could have existed on Antarctica - or anywhere else for that matter - so long before the Sumerians, the Mayans and the ancient Egyptians…
JT: What else is it about these writings that seems to be stirring up so much dissent?

GK-S: To start with, they appear to challenge many of the fundamental teachings found in sacred texts like the Torah, the Bible and the Koran.
JT: How do they do that?
GK-S: Simply by predating all of them. And apparently providing the original foundations from which several of our major religions developed. They also imply that many of the images and symbols we find in folklore and legend are actually based on reality.
JT: Can you give us a few examples?
GK-S: To begin with, there is the factual and detailed description of what is called the Paradise Garden, the way it was organised, the harmony…
JT: But surely that's all metaphorical…
GK-S: I'm afraid it isn't. Everything points to this having been a very pragmatic civilisation. Making us certain the Garden described in the original Haakon texts did in fact inspire the Garden of Eden we find in Genesis, written several tens of thousands of years later…
JT: I see. And what about the hybrid creatures we find in the opening pages of "Pre-Destination". Are we supposed to take them literally as well?
GK-S: I don't see why not. We believe the "Song of Gorin", on which most of these three volumes has been based, is a factual narrative. Just as accurate as any of the purely historical documents found in the Urns[12].
JT: Come on, Mr Keirle-Smith, you must admit all this sounds a bit fanciful and naive… People aren't going to take you seriously…
GK-S: You're quite right. They're bound to think we're utter cranks at first… But we're not afraid of that. Once people see

[12] See this book's Appendix for a complete bibliography of all the documents contained in the Haakon Urns when they were discovered in 1962.

the original texts for themselves and read the transcriptions, they'll find it very difficult to discount them out of hand.
JT: But what makes you so certain these *are* factual records and not just earlier versions of the same legends we're already familiar with?
GK-S: The reason we're so sure about this isn't because of anything actually in the texts. It's more based on what they *don't* contain.
JT: Would you mind clarifying that?
GK-S: You see, unlike all other ancient writings dating back to earlier civilisations, there are virtually no references in the Haakon texts to mythology or deities of any kind. Practically all the documents are either purely historical, or describe the way Zandernatis, the Golden City, was governed.
JT: But what about this "Song of Gorin" you were talking about…?
GK-S: There are a few exceptions. Including some collections of ballads and two epic poems; the "Song of the Heroes" and the "Song of Gorin". These are sagas describing key periods in the City's history in a way that made them easier to understand. But that doesn't stop them being historically accurate.
JT: Why not? Couldn't they be idealised, sacred texts full of symbolism, about spiritual leaders… Gods…?
GK-S: It doesn't seem likely. Because as I said, in contrast with every civilisation that came after, any notions of God or Gods as such seemed to be entirely absent from their culture.
JT: You mean Zandernatis was a society without a religion…?
GK-S: Apparently. It was areligious because they didn't actually *need* a religion. There were the "Lord Protectors", historically responsible for creating the City, and these were seen to be more highly evolved. But they felt no need to "invent" any superior beings who needed to be appeased or petitioned in times of hardship.

JT: That's rather unusual isn't it?
GK-S: Unique. As I said before, this was a very matter-of-fact society, and it's why we're convinced the two "Songs" must also be factual, even if they were written in a semi-poetic style.
JT: What about when people died? Did they believe in an afterlife? That usually involves some kind of religion.
GK-S: Invariably, yes. But not in this case. For them, death was just part of the process of moving on, getting a new body and being able to continue enjoying the good things of life.
JT: You mean they believed in reincarnation?
GK-S: I wouldn't say "belief" had anything to do with it… They just "knew" it to be a fact of life.
JT: Did they now? Well… you might come up against a bit of opposition on that score, Mr. Keirle-Smith.
GK-S: Oh, I know. But we can't just sit on this kind of knowledge. It's part of our racial heritage and people should be made aware of it… So that's what we're trying to do.
JT: Yes, um… Anyway, how did you become involved in this project?
GK-S: The first I heard about it was in 1969, when Professor James Gregson, who was on the Editorial Committee, got in touch with me and told me what he was working on.
JT: Why did he call you?
GK-S: Actually, James and I were at Oxford together, and we've kept more or less in touch ever since. Anyway, he said he'd been following my career with interest…
JT: You are also a visionary artist, I believe.
GK-S: I was. In my twenties I used to paint highly symbolic pictures and was actually quite successful. But I later realised I was really better at describing my allegorical visions in words rather than in paint. And so I literally threw myself into writing: plays, novels, articles… covering a huge range of subjects.
JT: A long way from visionary art, then.

GK-S: Some of it was, yes. But having worked in so many different fields, I could engage with a very wide audience. Professor Gregson - and his committee - wanted someone on a visionary wavelength who also had the writing skills needed to tell a story quite unlike any other. And of course I jumped at the opportunity.

JT: So what exactly was your role?

GK-S: The transliteration team, headed by the famous Egyptian hieroglyphologist Muminah al-Ubaydli from the Griffith Institute, Oxford, worked on deciphering the Haakon texts and producing "raw translations".

JT: Meaning?

GK-S: More or less literal texts that would be virtually incomprehensible to an uninformed reader. My job was to transform these cryptic fragments into a narrative that would entertain, intrigue and inform many different types of people on a variety of different levels. (*Editor's note: See a short sample of "raw translation" and how Gordon Keirle-Smith transformed it into readable narrative below).*

JT: And it was this approach that upset a lot of people?

GK-S: Oh yes. Two members of the Editorial Committee – including the Chairman - were absolutely dead against what they called "popularising" the research.

JT: Why was that?

GK-S: They only wanted the findings to be published in scientific papers to be studied by specialists. But Professor Gregson argued the findings were so sensational the press would be bound to pick up the story at some point anyway and "popularise" it in their own inimitable way. It was obviously better for us to beat them to it.

JT: And the controversy hasn't been resolved I believe. There's still a lot of opposition to the findings being published in this form.

GK-S: Yes, and a certain number of religious figures are against the idea as well, particularly fundamentalists. But we are hoping to finally bring it out sometime next year.
JT: Well, I'm afraid we're running out of time now, but I'm sure we're all very much looking forward to that. Thank you, Mr Keirle-Smith. Now it's time to go over to the Weather Centre for a look at what we can expect in the course of…

Editor's note: *In fact, "Zandernatis" was not published in 1975 as planned due to sustained opposition from the Chairman of the Editorial Committee, as well as from political and religious pressure groups. They did not want to see "traditional" beliefs challenged, fearing it could undermine the fabric of society. Publication has only been made possible now, 40 years later, following the death of Professor Harkwood in December 2012 and the fact that leaks of this discovery and its implications have now been extensively reported – and misreported – on the Internet.*

Sample of "raw translation"	**"Retold" text by Gordon Keirle-Smith**
"Initial Steps Cosmipotos, all items of unshape property, To be create introspect Single source, idea and strong overall." *Book of Magres Chap. I v.i*	*The Beginning was Cosmipotos of all things and formless, being and creating of Itself, one essence, one conception and one power."* *Book of Magres Chap. I v.i*
Gorin slow return to knowing. Mindforms to collect one and another as wind blows. Realize unshakable rock, put in sun and heat to knock down of it.	Gorin regained consciousness slowly, his senses gathering together one after the other as if breathed into him by the wind. He became aware of the unyielding rock he was lying on and the warm sun beating down on him.

Hold hand to side, feel harsh stones, to stay at temperature.	He moved his hand to one side and felt the roughness of the stone and the warmth it held.
Touch small bundle herbs proven holes existing, In places where water holds.	He touched the small tufts of grass eking out a bare existence in the tiny hollows where a little earth had collected and the dampness that sustained them.
Gentle nose wildflower. On soft wind. Carried. To light touch.	There was the delicate fragrance of wild flowers in the air, brought to him on the gentle, caressing breeze…
To lay so for time. Strange. No understanding. Gaining ground.	He lay immobile for several moments, as a strange sensation of incomprehension began to steal over him.
Where I am. Where here to come from.	Where was he? How did he come to be there?
To believe disorder regular from to sleep and wake. All is to come back at once. Is not to be.	He must have been asleep for a long time to feel so confused… Just be patient, he thought… Everything would come flooding back in a minute... But it did not.
Eyes to end open. To sit vertical.	At last, he opened his eyes and tried to sit up.

Legs silent. Tired to unbend. Much, much of time to be still.	Only to discover his limbs would not obey him; they were stiff and tired as if they had lain in the same position for many, many hours on end.
Wheel to roll difficulty edgeways. To look upon what about. The world.	He managed to roll over onto his side and look out at the world surrounding him.
Then know how to come place now. All too far to reach in.	Then he knew that however he had come to this place, and the circumstances involved, were all far beyond his grasp.
Just as countryside display so foreign everything in mind recalling.	Simply because the landscape he now saw spread out before him was quite alien to anything in his conscious memory.
But wondered at show. Beautiful no breath taking. And plus for one had no mind before back. To this so beautiful.	Nevertheless, he marvelled at the spectacle, for its sheer beauty was breathtaking. Particularly for someone with no previous recollections of such splendour.

V – The Lord's arbour

"*One into whose hands are given,*
to survey and watch upon
our pastoral Paradise,
given form and being as decreed."

Book of Magres, Aeon I, Age VIII, Chap. II v. xii

From "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 69-76

Gorin awoke to the sound of voices. They were some way off, but one of them was unquestionably that of Feldoc. It was not yet day, but already the first glimmer of dawn was penetrating the leafy canopy overhead. There seemed to be quite a discussion going on, although he could not make out what it was about. Neither could he see who the Harelop captain was talking to, but for some reason he had the feeling that whoever it was had some interest in him. He thought he heard the word "guest" several times, as well as something like the description Feldoc had given of him to the assembled company during his speech. He could not catch any more however, until he heard Feldoc say, "It shall be done."

There was a sudden rustle of leaves and Gorin saw a large, dark shape passing into the forest on the other side of the fire. He thought he recognised it as being that of the great stag they had seen on the journey towards the bower. What had he been discussing with Feldoc? It was hard enough to think of such a creature being able to speak at all, let alone for it to be

concerned with him. But then, he reasoned, how could he possibly think anything was “strange”, since he had no previous experience to compare it with. Still trying to solve this conundrum, he slipped back into his slumbers and did not wake again until the sun was well up and climbing into the morning sky.

When he opened his eyes, Feldoc and two other Harelops were standing by his bed. They asked him if he had rested well and gave him some of their mead - a drink made from nectar and the juice of wild berries. Once Gorin had refreshed himself, Feldoc knelt down and spoke to him in a quiet, almost secretive tone of voice.

"We have to go on a journey today," he said. "We are going to take you to the Lord of the Garden. He has heard of your presence and wishes to see you. But I cannot tell you why.”

Gorin tried to find out more about this Lord of the Garden and what might be behind such a request, but Feldoc had no further information to give him. “It was not revealed to me,” he said, looking genuinely sorry for being unable to help his honoured guest.

He did however add that they saw very little of the Lord these days and it was not usual for him to concern himself with what went on in the Harelops' realm. He implied this meant Gorin must be a very important person indeed, at least in Feldoc's estimation.

Gorin, Feldoc and two of the captain’s Harelop aides set out for the Lord of the Garden’s abode shortly afterwards. At first, the path they took snaked upwards between rocky outcrops, but these were soon replaced by large boulders until eventually they came into a rocky gully. It was no doubt an old watercourse that had at one time wound its way down the hill they were now climbing.

The party continued along the stony path for an hour or more, making good progress, although as it became steeper, Gorin had problems keeping up with his agile companions at times. The three Harelops spoke little during the journey, in complete contrast to the gaiety and liveliness of the night before. When they did exchange a few murmured words, Gorin had the feeling they were talking about him and the possible reasons for this summons from the Lord of the Garden.

Halfway through the morning they stopped briefly to drink some of their mead, which Gorin accepted gladly when they offered him the flask. As he lifted it to his mouth, he looked towards the sky and caught sight of a majestic stag on a rocky outcrop further up the path. It was obviously watching them and he felt certain it was the same creature they had met the day before - and probably the same one that had come into the bower during the night. Feldoc saw it as well and exchanged meaningful glances with the others. He then urged them to get going again and they set off up the steadily climbing path once more.

As soon as they were on the move, the great stag reared its head in the air and disappeared behind the rocks. After that, Gorin remained instinctively aware of its presence, feeling it was never very far away. He supposed it was following them to make sure the journey was completed as soon as possible, although exactly why did of course remain as obscure as ever.

Some two hours after noon, they came to a more level area of ground and were able to make better progress, finally rounding a corner and coming upon the opening of a small cave. They had been heading steadily uphill most of the time, but the rocky walls made it impossible to see exactly how high they had climbed – or where they were in relation to the Harelops' bower. Thinking over everything he had experienced so far, Gorin found it hard to believe it was barely more than

one day since he had regained awareness in this strange new world.

There was little time to ponder however, for almost as soon as they arrived in front of the cave, the stag appeared once again. It stood on the rocks above, lifted its head and bellowed to the skies, before staring down at them with cold, expressionless eyes. Feldoc held its gaze and after some moments turned to Gorin who was waiting beside him, as puzzled as ever by this fresh encounter and the beast's significance.

"You and I are to go in alone," the Harelop informed him, before telling his companions to stay where they were and await his return one hour later.

This made Gorin feel a little uneasy, for it implied he was to stay here with the Lord of the Garden, whoever he might be. Quite apart from not knowing what to expect next, he felt reassured and safe with the Harelops. Given the choice, he would have stayed with them. However, it appeared he had no say in the matter. Feldoc motioned him to follow and led the way towards the mouth of the cave.

At first sight, the rocky opening looked dark and forbidding, but as they neared it, Gorin saw that in fact, it was not a cave at all. It was the entrance to a tunnel burrowing into the rockface. Once inside, where the other two Harelops could no longer see them, Feldoc turned to Gorin and began explaining things to him as best he could.

"Please do not be afraid," he said in his gentle, high-pitched voice. "There is nothing to fear. We have brought you here because the Lord of the Garden has asked to see you. We don't know why, but he is rich in years and infinitely wise. Nothing happens in the Garden without him knowing all about it."

Gorin could well imagine that, if he had many spies like the stag who had been following them everywhere. As if in answer to this thought, Feldoc continued.

"You must not be afraid of Shimla either; he is the Lord's special emissary – his eyes and ears - and has been in the forest ever since I can remember. We brought you here on his instructions, in preparation for the next stage of your journey - to the City of Gold. But with another guide, for we prefer not to venture any further along that road."

Before Gorin could open his mouth to ask Feldoc what he meant by the 'City of Gold', why he was going there and who was going to lead him if the Harelops could not, he was silenced by a gesture from his guide.

"I can tell you no more; for there is much I do not understand or want to understand. We in the Garden are contented, as we have been since our time began, and we do not wish that state of grace to change. Perhaps you are from The City of Gold yourself, or perhaps not… In any case, we do not question Shimla and the commands of Lord Kutjaran. Let us just say we prefer to keep our distance from the City and its people."

It was at least a partial explanation for the Harelops' uncharacteristic behaviour during the journey, but Gorin was none the wiser as regards the rest of Feldoc's explanation. The only light it threw on the matter was that at least someone seemed to have an idea as to where he belonged, although what or where this City of Gold might be remained beyond his grasp.

"We have to keep going," Feldoc continued. "I shall stay with you for a while, but then I must return to our arbour. When the time is right, you will be guided onwards."

So saying, he took Gorin by the arm and led him further along the tunnel. It continued to bend and then suddenly,

ahead of them, they saw daylight reflecting off the rocky wall. Moments later they were able to observe lichen and moss struggling for existence wherever there was sufficient dampness to support them. As they came further round the curve, Gorin saw they were approaching what appeared to be a pleasant, tree-lined glade.

They emerged from the tunnel mouth, coming to a halt in the middle of the clearing, where they could finally appreciate the height they had reached in their long climb up the rocky path. For all around them, between and beyond the trees, vistas of open countryside could be glimpsed stretching as far as the eye could see. The trees themselves were much taller than those of the forest below and their trunks lighter in colour. A rich abundance of grasses and exotic, multicoloured flowers grew about their roots, weighing down the air with a heavy, languorous fragrance.

Gorin stayed a few moments looking about him, trying to make out what he could of the landscape through the trees. This was not easy, for they grew closely together and the undergrowth was high, thick and luxuriant. There was no sign of any Lord either. Except he had not looked behind him, and when Feldoc told him to do so his interest in the surroundings abruptly vanished. To be replaced by a sudden wave of absolute terror, causing a cold sweat to break out over his entire body…

The Lord of the Garden

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 76-87

There, not ten paces away from them, stood an enormous lion! It looked exceedingly powerful and, at first sight, fearsome. The sand-coloured body rippled with muscles and its magnificent mane flared in the gentle breeze, magnifying the creature's imperious head and determined jawline. Gorin's

immediate reaction was to run - but there was nowhere to go, for the lion stood between them and the tunnel mouth. Fearing that at any moment they might be attacked, he looked around desperately for some kind of cover - a tree to climb - or anything.

Gorin then realised the lion was not alone. Standing next to it was a lean, dark skinned hominoid with a proud bearing. He had penetrating brown eyes, thick, silver white hair, a broad nose and wide mouth partially hidden by a full moustache and grey beard flecked with silver. Most of his body was covered by a simple beige robe reaching almost to the ground. His outstretched right hand was fondling one of the lion's ears and part of its mane. Glancing down, Gorin also noticed there were several rather large greenish lizards with bright yellow eyes scuttling around his bare feet.

Feldoc appeared quite unperturbed by the appearance of the lion and watched Gorin's moment of panic with some bewilderment, for he had never seen anyone react like that when confronted with an animal. The lion also looked rather surprised and stepped back a pace or two, inclining its head at an angle to observe Gorin's terrified behaviour more objectively. Feldoc took Gorin's arm, attempting to reassure him, and began speaking.

"Worthy Lord Kutjaran," he began, "please forgive our guest's reaction, but he is not used to the ways of our Paradise Garden. There seem to be many ancient fears still within his soul and I fear he has not had a great deal of time to learn about us."

"Don't worry about Felos, young one," said the hominoid, with a gentle smile revealing a set of perfectly white teeth. "He cannot harm you. There is nothing to fear from any creature living in our Paradise Garden."

Gorin calmed down a little, realising this must be the Lord of the Garden. In fact, he felt rather stupid when he saw the quizzical way the lion was still looking at him. Yet he could not really account for the awful dread he had felt welling up within him - but his instincts were still screaming that such animals were highly dangerous and should be avoided at all costs.

"It is perfectly understandable," said Lord Kutjaran[13]. "Everything you are experiencing is totally new to you. But you will learn fast. Come, let us go to my arbour where we can talk in comfort."

Kutjaran and his feline companion, followed by the scampering lizards who seemed determined to keep as close as possible to their master at all times, turned and headed towards a path Gorin had not noticed before. He and Feldoc followed them up the fairly steep incline until they finally came to a tree-lined and leaf-covered arbour, some ten or fifteen measures above the level of the tunnel mouth. Stepping into it, Gorin was overwhelmed by a profound feeling of peace and wonderment, sensing this was indeed the very heart of Paradise. He looked around, yearning to understand what part he could possibly have to play in events that would concern the Lord of the Paradise Garden! But the soothing, harmonious energies flowing through this unique point in space and time soon began to drain away his anxiety and fear of unknowing as he took in his surroundings.

[13] The Lord of the Garden's name, once transcribed, bears a marked similarity to that of the Australian Aboriginal god Kutjara – (or Waati-Kutjara) who was said to have descended from a mountain in "Dreamtime" (the timeless primordial dream existing before the world began), taught magic to the shamans and created hills and valleys, trees and plants. This similarity suggests an intriguing potential link between Aboriginal mythology and the period covered by the Haakon Urn texts. The mention of lizards in Kutjaran's entourage provides further corroborative proof, since Kutjara was also referred to as a lizard god.

In the centre of the arbour was a throne draped in vine leaves, on which Kutjaran was now sitting. He cut a very regal figure with his noble demeanour, piercing gaze and adoring lion stretched out at his feet. The lizards had gone into hiding underneath their master's robe, only peeking out occasionally to make sure everything was as it should be. The worthy Lord obviously was as old and as wise as Feldoc had described him to be, having reigned over the Garden for as long as anyone could remember, revered and loved by all the creatures in Paradise.

Kutjaran raised a hand, and from the surrounding trees came hosts of attendant creatures bearing trays of fruit and wine. Most of them had human form, but they were considerably smaller than Feldoc or Gorin and were dressed in tunics of green and silver with deep red roses adorning their snow white hair. As they darted around on their various tasks, they sang a lilting, wordless melody, accompanied by a small group of musicians who appeared from behind the throne. Like all the other music Gorin had heard, it was haunting and captivating, the elusive tones and harmonies produced by the simple instruments charming the ear and calming the spirit.

Another of the remarkable features distinguishing this magical place was the way light shone everywhere, emanating from great urns of translucent alabaster standing around the edges of the arbour. A wisp of perfumed vapour rose from them also, filling the air with a fragrance of such delicately abundant sweetness that Gorin soon began to feel a little lightheaded. All fear and apprehension had disappeared from him now and he marvelled at everything he saw.

Other creatures, besides those in human form, were to be seen in the arbour; creatures that to Gorin's mind ought to be as terrified by lions as he had been at first. There were deer, goats, gazelles and other animals he could not recognise. All of

them seemed to be coexisting in a state of absolute contentment however, lying about the foot of the throne without the slightest apparent concern for Felos, Lord Kutjaran or his guests.

Mingling with the music of the little sprite-like creatures, a chorus of birdsong began to fill the air. For a moment everything came together in a glorious hymn to the harmony of this incredible scene, in which all creatures were at peace with one another and where fear was unknown.

Feldoc guided Gorin to a seat at the foot of the throne, and then invited him to sit and share the fruit and wine that was bought to them. Kutjaran also ate the fruit served to him by his attendants and so did all the other creatures gathered about him. It was only as Gorin was finishing his meal, and beginning to feel very warm and contented once more, that Feldoc spoke to him again.

"Now you have seen how we live here in the Paradise Garden, you must learn where you will be going next. This is one of the reasons for bringing you here, for it is the only place with a clear view of your destination, and only Lord Kutjaran can tell you about it or why you are to go there. He will reveal some of that knowledge to us shortly, but only as much as you need to know at this time."

The City of Gold

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 87-101

With the meal finished, Kutjaran stepped down from the throne, beckoning to the others, and led the way through the trees. He was followed by the faithful Felos and the lizards, scurrying along at top speed to keep up with their master's strides. Gorin and Feldoc brought up the rear until they all finally came to a rocky ledge on the side of the mountain. Here the Lord stopped and stood aside for them to

look out across the forest below, towards a massive rounded promontory some twelve or fifteen thousand measures distant.

Standing on this hill, which could not possibly be a natural feature of the landscape, appeared a vision of such wonder that Gorin thought his mind was playing tricks on him. Surely nothing could be so captivatingly beautiful! It had to be a hallucination of some kind... Induced by the wine, or the unfamiliar fruit? He rubbed his eyes and looked again. But it was still there, shimmering in an aura of suffused light.

"The City of Gold," announced Lord Kutjaran solemnly. “Created to be the jewel of the Paradise Garden.”

Gorin remained speechless, contemplating the gleaming vision in awe, marvelling at the City’s elaborate architectural forms, the outer walls, the archways, turrets and soaring towers rising high into the sky. From this distance, the entire structure bathed in its own radiance, further enhanced by the play of sunlight on its glinting spires and resplendent monuments.

"That is where your future lies and perhaps the future of us all,” declared the Lord of the Garden in a low, reverential voice. “It is where you belong now and where you must soon go, although it is not where your true origins lie.”

“Where did I come from then?” asked Gorin, hoping the disturbing gap in his memory might finally be filled by an explanation from the Lord, who could surely throw some light on the mystery.

“That, I cannot say,” came the disappointing reply. “It is sufficient for you to know where your destiny will take you. The past would only be a burden.”

Gorin wondered what all this could mean as he searched the landscape before him. He desperately hoped to find some clue, some familiar sight to spark a memory, no matter how remote. But in vain. The City of Gold and all its architectural

splendour meant nothing to him, and neither did much of what Kutjaran was saying.

"The City of Gold is the most wonderful city that has ever been," whispered Feldoc, speaking as if he had entered some kind of trance. "The highest expression of our Paradise..."

"That was the original intention," agreed the Lord. "The buildings are of such elegance and grace they enthral everyone who sets eyes upon them. The seven highest towers you can see there grouped together are those of the King's palace - the most wondrous building of them all. It is forever decked with flowers and music can be heard throughout its halls and chambers day and night, gentle and soothing or gay and spirited, depending on the hour[14].

"In… credible…," breathed Gorin, totally mesmerised as words failed him.

"The palace, and indeed the whole City, is in a constant state of celebration, for it was to be the apotheosis of the Paradise Garden. There it was decreed, the endless beatitude could take the form of dance and song, music and feasting quite different from our customs out here in the Garden. For we are much closer to the things of Nature in the way we live our lives, while they..." Kutjaran paused for a moment, looking down at Gorin, an expression of infinite kindness in his captivating eyes. He placed a hand lightly on the young man's shoulder.

"Despite the sincerity of their exultant, endless festival of life – or perhaps because of it – they have lost their communion with the natural world," he continued. "They are no longer as much a part of the air and the earth and every kind of life-form as we are. For example, almost everyone living in the City has

[14] As described in the "Establishment of the Golden City" (Second edition) which also contained plans of the Palace and several other important buildings in the City of Gold. JG

lost the art of communicating with the animal kingdom." He halted again, hesitating to speak of something so abhorrent he could hardly bring himself to form the words. "It is even said that they eat… flesh."

The Lord of the Garden paused for some moments while allowing this terrible notion to sink in.

"In addition to that, and all it implies, they have allowed other powers to slip away from them as well, despite the apparent gaiety, joy and celebration… Original thought for example, one of Paradise's greatest blessings, and the spirit of adventure. We used to see them heading off on quests, exploring the Garden around them and even beyond… Not now. Many centuries ago they sealed their portals for good and never ventured beyond them again, closing the City in upon itself. But you will learn much more about all this and what it could mean for them when you arrive there."

He paused again and turned his gaze back towards the shimmering City laid out before them.

"For the moment, they are at peace and enjoy lives of absolute tranquillity. Except it has become a state of bliss in danger of degenerating into indolence, eroding everything they were supposed to uphold. Indeed, there are already covetous eyes looking towards the unearned abundance to be found there. A day may even dawn when the preordained becomes unsustainable. Which will inevitably mean the Fall… of Paradise…"

Lord Kutjaran stopped speaking as he watched Gorin to see what effect all this new information would have on him. But the young man could find no ready response. He needed more time to take it in and think it all through. To start with, he still failed to see what he had to do with the affairs of this City and its people, nor why he, a foundling without any conscious

memory, should be directed to go there. Perhaps he would indeed find out more once he had arrived.

"We must be returning now," the Lord said finally, his eyes sweeping across the idyllic realm he was charged with preserving. He turned his attention back to Gorin and Feldoc, who was actually starting to find all this solemnity rather tiresome. "You will stay here tonight Gorin, and then tomorrow you will be guided through the woodlands of the Garden to the City, where you will be met by someone who is expecting you. While you, trusty Feldoc, can rejoin your fellows and make up a new song about everything that's happened today!"

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Feldoc enthusiastically, thumping his right hock on the ground for all his worth. Having such a wonderful story to tell in song and share with the other Harelops would more than make up for the wearisome last few moments he had been forced to endure.

Kutjaran smiled at Feldoc's innocent fervour and invited his guests to take the path leading back down towards the arbour. Deep in thought, Gorin knew by now there was little use asking just *who* was going to meet him when he came to the City. It was at least comforting to know someone was aware of his existence; someone who ultimately might be able to help him reconnect with his origins and identity.

"I cannot say if we shall meet again," said Feldoc when they were once more in the Lord's tree-lined sanctum and he was preparing to take his leave. "However, we shall learn what becomes of you, for here in the Garden we have messengers faster than galloping horses. I wish you good fortune in all your adventures. Farewell."

So saying, he turned about, and after a respectful bow to Kutjaran, who had regained his leafy throne, he made his way back down the path. The last they saw of him was his pure

white bobtail disappearing from sight as he headed for the tunnel and the spot where he had left his companions.

The messenger

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 101-112

Meanwhile, Gorin remained in the Lord of the Garden's arbour where he was well tended by the petite female nature sprites who darted around caring for his every need. He saw little more of Kutjaran, who retired to his quarters, only returning towards evening as the natural light in the arbour became softer and the great alabaster urns began emitting more of their all-pervading light. He came towards the throne and then stopped in his tracks, confusing the faithful lizards which went on ahead of him before scampering back after realising their mistake. He stood rooted to the spot for several moments, staring straight ahead. Gorin, who had been resting on the other side of the arbour, followed the direction of his gaze.

There, against the darkening blue of the sky, was the silhouette of a large bird, hovering in the still evening air. It let out a disembodied, strangely musical cry that was answered by a sharp whistle from Kutjaran. The signal to bring it swooping down to land on its master's outstretched wrist.

The newcomer was a falcon-like creature of a species already familiar to him. In fact, the more he looked, the more certain he became it was the same falcon he had seen the morning before as he stood on the edge of the precipice. Could it be some kind of messenger? The answer came almost at once from one of the delightful little sprites who brought him his supper of fruit and mead. They were such affectionate beings, but not much good at staying serious for very long. However, this one did whisper into Gorin's ear that his guide for the following day's journey had just returned, having been to the City of Gold to announce his imminent arrival.

No further information was forthcoming, because the creature dissolved into a fit of giggles and went bounding off to laugh some more with her elfin-like sisters. It was all innocent fun though, and in no way at Gorin's expense. She came back a while later to apologise, explaining something enormously funny had popped into her head just as she began speaking and she couldn't contain herself... That was how they were, she explained, so light-hearted and joyful their thoughts inevitably turned to things they found amusing.

She then told him Lord Kutjaran said he should rest as much as possible, for the next day's travel would be long and arduous. With that, the little sprite dashed away again, her tiny, piping voice rippling with fresh peals of laughter.

As Gorin rested on his soft bed with a pillow of down beneath his head, he gazed up at the thousands of stars sparkling in the vastness of the deep blue heaven and thought over everything he had been told. It was indeed all very strange, but he was gradually getting used to the idea that this was what he would have to live with. For the time being.

He took a final look around the shadowy arbour, now lit by a much more subdued gleam from the alabaster urns. They were just giving out enough light for him to see the silhouette of Kutjaran at the door of his quarters, apparently engaged in some kind of silent exchange with the bird on his wrist. While elsewhere he was just able to make out the resting forms of all the other creatures and sprites who waited upon their Lord.

He began wondering, dreamily, where the messenger bird might spend the hours of darkness. Still wondering, he slid into a gently deepening state of oblivion that carried him through the silence of the night. Unaware of the dark, feathered creature perching in the branches above his head, and of the unblinking way it looked down at him.

VI - The Haakon Urns in the press

In this section we are presenting a number of articles published in the international press between 1962 and 1976[15].

They reflect the intense controversy and strong emotions stirred up by the Haakon Urn texts and the disagreements between members of the scientific teams as to how the findings should be published. In the end, failure to agree on these points prevented the work from being made public until 50 years after the original discovery.

Just what impact the publication of these writings will have in today's world is of course still open to conjecture. Only time can tell if they really will bring about the changes forecast by so many pillars of the establishment at the time.

Whatever the outcome, we are at least now being given the opportunity to make up our own minds.

[15] ***Editor's note:*** Only two of these documents were found to be in good enough condition to reproduce the actual originals. The remainder have been reconstituted to show how they appeared when first published.

The Sydney Morn

Monday, 26 March, 1962

Evidence of ancient civilisation found in Antarctica

According to a number of unofficial but reliable sources, the Australian-led Vostok Traverse Expedition which returned from Antarctica last month, found substantial evidence indicating that a highly developed civilisation thrived there many thousands of years ago when the climate was much more temperate.

Further investigation has revealed that the Expedition discovered several urns buried under the ice, said to contain a large collection of manuscripts. They were written using a hitherto unknown hieroglyphic script and experts from all over the world have been invited to study them and try to decipher the information they contain. This is considered to be a find likely to stir up a good deal of controversy, since if the writings prove to be genuine they could be a major challenge to conventional theories of how civilization developed on Earth.

Questioned about this discovery, a spokesman for the Vostok Traverse Expedition would only say that a "certain number of interesting samples and artefacts have been collected which could give us a fresh insight into life on the continent before it was overrun by ice." He declined to put any specific date on the manuscripts, saying that so far, no organic materials had been discovered which would allow Carbon-14 dating tests to be carried out.

Report filed by Dan Carpenter, Adelaide.

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CITY PURCHASERS DISCOVER BIG NEWS '00

South Bend, Indiana... Unprecedented fleet purchases, reported

NORTH DEVON Gazette

Bishop calls for "indulgent" response to Haakon find

NORTH DEVON GAZETTE - 4 May 1971

In a homily to an assembly of British and foreign clerics in Exeter Cathedral yesterday, the Right Rev James Mc-Arthur, Bishop of Bath and Wells, put forward what he stated to be "the true Christian response" to news of a research project being carried out in Australia.

Apparently, a team of linguistic experts are working on deciphering and interpreting the many manuscripts found by an expedition in 1962 on the Haakon VII plateau in Antarctica.

The team believes these documents provide compelling proof that a highly sophisticated civilisation existed on the icy continent some 15,000 to 25,000 years ago. Perhaps even earlier. They also contain a very "unorthodox" alternative account of mankind's origins.

According to Bishop McArthur, "These radical assumptions would appear to challenge just about everything we have ever been taught by the church and the Bible for the past 2,000 years."

He then continued by saying, "However, this is not the first time we have met such challenges. And it will not be the last. We know in our hearts such ideas can never shake our faith in God and in His Son who came to redeem us. Our role as Christians then, is to be indulgent, and wait for this to pass, as all else has passed.

"Let us not forget that every other world faith calls for its adepts to seek God. Christianity is the only religion where God came to seek us..."

Mail
MONDAY, 20 NOVEMBER, 1972

Today! £290,000 jackpot must be won!

More controversy has been sparked among religious leaders by announcement of conclusive proof that an advanced pre-Biblical civilisation existed in Antarctica many thousands of years ago.

MULLAH URGES "ANTI-ISLAMIC" TEXT PURGE

EXCLUSIVE
by Jeremy Baxter Religious Affairs Editor

DURING a vitriolic address to the faithful after Friday prayers yesterday at the East London Mosque, visiting Mullah Ahmed Afzal Taleb, well known for his controversial and even extremist views, spoke about the work being carried out by an international team in Australia to translate the ancient manuscripts found in Antarctica ten years ago.

His speech was a savage attack on the project which he stated to be, "An offence against Islam". He denounced the manuscripts as the work of "false prophets" because they are rumoured to contain "revelations" about the origins of mankind and some of our most ancient legends which directly conflict with conventional Islamic teachings.

This spurred the cleric to call upon "all true brothers of Islam" to "join forces and rise up to root out the source of this evil anti-Islamic heresy before its poison can be allowed to spread throughout the world."

In an interview afterwards he refused to enlarge upon what kind of action he had in mind, saying only, "God will not allow these lies to blind the faithful."

Sociology Today
"Defending the science of Human Society"
OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY

"Haakon findings could be a danger to society"

CHICAGO - 10 January 1973

The I**nternationally renowned Harvard Professor of Sociology and Department Chair, William J. Winkleton II** published a paper yesterday in which he issued a stern warning about the work currently being carried out at the Dickensen Archaeological and Geo-physical Research Institute in Melbourne.

This paper concerns the transcription and "retelling" of the story of mankind's origins as revealed in the "Haakon Urn" texts. It would appear that this is to include "conclusive evidence" in support of certain beliefs which, according to the Professor, "Have the potential to undermine our way of life in the West".

In his view, "Widespread acceptance of these doctrines, which could come about as a result of publishing these findings in a format designed for the general public rather than specialised papers for the scientific community, might well lead to a disturbing tide of fatalism among Western societies.

In his conclusion, Professor Winkleton states, "This is a trend that could ultimately prove harmful to the economy and to the very fabric of society as we know it."

NB: "Sociology Today" ceased publication in October 1978.

AY TIMES

Feuding editors block publication of ancient Antarctic manuscripts

From our Melbourne correspondent – 20 January 1974

Reports are being received of serious disagreements occurring between members of the Editorial Committee working at the Melbourne Dickensen Institute on the publication of findings made by researchers working on the decipherment and interpretation of the so-called "Haakon" texts. These are now said to predate all of the other civilisations that have existed on our planet by as much as 50,000 years (or even many millions of years according to some experts!). The Committee's Chairman, Professor **J.G. Harkwood** of Melbourne University only wants these findings to be released to the scientific community, whereas Professor **James Gregson,** from the Archaeological Department of Sydney University and two other members of the five man Editorial Committee assert these texts contain "essential information about the heritage of the human race that we have a duty to make public."

"Cheap headlines for the masses."

"Sensation-seekers" is how Committee Chairman Professor Harkwood describes Professor Gregson and the other two Committee members for their determination to publish a "retelling" of the story in the texts so it can be understood by a wider audience. He has even stated he will use his authority to **prevent publication** of the findings in this form, claiming the project is merely "cheap, headline-grabbing story-telling for the masses which has no place alongside methodical, painstaking scientific research"

THE AUS

THE HEART OF THE

Thieves "tag" ancient urns and make off with rare manuscripts

MELBOURNE, 6 June 1976

From our special affairs reporter in Melbourne, James H. Shoreham.

Police were called to the Library of the Dickensen Archaeological and Geo-physical Research Institute in the early hours of Friday morning after security systems had detected a break-in. They found that a ground floor window had been forced open through which several intruders had apparently penetrated the building.

The Dickensen Research Institute

"They obviously knew what they were looking for," said Chief Inspector Trevor Ashworth from the Melbourne Office of the Australian Federal Police. "They went directly up to the Research Department on the first floor, broke open that door and went into the room where the manuscripts found in Antarctica in 1962 were stored in locked cabinets. They smashed the glass doors and gathered up the manuscripts, apparently without taking much care as we found a number of fragments on the ground. They were obviously in a hurry, but almost everything was taken."

The hunt for clues

Asked if the police had found any clues as to the identity of the thieves, Chief Inspector Ashworth replied, "We believe it was probably the work of religious extremists, because several of the urns that originally contained the manuscripts, stored in an adjacent room, were daubed with several sets of tags. These were mainly combinations of three or four letters such as "DOF", "JCIL" and "TBIT".

Our investigations have revealed that these are signatures used by the "Christian Soldiers' Defence League", a radical group of fundamentalist Christians which has been active before, although never in such a case of this kind. The tags mean ""Defenders of Faith", "Jesus Christ Is Lord" and "The Bible Is Truth."

Stolen for destruction

In a later statement, the Director of the Antiquities Department, clearly suffering from con-siderable shock, stated that if indeed the CSDL really were the perpetrators of this crime, there was every reason to suppose that they had taken the manuscripts with the sole aim of destroying them. They would believe them to be "heretical", he said, and "The work of the Devil". No representatives of the under-ground extremist group could be found to comment on these allegations.

Any readers with knowledge as to the whereabouts of the original Haakon texts following their theft in 1976 are invited to contact the Dickensen Archaeological and Geophysical Research Institute in Melbourne, Australia or their local authorities.

VII – The Silver River

"Creation is existence, a sudden
path of never-ending change replacing
nothingness by unlimited evolvement."

Book of Magres Aeon I, Age I, Chap. I v. viii

From "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 112-129

The next morning, Gorin was awakened by three of the little sprites who brought him a warm infusion made from herbs growing near the arbour. Apparently, these rare plants could be found nowhere else in the Garden and possessed unique fortifying and stimulating properties. The sprites said it would be good for him as he would need every grain of strength and determination he could muster for the journey ahead. He drank the brew gladly and it certainly did seem to have a very comforting effect at first, running through his veins with a warming glow. A feeling that then intensified, bringing with it a surge of confidence in his ability to meet whatever challenges he would be faced with in the next stage of his travels.

When he had drained his bowl dry and eaten some of the fruit brought with it, his attendants led him to a spring where he could wash himself. The water came down in a miniature cascade from an opening in the rock about five measures above his head, filling a pool below.

As he plunged beneath the tumbling water, he discovered it was icy cold, and his cry of surprise made all the sprites dance around in glee. One or two of them even came to splash him with water from the pool, and got just as wet as he did in the process. Gorin thoroughly enjoyed their musical laughter and frivolous antics. So much so, that once he had got over the initial shock, he even found the cold water invigorating and was soon laughing and frolicking with the best of them.

All of a sudden, the sounds of merriment and gay banter died away, though for no reason Gorin could see. This being said, at that particular moment, he could not see very much at all. He was still under the cascade and the water was running into his eyes, preventing him from being aware of a newcomer on the scene.

When he realised how quiet it had become and his own cries were the only ones to be heard, he stepped out of his natural shower to see a tall, imposing figure standing where all the sprites had been a moment before. He wiped his eyes clear of the water and realised it was Lord Kutjaran, who had no doubt come to see what all the commotion was about. Since there was now no sign of any sprite to be seen anywhere, Gorin supposed he must have disapproved of what he found.

There was no time for further conjecture however, as Kutjaran was beckoning to him. Gorin sensed an implied reprimand in that gesture, leaving him in no mood for any further jollities. He quickly dried himself, got dressed and followed the Lord back to his arbour. There he was greeted by the steely gaze of the messenger falcon, perched on the back of the vine-covered throne.

The sprites brought Gorin a bag fashioned from interwoven leaves which he could carry by a strap made out of plaited tendrils. It contained many kinds of small fruit and nuts, as well as some sort of bread he had not seen before. He

accepted everything gratefully and waited to be told what the next move would be.

Kutjaran came up to him and slightly lowered his head, allowing Gorin to look right into his deep brown eyes. They were almost as dark as his skin, and it was immediately clear there was no sign at all of any reprimand in them. Only absolute love, benevolence and encouragement. These were eyes that had seen so much and had become wise with the experience of many long years. Gorin became overwhelmed by a sense of wonderment and admiration for this regal being, who held the key to centuries of knowledge and wisdom.

"The time has come for you to go forth from our section of the Garden," Lord Kutjaran began. "You will be guided on this stage of your journey across the wooded country between here and the City of Gold by Messenger Falcon Huor. In the course of it you will undergo certain tests and trials to prepare you for the greater, more critical challenges you will encounter later on. Huor will also take you to he who is destined to guide you further on your path."

These words gave Gorin some reassurance, taking them to imply he would not be in any particular danger during this part of his travels, despite the likelihood of a few "tests and trials" along the way. However, the Lord's mention of subsequent "critical challenges" sounded rather more ominous.

He smiled up at Kutjaran with an overwhelming emotion of the deepest gratitude. He involuntarily lowered himself onto one knee and bowed before the Lord, who then reached out and gently raised his head. Their eyes met again in a final moment of unspoken communion. They exchanged words of farewell and then Gorin rose to his feet, looking up at the messenger bird rising into the air. It had the grace of an eagle, wheeling in the sky as it slowly flew around the tops of the trees encircling the arbour.

Huor leads the way

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 129-133

After making three circuits of the Lord's abode, Huor suddenly made off towards the path leading down to the tunnel mouth. Gorin followed the direction it took and barely had time to turn round and wave to all the sprites and other creatures who had assembled to see him off. His last glimpse of them was similar to his first, the previous day. Kutjaran had returned to his throne and all the others were grouped around him; Felos the lion, sprites, deer, gazelles and of course the lizards, flicking at the air with their yellow tongues. They watched him as he took his leave of them and disappeared behind the shrubs and bushes screening the path from the arbour. Gorin looked up and saw his guide hovering over the clearing at the tunnel entrance, made his way down and was soon standing in the middle of the glade.

Expecting the falcon to direct him through the tunnel, Gorin stepped towards it, only to be stopped by a cry from overhead. He looked up again to see Huor was indicating he should be heading for the other side of the clearing. The day before, he had thought the slope was far too steep to consider going down that way. As he approached a gap between two trees however, he saw there was a short flight of rough-hewn steps cut into the side of the rock. They led down some five measures or so to the beginning of a path snaking its way through the trees below before becoming lost among them.

Gorin negotiated the steps carefully. Although they were firm enough, he had the impression he was the first person to use them for a very long time. When he reached the bottom, he saw the falcon perched on the branch of a tree up ahead. As soon as it saw him coming, the bird took flight again and soared off, vanishing out of sight into the forest.

The path through the trees was clearly marked, at least for the time being, so Gorin set off confidently, singing softly to himself. Despite his strange circumstances and the unknown challenges he would have to face, he was in a light-hearted mood as he made his way along the forest path. He followed it down and round and down again towards the foot of the mountain where the Lord of the Garden held his court.

Perhaps it was the infusion the sprites had given him that made him feel like this, he thought. He had no particular reason to feel so positive, after all... His memory was as blank as ever and he was embarking on an adventure he knew very little about. One he could find fraught with all kinds of dangers. But no matter, right now he had somewhere to go and would be meeting a person who would surely be able to answer at least a few of the questions plaguing him. That was at least something.

Slaughter in Paradise

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 133-149

The steep path levelled off after Gorin had been travelling along it for about one thousand measures. He had noticed a change in the trees and plants growing about him almost at once. They seemed to be wilder species, still very luxuriant, but somehow untamed, as if there had been neither reason nor adversity to instil much order into them.

Ahead, he saw the falcon again, now hopping on the ground not more than two measures before him. Suddenly it took wing and flew up onto a branch just ahead. Then he heard a faint noise, imperceptible at first, that rapidly grew in intensity. It soon became the unmistakable sound of many creatures charging through the undergrowth, accompanied by the thunder of hooves pounding wildly on the ground. He

caught sight of shapes crashing through the forest to his right. They were moving at high speed and the sunlight playing on their white forms as they sped between the trees made them hard to identify with any certainty.

Fifteen or twenty measures away, the creatures suddenly broke cover and crossed the path ahead of Gorin. This allowed him to see it was a herd of pure white horses with trailing manes and tails rippling like silk in the wind of their flight. He wondered why they were running in such a panic. Whatever could have scared them so much? Here, in the Paradise Garden, where everything was supposed to be so harmonious and peaceful. Unsure what to make of it, he continued along the path, heading towards the clump of trees the horses had been fleeing from.

As he rounded the corner, Gorin could see a group of animals in front of him, all looking very intently at something on the ground. There were some deer, a couple of ponies and also a number of smaller creatures including wild pigs, rabbits, foxes and a pair of dogs. Suddenly, one of the ponies raised its head and looked towards the newcomer in their midst. On seeing him, it emitted a great whinnying cry that was a signal for the other animals to look up as well. All of them then began voicing their distress and started backing away in fear. This seemed such a contrast with the way every other living thing in the Garden apparently behaved, but something had obviously seriously frightened these creatures and seeing Gorin had caused their fear to return.

Huor then intervened by swooping down from the sky and flying towards the group of animals, crying all the time. Their retreat halted, but they continued staring at Gorin in a peculiar way that gave him a sense of foreboding. He carried on along the path, trying to look as friendly and unthreatening as he could, although he was beginning to feel distinctly ill at ease.

When he came to the point where all the animals had congregated, he realised what had been mesmerising them. There, lying on the ground, was something profoundly disturbing. Something that also kindled his anger at the way the Garden's sanctity had been so brutally violated.

For next to the still-glowing remains of a recent campfire, lay the dismembered carcass of a horse, including several hacked off bones with half burnt flesh hanging from them. The victim of this evil deed had obviously belonged to the herd of pure white creatures Gorin had just seen stampeding through the forest, making the reason for their flight quite apparent. Yet who could have killed the animal? Evidently, they had done so in order to eat it, but this went totally against the entire scheme of life prevailing in the Garden as he understood it.

Gorin immediately thought of the people from the City of Gold and what Kutjaran had said about them. However, he found it hard to imagine they could have had anything to do with this crime, for the City was still some ten thousand measures distant and apparently those who lived there never left the confines of its walls anyway. So who – or what - could have come here just to kill a horse, even if it was for food? Gorin looked at the animals standing around the defiled, mutilated carcass and saw them shrink away as he turned his head towards them. They were obviously afraid of him – as if they feared he too might be capable of such evil. But why?

Then he saw the glint of some metal objet on the ground near the dissevered horse and stooped down to investigate. It caught the rays of the sun again as he lifted it. As soon as the animals saw it in his hand they all turned and fled into the forest as fast as they could. In a moment they were gone and Gorin was left alone holding the bright, shiny thing. His hand began to tremble; it seemed to be out of his control, and he realised it was because in some strange way, this object was

familiar. He instinctively knew it to be a hunting knife and that was what had frightened the animals so much when he picked it up. For to them, simply holding such an implement immediately identified him with the barbarity of the horse's slaughter.

Gorin felt he should throw the hateful instrument away in disgust. Except he could not. That feeling of familiarity made him want to keep hold of it, in the hope it might jog some memory and give him a clue as to his real identity. It was, after all, the first time he had reacted to anything in this way since his awakening. He looked at the knife again and lightly ran his thumb along the edge to see if it was keen. It was, so much in fact that his skin was broken and blood oozed out to stain the blade. It was attached to a finely executed hilt in black ivory, carved to represent a serpent's head with delicate filigree chasing on the lower part. He held and examined it for some time, noting that the blade could be folded back into the handle. But nothing else of any significance came into his mind. Only the persistent impression it had some kind of special significance.

A call from the sky brought Gorin out of his reverie. Huor was in the air above him, circling and obviously trying to tell him they could not linger there forever and had some way to go yet before arriving at the City gates. He quickly closed the knife, thrust it into one of his pockets and made off down the path again in pursuit of his winged guide. The journey continued without further incident for some time, until Gorin began to feel tired and longed for a chance to rest. He was also getting very hungry.

At last the falcon flew down to the ground in front of him and hopped over to a fallen tree, perching on it and cocking its head invitingly. Gorin gladly went over to the bird's side and began unpacking the food provided by Kutjaran's sprites. He

ate some of the fruit and a little of the special bread, but found it rather dry and started wondering where he might find something to drink. He was given no time to search for a nearby spring or brook however, for Huor was in the air again and there was nothing for it but to follow the falcon's direction. He was about to continue along the path as before, but was halted by a whistling call from his guide who had flown round behind him. Evidently their route no longer lay on the woodland track, still quite well defined between the trees and winding on through the dense foliage. Huor was now perched on a branch not far from where they had rested and was calling repeatedly for Gorin to follow a new direction.

With no apparent path to follow, there was nothing for it but to plunge right into the forest, particularly overgrown and tangled at that point. Thick creepers hung from almost every branch overhead and giant ferns splayed out like fans between the massive trunks, making the going extremely difficult. Progress became much slower and the sense of direction far less certain than it had been on the path, but now the falcon was never more than two or three branches ahead of Gorin, making sure they never lost sight of each other.

The waters of the Silver River

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 149-169

They managed to cover some fifty measures of ground through the dense and unyielding undergrowth. Then, just as he was wondering how much longer the going would be as tough as this, Gorin caught the first faint sounds of running water up ahead. A few measures more and the sound became louder as the trees in front of them began to thin out. Large areas of sky could now be seen between the branches. Moments later, he was descending a gentle grass and fern covered slope

towards the banks of a river. It was at least twenty measures wide and flowing at great speed through the heart of the wooded groves. Huor had obviously sensed his thirst and led him straight to the nearest water!

By now it was late afternoon and already shadows were beginning to lengthen. This made the river seem a little mysterious as it wound its way round and out of sight among the overhanging trees. The water itself was crystal clear, and Gorin got down onto his knees at the water's edge, gratefully cupping his hands and dipping them into the cool water.

Whether the several hours of walking had made him lose control of his balance, or whether he was more fatigued than he realised, he could not tell. Whatever the reason, as he leaned forward to take the water in his hands, Gorin lost his balance and pitched right over into the turbulent, icy flow. The river banks were quite steep and the stony bottom fully three measures from the swirling surface. This meant that although he suffered no more than the initial shock of falling in, he soon found himself floundering in water too deep for him to find any foothold.

The current was even stronger than it had appeared from the riverbank and it began to sweep him along. The further he moved with it, the more he was dragged out into mid-stream. He fought against the raging water, but only succeeded in sinking below the surface and swallowing more than he should. Somewhere far away and high above, he dimly heard Huor screeching in alarm.

The current became stronger and he felt himself being drawn under for a second time. He could barely think clearly any more, for panic was taking hold and pushing everything else from his mind. Then, just as he feared all was lost and he would be brought to a watery grave, he heard the sound of laughing voices above the rushing tumult. They seemed to be

very close at hand and even part of the surging water trying to engulf him. Moments later, he became aware of small delicate hands reaching out, bearing him up so he could raise his head above the surface and gulp air into his lungs.

As he felt himself becoming stable in the rushing torrent, Gorin managed to look around and see where the buoyant support of all those hands was coming from. He was amazed to see he was surrounded by several young female creatures with long, light coloured hair. He could only make out their heads of course, so could not know if they were wholly human or half something else, like the Harelops. Judging by the way they swam, he wondered if they had fishes' tails instead of legs. No matter, whatever they were was far less important than the fact that they were saving him!

With this realisation, Gorin's fears faded away as the strongly swimming creatures expertly used the current's eddies and flows to guide their precious burden towards the opposite riverbank. They finally made contact, and once he felt himself being brought out of the water, a wave of exhaustion swept over him. For a few moments he slipped into a state of light unconsciousness, making him oblivious to all the excitement he was creating.

Awareness returned gradually within a few minutes, but Gorin's eyes remained closed as he thought of how near he had come to being carried off by the river's torrent. He could hear there was a great deal of fervent activity going on around him, accompanied by the tread of many light-footed creatures. This did at least rule out the possibility of his rescuers being half-fish he thought with an amused smile, as he opened his eyes to see what they were really like.

Gorin found he was looking into the face of a girl-woman, gazing down at him with round, blue eyes that looked caring and concerned. By all appearances she was as near to a human

being as any creature he had so far come across, apart from Lord Kutjaran. Although she was bending over him, he judged her to be about his own height, although of very slight build. She had long, blond hair still glistening with water falling forward over her face. The garment she wore was made of a thin diaphanous material that clung to her wet body like a second skin. She also appeared to be clothed in an indefinable mist-like iridescence, adding another dimension to her form.

With a swift movement of her hand, the girl-woman pushed the hair away from her face and smiled. There was something refreshingly innocent and impishly mischievous about her, nurtured by a totally carefree existence. Like all the native creatures of the Paradise Garden, she had always thrust any concern or feeling of insecurity into the furthest recesses of her mind.

"How are you feeling?" she asked gently, placing her delicate hand on Gorin's forehead.

"I'm all right now, I think," he answered. "Thank you for..."

He was cut short as a remarkably long finger was pressed gently against his lips and the girl's radiant face came even closer to his.

"You have nothing to thank me for," she whispered, her soft voice sounding sweet and sibilant. "We want to thank you for coming to us. Still, it was fortunate you came when we were bathing there, because the Silver River runs very fast and we are the only ones who can swim against it. But come on, everyone else wants to meet you."

Sliding her slim arm behind Gorin's neck and around his shoulders, she gently supported him as he managed to sit up and look around.

He then saw he was lying on the river bank surrounded by more than a dozen other girl-women. Most of them were

wearing virtually identical gossamer garments, apart from two, who appeared to be wearing nothing material at all. Although they were all clothed in the same kind of imperceptible radiance he had noticed around the girl at his side.

His look of surprise at being the centre of attention for so many nubile and practically naked young women sent them all into peals of delicious laughter. They jumped up and down, kissing and hugging each other in their excited delight before daring to edge forwards, reach out and touch Gorin's manly frame. It was at this point he realised he was wearing very little himself. His rescuers must have taken most of his clothes to dry after pulling him from the water.

"But you're all so young and slender," said Gorin, as the caressing, exploring hands of the girl-women ran over his body, discovering the unfamiliar firmness of his flesh. "However do you manage to swim against such a powerful current?"

The remark sent all of them into fits of laughter again. "Because it is our home," said the girl-woman with the caring and concerned eyes. "We spend more time in the water than on land. And we were made to be part of it. Look."

She pointed down and for the first time, Gorin realised that although the girl-women were predominantly humanoid in appearance, their feet were very different from his own. Instead of ending in five rather stubby toes, the five members of their feet were just as slight and as long as their fingers. Furthermore, they were connected to each other by a membrane of pliable, almost translucent skin. So when they extended this between their outstretched "toes" they acquired enough thrust to combat the fiercest current – and had thus saved him from drowning.

The girl-woman laughed again – a rippling, musical laugh sounding like a mountain stream bounding down a steep,

rocky watercourse. "We are the Water-Nymphs of the Silver River," she said. "And my name is Laztana."

Gorin tried once again to thank her and all the water-nymphs for saving him, but Laztana would have none of it.

"You must spend some time with us," she said. "That would be the best way of showing your gratitude. First of all though, we are all curious about what brings you to our river. We haven't seen anyone from outside come here alone for many long years."

The other water-nymphs whispered excitedly among themselves and crowded ever nearer to Gorin, hanging on his every word. They even halted their exploratory caresses while they waited to hear what he had to say.

Gorin then told them his name and that he had been given the mission of travelling to the City of Gold by Kutjaran, Lord of the Garden. He also explained how he had arrived at the banks of their Silver River and wanted to quench his thirst... Mention of the City and Kutjaran seemed to have no particular effect on the water-nymphs. They only really cared about the immediate present and Gorin's fortuitous arrival among them.

"You must be someone very important then," said Laztana, stroking his forehead. "But you know, we live sheltered lives here. The river is our whole world. The source of all our contentment and happiness."

"And sometimes, it brings us wonderful gifts… to make us even happier," declared another of the water-nymphs – one of those who was wearing nothing other than a simple garland of flowers. Looking at her, and then at the rest of them as they dissolved into their infectious laughter again, Gorin suddenly realised none of them had any kind of body hair anywhere - apart from their long, light coloured tresses. This partly explained the smoothness of their skin and perhaps why there was that faint iridescence hovering around all of them.

As the mirth and merriment died down, Laztana held out her hand to Gorin and helped him to his feet. "So," she said, "You will be our honoured guest for a while and you can carry on with your journey later. If you really want to, that is."

Gorin nodded, too overwhelmed by all the attention he was getting and the implied promise of more, to say anything else. Or notice the dark outline of a large bird high up in the sky silently wheeling in the air directly above him.

Laztana led Gorin along the riverbank, still holding his hand. The other water-nymphs followed behind and began singing a haunting melody, without any definite words at first. It just rose and fell like waves on the surface of an endless ocean. Another example of the entrancing, hypnotic songs the Garden's creatures seemed to delight in. By the time words actually did begin to emerge from the flow of melodic invention, Gorin was as utterly captivated as he had been by the songs of the Harelops;

> **"***Silver water, going, flowing; come to me,*
> *Light reflecting, life collecting; make us free.*
> *Move within us and about us; let us be.*
> *Take us, cleanse us and caress us - unceasingly."*
>
> *Ballads of Adoration XIX, verse VI*

In no time at all, Gorin became oblivious to practically everything except the music, the soft, gentle hand he was holding and the sweet, heady fragrance borne upon the light emanating from these delightful beings. He therefore paid hardly any attention to where he was being lead, and of course all thoughts of Huor, his journey and the shimmering City of Gold began to fade into the background of his mind.

The water-nymphs' grotto

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 169-184

Having walked along the river bank for some time, Gorin and his newfound friends came at last to a place where the ground rose suddenly ahead of them. Moss and grass-covered rocks now prevented them from continuing along the riverbank, meaning their only option was to go back into the water. He saw there was a path heading towards the river and Laztana was leading him in that direction. Despite his ordeal earlier, Gorin now had no fear and willingly followed her until the water was up to his waist. Being protected from the full force of the river's flow by a sharp bend upstream, the current was not particularly strong, so he was not afraid when he was told to let himself float with the water.

Laztana and the other water-nymphs then swam alongside, bearing him towards the point where the rocks reared out of the water to reach their highest point. They then rounded a final outcrop and Gorin saw the current was taking them past the low entrance to a flooded cave set back from the main course of the river. With powerful thrusts from their lean, graceful legs and outstretched webbed feet, the nymphs guided Gorin towards a shallow whirlpool just in front of the cave which gently swung them round and projected them towards its mouth.

A few moments later they were gliding across the calm surface of a hidden lake extending deep underground. High overhead, there was a rocky vault festooned with tortuously sculpted stalactites, reflected in the still waters of the lake beneath. This created the illusion that they were floating into the jaws of some monstrous whale with endless rows of needle sharp teeth above and below.

The water-nymphs did not take Gorin into the furthest reaches of the cave, but brought him to the side not far from the opening. The lake bed shelved gradually to the edge, and very soon he was able to stand up and make his way onto dry ground. From there, he looked back at the cave mouth they had come through and took stock of his surroundings. He saw they were in a grotto formed of a type of limestone with an iridescent quality just like the water-nymphs themselves. It glowed with a greenish light that reflected in the surface of the water, throwing back innumerable shifting patterns onto the roof.

From the outside, there had been little indication of the secrets lying behind such an unprepossessing cave mouth. What geological freak had caused it to be formed could only be guessed at. It looked as if the lake were part of some underground system joining the Silver River at this point. But it didn't matter, thought Gorin, dreamily. Nothing mattered. Only being there, with these deliciously alluring water-nymphs in what had to be an enchanted grotto… He could think of nothing else.

Laztana led Gorin to the back of the recess extending along the shore of the underground lake, where she invited him to lie down and rest on the bed of yielding cushions and pillows her sister nymphs had set out and prepared for him. By this time he was indeed feeling tired and rather cold in the few undergarments he was still wearing. Perhaps he should ask to have his clothes returned...? But Laztana was pushing back the hair from her face, putting her hand on his shoulder and giving him one of her caring and concerned looks.

"I'm so sorry," she said. "Of course the water isn't your element in the way it is for us. You must be feeling cold in here... Perhaps you would like to be dried and given something to wear?"

Gorin nodded, and before he could say anything, Laztana had summoned three of the other water-nymphs who came scampering up to him with large, soft, enveloping towels. They were made from the same incredibly light, semi-transparent material as their robes, although thicker. Then, sooner than he could think about it, they were taking his few remaining clothes from him and gently rubbing him dry.

Laztana looked appreciatively at Gorin's well-built body as it was gently tended by her caring helpers, the whisper of a smile hovering on her lips.

"The clothes you had on when you fell into the river were very strange," she said. "We brought them with us actually, just in case…" She pointed to a pile of garments against the grotto's back wall. "But I'm sure they must have been terribly uncomfortable."

"No," replied Gorin. "I don't think they were." In fact, he had never considered them before. He was wearing them when he first awakened, so had taken them more or less for granted. There was a sleeveless jacket, thickly woven from a coarse, fibrous thread, a woollen shirt and voluminous breeches, together with thinner, softer undergarments.

As he thought about his clothes, Gorin suddenly realised he was now dressed in nothing at all, as the deft hands of the water-nymphs pampered him. For an instant he was overcome by a strange, unidentifiable emotion, swiftly dispelled by the water-nymphs' gentle, reassuring care - and by the magical song they began to sing again as they worked;

"Silver water, coming hither,
Making sunlight glimmer, quiver,
Take us here and take us thither
In the cradle of the river."

Ballads of Adoration XIX, verse XX

Once Gorin was dry, Laztana brought him a robe similar in style to the ones worn by all the water-nymphs and helped him put it on. It was warmer than it looked and he accepted it gladly, even though it was slightly too small for him.

"You'll feel better now," she said. "We'll bring you something to eat and then you must rest."

At once, three of the water-nymphs hurried off to another part of the grotto and came back with dishes of food quite unlike anything Gorin had tasted until then. It was some kind of thick green leaf chopped up together with a red-fleshed fruit and accompanied by tiny pink, yellow and dark purple berries. There was also a selection of amazing bittersweet nuts. The combination of flavours was subtle and delicious, evoking the heady freshness emanating from Laztana and her companions. They brought him a chalice of water to drink as well – but water such as he had never known before. It had an orange tinge and a tangy sparkling taste, immediately conjuring up a powerful feeling of exhilaration and a vision of mountain springs glittering in the sunlight.

"I see you like our invigorating River Wine," said Laztana, after Gorin had eagerly drained his chalice.

"I certainly do," he answered. "It tastes so pure, so fresh..." His voice trailed off into nothing, for he could bring no words to mind capable of expressing the feelings it had given him or the intense emotion flooding through him whenever he looked at Laztana. In the ethereal green light of the grotto, her smile seemed to give her natural radiance added power, engulfing her body and reaching out to blend with the glow emitted by the other water-nymphs. They were still singing their song and the more he heard it, the more he felt drawn into the magic of this place and its exquisite creatures. He sighed in surrender and lay back on the enveloping bed, gazing up at the incredibly

complex shapes, protrusions, hollows, holes and shadows cast by the age-old stalactites above his head.

"Sleep now," whispered Laztana softly, bending down and brushing her lips across his cheek. "Sleep and enter The Dreaming of things beautiful and peaceful. Dream of the moon reflected in still waters. Dream of the ripples on the surface of the pool. Dream of the breath making them. And dream of us. Come, we shall sleep and dream with you..."

So saying, she lay down beside Gorin and the other water-nymphs came and lay with them. The gentle touch of their soft caresses lulled him into contented semi-slumber, still dimly aware of their presence, their infinite tenderness for him and the tenderness they lavished upon each other.

The tenuous frontier between wakefulness and sleep was crossed many times in the course of that unimaginable night. Until finally, consciousness gradually came stealing back - but so full of languid pleasures it could barely be discerned from Dreaming. There was so much here, so much love and bliss, so many delicious delights Gorin could have willingly stayed in that borderland state forever.

All thoughts of his purpose, the messenger guide Huor, Kutjaran and the City of Gold had now completely vanished from his consciousness. He had even forgotten he could not remember. Everything was moving forward in a constant flow of now, a constant flow building towards ecstasy, forever on the brink of culmination without ever needing to look back. There had never been a time before, nor was there any time to come after. He was experiencing the timeless rapture of Paradise.

Gorin eventually emerged from his trance-like state the next morning, although when he awoke he had no idea how long it had lasted. He reached out his hand in search of Laztana who had lain beside him for so long. She was gone, and so

were all the other water-nymphs. He opened his eyes and sat up, but could see no sign of them anywhere. He rose to his feet, catching sight of a movement on the surface of the lake; and there they were, diving and frolicking in some kind of water game.

When they saw Gorin was awake they swam over to him and emerged onto the bank of soft, dry sand. Laztana came up to him, held his hands and gazed at him with such intensity he felt the emotion welling up within him. She then closed those wonderful, caring, concerned eyes, drew closer and kissed him on the mouth, pressing her pert little body against his as he responded in kind. It was a signal for all the other water-nymphs to join in, creating new ways of adding to Gorin's pleasure and sharing their own with each other again.

This inventiveness included delectable demonstrations of ways their curious webbed feet and slender articulated "toes" could be used for much more than just swimming. They had a dexterity and control in them capable of giving an intensity of pleasure beyond the bounds of imagination.

When all the loving was finally done, the other water-nymphs ran off to prepare more of their succulent food and bring goblets of River Wine to Laztana and Gorin who were now reclining on the soft bed again.

Signs and portents

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 187-207

After they had finished their eating and drinking, Laztana invited Gorin to stand up and began looking him up and down with an expression of playful disapproval on her face. When he asked if there was anything wrong she laughed and said no... But he did look a little strange dressed in a water-nymph's diaphanous robe.

"My own clothes ought to be perfectly dry by now," said Gorin when they had finished laughing. "I can just put them back on again."

"Oh no," said Laztana. "They belong to the outside. To the other world. You won't need them anymore. But there was a girdle, I seem to remember. It would help a little."

She went over to where Gorin's discarded clothes had been placed at the back of the grotto and picked up the belt. She brought it back and fitted it around his waist, gathering the robe together and arranging the lower part to make it hang evenly.

"That's much better," she declared, taking Gorin by the hand and leading him to the water's edge for him to see his reflection. He only got a very distorted idea of the improvement however, due to the ripples being made by some of the nymphs who had returned to their water games.

Throughout the morning, Gorin tried to get some idea of how long the water-nymphs had lived in the grotto and how they came to be there in the beginning. But they did not appear to know, or have any particular interest in finding out. Time really did seem to be one eternal present to them and, as far as Gorin could see, their blissful existence certainly made such an attitude extremely attractive.

"We are not concerned about what has been," explained Laztana. "We are and therefore, we are. That is enough. Come and forget with us. Forget all but us. The past no longer exists… And we should do away with anything likely to remind us of it."

So saying, she went back to where Gorin's clothes were lying and picked them up. Presumably, her intention was to cast them into the deepest recesses of the underground labyrinth, or else into the river, so it could carry them away forever. Then, as she lifted the pile of garments, something fell

to the ground, clattering with a metallic ring that echoed like the peal of a broken bell. When she saw what it was, Laztana cried in horror and let the clothes drop again, staring transfixed at the object lying before her on the ground.

Gorin immediately understood it was the knife he had found the day before. And recalled the circumstances of his find… A realisation suddenly reminding him why and how he came to be there. He also recalled the peculiar impression finding it had made on him, and the way it had seemed to provide a connection with who he was. Whatever it might be, the sight of the object caused the water-nymphs to behave in the same, terrified manner as the animals had done when the knife was in Gorin's hand. They became very quiet and backed away as if it might suddenly strike out at them of its own accord.

"It's nothing," protested Gorin. "Really. I found it in the woods and kept it in case it would help me remember..."

"There is nothing to remember," said Laztana, in a low, dark tone. "And nothing that can have anything to do with us. Look..." she pointed a trembling finger at the knife's hilt. "It bears the sign of the serpents. Such signs are alien. They only come from the other side, with the intruders and their allies threatening to negate Paradise. We want nothing of them and their destructive evil."

"What does it signify then?" asked Gorin. "Where does it come from…? What makes you so afraid?"

"I have already spoken too much of what it means," replied Laztana, her voice still hushed and strained. "We only know it is the sign portending the event. Coming to steal our sweet and precious present from us. Why did you have to bring that terrible thing here? Why?"

Gorin felt at a loss to answer and wished he had left the knife lying where he found it. He wanted to understand why

Laztana saw it as such an evil omen, but there was no way he could persuade her to tell him. She had utterly changed, and all the other water-nymphs with her. They were now sullen and withdrawn, the radiance of their smiles a fleeting memory as the soft, natural glow of their bodies died to a throbbing dull red gleam. Stark evidence indeed of a fear they had so long suppressed coming to the surface.

Gorin suddenly became overwhelmed with a terrible feeling of guilt. He felt he had defiled the beauty of these wonderful creatures' existence and destroyed their joy which had been so simple and trusting. Joy that might have endured forever if this had not happened. What could he do to make amends? How could he overcome their dark, frightened suspicion and bring back the songs, the happiness, the enchantment…?

Events then moved so swiftly that describing them takes twice as long as it took for everything to happen. For as Gorin stood there looking at Laztana, now so diminished and afraid, there was a great disturbance at the mouth of the grotto. The sound of wings beating rapidly.

All eyes immediately turned to see what was causing it and saw the shape of a large black bird with a vicious-looking beak silhouetted against the light. It found the entrance and flew in, skimming the surface of the water and emitting harsh, rasping cries as it dived towards Gorin and the water-nymphs. Laztana and the others shrieked in terror and plunged, as one, into the lake, leaving Gorin standing alone at the water's edge.

The nymphs were swimming underwater, with scarcely a ripple to show where they were, until the heads of Laztana and some of the others appeared above the surface near the grotto entrance. They looked back to where the menacing bird was flying around Gorin, its discordant cry sounding all the time.

"The Garrows," she yelled. "He even brings the Garrows..."

As one, they all dived beneath the surface again and were gone, heading out into the open waters of the Silver River.

Gorin barely heard what Laztana had screamed out as she left, he was far too busy trying to fend off the attacks of the winged intruder. It did not appear to be actually trying to harm him, but he was scared by its wheeling and diving and its harsh, ear-splitting cries, amplified many times over by the grotto's resonant echo. For a moment he thought of following the water-nymphs, but he knew he could never swim in the river's current unaided and they were far too frightened to help him now.

He therefore decided to make his way further into the narrowing recesses of the cave, as there appeared to be enough light coming from the glowing rocks for him to find his way. He hoped that as the passage narrowed, the screeching bird would finally lose interest and let him continue his journey in peace.

Pausing only to pick up the serpent-headed knife and his discarded clothes, Gorin made off along the shores of the lake into the depths of the grotto. The bird continued to follow him, though it had now ceased its raucous cries and was flying just above him, more like a companion than a fierce attacker. Nevertheless, he decided to take no chances and continued along the rapidly narrowing passageway until he finally left the lake behind him.

As he continued ever deeper underground, the glow given off by the rocks around him became weaker, and after another thirty measures or so he was scarcely able to see very much at all. Yet he stumbled on, feeling his way as best he could until he was sure the bird had given up its pursuit... Until he made

out a dark shape on the ground ahead of him, hopping along just beyond his reach.

In a flash he realised it was the bird that had seemed to be so threatening moments before. Except it wasn't just any bird. And certainly not one to be feared as Laztana had thought. No, in fact now it was on the ground he recognised it had the characteristic shape of a falcon – of Huor, his faithful messenger guide from Lord Kutjaran's arbour up until he fell into the Silver River!

It all came flooding back to him with even greater clarity and he had to sit down for a few moments to get everything back into perspective. His guide remained true to form however, hopping around impatiently until he was back on his feet again. It obviously wanted him to continue down the rocky passageway, although of course he had no idea where it would lead him.

Suddenly aware of the cold air surrounding him now he was so far underground, Gorin decided to change from the tunic Laztana had given him back into his own, far warmer, clothes. He then felt much better equipped to press on, leaving the water-nymphs' secret grotto and all its enchanted memories behind him.

Once out of sight of those creatures and beyond the sound of their haunting singing, the whole episode began to fade into the unreality of a beautiful dream. He could now fully concentrate on negotiating the dim passageway and following his feathered guide just a few measures ahead.

VIII - Teams associated with the Haakon Urn project

(at Wilkes Station, on the Vostok Traverse expedition and at the Melbourne Dickensen Research Institute working on transliteration, translation, and retelling).

Wilkes Station Antarctica

Photograph taken at Wilkes Station by Lieutenant Andrew Stanner, 17th Construction Squadron (Royal Australian Engineers).

Wilkes was originally built in 1957 for a two-year period. By 1964 the buildings had become a fire hazard due to fuel seepage, and the station was becoming buried by snow and ice.

The Wilkes base camp team - 1962

The "official" picture they wouldn't let us publish when they found out about the disclosures contained in this book !

Officer in charge: Richard Bader, **Medical Officer**: Tomas Kalous, **Cook**: Raheem Abaza, **Senior Diesel Mechanic**: David Robert Simmonds, **Assistant Diesel Mechanic**: John Robin Fellows, **Mechanic Driver**: Harry J. Garson, **Electrical Fitter**: George Peter Stanford, **Plumber:** Arthur John Carver, **Supervising Technician (radio)**: Robert Edward Hammond, **Radio Operator:** Eagan O'Connel, **Radio Operator**: Shirley Ann Jones, **Radio Operator**: Reg William Storey, **Radio Operator**: Henry Gerald Smith, **Meteorologist:** Harry F. Winston, **Meteorologist and Physicist**: Stanley G. Williams, **Weather Observer**: Leonard Robert Smyth-Williams, **Weather Observer**: Daniel W. Hampton, **Weather Technician**: Fred Daniel Harford, **Engineer (electronics):** Neil F. Seaton, **Physicist:** Roger E. Bywater, **Physicist (IPSO):** Samuel Lister Sandman, **Geophysicist:** Robert Overmore, **Geophysicist:** Donald McDougal, **Glaciologist:** Andrew F. Beavan.

The station, staffed by 19 Australians and four Americans during 1961-62, continued an ongoing joint scientific programme. New scientific equipment was installed including a cosmic ray neutron monitor and a laboratory for cosmic ray and glaciological research. The outstanding achievement of the year was the six-man 5,000 km traverse from Wilkes to Vostok and on to the Haakon VII plateau (where the famous Urns were discovered) led by Richard "Arctic"

Edwards. The operation to recover all the urns was mounted during the month following the return of the Traverse team.

Vostok Traverse team (1962)

Richard "Arctic" Edwards, John Westwood, Clive Thomas, Phillip McFarrel, Nigel Cranford and David Beatty.

The snow tractors used to recover and carry the Haakon Urns to Wilkes station prior to their shipment to Australia (similar to those previously used by New Zealander Edmund Hillary during his transcontinental expedition across Antarctica in 1957).

Teams based at the Melbourne Dickensen Institute

The Dickensen Research Institute

Transliteration / Linguistic team

Headed by Egyptian hieroglyphologist **Muminah al-Ubaydli** (Griffith Institute, Oxford) and made up of a team including **David William Waterford** (New Zealand, famous for his work on the Oxyrhynchus Papyri), **Vladimir Kizenski** (Lomonosov Moscow State University), expert in Sumerian phonetics and Professor **Donald Summers**, an expert in Mayan epigraphy at the University of Texas in Austin.

Editorial Committee

Chaired by Professor **J. G. Harkwood** of Melbourne University and including Professor **James Gregson** from the Archaeological Department of Sydney University, Professor **Ian Durham**, from the Edinburgh Institute of Ancient Linguistic and Hieroglyphic Studies, Dr **Arnold J. Hanwell** from the Cleveland Research Centre and **William Tarford Sn.**, Chair of Civilisation Studies at Chicago University.

Logistics backup team

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Compiler and re-teller for the original edition (1974) and augmented edition (2014-2016).

Gordon Keirle-Smith

IX – From Plaza to Palace

"Mighty gates that hold
the world within them..."

From the Preface to
"Establishment of the Golden City"

From "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 210-224

Gorin continued groping his way along the tunnel through the heart of the rock as well as conditions would allow. There was no light at all by now and he only had his sense of touch to guide his steps. Huor was ahead of him, making reassuring chirping noises every now and then to let him know he was still on the right path and they should press on.

After a while, he began to feel a gentle breath of cooler air on his cheek. An indication, he hoped, that they were at last going to emerge from these subterranean regions.

It was however some considerable time before he was able to discern any sign of light ahead, but it did come eventually, like a false dawn. Although grey and dim, it was a very welcome sight, for Gorin was beginning to fear the falcon had taken a wrong turning in the darkness. Obviously not, and Huor was still there hopping in front of him. Upon seeing the distant glimmer, the bird let out a final cry of encouragement before stretching its wings and flying off down the passageway to merge with the far-off speck of day.

Gorin was left to make his faltering way towards the light on his own. He had no idea how long he had been underground. It seemed like an age to him and he felt tired and hungry, but all he could do was push on until he came out into the open air again. He only hoped there might be some fruit trees or other source of food readily available once he finally reached the outside world.

He continued along the passageway for some time, but without the light ahead becoming much brighter. This meant the opening was still some considerable distance away - and that the tunnel leading to it was absolutely straight. So straight in fact, he felt it could not possibly be natural. This conviction became even stronger when suddenly the walls on either side of him opened out and he found himself walking into a huge cavern hollowed out of the solid rock. It was impossible to tell how high it was, nor indeed how wide, for its furthest extremities were lost in shadow. Curiously, the floor appeared to be perfectly smooth and even, quite unlike the rough surface of the passageway. There was no apparent explanation as to why so much attention had been paid to creating this vast underground chamber however, or what its function might have been.

Gorin made his way towards the place where a broader, higher corridor led from the artificial cavern and continued in a perfectly straight line towards the distant opening. He noticed that here, the floor was indented with ruts, as if wheels had run over it many times in the past. There was nothing else to give any clues as to who or what had come this way before. In any case, judging by the thick layer of undisturbed dust lying everywhere, this structure had not been used by anyone for a very long time.

He continued on down the broad corridor, the light streaming in through the opening ahead now enabling him to

fully appreciate the precision with which the walls and ceilings about him had been crafted. It also revealed the signs underfoot that this had once been a busy thoroughfare for wheeled vehicles of some kind with even greater clarity.

The forest plaza

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 225-241

At last Gorin emerged from the subterranean complex, the glare of the daylight initially making it impossible for him to see exactly where he was. Then, as his eyes readjusted, he saw he had come out onto a huge rectangular plaza overlooked by a range of low, wooded hills. He had obviously been travelling beneath them during his underground journey from the grotto, meaning the Silver River was now some distance away on the other side. His first thought was to head for the trees and see if he could find any fruit or nuts to eat, but he was not given the chance. For the falcon suddenly appeared out of nowhere and came flying straight at him, evidently wanting him to continue his journey without delay. So he reluctantly turned back and began to walk in the direction indicated by his guide.

He then started to look more closely at the plaza and how it had been built. There could be no doubt about it, this was a mammoth feat of engineering. The surface was covered by huge flagstones, as smooth as the floor of the corridor and cavern he had just travelled through. They had been fitted together with such precision that only a few sparse tufts of rough grass had managed to thrust their roots into an occasional crack. They also bore the same kind of rutted markings he had seen earlier, worn into the hard surface by constant use over a long period of time. Most peculiar of all was the way the marks ran from the mouth of the corridor and

continued across the flagstoned surface for about forty or fifty measures. They then stopped abruptly some ten measures from the edge of the plaza, where it jutted out into the void high above the treetops.

Huor's insistent cries drew Gorin away from these mysterious markings, directing him towards the forward edge of the plaza. Upon reaching it, he discovered an imposing flight of steps over seven measures wide, leading out and round and down in a ceremonial descent towards the forest floor beneath.

As he slowly made his way down the broad staircase, he had the impression of walking on air, held aloft by an incredibly elaborate structure of intertwining pillars, struts and arches. He marvelled again at the accomplishment of those who had created this unique monument to their architectural mastery. Not to mention how well it had also survived the many centuries that must have passed since it was built. From what he had learned in the Paradise Garden, this vast complex was unlikely to have been the work of those living in the City of Gold. It had to be a relic of some far earlier age, and impossible to imagine under what conditions – or for what purpose – such an edifice had been erected. Yet another of those enigmas with no immediate explanation[16].

Once he had finally reached the bottom of the grand staircase and was standing on the forest floor, Gorin looked back to take in the entire structure from this new point of vantage. In particular, he saw the end of the plaza extended a full thirty measures beyond the rockface, supported by sturdy angled struts of hewn stone. More phenomenal engineering

[16] The "Song of Gorin" devotes ten whole stanzas to the description of this edifice, indicating it was a major feature of the Garden and must have played an important role in its history. JG

making him want to know who could have been behind it almost as much as he wanted to know his own identity.

As usual, the falcon intervened to bring him back to reality and keep him focused on his true mission. With resignation, Gorin then turned towards the pathway through the forest Huor was now indicating, his spirits rising again as he caught sight of a tree bearing the delicious yellow fruit he had been given by the Harelops. He was able to fill his pockets with them before being urged on again by his merciless taskmaster, but at least he had some sustenance to keep him going during the journey that lay ahead.

The forest on this side of the hills was very similar to the one Gorin had travelled through before coming to the Silver River, although here the undergrowth was not quite as thick and invasive. It made progress easier and helped him keep up with the ever impatient falcon. As time passed, the trees became smaller and more widely spaced, making him think the City could not be too far away now. Whatever else might be said about his adventures with the water-nymphs, that episode had considerably shortened the journey, as the passageway through the hills had enabled them to avoid several thousand measures of highly challenging terrain.

By now it was late afternoon, and the golden sunlight shining through the trees cast long shadows across the fallen leaves of the previous autumn. A cool breeze sprang up, rustling the branches overhead, filling the air with a fresh scent of earth, moss and foliage. It was so very peaceful here in the forest, with the song of innumerable birds adding a musical accompaniment to the total tranquillity. Gorin felt relaxed as he made his way through the trees and shrubs, wondering if he should sleep here before going on to the City in the morning.

However, the falcon left him in no doubt on that score. Whenever he stopped, even if it was only to look at some wild

flower growing nearby, his guide would swoop down and repeat the persistent, high-pitched cries he found so jarring. In fact, Gorin began to get a little irritated by them and once even shouted back at the bird in defiance. But it did no good; the only way to keep it quiet was to keep going.

The approaches to the City

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 242-261

At last, the trees thinned out until there were only a few saplings left, and even these were not very plentiful. Gorin emerged from the last grove of them to see, immediately ahead of him, some more even ground which might have been under cultivation long ago. Now it was largely overgrown with hedgerows and brambles emerging from a dense carpet of rampant, ground-smothering vines. Except he was no longer interested in the vegetation. For beyond the tangled masses of twigs and tendrils, grasses and bushes, a massive hill, long, broad and flat rose from the plain. On that hill, glinting in the light of the setting sun, stood the City of Gold.

Gorin had a much clearer view of it this time, for it was now no more than two thousand measures distant. And what he saw quite took his breath away, as understanding fully dawned on him that no city could ever be its equal. No matter how long the Earth had existed, or might endure.

The mighty perimeter walls were made of golden-coloured stone, given additional fire by the rays of the reddening sun as it sank towards the horizon. From where he was standing, they appeared to rise straight up out of the rock they were built upon, with no visible line to mark where the ground ended and they began. This gave the whole form of the structure a great continuity with its foundations, suggesting the hill itself was indeed artificial. The sheer size of it defied belief, stretching

away on either side and giving the impression it went on forever.

The City's buildings within the walls were equally resplendent in the last rays of the day and seemed to be built from much the same kind of materials as the outer ramparts. There was a difference however, in the way some of the towers had an even more pronounced golden gleam to them and, although it was hard to believe, Gorin supposed they actually were covered in pure gold. He could also make out a number of tall spires with a slightly greenish tinge to them while others, in the centre of the City, were pure white in colour.[17]

It was not very easy to pick out any more details, but nonetheless, Gorin's first impression of the City of Gold from so close at hand was something he would never forget. This was due to its sheer immensity, but also to its unique lambency, much more apparent now than from the Lord's arbour and stronger than anything of its kind he had seen so far. Here, it created a vibrant, golden aura radiating from every stone, every buttress, every tower, every monument - hovering about the entire City and holding him hypnotised for what seemed like an eternity.

Finally, he started to skirt the forest, still transfixed by the vision in front of him. The abandoned fields were now on his right as he made his way around the golden walls in search of the gates. When he came in sight of them at last, he stopped again, staggered by the sheer immensity of the stone structure framing them. He then noticed there were the remains of an

[17] Due to the many centuries during which very few ever ventured outside the City walls, this more detailed description of its exterior aspect contained in the "Song of Gorin" is almost unique. However, we cannot be entirely sure that whoever wrote the "Song" was really describing it from firsthand experience, or was conjuring up an imaged idea of what it must have looked like from outside. JG.

old, overgrown road leading across the flatter land towards them and lost no time in following its track.

Huor watched its charge keenly from the edge of the forest for a few moments as he headed towards the City. The noble bird felt proud of having completed its mission successfully, despite all the unforeseen challenges, and was certain its master would be well-pleased.

As Gorin began approaching the ramparts, the falcon took to the air one final time, flying above him along the course of the old road. He watched it rise higher in the air to cross the walls and then disappear into the complexity of the City itself, leaving him with only one conscious purpose – to follow its direction.

The roadway leading up to the massive gates was in very bad repair, with enormous clumps of grass and brambles pushing up between the fractured paving stones. It was obviously no longer used by any travellers and must have been abandoned long ago. The great golden gates also showed every sign of having been closed centuries before, judging by the windblown piles of earth and debris littering the ground in front of them. All this clearly indicated the City's inhabitants had absolutely no desire to leave their walled home or be disturbed by anyone or anything from beyond it.

This brought home to Gorin some of the things Lord Kutjaran had told him about the City and its inhabitants. Although he felt it might actually apply to all those living in the Garden. Their idyllic existence… Their unending preoccupation with celebration… Their blind determination to preserve the state of bliss forever… And the lack of curiosity or "original thought", as Kutjaran had described it, implying it was particularly true in the City of Gold. Well, he mused, if that were the case, then these impenetrable walls and permanently closed gates would indeed make the City the

greatest example of this self-perpetuated, introspective isolation.

More details of the City's fabulous design became clearer the nearer he came, bringing his thoughts back to the here and now. He took in the soaring towers, the ornate embellishments, the columns with their gilded capitals and interconnecting arches; all combining to form a complex trelliswork of golden stone against the background of the dark blue sky.

The light was beginning to fail faster now as the sun set behind the forest, but even with the golden rays no longer falling on the City walls, they were still radiant with the warmth of their own glow. As he continued walking, this was bright enough for him to make out even more details. For example, at least three different types of stone had been used to construct the buildings; each one of them emitting its own particular quality of light. Then all that was blotted out as he drew ever nearer and the walls loomed up in front of him, filling his entire field of vision.

Craning his neck to look at the top of the ramparts, Gorin was able to make out a line of statues extending as far as he could see to the right and to the left. They appeared to be moulded in pure gold, and he was particularly struck by the exquisite craftsmanship used to create them.

The frieze obviously represented the time when the fields around the City walls were under cultivation, for the figures could be seen sowing, tending and harvesting the abundant fruits of the earth. Some had scythes in their hands, while others had flails for separating the grain from the chaff or were shown carrying great sheaves of wheat to places of storage. Their faces were remarkably sculpted and had a dignified, noble air about them as they worked in harmony with Nature, almost transcending the human form. Too good perhaps, too comely, even for the Paradise Garden.

Gorin supposed this must depict the people of the City as they were when it was first established. However, in view of what he had been told, it was clear their present-day reality was somewhat different.

He then turned his attention to the huge gates in front of him and some of the carved designs they had been endowed with. These consisted of sculpted panels showing a series of scenes, presumably some of the major events in the City's early history. He also immediately noticed one particular motif dominated all the others wherever he looked; pairs of feathered wings stretched out in flight. One enormous set in solid gold was mounted on the architrave above the closed portals, supported by the marble columns flanking them.

This motif appeared in several other contexts on the decorative panels, invariably surmounting a schematic representation of the City. It looked as if the wings were there to protect this mighty architectural achievement, while another series of designs appeared to be showing them playing a role in the City's development. However, he had little time to work out the significance of all this symbolic decoration, for something else began to attract his attention.

"We have been expecting you"

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 261-279

Coming from beyond the gates, inside the City of Gold, Gorin could hear the sounds of singing and music. A large number of people were obviously taking part in festivities of some kind and judging by all the noise they were making, it was an occasion of great celebration. He felt a tremendous urge to be part of it and see for himself what the people inside this fabulous City were really like. But what was he going to do now? It was obviously pointless in knocking on those mighty

gates, for no one would hear him. Yet there was no other apparent way of entering.

At that moment, he heard a soft scraping sound to the left of where he was standing. He turned and saw a dark crack gradually widening in the cluster of columns to the side of the closed portal. A door was slowly opening, apparently leading into the pitch black interior of the wall.

Initially, there was no indication as to who or what was opening it, and although he imagined it was meant for him, Gorin hesitated before making any move. He then saw a glimmer of light coming from beyond the door, and a hand bearing a flickering lamp emerged as it opened fully to reveal a slightly hunched man shrouded in a long, dark garment.

The mysterious figure stepped forward, but it was difficult to make out his features, for they were hidden in the shadow of a voluminous cowl covering his head. All he could make out with any certainty were the strands of a white beard emerging from the robe's all-enveloping folds. It suggested the newcomer was a very old man, borne out by the fact that he was supporting himself on a sturdy, gnarled staff.

"Come along Gorin," said the old man in a thin, curiously high-pitched voice. "We have been expecting you. Come in and let us see how we can help one another."

So saying, he turned away and went back into the darkness. Gorin followed, presuming this to be the person Kutjaran had told him about. Once through the door, it closed behind him, shutting out the failing light of day and making it almost impossible for him to see anything for a moment. The lamp held by the old man in front of him only emitted a fitful gleam, but it gradually became possible to make out a steep flight of steps leading upwards, within the thickness of the City wall.

The old man began to climb the stairs and Gorin followed, slightly surprised at this clandestine entry into the City of Gold. There was no time to devote much thought to the question however, for he had to fully concentrate on negotiating the ancient stairway in the weak lamplight. Some of the steps were covered with slippery lichen, making them very treacherous and he was afraid he might slip at any moment. Thankfully, the old man's cautious, slow progress eventually brought them to the top of the stairway safely, from where he began leading Gorin down a long, narrow corridor.

When they had walked for about twenty or thirty measures, the old man made a sign for Gorin to stop. He then turned towards him and spoke in his strange, almost uncanny voice, rendered even more unreal by the echoes reverberating from the stone walls.

“We will shortly be passing through the door taking us onto the high ramparts of the City. From there you will be able to look out over the avenue leading towards the Great Palace Square. This will most probably be entirely unfamiliar to you. So if you are surprised by anything you see, now or later, it is most important you keep it to yourself. We don’t want people realising you have come from beyond the walls. At least, not yet."

Leaving Gorin even more perplexed about this need for discretion, the old man turned away. He then moved forward a few paces until the lamplight gleamed on metal bolts and a door appeared, set in the wall. Within moments, it was creaking open and the evening sky could be seen again, framed by the obscurity of the interior. It was getting quite dark by now, and the first stars were already appearing. They were not alone however, for another source of light was challenging the darkness from below. A brighter radiance that flickered and

danced, leapt and writhed as if possessed by some demonic spirit.

Stepping out onto the ramparts, Gorin saw the light was coming from a huge open space some fifty measures away at the end of a broad thoroughfare. A number of bright fires were burning there, casting the shadows of their contorting flames onto an array of imposing facades. That had to be the Palace Square, thought Gorin, for on the far side he could see the mighty towers he had already been told belonged to the palace complex. They looked even more wonderful now, for although they had appeared impressive when Kutjaran pointed them out from his vantage point in the Garden, nothing could compare with their true magnificence as Gorin now saw it.

The seven towers, of varying heights, complemented by a series of arches, turrets and pinnacles, were all glowing with their own unique aura. Each one was made of a different material and gave out a correspondingly different light. The first glowed darkly, with a subdued, reddish hue like a dormant volcano, the second emitted a greenish, coppery incandescence; the third had the whiteness of porcelain, reflecting the colour of all the others and the blush of the flames down in the Square. The fourth tower was also white, but more translucent, like alabaster, and throbbed with a pulsing red glow deep within it reminiscent of a beating heart. The fifth tower stood proud and tall, fashioned in highly polished bronze and decorated with elaborate cast figurines and intricate filigree carvings. Taller still, stood a silver tower, shining with the reflective power of a mirror and mimicking the images of all the other towers around it. Finally, outreaching all the others in majesty and in stature, a tower scintillating with the glory of fulgent gold defiantly thrust its spire into the darkening night sky.

Despite the old man's word of caution, Gorin could do little but stand and gape at the scene before him. For not only was the Palace alive with an inner light of its own, but so were all the houses and public buildings he could see around him. This meant that although there was almost no trace of the sun left in the gathering night sky, he had no difficulty in picking out the City's various districts and monuments, laid out before him like a gigantic map. Wherever he looked there were copings, domes and elegant porticos, colonnades, rotundas and mosaics… In fact, all the buildings, even those he took to be dwellings, had the appearance of each being a major feat of architectural design.

"Renewal of the Year" celebrations

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 279-299

The fires down in the Palace Square were the focal point of all the noisy revelry Gorin had heard when he stood in front of the golden portal. Many of the merry-makers had their hands joined to form a circle around the blazing logs, some of them spinning franticly. At the same time, others were busy turning large, dark, unevenly shaped objects supported by long sticks resting on two supports just above the licking flames. A curious smell filled the air, not altogether unpleasant, but he was at a loss to decide what it was.

"Yes, this is Zandernatis," said the old man slowly. "The finest city on Earth, called Golden at its creation and Golden still, despite all the changes it has undergone across the centuries. But do not judge everything by what you see down there in the Square; for most of the people, celebration has become a whole way of life now. Until there can be a change..."

"Are they celebrating anything in particular?"

"Oh yes, there is always a reason. Tonight for example, it is for the renewal of the year, an ancient festival dating back to the time when the City lived by the land. Nowadays, it serves to remind us of our dependence upon the Earth for supporting us, though many people have even forgotten that in latter years. We owe so much to our abundant, carefree existence here and this particular night is our way of expressing our appreciation of it. But unfortunately..." He sighed and shook his head.

"What is it?" asked Gorin, sensing a deep sadness in the old man's voice.

"Just… nothing can be forever, unless you really deserve it. Something the people of Zandernatis no longer want to remember. But come, we must not stay too long up here; I don't want too many people noticing us. Especially with you in those clothes."

Gorin looked down at what he was wearing. They were the same clothes he had found himself in when he first woke up in the Garden. Just the jacket, shirt and trousers. Why should they attract any particular attention? The old man muttered they would have to do until they could get something a little more uniform with everyone else, and then indicated a flight of steps leading down to the base of the wall. As they descended, they lost sight of the Square and the Palace, but the sound of the merry-making could still be heard everywhere and the strange smell of the roasting food was equally inescapable.

The old man guided Gorin through the narrow streets close to the outer wall, every step bringing something new to his attention. Here it was the unique style of a particular building, the sculptures ornamenting it, and there a fresco, frieze, or flamboyant window. Wherever he looked, he saw again many variations on the outstretched wings theme

dominating the outer gates. They were in evidence over practically every doorway, sometimes even forming whole porticos. He tried asking the old man what they signified, but his companion went on ahead as if he had not heard the question. Gorin therefore resigned himself to following his guide and taking in as much as possible, for everything was so new to him.

As they made their way through the almost deserted side streets, drawing ever closer to the Palace Square, the sound of music and laughter became louder and more intense. They then turned a corner and saw ahead of them the glow of the cooking fires, partially obscured by the indistinct silhouettes of people dancing and milling in front of them.

Gorin's attention was suddenly diverted from what was happening up ahead by the sound of a group of young men approaching them from behind. Judging by their raucous singing, they had already been having their own private party before coming on to join the public celebrations:

> "*Make haste to the revels, never be late,*
> *for the pleasures that all men celebrate.*
> *Coming anew in the year's creation,*
> *drain your cups in celebration*
> *to the greatness of which each man a part is,*
> *in the Golden City of Zandernatis.*"
>
> *Songs of Celebration – Book IV – N° VI*

Still singing for all they were worth, the young men drew level with Gorin and his shadowy guide, passing by without giving them a second glance. They were far too intent upon their merry-making to notice a pair of figures going their own, unhurried way towards the bright lights in the Square. Within moments, the sound of their voices had blended with the

thousands of others raised in the same song of praise and contentment. Gorin began to be intrigued by the intensity with which these people living in the City of Gold threw themselves into their revels. As he stepped into the Palace Square led by the shrouded figure ahead of him, he had the opportunity to see more.

They came upon a scene of wild abandon; men and women in all kinds of colourful costumes, earnestly launching themselves into a frenetic dance to the constant pulse of a hypnotic beat. This came from a group of musicians performing on a platform raised above the heads of the throng. Gorin spent a few moments absorbing all he could of the activity taking place in front of him.

He could see it had the same kind of underlying sincerity and simplicity he had observed in the Harelops' enjoyment. Except this was taken to a new level of fervour. Almost as if everyone was afraid they might never have another opportunity of celebrating anything again.

All the activity was centred around the three fires of blazing timber, twigs and branches burning in the midst of the seething crowd. Above these hung what could now be clearly discerned as the slowly rotating carcasses of animals, from which everyone was free to carve off as much meat as they desired. Strategically placed around the Square also stood several huge oaken casks, where revellers could fill and refill their tankards, quaffing down the richly foaming brew to add even more spirit to their singing and dancing.

Gorin absorbed all these new sights and sounds as best he could, mesmerised by the contrast between the wild, abandoned merry-making before him and the stately formality of the richly decorated buildings in the background. Until his fascination was interrupted by an insistent tugging at his sleeve. He turned to find the old man urging him on, directing

him around the side of the Square towards the Palace. He reluctantly did as he was asked, but never took his eyes off the hosts of people putting so much raw energy into their enjoyment.

Encounter with the revellers

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 299-324

His staring eyes and expression of naive disbelief finally caught the eye of a group of revellers standing next to an enormous table, overflowing with the most amazing array of delicacies, sweetmeats and wine pitchers. There were perhaps half a dozen young men and as many girls dressed, like all the others, in brightly coloured, even garish, clothing. Judging by their unsteady balance and exaggerated laughter, they had all been celebrating for some considerable time.

Once Gorin realised they had spotted him, his only thought was to become less conspicuous and melt into the crowd. But it was too late. They had already started towards him. One of the young men, clothed in a blue tunic and bright red trousers, hailed him in a challenging, though kindly, voice.

"Hey there, friend. What are you looking so miserable about? On a day like this! You're supposed to be having a good time."

"I know," answered Gorin, forcing a pleasant smile as the young people gathered around him. "And I am! Truly."

"Well show it then," said a girl in a revealing, low cut lime-green and red spotted dress, putting her hand on his shoulder. "Instead of looking like you're scared of us. We're your friends."

"We're everyone's friends," said another, heartily slapping him on the back.

But what's the fancy dress for?" enquired another of the girls, looking him up and down. "The costume ball was yesterday!”

Gorin could not hide his surprise at this comment. For the brightly coloured, extravagantly styled clothes all the revellers were wearing looked much more like party garb than the rather subdued, rough and practical garments he was wearing.

3What is this then?" he asked.

The revellers looked at him in sheer disbelief, before exchanging concerned glances.

3You mean you don't know?" said one of the young men, who appeared to be the group's leader. "How can that be? It's Renewal Day, for Cosmo's sake! Everyone knows that! The most important festival of the year!"

"Until tomorrow," the first girl reminded him. "The Feast of the Angels."

"Never mind about tomorrow," the leader replied. "We're only concerned by today."

Gorin finally had to admit he knew virtually nothing about Renewal Day, or indeed about anything else to do with the City, its customs and way of life.

"You see, I woke up a couple of days ago and couldn't remember anything of what happened to me before. Where I come from, what I've been doing, who I am. Nothing!"

This revelation seemed to have quite a sobering effect on the revellers. They all gaped at him in disbelief for a moment.

"How very strange," said the young man in red trousers. "You mean you really can't remember things like which part of the City you come from, who your friends are, who you’re bonded to, any of that?"

"Nothing," reasserted Gorin.

“I know who you are!” suddenly cried another of the men who had been staring intently at Gorin ever since the group started talking to him.

“You do?” exclaimed Gorin, turning round to look at him, a smile beginning to spread over his face.

“But of course,” the man said, lunging forward and hugging Gorin tightly as tears began to pour down his face. “You were my sister, my little sister Drianne... all those lives ago... I never thought I’d ever find you again.”

Gorin recoiled in horror. What was this? Was the man totally drunk? Delusional? Mad...?

“Are you sure?” asked red trousers. “But that’s wonderful!”

“We must celebrate!” exclaimed lime-green and red spotted dress.

“Hooray!” everyone chorused, cheering at the tops of their voices and jumping up and down in a frenzy of delight.

Gorin began to get really scared by their exuberance, understanding absolutely nothing of what was going on. It did enable him to escape the emotional embraces of his self-declared “former brother” though, who was now busy being hugged by all his friends who wanted to share the joy of his long hoped-for reunion.

When the “brother” finally realised Gorin was no longer in the midst of the happy party, he broke away from the group, but was stopped short.

"You must forgive my nephew, he's not quite himself."

All heads turned to look at the old man who was raising his hand in a commanding gesture, his other arm securely around Gorin’s shoulders.

"He's a little confused, I'm afraid. I think he's been celebrating a bit too much this evening and the mead has gone

to his head. And when that happens, he really can't remember who he is. Let alone who he was..."

"But I'm telling you, I *do* know who he was..."

"Well, perhaps you do," said the old man, patiently. "But in his present state, it won't mean anything to him, I'm sorry. Come along my boy, let me take you back home and you can rest. Everything will be better in the morning."

The old man grasped Gorin firmly by the arm and began to lead him away from the puzzled group of revellers. Except this only served to intensify their curiosity as they followed the pair of them, asking more questions and offering any help they could provide.

"But surely we can do something?"

"Will she remember me tomorrow then? We've got so much to catch up on..."

"I'm sure... she will." Gorin looked at the old man in horror. "If you would like to come back here tomorrow, two hours after bells, everything will probably be just as you would like it."

"Just a minute," the leader suddenly said, stopping in his tracks. "This just doesn't happen. Never. When there's a recognition it's always mutual. And there's always a celebration. If it doesn't follow the pattern, there must be something seriously wrong..."

A murmur ran through the group of revellers and, for the first time that evening, some of their exuberance seemed to fall away. They exchanged glances and then began staring at Gorin as if they were seeing him for the first time.

The old man paused in his passage across the Square, nervously pulling the folds of his cowl about his face to make his features even more obscure. He then turned to address those who were following him and Gorin, keeping his charge's

arm in a tight grip that was surprisingly strong for a man of his apparent age.

"Gentlemen and ladies," he said. "We appreciate the concern you have for my nephew, but please understand… when you're feeling as he feels, the only remedy is peace and seclusion. Your sentiments are well received, but I must ask you to allow me to bring him to his home without any further interference. He has nothing that rest cannot cure. To put it simply, his condition results from a kind of over-excitement, brought on by his excessive celebratory zeal. I am sure all of you are totally dedicated to your happiness in the City, but you are fortunate it never gets out of hand."

The old man turned towards his "nephew" and put his arm protectively around Gorin's shoulders again.

"Whereas for him," he said, turning to address the revellers once more, "his devotion to fulfilling the purpose of Zandernatis is so extreme he has to rediscover it time and time again. He is, if you will, a martyr to celebration. A destiny that is not easy to assume, but an example for us all. So at this time, celebrating a recognition really would be too much for him..."

The revellers nodded their heads and muttered a few words to each other, looking at Gorin with visible signs of admiration for such a "martyr" on their faces.

"Thank you so much for your concern, but the best thing would be for you all to return to the festivities and continue partying on his behalf. I will make sure he gets home safely and has the rest he deserves."

"Very well. But tomorrow..."

"Tomorrow will be another day. And something you can all really look forward to!"

"Two hours after bells then…"

"That's right."

With a few waves and smiles, the revellers took a last look at Gorin, one of the girls even leaning forward to kiss him lightly on the cheek. The “brother” brushed away a final tear... Moments later they had joined a flourishing dance, their peals of gleeful mirth soon banishing all thoughts of the strangely clad “sister” martyr to celebration from their minds. Until the morrow...

The old man looked quizzically at Gorin, "I hope we managed to quell their suspicions," he said.

"What was there to be suspicious about? Apart from me suffering from a loss of memory. Which is perfectly true! But what was all that about me being his ‘sister’?"

The old man grunted, muttering something about it actually being the revellers who had overdone the celebrating. He then hurried Gorin across the remainder of the Square, making sure he had no more opportunities to stop and attract attention. Within a few moments, the Palace was looming up in front of them, the main facade and the wide, ceremonial steps leading up to the great colonnaded entrance filling their view.

A night in the Palace

from “The Song of Gorin” Stanzas 324-357

Instead of directing Gorin towards the main doors of the Palace, where they appeared to be heading, the old man turned to the right just before reaching the ceremonial steps. He then led his charge away from the bright lights of the festivities and down another street running along one side of the elaborately styled building. Once he was sure there was no chance of their conversation being overheard, he relaxed his grip on Gorin's arm and spoke to him in a low and confidential tone.

"When we are in my rooms, I shall explain many things to you," he said. "There is also much I cannot speak of until the time is right. For the moment, you are here, and you will have the opportunity of learning about the City and the history of the people who live in it. You will be given access to the writings foretelling the events now coming to pass and you will perhaps be able to see the pattern they are taking. Then, when you are ready, the next stage of your journey will begin... And the most important phase of our impending destiny."

Needless to say, all this had little meaning for Gorin, and the old man was unwilling to reveal any more information on the subject just then.

"You will know everything you need before long," was all he would say. "But such things are best kept away from any stray ears that might be abroad. Besides, we are almost at the entrance to my rooms. We will be able to talk later."

They had progressed some way along the side of the Palace by now and the silver tower was reaching up right above them. The old man guided Gorin to a small door set in the wall of the great building. He produced an enormous key from beneath his long cloak and fitted it into the lock. The door opened, making scarcely a sound. He motioned Gorin to enter.

Once they were both inside, he was led down a short passage and through another door. This gave onto a room where the warm glow of firelight made it look inviting, almost cosy.

The old man walked forward and carefully lit two lamps standing on a massive bench in the middle of the room. He beckoned Gorin to enter and allowed him some moments to take in his new surroundings.

The room was high and broad, its walls made of golden stone similar to that used for the Palace's exterior, although without the same lambent quality. The enormous fireplace on

the right was surmounted by a wide chimney breast continuing up to the lofty arches overhead. Furnishings were simple, all of them made of the same dark wood and appearing extremely solid and probably very old.

Against the left hand wall was a large bookcase full of dusty tomes, some looking as if they had not been disturbed for centuries. Next to the fireplace and beneath a window showing the wall to be almost two measures thick, was a smaller worktable. This bore an unimaginable array of mortars, tubes and strange implements as well as glass vessels containing a variety of coloured substances, all neatly labelled.

However, the room's most prominent feature was a spiral staircase starting at the foot of the opposite wall and climbing around the chamber. It finally became lost in the shadows gathering beneath the vaulted ceiling.

Looking around, Gorin could see there were more books on the central bench and beyond it, a doorway leading into an inner room. The furnishing was completed by what looked like a portable forge, used presumably in conjunction with the fire, for there was a massive set of bellows by the side of it. He also noticed a low bed standing by the wall next to the bookcase.

The old man drew out two stools from under the bench and invited Gorin to sit on one of them. He then went off into the inner room and returned almost at once with a tray bearing some bread and cheese.

"I'm afraid there is little else I can offer you," he said. "But food is the least of my concerns, you know. There are so many other, more important things to think about."

Gorin did not stop to ask what, because he knew he would not be given a direct answer. He was also feeling rather hungry, and welcomed the change from fruit and nuts. The old man took nothing himself but went on talking all the time his guest was eating.

"So here you are at last," he began. "It's been a long road from the Lord of the Garden's arbour, eh? Well now, perhaps I should begin by telling you my name. Unless you know it already. Do you, by any chance?"

Gorin assured him he did not, wondering how he could possibly have been expected to, since everyone had been as mysterious and secretive as the old man himself ever since he met up with the Harelops. In any case, by now he had the distinct impression he was always the last person to know anything.

"Good," said the old man, "and I suppose everything you have seen here so far is new and strange to you, isn't it?"

He stared hard at Gorin, almost defying him to say something to the contrary. However, he seemed pleased to hear - through the mouthfuls of bread and cheese - that his guest did indeed find it all very strange, very wonderful and quite the most amazing experience he'd had since his awakening.

"Splendid! And just as it should be. So, you are Gorin, eh? Well, I am known as Hexard." He paused to see if *this* information would provoke any kind of reaction, but none was forthcoming.

"When you have finished your meal, I think the best thing would be for you to get some rest. You can sleep there." He indicated the low bed in the room where they were sitting. "You will then be fresh and relaxed tomorrow morning, ready to start everything with the new day."

Hexard paused for a moment, choosing his words carefully. "There is one thing I must ask you to understand, though. We want as few people as possible to know of your presence here. Therefore, you should not leave this room unless I am with you or someone designated by me. Is that clear?"

"Am I to be a prisoner, then?" asked Gorin.

"Certainly not, no. It's just for everything to succeed, we want to run as few risks as possible. Remember what happened out there in the Square... I'll give you plenty to keep you occupied, so don't think you'll get bored. There's enough knowledge contained in this room to keep one hundred people busy for a year. But I won't be asking that of you!"

Hexard laughed, and for the first time Gorin could see his features clearly as he pushed back his cowl and took off his cloak. It was a gentle face, with eyes that were young in the way they sparkled and yet betrayed an infinite wisdom accrued over many, many years. His beard was white, as was his hair, and his skin looked like parchment. In fact, it was almost transparent - and yet held just enough colour to prevent him from looking unnaturally pale. He might be old, but Gorin could detect a powerful vitality about him, radiating in an almost tangible way.

"So," he went on, "we will begin with everything in the morning. Perhaps then you will find some of the answers to all those questions buzzing around in your head; which I'm sure will please you, won't it?"

Gorin agreed it would indeed and thanked Hexard for the food before rising from his place and going over to the bed, realising there was no choice but to wait for the morning. He wasn't going to learn anything more tonight, obviously. Then, just as the old man bade him good night and was about to retire into the inner room, there came a familiar noise at a small opening high in the vaulted roof. It was the flapping of a bird's wings. Hexard looked up and smiled, calling out some pet name Gorin did not recognise and could not understand. A second later, his messenger falcon guide was in the room, letting out a string of little cries as if to say, "Mission accomplished".

Hexard fed the bird some succulent morsel and stroked it gently when it perched on his outstretched arm. He murmured something, whereupon it took to the air once more, flew towards Gorin and then around the room before disappearing through the opening high above them.

"One of my most faithful servants," said Hexard, "and one of the oldest, known to you as Huor. I'm sure he'll not be sorry to go back to the trees around the Lord of the Garden's arbour now. Even a bird like him won't be of much use to you next time you're out there on your own. My goodness, no."

With these words he turned and entered the inner room, leaving Gorin trying to understand what he had meant by that last remark. But he knew there was no point. So, with a sigh of resignation, he settled down on the bed - which turned out to be far more comfortable than it looked. The fire in the great hearth gradually died down until only the barest flicker played on the ceiling above. Gorin watched it for a while, mulling the day over.

He thought about everything he had seen in this incredible place – and how starkly it contrasted with the realm of Kutjaran. The domain of hybrids, sprites, harmony with Nature and simple delights… It helped him see what Hexard had meant when he said celebration had become a whole way of life in the City.

Gradually, tiredness overwhelmed the multitude of thoughts tumbling through his mind, and he drifted into a sleep bringing welcome respite from all the uncertainties surrounding him.

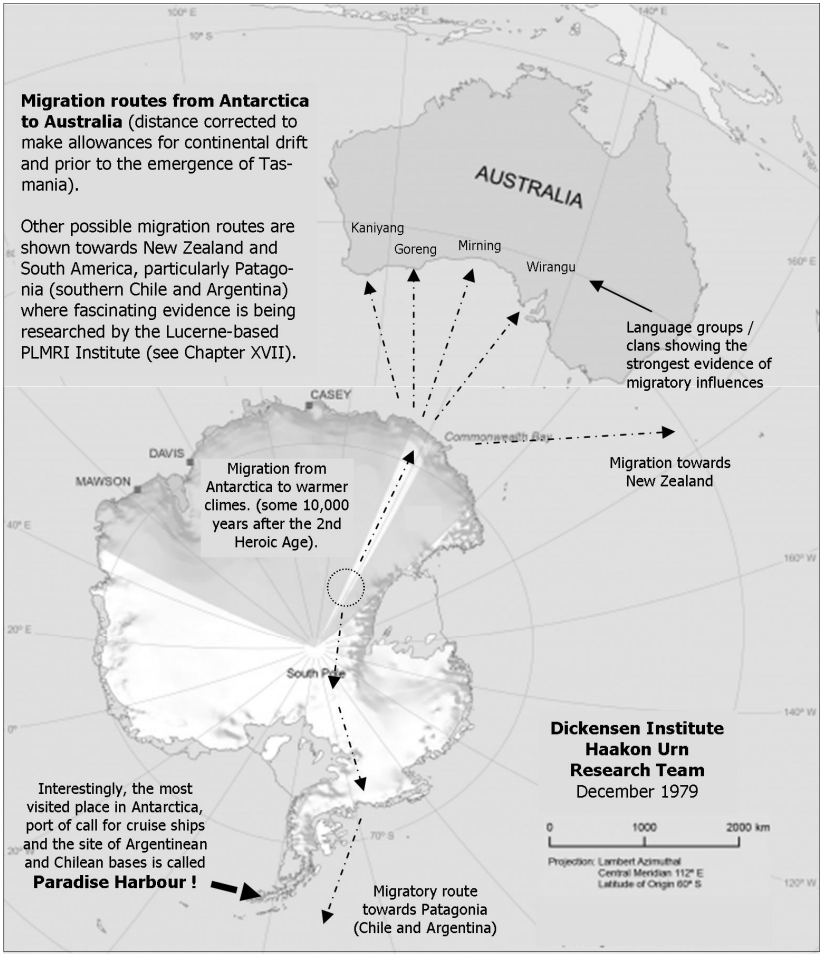
X - Zandernatis, Aboriginal mythology and "The Dreaming"

Following the theft of the original manuscripts in 1976, and faced with the huge frustration at being unable to pursue their research, some members of the Melbourne-based teams decided to look a little closer at Aboriginal culture to see if it had been influenced by the ancient civilisation on Antarctica. They reasoned that, as the southern continent became more inhospitable, there would have been a migration to the warmer climate of Australia further north and some elements of the ancient Zandernation culture might have survived and become incorporated into later traditions.

In this context, it is interesting to note that the Australian Aboriginals are reputed to have inherited the oldest living culture in the world, with conventional science acknowledging it is at least 50,000 or perhaps even 65,000 years old. The people themselves trace their origins back to what is known as "The Dreaming" or "Dreamtime", when the Ancestral Lord Protectors moved across the land, nurturing life and shaping significant geographical features. The Dreaming, or 'Tjukurrpa', also means to 'see and understand the law' as translated from the Arrernte language word *Altyerrenge* by Frank Gillen and Baldwin Spencer (authors of *The Native Tribes of Australia* published in 1899). This explains why these peoples also believe "The Dreaming" to be the place where souls go between incarnations. For this is the place where they are able to "see and

understand" their past lives in order to plan the fresh experiences that will make up their next existence.

Before European settlement of Australia, there were around 600 different Aboriginal nations, based on language groups. These were divided into two major types: those living inland and those living along the coastline, imposing environmental differences that led to different views being held about the nature of human life and death and the part dreams played in them. But a number of beliefs, such as reincarnation and "The Dreaming" itself were universal.



The Dreaming

"Dreamtime" has at least four basic aspects: The origins of all things; The influence of the Ancestor Protectors; The way of life and death and The sources of power in life. It includes all of these four facets simultaneously, in what Aboriginals call the 'all-at-once' time instead of the 'one-thing-after-another' time. In other words, "Dreamtime" is a state in which the past, present and future coexist and are compatible with each other. Some of the Dickensen Institute researchers suggest this could be a racial memory of the Paradise Garden and, in particular, the ceaseless celebration of the present in Zandernatis (as well as its people's ability to remember past lives "all-at-once"). They point out that this kind of belief is particularly strongly held by those speaking the Goreng (Gorin?), Kaniyang, Mirning and Wirangu languages in the south-western coastal areas of Australia, roughly between modern day Perth and Adelaide. It is argued that migrants coming from the cooling continent to the South would have been most likely to make first landfall in this region.

Responsibilities

The protocols governing social behaviour and consequences are also evident in Dreaming stories. These dictate that "Virtue in Aboriginal beliefs lies in the obligation to follow ancestral precedent". Among other things, this involves keeping the Dreaming stories alive. A goal achieved via various forms of painting, song, dance or ceremony, all inextricably linked. These bear witness to a pre-existent heritage of great wisdom and complexity which must be preserved and passed on to successive generations.

Researchers are convinced this suggests an underlying racial awareness of something far older, far greater and far more precious than is apparent at first glance. Something involving outside forces with seemingly superhuman powers and infinite wisdom. An ideal that was to be the source of everything the human race would always yearn for, and on which all our legends have been based ever since.

XI - The Golden City

"This City of perfection,
This home in Paradise."

King Primos I

From "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 358-361

Gorin was awakened by Hexard early the next morning, the old man muttering there was little time to waste. He was shown a place where he could wash, a small alcove just off the main chamber, with a water jug, ewer and even some soap for him to use.

The room looked quite cheerful in the sunlight streaming through the window, and because of it he was able to see much more of the old man's quarters. The ceiling was indeed as high as it had seemed the night before - that had been no trick of the lamplight – and he was now able to see the spiral staircase in more detail. His eyes followed it around and up into the arched ceiling where it finally disappeared into a dark aperture over fifteen measures above his head. It was not possible to see what lay beyond, but Gorin supposed it must lead to the upper reaches of the Palace.

His consideration of this possibility was abruptly cut short by Hexard coming back into the room carrying a tray of food. When the old man saw Gorin had not yet finished his ablutions, he began to show a little impatience.

"Come, come, it's no time to sit around dreaming, you know. Dear me, so much for you to relearn and we aren't going to have very long. Please hurry up. Oh, and here's something else you can put on. Better than those rough country clothes."

He handed Gorin a tunic, similar to those worn by the young men they had seen in the Palace Square the previous evening. There were also some trousers to match. Fortunately not in the garish colours that seemed to be so popular among the City people; these garments were brownish green. In fact, he was pleased to get out of his original clothes, for their roughly woven fabric had begun to chafe his skin.

Within a few moments he was ready and eating the bread Hexard had brought. This time the old man ate as well, although sparingly. He appeared to be lost in thought as if searching the farthest reaches of his mind in contemplation of some profound problem.

The more he saw of Hexard, the more Gorin realised he was subject to changes of mood or behaviour from one moment to the next, presumably at will. This appeared to indicate a constant ebb and flow of thoughts, at times making him quite unaware of his immediate surroundings.

This particular instant was a case in point. The second before, he had been urging Gorin to hurry up like a schoolmaster confronted with an undisciplined pupil. Yet now he was lost in his inner thoughts and oblivious to the fact that Gorin had hurried up, finished eating and was quite ready for whatever the day might have in store for him.

A few more moments passed and then Hexard suddenly got up, went over to the bench where he had left his cloak the night before, picked it up and turned to speak to Gorin.

"I think you must first see the City by day," he said. "So you can at least know something of what this is all about. It is perhaps at its best in the morning, before there are too many

people around. Follow me, but take care; one or two of the steps are a little unsafe."

So saying, he made his way to the winding flight of stairs and, with some caution, began to climb. Gorin followed, wondering to which point of vantage he was being taken - perhaps into one of those magnificent towers? There was little time for speculation however, since the stairs did indeed appear to have been worn by many centuries of use, and he had to fully concentrate on where he was putting his feet.

They followed the course of the staircase as it wound around the great chamber, coming ever nearer to the point where it vanished into the vaulted ceiling. Looking down, Gorin could see the room from a different perspective and discovered many new things he had not noticed before. On top of the bookcases were thick layers of dust covering more glass vessels, similar to those arrayed on the bench. There were also some more old books kept up there as far as he could make out, but everything was so dusty and festooned with cobwebs many of the objects were not easily identifiable.

As they drew nearer the roof, Gorin turned his attention to examining it more closely, amazed at the way it had been constructed. To all appearances it was made of the same stones as everything else, but here the pieces were cut with such precision it was hard to be certain where one block ended and the next began. Indeed, the immensity of them was something to wonder at. Each stone was at least six measures across and in some parts appeared to have been dressed within its very thickness to form the curve of the vaulted roof.

Rising from four pillars standing around the chamber below, the ribbed supports came together at a point now not far above Gorin's head. He looked up and saw there was a small but elaborately carved boss where the ribs came together forming a cross, once again featuring the motif of the

outstretched wings. Only this time a perfectly formed rose had been incorporated into the design. He hoped in the course of his promised instruction, Hexard would explain why the winged symbol was so much in evidence all over the City, for it obviously had some kind of significance beyond mere decoration.

At last they came to the point where the staircase passed through the opening in the ceiling. This made the next few steps more difficult to climb, for they only had light coming from the room below to see by. Then Gorin heard a sound ahead of him and saw the old man opening a door at the top of the stairs. After a hurried look around to make sure no one was about, Hexard motioned Gorin to follow and silently closed the door behind them.

The Painted Gallery

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 362-374

They were now in a long high corridor or gallery, apparently extending across the entire width of the Palace, its tall windows at each end illuminating an unbelievable wealth of richly ornamented extravagance.

On the walls hung a series of beautifully crafted paintings, many of enormous size in intricately carved gilded frames. They were flanked by columns of fluted gold standing all along each side of the gallery, separated from the pictures by tall mirrors. These reflected into infinity the images on the opposite walls, adding yet another dimension of space and grandeur. Looking up, Gorin could see the ceiling was also profusely decorated with gilded carved stone and painted panels. The colours in all the paintings were tremendously vivid and their forms rhythmical and linear, depicting many types of strange animals as well as imposing buildings, forests and flowers.

He recognised some of the creatures he had seen in the Paradise Garden; the Harelops, for instance, were often featured in many of the designs. So too were the water-nymphs - or at least young girls very much like them. There were also people Gorin supposed were meant to represent those from the Golden City. In one painting the City itself was shown in the background, glinting in the golden light of afternoon much as he had seen it the day before.

There were other creatures as well, noble-looking, stately and quite unlike those from the City in their manner of dress. There was something else about them Gorin found intriguing and he wanted to examine them more closely, but was not given time to do so, for Hexard was tugging him by the sleeve and urging him to follow.

"Haven't got time to stay here now," he said. "The King's daily audience will be starting soon and people will be coming through here on their way to the Throne Room. So if we don't hurry someone might see us."

Gorin protested. "But what about these paintings? What do they mean? And who are those people...? They're not like anyone else I've seen up to now…"

Hexard cut him short. "Never mind. You'll find out about all that in good time. Come on, through here."

He opened a door opposite the one they had just come through to reveal the beginning of yet another staircase. Regretfully, Gorin therefore had to postpone his questions and follow the old man once again, wondering if any of his queries would ever get satisfactory answers.

He went on climbing the stairs, going round and round, ever higher and higher until he lost all idea of how high they had come. The steps were at least in a much better state of repair than those leading up from Hexard's room and were also lit by small windows set into the thick stone. These were

glazed with heavy, translucent glass, serving only to provide the necessary light to negotiate the staircase, but preventing any view to be had of the City outside.

Overlooking the Golden City

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 374-387

It took them some considerable time to reach the top, but at long last, when every muscle in Gorin's body was protesting at the unaccustomed effort, they arrived. As Hexard opened the door ahead of them he felt the refreshing wind on his face and stepped out into the open air with great relief.

When he had recovered his breath, he saw they were at the highest point of one of the Palace's towers, as he had hoped. Looking out over the balustrade running around the platform they were standing on, he could see the tops of the bronze, alabaster and porcelain towers below them to the right. The even lower dark tower and its adjoining copper structure were to their left, while the tallest one, of gold, stood beyond the others at the furthest extremity of the Palace. This of course meant they must be at the very summit of the silver tower.

Glancing up, Gorin saw the platform was covered with a roof supported by tall, rounded columns, and above that presumably was the pinnacled spire. Looking at the other towers, he could see they too were topped by small, high points of vantage, but there was no one else to be seen on any of them. Not surprising, he thought, considering the effort needed to get there. The view might be incredible, but it was certainly well earned!

Hexard, apparently quite unaffected by the long climb, allowed Gorin to look around for a moment or two before saying anything. He let the City speak for itself. And on a day

such as this, with the sun shining down from a clear blue sky, it spoke volumes.

Once he had taken in the way light glinted on the golden tower and flashed with glaring insistence from the porcelain, he moved his attention to the rest of the City spread out below him. It looked even more spectacular than it had the night before, the buildings themselves surpassing his first impressions of them. For he could now see their overall golden colour was accentuated everywhere by use of the precious metal itself, wherever it could be added to strike a crowning note of opulence.

The Palace Square below looked a long way down from this height, but it was possible to make out the places where the fires had burned during the nocturnal festivities.

What could now be seen clearly in daylight, having escaped Gorin's attention in the semidarkness of the previous evening, was that the whole Square and indeed the Palace itself, were decked in flowers.

All around the buildings surrounding the vast public place were draped great chains of interwoven blooms, mainly red and white. Garlands of yellow roses mingled with green leaves adorned the Palace façade, complemented by cascades of blue and violet blossoms hanging from the towers and gently undulating in the light morning breeze.

"The Golden City," said Hexard in a soft, low voice, "known to us as Zandernatis; once the jewel of Paradise and now the whole universe for those who live here. Over there is the main Council Chamber." He pointed to a large edifice on one side of the Square. It had the form of a long, narrow rectangle, ornamented at each end by a triangular portico supported by fluted columns.

"It was there the Council of Nine Elders used to meet and determine the course of the City's administration. But now

there's no need for them; life has become so totally predictable. Like many of the public buildings you see here, it no longer serves its original purpose and there are few people who know – or even care – what the original purpose was." He paused for a moment, allowing Gorin to take this in before continuing.

"For example, you see that building with the tall spire - the one covered in green copper? It was initially created to be a meeting place for all the people of Zandernatis and their Protectors, although in the end it was never used for that purpose. They use it now as a Festival Hall where they can hold dances and feasts when the evenings are cooler."

"So what else do they do here besides have celebrations, feasts and festivals?" asked Gorin.

"They enjoy living," the old man replied simply, "and being the highest expression of Paradise, even if what that really means has now been largely forgotten. Everyone has their function and they are all happy to perform it, enhancing their blissful state with music and drama and a certain level of self-awareness. Although no longer comparable with what it was originally and intended to be."

The bells of Zandernatis

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 387-394

As Hexard finished speaking, the whole building began trembling to the deep, low vibrations of what sounded like a mighty gong, reverberating through every part of its structure.

Gorin looked at Hexard in alarm, but the old man was smiling and put a reassuring hand on his shoulder.

The gong sounded again, its deep thunderous note being followed by another, higher in tone. A similarly resonant chime could then be heard coming from the bronze tower, echoed

almost immediately from the gold tower, and then from the porcelain.

"The bells of Zandernatis," said Hexard. "The voice of the City singing its daily hymn to Paradise. Witnessing it here is an exceptionally rare and precious privilege."

For the next few minutes, conversation was impossible as, one after another, the seven peals of bells from the Palace's seven towers rang out individually over the City. Each set of bells had its own distinctive voice and dominant range, from the very deepest in the darkest tower to the ethereal transparency of those in the gold. Once each of them had made its own statement, all seven peals sounded together in a cascade of changes that sang in duos, trios, quartets… until an entire seven part chorus of pealing sound filled the air, sweeping around the two privileged witnesses of this unique heavenly concert.

While the bells continued to ring out their complex, interacting patterns of glorious sound, time seemed to stand still. Gorin closed his eyes to better absorb the physical impact of the individual notes, particularly the profound voices tolling from the darkest tower, the baritone choir from its sculpted copper neighbour and the rich tenor tones ringing out from their bronze belfry.

And then there were the sweet contralto bells sounding from the porcelain tower, the clear, silvery high trebles from beneath their feet… and the glittering top notes capable of extending beyond human perception from the tallest tower of all.

A time of the most infinite grace. Tangible communion with Paradise.

The intensity of the sounds and their complexity gradually, gently diminished as the individual voices fell silent, one by one. Finally, only the exalted chimes from the nearby

gold tower could be heard, reaching ever higher, higher - until they could not be heard at all.

Gorin opened his eyes. Everything was still. The now silent towers, the City spread out before his gaze; and Hexard at his side. For what felt like an eternity, mere words seemed hopelessly inadequate. And then at last, Gorin broke the silence.

"That… was… perfection."

Hexard said nothing.

"So how come it can't be like it was in the beginning? Why can't it all just go on…? In the Garden I felt a very real sense of harmony and contentment; surely not so very far from the original design. So why not here?"

"Because here in the City there has been more temptation and more opportunity to over-indulge in the celebration of life - as most of them are doing now. And that could be dangerous."

"Dangerous?" queried Gorin.

"Yes indeed. You see, they are gradually drifting away from the principles this Paradise was built upon. And it doesn't stop there. They're also becoming fearful of alternatives, even to the point of denying any could exist. For example, they doubt the existence of evolved life foreign to their own small, introspective world because they see no reason for it. So if any threat were ever to come from outside, they would refuse to believe it was real until it was too late.

"But what kind of threat could there be?"

Hexard gave Gorin a very strange look before answering his question. "You can't imagine?" he said at last. "No, perhaps you can't, and it's just as well. But threats do exist. Paradise does not extend everywhere and there are those who see it from beyond and covet the things to be found here. The time is not far off when some of them will make an attempt to take it

for themselves. If they were to do that now, you can perhaps imagine the result. It would mean the end of Zandernatis as it has been for three thousand years and probably the end of the Paradise Garden as well."

"So what can be done to stop such a thing happening?"

"We shall see," replied the old man, mysteriously. "We shall see. And when we have seen, we will act accordingly."

After this enigmatic statement, they both fell silent for a while as they looked out again over the roofs and towers of the magnificent city. There was so much beauty, so much that was still good. The very thought of it being under threat made Gorin uneasy, for in the light of such an idea, the relentless pursuit of enjoyment by the people of Zandernatis took on a rather ominous aspect. It was as if they sensed they had to live life to the full as much as possible before they could live no more.

A cold shiver ran through him, even though the warm sun was shining strongly on Zandernatis. Then he lifted his eyes beyond the City walls, out into the distance where the forest began and went on and on until it disappeared into the mists on the horizon. He fancied he could just make out something rearing above the level of the trees at the point where the distance was hidden by the veils of morning haze.

It was a rock or mountain, standing alone amidst the greenery of the forest. Gorin wondered if it might be the site of the Lord's arbour, from where Kutjaran had invited him to gaze out over the leafy expanse below to catch his first glimpse of the City. He rather hoped it was, imagining Kutjaran himself standing there now, looking towards him… Sending him thoughts of courage and reassurance for the task ahead.

"I think we've seen enough from up here now," Hexard said suddenly. "We should go down and begin our study of the Golden City and the legends it has made for itself. Then

perhaps you will be able to see where everything is leading. Come."

They began to make their way back down the winding stairs inside the tower. It was still quite exhausting, and Gorin soon felt his leg muscles aching, although the descent was rather less painful than the long climb. He was therefore very pleased when they finally came to the level of the Painted Gallery. This time he was not allowed even the most cursory glance at the decoration as Hexard hustled him across the highly polished marble floor, opened the door and pulled his charge inside before they could be spotted. They then picked their footholds carefully as they descended the old steps and came at last back through the opening in the ceiling, down and around until finally they were treading on the golden stone floor once more.

The City histories

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 394-415

Hexard went straight over to the bookcase and pointed to three dusty old volumes on the top shelf.

"Now you have seen the City," he said, "you must learn something about its history. I would like you to look through these books very carefully."

He took them down, one by one, laying them out on the table and blowing off the layers of dust covering them as he did so.

"There's no need to read them from cover to cover, but dipping in here and there should give you a good enough idea of how things were in the beginning and how they came to be what they are now."

Gorin looked at the titles and discovered them to be histories of the City people. Hexard told him they were written

no more than a few decades after Zandernatis had been founded. One was called "The Establishment of the Golden City in Paradise", the second was the "History of the Endless Happiness", while the third was entitled "Laws and Precepts for the Continuance of Perfection in Golden City Culture". No doubt very interesting, but Gorin was rather daunted at the prospect of being obliged to wade through them, even if he didn't have to read every word. Nevertheless, he consoled himself by hoping they might help him find answers to some of the questions he was constantly plagued with. Questions Hexard was still refusing to answer.

"You have three days," the old man said. "After which I shall allow you to hear some of the prophecies indicating that the time is drawing near for a new order of things to establish itself. 'The Book of Magres' has many mysteries in its sacred writings and it is only now we are beginning to see what they really mean. But you will not be able to understand any of these things until you have at least a grounding in the City as it was and as it should be. So I'll leave them with you to study in your own good time." He picked the books up again and carried them over to Gorin's bed, laying them down beside it before straightening up and turning away.

As he turned, his foot kicked against something on the ground, half hidden by the coverlet draping down onto the floor. He stooped to see what it was, uncovered the object and picked it up. It was the snake-headed knife Gorin had found in the forest and placed there before going to sleep the night before.

"Where did you find this?" the old man asked sharply.

"Out in the Garden," replied Gorin. "As I was being led here by Huor."

"Where. Where was it…?"

"I don't know exactly. By a camp fire… used to cook…

"Why did you keep it?" snapped Hexard.

"I don't know. At least, I think it felt somehow familiar. And I hoped it might have a meaning…"

"It means nothing. To you anyway. But it certainly proves the events we were talking about could well come to pass sooner than we think."

"I don't understand. How does a weapon prove anything?"

"Because it is precisely that; a weapon. And weapons are alien to the Paradise Garden, for its creatures have no knowledge of them. So finding it there means there must be intruders at large. Scouts, no doubt. Or an advance guard, testing the lie of the land. And this..." he brandished the knife; "This shows who they were. We have little time indeed. So, get to your books and take in all you can. I will bring you food and drink when you need it." The old man turned away and was about to leave the room when Gorin called him back.

"What about my knife?" he asked. "You've still got it in your hand."

"I'm sorry Gorin, but you cannot keep it. The risk is too great. Besides, it is an evil thing and has been used in hate, I can feel it. Believe me; you'll be better without it."

"Very well," said Gorin, remembering again the scene of the mutilated carcass and the frightened creatures gathered around it. He supposed Hexard was right, but all the same he regretted losing the one thing he had hoped would give him some clue as to his origins.

"Don't worry, you will find out all you need to know in the end. But it must happen in its own good time. Although that can't be far off if people bearing these are already abroad in the Garden. You will see. Now get on with your studying; I have an appointment to keep."

With a final word of farewell, Hexard went out through the door leading to the passage and the street outside, leaving Gorin alone with the books. Before turning to them, he thought a moment about what the old man had said concerning the knife and its significance. It was certainly borne out by the behaviour of the animals and also, of course, by the way Laztana and the water-nymphs had reacted when they discovered it. They had appeared so terrified it could only be accounted for by them having already come into contact with such things in the past and those who used them. Presumably, beings who wished to disrupt the peace of the Garden and even challenge the Golden City itself.

It was a chilling prospect and so, as it seemed he was going to have a decisive part to play in these events, Gorin set himself to the task of studying the books Hexard had left in his charge.

XII - A Note on Legends, Our Time and the Future

a commentary by
William J. Gainstone,
author of "Legends Past, Present and Infinite"
published by the Pinewood University Press 1973.

However the reader may view this presentation of the material contained in the Haakon Urns, there is one aspect of it which cannot escape attention, even after the briefest study. Something more conventionally-minded readers might well feel alarming in view of the interpretation it imposes on a particular dimension of our legendary past that has, until now, been merely the realm of romancers and dreamers.

This dimension is, of course, the way so many elements of the most ancient traditions and myths in our culture are presented as reflecting the reality actually existing at some point in an indeterminate past. It is a concept with the potential of delivering a cultural electroshock to those who may not have left their minds open to such a possibility. Yet we are asked to believe everything referred to in these documents, and set out here in a clear, engaging narrative, reflects everyday reality as it was for those who lived during the pre-glacial eras. We are being expected to accept that the Paradise Garden, with all its unreal creatures and even more unreal "eternal harmony" actually existed. Not to mention the utopian

cities of Zandernatis and Pardylis with all their mind-stretching marvels.

Memories of such wonders have lingered on in the ancient, universal traditions that have shaped the cultures of peoples from all parts of our (cosmically) diminutive globe, relating the intervention of "sky-borne superiors". Accepting their existence clarifies a great many hitherto unexplained enigmas - such as the remarkable continuity observed in the vestiges of ancient civilizations found as far apart as Assyria, Babylon, Mexico, Sumer, Egypt, India and Peru.[18]

Mention should be made of another myth we can trace back through our racial memories to the very earliest of times (subsequently absorbed into Judaeo-Christian teachings). These refer to the existence of "semi-divine" creatures capable of flight, not only in their "flying vehicles", but also by virtue of the fact that they had wings of their own.

For example, there are in fact some 375 mentions of "angels" in the Bible, as well as references in The Kabala, The Koran and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Islamic Sufi mystics claim "angels" are reflections of God's love and companions to our hearts. Ancient cultures, like the Romans and the Greeks, similarly often referred to "winged" divine beings assisting humankind. In Native American society, birds like the Raven and the Eagle are considered "winged messengers from God". And finally, the Zoroastrians of ancient Babylonia spoke of how Ahura Mazda, their God, was in a constant battle with evil and was assisted by seven archangels.

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[18]. For example, the Assyrian Calendar states that the "beginning of civilization" dates from 3760 BC (shooraya d'mdeetanayoota) as seen through the eyes of the ancient nahranaye (Mesopotamians and inhabitants of Assyria, Babylon, and Sumer). They believed civilisation to be a "gift from the gods", marked from the time "kingship was lowered from heaven…" (from **Chronologia Rorispergius, c**ompiled by Elias Pandochaeus).
Thanks to the discovery of the Haakon Urns, we now know these beliefs were of course pre-dated by their actual origins in Zandernatis, tens of millennia earlier.

When considering these references, so conveniently packaged in what we like to call "recorded history', we must now accept that they actually hark back to sources long buried in the distant mists of time – and in the glacial wastes of Antarctica – for many tens of thousands of years.

This argument is made all the stronger because the Haakon Urn texts prove the existence of the Zandernation civilization so conclusively. Its history, its laws, its governance are all there, described in irrefutable detail. Since they are all so factual – and there are no traces of any mythological or religious beliefs to imply there was a more spiritual dimension to these people - it requires no major leap of faith to accept that all the accounts of "fabulous" creatures in the Garden really do have a firm foundation in reality. An assumption which therefore gives us grounds for also supposing that the fauns, nymphs, centaurs, sirens, chimeras, etc. of ancient lore were similarly products of early experiments in evolution, before subsequently being rendered impossible through changes in genetic laws governing such crossbreeding.

Much more could be said about fables and legends based on actual events and personages in this distant past, their deeds and exploits being passed on through successive generations until they filtered down to us. Of course, in our "enlightened times", we consider them to be no more than quaint fragments of folklore. Mythology rather than anthropology. We can but hope that the Haakon writings will be able to redress the balance and make us take a more open-minded look at these issues, helping us understand the heritage that has made us who and what we are - and even more importantly - what we may become.

Getting involved in a project of this scope, wherein final judgements and evaluations could really only be seriously considered if all the material contained in the urns had been deciphered and put into perspective is, to say the least, rather hazardous for anyone with an academic reputation to preserve. Since there now seems to be

little likelihood of us ever gaining such a comprehensive view, venturing into this kind of uncertain territory may seem totally foolhardy. Yet despite these caveats, and although "Genesis Antarctica" only covers a portion of the history described in these ancient writings, I feel compelled to declare that the robust challenge it issues to so many of our conventional beliefs cannot be ignored.

As I see it, the revelations presented to us in the pages of "Genesis Antarctica" are but a point of departure, giving us a whole new vision of the universe and a means of understanding what that really signifies. Time can of course be the only judge in such matters, but I am convinced we will one day look back on these new perspectives and see they were the beginnings of an entirely new evolutionary process. One which will lead us to understand **we are much more closely linked to these "fabulous" times and events than we could ever have imagined.**

Having made it my life's work to study ancient legends and the influence they still exert upon us today, it has been an edifying experience to consider the implications of all the disclosures made in these documents. For they help us see that what they contain is in fact an expression of one single continuum; present, past and future. Furthermore, the way these are woven together gives us no alternative but to accept their veracity and all they imply for us as human beings and children of a vast design.

XIII - History, Legend, Prophecy

"One fertile grain amidst
the dark confusion of these days."

Book of Magres, Aeon IV, Age VI, Chap. V vs. xix

From "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 416-420

Gorin spent the next day in concentrated study of the ancient volumes, relieved only by a brief visit from Hexard who brought him some food in the early afternoon and promised to return at nightfall.

The books were indeed a mine of information about Zandernatis and the way it had developed, although the actual origins themselves were left cloaked in mystery. As had been suggested, Gorin did not try to read all three volumes in their entirety; instead he selected the parts he felt would be the most revealing, hoping this would allow him to build up a reasonable overview.

He began with the smallest of the three volumes, entitled "The Establishment of the Golden City in Paradise". When he first opened it, he was at once struck by the book's great age, for the heavy pages were dark and time-worn. The ancient script was not easy to decipher either, but once he had understood its main idiosyncrasies, he was able to get along well enough. However, he found the style of writing to be very archaic, especially at the beginning - so emphatic and flamboyant it sometimes appeared to be deliberately trying to

obscure the meaning behind the words. He could not, for example, make anything of the dedication, if such it was, written on the title page:

"From the Lords of Creation who were seemly to descend
into this haven Garden globe wherein they could defend.
From beyond unto the first of these unending days,
this was set down to be the scheme
that serves until the parting of the ways."

"Establishment of the Golden City" – "Prelude"[19]

Who were these "Lords of Creation" it referred to? And what were "the ways" that had parted? There was no clue in the rest of the book, mostly given over to describing the design of the City, accompanied by detailed plans of its main monuments. He pored over the drawings of the Palace and found, without any difficulty, the rooms beneath the Silver Tower now occupied by Hexard. He also identified the vast gallery they had crossed on their way to the tower and saw how it led to the principal state-rooms where the King now held his audiences. Judging by the plans, they appeared to be very impressive indeed and Gorin wondered if he would ever get the chance of seeing them for himself.

Apart from the plans and architectural descriptions, there was a second part to the book which was even more intriguing. It seemed to be referring to the actual work of construction, but was couched in such vague terms that nothing certain could be made of it. One passage in particular

[19] These additional excerpts from documents other than the "Song of Gorin" were inserted to give a more comprehensive insight into all the Haakon Urn writings. Initially a bid to meet the demands of Professor Harkwood, the Chairman of the Editorial Committee (although despite this concession he still prevented the book from being published in 1974 as planned), it was decided they should be retained in the 2014 edition.

drew his attention. He read it over and over again, trying to work out what it meant before deciding he would have to give up if he wanted to have sufficient time for the other two, considerably larger, volumes. Yet even after laying it aside he found he could not keep it out of his thoughts, and on the night of the first day he fell asleep with its words still running through his mind:

> "*In the wildness swam the multifaceted crystals of peace; in the maelstrom of creation were the thousand laws springing from one. So in the turn of all the million tasks there came to rest the choice upon this great flatness, forested and bare, raised and levelled by the bending of the powers summoned to the aid of those Protectors who came to give their art. In the emerging of this mountain, gold was forged from deep within the very heart of Earth. Then rose the stones and those transported from afar to be established as this great perfection built to live beyond eternity. So grew the seed of homage, the gift that brought this race unto the point from which they could rise up themselves to be worthy also of the strength they saw about them in the skies. The City rose to be the jewel of all the world, set here in this sweet glade of Paradise. It was to be, and is, the very soul of those beloved children who seek their way among the mortal paths of living. And it belongs to them.*"
>
> *"Establishment of the Golden City" – IV, v. XX*

Gorin took this to mean the City had grown up with outside help and that the people living there were not themselves responsible for the work of its construction. It was referred to as "*the gift*" and the same word was used time and again throughout the entire manuscript, describing it further

as "*the gift fulfilment of a heartfelt wish born of Earth-bound feeling blended with the aspirations of the firmament.*"

Failing to find any more specific information, Gorin then turned his attention to the "*History of the Endless Happiness*", hoping it would contain something to clarify what he had read in the first volume. It was a much larger book and he would evidently have to be quite selective if he were to have sufficient time for the "*Laws and Precepts*".

At first sight, the "*History*" contained basically a record of the events taking place in the Golden City since its establishment. The opening pages dealt with what was called "*The Great Feast of the Autonomy*", presumably the official celebration of the City's foundation. This great event also marked the beginning of the Zandernation calendar, explaining why the feast was frequently referred to as "*Day One, Year One.*" By all accounts, it must have been a splendid event, with the mysterious "*Protectors*" mentioned in the "*Establishment*" much in evidence. The account of this great function ended with a particularly interesting passage, written in a more direct style than the previous volume had been, although there was no more clarification as to the identity of the enigmatic Protectors:

> "*And as the Feast-Day drew to its close, the people of Zandernatis were gathered still in the great Square set out before the Palace of the Kings. The evening brought the fire of two hundred torches as the song of joy rose up again in ecstasy and gratitude, mingled in the bliss of this new state designed to be forever. Then, with the star of twilight shining above the golden tower, there came a new song telling of one last sorrow before such feelings fled. It was the song of parting, the chant of long, slow words already alien to these happy children. The work now done, the great Protectors rose*

and left their former charges to their Paradise even as they yearned, leaving them with memories so very soon engulfed in happiness anew. And from that moment, time began."

History of the Endless Happiness –
"Foundation" Part III p. 45

After describing this great event, the "History" went into considerable detail relating how the City came to be administered, and for the most part Gorin found it rather dull. Everything undertaken was always a success, the crops never failed, all the people were content to work in the fields outside the walls, celebrating whatever they could, whenever they could.

He was particularly struck by one aspect of the City dwellers' philosophy of life as revealed by the book. This was the total absence of anything related to death or anyone dying. Yet periodically there would be a great feast with much pomp and ceremony to celebrate the coronation of a new King and another for his bonding and another for the birth of the heir to the throne. But never a word as to when, or how, the previous King had died.

Such events presumably had no place in the history of Paradise. The first King had been called 'Primos I' and as far as Gorin could make out from the dates, he had ruled for 289 years, as the coronation of his son Primos II was in the year 290. Which of course provided another excuse for much feasting and celebration. In fact it was such an important event that the people went on eating, drinking and dancing for nearly a week in gratitude for the "*continuation of their bliss*".

Transition, recollection, recognition

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 421-442

The more Gorin thought about it, the more intrigued he became by this apparent denial of death and its inevitability. It was a huge omission. So, in the evening, he asked Hexard what happened when people came to the end of their lives and how others reacted to it. Even if it was a subject deliberately avoided in the histories, it had to be the one thing that could not be compatible with the notion of "Endless Happiness".

"Oh, but it is," replied Hexard. "Because it means a whole new life can begin. With a whole new range of opportunities for living it to the full."

"But how?" asked Gorin, totally perplexed. "When a person dies..."

"We don't use that word here," cut in Hexard. "We talk about 'transition'."

"Whatever you call it doesn't change the fact."

Hexard smiled. "Your naivety is most refreshing," he said. "It shows you really are who you are. Because nobody living in Zandernatis would ever think of asking such a question."

He raised his hand to stop Gorin asking any more questions before going on.

"Let me explain. You see here, and everywhere in the Garden, all the creatures and all the people are blessed with the ability to remember every life they have ever lived. And not only who they were and what they experienced, but also everyone else they knew in those lives." [20]

[20] The disclosure that the people of the Golden City had the ability to recall previous existences – and that this was a basic, unchallenged fact of life – was one of the reasons why opposition to the publication of

Gorin tried to fully take in this revelation, but Hexard left him no time to ponder on its implications.

"For example, you might have a man - let's call him Darvis – who is bonded with Shebel, and they have two children, Garwin and Margel. Now, in a former life, Garwin could quite possibly have been Shebel's father – or sister. And Margel could have been a close friend of Darvis. At another time they could all have been siblings, or perhaps had no relationship or contact with any of the others at all."

"So when they die..."

"At their transition," corrected Hexard, "they leave their ageing bodies, have an opportunity to review their past lives and select what new experiences they need to evolve further. They then return in a new body to a new context, invariably including some of those they had close ties with before. It can of course be more complex than that, but it should give you the general idea."

"And this is why people have no feeling of any loss when someone goes through this 'transition'?"

"None at all. Actually, it can even be quite the contrary. Because then everyone begins looking out for the return of the person who has moved on. This is when families start taking a special interest in all the children born to people they know or hear about... And if they do identify the person in question, there is a huge celebration. Of course, it can take longer… Sometimes, former bond partners don't meet again for many years, or even not until a later life. It depends on what they need to experience."

"Zandernatis" was so fierce. Apart from clashing with current religious beliefs, many felt giving such a notion scientific endorsement could have totally unforeseen consequences in society.

"But can't this get rather complicated?" queried Gorin. "I mean, you might be someone's son now, but if I understand it properly, the fathers you've had in previous lives won't necessarily be the same. They might be someone else in your life... So every time you meet a new person, you never know if they'll turn out to have been your mother, or son or sister some time before. "

"The possible number of permutations is, indeed, infinite," confirmed Hexard. "And in fact, this *is* getting to become something of a problem. It's one of the reasons the City can no longer continue being as it was at the beginning."

"Why is that?"

"Quite simply because so many people have lived so many things with so many other people that they are constantly rediscovering former sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, aunts, lovers and partners. Just imagine what it's like to meet up with someone who was very important to you - to experience a 'recognition' as it's called - but who you haven't seen for two whole lifetimes. The joy is immense. A real cause for celebration."

"I can imagine. And now I can understand why that young man came up to me in the Square and swore I'd been his sister... I thought he was mad."

"Precisely. Although in that particular case, it must have been the wine doing the 'recognition'. But you see, as time passes, the more relationships everyone has to rediscover and the more reasons there are to celebrate. This is why the City culture has begun to stagnate, turn in on itself and become preoccupied with superficial pleasures. And why action must be taken to prevent it from collapse – or worse."

"And I have a role to play in this?"

"Oh yes, Gorin. Indeed you do. Because you are the first being in the City or the Garden to have no recollection of what has gone before. In your previous lives or even in your present one. You have been born afresh to accomplish a mission of salvation. A unique destiny and a once-in-many lifetimes opportunity for all of us in Zandernatis."

Gorin stared at Hexard, trying to grapple with what lay behind those words as contrasting feelings of awe, pride and burgeoning awareness swept over him.

"It is also a tremendous responsibility," he finally said quietly, humbled by the potential implication such a mission could have.

For the rest of the evening and well into a night of fitful sleep and dreams that intermingled constantly, Gorin tried to come to terms with what Hexard had revealed. When dawn finally broke, he still felt daunted at the thought of the role he was apparently destined to play, but he felt himself driven with a new and unfamiliar resolve. Previously, his only concern had been to discover his past and what he had been. Whereas now he was beginning to understand why what he would become was infinitely more important.

Of Kings and reigns

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 442-461

Pursuing his studies of the "History", Gorin learnt that following the reign of Primos I, the first thousand years of the City's existence had continued in much the same vein. Indeed, even after them, everything remained largely unchanged for another three or four centuries. Then, between the reigns of Inquos I and Ersuto III (whose period of governance ended in 1684), the first signs of a change in the state of mind dominating all aspects of Zandernation life until

then began to appear. Gorin noted particularly a passage citing a special feast of gratitude proclaimed in 1545 by King Ersuto II (1400-1556) and a report of the address he had made at its opening:

> *"The King came onto the dais raised up before the Palace steps and spoke to the assembled throng saying, 'People of Zandernatis, we are here today by the grace of our heritage and by the joy we have been living. Celebrate your right to be joyful! My people, let us dedicate ourselves to living, let us see to what heights we can reach and to what measure we can make every moment one of beholden pleasure.'"*
>
> *History of the Endless Happiness "Consummation" Pt. I p.2*

From this time on, the ideal balance that had been such an important feature of the City's existence started to wane. It was almost imperceptible in the beginning, but the first real, permanent change came in the year 1670 with the publication of the *"Declaration of Supreme Delights"*. This was a very lengthy document drawn up by Ersuto III and the City Council giving priority to any events designed to *"enrich the possibilities for expressing the euphoric experience of being"*. (Interestingly, this King's period of rule, 1556 - 1684, was the first reign to last for less than 150 years).

The most significant thing about Ersuto's proclamation was its announcement of substantial reductions in the amount of work Zandernations were expected to contribute for the running of the City. Until then, there had been a well-maintained balance between work and pleasure, allowing everyone to justly earn the well-being they experienced. But the *"Declaration"* opened the door to a limitless, totally carefree existence, where justification for such a privilege no longer mattered.

Gorin traced the thread of this change in the City's way of life through the next reign - that of Primos V (1684 - 1791). Throughout this period, cultivation of the fields outside the walls began to decline, as did the frequency of the regular forums and debates held during special City Council sessions. Instead of philosophy and natural science, the only topics discussed at this time were new ways of glorifying and intensifying the nature of whatever festival was next on the already overcharged calendar.

Up until the 1680s, there had been fairly regular intellectual gatherings and all forms of art had played an important part in the cultural life of Zandernatis. But Primos V was no intellectual, having been one of the first generation to take advantage of the *"Declaration"* in as much as it affected students and studying. Since the priority during his youth had therefore been the experience of delight, he had put all his energy into that, rather than improving his mind. He had been a well-loved King by all accounts, but then everybody was always well-loved at this time.

The gradual changes and modifications brought about by Primos V were welcomed by all his people, for they were sufficiently far removed from their origins by then to forget any reason for living otherwise. Thus, anything enabling them to express their joy more fully could only be greeted with wholehearted approval.

The next important event, and perhaps the most significant of all, came at the beginning of King Nuovo's reign in 2045. Until his time, life had followed the course outlined for it in the 1670 *"Declaration"*, with some minor modifications tending to further encourage self-indulgence and pleasure-seeking as time went on. King Nuovo however, was not satisfied and brought in important measures resulting from

an incident involving the arrival in Zandernatis of people from lands to the North, outside the Garden. It appeared they had been attracted to the Golden City by the legends and fables telling of the fabulous wealth it contained. The "History" described them as *"physically very similar to the fair people living in the City since its foundation, but marked as unevolved by their behaviour and ignorance of our culture."*

The King and his fellow citizens had an immediate distrust of them and when it was discovered they had crept away one night taking a large amount of gold with them, the King decided something had to be done. This incident caused a feeling of fear, hitherto unknown in Zandernatis, to spread like wildfire through the people. They became suspicious of anything beyond their knowledge, and after the theft there were very few who would venture beyond the City gates. They knew where their happiness lay and were not prepared to expose it to outside influence.

It was to this end that the King ordered the gates to be permanently sealed and declared a great feast day to celebrate the event. It had the effect of re-establishing the people's feeling of security. A development "happily" enabling everyone to focus even more of their attention on the good things of living.

Of course, closing the gates meant the fields outside could no longer provide food. So the King authorised the eating of animals and, in a relatively short period of time, meat became an important part of the City people's diet. At first, they were not very partial to it, but after a year or so there were accounts of immense feasts taking place nearly every night - much like the one Gorin had witnessed on the evening of his arrival in the City.

It was with an account of one of the biggest of these feasts, held to celebrate the centenary of the closing of the gates (2145) that the records of the *"History of the Endless Happiness"* came to an end. There was only the briefest mention of the continued "state of bliss" during the following hundred years, apparently still of a high order, despite the transformation brought about by it being closed in upon itself. Events were thus brought up to the present time, for Hexard confirmed to Gorin they were now in the year 2964.

By the time he had completely finished studying the "History", Gorin was halfway through the third of the three days given him by Hexard. He only had the afternoon left to look through *"Laws and Precepts for the Continuance of Perfection in Golden City Culture"*. He found it the least attractive of the three books, being for the most part a monotonous list of ideals and the ways they could be applied to the Zandernation society. It did however make one thing glaringly clear; that as a set of precepts it had ceased to serve any useful purpose once Ersuto III had issued his *"Declaration"*.

Even before then, much of this document was probably out of date, for it spoke of how, *"The work on the land should reap benefits in the souls of men so that their joy could be expressed more ardently and more in accord with the forces of Nature."* As was written on the title page, it was meant to be *"A cornerstone in the fabric of the Golden City, placed here by those who love its people well, that it may be a guide and succour in the purposes for which they are."* It obviously dated from the very first days of the establishment and had been little altered over the years, even if its strict application had not been adhered to. The only amendment was one made by Nuovo in 2050, stating:

"No son or daughter of Zandernatis should desire to question the perfection of our existence by leaving the guardianship of the Golden walls. Any who may seek to leave are free to go, but may only return upon the express summons of the ruling King."

"Laws and Precepts" – Edict XXXVII – Paragraph 2

Hexard returned, as usual, towards evening. When he came in, he stood at the door for a few moments, watching Gorin bent over his books. He smiled benignly, and then in a soft, kind voice he asked:

"So, Gorin. Have you studied well?"

"I have tried," replied his charge. "But there's still a great deal that doesn't really fit in."

"Of course there is, but don't let it concern you, not yet. Besides, we aren't finished. Tomorrow I am going to read to you from one of the most remarkable books we have here in the Golden City, a book only a handful of people know about and which only I am allowed to consult."

"Would it be about what happened between the centenary of the closing of the gates and today?" asked Gorin, eager to show how much of the history he had absorbed. "I couldn't find any mention of the last 800 years at all."

"No, it isn't that," said Hexard, smiling again. "The reason you didn't find any history for the last period is because they didn't write any. The King who came after Nuovo decreed records should no longer be kept because it detracted from the enjoyment of the present. So no one bothered any more. No, the book I shall be reading to you is the only narrative we possess of the time before the City came into being. It is, of course, extremely old and some of it is not easy even for me to interpret with any certainty. Yet it is of great importance, and so too are the prophecies it contains,

accurate so far in their foretelling of the City's decline in the way it has come to pass, and containing very specific details as to the eventual course of events in the future. But you must rest now, we shall begin with the readings tomorrow. Sleep well."

With these words he went across the room and disappeared into the inner chamber, leaving Gorin to turn all these new things over in his mind. He ate a little food and drank some water, but really did not feel particularly hungry. He was too intrigued with the prospect of the things the old man was going to reveal to him from the book of ancient lore, particularly the prophecies he had spoken of.

He lay awake for some time again, thinking of Zandernatis in the early days, the kings who had lived in this very Palace for 3,000 years, who had even walked along that same gallery where he had been a few days before! It was a sobering thought, and with it still in the forefront of his mind, Gorin fell at last into a deep, weary slumber.

The Book of Magres

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 461-485

Hexard roused him the next morning, bringing some biscuits and a bowl of warming herbal tea that was very welcome as he tried to collect his thoughts. He then looked up and saw the old man had placed a huge book on the table near the fireplace and was carefully scrutinising it, leaning so far forward his nose was almost on the paper. Hexard straightened up, looked towards Gorin and made sure he was ready. He then began to speak, rather slowly and with the authoritative air of one who is imparting rare and arcane knowledge to the profane.

"The Book of Magres," he said, "is so old its origins are lost amongst the most closely guarded mysteries of creation; and we may never know exactly how it fits into the Greater Scheme. But the most important thing you should know is that it was written as a book of prophesy long, long before Zandernatis was created. And yet it contains a great deal relating to why and how the Golden City came into existence. It also describes many of the major events in its history with remarkable accuracy. We therefore have every reason to trust what it has to say about events soon to unfold.

"The author, or authors, are unknown; the only reason for it having its present name is because it was Magres, the Royal Alchemist to Primos I, who first set it down in the common tongue. He had been entrusted with the original for this purpose by those who knew we would one day need the knowledge it contained.

"Magres was therefore my predecessor and it was his son, my father, who passed the Book to me when I became of an age to have the necessary wisdom. You need not look so surprised Gorin, for physical age has another value when questions such as those we are about to face are at issue. For we have awaited the coming of the selected messenger, watching the signs and knowing he would come into our midst when the need was greatest; to receive the word with which we were charged.

"I shall begin with the passage relating to the age before our City was created. You will come to understand more of this as time passes and you have been able to see how it has all developed."

He paused a moment, then bent towards the great book once more and began to read the ancient script. It was clearly something of an effort for him, as he had to screw up his eyes

to make out exactly what was written on its cracked and timeworn pages.

> *"In what shall be called the Early Days, there shall be the children of Earth in the grace of newness. But there will be nothing with them, neither form nor shape, until the suns descend from their celestial course. It then will need the passage of one thousand times until their own may walk upon the fields of Koray grass and live within the shade of wooded lands. And then the Lords shall walk with their new children, giving them in grace the peace of understanding, the strength of knowledge and the signs of guardianship written in the form of wings. Life shall be harmonic song for all who live in acceptance of the star-born gift - while those who choose the wilder, lonely ways shall wander on them like their fathers in the generations of unknowing, before the coming of the Glory. They shall roam among the fastnesses of mountains, in the caves of night and far beyond unto the regions where no human foot has trod. Leaving the expanding goodness of the world to bathe within its resplendent and perpetual light, having knowledge of no thing else but love."*
>
> *Book of Magres, Aeon III, Age VII, Chap. II vs. xxi-xxvi*

"So that would mean the Lords, whoever they were, didn't get accepted by everyone," commented Gorin.

"If you like."

"Doesn't it then?"

"It is indeed one interpretation. Let us just simply say that even the finest opportunities are not always universally appreciated. But listen to this..."

Hexard thumbed through the heavy pages until he came upon another vital passage in the ancient narrative:

So shall pass the time whereby these things come into being. And so too will pass the order of the ancient way of things. For from the skies the Great Protectors shall perceive that joy no longer sings in endless songs from those who stay beside their Lords. There will be a new note to their voice, a cry for some other Paradise and a need to prove they are worthy of the bliss so freely given at the first.

"Thus will come the time when those who choose shall part upon the fading starlight, rising in the wings of fire to act in one last, mighty moment for the eternities of man. And in the onrush of the potent winds, in the heaving of the plain, there will come the cradle shining through the natal haze to glimmer in the rays of an as yet, unfamiliar sun.

"It shall be a work which comes to be within a second of the time of men, and unbelieved by even those who will be called to bear it witness. Yet there, in gold, shall be formed the perfect home that only could exist for those who have been nurtured by the Lords. For them it shall be a fitting place, a haven in the heart of havens, set within a timeless Garden far beyond the cares of any other thing."

Book of Magres, Aeon III, Age IV, Chap. VI vs. xx - xxix

"So that was when Zandernatis was built?"

"Yes, if 'built' is the right word for an act of spontaneous creation. It should help fill in some details not dealt with in the 'Histories', when explained in those terms. But what I am going to read you now is the most interesting part of all - concerning what has happened in the last thousand years and what will come to pass now, in our time. And do of course bear in mind, everything written here was set down many,

many thousands of years ago, before any part of it had happened."

Hexard bowed his head once more, turned a few more pages and then continued to read from the old book, his voice slowly and deliberately pronouncing the ancient words and phrases.

"And it shall be decreed by the Protectors 'ere they leave that Paradise will be a state enduring for as long as men are worthy of it. They may reap its fruits, but should ever do so in their own fashion - for the Lords never can return until summoned by the ruling King himself who, in so doing, would then change the age once more.

"So shall it be for many, many generations. Living will be filled with radiance and light, there will be a harmony surpassing anything in Dreamtime any race of men could ever dare to have. But then the years of greyness will begin to draw across the golden faces of the sentinels, and the fields whereon they gaze will grow no more to feed the children of the Lords. For from the very bounty they were bestowed with shall arise contentment spreading to excess, threatening that fine harmony which was the reason for it all."

"Those sentinels would be the figures lining the walls, overlooking the abandoned fields outside. Is that right?"

Hexard nodded and then went on without making any further comment.

"And there will come to pass a day whereon the source shall be forgotten and the way of fate shall lead into a time of isolation. Then the mighty gates which bear the story of the chosen City shall be shut for ever, barred and bolted to the

Garden air so long breathed upon the golden streets. Then shall the comfort pleasures wax and come at last to close upon themselves to bring about the passage of events deciding – one time and for all - the last salvation or the fall of those decrees with which the Lords had shaped the form of Ages.

"Mists will gather in the morning of this time, and the people then will see but all that was before and know no other way. So fair are they, so fine have been their fathers, only joy can answer for to turn them from the great surfeit of it. Thus shall they all rejoice and sing until the very last of days when they must win anew those things which had been theirs by right."

Book of Magres, Aeon VI, Age V, Chap. V vs. i – xii

"So this is what is going on now, with the feasts and celebrations becoming so important, everything else gets crowded out?"

"Exactly. The original equilibrium has been lost. But listen to the next part…"

"Then, in the heart of one shall be awakened consciousness both of the past and of the need to seek beyond. And this sole One alone, with destiny that lies in kingship of the realm, will go forth upon a search to find those things his kin had lost an age before his birth. He will not know a moment's rest from strange, disquieting visions from the Dreaming, beckoning him and drawing him to the other place of which alone the silence holds the key. His passing marks the point from whence there cannot be a turning back, for at that time the forces are in motion vowed to bring the clouds across the peaceful land.

"And these shall be no more the clouds of rain or storm, but clouds of jealous war, infested with the seed of darkness, writhing on the ground and piercing all the air with cries that shriek in vindication for the things the aeons did deprive them of. Time and choice forgotten, these originals of Earth will come once more to repossess the land which once was theirs. And those who merit victory shall be victorious."

Book of Magres, Aeon VII, Age VI, Chap. V vs. xii – xix

Does that mean there's going to be a war?" asked Gorin, horrified at such a terrifying prospect.

"It is what the prophecy indicates. And if it were to be the case, you can imagine in what state of readiness Zandernatis would be."

"Yes… But what I don't see is how you think I can have anything to do with all of this. I mean, I don't even know my own identity, let alone know what should be done to help win a war."

Hexard made no comment, but continued reading.

"One chance remains, one fertile grain amidst the dark confusion of these days. This too shall come to consciousness upon the world, but first without pre-knowledge of the scheme of life. With seven crescent moons to mark the parting of the City son upon his quest, this shall be the soul that reawakens to the daystar shining on the Garden's verdant life. For him it is the sun as he has never known before, and in a peace he could never have conceived. Until in all due time he shall come unto the City and from thence into the cradle of the Protecting Lords, brought by all the elements in concert which owe them all they are.

"He shall be the New One, new in knowledge, knowing nothing but his given name, untarnished by the ways of

carefree pleasure. He thus is worthy of the mission, and empowered by right and alien nature to be unhampered by the ancient laws. They thus shall have no sway, leaving him to freely go where City children dare not. He is that Prince who searches for the Prince and shall depart upon the road whereon the City son has gone. He too shall rejoin with him and recall him with the regal summons made to bring him to his home. And great shall be the need.

"Then for once alone the plea will carry forth and those who left the City to its own determinance can come once more to give their sacred hands unto the moulding of another, latter Age. Even if it must be wreft forever from the heritage of all that went before and divorced from those eternal gifts which brought it to the brink of its undoing."

Book of Magres, Aeon VII, Age IV, Chap. IX vs.. xix–xxxii

Hexard stopped reading and slowly straightened up, looking directly at Gorin without saying a word. When at last the old man did speak again, it was with great tenderness, in a kinder tone than any other he had used until then.

"So Gorin, you see who you must be. You came to us just as the Book of Magres said you would, knowing no more than your own name[21]. What has even more significance is just seven months ago, the young son of King Iraeus, heir to the throne of Zandernatis, left to follow a road no one has travelled on since any can remember. He was the first to leave

[21] The intimations of this revelation are very significant. In symbolic terms, having no personal memories in a world where everyone else can remember everything has obvious parallels with a virgin birth. Similarly, Gorin's coming and his destiny as a saviour had also been long prophesied. This makes him a **Christic figure** in terms of his significance to the Zandernation people, establishing an archetype which has echoed throughout human civilisation ever since.

the City publicly for nearly one thousand years. And he did so following constant dreams and visions, drawing him out to find their source. He was convinced they were channelled to him from beyond the City walls, persisting till he could have no more peace, his new awareness telling him the City was no longer fulfilling its original design. He studied with me before he went, much as you have done, although for longer, and thus was well grounded in the ancient lore."

"And so his going was part of the prophecy."

"It was. And now you have to continue its fulfilment - the only one who would dare leave the City as Esperon, son of Iraeus, has done. The King himself is getting very old and with his many years has come to see the present way of things cannot endure forever, even if he would like it to. But it is far too late for him to think of changing. All he wants is to have the chance of summoning his son to return and take up the throne before his own reign comes to an end."

"Does the King know about these writings?"

"He knows of the existence of the Book. Obviously, because as its guardian and as the Royal Alchemist, it is my duty to make him aware of it. But he was never greatly interested, which is not really surprising. However, when he learned his son's yearning to leave the City had been foretold over three thousand years ago, he did begin to take some notice. And now..." Hexard paused for a moment. "Now he knows you are here; and under what circumstances you came."

"So he wants me...? I mean, he's expecting me to follow after his son?" stuttered Gorin in disbelief.

"He does."

"But how can I know where he went? He might have gone in any direction..."

"You will be guided towards the place where he has gone," Hexard said before Gorin could finish. "He learned many things with me before he set out. And he also knew there would be one coming after."

"I see," said Gorin, incredulous at the way events were sweeping him along with them.

"It has been arranged that tomorrow morning, you will be received in audience by King Iraeus. He will want to talk to you and tell you more about Esperon, how he left and his own response to such an unnatural desire. Of course, he will also need reassurance you really are who – and what - I have announced you to be. Only then can he be sure you will seek his son and summon his return, in readiness to take up his responsibilities when the time is right."

"And I have no alternative but to do as he asks."

"I did not say that. The choice is yours to make. But to follow the path outlined by the ancient writings is the only way you may ever hope to find out who you are. I take it you still want to know?"

"Of course I do. But can't you tell me that now?"

"No. Because I don't know it either. At least no more than can be deduced from these prophecies, as I have explained. I learnt of you from messengers in the Garden and asked for you to be guided here, no more."

The old man gave a nervous cough and began to fuss around with the papers on his table. When he was satisfied all was in order, he spoke a final word to Gorin, saying, "Think over all I have told you and prepare yourself for the morning. I won't disturb you again until tonight."

Hexard then gathered up the weighty Book of Magres and disappeared with it into his inner room, leaving Gorin to absorb the wealth of new information he had just been given.

He wondered how he would react upon coming face-to-face with the ruler of Zandernatis, descendant of the Primos and Ersuto Kings. Would he feel nervous? Overawed?

It really did seem, that by some peculiar twist of fate, he had an even more important role to play in the destiny of the City and its people than he thought. He hoped he would be able to fulfil it and at the same time discover exactly why such a thing had come to him. Perhaps the morrow would indeed help resolve the question. There again, it might make the mystery even more difficult to understand.

XIV - The Kings of Zandernatis – a chronology

from Primos I to Esperon

(Drawn from "The *History of the Endless Happiness*" - Original Edition[22])

1 - 290 Primos I	Year 1: Feast of the Autonomy 69 - First "Initiatory Journey"- marks the beginning of the First Heroic Age[23].
290 - 427 Primos II	347 - Order of the Goldthrone Knights established. 392 - The Great Triumph of 'Primos the Heroic'.

[22] Work on the translation of this first edition of the "History" was still in its early stages when the original manuscripts were stolen in 1976. The second edition (dating from the revision ordered by Inquos II) had been given priority, since it was the one studied by Gorin (as described in the "Song of Gorin") during his time with Hexard. It contains many more details relevant to the events before 2964, but its significance could not be fully appreciated without more work having been done on it. However, as can be seen from this brief and incomplete list of events, it must have been a very exciting period and one which the research team was extremely keen to learn more about. Nonetheless, as a means of comprehending the importance of the events described in "Zandernatis", the information provided by the second (much shorter) edition was considered adequate (for our purposes and for Gorin's).

[23] It should be explained that the period 69 - 1123 is called the First Heroic Age to distinguish it from the Second Heroic Age which began shortly after the return of the Aeraumen to Zandernatis in 2964. But as this later period has no direct bearing upon what occurred in year 69 no further mention was made of it in the initial "retelling".

427 - 604 Primos III	500th Anniversary Celebrations.
604 - 762 Alandis	624 - Order of the Goldthrone Knights divided into the Knights Spiritual and the Knights Temporal. 666 - The 'Year of the Dragon Slayers'. 721 - First 'Expedition of the Valiant'.
762 - 921 Ersuto I (The Mystic King)	765 - Second 'Expedition of the Valiant'. 780 - Ersuto proclaimed Supreme Master of the Order of Knights Spiritual; adopts name of 'Tarava'. 849 - The 'Year of Attainment'.
921- 1082 Keron the Fair	925 - 1046 The 'Hundred Years of Great Romances'[24] (decline of 1st Heroic Age). 1080 - Transition of Magres, First Royal Alchemist.
1082 – 1243 Primos IV	1123 - Feast-Day 'In Memory of the Glorious Past' (end of 1st Heroic Age).
1243 - 1400 Inquos I (The Dreamer)	A reign during which the highest achievements in all fields of art, music, literature, painting, etc. were reached.

[24] All mention of "The Hundred Years of Great Romances" was stricken from the records in the second edition - the research team had not discovered why by the time the manuscripts were stolen in 1976.

1400 - 1556 Ersuto II	1545 - Feast of Gratitude.
1556 - 1684 Ersuto III	1670 - The 'Declaration of Supreme Delights'.
1684 - 1791 Primos V	1690 - Establishment of the 'Feastings of Eternal Joy'.
1791 - 1931 Inquos II	1897 - The 'Day of Oblivion'. 1901 - All historical records 'revised' by Royal Proclamation[25].
1931 - 2058 Nuovo	1975 - Feast in honour of 'The Eternal Present'. 2045 - Closing of the City gates - flesh becomes part of the Zandernation diet for the first time.
2145 - 2750	No records kept. City life becomes increasingly concerned with a simple enjoyment of the present. All further information comes from annotations to Hexard's 'Magres Commentaries'.

[25] The 1901 proclamation by Inquos II regarding the revision of all historical documents seems to have been aimed at obliterating all mention of contact with the outside world, thus suppressing official recognition of the exploits of those who lived during the Heroic Age. As a result, what had been known as historical fact soon became no more than romantic legend, and the pursuit of happiness could go on uninterrupted by any concern for the example set by the past. This paved the way for the closure of the gates 144 years later - which did of course complete the City's rejection of its traditional history and those who lived beyond its walls.

	These were written between 2985 and 2987. This source also tells us that Hexard himself became Court Alchemist in 2219.
2750 - 2860 Omagir	According to Hexard, this reign was only important for its maintenance of "high days" such as the 'Feastings of Eternal Joy' and a great celebration for the 800th anniversary of the City gates' closure.
2860 - 2964 Iraeus	The pursuit of pleasure became even more intense during this period, with celebrations ceasing to have much significance, for no sooner was one finished than another would start.
2964	The year in which this narrative takes place; the Year of Return and of Esperon's ascension to the throne.

XV - Royal Audience

"Blessed by kings of noble descent,
Born as The One the prophets have sent,
He shall fulfil the Fates' intent."

Anonymous ballad (Third century)

From "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 487-510

The next morning, Gorin was already wide awake when Hexard emerged from his inner room with a simple breakfast of tea, fruit and biscuits for his charge. With hardly a word between them, preparations were then made for coming into the presence of the King. They made their way up the long winding staircase once more until they came to the ornately decorated gallery leading to the state rooms. As they went along it, Gorin had another opportunity to marvel at the exquisitely executed paintings lining their way. In looking at them again, he searched for some clue as to the identity of the mysterious "Lord Protectors" as they were called in the histories he had been studying. If the pictures were at all contemporary with the events, then surely they would have some reference to these remarkable beings.

"Hexard," he asked, "how old are the paintings here?"

"Some of them are very old indeed. There was a time when this kind of art flourished in Zandernatis. The artists and sculptors loved to depict the history of their times. See, there

for example, a painting of the great feast marking the five hundredth anniversary of the City's foundation."

It was indeed a superb representation of the Palace Square thronged with people, all raising their cups in a toast to a figure who was evidently the King. There did not seem to be a great deal of difference between the feasts in those days and the one Gorin had witnessed on his first evening in the City, except of course at that time there was no evidence of flesh eating. The fields were still cultivated and fruit was plentiful. But the gaiety was much the same. However, Gorin was not particularly interested in scenes such as these.

"Are there any pictures of earlier events?" he asked. "I mean showing the Protectors and the time when they were helping the City people."

"If you remember well," Hexard answered, "their existence in the 'Histories' is only by reference to distant memories of them. They had long departed when those records were written and all these paintings date from a much later period as well. Only the first generation might have been able to show them in their true glory, but they had no interest in doing so. For them, such things had nothing to do with the new City Age, which only began once the Protectors had left. You can see some vague symbolic evocations of them if you look above us, but as in these more recent pictures, the ideas are confused because the artists had nothing to base them on."

Gorin looked up at the ceiling and saw there all manner of fantasies painted in forms emerging from wreathes of cloud. Indistinguishable shapes, tantalisingly veiled in mist, floated between them and through them. He could only guess at what they were depicting, although in parts there were some definite representations of horses, apparently in flight. Then, in another corner, a hand could be seen coming through the cloud to cast

a perfectly formed rose towards the ground. Nothing else could be determined with any certainty.

Despite their interest, Hexard did not want Gorin to stay all morning looking at pictures. He reminded his charge they did have a rather pressing appointment, and that the King might make others wait but should not have to wait himself. So they made their way along the polished floor of the gallery, passing many more fabulous paintings which they had no time to study. There were also many statues of former Zandernation Kings lining the way and Gorin was able to pick out the names of some of those he had been reading about. He saw Ersuto II and III, as well as King Nuovo and the Primos monarchs standing like a row of sentinels, guarding the way to the chambers of the present sovereign.

After several more minutes of walking through the painted corridor, they finally came to an enormous double doorway. It was flanked by golden pillars carved to represent tall, graceful maidens who bore the lintel upon their crowned heads. This was itself ornately worked and as ever, featured the outstretched wings motif.

Hexard paused a moment before the portal. He then drew Gorin to his side, whispered a few words of encouragement in his ear and brought him to the threshold. He lightly touched one of the doors and they watched it glide ajar on silent hinges before both opened fully of their own accord. The old man waited a few seconds more, then motioned Gorin to lead the way in.

They came into a lofty, thickly carpeted ante-room decorated on three sides by superb tapestries. These were richly woven in warm orange and brown hues with threads of pure gold running through the design. The fourth side of the room was taken up by an enormous window looking out over

the gardens of the Palace and beyond, to the ornate spires and towers of the City.

The furnishings were rich and opulent; each piece a pinnacle of the very finest craftsmanship. Two large, lavishly decorated desks stood on either side of the doors leading out of the room on the facing wall, while opposite the window was a huge display case containing a collection of delicate porcelain dating back to the reign of King Primos III. From the ceiling hung a chandelier of exquisitely cut crystal with a delicate pink tint. Beneath it, several elegant, velvet-covered chairs stood around a long, low table, apparently carved from a single, massive tree trunk.

Upon their entrance, two men seated at the desks, dressed in a simple, dark blue livery with long golden cloaks, rose to greet them. Hexard ushered Gorin further into the ante-room as the two courtiers came forward to meet the new arrivals. Meanwhile, the doors behind them closed as noiselessly as they had opened.

"Welcome Hexard. And to you, Sir," said one of the men, bowing slightly to Gorin. "The King is not quite ready to see you. But it should only be a few minutes."

"No matter," replied Hexard. "We will wait here. Come Gorin, sit down. And try not to look so nervous."

Gorin forced a smile and said he was not, but his voice betrayed him. In actual fact, he was terrified. All this splendour and grandeur! And the wealth of history behind the rulers of the Golden City! For all its apparent transformation since the early days, it was still the most splendid city ever created and he felt overawed by the pomp of it all.

He sat down on one of the elegant chairs and Hexard came and sat next to him. The two courtiers returned to their desks. The one who had welcomed them then opened the doors

leading, presumably, into the Throne Room. He went inside and closed them behind him, the dull thud as they shut accentuating the tangible silence left in the room. For several moments nobody uttered a word, and then Hexard began speaking again in a low voice.

"Do not be afraid because you see so much ceremony and protocol here. These are only the formal trappings belonging to the state of kingship, acknowledged by everyone as being part of the royal ritual. In fact, the King is not considered to be above the rest of the people. They love him as a father and respect him as a man. Perhaps more out of tradition than because of anything particularly remarkable he has done. But he embodies life as it is lived here and ordains its continuance; so all may benefit from the advantages it brings. His position is a privileged one, of course, but he is as much a citizen of the City as anyone else. For this reason, he is also subject to the same temptations and pressures as they are. All you have to do is listen to what he has to say and convince him you are as I have described; coming from nowhere and with no idea as to who or what you are."

"That part of it won't be too hard at least."

"No, it won't. Indeed. Anyway, do your best and bear in mind everything you have learned."

The Throne Room

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 511-524

Just then, the doors reopened to allow the courtier back into the ante-room. "The King is ready to receive you now," he said, opening the doors completely for Hexard and Gorin to pass. They walked through them into the great Throne Room of the Golden Palace and the presence of Iraeus, son of Omagir, ruler of the line of Primos, Ersuto and Nuovo; living

representative of the sole dynasty from which all Zandernation Kings were descended.

Gorin had no idea what he should expect, but his first impressions were nothing like anything he could have imagined. The Throne Room, almost 40 measures long, was lined on either side by pillars of the purest gold reaching up to a lofty, arched ceiling. This was criss-crossed by multitudes of ribbed supports, like the branches of a forest canopy. From them, "sprouted" finely sculpted, russet coloured leaves intertwining to form a burnished vault. Complementing this magnificence, the walls were decorated with finely worked tapestries, set against golden satin drapes hanging from the ornate roof to the carpeted floor.

One side of the room was taken up by a long balcony where a group of musicians were playing soft, mellow music, full of subtle rhythms and enchanting harmonies. There was also a choir of young women, singing a lyrical, reposing theme in a high register that seemed to flow on and on like a melodic river. For a second, it reminded Gorin of the music he had heard sung by the water nymphs. Until he turned his attention to the broad red carpet he and Hexard were standing on. It ran from the doors to the other end of the room and three broad steps leading up to a large, rectangular dais raised one measure from the floor.

Also carpeted in deep, royal red, the dais featured four golden pillars, one at each corner, supporting its own canopy of intricately carved, gilded wood. This extended upwards and blossomed out with petals of precious metal to form a huge flower, almost reaching the russet leaves above. Completing the scene, quite oblivious to the opulence surrounding them, a pair of indolent leopards lay stretched out at the foot of the

steps, apparently lulled into quiescent slumber by the soothing music.

The dais itself was occupied by a throne of heavily worked gold, with a back sculpted to represent an impressive pair of feathered wings. Only these were not extended as if in flight, like all the other representations of this symbol Gorin had seen. They were folded, giving the impression they belonged to whoever was seated upon the throne. Thus it appeared that King Iraeus, son of Omagir, had these wonderful golden wings growing from his back, and at any moment he would be able to spread them wide and take to the air.

As Hexard and Gorin entered, the King stood up, and it was immediately apparent he was a man of very great age. He actually looked far older than Hexard, although Gorin knew this was impossible. He was wearing a long coat of sky-blue velvet, trimmed with silver, while on his head was a crown of filigree gold wrought with infinite delicacy and set with multi-coloured gemstones. He wore a long, white metal chain about his neck and from it hung a jewel with even more prismatic brilliance than any in the crown. It shone with a vivid, hypnotic fire as if it were the product of alchemical fusion between liquid gold and polished diamond.

The King then raised his hand and beckoned his visitors to approach the dais, coming down the steps to greet them as they walked towards him.

"Welcome," he said, "welcome Hexard and welcome to you, son of the Paradise Garden." So saying, he stepped forward and, much to Gorin's surprise, embraced him. As he did so there was a sudden change in the music and song, filling the whole chamber with trumpet fanfares and the singing of the choir in an anthem of overpowering exaltation. It made Gorin feel both humbled and apprehensive, for it was

becoming very clear that great things were expected of him. He wondered however if he would be able to play such a crucial role successfully. What were they going to ask of him? What would he have to do?

The King then led the two of them towards the throne and invited them to sit on either side of him. He looked, in that first moment, to be full of radiant happiness so boundless he almost wept. Gorin instantly lost all feeling of fear and apprehension, becoming himself overwhelmed by the music and song as well as by the rapturous transport of their Royal host.

A moment later the King raised his hand again and the choir stopped singing; the musicians laid down their instruments and there was silence in the great throne-room. In that instant, the King's smile faded as the weight of his years came to bear heavily upon him. His head fell forward, the corners of his mouth turned down and his tears changed from those of joy to those of sorrow. He lifted his head and tried to smile again, but could not conceal he was carrying a mighty burden and scarcely knew how to support it.

"I am so thankful you have come, Hexard," said the King, "bringing us this one chance. For to think of the future as it is can no longer be a joyous prospect for me."

"That I know. But as guardian of the ancient writings, I have ever had faith in what they foretold and so have seen events take the course prescribed for them."

"Oh yes, I know you have studied well and I have faith in you, for your wisdom in these things is far greater than mine. My father trusted you and his father before him. So do I. But it is still hard for me to bear the loss of my son, even if it belongs to our history's design. Why should it be? Why aren't we all able to go on forever being as we've ever been? It's all so unnecessary."

"Unnecessary or not," replied Hexard, "We must stand in the face of events as they are unfolding. By all accounts, Esperon is not at all lost. Merely gone beyond to that place where he will be sought by this young man. He has come with no knowledge of us or of any other thing, ready to do your will in seeking the Prince; for you and for Zandernatis."

King Iraeus shook his head slowly, as if he could not believe such a thing, and then looked at Gorin who returned his gaze, trying to smile. He remained contemplating the young man from outside his realm for some moments before turning to Hexard again.

"I think I would like to talk to him alone," he said. "This is a matter involving more than just affairs of state. It is also the question of a father and his only son."

"As you wish," said Hexard, rising from his place beside the throne and bowing slightly before following the red carpet towards the double doors at the far end of the room. When he had gone, the King made a sign to the singers and musicians, indicating they should leave their positions as well. Moments later, Gorin and Iraeus were entirely alone, bringing some of the apprehension back to the young man as he began wondering again what he would be expected to accomplish.

"So," began the King, "Hexard says you have come to help us. We shall see. But first tell me your name."

He told him. Then a second or two later he added, "Sir," not sure if it was the right way to address a King. He had never spoken to one before - unless Kutjaran counted as a King. He was a Lord after all…

His train of thought was broken by the King's voice once more, speaking his name over and over to himself. "Gorin… Gorin… what can it mean, Gorin? I've never heard such a name before."

"I'm sorry, but that's what I'm called. Where it comes from, what it means, I'm afraid I don't know either."

"Never mind. It has no real bearing on what I have to say to you concerning Esperon. I presume Hexard told you about him?"

"He is your son, and heir to the throne."

"He *was* my son," the King corrected Gorin with a heavy note in his voice. "And cannot be again until I reach him in the place whence he is gone, wherever it may be, with a summons to come home in readiness for the task that will be his. He was the finest son a father could have hoped for; strong, noble and overflowing with an exuberance for living rare even here. But his happiness was not enough; at least not in the year before…"

The King's voice faltered for a moment. "Before he went away. He grew restless you see, grew tired of even the most extravagant celebrations in his honour. Took to reading all kinds of books as well, used to spend days with Hexard who I thought might be leading him astray. But it was his own wish. He could not be contented like the rest of us. And then the Dreaming started."

Iraeus paused a moment and stared into space as if he himself were dreaming, remembering the time when his son had changed so much - when the greatest joy of his life had begun to show signs of wanting nothing more than to leave his father's company.

"Dreaming?" prompted Gorin.

"Yes, perceptions of Dreamtime. They were strange. I remember it all began one morning in the middle of summer. Esperon didn't come down to the usual breakfast meal. We all supposed he had been at the Dawn Night Festival, a huge dance and banquet in the old Council Chambers to celebrate the longest day. Then, about mid-morning, he came down from

his rooms with a most peculiar expression on his face. I can see it now. For a moment I thought he was feeling unwellness, but he said he was all right, except that he had dreamt of something. I asked him what it was and he replied he was unable to say… All very mysterious to me. And I don't like mysteries.

"Anyway, for the next few days he seemed fine enough; even his old self. Then it began again, and three mornings in a row he came down looking as if he were ten thousand measures away and still in Dreamtime. I couldn't talk to him, neither could anybody, except perhaps Hexard. Only he said he wasn't able to make very much out of it either, although I feel he may have known more than he told."

"And did he still refuse to say what the Dreaming was about?"

"At first, he gave us no idea at all, until about three months later when he was experiencing it nearly every night. He was a different person then. His body was there, but most of the time you had the impression his mind was far, far away. The first sign of what was behind it came when he approached me one day and said, 'Father, who are the Hill-People?'

"I had no idea what he was talking about, and told him so. The only people I know are my people, the men and women of Zandernatis. If there should be any others anywhere else, we know nothing of them and have no reason or desire to."

"Did he say these 'Hill-People' were part of this Dreaming?"

"He did when I asked him why he wanted to know. He said he knew they existed and they were watching over the City. But they needed to know more of it and wanted him to journey to the hills to meet them in a place called 'Pardylis'. 'Pardylis of the Hill-People', a strange kind of city by the way

he spoke of it, with even stranger things in the air around it. And the people themselves he described as being tall and blonde, with blue eyes and the gift of powers we know nothing of.

"To me, it all sounded like something from the old, old songs and I told him not to be so gullible. But for him it was very real and he wanted to go and discover what it all meant. I pleaded with him, telling him Zandernatis offered everything he could wish for and had contented his kin for thousands of years. There was no reason for him not to be content as well. But he wouldn't listen to me. His Dreaming was more important. And it kept coming all the time, so in the end he was walking around in a kind of trance. It was hard to recognise him as my son any more."

"So in the end you let him go?"

"What else could I do?" the King answered, an imploring look on his face as if searching for justification of the permission he had given. "He was never happy, and only spoke of the things in Dreamtime. Zandernatis alone was no longer important enough for him. He wanted to see further. In the end, Hexard advised me he would always be the same until I gave him leave to go and find the reason for his visions. Either that or it would come to him simply leaving with or without my knowing. So at last I called him to me and told him, as it was his wish, he must do as he felt bound to."

The look of sadness became etched on the King's face and Gorin understood how hard it must have been to make such a choice. Finally, his son's peace of mind had proved more important than his own, but he still suffered from his choice and remained deeply troubled by the memory of it.

How did he react when you told him?" asked Gorin.

"He was overjoyed. In fact, briefly, he became his old self. He kissed me and embraced me and said, 'Father, I bless you for your wisdom. You have made me very happy; perhaps happier than at any time in my life. And not only for me, but in the end it will be good for everyone in the City'.

"It was impossible for me to understand what he meant by that, but he seemed convinced he would return one day with new knowledge and a new way of life for all our people. But why the need? It was a riddle then and still is now."

The old King lapsed into silence once more and sank back into his throne, contemplating the splendour of the great room around him. He breathed deeply, as if totally exhausted, and said nothing for some moments. This gave Gorin time to observe the extreme gentleness in his aged face more closely, despite being drawn and strained by the concern of the moment.

The lost heir

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 525-549

Finally, Iraeus continued. "In the end he left," he said, pausing over every word. "He left just three days after I told him he could. We held one last great ball, here in the Palace, to which all his friends were invited. It was one of the most splendid affairs in living memory - even here. I hoped, in some way, it might persuade him to change his mind. But it didn't. He came and danced with us, he feasted with us and joked with us. But his ideas never wavered for a moment.

"What was worse, only Hexard and I knew he was going away. He told us no one else should know of his plans until it was too late; they all had to think everything was normal again. And of course, when he appeared at the ball, looking happy and relaxed, they did. Everyone rejoiced, sang, danced… I too

had to pretend I was celebrating his 'recovery'. That was very hard. If only they had known…"

He drifted once more into his memories, remembering the great night of celebration in honour of his son's "return to normality". It had been such a splendid evening - and yet, instead of "normality", it had marked the opening up of a great gap in everyone's lives. The heir to the winged throne of the Kings was going beyond the walls; and no one knew where, or why, or if he would ever be seen again.

"He left us the same night, took provisions for three or four days, which he said would be enough, and went out of the City by one of the old farmers' gates in the East wall. By the time the sun rose he was far away, but for many hours I looked out from the top of the Golden Tower, hoping to see him somewhere on the road. But the sun was too strong. He was gone, and it was as if he had never been."

"Didn't the people realise straight away he was no longer here?" enquired Gorin.

"No, not immediately. It took two or three days before they started asking questions. Most of them were still thinking about the ball, and when at last they realised no one had seen him since it was held, nothing could be done."

"Did you make an official statement about him leaving?"

"I had to. A great meeting was called in the Palace Square and I came out onto the steps where I always address the people. How they cheered; how they blew the trumpets and sounded the bells as if it were a perfectly normal day! But I was in no humour for normality. I raised my hand to quieten them and waited until they had calmed down. I remember it seemed like an age. And then I began to speak.

"'People of Zandernatis,' I said, 'I come before you today not in my customary joy, not even as your King, but more as

your father. I come to tell you we have all suffered a great loss. For you it is the loss of a brother; for me the loss of a son and for the City, the loss of an heir.'"

Iraeus paused for a moment, closing his eyes as he relived the heartrending moment. Gorin sat in silence, watching and waiting.

"At first, everyone thought Esperon had transitioned beyond his present life as his dear mother had done ten years before. For this to happen at such an early age would have been unusual, but not unheard of. In fact, the people would have found it easier to understand and they could have started watching out for him in all the newborns right away. Those who transition young are always the swiftest to return.

"'But he has not passed as we are all destined to pass when the final rounds are danced and the last cup is drained,' I told them. 'He is not in the greater Paradise beyond, planning fresh existence. No, he is gone from us in a way that none have gone for many centuries. I have to tell you, my people; Esperon has left the City to journey through the unknown lands outside our walls.'"

The old King trembled a little after uttering these words as he recalled the scene. The shock it had been to the crowd assembled in the Palace Square before him. The shame he had felt, having to admit it was his own son who had done such an unimaginable thing!

"And so they knew. But of course no one could understand why, and I was unable to tell them. I could only repeat his promise to return, but they didn't believe it any more than I did. The world outside is so alien to us. There's nothing we can survive on. Here we rejoice in living. Out there we wouldn't know how to exist, or what for."

"But why do you think that?" asked Gorin. "The Paradise Garden has many wonders in it, and the creatures living there are wonderful as well."

"Ah, but they are the ones we fear most," the King retorted. "We do not know them; there is nothing between us. So we are better to stay as we are with the things we know. Perhaps there are good things out there in the Garden, but the forest edge is too near and there is nothing to protect us from the very real dangers lurking just outside. Believe me, peace and happiness for us lies only with what is familiar."

By now, Gorin had come to understand this attitude, so deeply ingrained in City culture, and that changing it would not be easy. He then thought for a moment of all the beautiful things he had come across on the way to Zandernatis and could well imagine its people would find much out there to please and engage them. Yet they were dominated by fear of the unknown. Once overcome, they would soon see it was groundless. Perhaps the kind of Dreaming Esperon experienced should have come to more of his fellow Zandernations… But Iraeus was speaking again.

"All this happened seven months ago, seven long months unlike any before. Hexard tried to console me; he told me of the ancient writings he and those before him have guarded since the beginning of our age. He said Esperon's departure marked the dawning of a whole new epoch in our history. But I've never been much of a scholar, and the hope he offered seemed vague and indefinite at the time.

"Only seven months he said, and seven months it has been until now. Until you came - the one person able to go in search of my son. I am getting very old now Gorin, and all my years have come upon me in these last months. I am weary of my

present body and long to be released from it so I can return and relive the pleasures of youth.

"But when I go, the City will have need of its heir. And there is only you, unfearing with our fears, who can go to him. For Hexard tells me you are not afraid of journeying beyond our walls, and not even of crossing the last frontiers of the Garden itself. Is that really true?"

"It is," said Gorin, surprising himself by the note of assertiveness in his voice.

"So, I will therefore ask you to do this thing for me," said Iraeus. "For us. To go out and search for my son, to tell him his people need him now and bring him back to the City. So he will be ready to take his place on the winged throne when he is needed."

The King's voice faltered for a moment as he caught his breath and then raised his misting eyes towards the intricacies of the ceiling arching overhead. But he was not looking at the interwoven leaves and branches. He seemed to be gazing beyond the decoration, beyond the confines of the Palace itself.

"I remember leaving on a noble mission once," he said, softly. "It was five, maybe six lifetimes ago in the Heroic Age[26]. We were young, we were proud. And had no fear of going beyond the walls. We saw the road ahead of us as a path to adventure… We were eager to see new things. Whereas now we seek only the familiar and secure."

King Iraeus lowered his head and directed his misty gaze towards Gorin.

"But you Gorin, you have the heroism which once was ours. It gives you the strength to accomplish what none of us

[26] Referred to in the Chronology as the "First Heroic Age". The Second Heroic Age followed the events described in "Apotheosis", Book III of "Genesis Antarctica".

would dare aspire to. It is because of the Dreaming I have to ask this of you, the Dreaming that took my son on the perilous road you now must follow. Perhaps you will see the fabulous things he told us of; the creatures who perform wonders with the strange forces they control and their Pardylis floating in the hills. But whatever you see, remember you are there in our name, and all our hopes are with you."

Gorin nodded slowly, wondering what was going to be in store for him on the road towards the hills where these people and their city were supposed to be. What if he didn't find them? What if there were nothing? If it had all been a figment of the imagination in the minds of Esperon and Hexard. Would he return empty-handed? Or perish in the unknown lands beyond the Garden? He began to think perhaps he had let himself in for more than he knew, but it was already too late; the King had placed his trust in him and he was now committed to whatever lay ahead.

"There must be a sign," said Iraeus, reaching into the folds of his gown, "to show you are truly sent by me with the Royal summons for my son." He produced a round, embossed object made from a reddish metal. It was attached to a fine cord which the King placed around Gorin's neck.

"By the seal of the ruling house shall he know you. Give this to him and he will understand he must return - and you with him, for as you are not of our City you may come and go as you please."

Gorin examined the seal, noting it was surprisingly light for its size. It bore a representation of the City surmounted by the ever present wing motif. He tucked it inside his tunic out of sight and waited for the King to continue.

"It will be best if you start as soon as possible. Time may be running out. You should leave as Esperon did, a few hours

before dawn. At that time there will be no one to see you, and by sunrise you will be out of sight of the walls. Hexard will take care of providing all you may require and I shall leave any further instructions up to him. I have no more to say, except to wish you good fortune; we trust in you to do all you can. Meanwhile, we will await your safe and speedy return with news of your success and with our son. Go now and prepare for the morning."

The King stood up and invited Gorin to rise as well, before leading the way down from the dais and towards the ante-room. As they approached, the doors opened to reveal Hexard standing on the threshold to greet them. He smiled at Gorin and led him away across the carpeted ante-room towards the Painted Gallery beyond. Almost as soon as they began to walk the length of the ornate marble floor, Gorin caught the sound of joyful music again, trumpets and choirs, far away. Telling him the King was trying to raise his spirits again.

Preparations for the Great Journey

from "The Song of Gorin" Stanzas 550-574

Hexard asked no questions concerning what had passed between Iraeus and Gorin during the audience, but seemed fully aware of all the preparations they had to make. The rest of the day was spent in the alchemist's rooms, organising supplies and studying the route to be taken, as far as it could be studied. The only information he could provide was that the journey began in a due easterly direction, leading through the wooded country of the Paradise Garden once more until the Paradise Gate. No particular hazards were likely to be encountered until then. But after passing through it, things were likely to be very different.

"Once you have left the Garden," said Hexard, indicating an aged and poorly-detailed map he had produced from his shelves, "you will notice a sudden change in your surroundings. There will no longer be the order and harmony so apparent in the forest here. For you will then be in the Forest of Dissemblance and there you cannot - and must not - believe anything you see. It is a vast area of confusion and deception, still trying to evolve towards the same level of perfection we have here. It will probably be the most dangerous part of your journey, for beyond it there are only the open grasslands and finally the Deserts of Jerah. These you must cross in order to come to the River Arondyvon." He indicated a blue line on the map. "And then you will come at last to the hills."

"And to Pardylis?"

"So it is said, and so Esperon believed." Hexard smiled, "You will be able to discover for yourself if the legends are true. Or false."

"You don't know?"

"I am not at liberty to tell of all the things I know, Gorin. To do so would be to betray my trust and take from you the right to discover your own truth."

"There is just one thing I would be interested in knowing," said Gorin, deciding at last to ask a question he had been pondering for some time. "Have you ever been outside the City walls?"

The old alchemist smiled and answered, "You know I have. I came outside them to meet you."

"Yes of course, but I mean really outside. Have you been as far as the Silver River for example?"

Hexard considered his answer carefully before replying, and when he did, it was in a hushed, almost secretive tone. "I have been some way, yes," he admitted. "And in fact, although

Esperon's departure was such a dramatic event in the history of the City, I can tell you now it was not without precedent in our days; for there are still a few nonconformists to be found here, hidden away."

"You mean others have left?"

"No, no. None have gone like Esperon. He went officially and for no fixed time. Those who venture outside now go for brief periods only, a few hours at the most. And they have to do it secretly or else they would be unable to return without a Royal summons."

"But why do they go?"

"To find excitement, and a change from the delightful - but predictable - life in Zandernatis. One providing little outlet for the small amount of adventurous spirit they may possess. In general, the purpose of these expeditions is merely to observe the things of the Garden around them; but with their upbringing, that is already a great deal."

"How many people do this then? I mean, if there are several, why can't one of them go in search of Esperon?"

"Because they wouldn't be able to go far enough. They know the Garden itself should hold no danger for them; but beyond is another matter. They would be incapable of even considering going any further…"

"So you have accompanied them?"

Hexard laughed. "Dear, dear, you want to know so many details, don't you? Yes, I have gone with them occasionally, if only for encouragement. Because even the smallest grain of progressive thought will be valuable in the times ahead of us."

"Who are they then, these adventurers?"

"Young men, like yourself. They call themselves the 'Outside Society' and meet regularly to organise their exploits. But you'll find out more about them tonight, for I shall take

you to their headquarters. Some of them may perhaps like to go with you on the first part of your journey. At least until your guide appears."

"And who will that be?"

"You will see. There's time enough to speak of such things when we are with them. They'll be very interested to meet you, actually. For ever since Esperon left they've been a lot more active than they were before, and I'm sure they'll be the main driving force behind the City's hope for the future."

"Did Esperon belong to this Society?"

"No. He knew some of them, but never passed through the walls in their company. And they did not go with him when he began his journey either, as he insisted on going alone. As far as you're concerned, I'm sure you will be pleased to have a little companionship and support during the first few hours of your journey?"

"Of course."

It will be good for them as well. We'll leave for their meeting place as soon as it becomes dark."

Gorin spent the rest of the day waiting for nightfall. He felt restless and experienced a whole raft of emotions as he contemplated the prospect of his journey into the unknown. There was eagerness and excitement at the idea of taking part in such an important adventure. Yet there was also trepidation and the fear of failure, or worse. What would it be like travelling through the "Forest of Dissemblance"? How would he survive in the Deserts of Jerah and who was to be his guide through all of this?

He would know soon enough.

XVI - Areligionism in Zandernatis

Observations by
Professor Henry Sutcliff O.B.E.
Chair of the Department of Anthropology,
Macquarie University, NSW, Australia.

When considering the assertions and philosophy expressed in the Haakon Urn documents, one of the most striking revelations is of course that apparently, those living in Zandernatis had "total recall" of all their "past lives". According to the writings, particularly the "Song of Gorin", it is clear this was not merely a belief, but a universally accepted fact of life. One enabling those living in the City to celebrate their lives to the full, safe in the knowledge that they had a totally holistic view of their evolutionary path stretching back over many centuries and a current lifetime shaped by everything preceding it. This of course meant they had no fear of death, or "transition" as they called it, since it simply offered them an opportunity of being reborn into a new body, ready to experience youthful joys again. Furthermore, they also had the confidence of knowing they were likely to meet and recognise the friends, family members and loved ones with whom they had shared their previous existences – and celebrate such happy events with all the enthusiasm and exuberance they had developed into a fine art.

To what degree these assertions may be allegorical or a statement of actual facts cannot be determined with absolute certainty. But the fact that they form an integral part of the epic "Song of Gorin" poem

would imply it to be the latter. This is because it is one of the few truly narrative texts to have been discovered in the Urns and does appear to be relating a sequence of actual events, in many instances **corroborated by historical** records found elsewhere in the writings. For several of those involved in this project, predominantly highly pragmatic researchers, academics and anthropologists, accepting the idea of ancient Zandernations really having "total recall" of "previous lives" was one step too far. This led to bitter disagreements in the early 1970s as to how - or even if - these findings should be made public. Acrimony which, in the end, did of course lead to them being withheld from publication for over 40 years.

A key component of Zandernation civilisation

Having studied all the available information concerning these documents and their content, I am convinced universal acceptance of the cycle of rebirth and all it implies was indeed a key component of Zandernation civilisation and culture. It shaped their society and did in fact play an important role in generating the conditions which ultimately lead to its demise and metamorphosis. The parallels these events have with the notion of Paradise and the Fall of Man as recounted in Genesis are striking, suggesting that the Old Testament account is perhaps an echo of the events recounted here after they had become absorbed into humankind's collective unconscious. A theory which did of course spark another furore, this time among religious fundamentalists, who asserted such claims were "heretical" and may well have led to the theft, disappearance and possible destruction of the original manuscripts in 1976.

A God-free society

However, in my view, the most persuasive argument to support the idea that everyone in Zandernatis believed life to be a cyclic process is, quite simply, the total lack of any superstitions, religious practices,

places of worship or "spiritual hierarchy" being mentioned anywhere in the Haakon Urn writings. The only possible exception being a few vague symbolic references to notions of "Cosmipotos" and the "Greater Scheme" in the earliest Aeons of the "Book of Magres".

This means Zandernatis was the only structured civilization ever existing on Earth that had no shrines, temples, cathedrals or equivalent "holy places". And if it did not have them, it was because they were not needed. In other words, Voltaire's famous pronouncement, "If God did not exist we would have to invent Him" did not apply to the Golden City. This was simply because the certainty of life's continuity meant Zandernations had no need of any imagined all-powerful being or beings to be placated or petitioned in times of hardship. They needed no "faith" or "beliefs" because their existences were founded on certitude and a clearly defined evolutionary progression.

Having that degree of conviction is of course what could be called a "state of grace". No doubt all of us today would like to have such assurance. But as the history of Zandernatis clearly demonstrates, this condition does have its drawbacks.

In any event, I am personally convinced the time has now come for this knowledge to be published – and in a form accessible to a much wider readership than a few erudite academics in selected Research Institutes. Now this is finally happening, I sincerely hope it will serve to enlighten modern Man and perhaps make us aware that if even a society as great and as wondrous as Zandernatis was not invulnerable to forces coveting its riches and splendid isolation, how much more should we guard against precipitating another Fall?

Let us be warned.

XVII - PAST LIFE MEMORIES - ZANDERNATIS REVISITED

A report by **Dr H K Kittner** from the **PLM Research Institute (PLMRI)** in Lucerne, Switzerland and the **Zandernatis Regression Research Facility** in Puerto Natales, Patagonia, Chile.

PAST LIFE MEMORY RESEARCH INSTITUTE SEEKS TESTIMONIALS FOR MAJOR RESEARCH PROGRAM

Have you experienced past life regression?
Do you have recurring memories of distant former lives?
Dating back to an ancient civilization in Antarctica?

We would like to hear from you !

In association with the **Dickensen Archaeological and Geophysical Research Institute** in Melbourne, Australia, the **PLMRI** is conducting a research program into past life memories of subjects having recall of **several successive lives** during an "idyllic" pre-glacial civilization in Antarctica involving:

- An advanced closed city culture "dedicated to celebration"
- An "all-at-once" ability to **recall every previous life** in this context during each successive existence
- The progressive decline of this utopian civilization
- A savage attack from outside forces and an apocalyptic battle.

Learn more at: www.zandernatis.com/past-life-memories

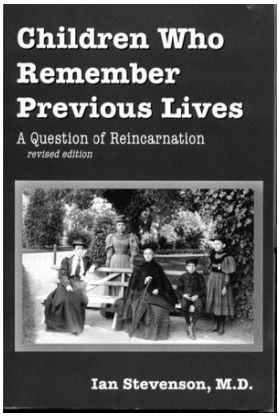
The Past Life Memory Research Institute
Lucerne, Switzerland
Contact Dr. H K Kittner: plmri@zandernatis.com

The Institute is located in the former residence of Dr. Lenz Streicher, the "secret" pioneer of PLR in Switzerland.

This advertisement was posted on a large number of Past Life Regression discussion groups and sent to over 500 PLR therapists worldwide in 2013.

PLR gains increasing credence

In recent years, Past Life Regression (PLR) has practically become a mainstream field of interest and therapy (with more than 1.7 million hits on Google). Large numbers of patients all over the world have found the root causes of their fears, phobias and "incurable" conditions by being taken back through previous existences to the traumas which have caused them so much suffering in their present lives.



A great deal of serious scientific study has been carried out into the subject of reincarnation. One of the most significant works in this field is "Children Who Remember Previous Lives" by Ian Stevenson, M.D. It offers meticulously well-documented cases of children who remembered who they were, where they lived and the people they lived with in their previous existence. He preferred working with children rather than use hypnosis which is necessary when dealing with adults.

Having obtained scientific credibility, public acceptation of the concept has also been gaining ground. A Harris poll conducted in December 2013 showed that nearly 1 in 4 of all Americans (80 million people) believe in reincarnation. The subject has also been given increasingly widespread coverage in the general interest press. For example, with the article in the UK magazine "Woman's Own" on the following page.

Our privately funded – and highly "confidential" - Institute in Lucerne has spent several years researching into this phenomenon and developing new techniques, particularly for exploring "life between lives" regression. This has always been more challenging for therapists because of the greater depths of hypnosis required.

Typically, such sessions lasted for up to four hours. However, some three years ago the fruit of our research enabled this time to be roughly halved.

REAL LIFE MYSTERY

'I've lived five times before'

Ever wondered if you've had a past life? Cate Bisp wanted to find out – and discovered she's been here before not once, but five times

Some mums get perfume for Christmas, some get books or DVDs – but last year, Cate Bisp got a present with a difference. 'My daughter arranged for me to have a past life regression, and I went back into lots of different lives,' she explains. 'I was amazed – I wasn't sure if anything would happen at all, and at most I thought I might find out about one life. I never imagined there might be five – or that so three of them I would be a man!'

Cate, who's divorced and lives in Bristol, says she didn't really know what to expect when she arrived for the session. 'Sharon, the hypnotherapist, asked me to visualise a place where I felt safe and happy, so I pictured a lovely, peaceful garden. I didn't feel as though I was in a trance – I was just very calm and relaxed. She asked me what I saw, and these images just flooded into my mind. I didn't have any control over them, they just came.'

The first of Cate's past life experiences took her to London, in what seemed to be Victorian times. 'I was wearing a Victorian dress, it was foggy, and I could hear sounds, like horses hooves, muffled the way noises are in fog. I knew my name was Rosemary Mitchell and I was a maid to a lady called Alice Frogmore. I'd been meeting a man, and I was going back to the house where I worked.

'It's hard to explain what it felt like – it wasn't like dreaming, it was more like watching a film, but being in it. I could look down at myself and see what I was wearing, and I felt all the emotions. I wasn't myself, I was Rosemary Mitchell, hurrying to work, knowing I'd be in trouble if I was late. It was so clear.'

If it felt strange travelling back in time, the next experience was even odder, says Cate. 'Everything went hazy, and as it got clearer I could see I was in a pub, with people talking and laughing. I was a Portuguese sailor and my name was Alfredo. I had to get back to my boat, but I was drunk and I kept falling over. I got into a rowing boat to go out to an enormous wooden sailing ship, but I fell out. I could feel the cold water, and hear people were telling me to get back in but I couldn't see how to, and then someone hauled me back in.'

Alfredo, it appears, was a bit of a lad. On the transcript of the session, Sharon asks whether he likes life on the ship, and Cate replies, 'It's a nice life – I meet lots of girls, and I don't have to stay with any of them'. Which, says Cate, was a surprise: 'His personality was nothing like mine – I'm a middle-aged woman who's had a very ordinary life! But I really do remember the feeling of being him, and feeling like I was having a lot of fun!'

In the third life, Cate was a girl of about ten. 'My name was Annie Cross, and my father was Edward Cross. He was a seaman, he'd gone off to war, and I didn't know when he'd be coming back. I was standing at a cliff edge, looking out over the sea. It was very strange. I knew the names of my brothers and sisters, but there were things I didn't know, like what year it was, and what people meant when they talked about war. But the overwhelming feeling was of being sad, and missing my father.'

In the last two lives, Cate went back to being men. 'The next time, I was in a cathedral, and I knew it was in France, but I was English. I was a monk, wearing a grey robe, and I'd had to go there to escape persecution – that was a very powerful feeling, a dread of what I'd left behind.

'Somebody was shouting for me, and I went to the door and saw the pigs had got out. Another monk was trying to round them up, and I was just laughing, because it looked so funny. I can remember that so clearly.

'Then that one merged into another, and I was confused. In the next scenario, I was French, but I was in Spain. I was an envoy and I'd been sent to the Spanish court, and I was fed up because I'd been kept waiting for hours. I also had strong feelings about the political situation; I felt the poor were being exploited and I didn't want to have anything to do with it. That feeling was still with me when I came out of it.'

After the session, Cate did some research on the names and places she'd mentioned. 'I looked up costume books and found that Rosemary Mitchell's clothes would have been worn around the 1810s, and then using the internet, I found that there had been an Alice Frogmore living at that time. I also found a seaman called Edward Cross living at Dover, and I traced a Portuguese ship with the same name as Alfredo's. I couldn't believe it when the names came up. You think, it can't be… but then you start to think, well, maybe...'

Many people believe that past life 'memories' are just patched together from things we've read or seen, but forgotten, and it's a theory that Cate's considered – 'It could have been something I dreamed up, I can't say for sure. But I can't remember ever coming across anything that relates to what I experienced. I've never been to France or Portugal, or even to Dover, and I'm not a history buff.

'It's all so far from what I'd expect my mind to dream up. For example, I'm very interested in the Second World War, so if anything was going to come from my imagination, I'd have thought it might be connected to that. I've also lived in Africa, so if my mind was just looking for something exotic, you'd think that's where it would go. But these other lives were in my head, so how did they get there?

'I'm a fairly sceptical person, and quite down to earth, so I know this all sounds far-fetched, and, even now, I still don't really know what to think. But when I look at that transcript, I know I felt those feelings, that I felt as though I was those people. It was a fantastic experience – and it felt 100% real.'

'It wasn't like dreaming, more like watching a film'

Cate's daughter gave her the hypnotherapy session as a present

'I was standing at a cliff edge, looking out over the sea. It was very strange'

'I'm a middle-aged woman who's had a very ordinary life!'

Want to try it?

Here's how to find a hypnotherapist

You can search for a hypnotherapist in your area at www.general-hypnotherapy-register.com, which lists members of the General Hypnotherapy Register – they're required to follow a code of ethics. To find a therapist who offers past life regression, click on 'Special interest registers'. Prices vary throughout the country, but on average, a one-hour session costs £60-£80.

FAST FACTS

What is past life regression?

Hypnotherapist Sharon Stiles, who did Cate Bisp's past life regression, explains what it's all about

What is past life regression? It's a form of hypnotherapy that aims to help people gain access to their subconscious minds... Why do it? A lot of people come because they feel there's something they want explained – perhaps they have an emotional problem that they feel has its roots in the past. But I also get a lot of people – like Cate – who are just curious. What happens? People often think they'll go into a trance, but hypnotherapy isn't like that – you're still fully conscious. Then I might ask them to visualise doors through which they can walk into past lives, or boxes containing their past lives. Once they've taken one of them, I'll ask what they can see, what their name is, and so on. Does everyone discover a past life? Not always. If someone has a lot going on in their current life, they often can't get into any past lives. It's as though their mind is saying, deal with this first. ▸ For more information about hypnotherapy with Sharon, call 0845 665 3024, or visit www.sharonstiles.co.uk

80 Woman's Own

Woman's Own 81

As a result, we can now gain much quicker access to the remotest depths of patients' past and between-incarnation experiences. Our management of the life-changing revelations this therapy inevitably produces has also been improved.

Reaching back into the distant past

A further benefit of these techniques is that we can now delve much further back into the succession of existences than ever before. The process is rather like peeling an onion. You explore one layer (or life) only to discover there is another behind it, and another and another…

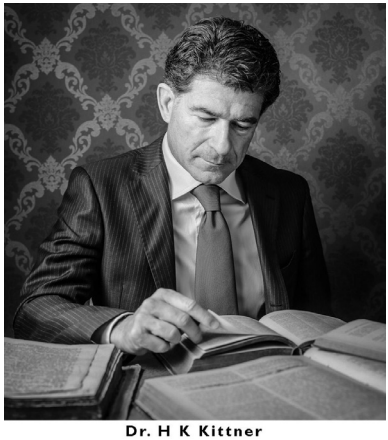
It was of course not long before the PLM Research team started asking the question, "How far back can we go?"

The more we searched, the more obvious it became that the answer was, "As far as you want". For therapeutic purposes, there is rarely little point in looking beyond four or five lifetimes to find the cause of a problem in a current life. But when it comes to research, the scope is limitless if the "Deep Regression" techniques we have developed are applied.

Working with a team of volunteers, we have been able to take our subjects back into lives lived many hundreds, and even many thousands of years ago. (Not all of them on Earth, by the way). In 2010, we felt we had gone back about as far as we could, after having revived memories in several subjects from what appeared to be Neanderthal times. Some of them involving recollections of great savagery and even cannibalism!

The Haakon Urns open new perspectives

Then, in 2011, we heard plans were underway to finally publish some of the documents discovered under the Antarctic ice in 1962. Although we had few details, it occurred to us there might be a potential proving ground for our techniques associated with this project. I therefore contacted the Melbourne Dickensen Institute and suggested using our approach to try and find subjects able to access memories contemporary with those texts.



Dr. H K Kittner

Professor Gregson got back to me immediately with a fascinating preview of what was being prepared for publication. Including the astounding news of the Zandernation people's ability to remember all their previous incarnations! Needless to say, this was incredibly exciting news for everyone at the Institute! An advanced civilisation tens, perhaps

even hundreds of thousands of years old! Where all past-life memories were retained! The implications were staggering.

Quite apart from being a seismic shock to all conventional notions of history, for us it opened up vast possibilities of research and a tremendous challenge for our most advanced regression techniques.

Suddenly, we found ourselves being asked the momentous question:

"Can you find a subject with recoverable memories of a life, or lives, dating from the age of the Golden City in Antarctica?"

Professor Gregson and the rest of his team were of course highly supportive and encouraging. We were also very eager to explore these uncharted areas of PLM Research and began seeking likely subjects towards the end of 2012.

Initially, results were very disappointing. Nothing remotely relating to any pre-Ice Age civilisation could be found in any of our subjects, even the most responsive.

After three months of fruitless attempts to find anyone with any trace of having lived so long ago, we began to think it was a fruitless endeavour. All of those we worked with only seemed able to relate to well-documented civilisations, apparently because the lessons they needed to learn in their present lives were all inextricably tied to the path of human evolution and development "as we know it".

Spreading the net wider

We therefore decided to look further afield. Over the next two months we made contact with numerous past life regression therapists in Europe, the US, Australia, New Zealand and South America. Also, after consultation with Professor Gregson, we posted the "Past Life Memory Research Institute seeks volunteers"

advertisement widely on various relevant Facebook pages, Internet Forums and Discussion Groups.

Responses to this initiative were mixed. Since most of the 500 or more therapists were unfamiliar with our enhanced Deep Regression techniques, they had never actually attempted to take any of their patients back that far.

We did receive several reports of apparently "unaccountable" memories though, none of which could be associated with any part of "recorded" human history. However, there was no indication any of them could be linked to a pre-glacial civilisation in Antarctica.

Then, one report arrived which stood out from all the rest. It was sent in from a therapist in Dunedin, New Zealand (South Island), giving an intriguing account of a flashback to a remote era and an experience that apparently dominated one of his patient's subconscious:

Message from H.W. in Dunedin, NZ

I saw your posting on the "Soul Memories" discussion group and thought you might be interested in one of my patients.

Jake (not his real name of course) is consumed by almost pathological jealousy. This affects nearly all aspects of his professional and emotional life and has already been the cause of his three divorces.

After several years of ineffectual psychotherapy, he came to me in near desperation to see if this obsession was rooted in an earlier existence. He proved to be a good subject and we were able to regress through several lives. But all of them were characterised by a similar type of consuming jealousy, to a greater or lesser degree.

Finally, I gently induced him into a deeper hypnotic state and asked him to go to the root cause of his jealousy, wherever, whenever that might have been.

His face immediately screwed up in an expression of rage…

"They have it all," he snarled. "The blessings, all the blessings…"

- Who has all these blessings?

"Those… behind their walls… inside their protection… And we were left behind…"

- By them?

"No. By the architects… their fathers… I hate them. We all hate them…"

- Can you tell me when all this is happening?

"Three thousand years after the architects built their accursed walls… that's when. After they shut us out because we weren't good enough… But now we'll take our own… We're going to take it back…!"

- Where are you now?

"We're all on the borders, massing… and we're going to take their putrid, festering, whore-hole of a glinting city…"

- Can you tell me where this city is? In what part of the world?

"On the great continent. Where else? The first continent. Where the architects came out of the southern ice…"

Apparently it was this great feeling of injustice, experienced in some very distant age, that had poisoned almost all of Jake's lives ever since. He was unable to give any more details, simply repeating again and again how he, his companions and those he referred to as their "allies" were going to reclaim what was theirs by right.

We were of course fascinated by this account. For not only did it appear to open a window onto a very distant age, but also the mention of *"The first continent, where the architects came out of the southern ice"* did look like it could be referring to Antarctica, presumably further north than it is today.

A decisive breakthrough

However, the most significant response by far, came from a therapist in Punta Arenas, southern Chile, a few weeks later. This was clearly the most exciting testimonial we had received up to that point, and proof that with perseverance we would be able to achieve our goal:

Message from "Ignacio Parades" [27]

I am Past Life theraputic in south of Chile. I read your announcement for news of peoples with memories back to lifes in very old civilization. This has happen to me. It is with patient from Puerto Natales, Jose. He always dreams dangerous things. Always is feered he gets attacked. Writing down dreams is not enough. I must go back with him to first experience.

This is not in last lives. Has the obsession as a man, as a woman. As a boy, once kills himself. We go back more and more. One day he talk about "first territory" and "great city". What happen to him in "first territory"… I write you transcript:
"Yes… yes… it is city again…
Not, not as I see it every day. It is dark now…
People running all directions… No light. Why is this? In all lives here, never seen it… Never seen this.
Someone screeming… No one ever screems.
Everyone on walls looking… Pointing…
Suddenly a big quiet.
All look up… and now I hear sound like wind in mountain get stronger…
Come closer…
We look to the sky to see the sound of wings…
It is wings beeting, beeting. And their song…
Everyone on walls cheering at the wings and the songing over our heds…
They push me to go to top the walls.
I not want to go… NOT WANT TO GO…
I feer… I never have feer before. No feer in the Paradise… I look out from walls…

[27] This is the message as we received it. No attempt has been made to rewrite the English in any way to preserve the impact of the original.

I see big dark shape come to me… Wings beeting over my hed with the songing.
Outside dark shape coming more to me… to walls…
Air fills up with denashas… says garrose… hard sound to win against the songing…
Loudness… pain in ears… blood in ears…
SO FEERED… Everyone...
I see all lives at once… like string of beeds… all beeds on single string… I feel they want to cut the string to let beeds role in all ways…
Getting lost… breaks the chain… the chain mean so much… They come at us now…
They come…"

This was the kind of graphic description we had been hoping to find. We crosschecked with Professor Gregson and his team, who confirmed that it did indeed corroborate certain passages in the texts. They were obviously very excited at this revelation and urged us to press on with our line of research.

Since more and more people are responding to our enquiries and advertisements, the number of cases and individuals with credible claims of unexplained memories similar to those described above is increasing. Curiously, the vast majority of them are from people living in New Zealand, Australia, Argentina and particularly southern Chile. We are continuing to pursue all these channels of investigation and will be issuing reports of our findings in due course."

APPENDIX

Bibliography

A non-exhaustive list of writings from the Haakon Urns including those referred to and/or quoted from during the compilation and retelling of "Genesis Antarctica".

The Book of Magres

Directly translated from the "Tables of Greater Scheme Design" by the first Court Alchemist. Very few facts about this original source had been discovered, but the "Tables" were apparently introduced by the Aeraumen in the form of an esoteric "key" having a universal application. From this, the initiated were able to glean an understanding of higher laws and thereby be able to prophesy future events in accordance with them. It was thus the interpretation of an unfolding scheme with an unparalleled breadth of vision, enabling precise predictions to be made. For the principles involved reached far beyond the evolutionary pattern of one planet; they encompassed the universe.

The book itself consisted of 7 lengthy sections (*Aeons*), each divided into between four and nine subsections (*Ages*). It began with symbolic references to Creation and the origins of the Cosmos and ended with what can only be described as a prophetic "roadmap" of the events leading up to and including those covered by "Genesis Antarctica".

Establishment of the Golden City

Two editions of this work were found, including a revised version dating from the time of Nuovo from which all direct reference to the "Lords of Creation" was expunged. However, the edition Gorin studied was the original, since Hexard had preserved a copy of it in his secret archives. As well as describing how Zandernatis came into being, this document also included plans and designs of the City and its architecture.

Species, Races, and Peoples

A highly detailed description of all the creatures, semi-human and human, living within the Paradise Garden and beyond it. This is one of the most fascinating documents in the entire collection, for it catalogues and describes virtually all the "mythical" creatures that have peopled the world's legends since recorded history began. They include Harelops, Fauns, Unihorns, Centaurs, Chimeras, Elves, Griffins, Denashurs, Manticores, Pegasuses, Garrows, Water Sprites, etc.

The Song of Gorin

The epic poem which has been the primary source for the compilation and retelling of this "legendary prehistory", since it is one of the only two documents from the collection written in the form of a narrative. It consists of almost 4,100 stanzas, and is divided into 21 sections, describing Gorin's adventures and experiences from his initial awakening in the Garden right through until the aftermath of the Great Battle.

Discourses of Primos I

A collection of the first King's public addresses, delivered at regular intervals in the early days, not long after the Golden City had been founded. At this time, the King was looked upon as even more of a father figure and inspirational leader than latterly. By all accounts, Primos I was one of the most enlightened rulers Zandernatis ever had, with the possible exception of Ersuto I (The Mystic King).

History of the Endless Happiness

Two versions extant (see section XIII).

The official historical record of Zandernatis, containing the full text of documents such as the 1670 "Declaration of Supreme Delights" and (in the first edition only) the Charter of the Order of the Goldthrone Knights.

Laws and Precepts for the Continuance of Perfection in Golden City Culture

This contains the statutes by which the City was governed. For the most part, it is a list of ideals and aims necessary for perpetuating the Paradise City concept. After the 1617 "Declaration" the "Laws" were not as strictly

respected since the whole nature of Zandernation society had undergone considerable change by then. Nuovo made some amendments in 2050, shortly after ordering the closure of the gates, and from that time on the original purpose of the "Laws and Precepts" became lost and almost forgotten amidst the new style of living.

Ballads of Adoration

A collection of some 200 anonymous ballads and traditional songs from the Third and Fourth centuries. They were gathered together and published for the first time in 1310 by Delania, Court Poetess to Inquos I.

Songs of Celebration

A small collection of "common" and even bawdy songs that became popular in Zandernatis from around the year 2800 onwards as the intensity and frequency of celebrations continued to increase.

Poems of Heroism

The largest book of poems by Zalander (1621 - 1753), one of the greatest poets of the second millennium. At this time, the glories of the past were ceasing to be regarded as actual historical events, with the vivid racial memory being subtly transformed into a series of legends and myths. Zalander, for all his merits as a writer and poet, was in fact one of those principally responsible for this change. This was because his romantically inspired works popularised the concept of a distant, heroic age, wherein mighty deeds were done, but without any real relevance to the present. The general acceptance of ideas such as these did of course pave the way for Inquos II's "revision of history" some 150 years later.

"Discourses" by Magres

A collection of lectures given by the first Royal Alchemist, most of them delivered upon anniversaries of the "Feast of the Autonomy". The most notable of them is unquestionably the "Treatises on Paradise", dating from 297, in which Magres spoke of the nature of the City and the unique position it enjoyed with regard to the rest of the evolving world.

Sayings and Proverbs (Books I & II)

A collection of Magres' thoughts on a variety of subjects, the greater part of them being fragments of the philosophy he evolved during his millennium of office. They were actually gathered together by his son, who succeeded him as Royal Alchemist, and presented to Primos IV on the occasion of "The Feast Day in Memory of the Glorious Past" in 1123.

The Song of the Heroes

An epic poem having its roots in great antiquity; reputed to be the song sung by the intrepid explorers who left the City in search of adventure during the Heroic Age. It probably had its origins at the time of the Initiatory Journeys, beginning in the year 69, gradually being added to until the "Expeditions of the Valiant" in 721 and 765, when the final stanzas were added and the saga was set down in its definitive form. It was a later copy of this amended edition that was found with all the other material in the Haakon Urns. It has a particular interest for us today, not only for its graphic description of the dangers encountered by the "heroes", but also for the understanding it shows of the City's relationship with those in the "Lands beyond our knowledge".

The Aerauman Charter of Evolution

This document, of which only a third millennium copy was found in the Urns, would appear to have been of great significance. Unfortunately, like a great many other documents, it had not been studied in sufficient detail to really assess its value when it, and all the other material found on the Haakon plateau, were stolen in 1976. The researchers who catalogued it stated, at the time, that it appeared to be a vulgarised account of the motivation behind "the winged ones" intervention in human affairs, but of course this could not be confirmed.

The Charter of Paradise

A second document apparently of Aerauman origin, dealing specifically with the state of Paradise as established around the Golden City and the principles it was expected to adhere to. The terms of reference appeared to be more limited than in the more universal "Charter of Evolution". However, the Charter did include some interesting elements of prophecy,

apparently taken from the Aeraumen's own interpretation of the "Tables of Greater Scheme Design" (not found in the corpus of Haakon Urn texts). Researchers speculated this might have been contained in one of the unsealed urns and had therefore not been preserved.

History of the Second Heroic Age

This document is in reality a continuation of the official history of Zandernatis, beginning with an account of the Great Battle. The events of the 70 years following 2964 do constitute, in themselves, a period worthy of the "Heroic" appellation, and it was the reason behind King Esperon's decree in 3029 commanding a proper history of the epoch to be written. However, the perspective we now have allows us to understand that although many of the qualities which made Zandernatis great in the first thousand years of its history enjoyed a resurgence during these years, much more was to come. It would therefore have been more accurate to entitle this volume the "History of the Dawning of the Second Heroic Age". But as decipherment of this particular work had still not been completed in 1976, no final judgment was made.

Speeches of King Esperon I

An official transcription of speeches made by Esperon during his reign, as had been kept in the ancient days until Inquos III did away with such records in 2145.

The Magres Commentaries

A series of monographs on the book of Magres written by Hexard between 2985 and 2987. It is basically an explanation of the prophecies contained in the ancient work and a description of how they were fulfilled. (This document was the source used for retelling the penultimate "Song of Gorin" excerpt in "Apotheosis" ("Genesis Antarctica" Book III). It transcribes the venerable alchemist's revelation of how Gorin really came to arrive in the City and his subsequent departure for Pardylis).

BOOK TWO
Destination

"Genesis Antarctica" affects different people in different ways. For some, it **confirms** what they have always subconsciously known, or seen clairvoyantly.

For others, it swiftly **suspends all disbelief** and totally absorbs them in a fabulous world of boundless imagination where the outlines of truth become blurred – and irrelevant.

While a third group, reading for "entertainment", suddenly find their **minds opening up**, glimpsing new dimensions and awakening desires to follow paths they had never previously explored.

How will "Genesis Antarctica" affect you?

I - The Meta-Realist Allegory: a new genre

"Genesis Antarctica" is described as being "a definitive meta-realist allegory".

Of itself, this means that it is the defining example of what is, in fact, a **totally new genre of writing.**

As far as being an **allegory** is concerned, this is how Wikipedia defines the term:

"Allegory is a literary device in which characters or events in a literary, visual, or musical art form represent or symbolise ideas and concepts. Allegory has been used widely in art, largely because of its immense power to illustrate complex ideas and concepts in ways that are easily digestible and tangible to its viewers, readers, or listeners. An allegory conveys its hidden message through symbolic actions, imagery, and/or events."

Thus, the characters and events in the parts of "Zandernatis" that have been "transcribed and retold" from the Haakon Urn texts symbolise ideas and concepts to make them accessible to as wide an audience as possible. It has a strong storyline and all the components needed to make it a stand-alone "fable" in its own right.

However, the meta-realist component takes all of this to another level.

As you will have seen in the footnote on this book's title page**,** in our context it is stated that **"Meta-realism transcends the real by creating compelling, fully documented, alternative truths."**

This ambition springs from the author's "previous life" as a visionary artist (between 1966 and 1979), when he produced highly symbolic and "allegorical" works which became increasingly influenced by the meta-realist genre and particularly the work of **Johfra** and **Ellen Lorien** (who he met several times).

What makes Johfra and Ellen's work stand out (and that of the entire Dutch meta-realist school) is the superlative technique which makes these visionary images **undeniably real.** There are some parallels with surrealism, except that instead of illustrating the absurd, meta-realism seeks to communicate the reality of symbolic truth so that its existence and tangibility **cannot be questioned**.

With "Genesis Antarctica", the author is making a bid to translate this approach into literature, by creating the innovative **"meta-realist allegory"** genre**.** This involves building an allegorical story and then giving it the "realism" of supportive documentation from every kind of source: press cuttings, interviews (transcripts, recordings or video), webpages and analysis by experts. It can even go as far as denigration, such as reporting the harsh criticism of those adamantly opposed to publishing the narrative in the form of an "accessible" retelling.

Virtually all of the ancillary material in "Genesis Antarctica" has therefore been designed to give credence to the story "transcribed" from "The Song of Gorin". It has been added because the purpose of "meta-realist allegory" is to make readers earnestly **want to believe** the alternate truth it presents, thereby making the underlying message of the allegory itself much more potent.

It may happen that, despite all the "disclaimers" and indications we are in "allegorical" territory, some may want to believe in the story so much they will shut out the possibility of it "only" being a way to make them dream. We therefore must tread carefully. Yet since **we shape our own reality**, it is part of our ambition **to make the dreams so real they take form in our consciousness and our lives.** Leaving with everyone the eternal, unanswered question which is the extension of every dream there has ever been:

"Yes, but what if…?"

II - The Journey Begins

"Gardens there shall be, and
forest limits cutting Paradise
away from all that was not made
for those so near the Glory."

"Establishment of the Golden City" Chap. II

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 575 - 607

In the evening following his audience with King Iraeus, Gorin left the confines of the Palace accompanied by Hexard. Night had already fallen when the two of them passed through the doorway beneath the silver tower. They made their way out into the City streets where all the buildings were softly glowing with the same strange incandescence Gorin had found so impressive when he first arrived.

He was carrying a large pack on his back, looking rather heavier than it really was. It contained two water bottles and bags of supplies for his journey, consisting mainly of bread, fruit and nuts. He had also been provided with a long, dark cloak similar to Hexard's. The alchemist had assured him it would be very welcome during the nights he would be obliged to spend in the open.

There were few people about as they walked along the road leading down into the Palace Square and headed towards the Eastern walls. Those they did see appeared to be busy with their own affairs and paid no attention to the two cloaked

figures discreetly making their way along the broad avenues and processional boulevards.

After walking for around half an hour, they finally saw the walls on the Eastern side of the City looming high above them. In this district, the golden stones of the buildings appeared to be glowing less intensely than elsewhere and Gorin had to carefully watch where he was stepping, for the ground was uneven and potentially treacherous.

Hexard looked around to make sure there was no one who might see where they were going, and then led the way to a small house backing directly onto the wall itself. Like every building in the Golden City, it was designed to harmonise with the overall grand architectural style, featuring a gabled roof, columns and a heavily ornamented porch.

However, Gorin immediately noticed one distinctive characteristic making this house quite different from any other construction he had seen so far. It was entirely windowless. There were carved frames where windows should have been, but the spaces had obviously been bricked up at a later date. All the other homes and buildings he had seen so far were well endowed with richly decorated balconies and wide, ornamented windows, most of them shining brightly with the golden light of their interiors. But not this house.

Hexard went up to the heavy, carved door and knocked three times with the end of his staff. It opened almost at once and he went in, beckoning Gorin to follow. The door closed with a dull thud, leaving them in almost total darkness apart from a greenish glimmer ahead, muted by a thin veil of fabric draped across the passage. A shadowy figure drew the curtain back, allowing the two newcomers to pass through into the main part of the house.

The subdued lighting revealed a large, high chamber occupying the greater part of the building. The walls were decorated with finely executed mural paintings of trees and rivers, creating a pleasant, pastoral atmosphere. This was further enhanced by the sylvan glow emanating from several lamps suspended on long chains hanging from the ceiling. The overall effect was extremely restful and highly evocative of the hills, valleys and wooded landscapes in the Garden outside.

There were four young men standing in the centre of the room, all dressed in the now familiar Zandernation-styled tunics. Another was holding back the curtain for the two visitors and, once they had entered, he joined his companions.

"So Hexard," said the young man who had ushered them into the chamber, "I see you've brought us a new recruit for the outside. Excellent. We're always ready to welcome those with an adventurous spirit keen to explore the forbidden world."

"Sorry to disappoint you Drian," replied Hexard, "but I'm afraid Gorin here has not come to join your Society. I have brought him to you for guidance in the early stages of a mission he has been entrusted with."

"Mission?"

"He is leaving tomorrow morning in search of Esperon."

This statement caused a considerable amount of surprise and excitement among the group of young men. They all began to talk at once, exclaiming, questioning and arguing, unable to believe what Hexard had just announced. He finally managed to calm them down enough to listen to his explanation of what was going to take place. Some low stools were drawn up and they all sat around in a circle, eagerly hanging on the old man's every word.

Hexard began by introducing the members of the Outside Society to Gorin. Drian was their leader, and apparently the most adventurous of the group, while the others were called Fordern, Werlyn, Aston and Guston, the last two being brothers. The alchemist then reminded the young men of Esperon's departure seven months earlier and went into more detail concerning Gorin's readiness to follow after him. However, he made no mention of the strange circumstances surrounding his awakening and subsequent arrival in the City.

"You mean he really intends to go all the way to the Gate?" asked Aston.

"And beyond," replied Hexard. "Esperon did."

"Esperon was deluded. Wouldn't listen to reason," retorted Drian. "Leaving the Garden means going into the unknown, into the Chaos. It's much too dangerous."

"He goes because King Iraeus is sending him."

"The King! Does that mean he knows about us and what we do?" questioned Fordern, exchanging nervous glances with his fellows.

"No, no. I would never reveal the existence of the Society to him, or anyone else. You know that. In any case, your exploits are far too valuable for the future of Zandernatis to be exposed prematurely. Furthermore, the courage you have shown is exactly what we need now - and the reason I have brought Gorin to you this evening."

"So what do you want us to do?" Drian asked.

"Accompany Gorin on the first stage of his journey. As far as the Greenwood Hollow, where he is to meet the guide who will take him from there to the Paradise Gate and beyond."

"Who will that be?"

"Ecinlorne," replied Hexard.

"Are you quite sure?" queried Fordern. "We haven't seen any trace of her lately. Not for many months."

"It's true," added Drian. "In fact, the Garden hasn't seemed quite so magical and beautiful without feeling her presence, even if we don't always catch sight of her."

"She will be there tomorrow, two hours after the sun rises, I can assure you," said Hexard assertively. "Now, who will be there to see her? Gorin must leave in a few hours, so you should decide quickly."

The young men conferred amongst themselves and soon agreed they would all go as far as the clearing where the meeting with the mysterious Ecinlorne was to take place. Gorin was pleased to think he would have such company, for the discussion between the Society members and Hexard had given him an opportunity to study the young men in more detail.

Like all Golden City people, they had faces reflecting contentment, unclouded by concern. Yet their eyes were more alert and alive than they would have been if complacency and perpetual celebration had been their only motivation. Gorin sensed this to be the stimulation of doing the one thing forbidden by the very nature of their utopian home.

The rest of the evening was spent talking over the past achievements of the Outside Society. It soon became apparent that they did indeed consider themselves to be an extremely daring group of young men. They described the way they would steal out of the City at dead of night, how they would creep away as quietly as mice and invariably wait for the dawn in a wooded glade just beyond sight of the walls.

They said they felt free when they were in the Garden, finding a kind of beauty out there impossible to experience amongst the edifices of the mighty City. The experience

relieved the monotony of endless, uneventful happiness, fulfilling a deep-felt need to have contact with a natural environment.

The time passed rapidly as the young men recounted their exploits. Even so, Gorin found it a little difficult to concentrate on what they were telling him, for he was becoming more and more preoccupied with the thought of his own adventure into the unknown.

He desperately tried to come to terms with the idea that he was shortly to leave Zandernatis and embark on a journey only one other person had made in the last thousand years. By all accounts, after leaving the Garden, the remainder of his travels were likely to be fraught with many dangers and challenges. He had also been warned it would be the most crucial stage of his mission, even with the guidance of Ecinlorne, whoever or whatever she might be.

Then, suddenly, he emerged from the whirlpool of his thoughts as he heard Hexard announcing it was time to go.

"It's now three hours after midnight. Everyone will be in their homes by this time, so I think we can be sure your departure will go unnoticed. Are you all prepared?"

A murmur of assent from the young men indicated their readiness.

"And you Gorin?"

"As much as I'll ever be."

"Very good," said Hexard. "But before you set out, there are a few final words of guidance I must give you in order to clarify what will happen in the next few hours and afterwards."

He paused for a moment, looking round at the small group of young men gathered about him as if wanting to impress upon all of them the significance of what he was going to say.

"When you leave here," he continued, "you will go to your usual refuge out of sight of the walls and then down to the edge of the forest a little further to the East. You will continue in the same direction until you come to the East road. There you must wait until dawn before going on to the Greenwood Hollow, a route I think you know well enough."

"We do," answered Drian confidently. "But why don't we carry on down the East road tonight? Then we can relax in the Hollow while we're waiting for Ecinlorne to appear."

"No!" said Hexard, with a sharp edge to his voice. "You must not venture along the East road before daybreak."

"Why not?" queried Fordern. "We've often been out on it after dark."

"Perhaps. But not tonight," Hexard insisted. "You will need to rest and must only set out when the sun has risen. Believe me, the success of Gorin's mission depends on you following my instructions to the letter. Is that clear?"

"Very well, Hexard," replied Drian. "We'll do as you say." He looked around at his fellow Society members, a steady gaze requiring – and receiving – a nod of agreement from each one of them.

"It will take you about two hours to reach your destination once you get going again. That should bring you to the Hollow in good time for your meeting with Ecinlorne. She will then go on with you, Gorin, along the road into the East. The rest of you can continue some of the way if you wish, until noon, but then you must turn back so as to reach the City at nightfall, when I will be waiting for you.

"Meanwhile Gorin, you and Ecinlorne will go on through the Garden until you reach the Paradise Gate. You should get there sometime tomorrow evening and, as you know, after

passing through it you will find yourself in a very different kind of world."

Gorin nodded. He was getting used to hearing these solemn warnings of the dangers and uncertainties awaiting him once he left the Paradise Garden. Although of course he had no idea of how these were going to translate into reality. Probably just as well.

"You will then no longer be in the realm of Kutjaran or the King of Zandernatis. In consequence, nothing, nothing at all you encounter there will be as it seems. This is why the country you will be travelling through is known as the Forest of Dissemblance. It is haunted by an untamed and malevolent spirit that will try to trick you by every means in its power. But provided you are not enticed away from the path Ecinlorne will show you, or are tempted to forget your reason for taking it, no harm can come to you. Do you understand?"

"Yes," said Gorin, hoping he sounded convincing. "But exactly how far will this Ecinlorne, go with me?"

"I'm afraid even she cannot go all the way," replied Hexard. "As I told you, the creatures of the Garden are loath to leave it for reasons not much different from those keeping the City people within the walls of Zandernatis. Ecinlorne however, is a little different. She is immensely wise and knows the ways of Paradise, as well as many of the things encountered beyond it.

"At some point, I am unable to tell you exactly where, she will leave you to make the last stages of the journey alone. By then, you should be far beyond the reach of any possible dangers. But come, we've talked enough. You should get moving or you'll be running late before you've even started."

Hexard stood up and all the members of the Society went with him to the far end of the chamber. Gorin followed them,

and in drawing nearer to the painted wall, he saw it was not entirely as smooth as he had first supposed. The surface was in fact much rougher than those of the other walls, consisting of large stone blocks on which the trees and bushes had been painted. He then noticed several cracks in the structure and even a number of cavities apparently extending some way into the wall.

"This is where I must take my leave of you," said Hexard, extending his hand and placing it on Gorin's shoulder. "In a few moments, the door will be opened and you will go out onto the path destiny has ordained for you."

Drian put his hands into two of the holes in the wall and pulled. This caused a line of cracks to suddenly widen and then yawn open as a whole section of the painted wall swung away, revealing a square opening one measure from the floor. After a few words of farewell to Hexard, Fordern, Werlyn, Aston and Guston climbed through it, leaving Drian and Gorin with the old alchemist.

"So, take care of him Drian, until Ecinlorne comes to you!"

"We will; don't worry Hexard."

"And you Gorin, remember all you have learnt, all you have seen and all you have to do for the sake of it. Go now, and good fortune be with you."

Treading the path

from "The Song of Gorin" stanzas 608 - 642

Gorin nodded, smiled as bravely as he could and climbed into the opening, finding the ground on the other side of the aperture less than half a measure below the sill. Werlyn and Fordern helped him straighten up and then Drian came through, the stones swinging back into place after him. A glimmering flame ahead of them, held by Fordern, showed a

short flight of steps leading down to a small chamber barely large enough to contain all six of them.

"This was how the last of the people working in the fields outside used to leave the City," explained Werlyn as they crowded together in the confined space. "But we're the only ones who know about it now."

"Doesn't anyone remember it existed?" asked Gorin.

"No, because of the house built over it, initially we believe for those who looked after the animals bred for food inside Zandernatis, once the gates had been closed for good. Later, all of that was transferred to another part of the City, so this building fell into disuse until we started coming here."

The weak flame suddenly went out and the blackness crowded in again, broken then by a line of darkest indigo in the wall opposite. It began to widen, accompanied by a creaking noise, until a whole rectangle of deep blue showed against the impenetrable obscurity.

There, in the portion of night sky thus revealed, shone a million tiny lights flickering and glinting like distant fires. Once again, Gorin was looking at the night sky over the Paradise Garden. He walked out of the opening in the wall to gaze in renewed wonderment at the star studded vault, extending from horizon to horizon above and around him.

Everything was eerily quiet as the group of adventurers made their way towards the deeper shadows of the trees, no more than twenty measures distant. Not a word was spoken in the darkness as they slowly moved away from the City walls. The others' sureness of step clearly showed they knew where they were going however, and one of them always took Gorin's arm to guide him whenever the ground became more uneven.

Gorin looked back towards Zandernatis as they drew away from it, but there was little to be seen beyond the vast

bulk of the walls extending away on either side in the ethereal light they were emitting. Although he tried to distinguish the exact position of the aperture they had come through, they were already too far away for him to be absolutely sure where it was.

Just then, the thought suddenly crossed his mind that he might in fact never return to the City again. Or if he did, it would almost certainly be in circumstances far different from those in which he was now leaving.

Such disquieting ideas were soon forgotten as they all made their way down the incline leading them towards the trees. Here, the path was well-defined and although relatively steep, it presented no real challenge. After descending steadily for some two dozen measures, they arrived at the bottom and only had a short stretch of open ground to cover before coming to the first patches of undergrowth at the forest edge.

As soon as they were under cover of the trees, Drian motioned them all to stop and gather together. When he was sure they could all hear him, he began speaking softly, as if afraid of being overheard, even though they were now well clear of the City walls.

“We ought to be able to make our way safely straight through the forest towards the Eastern road,” he said. “It isn’t far, but we should still remain as quiet as possible until we arrive.”

“And we’re supposed to stay there until it gets light,” added Fordern.

"That's what Hexard said.”

“I’d prefer to press on,” chimed in Aston. “We could be at the Hollow before sunrise and wait there in the daylight on the grassy bank instead of spending an uncomfortable couple of hours in the undergrowth.”

"Perhaps you would. But he must have had a reason for insisting so much."

"But why? He's never done that before. We've always…"

"That's just the point, isn't it?" cut in Drian. "If he's been so insistent this time, there has to be a good reason for it. So we should do as he said."

Aston sighed heavily, but didn't press his point.

"So let's head on towards the road then, and make ourselves comfortable," said Drian. "You must be careful where you step Gorin; let the two brothers guide you. Fordern and Werlyn bring up the rear and I'll lead the way until we get there."

The party then continued along the wooded track leading them further away from the City. There were only the stars to light their way now and so progress was slow, but it was sure enough, particularly since the Society members were so familiar with the route. Drian led the way as planned, followed by Guston and Aston who guided Gorin between them, each holding onto one of his arms and steering him clear of the major obstacles in his path; potholes, trailing brambles, rotting logs...

As they progressed, it soon became apparent that Gorin did not really need very much help, for he was able to see perfectly adequately by the weak starlight. In fact, he seemed able to see better than the rest of them and they soon lost all fear of him missing his footing. Fordern and Werlyn followed on behind and they all managed to keep up a fairly good pace, bringing them to the edge of the old East road's flagged surface within little more than half an hour.

They were now some distance from the City and could already feel the stronger influences of the forest about them. The sounds of the night were everywhere; insects chirping on

all sides and nightingales singing almost without ceasing. It was comforting to hear them and they gave Gorin some measure of courage as he thought of all the less attractive things he might come up against before his journey was over.

For a second, he looked behind him once more, observing that Zandernatis and its vast bulk were still dominating the skyline beyond the trees. He thought for a moment of all the people living there and the length of time they had remained under the same conditions, ignorant and afraid of all the many wonderful things to be seen out here in the Garden.

He then noticed something rather surprising, even in this land where so many unusual things seemed to happen as a matter of course. It was the way the old highway had somehow remained in such a remarkably good state of repair, unlike the cracked and overgrown road leading up to the City's golden portals. Surely there had been no one to maintain it since the gates were closed nearly one thousand years ago, he thought.

Yet if this were the case, why hadn't it succumbed to the encroachments of the forest? Why was there hardly any grass pushing up between the cracks of the stone paving or any bushes or vines overhanging the side of the road and trailing across it?

This couldn't be a freak of nature, he reasoned. It meant someone had an interest in keeping the ancient road open. The road they were about to take! As he remembered some of Hexard’s more ominous pronouncements, particularly his insistence on them not venturing along it during the hours of darkness, Gorin began to feel decidedly uneasy. He did however judge it best to keep his misgivings to himself for the time being.

Just then, a white gleam in the sky suddenly demanded his attention. He turned to see some clouds near the Eastern

horizon clearing to reveal the full moon rising above a line of distant trees. Its delicate rays fell onto the roadway, tracing a path of silver through the dark, impenetrable forms of the forest. Gorin saw this new light in the heavens as an omen of hope, helping him turn his mind away from the brooding, dark uncertainties he had felt crowding in upon him.

"Marvellous," said Drian. "Now it'll be easier for us to find somewhere to settle down and wait for the dawn. Look, over there…"

He pointed to a nearby outcrop of moss-covered rock set at an angle to make a natural shelter. It was topped by bushes and a mass of creepers trailing down to form a thick curtain of greenery, offering protection against the cool of the gentle night breeze.

Moments later, they were all making themselves comfortable in the lea of the angled rock. Once they had settled down, it didn't take them long to fall asleep, although Gorin remained awake for a while, his mind still trying to grapple with the situation he found himself in. So many uncertainties… so much apparently depending on him… carried forward on "no more" than a supreme act of faith.

With all these thoughts still going around in his mind, he finally slid gently into a light sleep along with his companions, as the moon continued to climb in the sky and the ghostly shadows shortened around the spot where the six of them were lying.

Strange intrusions

from "The Song of Gorin" stanzas 643 - 670

Barely two hours later, Gorin suddenly emerged from his cloak of sleep and sat up abruptly, every sense keenly sharpened. He tried to read his immediate environment,

reaching out to take in any sounds and signs from the surrounding forest that could explain his sudden awakening.

There was nothing tangible. Nothing to be seen, heard or smelt… but he soon realised something was missing. An absence like an all-engulfing shadow had fallen across the soothing peace and harmony that usually permeated every aspect of the Garden. He got to his feet and went out into the glade in front of their natural shelter, looked up and saw the moon riding high in an almost cloudless sky. Nothing ominous there.

And yet… the whole world seemed to be holding its breath. In a second, he understood. The unreal enchantment that made the Paradise Garden what it was had been withdrawn. Its essence stifled. At first glance, he could see nothing to account for this strange shift in mood. Yes, the moon was the same, the stars still shone and the trees stood as still as ever. Yet now that natural calm was overridden by an awesome, yawning silence, a frightening chasm of deadened soundlessness.

All the nightingales had stopped singing. There was not the slightest sound of any insects chirping or animals scampering through the undergrowth. Even the soft breeze had been entirely stilled. It was uncanny and profoundly unnerving, particularly as Gorin could not detect any reason for such a disturbing phenomenon. He thought of waking Drian and the others, but supposed they would only laugh at his nervousness, so he waited to see what would happen next. Either all the wildlife would become perceptively active again - or the cause of the sudden silence would make itself apparent.

Gorin's fear grew more and more acute as he became confronted with his dread of the unknown, despite all the assurances he had been given about the safety of the Garden.

Anyway, he thought, it couldn't be as safe as all that - what about the butchered horse he had seen? And what about Hexard's reaction to the knife he'd found beside it? All these fears came flooding into his mind, urging him to try and rouse his companions, no matter what. Then he heard something which held him rooted to the spot, for a moment incapable of any action whatsoever.

It was a sound far off, and yet gave the impression of being close at hand because of the absolute silence reigning over all. But the sound of what? At first he thought it must be some nocturnal creature running through the bushes, or else something falling from the top of one of the trees deep in the heart of the forest.

He soon saw it was neither of these. It was something in the air. Something dark, something much bigger than any bird, flying across the face of the moon to the slow rhythmical beat of huge, webbed wings.

The sound it made was caused by the rush of wind against the enormous area of its outstretched body. And it was not alone. Another followed it, and another and another... Altogether, Gorin counted about twenty of these creatures as they flew through the sky above the trees. They were coming from a Northerly direction and landing somewhere in the forest away to the South. This of course meant they were crossing the East road and would easily spot any travellers out in the open.

Instinctively, Gorin felt certain these things came from somewhere beyond the Garden, for they clearly had no place within its bounds. But what were they doing there? Why should they choose to land like this, at dead of night? And why did their coming make everything else in the Garden fall silent?

Another sound rang out – men's voices coming from the general area where the winged intruders had appeared to land. Then came a shout, as if someone were barking out an order. Seconds later, the beating wings could be heard again as the whole flock rose into the air as one, heading back into the North and passing across the moon together, briefly blotting it out completely.

As they flew away into the distance, Gorin felt a great sense of relief come over him. At the same instant, a nightingale began to sing away to his left. Its song was joined by another and before long all the familiar sounds of the night could be heard again. He took this to be an indication that everything was once more as it should be. At least, nearly. For there was still the question of the voices he had heard, betraying the continued presence of those who had apparently been brought there by those huge birds, or whatever they were. Left behind in the Garden for a purpose he instinctively knew was alien to its timeless peace and tranquillity.

There were no further indications of anything being untoward, the noises of the night reassuringly confirming that whatever danger might have been present had retreated. At least for now.

However, one thing Gorin did notice, was that the air had become considerably colder since the flying creatures appeared. Just a few minutes before, he had felt quite comfortable in the warm air of the Garden, whereas now he was shivering - the first time he had ever experienced such a sensation since waking up on the hillside. He then noticed a thin, diaphanous mist was beginning to weave its way through the trees, reaching out to him with clammy fingers of penetrating cold. It hugged the ground, insidiously invading the glade, their shelter and the pathway to the East road.

The sudden drop in temperature evidently affected the others, for one by one, they began to stir and emerge from behind the curtain of foliage hanging from the top of the rocky outcrop. Drian tried jumping around to warm himself up, which of course fully aroused the rest of them. By this time, the mist was thickening on the ground and already the stars were becoming indistinct as it built up.

"That's funny," said Fordern. "I've never seen anything like this before, have you Drian?"

"I don't think so. And it's never been so cold either."

"What's wrong then?" asked Aston.

"Nothing's wrong," answered Drian. "Just because we see something we haven't seen before shouldn't mean things aren't perfectly normal. It is only a mist, after all."

"Yes, but so cold," said Werlyn, hugging himself in an effort to maintain his bodily warmth. "Doesn't seem natural to me."

"How can you say that? We don't come out here often enough to know about everything, so how can we pretend to judge it?"

"Actually, something else happened just now," said Gorin, "and it did seem rather odd."

"What do you mean, odd?" enquired Drian.

"Well, everything was normal, the nightingales were singing and you could hear all the insects, when suddenly they all stopped while a group of huge, bird-like things flew across there," Gorin pointed to the route taken by the strange nocturnal intruders. "And then they flew back again shortly after and everything became just as it was before. I don't know what they were, or what they might signify, but they didn't seem to belong here somehow."

"Oh, you must have been dreaming. We may not have seen this mist before, but what you're describing doesn't correspond to anything here in the Garden."

"But I saw them, and I also heard someone shouting from over there." He pointed towards the South.

"No, no, couldn't be," insisted Drian. "Sorry Gorin, but we know what goes on here well enough to be sure you're describing something quite impossible. It could only be a dream. Perhaps it's your fear of not knowing what you might come up against later on..."

"Sounds something like the sort of thing Esperon used to talk about," commented Aston.

"Not quite," retorted Fordern. "He was always dreaming about people, or rather those who live in the Hills. There was never anything about giant birds."

"He used to talk about things in the air though, didn't he?" replied Aston. "Something that flew and was big enough to carry several men. Might have been this…"

"You mean the Valyon things?" interrupted Werlyn. "Because they weren't birds or anything like that after what he said... But there were wings as far as I can remember..."

"Can you tell me anything else about his dreams?" asked Gorin, hoping to glean a few more details of his eventual destination. Or at least the vision of it Esperon had found enticing enough to draw him away from all the comforts and safety of Zandernatis...

"Oh," laughed Drian. "They weren't really so remarkable. Just a bit crazy, and after a while we got so used to his ramblings we didn't take much notice of them anymore."

"But I need to know, if I'm supposed to find him,' Gorin insisted.

"Well… There were all those stories of people coming out of the sky and the lost city in the Hills. He even believed in the old legends linking them with our own origins. The kind of stories we tell our children to keep them amused. But he really believed in all those things."

"What else did he say?"

"Oh Gorin, honestly, I can't remember now. Do any of you?"

"Only about it being time to go and join them," added Fordern. "Because we're no longer able to work out our own life alone."

"And we'd need their help," volunteered Aston.

"Yes, yes," said Drian, "but it was all in his dreams. And now it looks like you're having them as well."

"I'm not. I know what I saw; and it was no dream. Neither could it have been any of the other things you're talking about."

"All right, if you say so," replied Drian, still laughing. "Anyway, once the sun gets up, we'll soon see if there's any trace of mysterious happenings during the night. And then we can set off for the Hollow as planned."

Gorin gave up trying to convince the others, but remained as certain as ever that he had witnessed everything he described. The argument was followed by an uneasy silence, only punctuated by muttered exclamations and the sound of stamping feet as the six travellers vainly tried to combat the penetrating cold.

On the road again

from "The Song of Gorin" stanzas 675 - 698

The mist around them started to dissipate as the daylight began to steal across the Eastern sky. High above, the deep blue of the night became paler and a few streaks of ragged cloud took on the first blush of the rose-tinted dawn. Almost at once, the aerial mist thinned more swiftly, although it continued swirling around in thick strands at ground level, giving everyone the feeling they were walking on a layer of undulating snow.

One by one, the forest birds took over from the songs of the nightingales as the dawn gradually asserted itself upon the territory of darkness. Gorin, Drian and the others were awed by the beauty of the natural spectacle unfolding in front of them. The remaining mists were now also tinged with pink as the sun drew nearer and nearer to the line dividing earth from sky. A gentle breeze then rose to make the gossamer wreaths swirl and move into fantastic patterns, twirling up from ground level, then snaking round and down again like living things.

The trees turned from dark, indefinable shapes into masses of variegated green foliage, while the light became stronger as the clouds above exchanged their soft dawn flush for robes of the purest white. Then, in a moment, the edge of the sun appeared above the distant hills, setting everything alight with a fire at once red and golden.

The first rays shone directly down the entire length of the East road, as the moon had done the previous night. For a second it was too much for the travellers to bear. They all stood facing the East, hands shading eyes, before finally turning away and gathering everything up in preparation for their departure.

While the others were getting ready, Gorin climbed to the top of the rocky protrusion and looked out over the forest for clues as to what had happened during the night. In vain. Everything looked perfectly normal. So normal in fact, that he began wondering if Drian wasn't right after all, and he had indeed been experiencing some kind of waking dream…

A call from Werlyn brought him out of his reverie and he clambered down to join the others, who made no comment on his brief absence. Minutes later they were all out on the East road walking purposefully towards the rising sun.

They said little to each other for the first part of their journey, as they were forced to bow their heads in the face of the sun's penetrating glare. This gave them no choice but to watch the mostly even slabs of stone and occasional tufts of grass passing beneath their feet, which was not particularly conducive to conversation.

Gorin turned round a couple of times to see the huge mass of Zandernatis steadily shrinking behind them as they continued into the East. On the second occasion, he could just make out the first rays of sunlight beginning to glint on the Palace's gold and silver towers.

After they had covered about one thousand measures, and the sun had inched a little higher into the sky, Aston finally broke the silence.

"Drian," he said. "Just one thing. Supposing when we get there, Ecinlorne doesn't appear. What do we do then?"

"If Hexard said she'll come then I think we can depend on it."

"I think so too," added Guston. "He's usually right about that sort of thing. Don't know how, but he is."

Fordern nodded. "Uncanny, isn't it?"

Gorin found his fellow travellers' confidence in Hexard very heartening. He even began to relish the idea of the adventure ahead of him, even if he did still feel himself to be like a playing-piece in some vast, unfathomable game.

As the sun climbed higher and no longer shone directly into the travellers' faces, they were finally able to appreciate the lush vegetation on either side of the road. Their progress was now also accompanied by a complex polyphony of birdsong coming at them from all directions, raising Gorin's spirits even further.

After continuing due East for barely more than an hour, Drian pointed ahead to a clump of tall trees on the right hand side of the road. "The Hollow is just ahead," he announced. "We've made good time."

A few minutes later they were walking towards a gentle slope leading down into the Greenwood Hollow, a roughly circular depression in the forest floor surrounded by lofty trees.

Gorin stopped for a moment, taking in the clearing and its ring of straight, slender trunks reaching up to their heads of dense foliage far above. Behind them, the East road continued on in a perfectly straight line, narrowing until it merged into a mass of vegetation two or three thousand measures ahead.

Beyond that, in the far, far distance, he could just make out something rising above the level of the horizon, or at least making it less featureless than it had been until now. It was still too distant for him to be sure of what it was, but he wondered if this might be the line of hills he was heading for. The home of those legendary Hill-People, whose very existence was cloaked in so much mystery and secrecy.

Then, as he began his descent into the Hollow, he heard a familiar sound, far away, as precious to him as the finest gold,

for it evoked one of the few real memories he had acquired since waking up with no memory at all.

The first notes were barely perceptible, but as others joined the chorus, the morning paean of bells in Zandernatis came wafting on the breeze as they greeted another new day with their Hymn to Paradise. Gorin stood still for a moment, closing his eyes as he concentrated on the glorious sound coming from such a distance. He recalled what it was like to experience those harmonic peals around, above and below him. Harmonies that had dominated his consciousness then and were now barely louder than birdsong, but still had the power to captivate.

Carried away by that enchantment and the memory it stirred, Gorin was suddenly brought back to the present as a shadow fell across his closed lids, thrown by a shape coming between him and the sun. He opened his eyes and saw, standing on the raised lip of the Greenwood Hollow and surrounded by a solar aura, the form of the fabulous creature they had been sent to meet.

Ecinlorne was there, just as Hexard had promised.

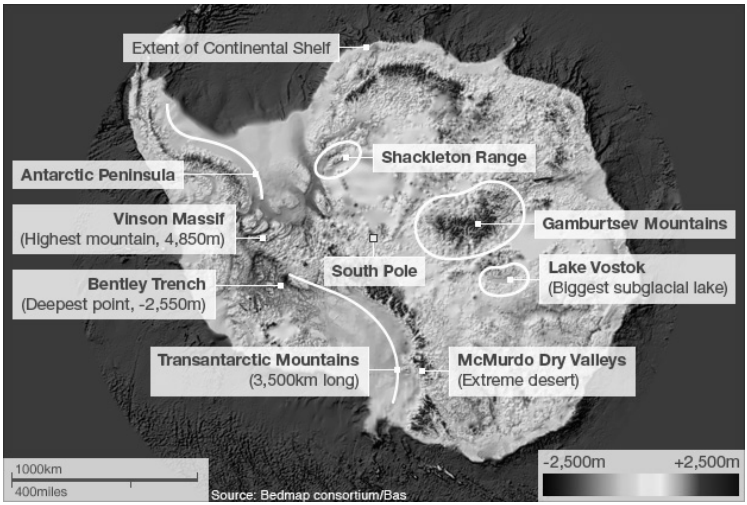
III - The site of Zandernatis

There has been a great deal of conjecture as to the actual site of Zandernatis. Covered, as it must be, by over one kilometre of solid ice, the actual topography will have been subject to glacial erosion over many tens of thousands of years. In all probability, very few vestiges of the Golden City will ever be found.

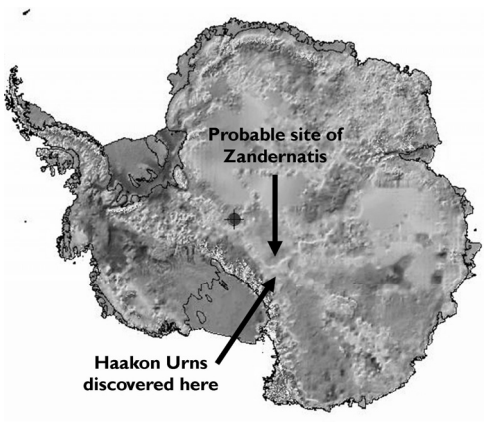
The Haakon Urn manuscripts give very few indications as to where the City and surrounding Paradise Garden were located, and even less to suggest where the limits of the "Forest of Dissemblance" and "Deserts of Jerah" might have been. However, following the 1962 find, surveys of the thickness of the Antarctic ice sheet began to be collected, producing a mass of data which has gradually been added to over the past 50 years. All this information has now been brought together in a single database by the British Antarctic Survey, making it possible to produce a compiled suite of seamless digital topographic models for the Antarctic continent and surrounding ocean.

Assuming the place where the Haakon Urns were discovered was likely to have been in the close vicinity of, Zandernatis itself, the research team has identified possible locations in the surrounding topography for some of the locations referred to in "The Song of Gorin".

The first map, produced by the Bedmap Consortium and the British Antarctic Survey, identifies some of the major landmarks on the continent. These included the location of the Vostok base (and subglacial lake) which was the first destination of the 1962 expedition that subsequently discovered the Urns.

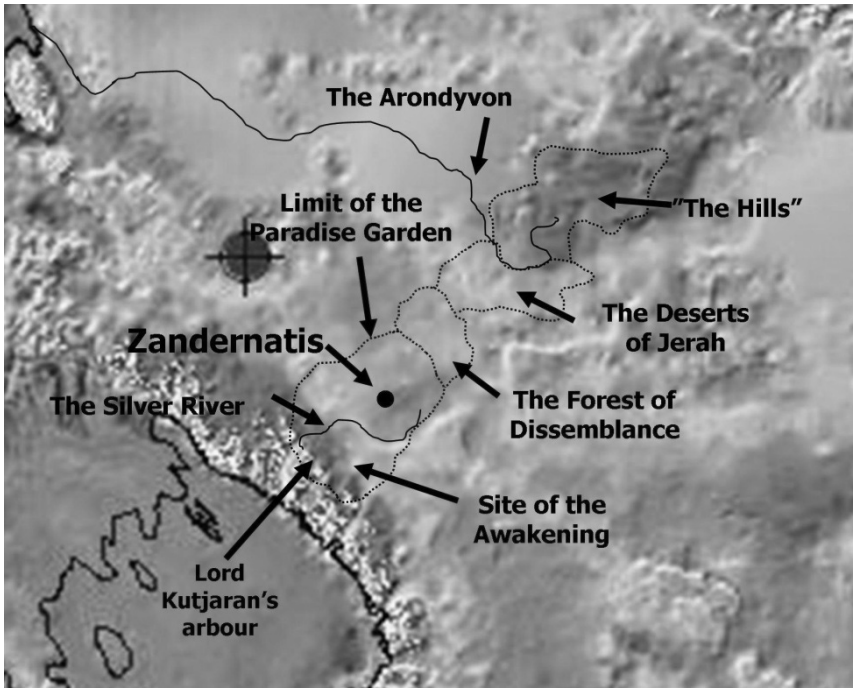


The map below is based on exhaustive research carried out by the Texas University of Austin's Geophysical Department showing the bedrock of the Antarctic continent. The site where the Urns were discovered is shown together with the most likely site for Zandernatis itself, according to the Dickenson Institute's researchers. It has been deduced that the Urns were hidden outside the City after the Second Heroic Age, the period following the events described in "Genesis Antarctica", when it had ceased to be a "closed society".



The map on the next page is an enlargement of the area around the presumed site of the Golden City, showing its position in relation to the other locations mentioned in "The Song of Gorin". We must insist that there is little hard evidence to back up these assumptions, but all the information currently to hand does tend to confirm their accuracy.

The narrative relates that the travellers took the "East Road" from Zandernatis. Since these events took place very close to the current position of the South Pole (shown by the cross on the maps) practically all directions would be northwards. However, it should be remembered that at the time, this continent was much closer to the equator. We may therefore safely assume that when this epic journey actually occurred, those taking part were indeed headed in an Easterly direction.



Acknowledgements:
British Antarctic Survey, the BBC,
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IV - The road with Ecinlorne

"And there shall be roads for all,
ways and paths that lead from one
unto the other through
the homeland of abundance."

"Establishment of the Golden City" Chap. III

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 699 - 729

Ecinlorne had a reputation among the Garden's population for being among the wisest of all those who had ever lived there. Even Lord Kutjaran was said to respect her judgement. But then, those of her species had always commanded respect since time was born, both for their matchless beauty and profound understanding of all things. As among the greatest of that noble and ageless kind, Ecinlorne thus had access to knowledge beyond the reach of other beings. This was why she shared thoughts with Hexard and why she had been the alchemist's obvious choice to guide Gorin on his path.

When the group of young men saw the shape of Ecinlorne silhouetted against the sky, they stood silently and simply stared. Gorin most of all, for although he had been given no idea as to who or what his guide might be, he had certainly not expected this. Once again, he had the now familiar feeling of surprise as new situations assailed his inexperienced, unmemoried awareness.

He watched, fascinated, as this magnificent creature came down the gentle slope into the middle of the Hollow, marvelling at her lithe, supple form and the finesse of her measured movements. She was a slight, elegant hind of the purest white, her velvet coat gleaming in the morning sun and her long, streaming tail describing a succession of eddying curves echoing her steps. Her head was held high on a slender neck accentuated by a flowing mane and crowned by her perfectly straight, ivory white antler-horn stabbing into the sky.

Yet for all the nobility and grace she seemed to emanate, there was one overriding feature which captivated Gorin's attention above all else. Her eyes. Deep, limpid, tender and inspiring. Eyes to melt your soul, comfort your sorrows, full of such wisdom he knew immediately he could have no better guide and mentor for the epic journey he was about to undertake.

The hind came to a standstill in front of the travellers, surveying them one by one as they each became aware of the greeting she was giving them, although no physical sound came from the creature's mouth. It was a message of welcome to the Garden, to the Greenwood Hollow, to the day and to the important events responsible for their coming to this place, at this time. Above all, it was a greeting to Gorin, who was to be the "selected emissary" and to whom Ecinlorne offered all her respects and the promise of assistance in the task he had before him.

Gorin tried to answer as best he could, but no words seemed adequate and indeed none were forthcoming, for before he could utter any, Ecinlorne bowed her head with a noble gesture, showing she perfectly understood what he wanted to say. She then slowly made her way around the group of travellers, acknowledging each one of them and

exchanging thoughts of greetings and encouragement. Drian eventually broke the audible silence by asking the hind where she had been during the past months.

"We are glad to see you again," he said. "We missed you and wondered if perhaps you had gone away, or else the City held no further interest for you..."

There was no visible response from the majestic creature to this enquiry; in fact, Drian was not even sure she had heard it, since she was now closely examining the bounds of the Hollow where they were now gathered. She was looking around every tree trunk, and under every bush, apparently making doubly sure there were no unwelcome observers of their meeting.

Gorin immediately realised she was by far the most cautious of all those he had encountered until then. This was a watchfulness he would have thought unnecessary, here in the Garden, where peace and tranquillity were supposed to reign supreme. However, the nature of his mission and the issues at stake made such singular qualities essential; and the unihorned Ecinlorne was the only creature in Paradise to possess them.

After satisfying herself there were no immediate dangers lurking in the nearby undergrowth, Ecinlorne approached the group again. In one, elegant movement, she lowered herself onto her haunches, her white tail snaking out like a cloud of windswept gossamer. She cast her eyes around the semi-circle of intrepid adventurers, tossing her head to make the solitary ivory antler-horn glint in the sun as fresh ideas and images began flowing into the young men's minds.

As one, they all knew Ecinlorne wanted to press on at once, and was giving Drian and his fellows the option of accompanying Gorin if they so desired. But only until noon. For that was when they would reach the crossroads, and then

the young men from Zandernatis would have to head back, in time to re-enter the City after nightfall.

"Yes, we should at least go that far," said Drian. "I think that's what Hexard expected us to do and we can't return before it gets dark in any case."

The others, who were quite confident of not being called upon to venture any further, accepted this idea without question. They knew Hexard would never expect them to do anything irrevocable like Esperon. For Gorin, the assurance of their company, if only for a few hours more, was a considerable comfort. He watched the hind as she rose to her feet, clouds of vaporous breath coming from her nostrils. Once again, he admired her magnificence and the respect she commanded among the members of the Outside Society. Although he did begin wondering what it would be like having such a fabulous creature as his sole companion.

They all moved off along the East road together as the sun lifted clear of the far distant hills, Ecinlorne leading the way with Drian and Gorin behind while the other four brought up the rear. Observing the forest they were now travelling through, Gorin noted that the trees on either side of them were different again from any he had seen elsewhere.

Until now, they had always stood straight and tall, with branches high up, allowing a good deal of light to penetrate even the densest growths. Here it was not the same, for the trees were shorter and their limbs much thicker. Even the leaves were of another, coarser texture, resulting in very little light coming through the canopy of foliage spread out overhead.

In fact, only on the road itself could he really be sure of what he was seeing; everything else was indistinct and gloomy. If this had not still been part of the Paradise Garden, he would

have thought twice about following such a route. It seemed to hold no fears for the noble hind leading them along it however, nor even for Drian, who appeared keenly interested in every aspect of their surroundings.

After an hour or two of steady progress, Ecinlorne suddenly stopped and turned to face the young men coming up behind her. All of them at once understood it was time to take a brief rest and so they set themselves down by the roadside to eat some of the food they had brought along. Gorin took off his cloak and unslung the bag from his back, relieved to be free of it, if only for a short while.

They began to eat and chatter quite contentedly - in fact, as he enjoyed the convivial company of Drian and the others, Gorin soon forgot his initial dislike of the woods they were now travelling through. While all this was going on, Ecinlorne kept her distance from the patch of ground where the group of young men had gathered together, staying aloof and disregarding their inconsequential talking and joking.

The jovial atmosphere was suddenly shattered by a terrified scream from Guston, who had wandered away from the rest of the party to examine some flowers he had seen growing at the foot of the trees in the shade. He came running back towards the road as if pursued by a pack of wild hunting animals, a look of sheer terror on his face.

For almost a full minute, he could not explain what he had seen, but kept pointing behind him and mouthing something, the words simply refusing to come. Only Ecinlorne understood at once, trotting over to the place where Guston had been standing. She snorted and backed off swiftly, before inching her way forward again much more cautiously to investigate what had frightened the young Zandernation so much.

Gorin went over to join her and quickly realised why his fellow traveller had been so petrified. For among the trees and in the darkness of their shadow, the ground was seething with movement. An undulating rhythm swarming through the undergrowth and around the thick trunks, giving the impression that the earth itself had a life of its own.

Then, as his eyes quickly became accustomed to the dim light, he made out the reason for this strange phenomenon; the forest floor was heaving with serpents! They were everywhere, crawling, writhing over each other, around each other and literally covering every square measure of ground between the trees.

Fortunately, they did not appear disposed to come any closer to the shadow's edge and it soon became apparent they would do no harm to the travellers provided they did not leave the sunlit safety of the road. Indeed, they were taking little notice of anything other than themselves, allowing Ecinlorne and Gorin to watch them with impunity. After a while, as soon as they realised there was no immediate danger, the others joined them and they all stared with disbelief at the unnervingly repugnant sight.

"I've never, ever seen anything like that before," breathed Drian. "They're certainly not from the Garden..."

"Maybe we shouldn't have come so far after all," said Aston. "The next things we come across might not worry so much about keeping out of the sun."

As these words were spoken, they all became conscious of an idea resounding in their minds. Awareness that these creatures' presence in the Paradise Garden was what made Gorin's mission so essential. In that instant, they all understood there was more at stake now than just the search for Esperon.

They looked instinctively towards Ecinlorne, who was now directing her gaze at them and breathing heavily through dilated nostrils, her message changing then to one of encouragement. She assured them they would suffer no harm during the hours of daylight, but even so, it would be as well for them to continue their journey and move away from the snake infested area. A recommendation they were all very happy to follow!

Despite Ecinlorne's assertion of there being no immediate danger, they were all rather shaken as they took up their packs and continued along the road, not daring to look into the forest on either side of them. This strategy made sure they would not encounter any further evidence of alien lifeforms, so that the next part of their journey was completely without incident.

Before long, Golden City people being what they are, Drian and the others started singing again, for they were incapable of feeling fear in the absence of any visible threat. Gorin was not so quick to join in the sing-along however. He was still greatly disturbed by what he had seen and its significance here in the Garden, where everything was supposed to be so safe and harmonious.

He thought again about those strange shapes in the sky the night before, wondering what connection they might have with the serpents. Perhaps even with the slaughtered horse and the knife he had found by the burnt-out fire. Not to mention the design of the weapon's carved handle.

Everything seemed to be pointing towards some kind of infiltration by elements very foreign to the Garden and its existence. Acting with a purpose that could, for the moment, only be guessed at.

The crossroads

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 731 - 760

After an hour or so more, the travellers came at last to a point where the East road was intersected by another coming from the North, which continued on towards the South.

Ecinlorne stopped, and the rest of them came to a halt behind her, nervously scanning the undergrowth around them for any sign of the snakes. They were all greatly relieved to discover there was no trace of them in this particular part of the Garden; but they kept their senses keenly sharpened, just in case.

By now, the sun was high in the sky and it was obviously not far from midday. A suitable moment for them to decide what should be done next.

Ecinlorne made them all aware that this was the point from which she would go on with Gorin into the East, helping him fulfil the mission he had been given and accepted. The others should therefore now return to Zandernatis, arriving there by dusk to slip back into the City without arousing attention, just as they always did.

"Yes, we don't want to come up against those serpents again once it gets dark," said Guston, nervously. "They'll be everywhere then."

"We must tell Hexard about them," added Aston, trying to hide the relief he felt at being able to head for home.

Fordern and Werlyn then both said how sorry they were to part company with Gorin, but they knew he understood why they were unable to go any further. The two brothers also spoke of how honoured they felt to have played a small role in such a momentous adventure, while secretly hoping the farewells would not be drawn out too long.

"Of course," said Gorin, "I do understand. And I must thank all of you for coming this far. It has been a great encouragement for me."

"And you will need more," said Drian suddenly, having remained silent until now. "Which is why..." He faltered for a moment.

"Why what?" asked Guston.

"I would like to be allowed to continue on the road with you, Gorin. You and Ecinlorne. If you will have me."

There was a stunned silence. Gorin was surprised such a wish could be expressed by any "normal" person who had lived his life within the confines of the City. Drian was no visionary as Esperon had been. As for his fellow members of the Outside Society, such an idea was unthinkable - beyond the wildest delusions any of them could imagine. In fact, at first, they thought he must be joking. Yet the unfaltering way he stared at Gorin and Ecinlorne, awaiting their reply, soon convinced them this was no jest. Their reaction, when it came, was one of incomprehension and fear.

"You must be out of your mind," said Guston. "You can't go on with them. You know where they're heading, don't you?"

"Of course."

"How far do you intend going then?" demanded Werlyn.

"As far as necessary," replied Drian, still looking steadfastly at Gorin and the unihorned hind.

"But what about us?" asked Aston.

"You'll manage. Your path is a lot safer than Gorin's, I think. And you haven't far to go. But he has."

"What about the serpents?" asked Guston. "Suppose we come up against them again?"

"How would I possibly be able to help, even if you did? In any case you've only got to stay in the sunlight and you won't come to any harm."

"Drian, you can't be serious," said Fordern. "I mean, it was one thing with Esperon; he had those dreams and visions. Although I always thought he was a little mad. And Gorin's different because the King sent him, even if he also had to be slightly insane to accept... But not you. The Drian we know would never consider such a thing. You know the law."

"I'm sorry Fordern, but I've made up my mind. We've lived so long in our predictable golden cocoon, I need to know what goes on beyond it and its Garden.

"Alone, I could never do a thing like this, any more than you could. But in the company of Ecinlorne and Gorin, I can see opportunities of discovering many new things. Besides, Gorin's mission is too important for him to accomplish alone. He may need help, and I would like to be there for him if he needs me."

"I still think you'd be making a huge mistake," said Guston. "And I'm afraid you'll regret it in the end as well."

"Why should I?"

"Because you're not made for this, Drian. None of us are, and we don't want to see you taking such a risk. The City means too much to you. However can you think of doing something that might mean you would never see it again?"

"Perhaps I want to do this just because the City means so much to me. I'm convinced there are things out there we're going to need before long; and I want to help Gorin find them. I'm sorry if the rest of you think it's wrong, or foolhardy, but I want to go on. Do you agree Gorin?"

"Well, if you're really sure you want to come, I'd be more than pleased to have your company. But I don't want you to

feel obliged; I've been grateful for your companionship, all of you, up until now."

"It's got nothing to do with obligation, I can assure you," cut in Drian. "It's a need to look further and perhaps find a reason why we've been living as we have for so many centuries without really evolving!"

"If you put it like that," answered Gorin, after a moment's reflection. "What do the rest of you say?"

"You know my opinion," said Guston. "I think it's very, very unwise, to say the least. When life is so free and full of joy in such a wonderful place as Zandernatis, how can anyone bear to leave it behind forever?"

"If he wants to go, let him," suggested Werlyn. "I think it's wrong as well, but we shouldn't try to stop him if he's really set on it."

"Whatever we decide, let's do it fast," said Aston, suddenly. "It seems quite obvious there are some very strange things going on out here with all those serpents and who knows what else around... I, for one, don't fancy spending a whole night in the open now."

"He's right. We ought to be heading back right away," added Guston.

"Then let's go. You're sure about this Drian; you don't want to change your mind?" Fordern's question was asked with a plaintive note in his voice, begging his friend to see reason.

"I'm absolutely sure, thank you," Drian answered in a cool, level tone, revealing his mind to be quite made up.

"There's no more to be said then," murmured Werlyn.

"Except goodbye; and I hope you might wish us good luck."

"Of course we do, Drian," said Fordern quietly. "We just don't understand... But if you want to go ahead with it, then you must. And we hope everything works out as it should."
"For you both and for Esperon, if you find him," added Werlyn, gravely.

"Let us hope so. In any case, it's my choice and I'll see it through to the end, whatever and wherever that may be."

Parting of the ways

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 761 - 772

Thus it was decided that three of them would be taking the East road across the most remote areas of the Garden and then beyond. For the two young men it was to be an exciting quest for new adventures in the world outside their experience, while their guide, the enigmatic Ecinlorne, made no comment on Drian's decision. In fact, she acted quite indifferently towards it, as she did to the fond farewells made by the other adventurers to their friends. It was something new for them too, as they had never felt any emotion such as this, except when Esperon took his leave of them, and then the circumstances had not been the same.

Werlyn, Fordern and the two brothers all embraced Drian and Gorin, before standing back to watch them leave the crossroads with the regal white hind leading the way. They stood where they were for some time, looking towards the East until they could no longer make out their comrades, until the sun no longer glinted on Ecinlorne's pure white antler-horn, until in fact nothing remained to indicate they had ever been.

Then at last they turned and resolutely began to make their way back down the road leading towards the City and the things they knew. Little passed between them during the first part of the journey, for each one felt he had said goodbye to

Drian and Gorin for the last time. They could not easily relate to all that talk of important "missions" and "selected emissaries". All they knew was that their greatest friend had just done the unthinkable. Abandoning his friends, his culture, his Zandernatis. And for what? To travel with a foreign stranger into the forgotten, forbidden lands of the East, which ancient traditions absorbed over many lifetimes had taught them to fear and ignore.

Throughout the day, the four travellers headed back towards the City, and nothing obstructed their path. Although if they had been more observant and sensitive they might have noticed a certain number of disquieting portents. For example, they saw no significance in the total lack of any animal life between the crossroads behind them and the Hollow where they had met up with the white hind.

The absence of birdsong similarly failed to register on their awareness. For they were so obsessed with looking out for serpents, that seeing no further sign of those writhing masses in the undergrowth even made them think it had all been just a waking nightmare. Brought on, no doubt, by the strange ideas they had been exposed to.

As far as they were concerned, this ambition to go into the East was inextricably associated with Esperon's delirium. It was therefore quite logical to suppose they had been under a similar influence when they saw those serpents.

It was so easy to rationalise now, as they were heading for home, so comforting to see the walls of their beloved City looming out of the gathering dusk ahead of them. Never mind the strange silences and even stranger noises occasionally breaking them in the surrounding trees and bushes. They were in sight of home and it was good to know any thoughts

incompatible with their conventional view of things could soon be put behind them.

Three for the road

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 773 - 810

Meanwhile, Ecinlorne and her two companions were making steady progress towards the East. Even though their path suddenly became overgrown and neglected the moment they crossed the North – South route. The road leading South had appeared to be in similarly poor repair - but heading Northwards it was as well cared for as the road they had followed up to the crossroads. A further indication that someone was interested in maintaining easy access to Zandernatis from the North.

Who could this "someone" be? Despite such a nagging question, Gorin felt in good spirits, mainly due to Drian's unexpected companionship. The Garden about them also helped put him in good humour, for they were now coming across many more creatures than they had encountered before. Some of them even emerged from the trees now and then, peering inquisitively at the travellers as they passed by.

At this point, the road was little more than a grassy track, bearing hardly any resemblance to the broad highway they had followed at the beginning of their journey. Ecinlorne gave the two travellers little time to examine their surroundings in any detail, however. She maintained a steady pace ahead of them, looking back frequently to make sure they were not lagging behind.

After some hour and a half of progress along the disused road, Gorin began wondering how long it would be before they would leave the forested part of the Garden behind them, or if it went on right up to the Paradise Gate. He was just about to

put this question to Ecinlorne when he heard a sound, far away to their right, imposing itself sharply upon the constant background of birdsong and scampering in the undergrowth.

He instantly stood rooted to the spot and waited until it came again, echoing through the trees like the wail of a lost soul. Drian heard it the second time and he too, stood still, waiting for a third call, which came almost before the second had died away.

It was doleful and yet hauntingly beautiful, expressing a strange kind of sorrow. Not necessarily for the loss of anything, or anyone. The sorrow in that voice seemed to be a lament for its inability to harbour such perfect beauty for any length of time. Mourning its inevitable surrender to the dissipating wind.

One call followed another, each one louder and nearer than the last. Ecinlorne paused ahead of Gorin and Drian, turned her head to one side and listened with them until snapping twigs and rustling leaves began accompanying the otherworldly calls. Something was clearly approaching at quite a pace and they were all eager to see what kind of creature could be responsible for uttering such eerie, transient cries.

Then, with an agile leap, a bizarre yet graceful form surged out of the trees just ahead of Ecinlorne and landed in the middle of the path. Like the Harelops, this creature was also half man and half animal. The head was undeniably human and the piercing eyes staring out of the bearded face shone with a light even more than human. The neck, torso and short, muscular arms were all covered in a fine growth of hair which became thicker below the waist. This was where the humanoid part of this newcomer ended - for its lower body was like that

of a great cat, as black as midnight, tensed in all its four legs for instantaneous flight[28].

After a moment's scrutiny of the three travellers, the lithe, semi-feline form relaxed, turning its head away from them to emit another of its heartrendingly plaintive calls. Then, once the last echoes had died away, it directed its keen gaze towards the two young men and their guide once more, as it addressed them in a singsong voice as full of ethereal harmonics as its cry had been:

> *"Greetings to travellers, walking unravellers*
> *of writings and sightings*
> *among the delightings.*
> *In your arrival, your quest for survival*
> *you carry the key, that I may see*
> *why you are here,*
> *and why you draw near*
> *to the land of the Sleethol Seer."*[29]

The creature then tensed its muscles and sprang high in the air, arms waving as if in a vain attempt to use them as wings. With all the agility of the big cat it so closely resembled, it landed on the ground again having jumped right over Ecinlorne, bringing it face to face with Gorin and Drian. For some reason, neither of them felt at all threatened by this improbable mixture of man and beast, in fact quite the

[28] In "*Species, Races and Peoples*", one of the other documents found in the Haakon Urns (see the bibliography in the appendix at the end of "Pre-Destination"), this creature is described as a "*Jahalldian*", with some similarities to a term which can still be found in Indonesian and Malaysian folklore referring to a were-cat or were-tiger. However, the creature described in "*The Song of Gorin*" appears to be closer to the "were-jaguar" described in pre-Columbian, Mesoamerican cultures.

[29] *"The Song of Gorin" stanza 785*

opposite; for there was something in those bright, far-seeing eyes that inspired confidence and respect.

Their instinctive reaction was reinforced by a strong mental impression from Ecinlorne, telling them the Sleethol Seer was distantly related to the Harelops. Unlike them, however, it generally shunned the company of others, remaining in the depths of the gloomy forest unless summoned for some specific purpose. The Seer picked up the message from the hind and gave a little cry of glee before raising its head once more to give another long, melancholic call. Then, in complete contrast to its previous behaviour, it suddenly stilled and looked Gorin steadily in the eye while pronouncing one of the strangest utterances the young man had ever heard:

> *"You come to the Seer as you have done*
> *while events their prophesied courses run.*
> *All movement is time and days are in motion*
> *with years that make millennia's ocean.*
> *Like a ship you ride this ineffable tide,*
> *finding the world indeed too wide*
> *to stay with demons at your side."*[30]

These words aroused great curiosity in Gorin, and he wanted to put all kinds of questions to the creature who he felt might be able to make several things much clearer. Until Ecinlorne began shaking her head reprovingly and he felt her stifling his thoughts, preventing him from voicing the things tumbling over in his mind. He then understood he was supposed to listen; that the Sleethol Seer always revealed everything, but did so in its own way and could not be questioned. And so, listen he did, although few of these

[30] *"The Song of Gorin", stanza 787*

enigmatic pronouncements made very much sense to him at the time:

> *"There is nothing to promise, nothing to know*
> *save for the paths on which you go.*
> *The trees are infested by dark ones detested,*
> *infiltrating, mutilating;*
> *doing as they are requested.*
> *Paradise becomes invaded,*
> *bright delights are growing shaded*
> *as the creatures grow to know*
> *of places where they should not go."*[31]

The Seer halted for a moment, giving Gorin time to reflect on the evidence he had seen of this "infiltration". But there was so much more he would have liked to understand…

> *"Ask not of me what you will see,*
> *In your search for what is free.*
> *You are going with a reason*
> *That the enemies will see as treason.*
> *But your paths will not converge*
> *until these destinies begin to merge.*
> *You will not meet the silent legions*
> *toiling in the shadowed regions,*
> *clearing tracks with Devil-snakes*
> *for the day when war awakes.*
> *It will rise with great commotion,*
> *secrets held within a potion*
> *moved in days by time in motion;*
> *waves upon millennia's ocean."*[32]

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31 *"The Song of Gorin", Stanza 788*

The Sleethol Seer let out another of its cries, smiled benignly at Gorin and Drian and then, in an instant, was gone. The movement of that powerful, dark, semi-feline form was so swift, they felt it had disappeared into thin air. Only the rustling of the undergrowth on their left betrayed the direction it had taken.

Without losing any time, Ecinlorne informed the two young travellers they should continue their journey at once if they were to arrive at the Gatehouse before dusk. No explanations were forthcoming as to the significance of the words uttered by the Seer - but both of them had plenty to think about as they followed their unihorned guide. For one, it was confirmation of impressions received and an increasing awareness of the purpose behind his mission. Meanwhile, the other was beginning to realise that, as near-perfect as it might be, even Paradise was not inviolate.

They continued their journey for a further two hours, keeping up the steady pace set by Ecinlorne. Then, as evening approached, they noticed signs of animal and avian activity were swiftly diminishing. Less than half an hour later, a blanket of almost total silence descended around them as the surrounding forest became devoid of wildlife. Even the trees were thinning out, until at last they came to a point where the track emerged from them altogether. They all paused for a moment, their eyes following the path ahead across a flat, grassy area of ground before it plunged into much denser forest some two hundred measures ahead.

"I suppose this must be it then," breathed Drian. "I never thought the day would come when I'd see this place."

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[32] "*The Song of Gorin*", *Stanza 789 - 790*

"Why, where are we?" asked Gorin.

"At the frontier of the Garden, I'm sure," he answered, an involuntary shiver running through him as he spoke. "As far as we're concerned, the edge of the world."

Gorin nodded, reflecting that although the lack of animal and bird life certainly contrasted with the rest of the Garden, the silence here was nowhere near as unearthly as it had been the night before, when those enormous flying creatures crossed the face of the moon.

Ecinlorne confirmed they were indeed at the point where the woods of the Paradise Garden merged with the Forest of Dissemblance. The plan now was for them to head for the Gatehouse in the midst of the trees on the other side of the grassy expanse, spending the night there before passing through the Paradise Gate the following morning. She then turned and preceded the two travellers over the rough grass, following the faint marks on the ground where the road had once been.

As they came among the trees again, there was at first no sign of any house; nothing in fact but the wild, random growths of the dense forest. Then, surrounded by a profusion of green foliage, they began to make out the indefinite form of what had to be some kind of building; but one such as neither of them had ever seen before. First of all, its dilapidated condition contrasted starkly with the Golden City's pristine edifices they knew so well. Furthermore, it was overgrown by creeping plants with tentacular roots and sinuous branches disfiguring large areas of its crumbling grey, stone walls.

The construction stood some seven measures high, topped by a sloping roof, although much of it was obscured by the masses of thick, fleshy green leaves on the branches overhead. From what Gorin and Drian could see of its architecture

through the invasive tendrils and creepers, its ornamentation consisted of squat pillars, carvings and small, square windows with massive chiselled frames. None of these features even remotely resembled the architectural style of Zandernatis. This was something from another age - and another culture - altogether.

Grotesque, leering faces peered from the stone, their sunken, moss-covered eyes made even more frightening by years of neglect. Clawed hands hung poised, as if ready to grab the unwary passer-by. Bat wings arched above pointed faces with open mouths showing the broken remains of sharp, sculpted teeth.

The sight of the house made Gorin's blood run cold, a feeling of dread gripping his stomach. As he later discovered, this was exactly what it was designed for, since it stood as a final caution to any travellers intending to go through the Paradise Gate. The message was clear. Those who chose to disregard this warning and pressed on, had to be prepared for encounters with more tangible versions of the horrors depicted here in stone!

There was no sign of any entrance in the wall facing them, but Ecinlorne led the way around the side of the building until a door came into view. They also caught sight of a tall slender chimney with an inviting wisp of smoke curling from it. Somebody must live there! Gorin thought it would perhaps be best to show a little caution, despite the heartening prospect of a warm, homely fireside. After all, if the Forest of Dissemblance were so near, it would be unwise to take any chances.

Ecinlorne did not seem to share Gorin's reticence however, going straight up to the sturdy wooden door and banging against it with her horn. At first, there was no response, but when she knocked a second time, there came a cry of "Who's

there?" from inside, followed a moment later by the opening of a tiny peephole in the solid wood.

"Ecinlorne! What a surprise," said the voice from behind the door. "Just a minute, just a minute; I'll open up for you. What? You have friends… From where? Never! Well, if you say so... Anyway, come in and warm yourselves by the fire, come on."

The thick door creaked open to reveal a diminutive old man standing framed in the blackness of the interior. He was bent and shrunken, his face covered in wrinkles and his eyes glazed in the vacant stare of one who had spent many years absorbed in his own thoughts. He welcomed the hind and her two companions graciously and ushered them inside, closely scrutinising Gorin and Drian as they passed before him, but without making any further comment. He had known Ecinlorne for almost as long as he could remember, so if they were friends of hers, they could pass.

The room they entered was the only one in the building, occupying the full extent of it. The ceiling above them sloped with the roof, lit up by the evening light streaming in through the high, square windows. Unlike the exterior, the inside walls were quite devoid of any decoration, giving the place a bare and uninviting look, despite the fire flickering and dancing in the hearth.

The furniture, such as it was, had all been made with an eye to its utility rather than its aesthetic appeal; the bed in the far corner was little more than a rude platform covered with bales of straw, while the tables were fashioned from hewn wood, barely smoothed at all. The fire was welcoming though, and the two young men went gratefully towards it, warming their overworked, aching legs.

Ecinlorne introduced them to the old man, presenting him as Claedon, the one-time Guardian of the Paradise Gate, but now only known as "the Keeper".

"No one knows me any more you see," explained the aged sentinel. "I mean, there's no point in having a name if nobody ever comes to call you by it, is there? Some may have heard of me, but they never come to see if I'm still here. Not like they used to in the early ages and in the time of my father."

Ecinlorne silently informed the Guardian that Gorin and Drian were seeking shelter in his Gatehouse until the next morning, when they would go on into the Forest of Dissemblance on the next leg of their journey. The wizened old man nodded, muttering in ominous undertones something about them certainly needing a good night's sleep before braving the morrow.

"Thank you Ecinlorne," said Gorin, "and thank you too Claedon, we are very grateful to you and glad we can stay here tonight."

"Not at all; it's what I'm supposed to be here for," answered the Guardian, pleased to hear someone pronounce his name again at last. "I'll just go and get a little something for you and then perhaps we can talk. I like to talk. Haven't talked to anyone for centuries."

Claedon made his way over to a far corner of the huge room, mumbling to himself as he prepared a simple meal for his guests. By the time he brought it over to them, they were already feeling much better after stretching out in front of the cheerful flames of the fire.

Ecinlorne retired to another corner of the room and watched Gorin and Drian gratefully eating the food the Guardian offered them. It was plain but good, and once they had finished and were more relaxed, the old man felt ready to

engage them in the conversation that, for him, was obviously the main purpose of their visit.

V - "Unihorn" skull found in Pennsylvanian cave[33]

On 27 April, 2012, a certain Walt Garner (this is not his real name), from Allenwood, Pennsylvania, submitted a report to his local newspaper, the Allenwood Echo. He claimed to have recently explored a small, secluded cave in White Deer Township, Union County, in which he found an old wooden box containing what appeared to be the skull of a "unicorn".

The discovery came about as Walt was hiking in the Tiadaghton State Forest, between White Deer Creek and Nittany Mountain, when he came across a small opening between several moss-covered boulders. He pulled away some of the rocks to reveal a shallow cave about ten feet deep and three feet high. At the back of this space, lay a rough-hewn wooden box with rusted metal bindings. He managed to pry it open and found it contained a curious animal skull with a horn protruding from its forehead.

After making this bizarre discovery, the hiker searched through the dirt beneath the box and discovered a cache consisting of several glass beads, fragments of a clay pot, and a misshapen piece of heavily rusted metal, which may have been a blade of some kind. On May 15, Walt brought his findings to Pennsylvania State University, where he presented them to members of the Palaeontology, Zoology and Ethnological departments. Two months later, after careful examination and testing of the specimens, the University experts issued a detailed report including the following points:

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[33] Reprinted by kind permission from the "*Journal of the Bizarre*" blog.

Skull Analysis

"The specimen appears to be the skull of a young male whitetail deer or related species with an 8-inch bony projection protruding from the frontal bone. The parietal bone is missing, and oddly appears to have been removed with surgical precision using a sharp object, rather than broken off.

"Evidence of this can be seen in the clean, smooth lines, along with the fact that the cranial sutures which connect the parietal and occipital bones are still intact. Had the skull been crushed, more likely than not the bone would have cracked along the cranial sutures. The coloration and physical appearance of the cuts in the bone suggest that this "lobotomy" was performed shortly after the animal's death.

"The 'horn' of the specimen differs drastically from the traditional depiction of a unicorn horn. According to European myth, the unicorn horn is spiralled, like that of an antelope. These types of animal horns consist of keratin, which surrounds a core of live bone. The specimen in question features a horn made of compact bone, which places it closer to an antler.

"This presents the possibility that unicorns were not horses with a long spiralling horn, but a type of deer with one pointed antler. This would make much more sense from an evolutionary perspective, since equine species cannot cross-breed with artiodactyls (goats, deer, camels, antelopes, etc.). Therefore, it is impossible for a horse to grow a horn.

The missing parietal bone seems to imply that the animal's brain was removed for ceremonial purposes. This would also explain why the specimen was found in a box over shards of a clay pot and a rusted iron cutting implement.

"The area in which the specimen was found lies along several historic Native American paths traversed by the Andaste (Susquehannock), Seneca, and Lenape (Delaware). Of these tribes, the Andaste (Susquehannock) would have been the most likely to perform such a bizarre ritual.

"By the year 1700, most of the Susquehannock had migrated toward south-central Pennsylvania. If the unihorn skull is authentic, the best estimate would be that the animal had lived in the woodlands of Pennsylvania sometime in the 17th century, before the migration and subsequent extinction of the Susquehannock."

Antler Analysis

"As noted above, true horns and antlers are two very different structures; horns are composed of keratin, while antlers are composed of bone. The specimen we examined undoubtedly has a bony growth protruding from the skull.

"This is clearly evidenced by examining the tip of the specimen's antler. The surface layer of bone has chipped away, revealing the underlying lamellar bone. When antlers reach the end of the growing process, the outer layer becomes compact bone, while the centers are filled with coarse and spongy lamellar bone and marrow. This detail of antler anatomy is virtually impossible to replicate by a hoaxer, and adds an important touch of authenticity to the "unihorn" (or, to be perfectly accurate, 'uni-antler') specimen.

"Another crucial detail exhibited by this specimen is the smooth polished look of the antler's mid-shaft. The velvet which covers its surface is usually removed by the animal rubbing it against vegetation. This is what gives antlers their smooth, polished look. A close examination of the unihorn's antler reveals that the

"shine" does not extend all the way to its base or back; it is limited to the parts of the antler that would have been most likely to come into contact with vegetation. A hoaxer would almost certainly have given the antler a uniform shine, even on the 'hard to reach' areas.

"There are also numerous gouges and scratches on the antler. All of these exhibit the same exact age and discoloration as seen on the rest of the skull. However, the most peculiar detail is the lack of a pedicle. The pedicle is the attachment point of the antler. On the specimen we examined, there exists no point of attachment. Rather, the antler appears to be part of the skull itself. There are no cracks, gaps, or lines of demarcation to suggest the horn was 'glued on' to the skull, or attached by unnatural means."

Note the underlying lamellar bone at the tip of the "unihorn"

The Region

"Since this alleged discovery was made in White Deer Valley, we couldn't help but wonder if there was a possible link between the Native American 'White Deer' legends and 'unicorns' (which are often depicted as being white in color). History tells us that there were several important Indian trails around White Deer Creek.

These trails were used by numerous tribes, beginning with the Susquehannock and ending with the Seneca (one of the Iroquois Six Nations) and the Lenape.

"The unicorn of European folklore is occasionally described as having cloven hooves, in spite of the fact that no equine species have such hooves. Deer, on the other hand, do have cloven (or "two-toed") hooves. If 'unicorns' did exist at one time, it stands to reason they would be more related to animals capable of growing horns or antlers (goats, rams, deer, etc.) than animals such as horses, which don't have horns or cloven hooves."

Ecinlorne – the origin of the "unicorn" myth?

In the light of this discovery and the scientific analysis reproduced above, readers may find it easier to accept that "fabulous" creatures such as "unihorns" really did exist during our distant pre-history. As the researchers point out in their report, our memories of their real nature have become distorted over the intervening millennia. This was particularly true in medieval times, when they were depicted as an improbable hybrid with the head, body and tail of a horse, the cloven feet of deer, a goat's "beard" and a single, straight, "spiralled" horn emerging from the head.

Many differing descriptions of these legendary creatures can be found in other cultures. For example, aboriginal paintings of them have been reported in Southern Africa and South America. They are even mentioned in the King James translation of the Old Testament (in the Garden of Eden as well as in Numbers, Psalms and the Book of Job). A unicorn is also reputed to have saved India from invasion by Genghis Khan.

However, the significant differences between Ecinlorne, as described in "*The Song of Gorin*", and the conventional - predominantly equine - "unicorn" portrayed in popular myths, do seem to be corroborated by this find in Pennsylvania, nearly 40 years after the first edition of "Genesis Antarctica" should have been published. First of all, she is said to be a white hind (or doe – female deer), with a single "antler-horn" (with no "spiralling") protruding

from the centre of her forehead. Although her physical form is not what we have been led to "expect", she is still however credited with great wisdom and even spiritual virtues, perpetuating her mystique.

This being said, perhaps the most persuasive argument for the credibility of this description lies in the fact that it is so well documented in the Haakon Urn texts themselves. They have enabled a huge body of overwhelming evidence to be built up confirming the authenticity of the writings they contain. We can therefore be confident that they are indeed faithful accounts of what actually took place, ***"when, and where, legends were born"***.

VI - Claedon's story

"We are told by the wise from the noble dawn,
of the legends recorded by sages;
of the point of sunrise, newly born,
that became the Heroic Ages."

Zalander, Golden City poet (1621 - 1753)

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 811 - 852

The old man settled himself down in front of his guests and looked at them for a full minute before he actually got around to speaking. When he did at last begin, it was almost as if he were talking to himself; as if he had forgotten that tonight, for the first time in many long centuries, he had an audience. He continued looking in Gorin and Drian's direction, but without registering their presence, addressing his first words to the other side of the room.

"I remember…" he said, "I remember so many things. In the far-off years, there was such a lot to remember. Now, every day is the same. No travellers set out to come this way, not since the City closed its portals. None seek adventure as they used to."

"There was one..." interrupted Gorin; but the old man carried on as if he had not heard.

"I remember the time when there were great caravans of horses and travellers journeying through here, and knights in

armour who wanted to prove their worthiness by braving the terrors of the Forest. But no more. No more."

There was a break in his voice as he mourned the times he had known, for to him they had been days of wonder and excitement. Replaced now by nothing but his unending watchfulness over a gate that was never opened, over a road that was never used.

"When I was young, I was as bold as the rest of them. I was prepared to endure all manner of things to prove my worth. And like all young men, I was proud. As proud as the great Lord Kutjaran. Life was sweet; the sweetest thing imaginable. Who could blame me for accepting all the life there was? Could you?" He looked directly at Gorin as he asked the question and seemed to expect an answer.

"It was natural," the old Guardian went on again, not waiting for Gorin to mumble his incomprehension. "Quite natural. They offered me life and I took it. And now... Now I live." His voice trailed away as he thought over what it meant "to live".

"But who offered you this life?" asked Gorin. "And what for?"

"Them," Claedon replied, distantly. "They came to me one bright and happy morning when I was in love with the happiness of Earth. They came to me, embraced me and took my hand. They led me away from my fellows and spoke to me in soft voices that would have charmed the malice out of a serpent. 'A special mission,' they said. 'Something to give you the chance to be forever with the world.' And it was a chance. And I took it."

"But you haven't told us who 'they' were," insisted Gorin. "Is there anything we could do to help?"

The old man laughed, ironically. “Help?” he said. “How can you, or anyone, help me when I am beyond the salvation of all creatures, be they Lords or be they men. Can you give me back the ones I loved? Can you wipe out the memory of seeing wife and children withering before me as I stood, still straight and young in mind and body, powerless to keep them by my side?”

“But you would see them again,” interjected Drian. “When they returned in new bodies.”

Claedon stared at him for a moment, and then bowed his head, shaking it slowly from side to side. “Such joy could not be for me,” he said. “Not then, and certainly not now, here and forgotten. That blessing was the privilege of experiencing the Heroic Age and keeping all it held in one life memory. But since everything ended, there has only been an endless procession of bleak, empty centuries. Can you give them back to me? Not even they can do that, if they knew, or if they cared. But it was my decision. I chose life and life I had, and will have until tomorrow never comes.”

“You mean, you’ll never…” Gorin faltered, not wanting to pronounce the word.

“Yes, I mean that, young man,” he replied, a tired smile passing across his face. “I mean I cannot die. Cannot know the joys of a new, young body ever again... The Lords of Creation, Lord Protectors, gave me undying life in return for guardianship of the Gate. It was no great hardship being out here in those days because of the constant traffic between Zandernatis and the Hills. It was even better than being in the City, for the people coming through here were always those with the most powerful visions, the most adventurous. This was their last taste of Paradise before they ventured into the Dissemblance and beyond. We used to have such wonderful

times discussing what they would do and then, when they returned, we'd celebrate their achievements."

"And you have been here all this time?"

"Yes, I have been here," came the resigned reply, "enjoying those first, wonderful years when all was beautiful and the Lords walked among us. Then through the great Heroic Age after their passing, until King Nuovo sealed the golden portals. That was when time stopped, and I remained... a permanent relic of the past until Zandernatis and the Paradise Garden are no more."

Gorin waited a few moments before daring to put forth some of the questions these revelations brought into his mind. For if this Claedon had been here since the very beginning, he must know many, many things not mentioned in the City records. He must know exactly how Zandernatis was created and the identity of those mysterious Lords of Creation. But how would the old man react to questions like these? He might find it very painful to recall all the details of those happier times.

"So you can remember what it was like before the City existed?" he said at last.

"Before it existed? But it has always existed. Like me."

"Yes, I know, but even before it was always there," pressed Gorin. "Can you tell us anything about what it was like in the days of its conception, before it attained the form we see it in now?"

"No. I can't tell you that. There is no one, save the Lords, who can. It is their secret, wherever they are now. All I know is I belonged to the first, ecstatic generation who went out into the wonder of the Garden from a Golden City that was the highest expression of perfection ever created.

"We were among the first to be born in Zandernatis, but our parents never told us anything about themselves, their origins or how they came to be there. I only know they were not, themselves, responsible for its creation, but they praised the Lords for their 'supreme gift'. This included not only the precious Jewel of Paradise, but also the freedom of will to be part of it and determine their own way. That was the great thing in those days - free will - the gift of self-determination. Look where it landed me!"

"Can you tell me something about the Lords themselves then, when they came to you with this offer to make you the Gate's Guardian?"

Claedon suddenly screwed up his eyes at this question and shuffled his feet nervously, as if it embarrassed him to reply. He said nothing at first, but instead got up and went over to the fire, muttering something unintelligible. He threw a couple of fresh logs into the hearth, then raked the embers with an old iron poker until the sparks flew into the air and the flames danced high and brightly.

He returned to his seat and sat down again, coughed once or twice and turned his sad wrinkled face towards Gorin and Drian who were patiently awaiting his reply.

"You really want to know about them?" he finally asked.

"Yes we do," said Gorin.

"You as well?" demanded the old man, directing his question to Drian.

"Well," replied Drian, with some hesitation, "if there is anything you know... Perhaps you could tell us..."

"Why should I?" snapped the Guardian, an edge of anger colouring his voice. "Lords of Creation they may be, but they should have left us before and not meddled with anything once the City was created. I would not be in this place now, but for

them. I'd have gone on with all my circle, through the cycle of living, reliving and evolving. Instead of being doomed to drag on here forever. If this is the Lords' will, I wish I'd never had anything to do with them. So clever they were, so handsome, radiating their knowledge and power. You wanted to be like them, to fly like them and do everything they could do. But we lacked their attainment."

"Did they treat you as inferiors?" enquired Gorin.

"No... I must admit, they didn't. It's me who says we were less than them. But there was such a huge difference, we couldn't be anything else. And in the end, they had to leave us to ourselves or else our Paradise could never have continued. It was inevitable."

Gorin didn't quite see what he meant and asked for some clarification. Whereupon Drian interrupted, having remembered one of the old stories still circulating among certain people in the City, which now seemed a little clearer in the light of what the old man was saying.

"Perhaps I understand," he began. "They say there was a time when the mythical Lords lived in the City with the first generation, but then, because they had so much knowledge and were so all-powerful, the people asked them to leave. Just as they had asked them to create the City in the first place. Is that what you mean?"

"More or less," replied the old man. "They never wanted to make the men and women of Zandernatis do anything against their will. They warned us of the dangers we might encounter in time, and reminded us of the many things they could help us do. But true 'self-determination' was impossible while they remained, and in the end, the City Council decided it would be better if they left us to seek our own way. So leave

they did, once they had appointed me to come out here and guard the Gate."

"So where did they go after leaving the City?" asked Gorin.

"To their home, where they had always lived. Never went there myself, though some people did in the days before they left us. And afterwards as well, of course, by passing through here."

"Carrying on along this road through the Forest of Dissemblance?" asked Gorin, hardly daring to pursue this line of questioning.

"Of course."

"And they went on to reach the Hills, once they had crossed the desert?"

"There was no desert in those times," replied Claedon. "It was all fields and rivers. But the watercourses started drying once the 'Hundred Years of Great Romances' passed, around the year 1050. Some say the Lords themselves ordained the changes, so the City people could assume their destiny. And once the desert started taking over, the travellers became fewer and fewer... making my days longer and my nights desperately lonely.

"Can you imagine it? One thousand years of happiness, of laughter, of tales told by wayfarers travelling between here and the Hills. Beautiful girls making the journey as part of their education, going away with fire and innocence in their eyes and returning as women, wise in the ways of life. Then the adventurers, the squires who returned as nobles and the neophytes who came back as adepts; all proving their worth in those heroic years against the dragons and demons they found out there.

"Yes, they all came this way until the desert began to dry. When that happened, the young girls couldn't stand the heat, the young men saw no bravery in fighting a sandstorm and even the seekers found the disciplines too rigorous. Only a handful of the most hardy wanderers came through then, perhaps one every two or three months. In the end, they stopped going all the way as the desert expanded and the Forest became more forbidding. Then of course, eight, nine hundred years after that, King Nuovo closed the gates forever. And I ceased to have a purpose."

He paused again, weighed down by the receding memories of his glorious heyday as the gulf between it and his present became ever wider. Gorin felt deeply touched by the strange and savage irony embodied in this man, with his "gift" of eternity stretching emptily in front of him.

"How did you learn the gates were to be shut?" he asked after this moment of reflection. "Or did you just realise it had happened when no one came here anymore?"

"I saw it coming. It was unavoidable, especially after the raid by the people from the North. They made off with things from the City treasury and everyone got frightened. The last traveller to pass through told me what had happened and said he wouldn't venture out anymore, not with things like that going on. Better to stay at home and enjoy himself. After that, nothing. Until one of the white hinds told me about the King's decree and then I knew my fate."

"What about the Lords?" Drian asked. "Are they still out there on the other side of the desert?"

"Who knows? I've no proof either way. It's been so long now, so many hundreds of years, I've lost count. There's no way of knowing if their island towers are still moored up there or if they haven't moved them off somewhere else."

"But do you think those we hear talked of today as the 'Hill-People' are in fact the Lords of Creation from so long ago?"

"Perhaps," said the old man, nodding his head. "If that is how you speak of them these days. But what does a name mean any more? Lords, Hill-People, Sky-People... But now you mention it, I do seem to remember someone who called them that..."

"Who?" Gorin asked at once.

"The young man," said Claedon, screwing up his wrinkled face as he recalled the incident. "Sure of it he was. And he wanted to know the way to go. I didn't understand him really, he was in such a terrible hurry."

"How long ago would that be?"

"Oh, I couldn't tell you," said the old man, showing his complete disregard for the measurement of time. "Long, long after they closed the gates, that I do know. He wasn't like the old adventurers who used to come through here either - much more assured than they ever were.

"Strangely enough, he was accompanied by a white hind as well." He cast a sidelong glance at Ecinlorne who was still in a far corner of the room, quietly observing everything. "Actually, now I think, it can't really have been very long ago. Maybe this season…"

"Did he tell you his name?" was Gorin's next question.

"No, not so I can remember. Didn't stay long, only for a meal and then he went on through the Gate and into the Forest. Can't say he paid much attention to a poor old man - not like you have.

"He only wanted to know the way through to the desert and on to where his 'Hill-People' live. Perhaps they really are

the Lords... Perhaps they did send for him, like he said... Or perhaps he was demented. I couldn't tell..."

From everything Claedon had said, Gorin was certain the lone traveller had indeed been Esperon on his way out of the Garden searching for the source of his dreams. There also seemed little doubt that the Hill-People of his visions were indeed descendants of the legendary Lords of Creation - making his own quest to reach their distant home even more intriguing.

Having discovered so much, he began to feel a certain impatience growing within him, a desire to be through with the hazardous part of the journey so he could at last come into this land of new discoveries.

Gorin felt great compassion for Claedon, whose enthusiasm for the burgeoning Golden City civilisation had left him trapped in the confines of a single lifetime; instead of enjoying the cycle of rebirth, rediscovery and reunion like everyone else. He watched the old, old man stand up, go over and poke the fire again before crossing the room to where the white hind was sitting on the floor. As he approached, she inclined her head, the antler-horn catching the firelight for a moment as she looked towards him with understanding in her limpid, dark brown eyes. Claedon reached out and stroked her pure white, silken mane.

"Some friends stand by me though, don't they Ecinlorne?" he muttered. "You at least come and see me; you know my story. What it was like being the guide of the Heroes, giving courage to dragon-slayers and promising bottled moonlight to the lovesick maidens searching for their princes. I'm lucky someone understands. Or I'd think myself as crazy as that last one..."

Claedon then lowered his hand, went over to the bed and lay down, wishing Drian and Gorin a barely audible "Good night". A moment later, he turned over to face the wall and instantly fell asleep.

The two young men watched him silently for a moment before Drian suggested they too should perhaps get some rest. Gorin felt tired as well by now, but was really far too excited to sleep. All he wanted was to be up and travelling with the new day, still several hours away. However, his companion did not share the same eagerness and was quite content to lie down and close his eyes.

Cries in the night

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 853 - 881

At the very moment Gorin's head touched the soft pile of straw, a piercing scream sounded from somewhere outside. He leapt to his feet and Drian sat bolt upright, wide awake in an instant.

"What was that?"

"I don't know," answered Gorin. "It was like someone screaming outside the house. But I can't imagine who it could be… "

The scream came again, nearer this time, rending the air with an agonised cry for help. This time it could be clearly distinguished as the voice of a young woman wailing in distress, as desperate and harrowing as if she were undergoing some frightful torture.

"It's a girl," said Drian. "But I thought nobody ever came here any more."

"Perhaps it's one of the forest creatures," suggested Gorin, thinking for a moment of the Harelops, although he could not

imagine any of them venturing so close to the frontiers of the Paradise Garden.

The cry came once more, quieter and more desperate, but sounding as if it were just on the other side of the door. This time they could not mistake the young maiden's pitiful appeal for mercy, uttered between deep, sobbing gasps of breath - as if she barely had the strength to call again.

"Well, whoever it is we must go and help," said Drian, springing to his feet and running to the door. As he went, Ecinlorne raised her head to see what was happening, but made no move to help or prevent Gorin and Drian from going outside. Meanwhile, old Claedon slept on, apparently oblivious to all the commotion.

In a moment, Drian had the door open, just as another doleful wail came through the darkness, this time from the trees some way to their left. He ran towards them and Gorin was about to follow when he sensed something was wrong. He called out to Drian to come back, suddenly realising in which direction the cry was leading them.

Although his own shouted warning was nowhere near as loud as the girl's screaming in the forest had been, it roused the old Guardian at once. He came blundering across the room, rubbing the drowsiness from his eyes and asking what all the fuss was about. As soon as he saw the open door, he straightened up and gaped in disbelief.

"Who opened the door?" he asked. "Who's out there?"

"Drian," replied Gorin, tersely. "We heard a cry and went out to see who it was."

"Oh no," said the old man, a look of horror on his wrinkled face. "You mean he's gone out there because of that? To find who was screaming?"

"Yes, I tried to call him back at the last moment because, I don't know exactly, but it came from those trees and I wanted to warn him to be careful."

"Hah," exclaimed Claedon, cynically. "You know what there is over there?"

"Well, it's towards the other side..." said Gorin, a growing fear stealing over him, all the more disconcerting now as the silence after the last cry became more and more prolonged.

"It is indeed. Beyond those trees lies the border between the Paradise Garden and the Forest of Dissemblance. Once across it nothing can be taken at face value. Nothing. Especially the cry of a maiden in distress."

Gorin let out a gasp of fear and made to go towards the trees into which Drian had disappeared, but the old man held onto his arm. "Don't be a fool," he said. "You won't be able to do anything now. He was nowhere near the gate onto the safe path. He's gone."

At these words, another sound came through the night air from the other side of the trees, but this time it was not a wail of distress or anguish. It was instead the sound of laughter, deep rolling laughter echoing through the branches of the trees and rumbling on like distant thunder. It sent a shiver through Gorin's bones and he turned away in a cold sweat of terror at the unspeakable evil that seemed to lie behind the broken silence. The old man kept hold of his arm and ushered him back into the house, closing the door firmly behind them. As he did so, the sound of the malevolent laughter stopped abruptly.

"I should have warned you," he said, "but an old man forgets. It's their favourite trick. The scream, the cry for help. You go out after it, and before you know where you are you've wandered onto the other side and then..." He left the rest

unsaid, but Gorin could well imagine that whatever had befallen Drian had not been very pleasant.

"You mean, he's really... lost?" he asked haltingly.

"Absolutely," said Claedon, with a tone of finality in his voice. "Wandering into the Forest at night, unwarned, delivers you into the power of the most malign forces, bent upon destroying all that comes within their clutches. I'm afraid you will never see your friend again."

"That can't be true. Only a moment... "

"You can do nothing, young man. He no longer exists, and might as well never have been. The Forest absorbs all those who stray into it as he did. In a moment it saps their vitality and their spirit, using them to serve the overriding, unevolved intelligence out there. I'm sorry."

Gorin felt another shiver run through him and as it did so, he looked towards Ecinlorne who had observed the passage of all these events with apparent disinterest.

"Why didn't you warn us?" he asked. "You knew... Couldn't you have come and stopped us?"

There was of course no audible reply from the white hind, sitting there in the firelight as she returned Gorin's gaze. He did however become aware of her thoughts flowing into him, clarifying much of what had just taken place. They explained how she had indeed prevented Gorin from going any further. Instead of also allowing him to follow his instincts and rush towards the cries of distress, she had held him back. But not Drian, and this was something Gorin found difficult to grasp.

Ecinlorne then explained that the Golden City people had a certain path to tread, that they had made a choice, long ago, when their home was created for them and given into their keeping. "It was a conscious decision and their own to make,"

ran the stream of thought. "Two paths were offered to them by the Lords. And they made their choice.

"They were fathers to those who lived there then and are related by blood and successive lives to those who live there now. It was a choice for the Lords as well. They had to choose between being true to the right they had given their children – or doing what they considered best for them. Only this would have meant imposing their superior knowledge and authority; and this was not their goal. Thus, the choice was made on both sides.

"And when it was made, the Lords rose up on their mighty riders, coursing across the forests and fields to their towers above the hills. They were now bound never to further intervene in the growth of those they had nurtured so dearly. Coming from beyond they returned to beyond, in their children's eyes, allowing them to evolve in their own way, through trial and through error. It was as their free will had decided. And it was respected."

"But Ecinlorne," protested Gorin, "how does this affect Drian and the way you let him go out there but held me back? I don't understand."

Again the thoughts, this time incisive and unequivocal in their pronouncement of what lay behind the night's events. "You Gorin, are chosen," they said, resounding inside his head as if shouted in a cavern. "You have a mission to end this era of ignorant self-driven purpose and prevent the downfall of the Lords' creation. Furthermore, you are not a Zandernation and so not subject to the same restrictions and obligations. You, I could help, but Drian, I could not. His people chose to follow their own path, and until events have come to pass that free them from their yoke, they cannot be aided by any outside

agent. They have existed in believing they are all-powerful and self-sufficient with the right to choose.

"Drian chose to go out there into the Forest tonight. It was his choice, made of his own free will. I was powerless to help him."

With that, Ecinlorne turned away and stepped back towards the fire. Claedon shrugged his shoulders and returned to his bed. He certainly couldn't do anything now; yes, he ought to have warned them, but even so, they knew where they were, or should have known. In any case, they would be leaving him in the morning, so in the end it all came to the same. More years would parade by, another century of solitude perhaps... With such a bleak prospect, all he could do was seek out sleep, hoping he might be able to capture something of his distant youth in the ephemeral world of dreams.

Gorin stayed in the middle of the room, not knowing what to say or think. This was certainly a rude awakening after experiencing the gentle, endless pleasures offered by the world of Paradise. But it did add a new dimension to his slowly expanding comprehension. It was also a demonstration of the urgent need for the heir to the throne he was seeking. For it would indeed take the independent character of an Esperon to reverse the relentless decay undermining the superficial fabric of the Golden City. Particularly now, with an exterior threat looming ominously that had little chance of being thwarted unless some radical changes were made.

Following the dramatic events of the evening, Gorin tried to collect his thoughts and focus on what would happen now. It of course meant he would be continuing alone, with Ecinlorne, to the home of the Hill-People, or the Lords, with their, what was it...? Towers and riders? He clearly had a wealth of unusual adventures ahead of him, but at least he

could understand a little better why he, an outsider, had to follow in the footsteps of Esperon and fulfil the prophecies.

He was of course deeply saddened by the sudden loss of Drian, but in a brutal way, it had taught him something important about his mission. He only hoped he would be able to atone for that terrible event with his own success.

Gorin stayed gazing into the fire, mulling all these thoughts over in his mind until the first light of dawn began to steal its way through the high windows onto the ceiling above.

VII – Martha's "Dreaming Diary" - I

PAST LIFE MEMORY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
SEEKS TESTIMONIALS
FOR MAJOR RESEARCH PROGRAM

Have you experienced past life regression?
Do you have recurring memories of distant former lives?
Dating back to an ancient civilization in Antarctica?

We would like to hear from you !

In association with the **Dickensen Archaeological and Geophysical Research Institute** in Melbourne, Australia, the **PLMRI** is conducting a research program into past life memories of subjects having recall of **several successive lives** during an "idyllic" pre-glacial civilization in Antarctica involving:

- An advanced closed city culture "dedicated to celebration"
- An "all-at-once" ability to **recall every previous life** in this context during each successive existence
- The progressive decline of this utopian civilization
- A savage attack from outside forces and an apocalyptic battle

Learn more at: www.zandernatis.com/past-life-memories

The Past Life Memory Research Institute
Lucerne, Switzerland
Contact Dr. H K Kittner: plmri1@zandernatis.com

The Institute is located in the former residence of Dr. Lenz Streicher, the "secret" pioneer of PLR in Switzerland.

Following publication of the advertisement issued by the PLMRI (Past Life Memory Research Institute)[34], several Past Life Regression therapists and individuals sent in letters and e-mails. These described sessions with patients or personal experiences suggesting some connection with an unidentified advanced civilization existing in the distant past.

Apart from the two messages quoted in "Pre-Destination" Chapter XVII, the remainder were largely anecdotal and difficult to corroborate as they related to single incidents and/or lacked specific details that could definitively link them to pre-glacial Antarctica and Zandernatis.

One e-mail did however stand out from the rest. It came from an American woman, Martha Calbrow aged 65, who was born in Illinois, but now lives in Dunedin, on New Zealand's South Island. Her initial message, addressed to Dr Kittner at the PLMRI read as follows:

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[34] The advertisement was posted on Facebook and Google+ groups focusing on "Reincarnation", "Past Life Regression" and "Ancient Civilizations" shortly before the publication of "Pre-Destination" in April 2014. The Institute is located in Lucerne, Switzerland and also has a research centre in Puerto Arenas, Patagonia, Chile.

Dunedin, New Zealand, 21 May 2014

Dear Dr. Kittner,

I have just seen your advertisement for people undergoing regression therapy who have accessed memories of previous lives taking place in an advanced civilization on Antarctica, before it became icebound.

I have never had any regression, but I have had a whole series of very vivid dreams, which might be useful for your research.

These began in 1980 when I was in my early teens and living with my folks at our house in Forsyth, just north of Decatur, Illinois.

I was in bed at the time, sleeping. I suddenly woke up and felt a cold wind on my face. That seemed odd because it was July and we were having a heatwave. Then, before I could work anything out, I felt myself being sucked up in a kind of vortex – leaving my body behind! That really scared me, because I thought it must mean I was dead.

Everything went very fast and in no time at all I was outside the Earth, floating in space. Far enough away to see the whole globe, in fact.

I soon forgot about being scared, or even worrying about being dead because everything was so beautiful. The planet so blue.

Then something really weird happened. I could actually see the world turning! And as I watched, it started to spin faster and faster. I saw the shadow of night creeping and then

racing across the surface of the Earth as it speeded up. It made me giddy to watch it.

But something wasn't quite right. Normally speaking, the Earth should have been spinning from west to east. Only for me, suspended in space, it was spinning in the opposite direction !!! The sun was rising in the west and setting in the east. And it was going so fast it soon became a blur as the land masses below me swept by at incredible speed.

What was going on?

A moment later, I realised that I, too, was beginning to move. Also travelling from east to west, as if I was trying to catch up with the spinning Earth. That seemed impossible, judging by the speed it had reached by now.

I soon realized that in this state, nothing was "impossible". As I was beginning to move so fast that the rotating Earth down below appeared to be slowing down!

The more I accelerated, the more the globe's relative speed dropped, and it wasn't long before I was hovering over a single spot high above the Earth's surface. The rapid succession of night and day seemed to accelerate even further then, creating a flickering image like in an old movie. But my relative position remained the same.
I tried to figure out exactly which part of the Earth I was hovering over. It was clearly an ocean. But which one?

Away to my left (westwards) I could make out a long length of coastline with a broad expanse of sea directly beneath me. And if I looked at

the lowest extremity of the world below I could see an edge of brilliant whiteness.

This was obviously the southern ice cap!

It was an incredible sight. Intensely beautiful. Awe-inspiring. I felt like a God, watching Creation as it happened.

Something new caught my eye then. Something was changing down there!

I looked harder – and there was no mistaking it. The huge landmass in the west was becoming more distinct. It was MOVING!

As I watched, totally unable to process what was happening, I saw the land from the west advancing into the blue of the ocean. Moments later, the southern, icebound mass started moving as well, growing in size as it advanced into the deep blue ocean directly below.

The next phase of this planetary transformation was even more wonderful as I saw it played out in front of me.

For as the huge continent below edged further and further northwards, so its edges began to disintegrate into shrinking islands of ice. In what, to me, was barely a matter of minutes, I watched that huge, roughly circular body of frozen land undergo an incredible metamorphosis.

All the ice around its edges finally dissolved, while at the same time rocky peaks began to appear everywhere inland, piercing the ice and shaking off their millennia-long winter mantle.

Within no apparent time at all, the continent was entirely free of its snowfields, glaciers and subzero temperatures. To be replaced by increasingly lush vegetation the further north it drifted.

It took me a few moments to fully understand what I was seeing, but had no time to organize my thoughts as yet another development grabbed all my attention.

I no longer seemed to be hovering endlessly in the same place watching everything below me unfold. I was now starting to descend, the vast mass of the southern continent below getting bigger and bigger as I plunged towards it.

Just as I closed my eyes and braced myself for the tremendous impact, I suddenly seemed to float for an instant, and then with a jolt I felt myself back in my body.

I opened my eyes, and there I was, in my bed, safe and sound. Although I knew after the experiences of the past few minutes – or hours – or maybe centuries - my life was never going to be quite the same again.

In the ensuing months and years, I frequently returned to that great continent freed of its ice before my eyes. As the dreams became more vivid and more regular, I started recording them in my "Dreaming Diary".
I enclose a few samples of my Diary entries.
I trust you will find them interesting.

Yours sincerely,

Martha Calbrow

The mail was accompanied by several scanned pages of extremely neat handwriting, carefully logging some of Martha's remarkable visions of events on the Antarctic continent, long before it gradually slid southwards due to continental drift and became the frozen wasteland it is today.

Excerpts from Martha's "Dreaming Diary" can be read in Chapter XI.

VIII – The Forest of Dissemblance

"The threshold of order, on the line
between perfection and rejection."

From "A treatise on Paradise",
discourse given by Magres in 297.

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 882 - 996

The ghostly fingers of daylight became stronger in the room, pushing the fire-lit shadows further and further into the recesses of the chamber until they disappeared altogether. With the coming of morning, Claedon rose from his bed and went over to the fire, raking the ashes and then coughing from the smoke curling up from the still-glowing wood. Gorin rose to his feet as well and stretched himself.

Although he had hardly rested at all during the night he did not, at that moment, feel particularly tired. He was still too preoccupied with the tragic loss of Drian to worry much about himself. He did feel rather hungry though, and pleased to see the old man was preparing breakfast. Not a very appetising one, but at least it was food, and Gorin ate it thankfully.

Ecinlorne also began to stir, but made no attempt to communicate with the Guardian and his guest. They ate in silence, as if neither of them wished to speak for fear of having to evoke the events of the previous night. This was certainly true for Gorin, who had been obsessed by them throughout the long hours of darkness. He had hoped the dawn of a new day

might bring some reassurance, but in fact he now felt more uneasy than ever at the prospect of having to make his own way through the Forest of Dissemblance.

It was not concern for the young man or the loss of his companion that prevented Claedon from speaking, however. For him, it was a question of habit. So used to having his breakfast alone, remaining silent was just a matter of course. He had said all he wanted to say the previous evening and besides, his guests were leaving soon, so he should get used to being on his own again.

Once they had finished eating, Ecinlorne came forward from the corner where she had spent the night, signalling Gorin to prepare himself for their departure. He dutifully picked up his bag and turned to thank Claedon for his hospitality.

"It's nothing," murmured the old man. "It's what I'm here for and if it weren't for that I wouldn't be at all. I do what I should, when I get the chance. And now I'll probably have to wait another hundred years until someone else decides they want to pass this way."

"Perhaps," said Gorin. "But perhaps not. It depends on what we find when we reach the Hills."

"Oh, I've heard that sort of thing too often before. There's always plenty of people who can make promises, but not many who can keep them."

With these words, the old Guardian ushered them to the door and bid them good day, in a somewhat surly and downcast fashion. Ecinlorne went out first, with Gorin following closely behind. The white hind turned, then gracefully bowed her head to Claedon who smiled weakly in reply.

"Alright Ecinlorne," he said, "at least I'm sure of meeting you again one of these days. Take care, and you Gorin, take

care as well. Be careful in the Forest; you've already seen what it can do. Trust nothing you see or hear and always keep to the path. It's the only way you can be sure of not ending up like your friend Drian."

Having said his last words of warning, the old man turned abruptly and went back into his strange house, shutting the door behind him with a heavy thud that resonated throughout the trees of the forest. Ecinlorne and her charge were now alone.

In that instant, Gorin became acutely aware of how near they were to the Forest of Dissemblance, just beyond the clump of trees Drian had entered the night before. Meanwhile, his guide was setting off along a little trodden path leading towards a clearing some fifty measures from Claedon's house. Gorin quickly followed her along it until, just ahead of them, he caught sight of the frontier itself.

The Gate of the Paradise Garden! Was that really it? Gorin blinked and looked again, for it seemed so humble, considering the two vastly different worlds it divided. Just a simple, rustic wicket, flanked on either side by two tall flowering trees, reaching considerably higher than anything else in the vicinity.

As they approached, Gorin had one last look around him at the familiar flowers and plants of the Garden, wondering what he might come across on the other side of this unprepossessing threshold. Would there be any apparent difference at all? Or would it all seem deceptively the same? Well, he was going to find out very soon.

Ecinlorne directed her steps towards the gate and Gorin followed a few paces behind, anxiously looking ahead for any sign that might betray the presence of potential danger. Yet there was nothing apparently unusual or out of place. Only the

trees, the bushes, the grasses and the pink blossoms on the flowering branches going up five or six measures into the air.

A moment later, they were standing in front of the fateful portal, which the hind invited Gorin to open. He hesitated for a second, then put his hand on the old wooden frame and drew it towards him. It opened without a sound and the way was clear, leading straight ahead into the gloomy depths of the Dissembling Forest.

The other side

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 997 - 1113

As they crossed the Garden's frontier, Gorin felt a strong wind come blowing through the trees; a wind, as it were, of welcome. Except that this welcome was bitingly cold, carrying with it dust and dead leaves which swirled around his head for several minutes before falling to the ground. It unnerved him a little, but his guide was quite unperturbed and carried on as if nothing had happened, although she was obviously paying much more attention to Gorin and where he was. She kept looking behind her to make certain he was still following before advancing at a measured pace, easy for him to maintain.

Apart from the sudden gust of cold wind, there was no immediate sign, as far as Gorin could see, of any change in their surroundings now they had crossed into the Forest of Dissemblance. There was still nothing obviously sinister, although he could already identify several plants he had not seen growing in the Garden. These were mostly tall, coarse ferns with long trailing leaves overhanging the path that brushed against the travellers' faces when they passed.

Penetrating deeper into the Forest, Gorin noticed gradual changes in the trees themselves, indicating the presence of an

entirely different prevailing influence. In the Garden, they had been slender and graceful, their trunks and branches smooth and unblemished. Whereas here, they were old and gnarled, twisted out of their natural form by unknown forces. Some of them looked so menacing, Gorin was half afraid they might tear themselves out of the ground and come after him at any moment! However, despite the increasing profusion of these tortured trees and increasingly invasive undergrowth, there was no tangible reason to fear anything. For the moment.

After about an hour of uneventful journeying, Gorin began to feel a little more confident, learning to accept the weird growths on every side and even developing a keen interest in some of them. He became lulled into thinking that as he had so far encountered no immediate danger, tales about the Forest were probably grossly exaggerated. Somehow, he even forgot what happened to Drian. He then fell to examining the plant life surrounding him more closely and made the mistake of dropping too far behind Ecinlorne to scrutinise one particularly eye-catching specimen.

He had never seen such a strange life-form before, certainly not in the Garden and not up to this point either in his travels through the Forest. It had a huge central stem ending in a kind of angry red bud. From the stem hung a series of leaves, larger at ground level and smaller nearer the top. Gorin was particularly intrigued by the way these long, pale growths appeared to be completely lifeless, drooping down with the lower ones trailing on the ground.

As he studied them, he became aware of a beautiful perfume beginning to steal around him. It was as fresh as the smell of earth after rain and as sweet as dew-damp roses. An extravagant spectacle then accompanied the heady fragrance as the bloated bud crowning the stem slowly began to open. As it

did so, the sweet scent grew stronger, hypnotising Gorin with its subtle, aromatic magnetism. He wanted to find its source, to breathe it deeply into his lungs and steep himself in its overpowering persuasion.

He stepped closer to the plant, and as he did so, the bud opened more to reveal the flower it contained in all its majesty. The scent became intoxicating and he was even more anxious to go to the heart of it. He stepped forward again, touching one of the deathly white leaves with his foot in the process. The beauty of the flower and its allure excited him so much he failed to observe how the leaf he brushed against had perceptively stiffened. Neither did he notice the other leaves reacting similarly, some of them even flushing with the angry redness as they slowly emerged from dormancy.

The next thing Gorin became aware of was something catching in the back of his tunic, pulling sharply and hurting his throat. He was then jerked upwards and hoisted high in the air. Just in time to see all the plant's apparently "inert" leaves reach out in a coordinated, whip-lash motion centred on the spot where he had been standing just moments before!

Gorin shuddered at his close escape and in the same instant felt himself being swung clear and down again, well beyond the reach of the plant's snatching tentacles. As his feet found the safety of the ground beneath them, he realised he had Ecinlorne to thank for his timely rescue.

She had come up from behind, stuck her long horn under the collar of his tunic and lifted him out of danger. Once the plant realised it had been cheated of its prey, it let out a scream that was terrifying to hear. It sounded almost human and so loud, Gorin had to cover his ears. The huge flower abruptly closed, the sweet perfume being replaced by a foul, sickly

stench as repellent as the fragrance had been enticing, while the leaves returned to their former lifeless state.

Gorin was greatly shaken by the adventure with the plant and full of apologies for having lagged behind when he should have kept up with Ecinlorne. His guide did not reproach him however, probably because she considered the frightening experience to be a valuable object lesson in its own right. Nonetheless, because of this incident, she did suggest it would perhaps be better for him to continue the journey on her back. This would speed up their progress, prevent them from becoming separated again and keep Gorin beyond the reach of any other creeping things that might try to ensnare him.

He welcomed this idea gratefully and was soon in place, feeling much more secure astride the powerful creature than he would have thought. It was even quite pleasant to go trotting through the Forest on such a mount and he began enjoying the ride, despite the unreal nature of his surroundings.

The Seattle Times

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Not a unicorn, but Italian deer has a uni-horn

A deer with a single horn in the center of its head - much like the mythical unicorn - has been spotted in Italy's Prato Nature Reserve, near Florence.

"This is fantasy becoming reality," said Gilberto Tozzi, the Reserve's Director. "The unicorn has always been a mythological animal."

The male Roe Deer, born in captivity in 2007, is believed to have been born with a genetic flaw; his twin has two horns.

Calling it the first time he has seen such a case, Tozzi said such anomalies among deer may have inspired the myth of the unicorn.

According to experts, single-horned deer are rare but not unheard of - but even more unusual is the central positioning of the horn.

They went on for some time without any further incidents, although Gorin found riding did mean having to cope with the overhanging ferns constantly brushing against his face. All he could do was keep his head low and hold on to Ecinlorne's mane as tightly as possible.

They eventually came into a part of the Forest where the ferns were not growing so profusely and Gorin was able to straighten up and look around once more. There were many more of the old, gnarled trees here, as well as several of the hideous plants with the potential to ensnare him. There were also broad expanses of thick, spiky grass that would have made the going very difficult had he still been on foot. Some of its shoots hanging over the sides of the path looked capable of inflicting some very unpleasant pricks on the unwary.

Flying dogs

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1114 - 1127

As he was examining the diversity of plant life from the vantage point of Ecinlorne's back, Gorin noticed something moving through the undergrowth, not more than thirty measures distant. Something black, which bounded from one clump of shrubs to the next and then, much to his surprise, took to the air. He made it out to be a huge, long-snouted, dog-like creature with broad wings, enabling it to glide through the air for several seconds before it landed again to resume its pursuit on the ground. As it came towards them, it emitted snarling barks of blood-curdling ferocity, leaving little doubt as to its intentions. Furthermore, it was not alone.

Looking up into the twisted trees ahead, Gorin could see many more such flying dogs, crouching motionless with wings outstretched, ready to launch themselves into the air at the most opportune moment. As soon as the white hind and her

rider came into view, the hideous creatures opened their slavering jaws and let out a chorus of angry, rasping snarls. It was a terrifying sound. Once it had died away, the evil creatures leapt from their branches and swept down towards the path, their raucous yelps cutting through the air like the cracking of a thousand whips.

Despite this threat, Ecinlorne continued along the path, never faltering for an instant. Before long, Gorin realised that although the dogs swooped low overhead and to either side of them, they did not in fact touch the travellers. The noise was deafening, the passage of their huge furry wings created powerful currents of air and all the time they seemed bent upon tearing into both hind and rider with their sharp curved teeth. Yet at the last moment, they always veered away to land among the grasses and shrubs, then running ahead and scrambling up another tree to gain enough height for a renewed flying offensive.

The aerial attack lasted for perhaps half an hour, always without any physical harm coming to their quarry and stopping as suddenly as it had begun. The dogs had apparently realised the travellers could not be deflected from their path – and would remain invulnerable as long as they kept to it.

With a final spine-chilling howl of frustration, the fearsome pack ran away into the depths of the Forest, leaving an uncanny silence behind them. Once they had gone, Gorin breathed more easily again. Even so, despite the evident safety of the path and the protection it afforded, he became even more watchful as their journey continued. For he now knew fresh threats to their safe passage were liable to come upon them at any time, from any quarter and in any form!

No more than half an hour later, a new sound gradually emerged from the deathly silence left by the departing dogs. As

Ecinlorne and her charge pursued their journey, it gradually became louder until at last they could clearly identify the sound of water running swiftly through the trees up ahead. They followed a gentle curve in the path and then saw it glinting just in front of them, the surface dancing in the dazzling brilliance of the sunlight. As they drew closer, Gorin saw it was a babbling stream, crossing their path in a narrow channel before flowing into a deep, placid pool some ten measures wide on the opposite side.

The watering hole

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1128 - 1155

As it was the first fresh water they had encountered since leaving Zandernatis, Ecinlorne indicated this would be an ideal opportunity for Gorin to refill his water bottles. He dismounted and unslung them from his shoulders before advancing to the edge of the channel, confirming he would be able to replenish his supplies without straying from the path.

"Oh look," said a clear, high voice, not very far away from him to the left. "There's a man over there."

Gorin leapt to his feet, startled by the unexpected intrusion. He looked round and saw a group of young girls on the far side of the pool. There were five of them, and all were identical, with blue eyes and long blonde hair that cascaded over their naked bodies in golden waves.

"Hello man," cried another of them.

"What are you doing?" called a third.

He did not answer. Instead, he knelt down once more and occupied himself with the water bottles, trying to pretend he had not heard or seen them, even though they were less than ten measures away. Ignoring them proved to be useless however.

With high-pitched squeals of glee, they joined hands to form a circle and began dancing round and round, speeding up as they went. The wind generated by their careering movement took their hair and lifted it away from their young, sensuous bodies. It was such an appealing and exciting sight that Gorin could not prevent himself from watching their apparently innocent fun.

Suddenly, they all stopped dancing abruptly, returning his gaze with their unblinking, ice blue eyes – making it impossible for him to refuse acknowledging their presence any longer.

"We called to you," said one of them, pouting in mock displeasure, "and you didn't answer."

"I'm sorry," replied Gorin, "but I was busy." He showed them the two water bottles, "Filling these."

"Why do you want to do that?"

"Because I need to. I must have water for my journey."

"Oh, are you going on a journey?" said another of the girls. "That would be nice, wouldn't it? To go on a journey. Where are you going?"

"Through the Forest," said Gorin, careful not to give any more away. "And I must hurry because I haven't much time."

"Not much time! What does that mean?" asked the first girl. "There is always plenty of time. We have all the time in the world, so what's the point of hurrying? You can do your journey tomorrow. Or the day after. Come and dance with us."

"Yes, come and dance, come and dance," chorused all the other girls, jumping up and down and holding out their hands to him. They reminded Gorin irresistibly of Laztana and the water nymphs, and yet there was something about them very far removed from the Garden creatures' simplicity and lack of guile. Perhaps it was the strange, half-mocking undertone to

their voices or the disturbing way they all resembled each other; he could not tell.

The girls tried to make their entreaties even more compelling by performing a series of complex and alluring dance movements for him. These were punctuated by laughter and cries of delight that intensified as their contortions became more and more provocative. They then took flowers from a nearby bush and kissed them, threw them to each other and finally tossed them across the pool, where they landed not far from Gorin's feet. He stepped back, wary of what might happen if he even touched the fallen blooms. Seeing this, the girls immediately stopped their temptation dance and tried to engage him with words once more.

"Do come and join us," said the first. "It isn't far across the pool and we could help you. Look over there." She pointed to a grove of trees next to the water. "We could look after you there, help you rest. Then you can go on with your important journey tomorrow if you still want to."

Their invitation reminded Gorin even more of Laztana and her companions. He had the uncanny feeling that in thinking of the nymphs, he was in some way making these girls resemble them even more. There was a moment's pause as he tried to formulate his inevitable refusal.

"Nothing can be as important as all that," the girl insisted, sensing his hesitation as she blended her laughter with the music of the babbling water. "We can make you happy here, you see. Think of it - five girls for only one man. What heaven that could be."

She laughed again and the others with her, but Gorin tried to get a grip on himself, betraying no emotion as he steadfastly refused to move in their direction. Whereupon the second girl tried to win him over with a voice even more entreating than

the first, her eyes aflame with desire and the beckoning of her graceful hands promising all manner of tenderness and unimagined pleasures.

"You can go on tomorrow, can't you?" she said. "We do everything tomorrow here. Tomorrow is a day full of such promise, full of so many wonders. For us it is the most important day in our lives because we always have so much to look forward to. Come and join us. Then you can be part of our tomorrows as well. Won't you?"

Upon hearing this last proposition, Gorin stepped back, as the mention of so many "tomorrows" broke their thin veil of temptation and he remembered his purpose. A mission he could not put off, not even for one of their precious "tomorrows".

As he retreated, he heard a noise behind him, turned and saw his guide standing there. He then realised she had been watching everything and would no doubt have come to his rescue if he had weakened. Only there had been no need. He had resisted the Forest's treachery on his own this time! Feeling rather proud of himself, Gorin was about to turn back once more to the girls with his regrets, when he heard a cackling guffaw, quite unlike the youthful happiness of a moment ago.

He spun round in time to see the withered forms of five old women in tattered black rags hopping up and down stiffly as their long white hair fell away, leaving them completely bald in a matter of seconds. Then, as he watched, the skin seemed to tighten across their gaunt, emaciated frames, suddenly snapping with a sound like brittle twigs crushed underfoot. At once, they fell to the ground in a grotesque heap, their bones splintering as they knocked against each other to leave nothing remotely recognisable as human remains. A sudden gust of wind passed over the place where they had been, carrying

everything with it, transforming what was left into a formless mass of broken branches and dead leaves.

Gorin felt a cold shiver run through him again, just as he had experienced after the encounter with the tentacular plant. He felt even more unnerved by the spectacle he had just witnessed, for it certainly demonstrated nothing here could be taken at face value. Behind all normal appearances there was inevitably something waiting and watching, ready to ensnare the gullible with its diabolical tricks.

It was at least comforting to observe that the path's inviolability did indeed appear to be respected at all times. The plant had needed to entice him away from it before daring to attack, and the flying dogs had not harmed the travellers as long as they did not stray from their route. The same applied to the maidens, or witches or whatever they were, for they could not harm him as long as he resisted their temptation and stood his ground.

It made him all the more resolute to keep close to his guide and to the path during their passage through this perilous country. Keeping that determination uppermost in his mind, Gorin rode on with Ecinlorne among the wild and tangled growths of the Forest of Dissemblance, wondering what the next test of his courage and fortitude might be.

Less than one hour later, the path brought the unihorn and her rider to a small clearing in the middle of a particularly dense clump of trees. The hind came to a halt and Gorin looked around to see if there were any special reason for stopping there. The only distinctive feature, as far as he could see, was that it looked somewhat less forbidding than the rest of the Forest they had travelled through so far. For example, the thickly growing trees around the clearing were less gnarled than most of the others they had seen. The undergrowth too,

although very abundant, also seemed less wild and threatening than elsewhere.

Following Ecinlorne's indication, Gorin dismounted, but stayed alert, for even if this grove did seem less ominous than the rest of the Forest, he was taking no chances. They stayed there for about half an hour, giving him time to get some refreshment from the supplies in his pack.

As he was eating, he felt inside his tunic to make sure the seal from King Iraeus was still there. He was about to pull it out and look at it again when Ecinlorne reprovingly reminded him to keep it hidden. With some reluctance he did as he was told, realising he had to follow directives. The dangers about him were too menacing to trifle with, and he was thankful to have such a wise and watchful guide taking care of him.

The afternoon progressed with no incidents to cause any great concern. Once they were on the move again, Gorin found himself daring to hope all the dangers associated with this part of the journey were now behind them; that they would finally reach the edge of the Forest without any further temptations or deceptions.

Three hours passed uneventfully, with only the occasional cry of some faraway animal or bird breaking the comparative silence. From time to time, Gorin did have the uncomfortable feeling they were being followed, but there was never any indication as to who – or what – might be watching them.

Running stones

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1156 - 1184

Suddenly, they heard a new cry in the distance, coming from behind and somewhere to the left. At first Gorin thought it was just another bird call. Except that this was repeated many times, over and over, in a way quite unlike any sounds they

had heard before. He looked in the direction the cry appeared to be coming from, but could see no indication of its origins.

The cry came once more, now sounding closer. When Gorin looked round again, he fancied he could make out the shape of something running through the trees behind them. As it gradually drew nearer, Ecinlorne quickened her pace, making it more difficult for Gorin to identify the creature following them. Whatever it was, clearly possessed remarkable agility, for it continued to gain ground despite the hind's quickening canter.

Seconds later, he had the impression the call was making some sense. It sounded like a human voice shouting, "Hey, wait, wait, wait..." again and again like a chant, keeping time with the rhythm of the hind's cloven hooves. As the voice grew more distinct, Ecinlorne increased her speed even more, making Gorin understand she would prefer not to meet whoever was challenging them.

He turned again to look back in the direction of the constant cries and this time could clearly see the figure of a man running behind them. He was not far away from the path now and near enough for something about him to seem very familiar. Ecinlorne was by this time going as fast as she dared along the path, but the man was still gaining on them and calling out, "Wait, wait, wait..." as he ran.

The unihorn was now practically galloping, forcing Gorin to concentrate fully on his riding, or else risk slipping from the creature's back. Nevertheless, he still managed to cast a few glances behind him from time to time; enough to see their pursuer was drawing ever closer. It was hardly possible to believe anyone could maintain such a pace for so long over rough terrain, yet he came on with no sign of fatigue.

The nagging familiarity of the figure behind them started to make Gorin feel uneasy, but he was at a loss to understand how he could possibly know anyone out here.

Then he heard his name. "Gorin, wait, wait, wait..." And he knew who it was. He turned again and recognised the lithe form of Drian, still running like a forest deer and still gaining slowly on them. But Drian had been enticed into the Forest the night before! Claedon and Ecinlorne had given him up for lost - yet here he was chasing them, and all his guide could do was try and run away!

Unless the unihorn hadn't wanted Drian to go with them. And told Claedon to declare him lost and beyond salvation as soon as he disappeared into the Forest. When in fact he hadn't been lost at all! These thoughts raced through Gorin's mind as he watched Drian drawing ever closer. It was surely cruel to make him run like that, even if it seemed so amazingly effortless. His feet were literally flying over the rough undergrowth, completely disregarding the needle-like grasses and predatory tentacular plants.

A few moments later, the pursuer had drawn level with them, running alongside the path, keeping pace with the galloping unihorn and her rider. He held out his hands and called Gorin's name again, begging him to stop. Gorin tried to tell his former companion he could not get off his mount while they were going so fast. Except the heaving movement on the creature's back was too pronounced for him to say anything as he needed all his strength and every breath to keep his seat.

Just then, another factor intervened to alter the situation. For just ahead, there was an enormous twisted and deformed tree growing right next to the path. One of its contorted branches reached down to no more than two measures above the ground. It would therefore be impossible for both Ecinlorne

and Gorin to pass beneath it together. He would have to dismount and go under the obstruction on foot. The hind was thus forced to slow down as soon as she saw the obstacle in front of them, making it easier for Drian to keep up, a smile of relief spreading over his face.

Just in front of the low branch, Ecinlorne stopped for her rider to slide to the ground. As soon as his feet touched the earth, his mind was invaded by a powerful command not to go anywhere near Drian. This faced Gorin with an agonising dilemma, for there, less than one measure away, stood the friend he had believed lost among the terrors of the Forest of Dissemblance. Yet Ecinlorne was insisting he should ignore his fellow traveller, pass under the branch, remount and continue the journey.

Drian now spoke, chasing the hind's directive out of Gorin's mind. "How glad I am to find you again," he said. "It's been terrible, you can't imagine."

He held his hands out, inviting his companion to come and support him. However, Gorin managed to keep his grip on discretion, determined not to set one foot outside the safety of the path without very careful consideration.

"What happened? he asked. "Did you find out who it was, screaming like that last night?"

"No one," replied Drian. "I just wandered through the forest, trying to keep out of the way of all the things there. But it wasn't easy. In fact it was horrible. And then in the morning, I thought I must get back on the path, catch up with you and carry on."

"Well, come and join us then. It'll be good to have your company again and good to know you weren't lost as they wanted me to believe."

Gorin stretched out his hand to Drian, but still stayed where he was, his feet firmly planted in the middle of the path. Drian smiled at him and stretched his hands out further, but received no more than an encouraging smile in return as Gorin maintained his caution without wavering. Neither of them moved for some moments. Then, without warning, a pitiful look of anguish came over Drian's face.

"I am so tired, Gorin," he said. "You must help me or I will be lost. Please Gorin. Help me."

He fell to his knees, and an expression of such suffering came upon him that for a second, Gorin forgot to be careful. He stepped forward, to the very edge of the path, taking him almost next to his friend. Drian was now sinking to the ground, repeating over and over, "Help me Gorin, help me…"

Just as he was about to go to Drian's aid and bring him safely onto the path, Ecinlorne came up and pulled Gorin back with her mouth. She then stepped forward before turning back to look at him.

He immediately realised he should have known better. All this had of course been but another of the Forest's ploys to entice him from the safety of the path. He watched as Ecinlorne bowed her head over the now prostrate and motionless form of Drian, bringing her horn slowly down until it made contact with the bare skin of his neck.

The moment it touched the recumbent form, something strange happened. Something Gorin would never, ever be able to forget. A sudden trembling motion surged through Drian's body, his limbs stiffened and his head moved to utter a cry, stifled by a transformation completed in a matter of seconds. For as he watched, Gorin saw his friend's body turn into grey stone, contracting as of its own will into a misshapen lump of rock no longer resembling a human form.

Gorin stayed staring at the rock that, moments before, had been his companion from the Golden City. He hardly noticed Ecinlorne raising her head and lifting her single antler from the stone before coming back to rejoin him in the centre of the path. When he did look at her again, it was with utter bewilderment, which his guide tried to dispel by explaining what had just happened.

"Do not be so dismayed Gorin," ran the unihorn's thoughts in his mind. "That was not Drian. You have seen it now. It was only an enchanted image sent to tempt you, just like everything else. We call these things the Running Stones. They are among the most dangerous forces in the whole of the Forest. They pursue anyone who comes along the path, and it is very difficult to escape them, as you saw. They can run as swiftly as a galloping horse. Even I had no chance against it, for the path is too rough to have risked going any faster.

"Once they are near enough, they have a way of drawing upon your memory, forming themselves into the shape of someone you know who then calls to you as the image of Drian did, enticing you to leave the path. If you were to do that, you would be as lost as Drian himself must be. Touching the vision would then turn you into one of those stones. So that you too could hunt travellers on the path and beguile them into suffering the same terrible fate."

Gorin was too shaken to speak for a moment, but he wondered why Ecinlorne had not been affected when she touched the body, or what appeared to have been the body, on the ground.

"Because, as a white unihorn, and as one of the most evolved creatures in the Paradise Garden, there is magic in my horn far stronger than any of the dark forces out here," came the reply. "We are the only creatures, apart from the Lords'

chanting Valyons, with enough power to resist the Running Stones. That is why Hexard wanted me to be your guide on this part of the journey."

With this message, Ecinlorne turned and passed underneath the branch responsible for bringing them to such an untimely halt. Urged to follow and remount, Gorin complied, but not before staring for several moments at the grey rock lying by the side of the road. It was hard to imagine it had been alive only a few minutes ago, talking, imploring, and had almost succeeded in tempting him away from the path. The sooner they were out of this treacherous Forest, the better it would be, he thought, longing for the ordered, dependable tranquillity he had experienced in the Garden.

Ecinlorne and Gorin journeyed through the rest of the afternoon with nothing else to trouble them. It was almost as if the Forest had given up its attempt to lure them from the path after the failure of the Running Stone.

In fact, Gorin only started feeling uneasy again when the light began to fail. There was no end to the Forest in sight and he did not relish the idea of a night spent in the open. For who could tell what form temptation and delusions might assume under the cover of darkness to test him still further?

Night in the Forest

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1185 - 1211

There was clearly no alternative however, and so, just before it got completely dark, they came to a halt at a point where the path widened a little as it passed through a copse of pine trees. Gorin slid down from Ecinlorne's back and found the ground was littered with dry twigs and fallen pine cones. Before long, he had managed to get a small fire going and felt somewhat more secure as its warming glow helped push back

the menacing shadows a little. Although it did cast strange, dancing shapes of its own upon the trunks of the surrounding trees.

Once Gorin had eaten from his supply of provisions and drunk some of the water collected earlier, the travellers prepared to settle down and get some rest. He was feeling totally exhausted by now, having hardly slept at all the previous night. Ecinlorne suggested she would take the first watch, allowing him to get a little sleep; an idea he found most welcome, agreeing to take his turn after the moon had risen.

It seemed like no time at all before Gorin felt the point of Ecinlorne's horn gently nudging him in the ribs. He rolled over and looked up at the white hind, her majestic form shimmering in the firelight as the white brilliance of the moon began to show through the trelliswork of branches behind her. She had nothing to report, so he roused himself fully and carried on watching while his guide rested in readiness for the next day's journey.

At first, there was little to distinguish the Forest by night from the nocturnal view of the Garden Gorin had experienced before the meeting with Ecinlorne. Everything was very quiet and very still. Nothing moved, not even the wind.

Suddenly, there came a cry from the heart of the darkness, similar to the one Drian had heard – and followed – the night before. Gorin ignored it. Nothing now would persuade him to leave Ecinlorne's side and the comfortable warmth of their fire. It was burning low now, so he added more branches and pinecones, giving himself added reassurance as the flames flared up again.

Some moments after the first cry, there came another and then a third. A whole series of strange and frightening calls in the night followed, some of them human or near human and

others coming from creatures whose form he preferred not to imagine. Fortunately, none of them ever showed themselves, and after a while, the blood chilling noises died away, leaving everything still and quiet, not even disturbed by the sound of a single night bird.

As he watched and waited, Gorin remembered the strange things he had seen in the Paradise Garden during those hours before the dawn. He thought of the dark shapes crossing the moon, the shouts in the distance and that other silence. He had no idea what else to expect here in the Forest, but he hoped it would not involve creatures like those. Instinct told him they were not mere illusions and would not need to respect any "safe" pathways.

He watched the moon rising above the trees, casting long finger-like shadows across the place where he and Ecinlorne were resting. The hind was peacefully sleeping at Gorin's side now, and the slow movement of her white body was a reassurance to him as he thought over the ways this fabulous creature had already helped him.

He gazed into the fire and let his imagination wander among the shapes and forms of the incandescent pine-cones, half-burnt branches and leaping flames. He saw castles shaped by the glowing twigs, armies marching through the valley of embers and dragons described by the flying sparks; a myriad of fantasies running through his mind as he lost himself in random thought-pictures.

A sudden realisation that he was not alone abruptly interrupted his reverie. His was not the only fire! He sat bolt upright and quickly scanned his surroundings, perceiving the series of fires that were burning in the Forest all around him. There must have been a dozen of them, campfires just like his own, set out in a perfect circle. He had not heard anyone

approaching or lighting them. But they were there. And in front of each one he could see the figure of a man bent towards the flames and gazing into them, just as he had been doing a few moments before.

Each of the men, before each of the fires, then stood up. This allowed him to see they were all dressed in clothes like his own - exactly the same kind of tunic as the one given to him in the Golden City! Yet these were not City people, he was certain.

As he began to realise what was happening, a shudder of fear ran through him. He even began wondering if the Forest had finally driven him mad. For all those men, those dozen men beside their dozen campfires, were reflections of himself! Each one could have been his twin brother and each one was staring at him now, lit by the orange, flickering flames beside them.

Then, as one, they bent down and reached forward, picking up a warrior's helmet from beside their fires and putting it on. Once again, in perfect unison, they all plucked a burning brand from their respective fires with one hand and took up a sword in the other. Gorin was now paralysed with fear and unable to think of trying to wake Ecinlorne, still sleeping peacefully at his side. The dozen Gorins then held their flaming torches aloft and began singing a mournful song that sounded like a dirge of damnation.

"Hail to the one who now lives in the light,
Hail to the one who took leave of the night.
Prince of the Mountains, son of the moon,
Leaving the cradle far too soon.

Out to adventure in the heat of the day,
With love in his heart and the will to betray.
Fear will freeze on the lips of the liar
And his prize will come in the kiss of the fire."

From "The Song of Gorin", stanzas 1188-1189

As the last word fell from the mouths of the wraith-like choir, so each member of it heaved his firebrand in Gorin's direction, creating a rain of flaming torches descending upon him with horrifying swiftness. He looked up in terror, and then covered his head against the merciless avalanche of fire.

Yet nothing fell upon him. He looked up and everything was as dark as before. There were no torches, no fires and no mirror images of himself. It had all been another of the Forest's tricks, and yet he was puzzled as to what it might have meant. The experience left him disturbed and unnerved, as most of the other illusionary manifestations had done. He decided not to mention the incident to Ecinlorne however, at least not until he had given more thought to its significance.

He was still mulling over what he had seen and heard during the night when the first pink flush of dawn came stealing across the sky to arouse the Forest from its sleep. A few moments later, the white hind stirred and woke up. After a brief breakfast, she and Gorin continued along the path, in search of new adventures and a safe passage out of this delusional land.

IX – An Interview with Professor J. Harkwood (1919-2012)

Extracts from the transcript of an interview with the late Chairman of the Haakon Urn texts Editorial Committee conducted by Margaret Simpson and broadcast on BBC2's "Newsday" on 15 September, 1976.

Margaret Simpson: Professor Harkwood, just to bring our viewers up to date, I would like to remind them that you are the Chairman of the Editorial Committee overseeing how the material found in the Haakon Urns should best be presented to the public.

Professor Harkwood: May I just correct you there. In fact, my role is to decide how the vast amount of material discovered in Antarctica should be made available. These documents, found 14 years ago, reveal that a highly developed civilisation lived there in a warmer climate tens of thousands of years ago, and should certainly be published. But not necessarily for public consumption.

MS: And this is because you don't believe such information should come into the public domain. Is that so?

PH: Not exactly. Just not yet.

MS: And I believe I would be right in saying that this is proving to be quite a divisive issue among the members of the Editorial Committee.

PH: Miss Simpson, I would just like to put this matter into perspective, if I may.

MS: Of course.

H: The discovery of the Haakon texts was probably one of the most important archaeological finds of all time. The work of deciphering and transcribing just a fraction of them took several teams of experts over a decade to complete. And it is my responsibility to see that this body of work is presented to our colleagues in the international archaeological community in a way which will reflect the true importance of what was discovered.

MS: But what about informing the general public? Surely they have the right to learn about such a major discovery?

PH: I believe we should be extremely cautious before announcing anything that might sensationalise these discoveries. This is why I am determined to prevent any premature disclosures in the mass media.

MS: There have been reports of disagreements between you and other members of the Editorial Committee. Apparently, Professor Gregson and two other Committee members have been working towards the publication of a book that "retells" the story of one of the epic poems in the texts to make it more accessible.

PH: There certainly have been "disagreements" as you call them. And I would like to make my position perfectly clear with regard to this issue.

MS: Please do.

PH: Without my approval, or even my knowledge, Professor Gregson and his team took it upon themselves to embark upon making the epic "Song of Gorin" poem into what I can only call a total travesty of scientific research. And all in a bid to make it "accessible" to a wider audience, or so he claims. In this context, "accessible" does of course mean cheap sensationalism with an eye to commercial success. It's absolutely outrageous.

MS: Have you seen any of their work?

PH: I have. And I find it difficult to believe that someone with Professor Gregson's background and experience could stoop so low. He has turned these remarkable records into a work of cheap fantasy fiction, pandering to the most undiscriminating readership. We are one million miles from the serious, painstaking, analytical research that needs to be made of material this important. It's like somebody trying to turn Egyptian sacred hieroglyphs into a vulgar strip cartoon.

MS: Have you tried to discuss this with Professor Gregson and his team?

PH: There's nothing to discuss. I cannot betray my integrity and will therefore do everything in my power to prevent this appalling work from being published.

MS: Have recent events changed things in any way?

PH: You mean the theft?

MS: Yes. I would remind viewers that the original Haakon Urn manuscripts were stolen from the Institute in Melbourne where they were being translated and analysed just over three months ago. Do you have any idea who may have been responsible?

PH: No. At least, nothing other than the tags on the urns that seem to suggest it might have been the work of Christian fundamentalists. But if they were responsible, then I would suggest they took exception precisely because of the approach Professor Gregson wants to adopt and has been promoting.

MS: You think...

PH: Listen. Among other things, he's been trying to make headlines with the idea that Zandernation society had no need of any gods or religion because they supposedly had total recall of all their previous lives. Ideas like that are bound to upset a lot of very devout and very sincere followers of today's faiths. Especially if they see the gullible, headline-hungry masses starting to swallow it up.

MS: So publicising these ideas...

PH: There was bound to be a backlash. I rather expected the Islamists to react first actually, but in the end it does look like it was the fundamentalist Christian Soldiers Defence League. And although I cannot of course condone such action, I can understand why they were so incensed.

MS: But the CSDL has strongly denied any involvement, stating that these accounts of such a civilisation existing such a long time before the biblical account of the Creation are so fanciful, and so obviously flawed, that people will reject them *en masse.* In fact, they're even expecting their numbers to swell as people start looking for ideas they can feel more comfortable with.

PH: They would say that, wouldn't they? In any case, it cannot be denied that the theft of the manuscripts has put the debate in a whole new light. First of all, it has brought our research to a complete stop, meaning humanity may well have lost an invaluable body of information about a fascinating period of our prehistory. Which is something that should make Professor Gregson feel *really* proud of himself.

MS: Do you think there is any chance of the manuscripts being retrieved?

PH: How can I know? Ask the police. But I'm very much afraid that if religious fundamentalists - whoever they might be - are involved, we may have lost them for ever.

MS: And in the meantime, you will continue to oppose publication of Professor Gregson's interpretation of the story?

PH: I most certainly will. Particularly now, since we have lost any possibility of balancing that popularised misrepresentation of it with something more scientific and objective. My God, that man's got a hell of a lot to answer for…

X - The Deserts of Jerah

"Illusions cease at that point
wherein the real contains enough
to do the work of dreams."

Royal Alchemist Magres, New Year's Feast 946
from "Sayings & Proverbs" Book II.

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1212 - 1250

The day wore on with little to alarm the two travellers as they made progress at a steady pace, covering a good deal of ground before the sun was very high in the sky.

The only notable event during their early-morning journeying was the sight of some apparently vicious pig-like animals that emerged from the undergrowth and followed them at the side of the path for some while. They made threatening noises and apparently wanted to charge the unihorn and her rider, but of course were unable to do the travellers any harm as long as they stayed on the path. Gorin even found himself examining the ugly creatures with curiosity rather than fear; proof enough of the assurance he now had in the safety of their route.

Once the wild pigs had made off, the white hind carried Gorin a good way further before finally slowing down and coming to a halt. The sun was now at its zenith and he welcomed the opportunity of taking some refreshment, for the temperature had been steadily rising throughout the morning,

accompanied by a sultry heaviness in the air. He slipped gratefully down, swinging his bags of supplies and the water bottles he had refilled in the witch-maidens' stream to the ground.

At this point in the Forest, the trees themselves were not so numerous, but the undergrowth was much more abundant and lush. There were, in particular, massive vine-like plants sprouting from the base of the knotted trunks to climb up and around them and along their branches, often linking several trees together. These growths had produced masses of enormous violet flowers that looked as if they were floating in mid-air, waving their delicate petals in the chequered patterns of light and shade.

Gorin set down his supply bags and water bottles at the edge of the path as he examined the strange growths around him a little more closely. Detecting no immediate threat from them, he finally drew some provisions from one of his bags, sat down and started to eat. Actually, it was not very interesting food; a kind of cake, but tasting rather stale and dry, despite its nourishing qualities. The people of Zandernatis might have a reputation for preparing feasts and banquets, but this certainly wasn't one of their most appetising creations, he reflected. If only there were some fresh fruit to eat!

At this thought, he sat up and looked around him again. But there were still only the trees and the creepers and those enormous violet flowers to be seen. He turned back to his dull, mealy cake with resignation. Then, from the corner of his eye, he caught sight of a movement, making him look up again in time to see the most remarkable transformation taking place.

Gorin stared, unable to believe such a thing could be happening in front of him and, judging by the way Ecinlorne was reacting, she was equally surprised. For the flowers that

had been so beautiful and finely formed a moment before, had started to wither and die. The movement responsible for attracting Gorin's attention had been the first petal, drifting brown and lifeless, through the air. Others followed it, becoming faded in their turn and falling to the ground. From every quarter, a rain of dying petals tumbled to the Forest floor, creating a strange autumnal carpet in the midst of the verdant growths.

Then, as they watched, the points from which the petals were falling began to enlarge, like balloons being inflated from some invisible source of air. It was a most peculiar phenomenon to observe and both Gorin and Ecinlorne stood enthralled, all else forgotten as the natural process continued. Wherever they looked, they could see nothing but these rapidly expanding forms, which were also becoming heavier, drooping down from the creepers supporting them. The air seemed to be full of these enlarging, semi-spherical fruit, already the size of large melons and still growing! In some places, they even blocked out the trees behind them, making Gorin wonder how the vines could possibly support the increasing weight.

Seconds later, a new change began to come over the ever-dilating fruit; they were ripening at a speed in keeping with every other phase of their evolution. Initially livid green in colour, they paled as their size increased until the bloated shapes began to take on a rosy hue. This became deeper and darker as they swelled until it turned into a fiery orange, changing in turn to an angry, blood red.

This dramatic metamorphosis had the most incredible effect upon the Forest, for where everything had been green before, and nothing but green, there was now only this vast area of creeping redness. It infused the entire surroundings

with the tint of a lurid sunset, although it was but one hour past noon.

It was this sudden change of colour that first made Gorin feel uneasy. Until that point, the whole thing had been a rather wonderful, natural spectacle. Now he was not so sure. For the moment, there did not appear to be any definite threat, but he wondered what might happen if these things continued growing. Even if the path were protected from the Forest's dissemblances, surely it was likely to become physically impassable within less than half an hour at this rate?

He looked towards Ecinlorne for some sort of reassurance, but none was forthcoming. For by now the white hind was obviously equally concerned and advised Gorin to come to her side and remount, so they could escape from these disturbingly mutating vines. At that moment, the first of the hideously distended fruit fell to the ground, its weight finally too much for the supporting tendril.

As soon as it touched the earth, the whole bright red outside exploded, releasing the fleshy interior and spreading it some distance around the spot where it had fallen. Immediately, a thin, yellow vapour began to rise from the disintegrated fruit and, seeming to gather in strength, it began to ripple over the ground. Then another globular, pulpy mass fell on the other side of the path. It too exploded and began emitting the yellow vapour. Another followed, and another and yet another, all in quick succession.

The falling fruit evidently alarmed Ecinlorne, for she snorted and wheeled round, at the same time sending Gorin an urgent summons to climb quickly onto her back. They were in great danger of being overwhelmed, she urged, even there on the path.

He needed no second invitation, for there was something very ominous about that vapour. In a matter of minutes, the luxuriant Forest greenery had been transformed into a strange kind of hell, as the red balloon-like forms continued to fall and the menacing gases became more concentrated.

Gorin made a move towards his guide when suddenly one of the inflamed fruit fell to the ground in front of him, exploding barely two measures away and covering him with its sticky mess. He stepped back involuntarily, looking up to see there were several more of the giant, angry fruit hanging above him and the path. At any moment, one could hit him as it fell, unless the yellow vapour overcame him first. For he was sure it would prove to have soporific properties – or worse. He watched the gas begin to rise from the pulp ahead of him and realised he must go through it to reach Ecinlorne. There was very little time to lose.

Gorin bent down to pick up his supply bags and water bottles, and in doing so, caught his breath. For, in stepping back when the fruit nearly fell on him, he had kicked over the open bottle and all the water it contained was now running away along the path. He could not locate the second one either, until he realised he had crushed it with his foot in the same involuntary movement and it was now lying useless and broken, covered by the fruit's thick, glutinous flesh. Just then, as he stooped to gather the empty bottle and the bags, he inhaled the first wisp of yellow vapour, now gathering thickly about the fallen mush ahead.

For a second he reeled, then coughed and stood up. His head was spinning and his eyes were running like rivers. It was difficult to see. He coughed again and tried to walk in the direction he believed Ecinlorne to be. A sharp pain in his head, which seemed to come from the very centre of his brain, made

him pull up. He realised that somewhere, somehow, the white hind was trying to guide him. Although he was still incapable of distinguishing anything around him.

The sound of more fruit falling in the Forest came at him from all directions. Releasing more vapour to creep along the ground and eventually rise until he breathed it again. It would then only be a matter of seconds before he succumbed completely, to be lost forever.

Somewhere to his right, Gorin heard another fruit fall, near enough for him to feel the splattering flesh against his face. For several moments, he had absolutely no idea as to which direction he should take. His eyes were still streaming profusely and he dared not move for fear of straying from the path. So he stayed put and waited, hoping to receive further mental instructions from Ecinlorne.

Yet none came. Panic began to sweep over him. Supposing she had also fallen victim to the vaporous poison? Or maybe one of the fruit had dropped onto her. What could he do then? His only chance lay in trying to combat the first effects of the gas and open his eyes in time to see where he was going before it rose high enough to affect him again.

A moment later, Gorin felt something touch him in the chest. He jumped, his initial reaction being one of fear until he reached forward to feel what it was and came upon a hard, unyielding form, slender and polished. With joy he realised it was Ecinlorne's horn! As soon as he had grasped it firmly, the creature backed away, her head lowered, with the handicapped Gorin following as best he could. He felt his feet treading over the slimy, splattered interior of the fruit that had fallen in front of him, and then a moment later, he was on firmer ground again.

This gave him some reassurance, but he was still unable to see anything. Although his eyes were no longer running as much as they had at first, he could not open them without considerable pain. Even when he did, he could distinguish nothing but a pale haze through which the form of the white hind was barely visible as she continued to step patiently backwards, slowly drawing him towards safety.

Another wave of panic swept over him as he realised the vapour had almost blinded him! He desperately tried to make things out through the blurred veil invading his vision. Yet all he could see was the vague redness of the fruit still hanging on the creepers and a dim carpet of the same colour created by those that had fallen. A clammy sensation about his feet and lower legs revealed the continued presence of the yellow vapour, already half a measure deep. This was why such extreme caution was necessary, for hurried movements could easily stir up the heavy gasses, with potentially devastating results.

Ecinlorne led her charge in this way for what seemed like an eternity, although it was in fact no more than some twenty minutes. Their slow progress continued to be hampered by the splattering fruit all around them and Gorin could feel the dank coldness of the vapour gradually creeping up his thighs. How long before his guide succumbed to its influence he wondered, or before he was himself affected again?

Moments later, just as he felt his feet treading through more of the fallen pulp, he had the impression there was less vapour about his legs. His guide's slightly quicker pace confirmed this as they came at last onto uncontaminated ground, raising hopes that, after all, they were going to be safe. Ecinlorne then moved faster and faster, drawing away from the

sounds of the exploding fruit so that, within the space of a few minutes, they became indistinct and finally ceased altogether.

At last, Ecinlorne came to a halt, letting Gorin know they were out of danger. He thankfully relaxed his hold of the horn, sinking to the ground, weary with exhaustion and fear. As soon as he lay down, he felt sleep sweeping over him like a wave, taking him with it. A few seconds later, consciousness had melted away and he was sprawled on the hard earth inert and insensible.

Ecinlorne kept watch over the young man's slumbering body, having assured herself he was in no danger. Sleep probably was the best cure he could have, enabling the worst effects of the vapour to pass off. It proved to be a deep and very long repose, for she was still standing there when the western sky began to redden with the light of the setting sun.

He slept on throughout the whole of that night, never even flicking an eyelid to show he still lived. The white hind waited patiently, watching the moon as it rose from behind the trees, gradually spreading its pale glow over everything. It transformed the whole Forest landscape into dream country; mysterious and forbidding, with shadows in secret places hidden among the trees. While in the open, stood the pure white guardian guide, alert for any sound from the darkness or from the young man sleeping at her feet.

Cogent dreaming

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1251 - 1278

It was not until the new dawn began to appear in grey bands across the Eastern sky, that Gorin moved again, and then only the slightest movement of his mouth revealed he was slowly returning to wakefulness. A few minutes later, his eyes moved, their lids fluttering as he rolled his head slowly from

side to side. A fist clenched, then he moved an arm and finally opened one eye before staring with both of them up towards the morning sky.

For a moment he could not remember what had happened, nor where he was; everything was faint and blurred as if he were staring into a fog. He raised himself on one arm and gingerly moved his legs, finding them stiff and awkward. Then he remembered the swollen fruit, how it had fallen, and that terrible, nauseous vapour. Yes, but why couldn't he see properly? What was wrong? He rubbed his eyes, but it made no difference.

For a second, a hopeless, helpless fear overtook him again until he felt the reassuring presence of Ecinlorne in his mind. She was telling him to raise himself up and approach her. Time had been lost, she informed him; as soon as he felt strong enough, they should carry on.

It took almost half an hour before he managed to teeter to his feet and find his bearings, and some considerable time more before he could walk steadily, let alone climb onto the hind's back again. And what about his sight? How was he going to achieve anything if he was almost blind?

Ecinlorne's only advice was that his condition was likely to last until they left the Forest of Dissemblance behind them. After that, it would steadily improve until his sight had returned to normal.

"I certainly hope you're right," said Gorin. "Because I really can't see a thing, only a white mist and vague shapes moving around in it, like phantoms. What time of day is it anyway?"

When he learned it was morning and that he had slept for nearly twenty hours, he found it difficult to believe. "Surely not!" he said. "Although it does seem a very long time since we

saw those purple flowers and the fruit... So much has happened."

For a moment, he searched his brain in an attempt to recall exactly why there were so many things turning over and over in his mind. Then he remembered.

"I was dreaming," he said. "A very strange dream... There were beautiful palaces built on mountains of rock floating in the sky. And singing voices. I remember them most of all. They were chanting more than singing really, and the sound was everywhere. There were people as well, wonderful people who lived endless lives of peace and grace. It was more like Paradise than the Golden City, more like Paradise was meant to be. Strangest of all, everyone seemed to know me, accepted me as belonging to their scheme of things."

Gorin stopped speaking for a moment as he tried to recollect everything he had experienced in his dream. Ecinlorne made no comment at all this, waiting patiently until he was ready to continue the journey.

"I knew myself as well," Gorin went on. "I knew my real reason for being there and who these people were. It was so important, but now it won't come back. Maybe it was the kind of dreaming Esperon had, drawing him away from Zandernatis. Is that possible?"

"Perhaps," came the hind's enigmatic reply.

"If it was, then I can well understand why he left. It was so glorious. Experience that, and all you want to do is seek it out in reality; discover if such wonder really exists. Even if it takes a lifetime."

With a great deal of effort and fumbling, Gorin at last managed to regain his seat on the white hind's back. He quickly felt inside his tunic to make sure the King's seal was still safe and then concentrated on the journey ahead.

Being practically sightless, he felt very vulnerable and was thankful Ecinlorne did not travel as fast as she had before. She also warned him to lower his head whenever there were any boughs overhanging the path. In the end, despite having to take these precautions, they were still able to make steady progress through the Forest for a further two hours.

During that time, Gorin felt a noticeable change taking place around them. Whereas before it had been hot and humid, the air was now becoming much drier, accentuating the parched feeling and unpleasant taste in his mouth after sleeping for so long. However, despite his growing thirst, he preferred to go on for a while before stopping for any refreshment.

Around midday, when they had already covered several thousand measures despite the reduced pace, Gorin noticed a slight change in the veil of grey clouding his vision. He felt it had moved, as if a breeze had come to stir up the mist. Sadly, the impression was only momentary, and afterwards the haziness flowed back as thickly as ever.

There was no such wind, real or imaginary, to disperse his thirst however, which had intensified with the heat of the sun high in the sky. In the end, he had to ask Ecinlorne to stop a moment while he took a draught of water.

As he searched for the water bottles, his hand came upon only one and he found it was empty! Gorin then remembered what had happened when the first of the oversized fruit fell onto the path. He had kicked the bottle over in his effort to avoid the exploding fruit – and trampled the other one. So there was no water at all! For a second his head reeled at the prospect of having nothing to drink, suddenly magnifying his thirst and making the sun's heat more intense.

Even Ecinlorne could not help him in this situation. They would not come upon any source of water again until they had emerged from the Forest, she informed him; still a good two hours' away. It was comforting to know this part of their ordeal would soon be over, but for Gorin it sounded like an eternity. Gritting his teeth, he clung on to the hind's neck, closing his eyes and bracing himself to face what would probably seem the longest and most uncomfortable two hours he could imagine.

The more they continued their journey towards the Eastern limit of the Forest, the more the air became drier and the more Gorin felt his thirst increasing. One consolation however, was that on two other occasions he had noticed his blindness receding slightly. When it happened a third time, he even caught a momentary glimpse of Ecinlorne's horn in front of him. He then put more faith in the hind's assurance that the affliction would indeed pass away once they were no longer under the influence of the Forest's powers.

As more time passed, Gorin's thirst became so acute, he felt as if his throat were going to swell and stop him breathing. At the same time, he experienced another momentary glimpse of partial sight, after which the mist did not flow back with the same intensity. He became aware of the green colour of the surrounding trees, noticeably less numerous than before, and the pale blue of the sky above. He even found the burning sensation on his tongue and in his mouth easier to bear with the growing hope that his vision would be restored to him eventually. In any case, he would soon know. For the air was now so parched and dry that the Forest edge, and the desert beyond it, could not be very far away now.

Desert vision

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1279 – 1291

A short while later, Ecinlorne suddenly began to increase her pace, and although Gorin was at first alarmed, he soon realised it must be because there were no more low hanging branches to worry about. That meant, in his semi-blindness, he no longer risked crashing into one as they raced along.

As their speed picked up, he also thankfully noticed further improvements in his sight! He was soon even able to see the trees around them were no longer of the gnarled, twisted type so common up to now. Instead, these were straight and tall, with enormous splayed palm fronds sprouting from the tops of their trunks. The ground was different as well; the brown and muddy path having given way to dry, sun-baked earth, much yellower than it had been in the Forest.

A moment later, they were hit by the desert wind. It was like the opening of an oven door, the rush of hot air driving fine particles of sand into their faces. Gorin had to screw up his eyes before the blast and bowed his head in an attempt to avoid the worst of it. The hind carried on regardless, still maintaining a good pace, her rider telling himself every stride against the searing wind was bringing him that much nearer to the water she had promised him!

After what seemed to have been an age of crouching over Ecinlorne's mane, Gorin suddenly felt the creature turn and come to a halt. At the same time, the wind dropped to become no more than a breeze. He raised his head, opened his eyes and discovered he could now see perfectly well again, his relief all the greater when he saw where they now were. This was obviously where the Forest of Dissemblance ended, marked by

the last of the palm trees, standing on the frontiers of unreality like gaunt, windblown sentinels.

They were protected from the fierce desert wind by a craggy rock formation rearing up between them and the beginning of the grasslands, which subsequently gave on to the Deserts of Jerah. This enormous, featureless plain extended almost as far as the eye could see, except for a shimmering yellow haze on the horizon to show where the sands began. It was a whole new world, and clearly one where there would be other, different forces to contend with.

Ecinlorne allowed Gorin to dismount and turned to him, projecting a message explaining what their next moves would be. "Wait here awhile," she advised. "I will go in search of the spring where we can safely drink our fill and rest before beginning our journey towards the desert."

Gorin nodded his assent and watched the hind disappear behind the rock formation. He hoped it wouldn't take her long to locate the source of water. For even sheltered from the desert wind, it was still unbearably hot and his raging thirst continued unabated. He rubbed his throat, but to no avail. He even examined the one remaining water bottle to see if, by any chance, some drops remained. He inverted it above his mouth and, sure enough, a few drips fell from it. Just enough to dampen the surface of his burning tongue. Except that once evaporated, they only made his craving worse.

After several minutes had elapsed, Gorin began to be a little concerned by his guide's lengthening absence. Where could she have got to? She had given the impression the spring was close at hand. Time went on, and with its passing he began to feel drowsy in the hot shade beneath the yellow-brown rocks.

He began wondering how they were going to cross the desert in that kind of heat. Unless they travelled by night of course. That would probably be the best option. He settled himself down against one of the rocky projections and gradually drifted towards sleep.

For an instant, he must have actually slept, for he dreamt again, but not of any fantastic cities or peoples this time. Just one person; Hexard. It was as if he were looking down at Gorin with a gentle, benevolent smile on his face, much as he had done when they were together in the old man's rooms beneath the silver tower.

Spring of hope

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1292 - 1318

A second later, Gorin was wide awake again. Something had changed! All senses alert, he realised it was a new sound, coming from behind the rocky promontory. He could hardly believe his ears; it was the sound of bubbling, gurgling water! Water at last! He could imagine it, clear and sparkling, pure and sweet, so refreshing after the scorching hot day in the dry, desert wind.

If it was the spring, why hadn't Ecinlorne come to lead him to it? And if it was so near, why did she make him wait? Gorin could not understand and hesitated a moment before making any move. Then it occurred to him that perhaps it only flowed at certain times, and the hind had been confused, not realising how near it was. In which case, she could be gone for some time. It might even dry up again before she returned!

This decided him, for his throat was burning more than ever and it was unthinkable he might miss his chance just because the unihorn had made a mistake. He rose to his feet and followed the path she had taken around the outcrop,

coming upon the source of the enticing new sounds within a few minutes.

It was indeed a spring, or rather a miniature cascade. The water tumbled down the rockface and then fell some five measures into a clear, deep pool sparkling above the endlessly varied greens and blues in its depths.

That was not all! Staring into the foaming water and spray falling from the rocks above, Gorin could just make out what appeared to be some kind of opening, perhaps even a cave, behind it. However, he was only interested in the water itself, so fresh and inviting. Imagine bathing in it! How cool that would be! How wonderfully cool!

He was on the point of stepping towards the tumbling waterfall when he noticed a movement in the space behind it. For a moment he stopped, wondering if his eyes had played a trick on him or if it had just been an effect of sunlight glancing on the water. No, there was something there. He drew back, thinking he should perhaps look for somewhere to hide.

Then he saw the shape move and come forward, through the sheet of water. It was a man dressed in a long black robe. A robe which, had Gorin noticed, did not appear to be even damp, despite having just passed through the deluge from above. He was far more intrigued with the form of this robed figure, for it seemed to be very familiar! An old and slightly bent man, supporting himself on a staff! In an instant, he realised it must be Hexard!

"Yes Gorin, it's me," said the old man. "Come to see how you're getting along. Thirsty work isn't it?"

"It is," replied Gorin. "But Hexard, how did you get out here? I thought you had to stay in Zandernatis."

"Did I say that? Well, you can't expect me to give all my secrets away, now can you? Why should you be so surprised though? Aren't you happy to see me?"

"Of course I am, Hexard. It just seems strange..."

The old man laughed. "Does it? I don't see why. I come to visit you in your hour of need, an old friend like me, and you think it strange?"

"My hour of need?" questioned Gorin.

"Well, you need water don't you? And here I am with all the water you could desire. Come and refresh yourself. Drink your fill, bathe here under the waterfall. You'll feel much better in no time."

"Thank you," said Gorin, wondering if he really should accept this invitation, in spite of the circumstances. After all, Ecinlorne had taught him to be wary of everything, and never suggested the old alchemist might pay them a visit.

"Well come on then. What are you waiting for? You were nearly dying of thirst a moment ago. Anyway, I have something very important to tell you. Something about your mission, you understand.

"Once your longing for these waters has been satisfied, you can come and rest in my cave back there where I can talk to you. It's so cool, with moss on the walls and a soft bed to lie on. No burning sunlight. Only the coolness and music of falling water. Come on..."

The old man certainly made it sound wonderfully inviting, and Gorin thought of the contrast it would make with this dry, windblown and inhospitable place. Yet something - he was not sure what - made him hesitate. Although there was no real reason to distrust Hexard, he decided to be prudent.

"It does sound wonderful," he said, "but I'd rather wait until Ecinlorne returns, if you don't mind. I wouldn't like her to

come back and see no sign of me She might not know where to look."

"We haven't time to wait for her," the old man said, with a note of impatience in his voice. "I told you, there's something vital about your mission you need to know. It's no business of hers. Come here at once before it's too late."

Gorin did not like to anger Hexard, but he was still reluctant to do his bidding without thinking everything through. What could he possibly have to say that was "no business" of Ecinlorne's? She already knew so much more about the mission than Gorin himself.

The old alchemist suddenly changed his tone from one of impatience to one of entreaty. "Come on, please," he said. "I need to talk to you in private and let you rest a little; you look so tired, Gorin. I think perhaps Ecinlorne is driving you too hard. Come on, you'll feel much better, and so will I when you know about this new situation."

He stepped back a pace, stretched out his arm and beckoned invitingly. Gorin was on the point of following, when he heard the thunder of hooves from behind.

He turned to see Ecinlorne charging out of the trees, her head lowered to make the horn thrust forward like a lance. She was charging straight at him! With a cry of surprise and fear, Gorin just managed to leap out of the way in time, as the hind sped by him like a white thunderbolt - aiming herself directly at the old man by the waterfall!

Gorin barely had time to scream out, "Ecinlorne no, it's Hexard!" before the creature's long horn struck, penetrating the old man's chest just above the heart and emerging on the other side. A fearful cry - suddenly cut short - came from him. Then, with the hind's horn still buried in his body, a rapid transformation took place. What had been, a moment before,

the flesh and blood of the aged alchemist, suddenly became nothing more than a block of solid ice!

Gorin looked on in amazement as Ecinlorne withdrew her horn and stood back from the shimmering spectacle. As she did so, the water in the pool began to dry up and the cascade stopped flowing. The hot sun shining on the ice started melting it immediately and before long, it was a shapeless lump, flowing away at an ever-increasing speed.

Ecinlorne came towards Gorin with a rueful glint in her eye as he realised he had once again been tricked by the illusions of the Forest. They were perhaps on the edge of it now, but apparently not completely beyond the reach of its malevolent tricks, so caution was still necessary. Gorin apologised as best he could, but his guide reminded him that an apology was useless. It offered no defence against the consequences of yielding to temptations presented by this kind of apparition.

Safe waters

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1319 - 1325

No more passed between the two of them as Gorin remounted for the short journey to the real spring. They arrived there after about a quarter of an hour's travelling and when he saw the water he was thankful that this time he could drink his fill, replenish his supply and bathe without any second thoughts. The spring was perhaps less impressive than the dissembling cascade, but at least it held no hidden dangers and Ecinlorne was there, standing guard all the time he refreshed himself.

Once he had finished, Gorin felt like a new man - better in fact than he had felt at any time since leaving the Golden City. After all, the most perilous part of his expedition was over - or

so he supposed. There would perhaps be the heat of the desert to contend with, but at least that was something certain and constant, unlike the changing images generated by the Forest. The last attempt to draw him into its power had been particularly convincing. He still trembled to think how close he had come to following "Hexard" into that cave.

Ecinlorne interrupted his thoughts with a reminder of the techniques employed by the Forest in its attempts to beguile the unwary. For, just as with the Running Stone, it had once again created an apparition based upon something already present in Gorin's mind, his own recognition of the initial image supplying any missing details.

Gorin nodded his head in understanding, and decided against talking about the dream of Hexard preceding the vision created by the Forest's dark forces. For it looked as if it were his fault again, that despite his initial reticence, in the end he had failed to heed his guide's warnings.

By the time they had eaten, rested and slept a little, night had almost fallen. As Gorin supposed, Ecinlorne suggested it would be far better to travel across the desert during the hours of darkness and seek shelter during the day.

So, as soon as the moon had risen from behind the distant sand dunes, they left the last trees on the edge of the Forest, setting off into the grassy wastes towards the Deserts of Jerah. As they departed, Gorin looked back briefly, relieved the realm of temptations was behind them at last..

There would be fresh challenges of course - like how to make one bottle of water do for a journey likely to take three good nights' travelling. They would have to find somewhere to rest out of the sun in daytime as well. But for the moment, Gorin felt the prospect far more encouraging than the uncertainties of the Forest with all its deceit and cunning.

XI – Martha's "Dreaming Diary" – 2

We are publishing three extracts from Martha Calbrow's Dreaming Diary. She used this to record the experiences that followed her initial vision of accelerated time regression, during which she witnessed Antarctica emerging from the grips of its icecap, as it regained its original position in the Pacific Ocean (see Chapter VIII).

They describe events leading up to the "Feast of the Autonomy" in the reign of King Primos I, and the return of the Heroes at the end of the "First Expedition of the Valiant" in the year 721 when King Alandis was on the throne. The third extract describes an incident from what we now know to be the dark days of 2964 following the reign of King Iraeus.

Wednesday, 3 June, 1981

Today was a special day. With a new city - Standing great and proud - All around it - surrounded by a perfect, wonderful garden-- I felt everything at peace. Total peace. Tranquil and still.

I saw crowds of people, many, many people. Very happy people. They were in a square? Surrounded with buildings- towers and turrets-- wide steps leading up - carved columns. Lots of carved columns and statues - This was the main square in front of the massive doors--- Everyone was waiting. I waited beside them. But how long? I didn't know how long.

Friday 5 June, 1981

That city again - now everyone is looking up into the air- Something happening in the sky. But I can't see it -- Too far, too high away. But I feel everyone so excited, pointing up. Someone cheers. Then all of them - I want to see more- I can't understand why I'm here ---?

A man comes out from the big building with the steps. He speaks. And everyone starts to cheer again.. But I can't cheer. I'm not part of this. Nobody can see me -- everything fades…

Saturday 6 June, 1981

I hear the crowd in the square cheering first. It's all fog -- a long way off.

It gets better then- hands waving in the air. Cheering, cheering, cheering -- I try to cheer too, but have no breath. I don't think I'm breathing - just floating---

Now I see the man on the steps. That's why everyone is cheering --- They don't want to stop.

I clearly see him--- holds hands into the air until finally stops. No more cheering but some even crying, so happy -

He speaks, but only hear hollow sounds - No words. I want to move forward - but the dream runs out ---

Saturday 6 June, 1981

The square again, the people again, the man speaking. This time I can hear it -- This time there is some sense - "At last we are free!"

All the people going wild. Cheering again.

"At last we can live - how we want to live, with no cares if the Lords approve -"

"We owe them so much, my people - " He talks about their City made of Golden something ---- living their lives, all of their lives, he says in contented - And he says it will evolve------

Someone shouts "Long live the King!" "Again and again and again," shouts another -

I am standing beside him now - Looking out to the faces -- All eager, all bright, all full of hope --

The king can't see me.. Says <u>we</u> can decide what Paradise is like now--- not made for us anymore-----
"It is time, my people -" Everyone waits. I am waiting.

"Time to CELEBRATE !!!!" Roaring crowd --- I see musicians play, but music sounds far away. I fade now, fading from joy, fading away from cheers, spiral back or forward. Don't know which it is---

Monday, 14 March - Thursday 17 March, 1983

Waking--- from being the fourth time in the City again this week... and 54th visit in the three years----

This was more vivid. Standing above main City gates - A column of men on horseback approaching. Lances and swords in their hands, nets across their mounts --

Then everything got confused--- out of sequence? A man leading the soldiers to call out "Hail the King...!" And then, then trumpets playing a fanfare

announce their coming--- as people line the wall waiting to see them arrive---

"Hail to the returning heroes," says the King, suddenly appears in front of men on horses. The crowd cheers --- follows them through the huge City gates and a hero's welcome.

One soldier on a big white horse comes in front of the others to speak. A clear, deep voice everyone can hear. I hear every word---

"All have served with honour in the Forest of Non—Truth--- Deep in its groves, we saw the Dragons and the Crantamores. Outwitted Racing Stones and slew the wraiths that will not die---"

Tried making sense of this: Some things were repeated, other new--- The clearest vision I ever had in these dreams - even if sequence got muddled---

Wednesday, 22nd May, 1985

About two hours ago, I woke up after what must be the most terrifying vision I ever had of the City on the new continent. It has taken me that time to compose myself and be able to write this entry with a steady hand -

This time there was no singing, no celebrating, no merriment.

Everyone was terrified, everyone seemed to be expecting disaster --- though I had no sense why the mood had changed so much.

It grew dark,. Clouds were building in the sky. I hovered over the city, watching frantic preparations

for something. Impossible to understand what was going on.

Fires were burning along the ramparts. Many men gathered there, some staring into the west, eyes shaded from the setting sun --- searching for the invisible---

Others looked eastwards, peering into the empty darkness of closing night -

I could physically feel the expectancy, the dread of something going to happen ----------

No way of telling when this was, how many decades or centuries after the men went out to be heroes in the Forest of Non-Truth.

Then, from my point high up, I saw shapes approaching from the sunset. Moments later, the men on the walls saw them too and started to shout-----

A dark veil covered everything. I could only hear, not see --- More shouts, screams, and other horrible sounds - Beating wings, wind, strange song chants in rhythms drowned out with ugly discordant cries---

The sudden blindness made me helpless. Vulnerable. I could barely breathe and trembled violently. So afraid---

I woke with a start, sweating all over my body. Still shaking out of control -

Thursday 22nd May, 1986

It has now been one whole year since I last dreamt of the golden coloured city in its wonderful garden.

I am so sad to think I may never see it again,
dreading to think what might have happened after
the events of that last night.

Perhaps it was the end of their everything…

Her last, apocalyptic vision, obviously had a very profound effect upon Martha, as we can imagine. To witness such an event and feel it so intensely must have been very difficult for a young woman barely 19 years old. We are extremely grateful to her for having shared these experiences with us and having provided so much extremely valuable corroborative proof.

Additional comment by Doctor H.K. Kittner

Although she had these dreams some considerable time after the Haakon urns were discovered and even after the first edition of "Zandernatis" was due to be published, Martha assures us that she had no inkling of the revelations contained in the texts before she saw the PLMRI advertisement. We have no reason to doubt her word on this point, thanks to Professor Harkwood's zealous and highly effective efforts to keep the story out of the mainstream media.

XII - Nocturnal Travels

"Seek not amongst the dunes of Jerah,
for the people in the East;
They are beyond you and above you,
where you seek them least."

From stanza xvii of "The Song of the Heroes"
(First Heroic Age)

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1326 - 1351

The desert air was cool as Gorin and Ecinlorne set off into the barren lands, and as the night wore on it became progressively colder. For once the sun had gone, there was nothing to warm the winds blowing from the dunes and the sands quickly lost the heat of the day. Within two hours of setting out, Gorin was already feeling decidedly chilled and even urged the hind to go a little faster if she could, hoping the movement would stimulate his circulation.

The unihorn did indeed increase speed at his request, the rhythmic beat of her hooves biting faster into the dry, sandy ground. She hardly kicked up any dust however, except for a few traces that trailed behind, catching the light of the moon and glimmering for an instant before falling back to earth.

In some ways, the desert was even stranger than the Forest had been; it was so quiet and so still. There was only the waning moon riding high in the deep blue-black sky,

surrounded by a million stars. Its cold light radiated over the undulating ground, which gradually became devoid of all vegetation, transforming the landscape into endless processions of dry sand hillocks.

As he looked back, Gorin saw the last trees in the Forest were already out of sight, despite having been on higher ground, and they were now entirely surrounded by a sea of sand. He wondered how Ecinlorne could possibly find her way in this arid wilderness, with nothing to break the endless monotony of rolling dunes sculpted by ghostly light and impenetrable darkness.

As they continued their journey through the night, a wind picked up, swiftly gathering strength until it became a bitter and merciless blast. Gorin started shivering violently, frozen to the marrow, his thick cloak affording hardly any protection against the icy gale. It was now blowing so strongly, the tops of the sand hills were disappearing in streams of granular spume, like ocean breakers caught in a hurricane. He tried jogging up and down with the hind's motion to see if that would warm him, but the effort was more fatiguing than comforting.

The sand came at them on the wind, whipped into an ever-increasing fury by the wild current of tortured air. It stung Gorin's face and forced him to bow his head against the relentless onslaught. Even Ecinlorne had to slow down and finally come to a halt because of the flying particles. As soon as she stopped, Gorin slid to the ground and tried to seek some shelter from the storm behind the bulk of the hind's body. Except the sand was everywhere and there was no way of escaping its penetrating sting.

"We can go no further tonight." Ecinlorne's thoughts spoke clearly in Gorin's mind, despite the maelstrom of dust and air surrounding them. "The stars are being blotted out by

the storm, so there is a danger of us taking the wrong direction. Come into the lee of this dune, we will be out of the worst of it there."

Gorin looked up and saw that indeed the flying sand was obscuring both moon and stars, which his guide must be using to navigate. He followed the unihorn over to the side of the nearby hillock, where they were able to find some respite from the merciless wind and the lacerating pain that came with it.

As they sheltered in the protection of the sand dune, Gorin looked up and watched the top of it trailing away into wisps of dust like all the others. However, the wind was so ferocious, they hardly felt any of it as it swept on its way above their heads and out into the desert.

For several hours, the storm continued unabated, the noise of the gale rising at times to a crescendo as it wailed and lamented across the desolate tracts of sand. The moon had now dimmed to no more than a faint glow, at times disappearing altogether, leaving only total darkness and the frenzied cry of the roaring night.

Gorin wondered how long such a storm could last. A few hours? A day? Perhaps even longer? If it did, he knew they would have little chance of reaching the other side of the desert before the meagre supply of water he had with him gave out. It would indeed be a sad way to end his quest.

At last, an almost imperceptible change began to take place in the howling battle of air against earth. The wind was still raging and the sand still flew with devastating force, but high above, the abysmal darkness was gradually becoming lighter. Somewhere in the midst of all that chaos, dawn was pushing back the veils of night. The coming of the day would at least render the storm a little less terrifying, even if it had no power to diminish its physical might.

Little by little, light came stealing across the sky, penetrating even the thickest clouds of sand and then tinting everything with a strange, blood-red colour as the sun itself rose from behind the invisible horizon. For a moment, the whole scene was transformed into one of rare and unbelievable beauty, in which the triumph of natural forces reigned supreme.

The solar fire could now be seen; a huge red disc hanging low in the sky. It shone through layers of nebulous wracks and golden dust flying through the air, rushing headlong into the sun as if sucked into some enormous vortex. The entire battlefield of elemental conflict, tinged with crimson and bronze, rode in majesty, contrasting with the blue and misty shadows cast by the surrounding sand dunes.

Then, with little warning, the wind began to drop, and as it did so, the particles it was carrying fell with it, completely removing the sun's yellow veil. The day-star rose with incredible swiftness, intensifying its power minute by minute until its brilliance became unbearable. With it, came the solar warmth, beating down on the desert and rapidly turning the chill air into an intolerable, scorching wave of fire.

It was a transformation so complete, Gorin felt he had been transported from one world into another. Taken from the hell of icy winds and stinging sand, he was now in a searing furnace, becoming more impossible to endure with every moment of the sun's relentless ascent.

For a few moments, bewildered by the might and contrast of the elements, Gorin was insensible to everything else. Ecinlorne finally had to bring him to himself by catching hold of his tunic and tugging with her mouth. She succeeded in the end and guided him round to the other side of the dune where they could find some protection from the sun's heat. The

wind's relentless force the night before had shaped the sand into an enormous curved ridge, although the shade it could offer them seemed to be shrinking at an alarming rate as the morning advanced.

Ecinlorne therefore set herself the task of scooping out a hollow in the sand with her hooves. Gorin joined in the work and after about half an hour they had made themselves a good-sized depression. Its sides were high enough to give them sufficient shelter throughout most of the day, although they would have to change their position as the sun moved across the sky.

The two travellers spent their first full day in the desert crouched in their improvised refuge. The hours passed slowly, only the shifting shadow cast by the sandy walls about them marking the passage of time. In the morning, Gorin slept, weary after the rigours of the night and the efforts of digging. He woke up towards noon, feeling much refreshed, although his mouth was desperately dry. He reached for the water bottle and took a gulp, before even thinking of how careful he would have to be with its precious contents if they were to emerge from the desert safely.

He put the stopper back in the bottle, shook it carefully to ascertain how much was still inside, and then looked for Ecinlorne. She was nowhere to be seen! He stood up, afraid something had happened while he was asleep. But no, in a moment the unihorn was there, coming round the side of the sand dune, mane streaming and her white body shining so brightly in the sunlight he could scarcely look at it.

"We will be able to continue our journey in a few hours," Ecinlorne informed him in her usual manner. "The sun will be going down by then."

The Old Way

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1352 - 1382

Gorin nodded and watched Ecinlorne scrambling down the edges of their dugout shelter until she came into the part of it protected from the sun by shadow.

Although he had now spent some time with this creature, he still found it difficult to understand her. She obviously possessed great wisdom and experience, but he could not really comprehend why she held herself so aloof most of the time.

Was it because white hinds simply preferred to keep their distance from the affairs of humans? Was her assistance on this particular quest an exception due to the threat hanging over the Garden, one capable of putting her existence, and that of her kind, in jeopardy?

There was no obvious answer. In any case, when seeking a guide for him, Hexard would have had no other choice. The unihorns were the only creatures with sufficient knowledge and wisdom to navigate the lands beyond the Garden and avoid the dangers of the Forest. According to Claedon, Esperon had been guided in a similar way, although apparently not by Ecinlorne. Gorin asked his guide if this was indeed the case.

"It was not I," she replied mysteriously. "Not I, but another. Esperon sensed much, but knew little. Hexard told him many things, as he instructed you, but only the white hinds have practical knowledge of the Old Way."

"The road we're taking is called the Old Way? Why is that?"

"Because...," came the answer. Then, after a pause, "It was ever the Old Way."

"You mean it's the road the Gatekeeper was talking about? Running between the City and the Hills?" Gorin ventured.

"If you wish." The words flowed through Gorin's mind like a ripple - but revealed virtually nothing, as usual. Why should Ecinlorne be so unhelpful and secretive? What was there to hide?

"I am hiding nothing Gorin." The message drummed inside his head like thunder. Ecinlorne had perceived the drift of his thoughts and had obviously not approved! "I am serving Hexard and Zandernatis and the Paradise Garden as your guide, just as you are serving the destiny of them all by undertaking this journey. I am not charged to be your teacher.

"The process of learning has been initiated and will be continued when the time is right. Nothing you need to know now is being withheld from you, but you must understand the only knowledge worth acquiring comes through what you live and experience for yourself. Not what you are told. You will see."

With that, the unihorn rose to her feet again, climbed out of the hollow and disappeared behind the sandhill before Gorin really had time to absorb the implications behind her thoughts.

He soon realised however, that Ecinlorne's "explanation" did little to satisfy his curiosity, although no fault lay with her. She was merely playing her part in the greater scheme of things, whatever that might be, and he knew his destiny was to follow her example.

As he stood there, in the open, looking towards the place where the hind had disappeared, he suddenly became acutely aware of the intense desert glare all around him. It was certainly brighter than any light he could ever remember and he sought refuge again in the shade, away from the direct rays of the sun.

He found himself unable to shake off the effects of that merciless, blinding radiance, even in the comparative shelter of the shadows. By the time Ecinlorne returned, about one hour later, Gorin was suffering from oppressive head pains. When complaining of them, the hind only nodded her head in acknowledgement; as if it were to be expected. Then, as it persisted throughout the afternoon, she suggested the pain would gradually diminish as sunset approached and the light became weaker.

They eventually set out once more about an hour after the sun had sunk into the West, Gorin's head pains preventing an earlier start. The steady, throbbing discomfort over his eyes had taken some time to abate, even after the last murky greens and deep blues of dusk had faded into the blackness of night.

They made good progress in the hour before moonrise, and it was during this period that Gorin thought he understood how his guide was navigating her way across the desert. For low over the Eastern horizon, hung a single, reddish coloured star, shining with an unwavering light that drew them onwards like a magnet.

The more he looked at it, the more Gorin realised it to be quite different from all the other scintillating luminaries scattered over the firmament like so much glittering dust. For not only was it shining with its constant reddish fire, but, so utterly unlike anything else in that star-studded night sky, it was motionless! A celestial beacon, guiding them across the empty vastnesses of the desert!

Ecinlorne confirmed it was indeed the sign they were following. "It is known as the Eternal Chariot," she explained. "It marks the path across the sands from the Forest to the beginning of the Hills. It has been there ever since the travellers started using the Old Way in the days Claedon remembers.

Without it no one could hope to reach the other side of the Jerah deserts alive."

Gorin gazed for some time at the unblinking point of light ahead of them, failing to pay much attention to anything else; not even the moon when it rose in cold magnificence to bathe the desolation in its ephemeral beams.

He was startled out of his almost hypnotic fixation upon the star by a swift movement in the sky, which flashed into his field of vision and then was gone. He looked towards the horizon, from where he thought the movement came, but could see nothing. It might have been a falling star, but something made him doubt it.

He looked again at the stationary reddish beacon, the countless other stars round about it and then at the moon, now high in the sky. Its waning face was being slowly absorbed by the irregular frontier of darkness that marked the lunar night. It was while still staring at the diminishing nocturnal orb that another sudden movement caught his eye close to the skyline.

Gorin switched his attention to the point where the unnaturally swift phenomenon seemed to have occurred. Once again, there was nothing. Then, as he watched, he saw a minute speck of brilliant light appear in the sky and move in an arc towards the reddish star, dipping towards the earth and vanishing from view. Another followed the same course and a third came after it. For a few minutes there was nothing more to see and then three lights together appeared over the northern horizon. They raced across the sky in a triangle formation towards the East where they sank below the line of sand hills, far, far away in the distance.

Before Gorin could say anything to his guide, he felt the hind's thoughts coming into his head. "You have seen them," came the message. "Ask not what they are, for you will be

discovering that very soon now. We will probably see many more of them as we draw closer and your journey nears its end."

That was all. Gorin knew better than to try asking any more questions on the subject. Nonetheless, he was burning with curiosity to know what significance these moving stars had, where they were going and what connection they might have with the Hill-People and his final destination.

Throughout the night, Gorin watched the lights in the sky. There were often as many as one or two every few minutes, either going to or coming from the same point in the East beneath the unchanging stellar beacon.

Fortunately, there was no storm to impede their progress in the course of that night, so they made good headway across the desert sands. Gorin hardly noticed the ground they were covering, however. He only had eyes for that one, fixed star and for all the other shifting ones associated with it. He saw formations of five, six, eight and even nine lights altogether. Once a single luminary, brighter than anything else in the heavens save the moon, passed right over their heads, moving comparatively slowly in a westerly direction.

That would surely take it towards Zandernatis, Gorin thought, wondering if it would travel the whole distance… and if there would be anyone, apart from Hexard, sufficiently interested in seeing it. For few people in the Golden City ever looked up into the sky at night. They had too many other things to occupy them.

So passed the hours of darkness, until the first grey streaks of dawn prompted Ecinlorne to halt their progress. Gorin had been so intent on watching the sky all night that he had failed to notice how the terrain was changing. He was therefore

surprised to discover they were now standing on much stonier ground than before, in a landscape dotted with craggy bassets.

They took shelter beneath an overhanging ledge of rock promising good protection from the heat of the day and the scorching power of the sun's rays. There were also a few scrubby bushes struggling for existence wherever their shallow roots could take a precarious hold in the infertile soil; a first indication they would soon be leaving the desert behind them.

A New Day

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1383 - 1408

As usual, Ecinlorne communicated very little, leaving Gorin to rest however he wished. Except he was now so excited, he only slept fitfully for an hour or two before springing wide awake, eager to explore his surroundings. Perhaps he might even find some clue as to what had been responsible for the strange lights in the sky the night before!

Upon emerging from the shelter of the overhanging rock, he was struck again by the blinding brilliance of the sun reverberating from the dry, yellow ground about him. The landscape was not very inspiring. It consisted predominantly of parched ground punctuated by the occasional craggy outcrop and sparse growths of shrubs; their drab, faded leaves doing little to relieve the overall impression of desolation.

In the distance, towards the East, he could see some yellow hills. At least, they appeared to be hills, for in the heat the air wavered and swam like a living thing, making anything more than a few thousand measures away indistinct. Nevertheless, there was something, for behind them he thought he could also distinguish a line of rugged mountains.

Apart from that, there was nothing to suggest anything remotely connected with what he had seen the previous night.

He turned to look towards the West, from whence they had come, but found even less to focus his attention on. In that direction there was nothing to be seen but the desert; an imprecise shimmer of fulvous heat without any detail to relieve its monotony.

Gorin then began to suffer from the head pains he had experienced the day before. It was as if the dazzling light were boring deep into his brain, searing his consciousness. He ran back into the shade of the rock and buried his head in his arms, waiting a few moments for the symptoms to ease and bring him relief.

The exposure to strong light was obviously causing these severe attacks of pain. He supposed his eyes must be particularly sensitive, although they did allow him to see well in the dark. It was something he had already noticed in the City and particularly during the nocturnal journey across the desert. In fact, he felt much more comfortable travelling by night, irrespective of the temperature. Exactly why, he could not say. It was more of an instinctive feeling, deep within him, influencing his thoughts from somewhere beyond the bounds of reason.

As the sun reached the point of noon, Gorin refreshed himself from his dwindling supplies of water and ate some of the sparse fare still remaining to him. He certainly hoped it would not be too long before they came to another water source of some kind. His bottle was by now scarcely more than a quarter full, with what it contained tasting brackish and unpleasant after such long exposure to the hot sun. He wondered, in passing, what his guide did about drinking, or perhaps she had no need to, being such a fabulous creature. He presumed unihorns must somehow escape being subject to the kind of constraints lesser creatures had to contend with. He

was never sure just how far this went however, and knew it was foolish to expect Ecinlorne to tell him.

Resting with these thoughts going through his mind, Gorin fell into a light slumber. He dreamt of the distant mountains he had seen, peopling them with all manner of wondrous beings capable of controlling the stars and flying like birds.

He felt himself surrounded by unearthly lights flashing across black, midnight skies on their way to unknown destinations; beyond the point where the infinities of heaven joined those of Earth. Then he saw wonderful, preternatural faces gazing down from behind billowing clouds. They were just like those he had seen on the ceilings of the Great Palace in Zandernatis. Except those in his vision were far more unearthly than anything a human artist could ever hope to capture with brush and paint.

That was not all – for he could also feel something urging him onwards to seek out this place of marvels and the origin of those lights in the sky. For there... there... And then he awoke with a start.

Ecinlorne was standing in front of him, head bowed and foreleg pawing at the ground. The daylight was waning and it was time to be going once more. Gorin shook off the last embraces of sleep and struggled to his feet, gathering his bags and water bottle as he did so. This time, the hind did not immediately step forward for him to mount. Instead, she stayed looking fixedly at him, meaning of course, she wished to communicate another of her mental messages.

"We must go now," came the words into Gorin's mind, "and then I too must go. Tonight will be the last time you ride me, and indeed the last time you will ever ride on the back of a white unihorn."

"You mean we'll get to the Hills tonight?"

"Not exactly. I am unable to take you further than a certain point, and we will come to that point towards morning. Tonight we will be travelling faster than we have ever travelled before, and at the end of our journey, you must complete the final stages of your quest alone. Come, we have to be on our way."

With some misgivings, Gorin climbed onto the back of his unihorned mount for what, apparently, was to be the last time. He felt the movement of Ecinlorne's powerful muscles as she moved away from the rocky protrusion before beginning to canter over the firm surface of the dry earth. Within minutes, they were indeed travelling far faster than at any other time of the journey, the wind rushing by as they effortlessly gathered speed over the uneven ground.

As they sped along, Gorin glanced up at the sky overhead and saw several more of the mysterious lights, similar to those he had seen the night before. Only now, they appeared larger and burned with an inexplicable, vibrant fire, endowing them with qualities natural heavenly bodies could never possess.

He then had to bend his head again in the face of the oncoming wind generated by Ecinlorne's speed. She raced faster over rocks and scrubland, faster over more bushes and short, stubby grasses; yet her step never faltered once and Gorin had no difficulty following the rhythm of her headlong gallop.

Far ahead, he could make out the silhouette of the distant hills and above them the steadfast light of the "Eternal Chariot", drawing them, encouraging them, onwards. Ecinlorne was going so swiftly now, Gorin even wondered if her feet were still touching the earth. It hardly seemed possible for any creature to cover so much ground and maintain such a

speed. On they went, and on again, until the nature of the land around them began to change once more.

From sparse growths of grasses and bushes, they came to an area where grass was more plentiful and even a few stunted trees managed to survive. More was revealed as the moon began rising sometime later, its feeble beams revealing a little more. Gorin was able to see how much closer the hills now were. If they continued at the same pace, they would surely reach them within a few hours.

The white hind kept up her fantastic speed throughout the night and Gorin, although somewhat fatigued by the continued effort of holding on, suffered no major discomfort. Finally, as the moon began sinking somewhere behind them, he felt his mount's pace begin to slacken. This allowed him to raise his head in order to see why they were slowing down, as the hills were still some considerable distance ahead. The reddish star continued to point the way, but it, too, was still on the horizon as far as Gorin could determine.

Nevertheless, Ecinlorne continued slowing down and then, for about an hour, fell into a more relaxed canter. As the last rays of moonlight lit up the surrounding landscape, Gorin was able to make out a high wall of rock formations ahead of them, rendered grotesque and bizarre by the deepening shadows. Before long, even the stellar beacon sank behind this looming obstacle. The white hind decreased her speed even more as they drew nearer and then finally came to a halt, by which time the huge bulk of the rugged wall was blotting out half the sky.

The range of cliffs proved to be less impenetrable than they had first appeared. For on closer examination, Gorin was able to perceive a great gash in the rocks, as if a giant knife had sliced into them, carving out a deep gorge in their dark heart. Ecinlorne moved again and brought Gorin right up to the

opening of this cleft in the precipitous rockface, stopped once more and indicated he should now dismount.

"I can take you no further," she told him. "You must continue on your own from this point, until you are met by others who will take charge of you. Dawn will come in a few hours and by then you should be nearly through. When you arrive at the far end of the gorge, you will know what to do. Farewell!"

Solo journey

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1409 - 1435

With no more ado, not even leaving Gorin time to say his own words of farewell, Ecinlorne turned and made off over the stony terrain with a swiftness soon equalling that of the outward journey. Almost before he could realise what was happening, his guide was no more than a white speck in the distance, rapidly shrinking in size until she had disappeared completely.

Gorin could hardly believe he had seen the last of the white hind. They had come such a long way together and now he was alone. But for how long? Ecinlorne had said he would soon be meeting up with some others. When would that be? And how would he know what he was supposed to do?

Resignedly, he swung his cloak across his shoulders, picked up his bags and near empty water bottle and began to walk a few steps into the mouth of the defile. He suddenly felt very small, insignificant and terribly alone, suspended as he was between two worlds; all too aware he belonged to neither of them.

The gorge around him was dark and forbidding. Even with his excellent night vision, he had some difficulty making out the details of his surroundings. He walked with great care,

lest some unseen irregularity or hole in the ground caught him unawares. However, the surface of the rocky trail turned out to be surprisingly smooth, so that after a while he became a little bolder, advancing at greater speed.

Looking up, he could see a good portion of sky overhead, dotted with the innumerable stars that had been such a feature of the nights spent travelling across the desert. They were now his only companions on this solitary pilgrimage into the unknown.

After about one hour of steady progress, Gorin realised the walls on either side of the gorge were not quite as high as they had been at the beginning. Consequently, a little more light was filtering in from the sky above. Admittedly, it was only starlight, but there was enough for him to see where he was going. His spirits rose again and he began to feel a little more confident. After all, he had made it this far. With Ecinlorne's help admittedly, but even so... There had been the awful shock of losing Drian at the Paradise Gate, but judging by his guide's comments, it was almost inevitable considering the limitations imposed on those living in Zandernatis. Limitations he might have a hand in lifting, if everything went as it should.

These more positive thoughts led to Gorin feeling rather proud of the responsibility laid upon him by Hexard and the King, even if he was unable to grasp the full implications of his destiny. As for his own origins, they seemed to be of lesser importance now, for in some measure he had found the identity he lacked in his mission. It was carrying him forward, and there had even been intimations he would ultimately discover the truth of his own being in its fulfilment.

Then he heard the sound for the first time, sending all other thoughts fleeing from his mind.

It began in the remote distance, as if coming from another world. At first, Gorin supposed it to be a trick of the wind, wailing and echoing along the length of the gorge. The sound grew louder, and it was soon evident that no wind, not even the mightiest tempest, could stir up anything to equal these unearthly notes. They were high-pitched, then varied in tone as they grew in volume to the accompaniment of a powerful swishing noise, rising and falling like the waves of a mighty sea.

Instinctively, Gorin drew into the side of the defile, trying to hide himself among the few loose rocks lying there. He felt extremely vulnerable as the sound increased in intensity until it filled the air all around him, finally becoming distinguishable as ethereal music; a strange, powerful and rhythmic incorporeal chant.

It was followed by the light. A wave of brilliant effulgence surging up the ravine, throwing every rock into sharp relief. As the skyborne radiance approached, Gorin had to shield his eyes, for it burned with brightness greater than the noonday desert sun. Yet it was without heat. The chanting and swishing rhythm rose to a mighty crescendo as they passed overhead and then died away, as the splendour swept on down the gorge.

In a moment, all was as before, only seeming darker because of the sudden contrast with the wave of blinding intensity. Gorin lifted his eyes in time to see a concentrated blaze of light disappearing at the other end of the defile. He then realised it must have been one of those peculiar moving stars he had seen in the desert sky - and it had flown right over him, heading in the direction he was taking!

He wondered what connection there was between these speeding, chanting stars and the Hill-People he was supposed

to seek out. Could any creatures having mastery of such power be interested in him? He found it difficult to see how.

All the confidence he had felt just a few minutes before dissolved in an instant, leaving him feeling vulnerable, alone and insignificant again. He soon realised there was no point in staying where he was however, cowering behind a rock at the side of the gorge like a cornered rat. He still had his mission after all, and there was no alternative but to press on, whatever the end might be.

Gorin continued his journey for another half hour or more, stopping every now and then to listen in case he could hear that strange unearthly sound approaching again. Thankfully, there was only the silence of the night, and nothing further occurred until a gradual lightening of the sky in front of him revealed that dawn was not far away.

As the new day grew around him, Gorin was able to make quicker progress, and by the time the sun finally rose, he had covered a considerable distance. There was no appreciable change in the nature of the gorge around him however, the daylight revealing it to be bounded by sheer yellow rocks rising in vertical formations to an irregular skyline. The ground was hard and stony, without trace of any kind of life, vegetable, animal or human. He therefore had no alternative but to press on, in the hope of ultimately finding some clue as to the next stage of his journey. The bottom of the ravine was still in shadow, so he could walk there quite comfortably for some time yet before the sun's heat became a problem.

He followed the monotonous rocky corridor for an hour or more, still on the lookout for anything indicating how near he might be to the end of it. But the gorge seemed to go on for ever. Until up ahead he realised the rocky trail through the precipitous cliffs turned sharply to the right. Just as he saw the

bend in front of him, he also became aware of a faint sound, far away. At first he was afraid the mighty source of light and noise was returning, but the sound did not grow in intensity, at least not while he stood still. However, it did become louder as he walked further towards the point where the gorge changed direction so abruptly. It was also a kind of swishing, but without the fearsome rhythm he had heard the night before. This was much more familiar and far more welcome. It was the sound of flowing water!

Driven by a renewed sense of purpose, Gorin quickened his pace, hastening along the rocky defile until he came to the deflection in its route. By now, the sound of running water was quite distinct and unmistakable. This gladdened his heart, for the air was beginning to warm up as the sun steadily climbed higher in the sky. He could at least be sure of not expiring from thirst!

As he rounded the bend, he saw ahead of him a dramatic change in the nature of the gorge. For it suddenly became far less unprepossessing, with the rugged walls now much lower. They even featured a number of ledges with enough soil on them to support a few small trees and patches of grass. There were still giant boulders and irregular outcrops of rock strewn in every direction, but after the barren nature of the country he had just come through, this looked like a pastoral idyll. Even more welcome than these signs of plant life, he could now see ahead of him the end of the rockbound trail; no more than two hundred measures distant. At this point, the cliff formations stopped abruptly, and beyond them ran the waters he had heard from afar. The waters of a broad, gently flowing river!

Gorin hurried down the last stretch of the gorge as quickly as he could, even finding the energy to run some of the way. This soon revealed how spent he was after his long trek; but

reaching the end of these waterless wastes and finding the river made his exhaustion immaterial!

He came out onto a narrow strip of land running along the foot of the cliffs. There was verdant grass growing here, lush and well watered of a kind he had not even seen in the Garden. It felt soft and springy beneath his feet as he ran over it to the riverbank, plunging his dusty hands and arms into the cool, clear stream. He splashed water into his face and drank long draughts from his bottle, refilling it again and again, then pouring some over his head and letting it run down his back in delirious exultation at having emerged from the desert at last!

Once his initial excitement had ebbed away, Gorin paused to look around and survey his surroundings. Behind him, there was nothing but the yellow cliffs and to either side the river extending as far as he could see, without any visible deviation in its course.

There was a good deal more to see on the opposite bank however, some sixty measures distant. For there, everything was green, bright and fresh with a palpable succulence surpassing anything he had ever seen. Close to the river's edge, grassy mounds led away to some gently rising foothills, covered with tiny wildflowers of all imaginable colours.

Beyond the low hills, the ground became more uneven, attaining considerable heights in places, but it was nowhere as forbidding and inhospitable as the cliffs and rocky gorge on Gorin's side of the river. The higher land was also covered in grass and, further up, by thick wooded groves that partially concealed an imposing chain of mountains thrusting up into the sky.

This was a truly magnificent sight and Gorin stared at it for some time in sheer amazement. Until he started wondering how he was supposed to cross the river and continue his

journey into this new country. Although not flowing particularly fast, it was obviously quite deep and too wide for him to attempt swimming across. He looked around in the hope of finding a piece of dead wood or something similar to assist him. Then he realised that in his first, rapid survey of his immediate surroundings, he had quite overlooked one of its most important features.

For some way to the left, perhaps thirty measures from where he was standing, a thin, straggly tree was growing right next to the water's edge. Its branches descended almost onto the surface of the river, making it difficult to see what was concealed among them. But there was something. As he approached, he saw it was in fact a small boat, bobbing on the gentle swell of the passing current. And in the boat lay a paddle, ready for use! It was just a matter of untying the thin rope securing the boat to the tree and paddling across!

Gorin did not have to think twice about such an open invitation, and before long he was in midstream, energetically directing his frail craft towards the strange, enticing land on the other side of the great river.

XIII – "The Paradise Knowing"

As revealed in "Pre-Destination", the original Haakon Urn manuscripts were stolen in 1976, apparently by religious extremists. This was shortly before the book's initial scheduled publication date. However, although most of the transliteration, translation and rewriting had been focused on the material for "Genesis Antarctica" itself, the team of experts at the Dickensen Institute had also worked on a number of other texts that appeared to be of particular significance in Zandernation culture.

The most notable of these is a brief, ten line "credo", now referred to as "The Paradise Knowing".

It was included in a small folio of documents found in the third urn to be opened, which also contained the "Book of Magres" and appeared to have been taken directly from the "Tables of Greater Scheme Design". It was singled out as worthy of particular attention by David Waterford (New Zealand Institute for Ancient Languages) and Professor Summers (University of Texas, Austin). They believed it should be considered an integral part of the "Book of Magres" as it was one of the very few documents of all those found in the urns which could be said to reflect a Zandernation belief system.

The text follows, as transcribed by David Waterford and Professor Summers and revised by Dr. G. L. Neaker:

"The Paradise Knowing"

(from the "Tables of Greater Scheme Design" and incorporated into "The Book of Magres").

First Trinity
We are At One with Oneness.
We are At One with our Diversity.
We are At One with our Uniqueness.

Second Trinity
We know ourselves to be the sum of all our lives.
We know ourselves to be the fruit of infinite dreaming.
We know ourselves to be Creators of our Worlds.

Third Trinity
We cannot believe. We only Know.
We cannot hate. We only Love.
We cannot die. We only Live.

Our destiny is to evolve and fuse As One with Oneness.

As has been clearly stated elsewhere, Zandernatis was essentially an areligious society. Initially, it was thought this was because everyone had perfect recall of their previous lives and were not afraid of death, as they knew they would soon be returning in a new body. These few brief lines, encapsulating a whole philosophy of life, reveal there was a great deal more to it than that.

The following interpretation of "The Paradise Knowing" by ***Dr. Graham L. Neaker***, Visiting Professor in Pre-Philosophical Studies at Athens State University, who also contributed to the final version, provides a valuable insight into its far-reaching implications.

Commentary by Dr. Graham Neaker

First of all, I would like to begin by saying that rendering the initial transliterated texts into the present form was a particularly difficult challenge. It is therefore possible that some of the more subtle meanings may have been 'lost in translation'.
However, I will try to interpret what lies behind these various statements and what they can teach us about this society.

First Trinity

We are At One with Oneness.

The notion of being "At One" with something implies being in harmony with it. So being "At One with Oneness" is recognition of having a bonding association with the source of all Creation. This is an abstract concept, perhaps a precursor of the Judeo-Christian notion that we all have a "Divine Soul".

We are At One with our Diversity.

This "At Oneness" does have infinite facets however, and is expressed as our Diversity, being the multiple manifestations of the Oneness that can also be referred to as the "Godhead".

We are At One with our Uniqueness.

The multiplicity implied by "Diversity" is further developed to encompass our Uniqueness, presumably meaning the unique nature of our own individual paths of evolution.

The First Trinity may therefore be defined as being at once the Single Source, its Infinite Manifestations and its Singularity. We are one and yet multiple, individual components of a Greater, Unified Cosmic Scheme.

These notions will be familiar to anyone who has studied systems of belief in any depth. However, to see them expressed in this cryptic way suggests

there were distinctly esoteric aspects to the underlying foundation values on which Zandernation society was built.

Second Trinity

We know ourselves to be the sum of all our lives.

This statement unequivocally reflects the Zandernation people's ability to recall previous incarnations. It is not a statement of belief, but of an irrefutable knowing. It explains much about the way the society developed once it was left to its own devices. It does however also imply that this ability should contribute to evolutionary development since "ourselves" must be the "sum" of all lives lived by each "Self".

(NB: the original text of this Second Trinity is not clear as to whether we should be talking about "ourselves" or "our selves". The second option does perhaps have broader implications).

We know ourselves (our selves?)
to be the fruit of infinite dreaming.

We are not exactly sure what this statement is referring to. Does it mean individual dreaming that is infinite in scope? Or that there are an infinite number of dreaming states? Or even levels of awareness? Although "The Dreaming"[35] does appear several times in "The Song of Gorin", particularly with reference to Esperon, its appearance in the "Knowing" would imply there is a more far-reaching significance behind it. Nothing in any of the documents deciphered by the Dickensen Institute teams before the manuscripts' disappearance throws any further light on this issue. If the lost texts are irrecoverable (which seems probable), we may never learn the answer to this question.

[35] We should also not forget that "The Dreaming" as a pre-creation state lives on in Australian Aboriginal culture. See "Zandernatis Pre-Destination", Chapter X.

We know ourselves (our selves?)
to be Creators of our Worlds.

On one level, these words give us to understand that the Zandernations had a very clear idea of the role they had to play in shaping their personal existences. It is a statement of responsibility, implying that they too believed "You reap what you sow".

There could be another dimension to this statement, though. For in view of their relationship with the Aerauma and their notion of being "At One with Oneness", this could imply an (implicit or explicit) awareness of Creation at a much higher level.

Third Trinity

We cannot believe. We only Know.

This Trinity consists of three very cryptic precepts. The first of these restates the fundamental reason why the Zandernation people did not need to be told what to believe. They knew what to most of us is unknowable - the purpose of Life, the truth of Creation, the real nature of "Death", etc.

We cannot hate. We only Love.

With the breadth of understanding enjoyed by the people of the Golden City, this precept comes as no surprise. They knew how to embrace life in a way we have long forgotten.

We cannot die. We only Live.

Once again, and for the second time in the "Paradise Knowing", we find reference to life's inextinguishable nature. It also serves to introduce the final line, highlighting the vital role played by evolution.

Our destiny is to evolve and fuse As One with Oneness.

The entire Zandernation philosophy *is summed up in this line. Evolution. Fusion. Oneness. Attaining the point at which being "**At** One with Oneness" becomes "**As** One with Oneness". The first describes an aspiration, a fervent desire to evolve, while the second expresses the ultimate goal of attainment.*

We are indebted to Dr. Neaker for this insight into the "ethos" of the Zandernation people. We invite you to bear it in mind when reading the "re-telling" of "The Song of Gorin", as it does explain a number of reactions and attitudes that we, in our "modern" world, might otherwise find difficult to accept.

XIV - Pardylis

"Lands beyond our knowledge,
goals we cannot reach,
Wandering in search of truths,
that living cannot teach."

"The Song of the Heroes", stanza xxi

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1436 - 1471

Once on the other side of the river, Gorin climbed out of his small craft and looked round for some clue as to which direction he should take. At first sight, there was not a great deal more to see than had been visible from across the water. The lush grass was thick and its emerald green carpet extended everywhere, punctuated by the multi-coloured flowers he had already seen from afar.

Towards the hills, the profuse vegetation was intermingled with even more exuberant splashes of colour from various types of blossoming shrubs. Beyond them, the wooded parts of the hillsides looked even more attractive, promising cool, leafy shade to the desert-weary traveller.

There was something else, however. Something Gorin had failed to notice before. He screwed up his eyes trying to identify what he was seeing. There seemed to be a flock of large birds – or what he took to be birds - slowly circling the peak of one of the distant mountains on the horizon. They must be

huge if he could see them from this distance, he thought. How could it be possible? He puzzled over this curious conundrum for a few moments. Then, realising he could not possibly have any explanation immediately, he set off resolutely into the new country now opening up before him.

Gorin had only walked about twenty or thirty measures from the river when he heard the noise of something behind him, like the soft snap of a twig breaking. He glanced round and was astonished to see two figures standing not more than five measures away from him. They were young men, fair of face, with shoulder-length blonde hair; and they were scrutinising the new arrival with compelling, blue-green eyes.

Having intruded upon this sovereign domain uninvited, he suddenly felt overcome with guilt and an urge to run away from these two sentinels as fast as he could. Except that he was unable to do anything; for there was such magnetism in their gaze and authority in their manner that he was powerless to move.

"Please do not be afraid," said one of the young men, moving towards Gorin, holding out his hand. "We mean you no harm. But it is so rare to see anyone here by the river we wanted to know what brings you here."

He put a gentle hand on Gorin's shoulder and looked into his eyes with an apparent expression of regret for having alarmed him. Gorin returned his gaze and half smiled, hoping it gave the impression he was reassured. In fact, he was still on his guard, for these two beings were so unlike anyone he had come up against until now. Their faces were kindly, and there was nothing whatsoever to suggest they could be hostile in any way. Yet there was something indefinable about them, transcending the merely human.

Perhaps it was the hypnotic quality of those eyes, glinting like jewels and seeming to reflect a special kind of knowing. Or else the insubstantial air given them by the long, white linen robes they wore, accentuating their tall and noble bearing. For an instant, Gorin wondered if they could be part of a dream or an apparition of some kind. The light pressure of the hand on his shoulder was real enough though, and there was nothing else to make him believe things were not exactly as they appeared. He was, after all, a long way from the Forest of Dissemblance now.

"My name is Dorund," said the young man, and my companion is Abroath. How may we call you?"

Gorin told them his name.

"Well, Gorin, it is part of our duty to keep watch on the lands bordering this country, just in case there is anyone who should stray into them without realising where they are going." He let his hand fall from the newcomer's shoulder. "So can you tell us why you are here and where you intend to go?"

"Not exactly. I mean, I'm looking for someone who is supposed to have come through here, trying to reach a city in the Hills. But I have no idea how to get to it from here."

"Where did you come from?" Abroath approached now and put this question in a slightly sterner tone of voice than Dorund had used.

"From the desert."

"And before that?"

"Well, from the City in the Garden..."

"From Zandernatis, you mean?"

"And you are seeking the way to Pardylis?" put in Dorund.

Gorin nodded.

"Now why should someone from the Golden City want to brave the challenges of the Forest and the Deserts of Jerah, with all the fears and dangers they hold?" Abroath paused for a moment in his cross-examination, then suggested, "Perhaps it isn't good enough for you there any more?"

"That is not the reason I came," Gorin answered firmly. "I have been sent to deliver a special message to a particular person in Pardylis, and if you could be of any aid in helping me reach him I would be most grateful."

Dorund laughed at this and put his reassuring hand on Gorin's shoulder once more. "Don't be put off by Abroath," he said. "He wishes you no ill. He's only asking these questions because we are responsible for guarding the frontiers to this land. In any case, we are obliged to send you on to Pardylis; anyone found here by the river has to be taken there first, so have no fear about that. If the person you are seeking is there, no doubt you will be able to deliver your message. Now, if you would please follow me."

He led the way along an infrequently trodden path winding through endless masses of glorious wildflowers. Gorin followed, while Abroath brought up the rear, giving the impression he needed to keep a close eye on their visitor, just in case he suddenly decided to head off in some other direction. Despite Dorund's courteousness, Gorin felt both his companions were carefully observing and assessing him throughout their uphill journey.

The meandering path they followed took them over some of the lower, grass-covered hills before reaching more rocky terrain again. They then climbed through an area of uneven sandstone formations, differing considerably from those Gorin had encountered on the far side of the river. These supported many different types of vegetation, including tall, graceful trees

that cast a very pleasing, leafy shade upon the path. From time to time, as they wound their way upwards, they were able to catch glimpses of the broad valley with its gently flowing river below them.

Finally, after negotiating a particularly steep part of the track, they rounded a bend and came onto a wide ledge some five score measures long and twenty measures wide. Gorin was led to a dark opening in the craggy cliff on the far side and invited to enter, bowing under the natural lintel. Once inside, he was able to stand fully upright again.

At first glance, he saw there was room to accommodate several people in the rocky chamber, and that provision had been made for their comfort with various articles of furniture ranged about the interior. Dorund invited Gorin to rest on a low bed next to the rear wall and brought a small oil lamp to his side. He then busied himself with the preparation of some simple food, which they all shared.

During this time, little was said beyond what was necessary, increasing Gorin's feeling of unease. The two young men had promised to help him reach the city of Pardylis after all, but he could see no apparent preparations being made for the journey. So he decided to raise the question again and ask how far they were from their destination.

"It's in the mountains," answered Abroath. "Not very far."

"You will be there sooner than you think," added Dorund, rising to his feet and moving to the entrance of the cave. Gorin wanted to follow him, but was restrained by the firm pressure of Abroath's hand on his arm.

"Please stay where you are," the young man said in a low, but not unfriendly voice. "Dorund will tell us when it's time for you to leave."

Gorin sank back onto the bed, wondering what they could be waiting for. In any case, there was certainly no point in him trying to go anywhere on his own, for quite apart from not being able to evade both of his "guardians", he had no idea which direction he should take once outside.

Looking around the cave, he could see it was not used very often, judging by the heavy layers of dust lying on some of the tables and stools. It served perhaps as a brief resting place for those who patrolled the area as these two had said they were doing. He tried to make conversation with Abroath on this subject, but found him little inclined to share any real information.

"We come in here whenever we pass this way," was all he volunteered. "But it's only an outpost and rarely used, even now."

"Yes, but how rarely?"

"Why should you want to know that?" Abroath's reply was curt, his clear, turquoise eyes suddenly becoming small and full of suspicion.

"No real reason; I was just thinking how lucky I was you came upon me. After all, if you hadn't, I could have been wandering around for a long time before finding the right direction."

"Certainly. Although unless you go by the means we use, you would never get to Pardylis at all. So eventually, one of our patrolling parties would have found you. We just happened to be the first."

"Do you come upon many people around here then?" asked Gorin, puzzled, for he had understood the land of the Hill-People to be remote and virtually isolated from the outside world. They certainly wouldn't get many visitors from the Garden or the Golden City.

"No, but in these days, we prefer to be sure. The time may be coming when conditions will change and some will seek the way, with evil or good intent. We therefore prefer to take every possible precaution to meet any eventuality." Abroath looked at Gorin almost accusingly, as he tried to detect what motivation really lay behind the intruder's arrival.

After this brief conversation, no more passed between them, each preferring to think his own thoughts. Gorin's main concern now was how long they intended keeping him there. Allowing a few more silent minutes to slip by, he was about to put this question to Abroath when suddenly Dorund rushed back into the cave, full of excitement.

"It's coming," he said. "Go out and wave them in while I look after our friend Gorin."

At this news, Abroath got up and went outside while Dorund busied himself with preparing a piece of soft cloth, which he had taken from one of the shelves at the back of the cave. This he folded in half, and then in half again, thus forming a strip of material about one measure long and seven or eight hundredths wide.

"I'm sorry about this, he said. "We have to blindfold you. It's the usual thing I'm afraid, but you'll probably understand why in the end."

So saying, the band of cloth was passed around Gorin's head and securely tied behind. Although having some misgivings about this treatment, he realised there was no point resisting, for if it was going to get him to Pardylis, he had no choice in the matter.

The final stage

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1472 - 1489

Just as Gorin's view of the outside world was blotted out, strange sounds began to fill the air. They initially resembled the rushing of a distant wind, but then became the roar of a hurricane mingled with the chanting of empyreal voices. These throbbed in an obsessive rhythm, echoing around the rocky walls of the chamber, to be amplified into a weird, almost grotesque howl.

Gorin recognised them as the same terrifying sounds he had heard in the gorge, associated with the brilliant light in the sky! For an instant, they were all about him and so loud he had to put his hands over his ears. A second later, the chanting altered pitch, while suddenly becoming accompanied by rhythmical thudding and a heavy, rumbling noise. This quickly died away, to be replaced by Abroath's voice calling out a greeting. Dorund then took Gorin's arm and guided him towards the mouth of the cave, where he was reminded of the lintel and the need to duck beneath it before coming out into the open air again.

Because of the blindfold, Gorin could of course make very little out of the next few minutes. He did however have the impression there was now another presence on the plateau of rock outside the cave. In particular, his ears caught the faint sound of something jingling and then the murmur of voices some way off.

After a moment's pause, Dorund guided him forward again and closer to the source of the new sounds, which became more complex as they approached. In addition to the jingling, Gorin could hear what sounded like the shifting of restless feet and the noise of ropes or straps being pulled and strained. Finally, a brief gust of wind suddenly blew past him,

heavy with an indefinable, musky scent, coming and going as if raised by an enormous fan of some kind. Dorund then drew him to a halt and released the pressure on his arm.

"Stop," he said, "you have to step up here, so be careful." Gorin tentatively raised his leg, extended his foot and felt it come down on something hard and firm. He put his whole weight on it and a moment later felt a strong pair of arms supporting him under the armpits, helping him up onto some kind of platform that seemed to be shifting gently beneath his feet.

"This is where we must leave you." Dorund's voice came to Gorin from somewhere slightly below him. "But you'll be in good hands. Don't worry about anything and try not to be afraid. I think you'd best stay sitting on the floor; you should have a smoother ride that way. Farewell, and good luck."

Gorin heard the young man's footsteps fading away. He then found himself being settled against a smooth concave surface by the same firm hands that had helped him up a moment before.

"This is where you should sit," said a soft voice, close to his head. "It won't be very comfortable I'm afraid, but it isn't for long. There will be some bumping at first, then afterwards you should find it easy enough to bear."

Gorin did as he was instructed, squatting down against the curved surface as well as he could. Whatever he was riding in seemed to be made out of some smooth, polished material, slightly warm to the touch. As he had been told, it was not at all comfortable and he did not relish the prospect of being bumped around too much in conditions such as these. But as he had no choice in the matter, he braced himself for whatever was coming next.

He did not have to wait long. Moments later, the jingling noise became louder and he heard a second person get up onto the shifting platform as they began to move. The sensation of motion was at first comparatively gentle, but it became increasingly more pronounced with each second.

As they moved forward, he heard the other-earthly chanting starting to build. It was coming from right in front of them and he dearly wished he could see what was going on. He tentatively raised one arm towards his head, hoping he might be able to loosen his blindfold a little, but another hand found his before he could achieve anything. A second voice then assured him, though not unkindly, that it would be better for the moment if he kept his eyes covered.

The sensation of movement became more acute, and as the vibrations mounted, so the rumbling came to Gorin's ears again, although its thunder was all but drowned out by the insistent, disembodied chanting. This was accompanied by a swishing, beating sound that also built in intensity and rhythm. Then there was a great lurch and he thought for a moment their carriage, or whatever it was, had hit a rock and would overturn; but no!

Instead of the crash he was expecting, there was an abrupt end to the rolling and pitching motion they had undergone until then. The ride suddenly became perfectly smooth, backed only by the ever constant, wordless singing and steady, rhythmic beating.

Seconds later, the noise of rushing air became audible and gradually intensified, accompanied by a strange, floating sensation. With a horribly empty feeling in the pit of his stomach, Gorin realised they had left the ground! He must therefore be in one of those bright lights he had seen arcing

across the sky in the desert. Just like the one that frightened him so much when it flew over him in the gorge.

Perhaps it really was as well he had been blindfolded, he thought. But the longer the flight continued, the more his curiosity began to overcome his fear. If only he could see what was happening! It was no use trying to remove the blindfold though; he could sense his companions were too vigilant for that. So he had to bide his time and wait until they arrived in Pardylis, for he assumed they must be taking him to the Hill-Peoples' city, his ultimate destination.

As far as Gorin could determine, they had been travelling in the flying craft for about half an hour when he noticed a slightly different note in the chanting ahead. At the same time, the platform he was sitting on began gently dipping downwards. Moments later, he heard his two unseen companions exchanging words with each other, but the rush of the wind was too great for him to make out what they were saying.

Welcome to Pardylis

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1490 - 1523

Seconds later, he felt the sky vehicle descending more steeply, the sinking sensation bringing a moment of nausea welling up within him. The chanting rose to a higher pitch followed by a furious jolting that all but shook the breath out of his body. The clamour of the rapid thudding sounded once more, dust flew through the air making Gorin cough and then, after a moment's rocking and jangling, the platform rolled to a halt and everything became still again.

Then came the sound of voices approaching, accompanied by gentle hands reaching to assist the blindfolded passenger out of the craft and down onto the level of the ground.

Someone made sure the blindfold was still well in place and then he was led away, surrounded by a considerable number of people, judging by the sound of their footsteps. Yet exactly where he was, where he was being taken and by whom, he was of course quite unable to determine.

As he was guided forwards, Gorin had the impression he was treading on an exceptionally hard, smooth surface, such as polished marble. Despite this, those accompanying him made very little noise, their steps sounding muted and muffled. That must mean they were wearing some special kind of footwear, he decided, to deaden all sound.

He had scarcely any time to consider such details however, for within a few moments he was being ushered up a short flight of broad steps and into some kind of building. Judging by the cavernous echo that was now amplifying the soft footfalls and whispering voices all around him, he pictured it as being very large, built of stone and probably with a very high roof.

"If you would just come this way, please," whispered the voice in his ear. "We'll take you to your room."

Gorin allowed himself to be guided a few steps further into the building before receiving a signal to stop from whoever was guiding him.

"Here we are," the quiet voice said, reassuringly. "Now, if you could lift your right foot a little and step forward. Just so you don't trip on the edge of the dish."

Gorin did as he was told, and felt his left shoe graze against something as he brought his feet together.

"Now," said the voice. "Please sit down, you'll be much more comfortable as you go up."

"Up where?" queried Gorin.

"To your room. This will only take a few moments, and then you'll be able to remove the blindfold."

Gorin followed instructions and crouched down on the slightly concave, metallic surface of whatever he had just stepped into. He strained to try and make out what was going on, but could only deduce that he seemed to be surrounded by a circle of perhaps five, six or seven people who suddenly fell silent as one.

A voice from outside the circle issued an unintelligible command. He felt the metallic surface beneath him move slightly to one side and then swiftly rise one or two measures into the air, where it remained stationary for a few moments. He had the distinct impression that the metal plate or dish he was sitting on had been lifted from the ground by those standing in a circle around it. Sitting there in midair, unable to see, he began to feel rather uneasy. Why did he have to keep this stupid blindfold on anyway? What was all the secrecy?

He reached up and was about to pull it off, when he sensed another presence next to him. A hand gently grasped his uplifted arm and there came the reassuring voice in his ear again.

"Just a few more minutes. Please bear with us. You are in perfectly safe hands." These words were followed by what sounded like another command and Gorin felt the dish shudder. Then came a swishing sound, similar to the one he had heard accompanying the chanting during the journey from the cave. He felt a breeze on his face and then the sensation of rising from the ground.

The whole dish, and those around it, were being carried through the air! Up, up and up they went, smoothly rising, taking them higher and higher. They were presumably still inside the building, for the swishing sound was echoing from

all sides, but it was impossible to imagine how high they were, or where they could be going.

Finally, Gorin felt the ascent slowing down and coming to a halt, although the wall of swishing sound still surrounded him. It increased for a moment and the dish moved horizontally for a few measures before bumping against something, then partially sliding onto some kind of flat surface. He felt his companion stand beside him, a hand took his and he was led off the quivering metallic plate and onto a shelf of reassuringly solid stone. A moment later, he heard the dish being pulled free and the swishing sound retreating for a second before rapidly fading away, far below.

"There, the worst is over," said the reassuring voice. "Now, if you would just like to come this way."

Gorin heard a door swing open and felt himself being guided through the opening and towards a bed, where he was invited to sit down.

"You may rest here awhile," said the voice. "There will be someone coming to see you before long. Once I have gone, you can take off the blindfold and get your bearings a little. Welcome to Pardylis."

Before he had any time to respond, Gorin heard the door close behind his guide and a key turning in the lock from outside. What did that mean? Within seconds, he had untied the strip of cloth from his head and sat blinking as the daylight flooded in through a tall window, set high in the wall facing him.

An initial examination of his surroundings failed to reveal very much. The lofty room was built out of enormous blocks of grey-greenish stone with fine veins of white running across them. The furniture was sparse and utilitarian, consisting of the low, hard bed on one side, a table of black wood and two stools

of the same material in the middle and a narrow bench under the window.

Gorin had already started feeling uneasy by Dorund and Abroath's manner soon after they intercepted him. Then he had been subjected to that mysterious blindfolded journey. And now he found himself locked up in what looked very much like a prison cell!

His anxiety increased as he examined the door, which clearly confirmed the chamber's purpose. It was made of the same heavy black wood as the table and was studded with rows of brass nails. Light came from the single window in the wall opposite the door. However, despite being set too high to see what lay beyond, Gorin realised it wasn't entirely out of reach.

Within a few moments, he had pulled the bench away from the wall and replaced it by the table. He then set one of the stools on top of it and climbed up, giving him easy access to the window and his first glimpse of the world outside.

The view was somewhat limited by the thickness of the stone walls. Nonetheless, he could see enough to be so staggered by the breathtaking sight in front of him that he almost fell from the stool in astonishment.

There were mountains everywhere; tall jagged peaks reaching into the clear blue sky and separated by dark, yawning chasms. Yet even more spectacular were the magnificent buildings perched on the edges of these unfathomable depths. Buildings that soared to impossible heights from foundations carved out of the mountains themselves.

Craning his neck, Gorin could make out an open square some fifty measures below his window. It had a large, official-looking edifice on one side, sheer rock faces on two others and

on the fourth nothing but the gaping abyss. In several places, the austerity of the abundant rocky expanses was relieved by long, trailing, vine-like growths of such a brilliant green they looked like festive garlands swinging back and forth in the gentle wind.

On higher levels there were more great towers built on the side of the mountains, some of them rising well beyond the height of Gorin's window. Even with his restricted field of vision he could count twenty-two of them in all, each one with a different architectural design. Some had a whitish appearance, gracefully wrought out of brilliant stone, slender in form and lavishly ornamented. Others were more solid looking, older perhaps and more greenish in colour. All were decorated with elaborate carvings and many of their windows boasted ornate frames and columned embellishments. These finished in the sculpted forequarters of fabulous animals, whose multi-horned heads engaged each other above the opening in delicate, infinitely complex traceries.

More trailing plants grew from many of these window openings, giving the entire architectural ensemble a uniquely verdant appearance, despite it being built in such a forbiddingly mountainous setting. Some of the tallest peaks beyond the towers in the square even had snow on their summits, glaring in the sunlight, making them almost too bright for Gorin to look at directly.

However, despite the impressiveness of this city, its monumental design and the majesty of its spectacular environment, Gorin felt there was something here that didn't make sense. And the more he looked, the more perplexing everything became.

To begin with, he failed to see why anybody would choose to construct buildings like these in the middle of such

inhospitable terrain, no matter how awe-inspiring it might be. For not only did the void he could see from his window appear to cut the city in two, it also rendered access to the square impossible.

That was not all! By leaning out a little further, he could see there was a whole series of dark, bottomless chasms separating each group of monumental structures one from another. In fact, as far as he could make out, the entire city had been constructed on an archipelago of rugged islands rising from a gaping sea of emptiness. A more impracticable site for such a metropolis would be hard to imagine!

How could anyone live in such a place? The buildings themselves were of an aesthetic perfection beyond compare, noble and dignified. Except many appeared to have doorways thirty or forty measures above the level of the square. There were even some, a little further away, with elaborate, sculpted porticos, imposing entrances and a broad platform in front of them set half way up their sides!

It would be a good place for a colony of eagles, thought Gorin, but not for any other kind of being - even if they did have "riders" or whatever they were for flying through the air. These aerial vehicles needed somewhere to land, didn't they? They couldn't just hang suspended in the middle of nowhere without any support. Or maybe they could...

As he pondered over all these things, contemplating the strange, perplexing architecture and its grandiose setting, he heard a sound behind him in the room. He turned just in time to see the door opening, and through it come a figure whose very form answered at least some of the questions posed by the enigmatic nature of this soaring city in the mountains.

XV - The Reincarnation Debate. Extract from a discussion on the "*Chat4Forums*" platform

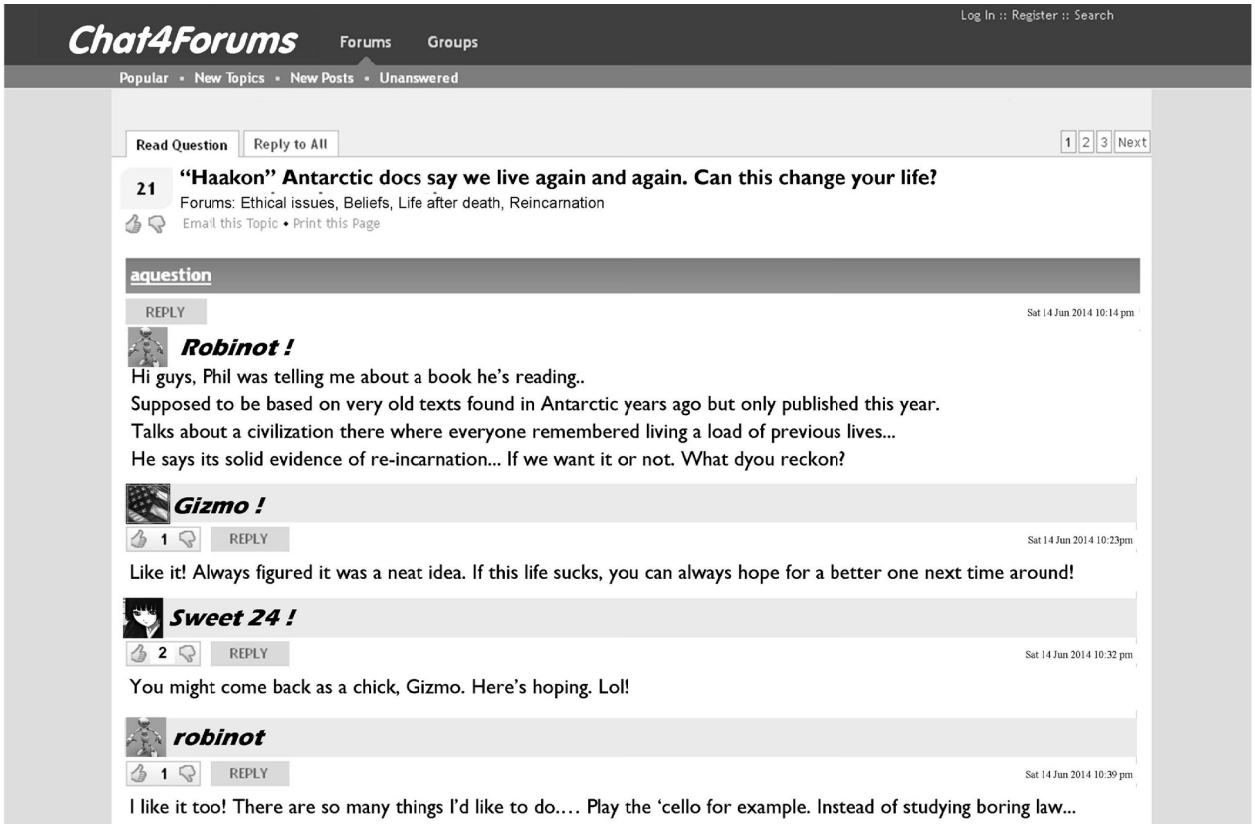
One of the most controversial revelations in "Pre-Destination" (Chapter XVI) was evidence that the Golden City's population had "total recall" of their past lives. This led to an explosion of discussions on many different Internet Forums and Chat rooms, several of them particularly focused on the ethical issues this could raise.

We have chosen an extract devoted to this subject from the highly popular "Chat4Forums" platform (the name has been modified for copyright reasons, but those familiar with such media will probably have no difficulty in identifying the source).

This Forum was chosen because its contributors are known for their frankness and willingness to raise issues considered taboo elsewhere. ***Warning!*** *Some readers may find the viewpoints aired in the following extract offensive.*

Please consider these ideas as dispassionately as possible, bearing in mind that they are ultimately ***motivated by compassion****, even if expressed in unsophisticated terms.*

Whether or not they are misguided, is quite another question...



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21

"Haakon" Antarctic docs say we live again and again. Can this change your life?

Forums: Ethical issues, Beliefs, Life after death, Reincarnation

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aquestion

REPLY

Sat 14 Jun 2014 10:14 pm

Robinot !

Hi guys, Phil was telling me about a book he's reading..
Supposed to be based on very old texts found in Antarctic years ago but only published this year.
Talks about a civilization there where everyone remembered living a load of previous lives...
He says its solid evidence of re-incarnation... If we want it or not. What dyou reckon?

Gizmo !

1 REPLY

Sat 14 Jun 2014 10:23pm

Like it! Always figured it was a neat idea. If this life sucks, you can always hope for a better one next time around!

Sweet 24 !

2 REPLY

Sat 14 Jun 2014 10:32 pm

You might come back as a chick, Gizmo. Here's hoping. Lol!

robinot

1 REPLY

Sat 14 Jun 2014 10:39 pm

I like it too! There are so many things I'd like to do.… Play the 'cello for example. Instead of studying boring law...

gizmo

1 REPLY

Sat 14 Jun 2014 10:48 pm

Might find being a 'cellist doesn't give you the lifestyle you want to be accustomed to...

robinot

1 REPLY

Sat 14 Jun 2014 11:18 pm

OK. But if, when you die, you don't - and you come back again… It means dying is no big deal anymore. Doesn't it?

sweet 24

1 REPLY

Sat 14 Jun 2014 11:24 pm

Sounds a bit creepy to me… I don't really go for that kind of weird stuff.

robinot

3 REPLY

Sat 14 Jun 2014 11:47 pm

But just suppose it's right? I mean, take my grandad. He's really old. Can't remember who he is, Has to be spoonfed... He's got no life. Wouldn't he be better out of here, come back as a kid and start all over?

gizmo

1 REPLY

Sat 14 Jun 2014 11:58 pm

What does that mean? You want to do him in?

robinot

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 00:11 am

Come on. He's my grandad. I don't want him to go… But he'd really be better off if they gave him something…

Harvey !

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 00:14 am

Hi there, r u talking about youthanasia?

sweet 24

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 00:24 am

Hey !!! What are you trying to say?

harvey

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 00:26 am

Helping people suicide. When life's not worth living, why live it?

robinot

2 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 00:34 am

I saw a programme on TV about that. The "Right to die". When people are terminal they should be able to finish in dignity and not be kept alive artificially. I totally go along with that.
Specially now we've got more evidence we come back anyway.

sweet 24

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 00:47 am

Fine. But suppose you've got someone rich and powerful… And he's sick…
Don't you think you'll get people tempted - even in his family - to "send him on his way"
to get their handfs on the inheritance?

robinot

2 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 00:51 am

OK. Only you have to really watch it. But it's a better alternative to just upping the dose of morphine...
I'd even give em people who can help them face what comes next...

harvey

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 00:59 am

You've gotta be really sure about this coming back thing. It scares me...

robinot

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:05 am

According to Phil, this book makes a great case for it. Plus all the other evidence...
Like kids remembering who they were before, for example. Everyone's talking about this kindof thing...

sweet 24

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:07 am

When I was a kid I kept getting strange dreams about being a guy working on a farm.

gizmo

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:10 am

I'm not surprised. How is Stella, by the way? Are you still together?

Phil !

2 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:12 am

Hi everyone. I see you've been talking about me!

robinot

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:15 am

Hi Phil. Yes, and about the Antarctica book, and the reincarnation thing.

gizmo

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:19 am

Do you really go along with all that?

phil

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:21 am

I do, actually. The more I think about it, the more logical it seems...

gizmo

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:24 am

Logical? What kind of evidence have you got?

phil

2 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:27 am

Plenty. That book to start with… But think. In the universe, nothing ever gets destroyed. Only transformed. The same goes for energy and matter… So why not our minds as well? Can you really sign up to only getting one shot at life? What about a kid who dies the day he's born?

robinot

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:29 am

Isn't that because God loves him so much he wants him back?

phil

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:31 am

Come on. You're talking religious superstition. They want you to believe you've only got one life so you do what they tell you to get "saved". We're always talking about "evolution", how everything works towards improvement.
So as our consciousness is supposed to be so evolved, why should it buck the trend?

harvey

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:34 am

OK, So you're right. We do come back. We can have the "Rite to die" if we're done for...
Does that make death penalties OK as well?

sweet 24

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:37 am

You mean it's cool to execute people because they're coming back anyway?

harvey

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:41 am

Maybe. After all, if its gonna teach them something and they come back a better person...
It's even doing them a favor!

phil

4 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:43 am

Hang on, Harvey. You're going a bit far...
This isn't supposed to be an excuse for making life cheap. On the contrary. It should make us more humane...

sweet 24

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:46 am

Right on! There's enough sadists and maniacs out there as it is!

phil

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:48 am

Might even be one of the reasons its been kept out of the "public domain" for so long...

robinot

2 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:52 am

Might be another reason too...
I mean, if you're sure you're coming back again, you might feel inclined not to bother too much in the present.
You just take things easy and tell yourself you'll try harder next time round...

gizmo

1 REPLY

Sun 15 Jun 2014 01:58 am

I could go for that, you know! Be quite a relief!

XVI - Aelaguel

"….. Beneath paternal wings which beat
like constant hearts and never fail."

From the preface to
"Establishment of the Golden City" (original version).

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1524 - 1555

As Gorin climbed down from the stool and table a rush of thoughts flooded through his head - thoughts about what he had just seen from the window of his room and the nature of the creature who had just entered.

It could not exactly be called human, for there was something in the presence emanating from this new arrival that immediately set it apart from any human being. It stood almost two measures high, with a proud, manly bearing and yet a slender, willowy physique, making its gender difficult to determine.

Little was revealed by the clothing either, for the creature was clad in the same kind of long, white robe as Dorund and Abroath had been wearing. There was also long, blond, silken textured hair falling to the shoulders in almost imperceptible waves, and eyes glinting with an emerald fire that was unutterably beautiful and disarmingly compelling.

The presence made itself felt in another way as well; for there now seemed to be an aura of indefinable calm radiating throughout the entire chamber, putting Gorin instantly at ease.

In fact, he was so overwhelmed with this instinctive feeling of confidence in the newcomer, that he almost took for granted its strangest aspect of all.

For coming from its finely sculpted shoulders, curving up above the head and then behind, grew the most splendid pair of white, feathered wings. They gave the creature an unreal, transcendental air, adding to the intensity generated by the magnetism of the eyes and the almost tangible emanation of a strong, but benevolent personality.

The being smiled at Gorin and turned to close the door, revealing the full magnificence of its great folded wings. Their feathers rustled in the draft caused by the closure, but an apparently involuntary movement of powerful shoulder muscles swiftly controlled their disarray and pulled them back into place. The creature turned once more towards Gorin and began to speak, in a voice so lilting and musical, it sounded like the speech of a young girl.

"So. Do you like our city of Pardylis? I see you have already had some occasion to look at it."

"It's very impressive," answered Gorin. "But...

"But what?"

"I couldn't understand why it had been built up here in the middle of so many mountains, or why the buildings themselves are so inexplicable..."

"What explanations do you need?"

"Well... so inaccessible, with doorways halfway up. But now, I begin to see why, if everyone..." He faltered, unsure if he should continue.

"If everyone is like me, you want to say?"

"Yes. I suppose so."

The winged creature smiled and invited Gorin to be seated on the stool that remained in the centre of the room. Instead,

Gorin took the one he had used to look out of the window and set it down for himself, so enabling his visitor to sit as well. This it did, pulling the graceful wings a little tighter together, preventing them from dragging on the stone floor.

Once they were both settled, the noble being began to speak again, still in its delightful, almost song-like tones.

"Most of us here in Pardylis are indeed, as I," it said. "Although there are some who do not have all our attributes. You maybe saw some of them when you crossed the Arondyvon; the river?"

Gorin confirmed that he had.

"In the city itself it is a little difficult for those without the facility of flight, so here you will notice a predominance of winged ones. The nature of our structures requires us to fly between them, and of course this is the reason why entrances are positioned at whatever level is convenient."

"I see," said Gorin, imagining what it must be like, wheeling and rising through the air in such a spectacular setting. He remembered the huge birds he had seen from afar, just before being met by Dorund and Abroath. He realised now they had not been birds at all, but these creatures flying above and around the isolated fastnesses of their awe-inspiring stronghold.

"Let me introduce myself," said the winged one. "My name is Aelaguel and there are, I am afraid, certain questions I have to put to you before you may be allowed to see any more of our city or our people. First, how may we call you?"

"My name is Gorin, and I have come from the Golden City of Zandernatis to search for someone to whom a special message must be delivered."

"And you believe this person to be here in Pardylis?"

"I do."

"Who might it be?"

"He is the son of Iraeus, King of Zandernatis. He came here seven months ago on a quest and has never returned."

"What kind of quest could that have been? As a rule, no one leaves the Golden City in these latter days. Or weren't you aware of that?"

"I was. I mean, I am... But the Prince left his father and all his kinsmen after experiencing a series of strange dreams compelling him to seek out their source. In the end, he left the City to find it..."

"What is his name, this Prince of Zandernatis?"

"He is called Esperon."

The faintest shadow of a smile passed over the otherwise impassive face of the winged being at the mention of the Prince's name. This was followed by another question, but now in a voice that betrayed a hint of suppressed excitement.

"Yet, if this Esperon was called away from his City by dreams, as you say, what made you venture forth after him? Did you have dreams as well? Or were you ordered to come, despite the inborn fears you must have of venturing beyond the City walls. Unless of course, you are not from Zandernatis at all?"

For a second, Gorin was unsure how to answer. The truth was really a mixture of all three.

Finally, he said, "In fact, I am not of the City; at least I don't believe so. I was found on a hillside in the Paradise Garden and taken to Kutjaran, Lord of the Garden. He directed me to Zandernatis, where I was greeted and instructed by Hexard, the Royal Alchemist. I was then given this mission by the King because no one else could undertake it. But I cannot remember anything before that first morning when I woke up on the hillside."

"Very good," said Aelaguel, rising from the stool. "You are truly welcome in our city of Pardylis. We were expecting someone to come in these days, but we had to be sure you were indeed the one we were waiting for. Come, and I will show you more of the buildings you find so curious."

Vertical corridors

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1556 - 1586

With a rustle of feathers, Aelaguel threw open the door and stood aside to let Gorin through first. Somewhat relieved the cross-examination was over and that, apparently, he had passed the test, he stepped outside. Only to be brought up sharply as his head swam and he was suddenly gripped by a fit of vertigo.

He felt Aelaguel's reassuring hand on his arm, steadying him as he teetered on the edge of the yawning empty space running from the base of the tower right up to its roof, just above them. As he regained his balance, and a little of his composure, he saw that the hollow interior was lined with fifteen or twenty narrow, circular ledges. These created a succession of "storeys" ringed by several doors leading off them at each level.

"I should have warned you," apologised Aelaguel. "Of course, you're not used to our corridors."

"Corridors?" asked Gorin, in bewilderment. Then he understood.

Looking over the edge into the plummeting depths of the tower, he saw there were several of the winged beings at various levels within the central shaft – or "corridor". They were going about their business and flitting from one level to another with just a few beats of their magnificent wings. Of

course, it was logical, he thought. If you move around on legs, corridors are horizontal. But if you can fly, they're like this…

He looked down into the depths again, where he made out one of the flying forms rapidly climbing the length of the vertical corridor and drawing towards them at great speed.

"That must be Gaelaguel. Coming to help me take you down to ground level."

Moments later, the second winged being had landed on the ledge. The two of them then took Gorin tightly in their grasp, beating their wings in unison as they floated out towards the middle of the corridor.

Hovering in the air, with the sound of the beating wings all around him and a gaping shaft almost eighty measures deep beneath his dangling feet, brought the nausea back to Gorin's stomach. He closed his eyes and then felt himself gliding slowly, smoothly downwards, with no more than a light breeze from the wings fanning his hair.

When he opened his eyes again, they were already less than twenty measures above the ground and he even found himself enjoying the gentle descent. On the way, they passed other winged creatures standing on different levels or flying from one to another.

At last, his carriers reached the end of the corridor, allowing his feet to kiss the ground before they released him and his legs could fully bear his own weight again. He tried to come to terms with his surroundings, first of all looking up at the shaft soaring above him like a hollow tree trunk lined with its series of diminishing circles.

"I think perhaps you'll feel more comfortable down here," said Aelaguel with a smile.

Gorin nodded, then looked down at the floor made up of gigantic slabs of porphyry. It was certainly more reassuring than only having empty air beneath his feet!

Gaelaguel left them with a smile and a wave of the hand, soaring off to return to one of the building's higher levels. Gorin spent a few more moments taking stock of the building around him. It looked as if it had some kind of important official function, since there was a lot of activity, with several of the winged beings flying back and forth as well as up and down the vertical thoroughfare. Some of them, he noted, were wearing what appeared to be robes of office. He also saw one or two like Dorund and Abroath on this level, without wings, purposefully striding across the circular, ground floor area featuring several arched doorways giving onto the outside.

Aelaguel and Gorin finally emerged from the great building through a massive ceremonial portal. It was decorated with painted carvings of birds and horses, the forms of one intertwining with the other to create an overall design of tremendous intricacy.

A dozen or more shallow steps took them down towards an enormous open square. It was built like a huge platform on a plateau of rock that appeared to be practically suspended in midair. More buildings of noble proportions and breathtaking conception stood on either side of this vast paved area, emulating the edifice they had just left.

The fourth side of the square was bounded by the nothingness of the open chasm, gaping wide like a gateway into the centre of the Earth. This made it very similar to the smaller square Gorin had glimpsed from his "cell" in the tower. Except in this case, there was one important difference, quite apart from its monumental dimensions. For it provided the backdrop to a scene of the most intense activity on the ground

and above it, involving hundreds of robe-clad, winged and non-winged figures.

Some were strolling across the great public place, while others talked in groups beside the white waters of an ornamental fountain, gushing into the air from a pool in the shape of a seven-pointed star. More of these beings were entering or emerging from the grandiose architectural complexes around the square. Meanwhile, those in the air did indeed resemble mighty eagles as they spread their enormous white wings and beat them in the rhythm of flight.

Gorin watched, quite fascinated, as a whole group took off together, thrashing the air as one and rising to make several ever-widening circuits of the square. A moment later, they plunged over the brink of the chasm on their way to some other part of the city and disappeared from view.

Pardylis! Gorin could hardly believe he was really there. It was all so magical; as if he had stepped into another dimension. Yet, despite the dreamlike vision created by this combination of mountain peaks, spectacular architecture and graceful, airborne beings, Gorin found himself resonating to this alien cityscape. For he sensed it reflected a degree of advancement that largely exceeded the supposedly "Paradisiacal" wonder of Zandernatis.

The Oarian Plaza

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1587 - 1654

Aelaguel allowed Gorin some time to take in everything before making any verbal comment. Then, when a few minutes had passed, a light touch on his shoulder and a gesture invited him to look back at the complex of buildings looming up behind them.

"We are now standing in the Oarian Plaza, and have just come out of what is known as the Palace of the Jurisdiction. As you can see, it was built on the level summit of the mountain, with the lower part formed from the rock itself. Above it are twelve floors built of red ansorite stone embellished with white veined orst. The topmost floor houses the Council Chambers and Hall of Ultimate Tribunal.

"Then there is the Sildar Tower, where you were first taken. It rises another thirty floors to the signalling platform. The whole outside is decorated with star-pattern designs and a number of symbolic murals representing episodes from the birthing story of humankind."

Gorin looked up in wonderment at the enormous structure, glittering in the sunlight before him. It was of gigantic proportions, yet seemed perfectly scaled to its setting, complementing the grandeur of the surrounding mountains. Whatever building techniques had been used to create it, they did indeed demonstrate a mastery of architectural and engineering design that was utterly breathtaking.

He watched intently as several winged figures flew up and down the outside of the Tower, intent on something or other concerned with the "Jurisdiction", whatever that might be. Even without having any idea of the business they were about, all this purposeful activity reinforced the impression he had already formed; that here in Pardylis everything was much more meaningful and potent. Whereas back in the Golden City, all seemed to revolve solely around celebrating a supposedly glorious present to perpetuate a glorious past.

Aelaguel then directed Gorin's attention to a group of buildings on the left-hand side of the Plaza, pointing out their shapely design and the infinite number of columns ranged

around the numerous porticos, towers and domes making up the structure.

"That is known as the Aar-Pardylis," explained Aelaguel. "It is the Assembly Chamber for our city and the Jurisdiction; where all the most important matters are discussed concerning our immediate environment, as well as how laws and decrees from other levels should be implemented. We will be visiting it later, so you can see the way it functions during a debate. I think you will find the gathering convened for this evening particularly interesting.

"But first, I shall take you to the Residence of the Six Territories, over there on the left. That is where you will be staying while in Pardylis. We will see about providing you with a meal and anything else you may need. Please follow me."

Aelaguel led the way across the broad stone flags of the Oarian Plaza, Gorin following on, still enthralled by the sight of the city around him. Wherever he looked, he could see more soaring towers and domed buildings, many of them reaching great heights, though none quite equalled the Sildar Tower. Just then, he heard the chanting sound he associated with the flying craft in which he had travelled to Pardylis from the borderlands. Something flashed across the sun, its shadow flitting over the Plaza in an instant. He looked up, but only had time to glimpse a dark shape against the sky. Apart from it being of some considerable size, he could get no real idea of what it looked like.

He turned his attention next to the Residence of the Six Territories, towards which they were heading. Like all the other edifices he had seen, it had been designed on a grand scale. Gilded figures, dressed in different costumes he could not recognise, upheld a monolithic archway decorated with

intertwined leaves and wild beasts, all carved exquisitely in a bluish coloured stone. The building's central section, composed of five floors, was flanked by two wings of three storeys. Each of these was topped by an impressive colonnade, which appeared to run behind the central section, thus forming an extensive gallery. It no doubt afforded some spectacular views of Pardylis and the gorges about which it stood.

Aelaguel explained that the Residence of the Six Territories had been designed to accommodate important guests coming on business to the capital of the Jurisdiction. "Initially, it was built to include six different suites for permanent delegations from the six Territories under our responsibility. However, things have changed over the past few hundred years. To begin with, of course, since Zandernatis closed its gates, there has been no contact with the people living there, and some of the other Territories are also choosing to go their own separate ways now. Therefore, many of its rooms are no longer used at all."

"You mean there are other cities and civilisations beyond the Garden, apart from Pardylis?"

"Oh yes, the Jurisdiction does not limit its interests to the Golden City, or even to the races immediately associated with it. Maybe we had more to do with them because we chose this continent as our founding-ground in the very beginning, but our influence extends much further. At least two of the other Territories are over three flying days away, and the others are already separated from the Zandernation continent by considerable tracts of ocean."

Wondering at this, Gorin followed his guide into the enormous courtyard in front of the Residence. Once through the great gate, they were cut off from the noise and bustle of the busy Plaza. They then crossed the tessellated pavement

leading up to the massive entrance doors of crystal glass, protected by a wrought metal grille representing interlaced wings.

Once inside, they found themselves in an immensely high, cupolated vestibule, decorated with paintings showing many things of which Gorin had no knowledge. There were six of them altogether, and upon closer examination, he found that in fact only one was at all familiar; a representation of the Golden City, very much as it appeared in some of the paintings he had seen on the walls of the Royal Palace.

The other pictures showed things which, for the most part, were very strange; great triangular shaped buildings towering above the dwellings built around them; quite out of proportion for any human need. There was also a painting of a mountainous plateau surrounded by high, snow-covered peaks. Some kind of city took up one part of the flat open area, while the rest appeared to be marked out with several sets of parallel lines like roadways. These were complemented by the outlines of various animals, described in huge proportions, very much like the carvings he had seen on the porphyry walls inside the Palace of the Jurisdiction.

However, he was given little time to study all these fascinating images, for Aelaguel was now leading the way towards a flight of stairs which curved up towards a circular gallery running around the entrance chamber. A series of six passageways led out of this area, all thickly laid with a soft fabric featuring geometrical designs. The source of illumination was a line of elaborately fashioned lamps hanging from the carved ceiling, giving out a clear and unwavering light without smoke or odour. Aelaguel led Gorin down one of the corridors until they came to a door standing ajar on the right. Once it had been fully opened, he was ushered inside.

Gorin's immediate impression was the contrast between this room and his previous accommodation in the city of Pardylis. For here, although there was no extravagance, it did have a certain level of comfort and elegance. The furnishings consisted of carved tables and chairs, hangings adorned the walls and the floor was covered with fabric similar to that used in the corridor. A large double window opened onto what he supposed was the colonnaded gallery he had seen from outside. A door leading off the main room opened into another chamber in which stood a large bed, draped in a deep blue velvety material. Beyond that was another room, containing a stone carved bath, pedestal and private facilities. Everything about the suite was functional and yet well considered. Colours had been chosen with care; there was nothing to either shock the eye or offend the taste.

"This will be your home for the time you are here," announced Aelaguel. "It is in fact the suite designed to be used by the first deputy of the Zandernation delegation to the Territorial Council. Is it to your liking?"

"Very much," said Gorin, feeling greatly honoured and a little overawed. He stepped to the windows and opened them, taking in the stunning panorama offered by the unique vantage point. Buildings and mountains literally grew one out of the other, separated by the network of deep, dark chasms. He could now see that these did in fact serve as the city's main thoroughfares, for they were peopled by steady streams of winged figures flying back and forth along them.

Below the level of the colonnade was a line of trees, and by leaning over the balustrade, Gorin discovered a very elegant garden laid out at the back of the Residence, complete with two ornamental pools and four fountains. A haven of calm in such a dramatic context that really was so very different from

Zandernatis, making the Golden City seem even more pretentious and degenerate by comparison.

Gorin turned back into the room. “This is all so amazing,” he said. “I could never imagine... It’s nothing like I expected.”

Aelaguel smiled. “I wonder what you did expect? Now, before you go to the convocation this evening, there are some things I have to make known to you and which you must understand. Otherwise, the proceedings will lose much of their significance. But first you must eat.”

No sooner had he uttered these words, than one of the wingless persons came into the room bearing a tray of food giving off the most delectable aroma. Gorin noticed the newcomer was wearing the familiar, all-enveloping floor length robe everyone seemed to wear in Pardylis, wings or no wings. He was also wearing the same enigmatic smile that was always hovering on Aelaguel’s lips.

“I hope you will find this agreeable,” said the food bringer. “It’s mainly crushed nyoras and herbal fruits, but the sauce is rather special. Enjoy it.”

“Thank you Natond, I am sure he will,” said Aelaguel, as the other withdrew. “We can talk once you have eaten, and then perhaps you will find the answers to some of the questions that still worry you.”

With that, Aelaguel left Gorin to his meal, which was indeed delicious, and probably the best one he could remember. It was delicately flavoured with some kind of juice or herb, which left a slightly musky taste in the mouth, reminiscent of well-aged wine. Being very hungry, Gorin enjoyed it all the more and, once finished, was fully prepared for whatever Aelaguel would have to tell him.

XVII - "Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit" angers Catholic fundamentalists

The revelations contained in "Pre-Destination" started stirring up considerable controversy the moment it was published in April 2014. This is to be expected from a book that challenges both scientific and religious conventions so strongly – and so convincingly.

Some of the most bitter criticism came from the Creationist movement, who defend the idea of a "Young Earth" that only came into being a few thousand years ago. However, to give an example of some rather more substantial objections, we have decided to publish a series of screen shots from the Ultra-conservative Catholic website, "Fundamental Truths". This site condemns the book and practically all the claims it makes in particularly strong terms, backed by Biblical references and Papal pronouncements.

We chose "Fundamental Truths" because, in its Mission Statement, it focuses on the fact that "The Catholic Church is the only body which can trace its origins all the way back to the Disciples and to Peter, upon whom Jesus said he would build his Church." It therefore argues that this unbroken line of "Vicars of Christ" (Popes) gives it unrivalled authority to denounce anything that challenges its teachings.

Dangerous ideas gaining credence

In recent months, several members of our movement *have contacted us for spiritual guidance with regard to the recently published book purporting to reflect the findings of research teams in Australia who have been working on manuscripts discovered in Antarctica some 50 years ago. The book contains statements and ideas that challenge some of the fundamental teachings of the Catholic Church. We must therefore be prepared to actively oppose these revisionist notions and do everything in our power to prevent them from gaining general acceptance.*

Let us examine a few of the more controversial concepts that are being promoted by this interpretation of the so-called "Haakon Urn" texts and how we should respond to them:

1: These writings are claimed to predate the Creation as described in Genesis.

These are claims we do not need to challenge, simply because **the Catholic Church does not interpret the Genesis story of Creation literally**, in contrast with some Protestant denominations. In his address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in 2008, Pope Benedict XVI stated, *"My predecessors Pope Pius XII and Pope John Paul II noted that there is no opposition between Faith's understanding of Creation and the evidence of the empirical sciences."*

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* clearly states that Genesis "symbolically" presents God's work of Creation. In other words, it is a parable and does not have to be literally true for the story to convey profound religious truths. Interestingly, the idea of evolution seems to be supported by Genesis 1:24, which states, *"Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures."* Genesis does not say that God directly created plants and animals in their final form, only that they came forth from *"the earth."*

However, even though our material bodies may be the product of evolution, the Catholic Church holds that **our immaterial and immortal soul**, which makes us truly human, **is directly imparted by God.** In his 1996 address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Pope John Paul II stated, *"If the human body takes its origin from pre-existent living matter, the spiritual soul is immediately created by God."* The CCC (#366) also states, *"Every spiritual soul is created immediately by God."*

Therefore, **the Church has no objection to the concept of theistic or guided evolution**. This holds that if life evolved from a common ancestor, it was God who established the framework, including the finely-tuned set of conditions and governing laws of nature, which enabled life to evolve over very long periods of time into the vast complexity we see today.

2: The writings contain references to "Paradise" which are clearly incompatible with the teachings of the Church.

Christian tradition teaches that humankind was originally created in a state of innocence and justice, in full possession of the dignity proper to our species, and was provided with preternatural gifts that elevated and perfected human nature. Human beings in the Garden were not subject to the frailties and failings of our present life.

They were not inclined to do evil; their understanding and reason were not darkened by pride or lust; they had a perfect knowledge of moral law; they did not experience any opposition between the spirit and the body; and all of the parts of the soul existed in a state of order and harmony in relation to one another.
While the description of the "Paradise Garden" in this new book could arguably correspond to this description, it is quite clear that the "City of Zandernatis", described as "*The jewel of the Garden of Paradise"* is totally at odds with it, therefore totally undermining the entire premise (see below).

3: It is stated that the population of this Antarctican "Zandernatis", not only lived a shamelessly hedonistic existence but, far worse, maintained an "areligious" society because, "They did not need a God."

This is a total aberration, and the clearest indication that we are dealing with the most abject – and most insidious – heresy imaginable. For denying the "need" of a God means denying the existence of God, and ***this is apostasy****. To show just what this implies, we only have to read 2 Thess 2:3, which states: "Let no one in any way deceive you, for* ***the AntiChrist*** *will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction".* In other words, we should do all we can to combat this descent into Godlessness for fear of bringing death and destruction to our world.

Everyone needs God. He is our Father and Creator as taught by the Church and, quite simply, those who deny any need for Him deny any chance of salvation for their Immortal Souls.

4: These people are said to have had "total recall" of "all their previous lives", promoting the concept of reincarnation, rather than salvation and resurrection.

In the CCC we read – *"When the single course of our earthly life is completed,* ***we shall not return to other earthly lives****"* (*CCC # 1013*). This teaching applies to everyone, even to those people who mistakenly believe in reincarnation.

Belief in resurrection and **official Church rejection** of the pre-existence of souls rule out reincarnation. Hebrews 9: 27 confirms that **we only die once**, so our individual immortal souls cannot reincarnate. By maintaining an indefinite series of chances, **reincarnation reduces the seriousness of God's grace** and human liberty which we know is exercised **in one life that is terminated by a once-and-for-all death.**

Believers in reincarnation cannot answer the question of human personhood. Consider a person alleged to have reincarnated; would the person have been himself or someone else, or partly himself and partly someone else? Of course, neither alternative is logical. A human person is a UNIQUE INDIVIDUAL BEING with a spiritual soul and a material body. Heaven is our true destiny, but the choice is ours.

5: As they lived in a closed society, their "total recall" led them to meet, recognise and have new relationships with their "parents, partners, children and relatives" from former lives.

We have already seen that the idea of an "areligious society" is totally alien to everything the Catholic Church – and indeed all the major religions – stand for!

We have also seen that reincarnation is totally at odds with the Church's teachings.

But to suggest that we can come back to live another life and perhaps meet up with our mother or our sister or our father in another body, marry them and have children by them... This is more than just heresy or apostasy...

It is incest of the soul! *Nothing could be more abhorrent to any true believer. No one "belief" could be a stronger denial of everything the Church has ever taught us.*

In fact, since this concept more or less shaped everything the entire Zandernation society was supposed to believe in, I suggest that it amounts to mass Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, a sin that can never be forgiven! (Mark 3:29: *"Whosoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin".*)

Let not the "revelations" of these texts lead you from the path of Faith. For they are the work of false prophets, with the capability of taking your soul beyond the point of non-return, beyond any hope of redemption.

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Dangerous ideas gaining credence

XVIII – Architects of Civilisation

"Shaping worlds to make a home
for their regenerated indigenes;
begetting new, engendered races
that can go forth and multiply."

The Book of Magres, Aeon VII, xxi. v.67

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1655 - 1671

Natond returned to collect the tray, earnestly enquired if Gorin had enjoyed the food and seemed very pleased to learn that he had. He left two goblets of a warm, dark liquid smelling faintly of roses and then retired once more as Aelaguel came back into the room, carrying a white robe which was laid carefully over the back of a chair. A few moments later, after sitting down, carefully adjusting the beautiful wings and taking up one of the goblets, the explanations began.

"You no doubt learned many things during the time you were in Zandernatis," Aelaguel said to Gorin as they sat facing each other in the elegant surroundings of the Six Territories' Residence.

"Some things," replied Gorin. "But there must be much more I wasn't told, or didn't have time to learn about."

"It was Hexard who instructed you?"

"Yes. He seems to be the only one there who really knows anything about the history of the City or how it came into being to start with."

"He probably is. In fact we are certain of it," said Aelaguel, with a nod of the head. "That is of course due to his great age and the extensive knowledge possessed by his father before him. He is also one of the few people in Zandernatis who has kept a mind open to the realities in which he lives. Very few have been able to preserve that all-important quality."

"I did feel that, although it is still a very wonderful place which I could never have imagined being bettered. Until I saw Pardylis."

"Aelaguel smiled. "It is no small wonder you should have experienced that emotion, for Zandernatis was created by us after the model of our own civilisation, best embodied here in our own city. In fact, it probably is the finest of all our works, as everything afterwards was modified to reflect the ideas and priorities of the indigenous peoples.

"Such accommodation did not apply to the Golden City. For it was created to fulfil a specific need expressed by the first generation and brought into being without any consultation. For one thing, it was the first Territorial Centre to be established, the others following much, much later. Secondly, at the time, our children could not know what they really wanted. So we created it for them as we thought best and then watched, to see what they would do with it."

"So it was your people who created the City."

"Of course, but you must have read that in the old records Hexard showed you."

"I did, but in them, you were referred to as the 'Lords', which I took to mean… Gods…" Gorin started to rise, trembling a little, only to be reassured by Aelaguel's smile and gently gestured invitation to stay seated and relax.

"It is so very easy to deify those who wield powers one does not understand," said Aelaguel once Gorin had settled

down again. "But our powers are certainly not ultimate. Everything is relative, and in the greater scheme of things we are but servants of higher purposes. In fact, our primary mission had already been fulfilled long before the City was created and finally severed from us, as well as from the rest of the Jurisdiction. None of which was explained to you, I imagine."

"No, nothing was mentioned about anything before the Great Feast of the Autonomy, other than a few vague references. Hexard didn't seem to think I needed that sort of information for my mission. My guide through the Forest and the Deserts filled in a few missing details, but even she didn't consider it her place to reveal too much."

"That was one of the unihorns I presume?"

"Yes. Ecinlorne."

"The noblest of them all. They are fine creatures, and seen all too rarely these days, even keeping their distance from us now. She is very knowing though, and I'm sure it was quite an experience having her as your guide."

"It was indeed..."

"Lords of Creation"

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1672 - 1708

Aelaguel smiled and nodded slowly, radiating a presence of warmth and reassurance that bathed Gorin in a cloud of total confidence.

"You know a certain amount... But we need to complete the picture. So let me begin by telling you that we, the Aeraumen people, have lived on this Earth for many thousands of years and have been known by many names. The one you probably heard most in Zandernatis, in addition to 'Lords' or 'Lords of Creation', was probably "Hill-People'. It seems more

acceptable for those wanting to forget the part we played in the beginning. They prefer to forget any external influence could have been involved in making them what they have become.

"This was an attempt to make us into just another race living a long way off and being no concern of theirs. Yet in truth, we came here, and remain still, to perform certain tasks as part of the responsibility placed upon us by the Mediatorum who commune with the Essence of the Greater Scheme.

"We were assigned to this planet in the first days to assist in the evolution of the world as we found it. I emphasise 'assist', for our role is never to replace what exists, merely to hasten its evolution and that of its indigenous peoples. But we never usurp their right of self-determination, for that is a sacred prerogative even more important than what we may esteem good for them.

"The main indigenous race here, the Febling humans, was not very highly developed when we first came into contact with them. They were living a nomadic, pastoral life, rarely staying in one place longer than a few days before moving on when their animals had eaten all the forage in one locality. At first, they accepted us in the capacity of Gods, to be feared and worshipped, but later understood our purpose as real helpers in the development of their world.

"All this of course took place over a long period of time. It was several generations before all Febling communities fully acknowledged the fact of our existence and our benevolent intentions. This complete acceptance and trust was essential before we could put into operation the most crucial aspect of our time-honoured mission; to help native races attain fulfilment from their lives and environment."

"So what does that involve?" queried Gorin, intrigued by this talk of a "time-honoured mission".

"We stimulate the evolutionary selection by interbreeding with them, thereby increasing their capacity to fully benefit from the many other advantages we can offer. This approach is also a way to ensure that devolutionary tendencies which may have appeared are not allowed to multiply."

"What do you mean by 'devolutionary tendencies'?"

"Any natural 'experiments' resulting from practices that were very common prior to our arrival and led to the birth of half humans, half something else. Our intervention put an end to all that. There are still many descendants of those times who continue to exist in the Paradise Garden, of course. However, their capacity to evolve is very limited and they will, I am afraid, die out in time, charming as many of them may be."

Gorin thought fleetingly of Feldoc, the Harelops and the water nymphs, feeling a little sad they had no lasting place in the "Greater Scheme" of things.

"Let me just make sure I understand this," he said. "You and the other Aeraumen fathered children among this Febling people to improve their race."

Aelaguel stood up and began unfastening the long white robe's laced front.

"We fathered them, yes. And we also mothered them."

So saying, the unlaced neckline fell open to reveal the most exquisite, ivory cream breasts with pink and tan nipples standing proud to crown their glory.

Gorin stared, unable to absorb what this must mean.

"Only for the first three months," said Aelaguel, doing up the laces again. "Our milk is wonderfully nutritious and it helps make sure the child's fullest capabilities will develop."

"The interbreeding programme was very successful," continued the Aerauman, not giving Gorin a moment to get over his amazement. "Gradually, a new generation of people

emerged, born of Febling mothers but having Aeraumen nurses and forefathers. Its qualities reflected both their maternal heritage and their paternal origins, further enhanced by our initial breast-feeding. They only lacked the gift of flight, which cannot be transmitted to halflings.

"In those days, it was seen to be highly prestigious for a woman to bear the child of an Aerauman; a social convention which made the new generation arise that much faster. It took perhaps three or four hundred years, but resulted in the firm establishment of three separate peoples on this continent, each one distinctly different from the others; the original Feblings, the Aerlings, born from our fathering, and the Aerauma.

"The new race was strong and intelligent with heightened awareness, allowing its children to uphold the many new concepts and values we instilled into them. From this worthy inception it finally matured into a remarkable blend of natural instinct and physical hardiness, combined with higher spiritual and intellectual advancement.

"However, despite these auspicious beginnings, disharmony began to creep into the relationship between the three races; a reaction we had feared but could do nothing to control as such matters were beyond the authority invested in us by the Mediators. Perhaps caused by a feeling of inferiority, or some other emotion we could not explain, the original Feblings gradually became estranged from us and from their half-brothers. They too had been able to enjoy many of the advantages our civilisation brought them. Indeed, they were the first to reap the benefits of being in contact with us. Yet they increasingly seemed to feel we were favouring those we had fathered.

"There may be some truth in this allegation, for we knew which race would ultimately command the future. Even so, we

did all we could to encourage interaction between the two peoples, but were not surprised to see resentment and distrust growing among those who could not claim the same lineage as our children.

"In time, certain 'isolationist' factions began to emerge among the Feblings, groups who wanted to sever all contact with us and incited their fellows to do likewise. Ultimately, these reactionary elements dominated their society, resulting in the vast majority breaking away altogether and migrating to the North, beyond the Greywood Forest. There they lived, for the most part in deep underground caves and tunnels, almost fanatical in their determination to be rid of the bonds they felt our contact with them had imposed.

"With the passing of the years, a similar current of unrest also began to emerge among our Aerling family. They became more and more restless, asking for an independence of their own and a chance to benefit fully from the opportunity we had given them to live a life of constant contentment.

"It was not that they were ungrateful, or did not appreciate what we had done for them. On the contrary. But, like all children, the time had come for them to tread their own path, without us at their side to influence – or even impede - their self-realisation.

"This saddened us, of course, for we loved the offspring we had engendered, even if it was an inevitable aspect of our evolutionary mission. Like all parents, we had been fascinated to watch them grow, develop and then bring generations of their own into the world, evincing even more strongly the positive qualities we had introduced into the race."

Founding the Golden City

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1709 - 1731

Aelaguel paused for a moment, taking time to reflect on all the implications of the crucial role the Aerauma had played in the "Greater Scheme" before continuing.

"At last their discontentment came to the knowledge of the Mediatorum and it became obvious that a new order had to be established. This was how the concept of founding the Golden City of Zandernatis came into being, providing for the creation of a home for those who no longer wished to live beneath our protective wings.

"Once the principle was embodied in reality, and the choice was open, most of the Aerlings entitled to go into the City took advantage of the privilege. The Aerlings you see in Pardylis today are descendants of those who chose to remain behind. None of them has ever regretted the decision taken by their forebears long ago, particularly when they see what is happening to the Golden City now.

"Once Zandernatis had been created, the area around it was sanctified as the Paradise Garden, protecting it from the lands of confusion and unevolved disorder. There was then a very brief period during which some communion between ourselves and the Citydwellers was maintained. This allowed us to observe how our children were adapting to their new balanced environment and their major concern; how best to employ the many hours of leisure remaining after the minimum of essential work had been done.

"However, before many summers had passed, we found the men and women we had fostered for so long wanted no further reminder of what we had done for them, and so issued a formal request for us to withdraw completely. This was

indeed a tragic day for us, even if we knew such a thing had to happen in the natural order of things.

"As I have told you, under the terms of our mission, we are not permitted to impose ourselves upon a race, even if we have had a hand in its shaping. We are not dominators; 'cultivators' would be a better term. Thus, in accordance with the Mediatorum, we did at last withdraw, allowing the people of Zandernatis the right to determine their own existence in the Paradise they had asked us to create.

"This was an event marked by the 'Feast of the Autonomy' to which you made reference. However, as required by law, our departure was subject to one condition - and a very important one at that."

Aelaguel paused, allowing the silence to add greater emphasis to what was about to be revealed.

"It was, quite simply, that we should have no more to do with the destiny of the people in the City, even if they were in danger, whatever threat they might be facing. They had chosen self-determination and the right to follow their own evolutionary path.

"They were given this right, but with the understanding that they could never come to us for aid – unless it was at the express bidding of the ruler; that is to say the King. He alone could summon us, and then only by using a special procedure.

"Needless to say, across all the millennia, this has never happened, for the Kings have always been just as keen as everyone else to focus on enjoying the benefits of Paradise.

"There was a certain time after our departure when some of the younger, more spirited Aerlings sought adventure outside the City and came by the Old Way towards these mountains. Indeed, so many were coming at one point that we had to discourage all but the hardiest. For the Mediators were

concerned that we were still having too much influence on the ideals of the Zandernation youth.

"This is why the Forest of Dissemblance and Deserts of Jerah came into being, extending for many thousand measures from the river Arondyvon to the Paradise Gate. They were a formidable barrier to the fainthearted, but in fact gave birth to what was perhaps the greatest period Zandernatis ever knew. It was known as the Heroic Age, when the brave knights we counted among our sons went into the Forest to combat its dragons, witches, wraiths and other dissemblances. They sought honour under the mystical patronage of the 'Winged Lords', created wonders in their own right and were known as the 'Legend Makers' who sang the ancient 'Song of the Heroes'.

"Since a certain contact was maintained between us and the most adventurous of our Aerling great, great grandchildren, the decision was taken to create this Residence of the Six Territories. We hoped we could encourage representatives from the City to come here, together with those from the other Territories we had developed in the meantime.

"We felt there was no reason why ambassadors from Zandernatis should not come to us, if they could brave the hazards of the journey and come of their own free will; even if we could never return to the City without the Royal summons. It was a way for us to assist our children from afar, or at least maintain a certain contact with them. But it was not to be.

"The Residence had barely been completed, I remember. We were on the point of offering posts of ambassador and deputies to the next travellers coming through. Until we heard a party of Feblings had slipped into Zandernatis at dusk, killed a watchman and made off with a hoard of gold and treasure under cover of darkness. This incident put so much fear into the people that King Nuovo ordered the permanent closure of

the Golden Portals, abruptly cutting us off from all contact with our progeny forever.

"As a result, these rooms were never used. The other Territories sent delegations of course, but they had been developed in another way and none of them were our children, for the Mediatorum had cautioned us against using the interbreeding method again.

"All the other races in the world are therefore natural ones which have simply been aided culturally and not genetically. This is why we will always feel a special affinity with the Aerlings in the Golden City. It touched us deeply to learn they were becoming more and more closed in upon themselves. And recently, we have been even more concerned by reports from our reconnaissance flights that ominous preparations are now being made in the Feblings' domain.

"They have coveted the wealth and beauty of Zandernatis for so long, their hatred has now virtually become a racial trait. To such a degree that they are now actually planning to intervene and take the City for themselves, so they can at last benefit from the privileges its people enjoy. I need hardly tell you that any serious attempt to put such a plan into action will not meet with a great deal of opposition."

Gorin nodded ruefully, calling to mind Hexard's original warning of the impending war and the Citydwellers' total lack of preparation to organise any kind of effective defence.

"And of course, we are powerless to do anything about it," continued Aelaguel. "We must not. And yet..." A smile replaced the grave expression that had prevailed for the last few minutes. "There was one thing we could do. Perhaps you can now imagine what it was."

"The Dreaming"

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1732 - 1765

Gorin had half guessed. Everything suddenly seemed to be falling into place. But he let the Aerauman continue.

"With our powers of mind we approached the City of Zandernatis and entered into the dreams of a young man who came, thereby, to have knowledge of us; real knowledge of who we were and where we were."

"Esperon."

"Exactly. The son of the King. And he, of his own free will, yearned so much to discover the source of those dreams and the reality lying behind them that he sought ways of finding us. It was not easy for him, but he soon found a sympathetic ear in the person of Hexard, who was made aware of what was happening. He is someone we have always respected for his powerful mind and greater understanding; a truly enlightened soul, and worthy Guardian of the Book of Magres, which we knew he still had in his possession.

"It is, as you have learned and ascertained, a very ancient book of esoteric truths and prophecy handed down from Magres himself, who actually transposed it directly from the original 'Tablets of Divine Design'. He was of course Hexard's grandfather, one of the last remaining first generation Aerlings - and the only one to go into Zandernatis when he would have preferred to stay with us. He went in order to keep the light of our knowledge alive in the City, a function those of his line have maintained. This explains why they have a greater affinity with us than with the comparatively short-lived, later generation Aerlings.

"You mean Hexard's great grandfather was actually one of your people?" asked Gorin, hardly able to believe his ears. "I knew he came from a very wise and noble family, but I didn't

know of his relationship to the Lords. Is that why he's lived to such a great age?"

"Indeed it is, for the Aeraumen are deathless; a necessity for our work of guiding whole civilisations from the level of primitive existence to that of an advanced culture. Early generation Aerlings therefore had this quality mixed with the Feblings' mortality, which meant they lived extremely long lives, but did transition in the end. Today's City people are increasingly affected by this, for the further they get from their winged ancestors by their own interbreeding, the shorter their incarnations become.

"So that is why Hexard has maintained such a great understanding, so different from all the others I came across; and also why he encourages those who are not totally absorbed by their way of life, like Esperon and the young men in the Outside Society."

"Exactly. For not only is he close to us by birth, he has also remained close to us in mind. But what perhaps you do not yet see is that there still exists a very special relationship between us and Hexard, for as I told you, we do not know death; a succession of incarnations is a luxury reserved only for those we assist. Our way is a continuous stream, whereas theirs' must be broken by cataracts. Do you see what this means?"

"Oh." Gorin hardly dared phrase the inevitable question. "You mean the father of Hexard's grandfather is still here in Pardylis?"

"He is more than here in Pardylis, Gorin," said his winged instructor. "He is here in this room before you. Hexard is my great-grandson."

Gorin's mouth fell open at this disclosure; it all seemed too impossible. The story of the coming of the Aeraumen had been one thing, and the history behind the races in and around the

Garden was another, even the threat to the City, although he had not known all the details. But that there was such a relationship between one of these noble beings and Hexard was almost too much for him to take. It certainly explained why the old alchemist was so wise and knowledgeable in comparison with everyone else he had met in Zandernatis.

"Are there any more, besides Hexard, so closely related to your people?" asked Gorin when he had finally recovered his former composure.

"Not now; he is the last. Many have come and gone since the time of Magres, so there cannot be anyone else less than two dozen generations removed from the original product of the genetic intervention."

"And Esperon?"

"Esperon came, as I said, of his own free will after due instruction by Hexard, who knew of the approaching events and the fulfilment they must engender, one way or another. This he came to know through mental contact which was maintained with him from here, and also of course by an accurate interpretation of what was written in the prophecies transcribed by Magres."

"Which is how you knew someone like me would follow, once Esperon had come."

"Yes, although we did not know from exactly which source. Nor did we understand the prophecies' mention of the messenger being found in the Garden knowing nothing but his own name, and then travelling to the City just as such a mission became essential. Neither the original Tablets nor Magres' translations were ever very clear on that point."

"So you don't know who I am either?"

"No, I am afraid not."

"Then who does?"

"Hexard might, but I cannot be sure."

Gorin sighed. Although he had found out a great deal by listening to Aelaguel, the one thing which still haunted him remained as much of a mystery as ever. Perhaps if he saw Hexard again one day, he would be given some kind of an answer. But for the moment, the truth remained as elusive as ever.

"What I don't understand is why there had to be someone like me in the first place," said Gorin. "I see you have recognised the potential threat to the City from the Feblings, and that by drawing Esperon here you have the future ruler with you, so he can summon your assistance at the proper time. But why couldn't you wait until he became King?"

"Because events were moving too fast; and he was an eager young man. I do not have to remind you that eager young men in Zandernatis soon find outlets for their zeal which might have rendered him useless to us and to his people. So we had to draw him here as soon as we saw the way things were developing in the North and before he became too immersed in all that pleasurable living. We at least wanted to give him some time to readapt to our concept of existence. We wanted him to be able to judge clearly and appreciate the significance of what was happening. This has indeed proved fruitful, for although Esperon has only been here a few months, he is now well integrated into our society and fully aware of the ominous clouds now gathering above the innocent tranquillity of his home.

"This situation is making him grow very impatient, but of course he can do nothing because of the law established by Nuovo, which says that only the ruling King can summon a return under these circumstances. In any case, he could not return to Zandernatis unaided. He has frequently asked us to

assist him in doing this, but we dare not intervene, much as we would like to. For a contravention of the law at this stage might mean disaster for us and all we have achieved, not to mention destruction of the Golden City. Something which is likely to make the young Prince all the more frustrated when he attends the special convocation in the Aar-Pardylis tonight."

"Why is that?"

"Because of the information to be put before the assembly. He will be present, so will I, and so will you. Esperon knows the writings of the Book of Magres as well as anyone here and has been waiting, with all of us, for the prophecies to be fulfilled. With the disclosure of tonight's news, there will be little doubt in anyone's mind that the hour of decision is upon us, further confirmed by your arrival. It only remains for us to examine the options available to us within the limitations we have to observe."

"What is this news then?"

"You will see. In any case it is time to go now." Aelaguel rose from the chair. "Come Gorin, we will go to the Aar-Pardylis together and then you will be able to hear it for yourself, in the company of all the others, Esperon included! And then, you will have your moment. "

"My moment?"

"You will recognise it when it comes. But to give it the greatest effect, we would like you to wear this."

Aelaguel reached across and took the white robe from the chair next to them.

"You want me to put that on?"

"I do. It will make you indistinguishable from any other Pardylian attending the Great Assembly. Believe me, when your moment comes, it will be all the more telling."

"If you say so."

Gorin took the robe proffered by Aelaguel and slipped it over his head. It fell easily around his body, the hem floating no more than a few hundredths of a measure above the floor.

"Excellent," declared Aelaguel. "You make a perfect Aerling."

The threshold

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1766 - 1779

Gorin and Aelaguel left the Residence of the Six Territories to cross the Oarion Plaza, both clad in their white, floor-length robes. The sun had sunk behind the mountains, an aureate glow marking the place where it had disappeared from view.

The Plaza itself and the chasm to their left were thus cast in shadow, but there was still light on the uppermost reaches of the Sildar Tower rising above the Palace of the Jurisdiction. Many winged figures were flying around it, some passing into shadow in the course of their flight while others, ascending, were suddenly caught in the golden rays to flare with a fire of their own.

The sky overhead still held much of the daylight's intensity, but was darkening rapidly. Ahead of them, beams of light had been directed onto the shapely towers and domes of the Aar-Pardylis, making it float in the sea of surrounding shadows like a mirage. The huge porticos were brightly lit and Gorin could see that several groups of robed figures were congregating in front of the building.

He looked up and saw some of the "riders" were flying overhead, and hoped one of them might actually land in the square. Much to his disappointment, none of them touched down, neither did any of them stay visible long enough for him

to learn any more about how they were made or how they stayed aloft.

Looking towards the great public building, Gorin was once again impressed by the architectural design that had so superbly rendered this enormous structure graceful and effortlessly monumental. The towers stretched into the sky, their supporting pillars so slender they seemed to be floating with a buoyancy all of their own. Together with the semi-hemispherical form of the main dome and the several smaller ones, the whole building cast an exotic, magical pattern of silhouetted mystery against the darkening night sky, framing the brilliance of the brightly lit portico.

They started walking towards the grand entrance of the Aar-Pardylis and the considerable crowd that had by now gathered in front of the main doors. It appeared to include quite a few wingless Pardylians, although because everyone was wearing the same kind of long white robes, Gorin initially had some difficulty distinguishing between the two peoples.

This of course became much easier as he approached the sculpted portico. He soon saw that the crowd mostly consisted of tall slender, winged figures, although there were quite a number of the slighter-built male Aerlings. Many of them were accompanied by shorter, mostly fair and softer-featured Aerling womenfolk.

Moments later, Aelaguel and Gorin passed through the outer doors and came into the brightly-lit vestibule, which at first overpowered Gorin's sensitive eyes. He bowed his head for a few moments, gazing down at the floor until he became more accustomed to the glare.

Moving slowly towards the doors leading into the Assembly Chamber, he cautiously raised his head and took in all the white-robed figures surrounding him. Then, suddenly,

perhaps no more than ten measures in front, he saw a young man who stood out in stark contrast with every other being in that crowded entrance.

He was wearing a distinctively cut dark green garment. Unmistakably a Zandernation tunic!

Gorin gaped in amazement, and was on the point of calling out when he looked up at Aelaguel.

The Aerauman simply gave Gorin another enigmatic smile and nodded slowly, placing a hand on his shoulder and giving him a firm, reassuring squeeze.

When he looked round again, the young man in the green tunic had been swallowed up by the sea of feathered wings and white robes.

But Gorin had seen him!

Suddenly overcome with a great feeling of joy and proud achievement, he stepped forward confidently, with Aelaguel at his side, into the Great Council Chamber of the Aar-Pardylis.

XIX - Our Angel Guardians

"Angels" enjoy a remarkable degree of universality. They are mentioned in the sacred texts of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and a whole range of more "primitive" cultures all over the world.

It is therefore particularly interesting to find these "Aerauma" so graphically described in *"The Song of Gorin"*. For this text gives us the first solid, documented proof of where accounts of these "legendary" beings actually originated.

The impact these "angels" have had on our collective unconscious is massive, and this is of course why we find references to them in so many different contexts. However, as these **progenitors of the human race** were seen to be **the fount of all knowledge** and also **gave protection to the foundation civilization on our planet** (as *"The Song of Gorin"* reveals[36]), their true nature became confused in the collective mind during the ensuing millennia. This was simply because of **the pivotal role they**

[36] The full extent and implications of this protection is revealed in "Apotheosis".

played at the time **when our human race - and legends - were born.**

Subsequently, this confusion led to them becoming translated into "Holy Guardian Angels". These were - and are - defined by many as beings who remain with us from the moment of our very first physical incarnation on Earth, constantly watching over and guiding us during our progress through all our physical lives on this planet and beyond.

While the concept itself is well-founded, the Holy Guardian Angel is actually our **Higher Self** and **not**, contrary to popular belief, a separate being. Having this purpose, it may also be referred to more specifically as the Inner Self or Inner Teacher,

"It" will communicate with us on a very ephemeral level, often by means of impressions, intuition or the "voice within" whenever necessary or when communicated with directly.

This communication can be in the form of perceived warnings, advice and knowledge from the inner spheres we might require to progress at various stages of our lives on the physical plane or between them. Should we stray from the determined path, our own Higher / Inner Self may endeavour to warn us by the most subtle yet effective means, although it cannot directly intervene or interfere with our own free will, except in the most exceptional circumstances.

Our Holy Guardian Angel / Higher Self has full access to the inner levels of reality and therefore knows and understands everything about us. This includes past, present and future incarnations, as well as all factors having an influence on them. Those who listen for, and are receptive to, the promptings of their own "Holy Guardian Angel" will always take heed of such guidance, since being the Higher Self, it always has our own evolutionary progress at heart.

As an Inner Teacher, our Holy Guardian Angel should always be approached and respected in total love and total faith, certain in the knowing that "It"[37] is always with us and always will be; for **we never journey along the path alone**.

Partially based on extracts from "Desert Meditations" by Sri Ara Kali

[37] Angels are said to be sexless, although the *"Song of Gorin"* implies they were in fact androgynous.

XX - Zandernatis and the Origin of Archetypes

+ Archetypes in art and *"Incarnation"*

An analysis by
Pierre-Louis Dutoit
Professor Emeritus of Mythology,
Victoria State University, Canada.

I have been extremely intrigued by the work of transcribing and retelling "*The Song of Gorin*" carried out by Professor James Gregson, his team and Gordon Keirle-Smith. It gives us a fascinating and unique insight into a far distant and totally unknown period of pre-history, many millennia before any other known civilization had emerged. This epic poem was found among a body of immensely ancient material consisting almost exclusively of historical records, speeches, charters and facts relating to the governance and customs of the Zandernation City State. A strong case can therefore be made for the "*Song of Gorin*" also being an account of actual events taking place at the same particular time in its history. As this narrative includes the earliest-ever mentions of actors and events subsequently appearing and reappearing in many different cultures, we may assume it provided the source material for many of the universal myths and legends that have now become part of our human heritage.

In other words, Messrs Gregson and Keirle-Smith would have us believe that "Zandernatis", and this epic "*Song*", describe the foundations of many - if not all - of the archetypes which have been part of our collective unconscious ever since. According to Swiss

psychiatrist Carl Jung, the collective unconscious has been generated by the shared experiences of our ancestors. He considered it to be primordial in that we, as individuals, have these archetypal images ingrained in our understanding even before we are born. Archetypes can be found all over the world and are universal throughout history. The forms may differ, but the foundation ideas are always the same.

Archetypes fall into two major categories: characters, and situations / symbols. There are several examples of these in the stanzas of "*The Song of Gorin*" on which the narrative of Genesis Antarctica has been based.

Two of the most universal archetypal **characters** are the **hero**, the courageous adventurer who undertakes daring deeds and the **outcast** who is set apart from society and can sometimes also be considered a Christic figure. Gorin represents both of these to a degree, in as much as having no memory sets him apart from the people of Zandernatis who can, it may be argued, remember too much. Furthermore, he is given an important mission with implications of salvation, suggesting his role has a much higher purpose.

In addition, there is the **teacher**, who appears as Kutjaran, then as Hexard ("Pre-Destination") and later, Aelaguel ("Destination"), representing ancestral wisdom and guidance bestowed upon the hero so he can successfully complete his mission and fulfil his purpose.

As far as **situations and symbols** in "Zandernatis" are concerned, these are typified by **tasks, quests, loss of innocence, initiation,** and **water** as a symbol of life and cleansing, to name but a few. We could, for example, cite Gorin's near-death experience in the Silver River ("Pre-Destination") and subsequent "born again" survival as a baptism for "The One" who will be called upon to deliver salvation. All the more significant since it was followed by a loss of innocence

and a "leading into temptation" at the hands of Laztana and the water-nymphs. A temptation he only escaped thanks to intervention from his guide, the falcon Huor. Falcons have often represented visionary power and knowledge, the capacity to solve dilemmas, wisdom and guidance for an understanding of life's purpose. A role Huor certainly fulfils in this sequence of events.

There is also a great sense of **destiny** running through the narrative, another instinctive belief which has powered many great deeds and achievements throughout history.

Having studied these subjects for a great many years and their manifestations in many different contexts, I am not sure if I can totally endorse Professor Gregson's assertion that **all of them** are rooted in the "Paradise Garden", "Zandernatis" and Gorin's "mission" as described in the epic poem from the Haakon writings. For example, I am not yet totally certain we are really expected to take creatures like the Harelops literally. I feel they should be viewed as symbolic devices for establishing the innocence of the Garden and all it stood for. Just as the Adam and Eve legend was used to symbolise a similar state of innocence - and its "loss" - in a much later use of very similar elements.

This being said, it is clear that the extreme age of these documents does make them the earliest known recorded accounts of such "archetypical" characters, situations and symbols. Accounts which certainly could have served as the model for all subsequent expressions of them throughout the ages.

Archetypes in art

During the discussions I had with Gordon Keirle-Smith in connection with the above article, I discovered that at a time when what he calls his "Artist Self" was manifesting, he made great use of archetypes in his symbolic art.

He said something that I found very interesting with regard to the way a combination of archetypal symbols can create "a message of its own", and I quote:

"There exists a huge vocabulary of symbols which can be used to express various qualities, ideals and forces. I used a wide range of them in my work. What always greatly impressed me was to see how they interacted to create a meaning that was invariably far greater than the sum of their parts."

I pressed him on what he meant by this, and it turns out his approach was to dip into the "vocabulary" he mentioned and create an image made out of the elements he had chosen *"at random"*. In other words, he created a composition out of archetypal *"building blocks"* which was artistically and creatively pleasing and harmonious. He did not have any particular *"message"* to deliver at that time. Once a work was finished, as long as six months or more after the first sketches were made, he would sit down and look at it to determine what kind of message was being transmitted. G K-S again:

"I discovered that if a composition was made using these archetypal elements, it became transformed into a type of mandala[38]. In other words, it became an object for meditation with an inner meaning, which could take some considerable time to fathom. At this point, I became totally divorced from the artist who had produced the work and was just a simple

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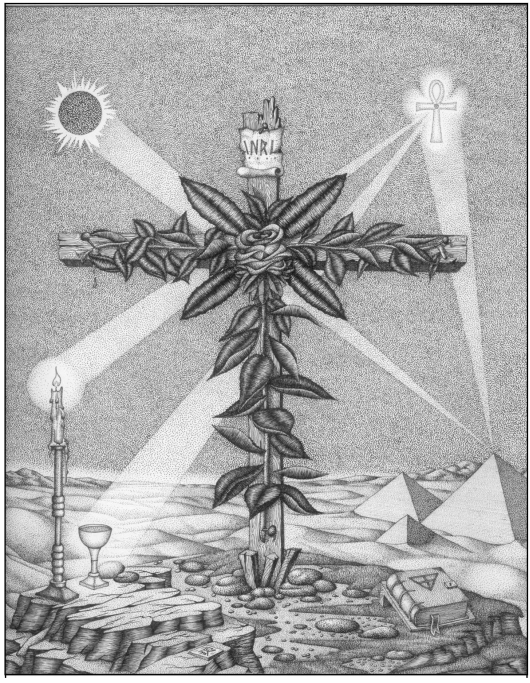
[38] **Mandala** (Sanskrit: मण्डल) is a spiritual and ritual symbol in Hinduism and Buddhism, representing the Universe. In various spiritual traditions, mandalas may be employed for focusing attention of practitioners and adepts, as **a spiritual guidance tool**, for establishing a sacred space, and as **an aid to meditation** and trance induction. In common use, mandala has become a generic term for any diagram or pattern that represents the cosmos metaphysically or symbolically; a **microcosm of the universe**. (Source: *Wikipedia*).

seeker. Once the meaning had become clear, it appeared to be glaringly obvious. Such an interpretation was, however, very personal, as different people would tend to see and understand different things."

I asked him if he could give us an example and he suggested using the drawing he made in 1978 and which he has since adopted as a signature. It is entitled "Incarnation" (a title it was given thirty years after its completion once all aspects of its significance had been realised). This is how he explains it:



"This ink drawing shows a rose crucified on a cross (a "Rose Cross"). This is generally accepted as symbolising the Self (the Rose) occupying a physical body (the stem, branches and leaves) suffering on the cross. In other words, it is the incarnated Self, undergoing the trials and tribulations of life on the physical plane.

"Behind the cross, we can see the pyramids of Giza, representing ancient knowledge and wisdom. In the sky there is the Ankh (the symbol representing life in Egyptian hieroglyphs), and a solar eclipse. These represent physical and cosmic forces concentrated by the power of the pyramids. The beams illustrate the interaction between the various elements, in particular with the candle and Grail cup.

"The ultimate message transmitted by all these symbols and their interaction is revealed by their relative positions to one another. You will

notice that the power of the pyramids and the cosmic forces are behind the Self, incarnated in the physical world. They are therefore invisible to it.

"There is however the candle, symbolising the light of knowledge, as well as the Grail communion chalice revealing that knowledge is attainable (shown by the beams). INRI (written on a scrap of torn paper) represents conventional religion, while the book of arcane knowledge offers a potential way of achieving enlightenment (the book is shown closed).

The necessity of the physical plane is revealed by the drop of "blood" falling into the chalice. For learning during incarnations – often involving suffering – is the only way to raise awareness to the level of true communion with the cosmic forces of creation.

Knowledge, illumination and spiritual communion are thus shown to be the means by which the Self on the cross will ultimately be able to gain awareness of all that has so far been hidden from sensory perception."

BOOK THREE
Apotheosis

Foreword

by

Gordon Keirle-Smith

The extraordinary sequence of events which took place in the course of the year following the initial publication of "Pre-Destination" in April 2014 brought about significant changes in the way this third volume was constructed.

The ongoing story of Gorin and the monumental events described in the ancient Haakon Urn texts bring us a number of climactic moments from our legendary prehistory, which are, in themselves, major revelations.

However, the principal changes in this third part of our saga concern the effect these disclosures are having on society and the way their potential influence is growing. As a result, most of the ancillary material accompanying the "retelling" of the "Song of Gorin" in this volume is focused on what is currently unfolding. To put it simply, in little more than one year since the first volume was published, what may have seemed a "fantasy" to many, is now drawing closer and closer to becoming **tangible reality in the here and now**.

I – The Neo-Zandernatist Manifesto

One of the more surprising developments to emerge from the revelations brought to light by the discovery of the Haakon Urns occurred on 1 January 2013. This was the posting of a series of precepts purporting to represent a belief system and guidelines said to reflect the underlying principles laid down by the Aerauma upon which the "Golden City" had been founded.

This document appeared simultaneously across a vast number of social media platforms, forums and discussion groups backed by a monumental e-mail campaign that in some 75.3% of cases managed to avoid users' spam filters. In the first week of January, experts estimated that out of the 3 billion or more people in the world who use the Internet, at least 55% of them were exposed to this message in one way or another. Its origin was unknown. Its author or authors could not be traced.

Then, on 1 February 2013, the page completely vanished from all platforms as suddenly as it had appeared, erasing all trace of it. There is however every reason to believe that its ephemeral publication has set in motion a series of effects, the results of which can only be guessed at.

Manifesto

Being a statement of our original, inherent knowing before our selves and within our selves.

We, the children of our origins, hereby state:

We believe nothing. We know everything.
Our mission, through successive, evolving lives is to rediscover what we already know.

Each rediscovery is a wholly original facet of The Whole.
Thus, we are behoven to define it at this point in the illusion known as time.

We need no Gods, no priests, no religion, no holy books...
Since only we can be aware of what we comprehend at our present place in time.

And now, at last, our own time has come.

In application of which, we, the children of our origins, hereby state:

I - We must attune our lives to resonate with the wholeness of our beings
on however many planes we can perceive at this instance of our time.

II - Within this framework, we must situate our selves upon the Path that takes us
from our origins to being At One, and ultimately As One.

III - We should seek a state of readiness wherein we gravitate to like selves
for communion on all planes and in all conditions.

IV - Only the sacred book written by our selves can be our guide and basis
for referral as an expression of our state of knowing .

V - Once we know the measure of our evolution, our duty is to go forth and spread
awareness of awareness. Quietly or with bold announcement, according to our place upon the Path.

VI - At all times, we must stay mindful that as we do, so we are.
But we can only judge ourselves before the Oneness, since we have no authority for judging others.

VII - Every instant is a lesson and an opportunity.
All is for our good. All is as it should be. All is at once and a journey.
For we *are* the children of our origins.

In humble gratitude for being instruments within the Greater Scheme.

Manifesto

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before our selves and within our selves.

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is to rediscover what we already know.

Each rediscovery is a wholly original facet of The Whole.
Thus, we are behoven to define it at this point
in the illusion known as "time".

We need no Gods, no priests, no religion, no "holy" books...
Since only we can be aware of what we comprehend
at our present place in "time'.

And now, at last, our own "time" has come.

In application of which,
We, the children of our origins, hereby state:

I. **W**e must attune our lives to resonate with the wholeness of our beings on however many planes we can perceive at this instance of our "time".

II. **W**ithin this framework, we must situate our selves upon the Path that takes us from our origins to being "At One", and ultimately "As One".

III. **W**e should seek a state of readiness wherein we gravitate to like selves for communion on all planes and in all "conditions".

IV. **O**nly the "sacred book" written by our selves can be our guide and basis for referral as an expression of our state of "knowing".

V. **O**nce we know the measure of our evolution, our duty is to go forth and spread awareness of awareness. Quietly or with bold announcement, according to our place upon the Path.

VI. **A**t all times, we must stay mindful that as we do, so we are. But we can only judge ourselves before the Oneness, since we have no authority for judging others.

VII. **E**very instant is a lesson and an opportunity. All is for our good. All is as it should be. All is at once and a journey. For we *are* the children of our origins.

In humble gratitude for being instruments
within the Greater Scheme.

The substance of this document and its manner of publication baffled many. No one has so far claimed responsibility for posting it. Nevertheless, it has certainly stirred up a wealth of speculation.

It has been likened to the digital equivalent of Martin Luther nailing his *Ninety-five Theses* to the door of All Saints Church in Wittenberg (1517) or the mysterious appearance of Rosicrucian tracts such as the *Fama Fraternitatis* (1614) and *Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz* (1616). While others suggested it was merely a publicity stunt designed to promote the interests of an unnamed Entertainment Corporation.

Only "time" will prove if it was either one – or neither – of these...

II - The Great Assembly

"He will come in time into the
cradle of the Great Ones, brought
by all the elements in concert
which owe them all they are."

Book of Magres Aeon V, Chapter X v. xxii

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1780-1817

The vast hall beneath the dome of the Aar-Pardylis was almost full when Gorin and Aelaguel entered. Circular in shape, it was of tremendous height and furnished with rows of seats, one tier rising behind another to form an amphitheatre, sweeping round in a horseshoe formation. This enabled the several hundred delegates to have an uninterrupted view of the platform and podium.

Behind the stage, and dominating the entire auditorium, hung an enormous pair of wings fashioned out of a smooth, reflective substance. Gorin was interested to observe they closely resembled the motif he had seen everywhere in Zandernatis, and of course could now understand the significance they held both for the City and as a symbol of the Aerauman race.

Aelaguel guided Gorin to seats at the end of the third row, giving them an excellent view of the proceedings – and of the others attending the meeting in this imposing chamber.

From the dome's apex, high above, beams of white light picked out the front of the stage and the single podium standing on it. In contrast, the wings on the curved wall behind were bathed in a deep blue glow coming from no apparent source, giving them an unreal, detached appearance.

The rest of the hall was left in comparative obscurity, with only just enough light for delegates to find their places. Gorin keenly scanned the vast assembly as it settled down, hoping to pick out the distinctive cut of Esperon's Zandernation tunic somewhere among the throng. But to no avail. All he could ascertain was that the majority of those attending were Aeraumen like Aelaguel, but a good number of wingless men and women were also present. These, he remembered, were Aerlings, the descendants of those among the original generation who had chosen to stay behind when the rest of their kin took up residence in Zandernatis. Aelaguel commented that there were more of them gathered in the Aar-Pardylis on this night than there had ever been before.

It required some effort for those living in the lower lands to come into Pardylis itself, apparently. Seeing so many of them on this occasion emphasised the seriousness of the situation and the importance of the announcement soon to be made.

Within a few moments, nearly all the places were taken and the main doors closed, the last few latecomers finding their seats as the lights on the platform suddenly intensified. Silence fell as all eyes turned in anticipation towards the focal point of the mighty hall. Then a door at the back of the stage opened. Through it came a tall winged figure wearing a long, pale blue robe and carrying a staff surmounted by gold wrought Aerauman wings. This mark of authority was raised ceremoniously in the air as a proclamation was made to declare the opening of the Assembly.

"Behold the wings of Pardylis," the blue robed Aerauman announced, in ringing tones. "Symbol of the guardianship bestowed upon us by the Mediators of the Oneness. Under their protection we are convened tonight, seeking guidance in the questions we must deliberate before our Triune Council of the Aar-Pardylis; Brothers and Sisters Hirlute, Cydornis and Melaguon."

With these words, the herald pointed the staff towards the great wings above the platform as the blue light about them began to change. First, it became a deep crimson before lightening again, finally assuming a brilliance rivalling that on the stage itself. The great alar forms then began to part and an opening appeared between them. Once they had fully retracted, the figures of three winged Aerauma[39] stepped forward out of the darkness to stand before the Assembly in the glare of the powerful beams directed upon them.

They were dressed in robes similar to all the others Gorin had seen, except for the colours, which were markedly deeper in tone. The tallest and most imposing of the three wore a garment of dark violet hue. This figure was further distinguished by being the only "winged one" Gorin had so far seen who appeared at all old. This impression was emphasised by shoulder length white hair that seemed to glitter in the silver light playing upon all three Council members. The other two appeared to be much younger, although by now Gorin knew they had all lived lives going back many thousands of years, endowing them with vast experience and understanding. Their

[39] There is an interesting semantic difference in the use of the collective terms which have been transliterated into "Aeraumen" and "Aerauma". The former is generally more commonly used as the plural of "Aerauman". When the race as a whole is being referred to, or in more formal contexts (as here), the latter term is generally favoured. To further complicate matters, "Aerauman" is invariably used as an adjective.

robes were both of a dark blue colour, as intense as midnight; making a sharp contrast with the pure whiteness of their wings.

The three Aerauma stayed on the threshold of the opening for some moments while they surveyed the multitude gathered before them. Their faces then relaxed from the austere expressions they had been wearing as they smiled, immediately radiating an inspiring tenderness into the consciousness of all those present, Gorin included. He was by now quite captivated by their charisma, even before they spoke, watching every move they made with transfixed wonderment in his eyes.

A moment later, the three of them spread wide their broad, feathered wings and with scarcely an effort launched themselves out into the void, gently gliding down to the level of the platform. The shafts of light followed them to the ground, bringing the greatest concentration of brilliance to bear on the stage and the speaking position.

"These are the most respected beings in the whole of Pardylis," Aelaguel whispered into Gorin's ear. "Hirlute is said to be the wisest of the Aerauma on this planet and the only member of the Council to be granted access to the Hall of Infinite Tribunal and the Mediators. The other two, Cydornis and Melaguon, concern themselves mainly with the affairs of our city."

Aelaguel was unable to add more as Hirlute was now beginning to speak, the venerated sage's lyrical tones carrying into the furthest reaches of the Chamber. Every word was carefully chosen and pronounced with the benign authority of immeasurable wisdom.

"Brothers and Sisters in Pardylis," Hirlute began, "We are assembled here this evening to give our attention to tidings brought by the Captain of our Scouting Flight, the worthy Daen. It is not for me to remind you of the constant watch maintained by Daen and those who operate with such diligence from the

Flying Fields. You know well of our indebtedness to them, of the contact they provide with the lands under the Jurisdiction and all the special services they render to Pardylis in particular. One of the most important being their constant surveillance over our homelands and the First Territory.

"You are also all aware of our increasing alarm at the discontent that has been building among those beyond the borders of the First Territory. In recent months, this unrest has assumed much more significant proportions, causing us even greater concern. Daen will explain to what degree our anxieties have foundation in fact. We will then present the response of those who hold supreme authority in these matters to the Assembly."

As Hirlute finished speaking, a murmur ran through the host of Aeraumen and Aerlings, as if they were already knew what kind of pronouncement the "supreme authorities" were likely to deliver on this question. As the brief tide of restlessness moved through the rows of assembled spectators, Gorin caught a second glimpse of the young man in his distinctively cut, dark green tunic. He was almost entirely hidden by the wings and white robes around him, but Gorin could see he was obviously hanging on Hirlute's every word. One glance at Aelaguel was enough. The Aerauman nodded and smiled.

"Yes Gorin, you have fulfilled the first part of your mission. He is indeed Esperon, son of King Iraeus, who you came to find. You will meet him tonight, once the Assembly has finished."

Having at last clearly identified the object of his quest, Gorin found it difficult to concentrate on the events taking place on the platform. He now focused his attention on the young man opposite. Although he was leaning forward in his seat, concentrating hard so as not to miss anything important, he had an air of hopeless desperation about him that Gorin found disturbing. It made him ever more eager to know the nature of

the tidings he sensed were likely to affect the young Prince so profoundly.

Then, while he was still studying Esperon from afar, another winged figure strode onto the stage, carrying a sheaf of papers in one hand. This was the signal for the three members of the Council to retire to places set out for them some five measures behind the podium to await the report from the Scouting Flight Captain.

The Captain's report

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1818-1858

Daen was a very tall Aerauman, broad and powerful, but for all such obvious strength, the elusive quality of gentility that so distinguished the race was still very much in evidence. Daen gracefully bowed to Hirlute, Cydornis and Melaguon, laid the papers on the podium and then looked up, unflinchingly meeting the expectant gaze of the entire Assembly. In an instant, the ceremonial reserve departed, to be replaced by an expression of the utmost gravity.

Daen began speaking in deep, resonant tones, carefully weighing every word. "Brothers and Sisters in Pardylis, you know of the constant surveys our Flight teams conduct over our mountains and across the deserts to the First Territory, with its Paradise Garden and Golden City of Zandernatis. You also know that ever since contact with our children in the City was severed, there have been other elements who covet those things we no longer have the right to help them protect."

A whisper of resigned acknowledgement ran through the gathered Assembly, accompanied by the rustle of many restless wings echoing throughout the cavernous reaches of the Aar-Pardylis. Gorin looked across to where Esperon was sitting once

more and saw almost all the colour had drained from his fresh, young face. Daen began speaking again.

"Those we have known as the Feblings have indeed always yearned to encroach upon the Paradise we created nearly three thousand years ago, and have long been envious of the wealth, beauty and glory embodied in the Golden City. Until now, they have been powerless to take any kind of action and our constant surveillance has never shown any noticeable evolution in their way of life. For many centuries, they have dwelt in their warrens beneath the mountains of Fading Dusk in the North, never straying very far lest the sun should come upon them unawares.

"As you know, they cannot tolerate strong daylight; an allergy which developed after they went to live in their subterranean domain after rejecting our original offers of help, back in the very early days of our mission here.

"However, things have now changed. In a way that could bring a whole new order to the land of the First Territory. Our reconnaissance flights over their mountainous heartlands and the Greywoood Forest reveal the Feblings have finally obtained what they sought for so long; the means of transforming their long-harboured jealousy into a very real and potent threat. This has been made possible by the powers their recently acquired malicious allies have given them.

A hush fell upon the Chamber. Then the word "allies?" sprang from hundreds of lips. Only Aelaguel and those given prior warning of this devastating news showed no reaction. All the other Aeraumen and Aerlings present were visibly shocked, addressing each other in an intensifying buzz of questions and conjecture.

"What allies?" everyone wanted to know. "How could the Feblings have any allies?" "There's no other race of men this side of the ocean...," some observed, perplexed. Gorin watched Esperon's reaction closely throughout these discussions,

although there was little enough to see. The heir to the throne of Zandernatis just sat there resignedly, looking more drawn and more desperately anxious with every passing moment.

Order was finally restored by Daen's authoritative uplifted hand, immediately bringing silence upon the assembled host.

"It is the power of these allies which constitutes the greatest threat to the continuance of the First Territory in its present state. They have brought with them an evil and malignant influence, stirring up the Feblings' age-old discontent to such a point that they are now prepared to take action and remedy what they consider to be a great injustice.

"The allies I speak of came to the mountains of Fading Dusk several months ago. They gradually nurtured the Feblings' deep-seated resentment they have harboured for centuries. With this added force behind them, they now feel themselves capable of invading the Garden and even attacking the Golden City of Zandernatis itself."

At these words, one of the Aerlings in the front row stood up and called out, "But who are these allies, or what are they?" This sparked a renewed outburst of incomprehension from all over the vast multi-tiered amphitheatre, once more quelled into silence by Daen's assertive raised hand.

"First, and most important of all, I must tell you that the Feblings' allies are not drawn from any race of men." There was a moment's pause, giving added emphasis to the next item of information.

"They include numberless swarms of Rinin-Serpents[40], many thousand black Garrow crows and hordes of giant Denashur bulldog bats; creatures of the night that have invaded

[40] Interestingly, the Aboriginal word for Devil is "Purinina". Or rather, it is the name of the "Tasmanian devil", a solitary marsupial which makes blood-curding nocturnal screams. It is also said to "reek of death" when alarmed (like a skunk) and fight with devilish ferocity over carrion.

the Febling caves. There they have carried out a campaign of malevolent incitement, aimed at the eventual domination of the Paradise Garden and destruction of all it represents - both for the people of Zandernatis and for us, its creators and the father-mothers of its children."

The news of these "allies" and their nature took a few moments to impress itself upon the Assembly. Whispered exchanges passed between many of those present, finally voiced in requests for Daen to give more details about these dark creatures and the evil threats they brought with them.

"There is little more I can add. Is it not enough to know that, for example, the floor of the Greywoods is alive with a sea of writhing serpents, slowly choking the natural forest life out of existence? That they are also steadily gaining ground elsewhere and may have already penetrated parts of the Garden itself, although we do not yet have any proof of this."

Gorin could have assured Daen on that point, for he remembered only too well the sight of those loathsome creatures he and his companions had encountered on the East road.

"Furthermore, the northern forests, from the mountains to the borderlands and as far as the Sharl River in the West, are thickly infested with Garrows and Denashurs. In fact, there are so many of them that large parts of the forest floor are permanently cloaked in darkness by the masses of extended wings overhead.

"This of course makes it much easier for the Febling forces to advance, even during the hours of daylight. A tactic that also hampers our reconnaissance missions by preventing us from having any precise idea of where the main body of men are gathered at any one time.

"As far as we could tell during a flight over the area this morning, the main concentration of wings indicates intense activity along the northern borders of the Paradise Garden.

Particularly at the point where the old road heads southwards; a route that, I should add, has already been cleared by advance parties working at night.

"They are only waiting for the right moment to advance upon the City. It is impossible to say what strategy they intend to employ in their attack. That will remain a mystery until we see it go into action."

"What are we going to do about this?" asked one of the Aeraumen from the floor. "What can we do?"

"This is a matter for the Council to decide of course," replied Daen. "Although I think we are all conscious of the conditions defining how much – or rather how little – we can do to protect our children in Zandernatis."

At these words, Gorin saw Esperon bow his head, a look of despair in his contorted features as he thought of the Council's inevitable pronouncement.

Hirlute, sitting at the back of the platform, now stood and came forward to join Daen at the podium. "We thank you, worthy Captain of the Scouting Flight. And although we may feel heavy of heart to hear the news you have brought us, we are in your debt for having explained it so clearly and concisely."

"Thank you, Venerable Hirlute, thank you Brothers and Sisters in Pardylis." With these words, Daen bowed to the Assembly, gathered up the papers from the podium and regained the body of the hall.

The fate of Zandernatis

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1859-1922

Hirlute stood for some moments in contemplation before looking up and out at the sea of anxious faces stretching to the amphitheatre's highest tiers, where the softly-lit dome began to curve above their heads.

"So it is that momentous events will come about in the First Territory. Revealed to you now as its change in status becomes imminent. Although such matters as this are, strictly speaking, the concern of the Jurisdiction Committee, we are discussing the situation in open session tonight because of the special relationship we have with the Zandernation Paradise. It was, after all, our first attempt at civilisation building on this planet and we all feel particularly responsible towards those who are part of it."

Hirlute allowed a few moments of silence to pass, surveying the attentive throng again before continuing.

"Time has gone by; and we have achieved many great things since the initial experiment was made. Yet even we, who are given the task of developing worlds and fostering civilisations, still have sentiments. No matter how constricting they may prove to be.

"This is why it was considered important for me to acquaint you with these developments. I know very well what many of you are going to ask this evening and I am bound, by the same feelings, to sympathise with what will be said. However, I must warn you that as things stand, we are powerless to change anything; an inescapable fact we have no alternative but to accept."

One of the Aeraumen in the second row rose and waited for Hirlute's acknowledgement. Once given, the Assembly heard a rich, musical voice delivering a heartfelt plea in calm and controlled tones, despite the profound emotion it was expressing.

"Venerable Hirlute, Brothers and Sisters in Pardylis. You have shared your speech and we have heard the report from our worthy Captain, Daen. The news has moved us all, because of our implication and its uniqueness. For it is a situation never

known before in all our history of assisting evolution on the many worlds where we have played our role.

"The First Territory is not like any other, and never was. It belongs to us more than any Territory ever can, for there is something of our selves in that Golden City. Not only because it is perhaps the greatest creation of all our art and power, but more importantly, because it is the home we made to give our children.

"Furthermore, those children are still with us. They may be in different bodies and now have the experience of many lives behind them. Yet they remain our own and we love them as all progenitors love their sons and daughters…

"They are part of our existence, just as our Brothers and Sisters here, where we are gathered. Not one of us can ever forget their own children passing through those mighty golden gates three thousand years ago. For all of us, it is as though it happened only yesterday.

"We will always remember them and their longing for freedom to enjoy everything we had so lovingly bestowed upon them. We cannot therefore learn of what awaits them now and simply stand aside. We have the will and power to neutralise these forces threatening the Paradise and Zandernatis. I therefore call upon you, worthy Hirlute and other Council members, to declare this a special case, to grant us the authority to act under circumstances overriding all other considerations.

"Worthy Council members, I would even plead that our eternal impersonality in all matters of the Jurisdiction allows us, just once, to intervene more directly. A humanitarian exception proving the justice of the rule. Thank you worthy Hirlute, Brothers and Sisters."

The speaker sat down to a murmur of approval from the body of the Assembly.

Gorin glanced round and immediately saw from Aelaguel's expression that however emotional the plea may have been and however much the Aerauman might understand it, there was little hope. Everyone knew Zandernatis could never be saved by "overriding" established law.

A new ripple of excitement suddenly passed through the Assembly. Another delegate was standing and being acknowledged. It was Esperon, about to voice a personal appeal for his people and his home.

"Venerable Hirlute, Cydornis and Melaguon, and all Brothers and Sisters in Pardylis, I speak to you now, not as one who has lived with you for many months and gratefully accepted your hospitality and instruction. Nor do I address you as the one drawn here by visions that urged me to leave the Golden City as no other child of Zandernatis had done for many long centuries.

"No, I speak to you as the sole representative of my people here tonight, the only one mindful of the evil threat hanging over the place where I have been born many times, over my present father and the City he governs. I appeal to you also as one of your own, as the son who finds himself trapped in mortal danger and then hears a familiar voice at hand. He cries out as I cry out to you, to all of you, 'Fathers and mothers, come to us, for we sorely need your aid.'

"If no help is forthcoming to combat the threat of the Febling forces and the dominance of their evil allies, the Paradise Garden will become nothing but a pit of serpents. The gilded halls of the great buildings in the City you created will become the filth-infested realm of Denashurs, despoiling all the beauteous things that have no equal in all your works. Black Garrows will nest in the towers of the Palace and pick at the bones of my kin and your children, fouling the air with their cries and the beauty of Paradise with their excrement. Over all

will reign the sorrow of the Feblings, caught in their own trap of hollow independence; as empty to them as our bondage will be to us. They will be overcome by the wickedness of their jealous allies and utterly at their mercy; never knowing the hour when they might rise to destroy them as well.

"I beg of you, as Prince of Zandernatis, come to our aid, let not this be visited upon your own. Hear the words our worthy brother and sister has spoken and hear my plea. It is from all of us to all of you. Thank you, my Brothers and Sisters."

Esperon sat down, every muscle of his face tensed and drawn by the overpowering force of the emotion he had just expressed. Every other being present felt deeply for him, as great compassion and understanding welled up within them. Gorin was also deeply moved and failed to see how the Council members could ignore such a heartfelt request. The suspense became more and more intense as Hirlute conferred with the other two Councillors for several agonising minutes. Then Cydornis came forward and a deathly hush fell upon the Assembly once more, so absolute that the Councillor's gentle, musical voice sounded unnaturally resonant in the expectant gulfs of the great Chamber.

"Worthy Brothers and Sisters in Pardylis, we have listened with great sympathy to the words of our Brother-Sister Arndya and to those of Esperon, who speaks with even greater implication. However, a matter of this kind may only be addressed at Jurisdiction level where, as you know, governance is administered according to the law, without exception.

"In consequence, this issue has been brought before the Hall of Ultimate Tribunal and even the Mediators of the Eternal Chariot have examined it. I need not remind any of you here, even Esperon, that decisions formed on such a supreme plane are made according to the greater good, and we may not always be able to understand their finality.

"The Mediators in their communion with Oneness have access to all knowledge, extending far beyond our mission, and far, far beyond what we may understand or feel in our execution of it. There are higher laws at work here, which must be impersonal in order to be universal. I therefore leave our worthy Hirlute to announce the findings based on Infinite Wisdom that have been handed down to us. Thank you my Brothers and Sisters."

Cydornis stood back to allow Hirlute to take up position on the forefront of the stage once more. All ears now awaited the pronouncement from the lips of this most venerable of winged ones; the most revered of all those who ever spoke before the Assembly of the Aar-Pardylis.

For some moments, Hirlute said nothing, remaining motionless before the podium, the weight of authority and infinitely impartial Justice greater and more agonising than it had ever been in more than three thousand years.

Among the sea of expectant faces, Esperon's tortured expression stood out from them all. The emotion was still showing in his expression as he trembled in the agony of waiting, even though he was resigned to the inevitable. He knew what was going to happen, despite the desperate plea he had just made and the tide of sympathy it had generated.

At last, Hirlute began to speak again in calm, level tones betraying no personal feelings, no matter how profound they may have been. As the judgement was delivered, a hush of foreboding fell upon the vast Chamber, a silence unbroken by the slightest rustling of a feathered wing.

"My beloved Brothers and Sisters in Pardylis, I speak to each of you now, be you of our Aerauman stock or of those springing from the seeds we sowed among the originals of Earth. You may well know what I have to say in essence, but let me summarise it in the five short words emblazoned over the

entrance to the Great Hall of Ultimate Tribunal; 'The Law Is The Law'.

"It is my burdensome duty to tell you, evoking this eternal principle, that what has been established cannot be disestablished. The Law does not change in order to comply with our desires. It must remain changeless, so we may ever know what we can depend upon and what we can teach others to depend upon.

"One of the mightiest manifestations of all Law is that giving every creature the right to determine the course of its own existence. This has ever been a supreme command in the code of action issued from the Oneness of the Itself and transmitted to us by the Mediators; to be for all time the most sacred edict governing every mission to aid the development of evolving peoples.

"You will know it was respect for this precept that brought Zandernatis into being in the first instance. If we had followed our sentiments, we would have kept our children about us. A few even wanted to live with the women who bore them in the kind of partnerships perpetuated among Feblings and in the Golden City today. In other words, these Aerauma were prepared to embrace an alien way of life, which is not our purpose, and can never be.

"We came to assist them in developing their sensibilities and capacities for attaining higher levels of understanding and advancement; nothing more. We should never become personally invested in what we do. On this occasion, our impartiality was challenged by the sorrow we felt when our children claimed their right to self-determination. But they wanted their City, they *needed* their City. In order to structure their individual unfoldment in a way of life totally divorced from our direct influence.

"As part of that monumental decision, they also assumed the responsibility of evolving solely with the means at their disposal; to guard as inviolably sacrosanct their right of self-determination with all the consequences this might have. For good or ill. If they wished to learn the lessons their evolution had to teach them, there was no other way.

"At the time Zandernatis was created, in accordance with the Law and at the Aerlings' own request, it was thus decreed that we were never to intervene in the Golden City's affairs unless called upon from the Summoning Place within the Great Palace by the ruling King.

"The fact that so many centuries have distanced us from those times and wrought so many changes in the intervening years is quite immaterial.

"The Law is the Law, and if the City now is other than it was originally, we are powerless to act. Even if we recognise a certain degeneration taking place and the existence of a threat which could take advantage of growing complacency, we must not change what has been decreed, nor how the Law may be fulfilled. For the danger Zandernatis now faces has resulted from having freedom of choice - the very self-determination that brought the City into being. We can only observe and ensure this right is preserved until the end. If those in Zandernatis must learn by what befalls them, they should be allowed to do so. We can do nothing to prevent it."

"Even if it means the annihilation of them all?" Esperon was on his feet again, challenging Hirlute in a manner not usually allowed under normal debating conditions. Now it went unnoticed, for the tension was too high and the gravity of the situation too great.

"Even then," replied Hirlute, "although we doubt it will come to that. In all probability, there would be much slaughter, but the Feblings are more likely to hold most of the

Zandernation people in bondage, just as they themselves are now subservient to their evil allies. However, what the end may be, we cannot know. Only the passage of time can reveal it to us.

"Believe me, my Brothers and Sisters, it has been a terrible task, giving you this news, but it had to be done and now we all share it equally. Let us be strong in understanding what must be."

Hirlute gripped the podium and sighed deeply, as one who has been relieved of a heavy burden. The weight of knowing was now upon all of them.

"But I am heir to the throne," cried Esperon. "I will be King some day. Cannot I call upon you in a moment of need when I am the only one to know of the danger? My father the King cannot be aware of it because he lacks your means of seeing how the Feblings and their allies are preparing to attack. And by the time he does, it will be far too late to do anything to prevent our downfall."

"Oh Esperon," replied Hirlute, "it is precisely because your father knows not of this danger that he and his people have to face it. You may indeed be heir to the throne of Zandernatis, but you are not yet empowered to summon us. This can only be done by the *ruling* King and from the Summoning Place, not from anywhere else.

"It is the Law, established for and agreed to by the founder children when they went into the City, asking for nothing more than to be left alone. *Only the Royal Summons*, expressing a once-and-forever need to change the age can allow us to intervene again in the affairs of Zandernatis and its self-determined history.

"Similarly, we are all obliged to recognise and comply with the decree issued by King Nuovo stating that no child of Zandernatis who leaves the City may ever return unless expressly summoned by the ruling King. Therefore, you cannot

even attempt to warn your father of the danger threatening his realm yourself. Even if there were sufficient time to do so… And we are powerless to help you by the obligation to respect our children's rights…"

The New One

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1923-1941

Esperon protested: "But there is the prophecy. Saying the New One will come, written in the words, 'He shall rejoin the City Son and call upon him to return with Regal summons, for great shall be the need.' What is this? Has it no significance?"

"It has, Esperon, but that New One has not come, not yet, and you have received no such call. Therefore, you cannot return while your father is still on the throne. Should that throne fall, there will then be a new order of things and you will no longer have any right to return. I am sorry, until the messenger spoken of in the prophetic writings, this 'New One', is among us, nothing may change."

Gorin rose to his feet, his head spinning with the pregnant import of the moment and energy such as he had never known before coursing through him.

"The New One is come," he declaimed in ringing tones.

The silence in the Aar-Pardylis was absolute; the surprise complete. Even Esperon did not believe what he had just heard. Although there was something about this "New One's" bearing and expression of purpose that sparked a seed of hope deep within him.

"Who are you?" The question from Hirlute was direct and almost disbelieving. Aelaguel rose beside Gorin and answered for him.

"Venerable Hirlute, members of the Council, Esperon and all Brothers and Sisters in Pardylis, the moment has come to

introduce Gorin into your midst. He came to us today, having made the long and hazardous journey over the desert sands of Jerah from the trials of the Forest of Dissemblance and before that from the Golden City of Zandernatis.

"I have questioned him and am fully satisfied he is indeed from where he claims to have come. Furthermore, he comes bearing a message he must deliver to a certain Esperon, who is here in the Aar-Pardylis this evening. A message from Esperon's father, King Iraeus."

"What is this message?"

All eyes were now on Gorin as he reached inside his robe and pulled out the seal of Iraeus he was still guarding around his neck. He held it high above his head for all to see as he made his declamation.

"Esperon, son of Iraeus, your father has sent me on this mission to find you and bring you knowledge of his fervent wish to see you once again within the City. He fears his present time is drawing to an end and so issues this official summons for you to return and assume your rightful role in Zandernatis. This is his seal which gives me the authority to communicate these tidings to you."

Gorin then left his seat and walked across the floor of the Chamber towards Esperon. As soon as he reached the Prince, he held the seal out for him to take.

With a trembling hand, Esperon grasped hold of it, smiling for the first time that evening as he held it aloft. "Behold the seal of my father the King," he proclaimed. "I am called upon to return as it has been written; and surely, very great is the need."

It was the most dramatic moment in the history of all the assemblies in the Aar-Pardylis since the creation of Zandernatis and subsequent withdrawal of the Aerauma. All those gathered there realised the coming of the messenger to summon Esperon meant there was yet a chance of averting the terrible fate

threatening their children. Provided the right decisions were taken of course, and taken quickly.

As soon as the initial excitement died down, Aelaguel went to confer with Hirlute and the other two members of the Council. It was important to discover their reaction to the news of Gorin's arrival and discuss how he could be allowed to fulfil his mission and bring Esperon back to his father.

In the meantime, the assembled Aeraumen and Aerlings began to leave the great Council Chamber, streaming out through the ornate portals into the squares and chasms of the city. Many of them came forward to greet Gorin and wish both him and Esperon good fortune in the times ahead. For his part, the Prince was rejoicing at the slender chance held out to him; for at least he could now see some hope in the future, replacing the grim prospects of a few moments earlier. Although of course, it all depended on getting back to Zandernatis before it was too late!

III – PLMRI opens
Puerto Natales "Austral" center

Originally based in Lucerne, Switzerland, the PLMRI (Past Life Memory Research Institute) became interested in the Haakon Urn texts as soon as it became apparent that the Zandernation society had fully embraced the concept of reincarnation as a way of life – and indeed, of death!

After the remarkable response to the PLMRI's first appeal in 2012 for members of the public with memories of previous lives involving the *"Great Southern Continent"* to get in touch with the Institute, Doctor H. K. Kittner (the Institute's Director) decided to set up a new center in the Patagonian region of southern Chile.

The reasoning behind this move was quite simple; for out of the 223 submissions received, a disproportionate number of subjects lived in the southern latitudes of Australia (NSW, Victoria and South Australia), New Zealand, South Africa and in particular, the most remote extremities of Chile and Argentina.[41]

[41] Two such submissions can be found in Chapter XVII of "Pre-Destination".

Further probes (invariably using various types of hypnosis) revealed many of these subjects harboured a genuine "nostalgia" for the lives they had lived on the warm/temperate continent in the southern seas.

As the story unfolded, it became clear that this was why such a high proportion of these subjects preferred to seek out subsequent lives in these regions. Findings confirmed by the results of a second recruitment campaign in April 2014.

Dr. Kittner commented at length on these observations in a series of articles published in special editions of the "Scientific Digest" towards the end of 2014. Extracts from two of these articles are reproduced below:

Sourcing past life memories set in Antarctica

by Dr. H. K. Kittner, founder and Director of the PLMRI.
October 2014
We launched our research program into past life memories set on the continent of Antarctica in pre-glacial times at the end of 2012. It began with an advertisement inviting subjects or Past Life Regression therapists to contact us and share any relevant experiences we could add to the considerable body of evidence proving that Zandernatis had actually existed.

The response was quite remarkable, encouraging us to repeat the exercise in 2014, once our "Austral" Research Center was fully operational. It rapidly became apparent that having closer contact with therapists and subjects in these southern regions would pay dividends. For in addition to the unique "Dreaming Diaries" submitted by Martha Calbrow[42], we began to receive even greater

[42] See "Destination", the second volume of the Zandernatis Trinity, in which Martha graphically describes several of the major events referred to in the history of the Golden City mentioned in *"The Book of Magres"* and *"The Song of Gorin"*.

numbers of fascinating reports from Past Life Regression therapists living and working in the southernmost extremities of the Australian, African, South American land masses and other territories in this zone.

It was not very long before a distinct pattern began to emerge. The therapists described their subjects as being from a wide variety of socio-economic and educational backgrounds. These ranged from workers on sheep farms in New South Wales, Australia, to company managers in Cape Town and housewives in Dunedin, New Zealand. Despite this diversity, they all appeared to be perfectly comfortable with the notion that they had lived many previous lives and seemed to share a certain inner assurance and confidence in their future. Many of them also felt they had a "duty" to share these experiences with others as their "contribution" to what was referred to by at least five of them as the "tide of renewal" currently regenerating awareness of humanity's true origins.

However, by far the largest number of reports submitted to the PLMRI for our consideration continued to come from the southernmost tip of the South American continent, where Argentina and Chile reach out towards the northernmost tip of the Antarctic peninsular and the appropriately named **"Paradise Harbor"**[43]**.** This region of "Patagonia" covers a total area of 777,000 square kilometres and includes some of the most spectacular landscapes to be found anywhere on Earth. There are several National Parks in the region, of which Chile's Torres del Paine is particularly striking (see following page).

[43]This base, with its evocative name, was the first permanent station to be established on the ice-bound landmass. In recent years, it has become the most visited spot on the continent, since it is a regular port of call for the cruise ships sailing from Argentina, giving visitors the experience of actually setting foot on the Antarctic continent. Attention is also drawn to the remarkable "coincidence" of its name in Chapter X of "Pre-Destination".

According to the Past Life Memory reports we have recorded and investigated, it is this landscape that draws so many very "old souls" to the region. For the lofty peaks, rock formations, relief and vegetation stir powerful memories among the majority of these subjects. In other words, it is clear that this part of Patagonia closely resembles the continent of Antarctica when it was in more temperate waters and particularly the area covered by the "Paradise Garden", Zandernatis itself and the "Hills" where Pardylis, the city of the Aerauma, once stood (or was once "tethered" as some accounts intriguingly suggest, implying that its location was not necessarily permanent).

Past life memories evoke Antarctic civilization

December 2014

In the first six months after the PLMRI began researching the past life memories of subjects in Patagonia, a number of fascinating patterns emerged. These fall into three distinct categories:

I - Lucid identification (also known as "Context absorption")

The vast majority of cases (59%) are of this type. Most subjects are swiftly able to connect with levels of consciousness holding clearly defined memories of lives in Zandernatis. Many are also keenly aware of the "total recall" phenomenon and some of its more complex implications concerning "role changes" in successive existences. Several expressed this unique feature of the Zandernation society to be the "ultimate gift" of living in "Paradise", and in this context seemed to find it difficult to imagine any kind of lifestyle without such multi-layered personal relationships.

This category of subject had the greatest difficulty reconciling their awakened memories with their current lives, described by many as "bland and one dimensional" in the light of these revelations.

II - Evocation and integration ("The existence continuum")

Subjects falling into this category (23%) were able to cope with the co-existence of the two mindsets much more easily. They appreciated the breadth of vision given by multiple-awareness of preceding lives, but at the same time saw the advantages of dealing with one life at a time. They argued that the potential for evolution was much greater in what we call our 21st century than during the millennia of "unwarranted Paradise". Their glimpse of the alternative did however apparently inspire many of them to strive more consciously towards **achieving** a comparable level of consciousness, which they understood to be infinitely better than having it **"thrust upon them"**.

III – Aspiration and purpose (Projection and application)

Only 15% of all cases studied corresponded to this profile. Despite appearing capable of recalling numerous events and situations that could only refer to life in pre-glacial Antarctica, subjects in this category refused to accept such visions as being part of their own experience. On the other hand, they saw them as an aspirational ideal

and a "spiritual awakening". Some described the experience as "a glimpse of heaven" and vowed to work towards making it something to aim for in their everyday lives.

A further 3% of subjects could not be placed into any of the above categories.

OBITUARY[44]

DEATH OF EMINENT MELBOURNE SEMANTICIST

2 December 2012, Melbourne, Australia

The death has been announced, in Melbourne, of **Professor J. G. Harkwood** at the age of 97, after a long illness. Having obtained an MA in Linguistics and Semantics at University College, London, for the greater part of his career, Professor Harkwood worked at the Dickensen Archaeological and Geophysical Institute in Melbourne and came to be considered a world authority on the semantics of hieroglyphs. It was in this capacity that he chaired the Editorial Committee (from 1968 – 1974) responsible for preparing a digest of documents from the "Haakon Urn texts" (discovered under the Antarctic ice in 1962) for the benefit of fellow archaeologists, hieroglyphologists and semanticists in all parts of the world (particularly London, New York, Paris and Berlin).

To his great regret, this project ended abruptly in 1976, when the original artefacts were stolen from the Dickensen Institute, apparently by Christian extremists who objected to their "heretical" content. Since the greater part of the writings had not been deciphered when the theft occurred, and despite his own personal involvement in this major project, Professor Harkwood took the bold decision to prevent *any* of their content from being made available to the public to prevent partial and unrepresentative disclosures. This clearly demonstrates Professor Harkwood's integrity and selfless dedication to scientific accuracy. He will be sorely missed by his family, colleagues and all defenders of truth. His British wife, **Phyllis Margaret** (née **Stanford**) died in 2005, leaving their son, **Philip Reginald Harkwood**, sole heir to the Harkwood estate

[44] Published in The Australian, Sydney Morning Herald, The City Weekly, The Geograph Gazette, Melbourne Times Weekly and Australasian Science.

IV – Gorin and Esperon

"The task is resting in the generations
yet unborn, whose present is our future
and whose future is our vision. Theirs
is the life, and ours the duty."

From the Aerauman "Charter of Evolution"

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1942-1972

Once the greater part of those present at the Assembly in the Aar-Pardylis had left, the mighty domed hall became quiet again. The momentous events that had taken place there so recently passed on into the history of the world, as all other events would do. Yet a whole new epoch had just been born, even if there were still many details to be determined and transformed into reality. It was to such an end that those bearing this huge responsibility were now striving to reconcile law and circumstance, fully aware their decisions would leave a mark on all foreseeable ages of civilisation on Earth.

Within the Inner Chamber of the Council, Aelaguel was in conference with Hirlute, Cydornis and Melaguon. They were earnestly discussing the significance of Gorin's arrival in Pardylis and the action to take in view of the Royal summons he had brought to Esperon. They were also evoking the threat to the Garden and its Golden City. Aelaguel was making a special request in the light of the evening's disclosures and the Council was deliberating as to what it could allow within the order of

the Law. As Aelaguel argued, these were edicts laid down three millennia before, when circumstances such as those they were now faced with could not have been envisaged.

Meanwhile, in the grand portico of the Aar-Pardylis, Gorin and Esperon waited together for Aelaguel to come to them with news of the Council's final ruling. The Aerauman had asked them to stay, saying they would not be kept waiting any longer than necessary. Yet it was already over one hour since the last of the winged beings had flown off into the night and there was still no sign of Aelaguel.

The two men had found a great deal to talk about however, for Esperon had been eager to have news of his father and events in Zandernatis. Despite an obvious fascination for Pardylis, Gorin soon realised the Prince was desperately homesick and longed to be back in his familiar surroundings, particularly at this hour of need.

It had of course been very difficult for him to learn there was such a danger hanging over his City and yet live with the knowledge he was completely powerless to do anything about it. Because of his rank and concern, he had received some advance warning of Daen's reconnaissance reports. Nevertheless, this did little to soften his confrontation with all aspects of the situation when they were finally presented to the Assembly.

Esperon understood why anyone leaving the City could only return if a Royal summons were issued. The Law had been designed to protect those whose greatest desire was to remain sheltered from the unfriendly influences of the world beyond their walled domain. Except in times such as these. The frustrations this had brought upon the Prince had almost been more than he could endure.

"I can't wait to be back," he said. "To gaze once more on my father's Palace, the Great Square before it and all around the beauty of the Garden seen from the top of the Golden Tower. Can't you tell me any more of how things are there? Is everyone still content, do they still rejoice in life as much as ever?"

"I'm sorry, but as I've told you, I was only there a few days. Just long enough for Hexard to tell me what I needed to know for the journey. I saw the festivities, the dancing... As far as I could see, celebration still seemed to be the most important thing in everyone's lives."

"It sounds to me just like it ever was, and I remember it dearly for all that. However, since being here, I've seen life has other things to offer, things transcending our endless freedom from care."

"And you'd like to see them applied in Zandernatis?"

"All in good time," replied Esperon ruefully. "We have other, more pressing matters to attend to first."

"We do indeed."

"The thought of an imminent attack is terrifying. The first-ever challenge to the status of Paradise and no one has the slightest inkling... They are so totally vulnerable, so totally unprepared..."

"We have to get back fast."

"It will be a close call," said Esperon solemnly. "Even with the help of the Aerauma. But if we do prevail, a truly golden age will dawn. There will be an end to the degeneration that has been slowly clouding our awareness of what harmony really means. Our lives will be richer, more purposeful, more evolved."

"What kind of changes would you make?"

"I don't know exactly. In any event, the trials we must all soon confront will bring a flood of fresh awareness. This we must discuss with the Aeraumen and listen to their infinitely

wise counsel. For example, I would like us to draw on the infinite experience of world governance they have built up over aeons of time.

"Above all, if we are victorious, we must ride that wave of new awareness and build upon it, learning to strike a balance between the pleasures of Paradise and our right to enjoy them. Not an easy task, but I am sure we can achieve it. We must achieve it! Once we have shown ourselves worthy of being given the choice."

Gorin nodded, greatly impressed by the determination of this young man who was so unlike all the others he had met in the Golden City. Esperon had a conviction they lacked and a certainty of intent heightened by the tremendous undertaking ahead of him. Furthermore, he displayed qualities indicating he would be a fine leader of men, respected by all who served him.

This made it clear to Gorin that if anyone could save Zandernatis from its present danger and the long-term risk of slowly declining values and ideals, it was Esperon. There and then, he decided to do all he possibly could in support of this noble cause.

No longer feeling himself the victim of an inexplicable set of circumstances, he suddenly sensed everything was falling into place. Having met the royal heir he was sent to find, there was new purpose in his heart, a purpose now fully identified with the well-being and salvation of Zandernatis and the triumph of its future King.

The Council's pronouncement

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 1973-2009

There was still no sign of Aelaguel, so after their long conversation, Gorin and Esperon strolled away from the sombre shadows of the portal and out into the illuminated

immensity of the Oarian Plaza. The sky was by now completely dark and the only visible light sources were those coming from, and directed onto, the city's various buildings. It was a magical sight, for the unreal grandeur of the huge edifices and the way they appeared to be suspended in mid-air was quite remarkable.

Impenetrable blackness seemed to well up beneath them and then fall away as the walls emerged, bathed in the glow of their subtle floodlighting. There was evidently still a considerable amount of activity going on in some of the larger public buildings, the gleam of numberless lighted windows adding a scintillating sparkle to the curtain of velvet midnight. It was like a far-flung galaxy twinkling in the rarefied mountain air, and for a time its overwhelming beauty stilled any further interchanges between the two observers.

In contemplating the sight before them, Gorin turned his attention to the mighty Palace of the Jurisdiction on their right, allowing his gaze to travel the length of the Sildar Tower rising above it. Lights blazed forth at all levels and, brightest of all, the pinnacle basked in a haze of intense luminosity. It was bluish green in colour and throbbing as if the very particles of air were in motion, responding to some unknown, highly charged vibration.

However, what caught Gorin's attention most of all was the main Palace's topmost storey, where he knew the Ultimate Tribunal must be in session. A powerful, deep sapphire light shone from every window, while a shaft of ice blue radiance rose above the massive structure, stabbing far into the night, up and up in an unwavering beam of concentrated energy towards the enormous red-hued star hanging in the sky directly above. There, the piercing light fused at the point of union in an aura of violet mist.

Gorin quickly realised this must be the "Eternal Chariot", Ecinlorne's guiding light during their long journey across the desert. Seeing it from this viewpoint was a completely different experience, rendered even more awe-inspiring by the beam of light directed towards it. Quite obviously, this was more than just another heavenly body and far brighter than any of the others to be seen in the clear night sky. He asked Esperon if he knew anything of its significance.

"Not very much," the Prince replied. "It's known as the 'Eternal Chariot' and, unlike all the other heavenly bodies, it always stays in the same position. Sometimes with that ray of light directed on it as well. It's the only thing no one has ever been too eager to tell me about, although from what I've gathered it seems to be where those they call the 'Mediators' reside.

"The light probably means there is some kind of consultation going on - and I think we can guess what it's about. Beyond that, and the kind of allusions to them we heard tonight, they're rarely mentioned. Most of the time, contact is made mentally from the Jurisdiction Palace, although on very rare occasions a delegation actually travels there. Whoever they are, the Mediators clearly have greater authority than the Aerauma, and they are the ones who take all the final decisions."

As Esperon finished speaking, there was a slight noise behind them and they turned to see the winged form of Aelaguel emerging from a secluded doorway in the side of the Aar-Pardylis.

"The deliberations have taken some time, I'm sorry," the Aerauman said, approaching them. "Hirlute and the two other members of the Council had to consult with the Mediatorum. And after considering all aspects of this situation they have finally reached a compromise."

In a flood of excitement, Gorin and the Prince eagerly pressed Aelaguel to tell them more.

"It is quite simple. The main question was of course whether, under the terms of the Law, we could take you both back to the City by chariot. As all contact with Zandernatis has been severed under the conditions you are familiar with, this could be considered an unlawful intervention. However, as we heard tonight, time is of the essence and every hour may be important.

"In searching for a way round this limitation, we also considered taking you as far as the outer walls of the City so you could make your own way in. Only then, it was argued, valuable time could be lost if we stopped there. Everyone would want to celebrate your return and pay little attention to your call for immediate action."

"That occurred to me as well," said Esperon. "They would think it was all part of 'The Dreaming'."

"Furthermore, with the enemy's invasion plans so far advanced and the allies thirsty for blood and victory, the City will have to organise a good part of its own defence, even if there is a Royal Summons. For by the time your father agrees to issue it, there will not be enough time for us to arrive before the Feblings launch their first attack. So unless all is to be lost at the last moment, there is only one course open to us, which has finally been agreed to by the Council and the Mediators."

"So what is it then?" Esperon asked impatiently, hardly daring to hope what the answer might be.

"It has been decided that, after all, we can take both you and Gorin back into the centre of Zandernatis by chariot. The arrival of such a craft will cause enough excitement for you to make yourself immediately known and with that, the reason for your return. Then, even if at first your father is reluctant to summon us, the people are more likely to be sufficiently aroused to call

for him to do so. They will have had irrefutable proof of our existence and our endorsement of the very grave threat to theirs."

"This seems to be an excellent solution," Esperon said slowly, thinking over how the Zandernation people might react to one of the Aerauman sky-craft landing in the midst of the City. "When can we leave?"

"As soon as possible. But it will take a few hours to get everything ready. Daen has already been informed and is preparing the team we will use. The best thing for you and Gorin to do now would be to return to your rooms in the Residence and get some rest before our departure. I will come and rouse you when we are ready to go to the Fields, just before dawn. Is there anything else you need to know before then?"

"No. I'm only relieved to think what this is going to mean for us," said Esperon. "It's our only chance and we must make the most of it. Where exactly do you intend landing? The Palace Square?"

"That would be the best place I think, both in terms of the space we need to land safely and because arriving there would be seen by the greatest number of people. By the time we arrive, it should be around midday, so news of your return will spread fast and you will very soon have a large audience hanging on your every word."

"It's going to be quite spectacular!" observed Gorin, trying to imagine the impact such a vision was likely to have on the zealous fun-seekers of Zandernatis. Would they be intrigued? Bewildered? Or simply terrified?

"However, there is one very important detail I am obliged to impress upon you," added Aelaguel in a grave voice, looking steadily at the two young men.

"As soon as we have landed and you have both disembarked, we must take off again immediately. The Council was most emphatic on that point. You have every right to answer your father's summons, especially since you will one day be King yourself. Indeed, if you were anyone other than the heir to the winged throne, I doubt very much if we would have been able to go as far as we can now."

"But surely, if they could just catch a glimpse of you..." urged the Prince.

"No! For us to stay a single moment after you have set foot in Zandernatis again would contravene the Law. Remember, we may only truly return in response to an official summons from the Summoning Place. Not under any other circumstances."

"I understand," answered Esperon, with resignation. "And I am deeply grateful to the wisdom of the Council for their enlightened judgement. You may be assured that having this opportunity, once I have regained the Golden City, the summons will not be long in coming."

"Let us hope so. Hirlute has already given Daen orders to prepare the Sky-Force for battle. So as soon as the Law is fulfilled, we will be airborne, and in a few hours doing everything possible to avert the overthrow of our creation and the slaughter of our children."

With a barely perceptible bow of salutation to Esperon and Gorin, Aelaguel bid them a peaceful night before leaving to finalise preparations for the morrow.

The Prince of Zandernatis and Gorin watched Aelaguel's retreating figure crossing the Plaza. Then, with what seemed to be effortless wing movements, the Aerauman was in the air and rising towards the tower dominating the Palace of the Jurisdiction. Seconds later, the flying figure was out of sight, having entered the great edifice by one of the numerous doorways high up in its soaring walls.

The two young men slowly made their way back towards their respective suites in the Residence of the Six Territories, both deep in thought and saying little. They were very conscious of the overwhelming importance these events would have and the key role they had to play in turning them to the City people's advantage.

For Esperon, they offered vindication for his historic break from millennia-long conventions and an opportunity to set his people and his City on a new path. While for Gorin, they offered him the purpose in life he had lost together with his memory prior to regaining consciousness in the Garden.

Despite these differences, their combined hopes and fears were all pinned on the ultimate outcome of the world-changing events that lay before them. Only one thing was certain: everything would be decided for good or for ill within the next few hours.

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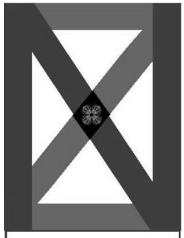

Those having an affinity with the precepts laid down in the Neo-Zandernatist Manifesto

are hereby invited to attend the First **NZO Convocation** to be convened on the morning of the forthcoming Spring equinox at 57° 44′ N / 4° 22′ W. [45]

This event is open to all who seek **awareness of truth** and the **truth of awareness** that corresponds to their state of readiness.

The Convocation will last for three days and three nights.

It will be followed by **The First Initiatory Convention** for those prepared to identify their place upon the Path and evolve in accordance with the Order's principles and objectives founded upon **the right of self-realisation**.

- From At One to As One -

[45] *Coordinates changed at the Administrators' request for confidentiality.*

Prelude to departure

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 2010-2044

Alone in his room, Gorin found it difficult to think of resting. So much had happened since he arrived, he found it difficult to believe he had only been in Pardylis for little more than fourteen hours. It was, after all, only that morning he had emerged from the gorge and crossed the Arondyvon river.

The revelations of the day kept whirling through his head with great speed as he tried to concentrate on their significance. They refused to diminish in intensity and allow him the balm of sleep, despite his physical weariness. Finally, unable to remain lying on his bed a moment longer, he got up and went to the large double windows opening out onto the colonnaded gallery running around three sides of the building. As he opened them, he felt the refreshing coolness of the night air blowing softly upon his face, while from the garden came the distant music of the playing fountains, tumbling and splashing in the stillness.

He stepped out of his room, crossed the gallery to the stone balustrade running between the columns and gazed out at the mountain-bound city beyond the Residence garden. There were fewer illuminated windows now, although much of the floodlighting was still operating. It picked out the few winged figures who were gliding backwards and forwards through the yawning spaces of the chasm; but the activity was nowhere near as intense as during daytime. Everything was calm, quiet and yet strangely heavy with expectancy; as if the whole city were waiting for events to unfold.

A new element in this nocturnal view of the Aerauman home was the milky light of a huge, three-quarter moon that intensified the darkness of the deep rifts between the buildings. Wherever the ephemeral beams caught the edifices, or the rocks upon which they stood, some kind of sympathetic vibration

appeared to occur, creating a shimmering cloud of insubstantial matter around everything.

This had the effect of making the whole scene appear much more unreal and closer to something seen in a dream than ever before, far removed from the realities of an objective world. Looking out upon this prospect of tranquillity and magical unearthliness, Gorin felt himself being gently lulled into the sleep he had found so elusive a few moments before. Then a footfall on the marble pavement and a voice brought him back to full consciousness with a start.

"So you can't sleep either?"

He spun round to see Esperon standing behind him, smiling in the light of the moon filtering through the tall columns of the gallery. He looked drawn and weary, his light hair dishevelled; as if he too had been tossing and turning like Gorin, before coming outside.

"I'm sorry, I didn't want to alarm you," he said. "But I couldn't sleep for thinking over everything that's going to happen; it was just impossible. So I came out here and saw you."

"It's all right," answered Gorin. "I was so taken up with looking out at all this, I didn't hear you."

"It is so beautiful isn't it? So serene and untroubled - and so unlike the kind of beauty we know in Zandernatis. Can you imagine? In just a few hours from now, we'll be back there, back in the Palace Square, back among all the people I have known since I was a child. It defies belief."

"Your father will be so happy to see you return safely after so many months away, and Hexard too, of course."

"Ah yes, Hexard," said Esperon with a gentle smile passing over his face. "It will be good to talk with him again, and be able to thank him for the way he got everything ready for me to set out on my journey. Not to mention his guidance in helping me study the ancient writings."

"He told me of his awareness and understanding of your reasons for leaving the City, and how he gave you some of the old books to read."

Esperon laughed. "I wonder what my father's comments were. I think at the time, he thought I was quite mad. So did everyone else, and for a while that idea ran like a current of disillusion and sadness throughout the whole court; at least as far as any of them were able to experience such emotions. But there was nothing else I could do; I had to leave."

"Did you know where you were supposed to go?"

"Not exactly. But Hexard was a tremendous help, and the only person I could really talk to. Then, once I'd looked into some of the old records and he'd told me all he knew, I began to see what it was all leading to; and what I might find when I finally arrived at the places I kept seeing in my Dreaming."

"Did you know why you were having those dreams?"

"No. In fact, that was what drew me on. The purpose behind it was far from clear, and I had to wait until I'd been here a while and learnt something about our true origins and the Feblings' role in them before I began to understand fully. Then of course, as things developed and the news became more and more ominous, I remembered the prophecies and Hexard's interpretation of them. So I stayed here waiting, day after day, for the message, the summons, to come."

"You never doubted it would?"

"Not really, not in the beginning. I had such faith in Hexard and his great wisdom. Although as time went on, I did begin to wonder. Then, when I heard Daen's report last night, I grew afraid it had all been a terrible misrepresentation of some kind. Until you stood up of course, and then I knew..."

"I'm only glad I came in time."

"We'll see if you did or not tomorrow," Esperon said ruefully. "But if so much has gone as far as it has, I have faith that somehow we will pull through. Perhaps it isn't the wisest thing to rely so much on feeling. But Hexard taught me never to despair if I could see everything as part of the Greater Scheme.

"I remember how he used to come into my playroom when I was very young and tell me wonderful stories about faraway cities and faraway peoples. Maybe he already knew what was going to happen in my lifetime and it was his way of preparing me.

"Anyway, it won't be long now before we know, once and for all. But come, I think perhaps we should at least try to rest a little, even if sleep is not possible."

Gorin nodded in agreement, and after one final glance at the transient, moonlit beauty of Pardylis, they each made their way back into the Residence. Both of them felt a little more at ease after their conversation and better prepared for rest, having experienced the tranquillity of the night all about them.

In fact, they were so soothed that sleep soon overcame them and they knew nothing for several hours. Not until Aelaguel came to them just before dawn, quietly urging each in turn to be prepared and meet downstairs in a few minutes. The time had come!

The Flying Fields

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 2045-2107

Aelaguel conducted Esperon and Gorin to the middle of the Plaza where two very large and strong looking winged Aeraumen were standing. They bowed to the young men and Aelaguel explained they were going to carry the two of them to the place from which they would be leaving on the chariot for Zandernatis.

Moments later, they were in the air, held tightly by the Aeraumen and flying above the pinnacled rooftops of Pardylis. The buildings and bottomless chasms were still in darkness below them as they pursued their aerial journey, making it impossible to distinguish very much beyond the shape of Aelaguel ahead; a dark shadow against the jewelled firmament of stars.

There was no sound other than the constant beating of feathered wings on air throughout the journey. It only lasted a few minutes, but was long enough for Gorin to appreciate what it must be like to have the ability to fly and know no limitation imposed by surface terrain. In fact, by the time he and Esperon were set down, somewhere just beyond the last of the soaring towers and ink-black ravines, not having wings growing out of his shoulders suddenly seemed to be a tremendous handicap.

Somewhat breathless after the journey above the silent city, Gorin had Esperon thanked their two carriers, who smiled graciously and made off again into the featureless abyss. Aelaguel then conducted them over a wide, flat expanse of ground towards a series of lights glimmering some fifty or sixty measures away.

"We are now on what are known as the Flying Fields," said Aelaguel. "This is where the chariots take off on their missions of assistance and reconnaissance to the various territories under the surveillance of the Jurisdiction. It is of course also from here that we have surveyed what has been happening in and around the Paradise Garden. Daen is over there waiting for us now."

Gorin looked ahead and was able to make out the shadowy form of a figure moving in front of an imprecise source of glowing and slowly pulsating light. There were also other unrecognisable patches of darkness moving against the background of shapeless luminosity, but everything was still too distant to be clearly distinguishable.

Then, suddenly, from behind, came the now familiar sound of chanting, accompanied by a rush of air. Moments later, a brilliant light passed overhead, dipping in front of them before making off into the distance and slowing down as it glided towards the ground.

"That must be the scouting chariot they sent out last night," said Aelaguel. "Perhaps they will have some more news about developments in the Febling camp."

They continued walking towards the centre of activity ahead and, as they approached the luminous shape, Gorin realised it was some kind of vehicle, in outward appearance very similar to an ordinary land-going chariot. With one significant difference. It possessed the remarkable light-emitting quality he had found so intriguing from afar. In fact, the whole form was shimmering with life, each line of the intricate design on its flanks moving independently from the main body of the vehicle.

There was a team of six magnificent horses harnessed to the front of the chariot, as could be expected. Except these horses had the singular peculiarity, like their masters, of being capable of flight. A large pair of sturdy, powerful wings rose from each creature's back, motionless now, but raised high in eagerness to be away. The figure standing beside them stepped forward as the three new arrivals drew nearer, becoming easier to discern. Gorin recognised the Captain who had delivered the reconnaissance mission report to the Assembly in the Aar-Pardylis a few hours earlier. After the customary greetings, Daen began going over the plan they would be following in the course of the next few hours.

"We will be leaving in about half an hour," said the winged chariot master. "By that time, it will be just starting to get light, enabling us to travel with the sun behind us towards Zandernatis and high enough to avoid the desert heat. Then,

once inside the Garden, we will fly at a fairly low altitude to avoid being seen by observers from beyond it. There is no need to attract undue attention to our purpose."

"How are preparations progressing for our response to the summons when it comes?" asked Aelaguel, an edge of anxiety sounding in the Aerauman's normally steady, melodious voice.

"They are well. As soon as we have left on our mission, the whole Sky-Force will be alerted and ready to follow as soon as the summons is received. Most of the chariots are already equipped and we have been preparing the Valyons throughout the night. At present, the majority of them are still at their sleeping posts, but we will start harnessing them up as soon as morning breaks."

The Captain indicated a nearby area where a series of large, sturdy posts were standing. Beside each of these hovered one of the winged horses, tethered by a slender cord of twined silver, long enough to give it sufficient freedom of movement to drift a few measures above the ground, its great wings lazily keeping it aloft.

"We have to keep the Valyons secured like that," explained Aelaguel, "or else they would drift off in their sleep. Normally, they are set free in the pastures, lower down on the hill slopes towards the river. But given the importance of this mission, they are all being brought here, ready at a moment's notice to take off and carry our forces towards Zandernatis and the confrontation which will determine its future."

"How many chariots will there be altogether?" asked Esperon.

"About one hundred and twenty," replied Daen. "Maybe more, depending on the number of rested Valyons we can muster. Some have been overstretched by their recent long reconnaissance flights, while others have only just returned from

the distant Territories. But I think we can be certain of having well over one hundred."

At that moment, another winged figure came out of the darkness and approached them, greeted Daen and the others, then handed a scroll to the Captain.

"This is what I was waiting for," said Daen, "the report from the latest scout to come in." After a quick glance at the message there came a question, spoken in a quiet, terse tone.

"Are they sure?"

"Yes Captain," came the reply. "There can be no doubt. We have never seen so much activity in the air before. This time it is extending from the Greywood side of the borders up to the line of the old East road and along a good part of it, well within the limits of the Garden.

"This can only mean one thing. The Feblings intend to move in today, or rather tonight, for their intentions can no longer remain concealed. As soon as dawn comes, the people in Zandernatis will be able to see all the birds and other creatures in the air. Even if they settle on the trees to provide cover for the army, there are enough of them to make an unmistakable mark on the skyline."

Just then, the first grey rays of the new day began to lighten the Eastern sky and, as if the night were breathing its last, the mountain air moved gently about them in a breeze blowing from the East. It disturbed the wings of the Valyons and Aeraumen alike and slightly chilled all of them for the few moments it endured. Gorin and Esperon looked at the serious expression on Daen's face and considered the additional observations the scout had reported.

"Time is very short now. Even shorter than we thought when I addressed the Assembly. This latest information indicates that the Feblings' so-called 'allies' are active in the air, which always means a movement of the main army. As our last

estimations put the ground forces so near the edge of the Garden, they must be intending to penetrate it within the next few hours. Indeed, they may have already done so by now and will be sheltering in the darkness provided by the hoards of Garrows and Denashurs on the branches above them.

"If they employ this tactic, and are already well established in the Garden, then we may be sure the attack will come tonight, as soon as darkness falls. It all depends on the actual progress they make along the northern road, something we cannot know until we investigate the situation for ourselves. But it won't be very difficult to find them; just a question of locating the greatest concentration of bulldog bats and Garrows."

"We should leave at once," said Aelaguel, mounting the chariot in front of them. "Come Esperon, stand up here and you Gorin, come beside him. Hold onto the supports, for even here it can pitch and roll a little until we are in the air."

The two young men climbed onto the chariot as they were invited and Daen got up behind them. The Aerauman who had delivered the report waved farewell and stood back as the Captain took up the reins and prepared to give a signal to the steeds. Meanwhile, the sky was rapidly becoming brighter and the stars were already beginning to fade. Looking back towards Pardylis, Gorin saw the fiery glow of the Eternal Chariot still burning brightly, although its intensity was rapidly diminishing as the vault of heaven opened up to the onrush of day.

They began to move; the six winged Valyons ahead of them prancing with high steps as they began to draw the chariot into position. A few minutes later they reached the beginning of a well-defined road stretching out before them across the Flying Fields until it came to an abrupt end on the edge of the chasm.

Looking at the ground beneath their wheels, Gorin noticed that the surface of the road was rutted by the repeated passage of so many chariots like the one in which they were about to

travel. He suddenly remembered the similar markings he had seen on the floor of the broad, high corridor and plaza in the Paradise Garden when he was heading towards Zandernatis. He also recalled how those ruts had begun and ended so mysteriously.[46]

Now of course he understood. The complex he had discovered must have been used, long ago, as a landing ground for the chariots at a time when contact between Zandernatis and Pardylis was an everyday occurrence. But there was no time to think of that, for Daen was urging the team of six fabulous winged steeds into greater activity. They were beginning to gather speed over the level surface of the road, bringing the blackness of the yawning chasm racing towards them with every beat of the accelerating Valyons' hooves.

Gorin had to grip firmly onto the rail running round the front of the chariot to avoid being thrown out by the bumping, lurching motion of the speeding vehicle. At his side, Daen was flicking the reins with an ever-increasing rhythm and spurring the team on with words he could not understand. Esperon looked ahead, like Aelaguel, with no perceptible expression on his face, remaining impassive even when Daen began calling out to the pounding steeds ahead of them.

"Sing my beloved Valyons, sing!"

At these words began the strange and haunting chanting Gorin had heard before and yet never understood, suddenly realising it was the horses themselves - or Valyons as Daen called them - which were responsible for the song. As the unearthly sound of it came flooding around them, so the great wings on the backs of the racing creatures began to move to the rhythm of the chant. In unison with these waves of sound and

[46] See "Pre-Destination" Chapter IX - From Plaza to Palace

movement, the pulsing glow emitted by the chariot started to grow stronger as its rate of vibrations increased.

With more urging from Daen and greater speed from the Valyons, the chant rose to a higher pitch with a rhythm that became steadily more compulsive. As it did so, the wings beat more strongly and then, in a moment, the expert hands of the Chariot Captain had given a gentle pull on the reins, easing the creatures' heads towards the sky. They looked up and saw the dome of infinite space above them, felt again their inborn longing to move within it and majestically leapt free of the ground. Their manes and tails flowed behind them in the wind as they drew the chariot upwards; full of a light of its own now and rising into the dawn sky like a morning star.

The moment they left the ground, all sensation of motion ceased. There was only the wind blowing strongly in their faces to give them any indication of their passage through the air. Gorin looked down and saw the perimeter of the Flying Fields disappearing behind them, falling away into the inky emptiness of the rifts winding around and between the city-bearing islets.

In the half-light shadows of the receding night, the chasm looked as bottomless as ever, cutting into the mountain formation a thousand times to create a network of unbelievable complexity. From this altitude, well clear of even the highest towers, the buildings really did seem to be rearing up out of the void, with sinuous roots reaching down into the very heart of Earth.

Then, in turn, all that fell away as they slowly gained height, the Valyons' chanting rising and falling with the measured waves of movement sent along the reins by Daen. They slowly turned to the left in a wide arc to have a final view of Pardylis standing in the soft blue colours of the waking day as they circled above it, rising higher and higher every second. Moments later, just as the mountaintops in the East began to

glow with the day-fire beneath them, they turned into the West and headed out, away from the Aerauman city and towards the Garden of Paradise and Zandernatis.

V – New Sensations

The discovery made in the Spring of 2013 did of course have a profound effect upon the subsequent course of events. Indeed, it would probably not be an overstatement to say that, for those who were able to read the signs and project their awareness into the future, this was a major turning point. In other words, nothing would ever be quite the same again. For it was as if a bird, caged for centuries, for millennia, had suddenly been let free to soar high into the sky, singing for all its worth, before looking down at the landscape spread out beneath it.

Just then, it probably fell silent, although by this time it was far too high for anyone to notice.

In learning about the momentous developments presented in the next few pages, readers are invited to take the place of that liberated bird as it glided silently over the new world far below. A world it had almost forgotten existed.

Just as we, in the competitive, hungry, device-dependant urgency of our so-called "modern" civilisation, have forgotten where we really came from and what our true destination should be.

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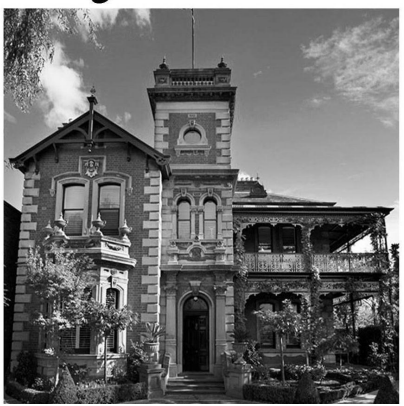
JAMES H. SHOREHAM
JULIAN GILES

FOLLOWING THE DEATH of Professor J. Harkwood, much respected specialist in hieroglyphic semantics, at the end of 2012, his son and heir, Philip Harkwood finally decided to liquidate the estate, with the aim of investing the proceeds in a yacht charter business.



Two years later, in 1976, "thieves" broke into the Dickensen Institute and stole the scrolls, tagging the urns with acronyms suggesting this was an act of protestation by Christian extremists. This finding in Professor Harkwood's "secret" cellar does of course throw a whole new light on these events.

Philip Harkwood declined to make any comment on this discovery, its implications or what he intended to do with the find. However, it would seem that all these scrolls should be

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During the process of clearing out the Harkwood villa in Melbourne, which had been the family home for three generations, workers uncovered the entrance to a "hidden" cellar. Philip Harkwood claimed he had never known of its existence, even though he had grown up in the house.

Upon his instructions, the heavy, sealed door was broken open. The workmen shone their flashlights inside to reveal a chamber of around 16^2 m. Along the two side walls a considerable number of metal pipe sections with a diameter of about 30 cms had been piled up to form a "honeycomb" of tubular storage spaces.

When the flashlight beams were directed into these spaces, it was immediately clear that almost all of them contained one or more long, cylindrical objects about 45 cm long wrapped in an unusual, thick material.

Removing one of these and carefully unwrapping it, Philip Harkwood discovered it contained a scroll made from a strange, unidentifiable substance. Unrolling the scroll revealed it was covered in hieroglyphic writing quite unlike anything he had ever seen before…

It was very soon apparent that these scrolls were the missing "Haakon Urn" texts, discovered by the 1962 Vostok Traverse Expedition and taken to the Dickensen Institute where Professor Harkwood worked. He was appointed Chairman of the Editorial Committee charged with making these writings available to a wider public.

The Dickensen Research Institute

However, disputes arose within the Committee as to what form these "revelations" should be given. Another member of the Committee, Professor James Gregson, wanted to publish what Professor Harkwood called a "romanticised" version to bring news of the findings to a mass audience. which was to have been co-written with British "visionary" artist and writer, Gordon Keirle-Smith.

returned to the Dickensen Institute so that further work can be done on deciphering them and making the information they contain available to other researchers and, ultimately, the general public.

NZO SPOKESMAN HAILS FIND "A SIGNIFICANT SIGN OF THE TIMES"

RENFREWSHIRE, SCOTLAND

In a communiqué from the First Neo-Zandernatist Congregation Centre in Scotland, spokesperson Rafa Garshwell welcomed the news that the missing Haakon Urn texts had been recovered.

"We were expecting this to be announced before the end of the year," he stated. "It is a sign that the times of revival are approaching. We can now move forward with confidence in the course of future events."

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E-mail from Professor James Gregson on hearing news of the discovery at the Harkwood villa.

To:
Ian Durham (idurham343@yahoo.co.uk), Arnold Hanwell (ajhanwellcleveland@gmail.com), Donald Summers (utasummersd@texascampus.org,

From: jamesgregson@sydney.edu.au

Sydney, 10/2/2013

Dear colleagues,

I take it you will all have heard the news about the find at Harkwood's villa in Melbourne by now. I'm sure it has shocked you as much as it has me.

We all know how bitterly opposed Professor Harkwood was to the idea of presenting the Haakon writings in anything other than a strictly scientific context.

But I would never have dreamt he'd do anything as extreme as faking a break-in and robbery just to keep the whole project under his exclusive control!

Quite apart from the risks involved, this action definitively prevented him from continuing his own research. Or at least, severely curtailing it, since he would no longer have had access to all the resources provided by the Institute.

However, it was a move that gave him the leverage he needed to prevent us from publishing our retelling of the "Song of Gorin". He apparently considered that to be more important than the continuation of the project itself!

In any event, these developments could well allow us to move ahead and finally publish "Zandernatis" as we had planned, almost 40 years ago.

Better late than never!

Looking forward to your thoughts on this matter, James.

To:
James Gregson(jamesgregson@sydney.edu.au
From:
Ian Durham (idurham343@yahoo.co.uk)
Edinburgh, 11 / 02 / 2013

Dear Professor James,
I was amazed by the news as well! Dumbfounded in fact! To think he lived with that lie all those years! Really hope this means the book will finally get published?
Please keep me informed of all developments,
Best regards,
Ian

To:
James Gregson(jamesgregson@sydney.edu.au
From:
Gordon Keirle-Smith (gordonkeirle@gmail.com)

Nîmes, France, 11 / 02 / 2013

Dear James,
Isn't it amazing about them finding the scrolls in Professor Harkwood's cellar? Did you ever suspect it was him all along? He certainly kept us all fooled! But what's it likely to mean? Does this mean we'll finally be able to get "Zandernatis" published? I can hardly believe it…

I'm pretty tied up this week but we can Skype over the weekend.
All the best,
Gordon

To: Gordon Keirle-Smith (gordonkeirle@gmail.com)
From: James Gregson(jamesgregson@sydney.edu.au

Sydney, 22/2/2013
Dear Gordon,
I enjoyed talking to you again last Sunday. It was just like old times!
Since then there have been some interesting developments.
The legal advisors at the Dickensen Institute say there's nothing preventing us from publishing now. What's more, as it's based on work carried out at the Institute, they're suggesting we bring it out on their own imprint, the "Paradise Garden Press". That sounds like a good idea to me. It will give us extra credibility for people who've never heard about the initial discovery.

To:
James Gregson(jamesgregson@sydney.edu.au
From: Gordon Keirle-Smith (gordonkeirle@gmail.com)

Nîmes, France, 24 / 02 / 2013

Excellent news! It ought to get us some extra publicity as well. Very useful for launching a book like this one!

We'll probably have to go over everything again to make sure there are no inconsistencies. But I should think we'll be able to publish the first book next Spring.

To: James Gregson jamesgregson@sydney.edu.au
From: Donald Summers (utasummersd@texascampus.org

Austin, Texas, 27/2/2013

Hi James,
Glad to hear you're planning to go ahead with publishing the magnum opus. It should cause quite a stir if you finally manage to get it out there!
Don't want to spoil the party, but I guess you know what Philip Harkwood has been up to?
One of our lecturers in Law told me about it yesterday. Interesting case, apparently.

Let me know how it goes.
Good luck!
Take care,

Donald
Donald Summers,
Lecturer and Researcher in Ancient Civilization
University of Texas, Austin

VI – Return to Zandernatis

"In the morning when we come,
returned from other lands,
We'll sing to you of cities fair,
beyond the scorching sands."

From stanza XXXIV of "The Song of the Heroes"

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 2108-2227

When dawn finally broke upon the world on that fateful day, it found the travellers some distance from Pardylis. In fact, as the golden rays lanced through the morning air from behind the jagged eastern mountain range, the chariot was just flying over the mighty river separating the land of the Aerauma from the deserts.

Looking down, Gorin could clearly make out the snaking line of water lazily wending its way from the distant East. It glinted like a ribbon of silver, meandering back and forth until it came to the valley it had fashioned for itself at the very limit of the desolate wastes. At this point, it became straight and purposeful in its course as it cut into the arid hills. Being at such a great height, Gorin could better appreciate the dramatic change in the terrain, once the waterway had been crossed. He marvelled at the command of natural forces the winged race must have achieved to bring about such a fundamental

transformation in the climate and topography. Simply in order to render their isolation more complete.

He looked over the side of the flying vehicle and fancied he could identify the point where he had emerged from the gorge before seeking his way across the watery frontier. Then, leaning against the rail he was grasping, he suddenly noticed that in addition to its own powerful luminosity, the whole chariot was blazing with a new light. This was presumably drawn from the energy of the risen sun now encompassing everything in a golden glow of matchless beauty. Furthermore, not only was the speeding sky-craft pulsing with this new aureate light, but so were the Valyons ahead – together with Aelaguel, Daen, Esperon and Gorin himself!

They were all afire with a radiant splendour that shone from them as if they had been transformed into demigods, bearing witness to the power winging them on their way. Once he got used to it, Gorin contemplated this wonderful phenomenon, staring not at the land spread out beneath him like a map, but at the soft golden glow coming from his hands as it joined with the very substance of the sunlight, growing stronger with every passing moment.

Gorin's reverie was broken by the sound of Aelaguel's voice.

"We have crossed the Arondyvon, and the sun has only just risen. Perhaps with a fair wind we will be in Zandernatis before noon. What do you think, Daen?"

"Maybe. Unless we meet anything on the way."

"What could we meet?" asked Esperon. "There's nothing capable of doing us any harm while we're flying is there?"

"I hope not." The Captain's reply was clipped and guarded. It was better to take no chances and not promise anything.

Nothing more passed between them for a while as they flew ever onward into the West through the myriad colours of dawn.

As the sun slowly lifted above the peaks of the mountainous horizon, so it gathered strength, the flood of light rendering the land beneath them indistinct and hazy.

By now, the cliffs near the river were far behind them and they were flying over the desolate emptiness of the deserts. The reflecting power of those immense tracts of sand and rock made it impossible to pick out any feature of the terrain beneath, giving them an impression of being suspended in nothingness. They could not have experienced greater solitude if they had been on the surface of the desert itself, in the midst of its endlessly monotonous, undulating dunes.

Gorin glanced around him, further realising just how forsaken they were in their isolated sphere of sky and desert, emphasising the incredible distance he had covered on the back of his unihorn guide. What a formidable barrier it was to anyone attempting to cross the barren lands by conventional means! Indeed, few would ever contemplate such a journey unless they had a powerful motive.

As the chariot was now flying at some considerable altitude, its occupants were not troubled by the heat of the sun, which must have been unbearable at ground level. There was also the refreshing flow of air caused by the speed of their flight, so that before long, Gorin was thoroughly enjoying this new and exhilarating experience. To be so high in the air with the opportunity of seeing rivers, mountains and the immensity of the desert like this was something he had never dreamed possible.

Shortly afterwards however, he began to suffer some discomfort from the brilliance of the reflected sunlight thrown up from the sands below. With every minute of the sun's steady ascent, the glare was becoming more blinding and he feared a recurrence of the agonising head pains he had experienced during his journey with the unihorn.

It was therefore in anticipation of relief from this potential hazard that he at last caught sight of a green line on the horizon ahead, the first break in the featureless outlook for some time. This he supposed marked the beginning of the grasslands standing between the desert and the Forest of Dissemblance; the approximate halfway point in their journey back to Zandernatis.

"Are we likely to run into any trouble from the power of the Forest when we come over it?" asked Esperon as the green area ahead of them gradually became clearer and more defined.

"Not at this height," replied Daen. "There would in fact be little danger even if we were to fly at the level of the treetops. The Forest relies on guile and has to entice you into its clutches before it can work its evil. Provided we do not actually land there is no risk at all."

"If this were not such an urgent mission, we could have allowed ourselves to go down and investigate a few of the more interesting manifestations to be seen there," said Aelaguel. "On the path you only come up against some of the more mundane phenomena."

After his experiences in the Forest, Gorin was secretly very pleased they would be having nothing to do with it as they passed over. He felt he had seen enough of its "phenomena" to last him a lifetime.

As soon as they came over the rough grasslands, the glare of the sun diminished and a much clearer view could be had of the features on the ground below. Then, before long, a line of much darker green appeared on the skyline, to which all four travellers turned their eyes. This was the Forest of Dissemblance itself, marking the last stage in their journey before they finally reached the Garden.

The sun was climbing steadily in the sky as the chariot sped over the first of the great trees in the dark and treacherous forest. The Valyons still chanted their rhythmic song of flight as they

drew the voyagers ever nearer to their goal, wings rising and falling in perfect unison and heads held high in noble awareness of their grace and beauty. Aboard the sky-craft, all conversation ceased as the end of the journey drew nearer, focusing the travellers' attention on their desperate race against time.

Aelaguel looked up at the position of the sun in the sky, exchanged glances with Daen, who nodded and then sent another rhythm whipping along the reins. In reply, the flying song subtly changed, giving them more momentum as they were carried even faster through the tree-scented air. The masses of greenery below seemed to pass by in an endless procession, now broken with patches of light and colour to mark a clearing or some different species of plant; then dark once more as creepers and foliage combined to shut out all sight of the gloomy forest floor.

At long last, Daen gave a cry and pointed ahead. Aelaguel, Esperon and Gorin immediately saw it as well - a very definite end to the solid mass of trees below and a wide area of much lighter green. That was not all; a faint coil of smoke was rising above the leafy branches just before they gave way to pastureland. Gorin knew this could only be coming from Claedon's fire in his isolated Gatehouse. A moment later, it was behind them, meaning they had passed right over the Paradise Gate, although at such speed nothing had been distinguishable among the densely growing foliage below.

Once so dependable and consistent, they were all very much aware that the "Paradise" they were now entering harboured forces of darkness threatening its destruction. They had to be prepared for every eventuality. Events were likely to have moved very swiftly during the past few hours, and there was no way of knowing exactly how much progress the invading armies might have made overnight.

As soon as they had pulled clear of the trees and were safely over the lands of the Garden, Daen flicked the reins again and gently guided the Valyons to a lower altitude. “I would prefer us not to be seen from too far away,” came the explanation. “We can no longer be sure whose eyes will be watching the skies over Zandernatis and we would be better to arrive there undetected.”

There was now a greater sensation of speed as the chariot sped along, less than ten measures above the woodlands of the Paradise Garden. Gorin could even make out some of the creatures down on the ground, many of them with heads raised in curiosity at the strange object singing its way through the air. It was something quite outside their experience, but they showed no fear, sensing perhaps it meant no harm and came in the name of goodness.

On they went, over groves and streams, glades and hillocks, the whole land echoing to the sky-chant that had not been heard there so distinctly for almost three thousand years. Aelaguel was now leaning over the side of the chariot, gazing again upon the Paradisiacal beauty the Aerauma had left to its descendants so long ago.

Discordance

from “The Song of Gorin”, Stanzas 2151-2174

Suddenly, there came a harsh noise behind them; one which was alien to the song of the Valyons, the rush of the wind, or even any creatures on the ground below. They turned to see what it was as the noise came again, raucous, grating and with a disquieting note of derision about it. They were being followed by a huge black bird, its long pointed beak gaping wide as it uttered another of the cries, this one louder and more discordant than the last.

The Valyons also heard it, and because of its jarring, inharmonious discordance, they momentarily faltered in the rhythm of their flying song, causing the chariot to lurch unsteadily. Daen turned to concentrate on controlling them while the others watched apprehensively as the enormous bird flew nearer, its ragged wings flapping ungracefully as it approached. Every harsh cry brought about a corresponding pitch in the flight of the Aerauman craft, despite Daen's valiant attempts to keep it on a steady course. Gorin observed uneasily that each time the evil looking bird emitted the rasping call, its open beak revealed a fearsome set of serrated teeth lining the jet black mandibles, threatening the travellers with gruesome violence.

"What is it?" asked Gorin.

"One of them," answered Daen with an expression of tense concentration, urging the Valyons on to maintain their rhythm. "The black Garrows complicit in the invasion. And there are more of them, look!"

The Aerauman pointed to the left of the chariot, where the others could see several more of the great black birds rising out of the trees towards them, beaks yawning and claws flexing in anticipation of closing on their prey.

As the Garrows approached, they let out more of their harsh cries, piercing the air and building up a cacophony of grating, ugly sound, terrifying to hear. What was even more alarming was the way the Valyons reacted to this intensification of the discordant interference, for it was severely affecting the regular measure of their chant. A moment later, when one of the birds tried to attack them directly, it almost succeeded in halting the song altogether, despite Daen's valiant efforts to keep the steeds going.

This caused the sky-craft to plunge and roll much more than before. In fact, so acutely, that for an instant Gorin feared they

would be tipped out, or plummet like a stone to be dashed to pieces on the ground below, chariot, Valyons and all.

Gorin held on as best he could and anxiously watched Daen fighting to control the six flying creatures. For several moments their fate hung undecided as the Garrows shrieked around them, the rearing winged horses trying desperately to obey commands and bravely combat their terror of the evil birds' hideous screams. Then, with a powerful flick of the wrist, Daen sent a new message along the reins, pulling at them all at once, lifting the Valyons' heads towards the sky and giving them the freedom to soar, as they loved to do. At the sight of high heaven, their courage returned and the song came strong into their throats again, causing them to leap forward with renewed energy, up and away, high into the morning sky, taking the chariot with its occupants out of immediate danger.

"There was nothing else for it," said Daen, when they were flying level again with the rhythm of the Valyons' song once more well established. "If I hadn't made that move, those vile things would have had us down."

"Can't they come up after us?" asked Esperon.

"No, we are too high for them now. But unfortunately, at this altitude, we can be seen by anyone who cares to look, long before we come to the City. Although it isn't of any great importance now. The Garrows found us, so it amounts to the same thing. The entire Febling army will soon know of our presence, even if they didn't have the chance of seeing us now with their own eyes."

"Yes, but I don't understand why they could be so dangerous," said Gorin. "Why did the chariot almost drop out of the sky?"

"Because of the song," explained Aelaguel. "The Valyons' chant keeps us in the air; or rather without it the beating of their wings cannot be coordinated and is therefore ineffectual. If

anything breaks the rhythm, we are unable to stay aloft and disaster is inevitable."

Gorin thought about that for a moment, considering how dangerous such creatures would be to the chariots - and to the City - even if help were to arrive in time. And these were the invading Feblings' allies! To have come across them so soon clearly showed how close they already were to the City and that the urgency of the situation had not been exaggerated.

Time was indeed running out!

Arrival

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 2175-2227

Staring ahead, Esperon suddenly let out an excited cry, pointing as the Golden City of Zandernatis came into view at last, standing proud on its artificial hill. Seeing it again, Gorin appreciated even more what a magnificent achievement it was, rising majestically in isolated glory, glinting and glistening in the light of the noonday sun. From the vantage of their great height, he suddenly saw it as more than a superb architectural and cultural creation, realising it was an integral part of the natural Paradise surrounding it. Like a great heart in the breast of a mighty creature, throbbing with an essence permeating all about it. More than ever, Gorin felt himself involved in its destiny and concerned with the fate of its people. Whatever their faults, they certainly did not merit being overwhelmed by the likes of those hideous, screeching Garrows, that was certain.

Daen guided the Valyons' course towards Zandernatis, very gently easing them lower as the woods and pastures sped by below. The approach should not be too low, for fear of another attack from the monstrous birds. Thankfully, there was no further sign of them during their steady, measured descent towards the mirage of resplendent spires and towers ahead.

Since first catching sight of their goal, Esperon had remained silent, lost in memories rooted among the people he loved and in his determination to do all he could to save them. Aelaguel also appeared lost in thought, recalling the far off days when Zandernatis was no more than an ideal before it became design. In order for the chosen, ennobled generation of their children to assume its destiny and take possession of its Paradise. It seemed like only yesterday the Grand Procession had taken them through those golden portals and into their City for the very first time; and now the Aerauma were on the point of returning. Something that had always seemed impossible. Let it not be just in time to witness their descendants' final overthrow!

They flew over the fortified City walls and began to circle the perimeter of golden defences. Daen had maintained a certain height, even while coming over the open spaces just outside the walls, so it was not yet possible to see what was going on within them in any detail. Gorin could well imagine what consternation their arrival in the sky must be creating, and he wondered what the initial reaction might be. Would the people recognise the chariot for what it was? Would they hail the return of the 'Lords of Creation'? Or would they run in fear? Or even show hostility towards the new arrivals?

Wondering about all this, he gazed down at the patterns of streets and squares passing underneath as Daen guided them round to make a second sweep about the walls, gently losing height with every beat of the Valyons' wings.

As the chariot flew above the porcelain, silver and gold towers of the Palace, Gorin looked towards the Great Square, expecting to see a throng of people jostling together with uplifted faces, all staring into the sky.

But there was no one! The Square was completely empty. This was very strange. In the middle of the day, it was usually

full of people who gathered there both before and after the noonday meal to meet friends and generally socialise. It was the very heart of the City's activity, and yet there was not a single soul to be seen. Gorin glanced at Esperon and realised he too had noticed the unusual state of affairs below, although for the time being neither of them made any audible comment.

They gradually lost more height as Daen ran complex rhythms along the Valyons' reins, easing the measure of their chant by gentle degrees to make the descent unhurried and unalarming; for both the chariot's occupants and watchers on the ground. If there had been any! This really was very curious and the lower they descended, the more convinced Gorin became that all was not as it should be in Zandernatis. Surely, someone somewhere, would have seen and heard them? Even supposing they had taken shelter for fear of the strange object in the sky, it could not account for the deathlike stillness permeating the buildings and public places below.

If the people had taken cover suddenly, upon first sight of the chariot, then there would at least have been some evidence of the panic, with everything left as it was; stalls, chairs, tables outside the drinking houses, abandoned bundles and the like. Yet there was nothing, not even the slightest indication that the City was inhabited at all.

As they made their last turn over the rooftops surrounding the Palace, Gorin noticed something else inconsistent with the populace having been suddenly frightened. For in the Great Square itself, instead of the usual gay, multicoloured bunting festooning the balconies, flagpoles and facades, there were now only rows of small, black flags hanging motionless in the still air. No open doors could be seen, and many of the windows were closed and shuttered, adding to the unnatural air of desertion weighing heavily about every street and building like a curse.

Esperon saw all this as well, and a sombre expression came over his face, as if he almost feared to know the reason behind such a radical change in his City's character. Both Daen and Aelaguel had also realised something was wrong by now and were looking at each other and the young Prince with an air of mounting concern.

Not a word was spoken as Daen expertly landed the sky-craft in the Palace Square, the hooves of the singing Valyons all touching the ground at practically the same moment. The travellers were jolted a little as their vehicle clattered across the flagstones of the great public place until, as the chanting died away, they rolled to a complete stop and surveyed the lifeless tableau surrounding them.

The silence was almost tangible, intensifying the impression of abandonment they had perceived from the air. Gone was the festive atmosphere that had always reigned in Zandernatis, and gone too were all traces it had ever been; even the garlands of flowers which always decorated the Palace were no more in evidence. Everything was still, without even a breath of wind to rustle the dead leaves and torn strands of cloth lying untidily on the ground. Gorin was unable to imagine what could possibly have happened and Esperon was equally mystified by the forsaken appearance of his familiar surroundings. No guards stood at the Palace doors, there was no sound of music, no voices raised in song; nothing in fact to show any life remained in this abandoned city.

Even the two Aeraumen were affected by the uncanny stillness, disquiet mounting within them. Perhaps they had misjudged the invading army's capabilities! Maybe something terrible and irrevocable had already occurred!

Then, just as Gorin and Esperon were preparing to get down from the chariot, a sudden rustling noise from high above attracted the attention of them all; the sound of many wings

furiously beating on air. As they looked up towards the roof of the Palace from whence the noise had come, they were in time to see several enormous black birds with long, pointed bills, rising into the sky. Once airborne, they flew in a tight circle about the golden tower, uttered a harsh cry in unison and then made off into the East.

"Garrows!" exclaimed Daen. "So they're already here. We will have to be very swift if we are to have any chance of returning in time."

"You must see if there is anyone in the Palace," said Aelaguel, "for as you know, we cannot help you any further."

"We do," said Esperon. "I would only thank you for all you have done until now, with the hope we may yet resolve our destiny together."

"It is our hope also," answered Aelaguel. "But there is much more to be done. Go now and let us begin to do it quickly."

Esperon nodded and descended from the chariot, followed by Gorin. They walked swiftly away from the landing place towards the Palace, running up the broad flight of steps to the ornamental doors and hammering on them with all their force. But the only answer was an echo, resounding with a booming note of hollow emptiness, forlorn and unheard.

"What can have happened?" asked Gorin.

"I don't know. In all my years of living in the City, I never saw it like this. It's terrifying."

As they spoke, there came the sound of wings again, but this time they were not those of evil birds. These were significantly smaller and bore a much lighter creature flying into the Square. It circled once and then disappeared behind the porcelain tower.

Gorin called to it, for he felt sure it was Huor, the falcon who led him through the Garden from Lord Kutjaran's arbour to the gates of Zandernatis. The bird took no notice of him

however and was out of sight before he could call a second time. Another sound then came to the ears of the two young men standing on the Palace steps amidst the unnerving stillness. Something they had become very familiar with, but which had an altogether different significance under these particular circumstances.

It was the chant of the Valyons! They looked towards the centre of the Square, in time to see Daen urging the steeds on and encouraging them to take up their compellingly harmonious song. The chariot began to glow brighter again and moved forward. Instinctively, Gorin made to go towards it, as if wanting to prevent their winged friends from leaving, but he was restrained by Esperon's firm hand.

"They have to leave," he said. "It's up to us now, to me and you and the rest of my kin in Zandernatis. If there are any of them still to be found here, that is."

They watched the chariot pick up speed, shuddering as it moved over the paved surface until it gained enough speed to lift clear of the ground. The song of the Valyons echoed back from the deserted monuments of the Golden City, amplified tenfold to make it seem as if the very buildings were joining in the ethereal chorus.

The sun's reflection flashed across the pale bodies of the flying creatures as they rose into the air, glinted on the sky-craft's smooth structure and then transformed the Aerauman wings into spots of dazzling brilliance before all was lost to sight behind the line of pinnacled roofs.

The chanting gradually died away and all was silent once again. The "Lords" had gone, until such time as they were summoned to return.

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Harkwood estate claims late professor registered copyright of Haakon texts
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Professor J. G. Harkwood, former Chairman of the Dickensen Institute Editorial Committee overseeing the transliteration and transcription of the Haakon texts found in Antarctica in 1962.
MELBOURNE — Solicitors acting as executors for the late Professor Harwood have announced that he registered his transcription of the Haakon Urn texts as original works. Copyright is therefore now owned by his son and heir, Phillip.
Phillip Harkwood stated that he would be consulting with his financial advisors as to how these rights should be managed, particularly the rights to the "Zandernatis" books which are thought to have great commercial potential which could
Sydney
Change city
23°C - 34°C
TODAY
21°C - 26°C
TOMORROW
7 DAY FORECAST ▸
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The deserted City

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 2228-2280

With the departure of the chariot, Gorin and Esperon felt the strange and unnatural silence closing in on them with a relentless insistence; enveloping them, defying them to break it. Esperon shivered, despite the warm sun beating down on the empty Square. He then suggested banging on the Palace doors again with a stone or any other heavy object, desperately hoping this time they might succeed in rousing someone in the great building. They began to hunt around, frantically searching for a suitable implement, when suddenly Gorin caught sight of something new in the centre of the Square. He stared at it for a moment, then tugged at Esperon's sleeve, pointing to where the bright sunlight clearly revealed the first visible indication so far that a human presence still remained in Zandernatis.

Standing at the very centre of the great open space was a solitary figure, dressed in a black garment hanging about it like a shroud. From where they were, the two young men could make out no features, nor any distinguishing characteristics as to who the newcomer might be. Nevertheless, they ran excitedly down the steps towards it, calling as they went, as if half afraid it was an apparition and might vanish before their eyes at any moment.

The nearer they drew to the mysterious figure, the more wildly they shouted until they noticed something vaguely familiar about the shape in front of them. They then fell silent, advancing at a more leisurely pace, their certainty growing with every step they made. Until, at last, when they were within a few measures of the mysterious black form, an aged hand appeared from beneath the folds of heavy cloth and drew aside a portion of the material to reveal a face they both knew well. It was Hexard!

The old alchemist stayed still for a few moments, looking deeply into Esperon's eyes, as if searching for something. He said nothing, and for some reason the two young men did not feel they had anything to say either, stricken to silence by the gravity of his expression. He nodded slowly, then stepped forward and embraced both Gorin and Esperon, holding them to his breast as tears welled up in his misty eyes. Finally, he stood away from them once more and began speaking, his words coloured by a weight of emotion.

"So you are come. But almost too late we fear."

"Why?" demanded the Prince. "What has happened? Where is everyone?"

"Esperon, I have to tell you something." The old man's voice sounded even more solemn and strained. "You must know that two nights ago, your father, King Iraeus, transitioned into the Greater Paradise. This is why you see no people on the streets. Zandernatis is observing official mourning. For the first time in its long, long history, this could not be immediately replaced by rejoicing because the heir to the throne was absent. Thus, the customary celebrations marking the beginning of a new reign could not take place."

Esperon bowed his head for a moment, trembling momentarily as the shock of this tragic homecoming passed through him like a wave. Then he looked up once more and said, in a level, controlled voice, "Then I am now King of the Golden City."

"Of course."

"Which means we cannot waste any time. Our sojourn in Pardylis has taught us many, many things. But above all, that we must face the peril hanging over our City as one, or risk annihilation."

"It's all coming together now, as has been written," said Hexard. "When I saw those great birds settling on the roof of the

Palace this morning, I knew their armies could not be far away and that the time was drawing near for us to decide our fate. This confirms the many things my falcons have told me; terrible things going on in the Garden outside which threaten to destroy the tranquillity and harmony of its perfection forever.

"Creatures are being hounded from the homes their species have occupied for thousands of years and all kinds of animals are being slaughtered to provide food for the cohorts massing just beyond the limits of the Garden. Already, the devil-serpents are assembling in enormous numbers within a few hundred measures of our walls, and the Garrows are gathering in their thousands to encircle us. From the top of the silver tower you can see huge flocks of them, infesting the trees and filling the air with their wild screeching calls."

Esperon nodded in agreement. "It seems most likely that an attack will come tonight. The scouts of Pardylis have been keeping a close watch on the situation and unless we can do something very quickly, there is no hope of us being able to survive."

"The first thing we must do is call the people to the Square," said Hexard. "You can then show yourself to them and let them know they have a King again."

"Very good. How should we summon them? The great bell?"

"I think so. It only rings in times of great rejoicing, so if it were to be heard now, everyone would be bound to come out and see what had happened."

"Right," said Esperon, his face tightening with the tension of the moment. "Is there a way for us to get into the Palace?"

"Yes, my door still gives access to the main passageways and from there you can get to the golden tower and bell room."

"Good. So if you stay here Hexard and gather people together once they start coming out, Gorin and I will go and toll the bell. It will need the two of us."

With that, King Esperon of Zandernatis and Gorin made their way around the side of the Palace as quickly as they could, until they reached the inconspicuous door leading to Hexard's rooms.

Less than a minute later, they were on the stairway leading to the upper levels of the Palace and racing through the endless corridors towards the foot of the golden tower. On their way, they had to pass the entrance to the State Chambers and, as they drew level with the huge double doors, Esperon came to a halt, catching hold of his companion's arm to prevent him from going further.

"Why have you stopped? asked Gorin, panting with the effort of their headlong run.

"As we are here, I thought perhaps I should prepare myself for the people."

"What do you mean?"

"They must accept me at once if I am to have the real authority to invoke the help of the Aerauma. So some sign, some regal symbol, might help win their confidence. There may be something in there."

He threw open the door to the antechamber. Inside, everything was exactly as Gorin remembered it from his audience with Iraeus, except this time there were no courtiers in attendance at the desks flanking the door into the Throne Room itself.

Inside the Grand State Chamber, the magnificent crystal chandelier was not lit, so they only had the light coming through the door to guide them. Following the path it made across the red carpet's deep pile, Esperon advanced towards the dais and

the mighty winged throne surmounted by the looming shadows of the ornate canopy.

He mounted the steps and came to the Royal seat of office, his eyes lighting upon something lying amidst the soft velvet of the cushions. He reached out and grasped it, holding it up for closer examination in the half-light.

"I hoped to find this here," he said. "The Goldstone of Zandernatis, the symbol worn by all City Kings since the Autonomy. As I was not here at the time of my father's transition, it was left on the throne until claimed."

Gorin recognised the captivating golden jewel he had seen about the neck of Iraeus and watched while Esperon passed its chain over his own head. He then drew the fabulous gem down onto his breast, where it glimmered and flashed with pent-up fire.

"So begins the reign of Esperon the First," said the young King, gravely. "Let us hope it may be a long and fruitful one. But come, we must go to the bell room."

They left the State Chambers and set off, heading along endless corridors in the increasingly complex maze of the Palace interior. At last, Esperon stopped in front of a small door recessed into the wall next to an elaborately decorated archway.

"Here," he indicated, "this door leads us to the Sounding Place and the rope to the belfry halfway up the tower. A few good hard pulls ought to be enough. Then we must get back to the Square as quickly as we can."

Gorin was too out of breath to say very much, but followed the new King through the narrow doorway to find himself in a small space barely five measures square. It contained nothing but two solid looking chairs and a heavy rope as thick as his wrist, snaking down from impenetrable shadows high above. The only light came through a small window just above their heads, but was sufficient for them to see what they were doing.

Esperon moved one of the chairs close to the rope, climbed onto it and told Gorin to stay on ground level. Then each one of them grasped the coarse, unyielding rope with both hands and pulled down together with all the strength they could muster. At first, nothing happened. Then, as Gorin's hands were nearly grazing the floor and Esperon's were about level with his companion's head, a deep sonorous note vibrated throughout the whole building.

"Let go!" yelled Esperon, trying to make himself heard above the powerful, penetrating voice of the bell. Luckily, Gorin realised what he should do and released his grip as the rope flew upwards with the return of the bell's swing. Another booming vibration shook the very foundations of the Palace. Once more they pulled together, released the rope and pulled again, sending the ringing sound into all corners of the City in an effort to bring the desolate, sleeping streets back to life. Again, they pulled and again, finally tolling the resonant knell nine times before they let the rope swing free.

"That should be enough," said Esperon. "Let's go back."

They retraced their steps through the corridors of the Palace, back past the State Chambers and down the spacious gallery hung with the pictorial record of the Golden City's history.

Gorin would have dearly loved to examine those pictures in the light of all the new knowledge he had acquired, but there was no time for such luxuries now. They made their way to the top of the stairs, negotiated them as quickly as they dared, crossed Hexard's quarters and finally came out into the open air again.

As soon as they emerged from the door beneath the silver tower, they were aware of a great change taking place about them. It was as if the entire City had suddenly been resurrected, emerging from its purposeless limbo to swarm with reanimated

vigour, completely dispelling the deathly stillness hanging over everything a few moments before.

Now, the sound of running feet and voices raised in excited conversation could be heard everywhere. Men were shouting, babies crying, women were calling to each other from windows opened wide and, from around the corner, came the unmistakable sound of a large crowd gathering in the Palace Square.

The King speaks

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 2281-2354

As Esperon and Gorin came into the Square, they could hear Hexard's voice, raised above all the rest, catching people's attention, preparing them for the great revelation.

"People of Zandernatis," he proclaimed, "we have brought you from your homes to give you tidings of this momentous day. We need no longer mourn, for our King is returned to us. We must go forward; yes we must carry on now and face the perils of the future. Come nearer, let everyone see and hear..."

For all his many excellent qualities, Hexard had little talent as a public speaker. He really only succeeded in perplexing the gathered people, who drew nearer not in response to his invitation, but rather because they wanted to see if he really was as insane as his words seemed to be. Some of them even wondered if it were some kind of trick on his part to bring them out of their houses, perhaps because he wanted to claim the throne for himself! The more he went on, repeating much the same thing about the "Return of the King" and "This important day in our history", so the bewildered murmuring increased among those he was addressing.

Many thought he must be speaking of Iraeus. Yet, for all its wonders, the Jewel of Paradise had never seen any previous

cases of a departed Self repossessing its body after life functions had ceased. So there was a strange mixture of curiosity, doubt and wonderment in the minds of those who approached to hear what Hexard was trying to tell them.

Just then, Esperon and Gorin rounded the corner of the Square, made their way through the crowd towards the Palace and began climbing the steps until they finally reached Hexard and came into full view of the assembled throng. With a note of excited triumph – and relief - in his voice, the old man pointed towards them and cried, "See, here comes your King. Esperon, returned from beyond to ascend the winged throne!"

Esperon stepped forward, looked out at the crowd jostling together in the Square below and held the Goldstone aloft for all to see. As he did so, a gasp of astonishment came from the thousands gathered before him and a cheer welled up within them. A united, heartfelt cheer of wild, abandoned happiness, dispelling the clouds of sorrow that had been obscuring their habitual joy.

In an instant, the people of Zandernatis suddenly saw a renewal of endless opportunities to revel and enjoy the sweetness of life, as they had ever done. Their full-throated acclamation of the new King was a clear demonstration of the loyalty he could expect from them; and an indication of what they were expecting him to do.

As the cheers resounded again and again around the Square, so more people gathered to see what all the commotion was about. They then added their own cries of welcome to all the others as soon as they realised who that young figure was, out there before everyone, with the Goldstone of Kingly office in his hand.

The cheering was accompanied by the sound of stamping and clapping until someone started playing a lively flute tune. Moments later, a drummer joined in, beating out a rhythm that

soon had everyone's feet tapping. On this cue, a few groups of younger men and women started dancing round in circles, linking arms and whirling each other faster and faster in an almost delirious expression of joy.

As soon as he saw this, Esperon allowed the Goldstone to fall back on its chain around his neck. He raised both hands high in the air to command silence from his newly acquired subjects. The dancers stopped their headlong whirl, looking a little disappointed, and the musicians fell silent.

"People of Zandernatis! I stand before you now in assumption of the office held by my father, as your King and as your leader. But I also address you as no one has ever done in a thousand years - for I bring you news from beyond the limits of our walls!"

Esperon's mention of things outside the City brought a hush upon the assembled people. Indeed, nobody had ever mentioned this subject publicly as long as anyone could remember. If nothing else, it was a novelty not to be missed.

"I have to tell you that whatever we may think or want to think, we can no longer consider ourselves to be alone in the world," continued the King. "There are others, other races, other civilisations; and I have been in the company of one of these during the months of my absence. Many of you will remember me as I was in the days before my departure. I enjoyed the pleasures life gives us in our wonderful City, as we all do - and it is my avowed intention to maintain this state of well-being so all may benefit from what it has to offer."

Another great cheer went up from the crowd as he uttered these welcome words.

"But I repeat, we are not alone in the world." Esperon's voice suddenly became more dramatic as he reiterated this concept-shattering truth, stilling even the most demonstrative expressions of delight.

"Beyond our walls there are those who are our friends, who succoured us, guided me and instructed me when I came to them. They also opened my eyes to the existence of others who have no such feelings of goodwill; others who are our enemies."

An uneasy murmur ran through the crowd as the King's words began to sink in.

"Yes, there are those who wish us harm, who are jealous of the gift we were given in the distant past by those to whom we owe so much. For you should know, and we should all learn to recognise, that our very existence here is a result of the creative goodness of one race of beings, the race which fathered us and made us what we are, long before they even gave us this..." He indicated the City about them with a sweeping gesture of his arm.

"Three thousand years have come and gone, three thousand years during which memories of our origins faded… clouded by our celebrations of the here and now. But they could not forget we are their children, watching over us, guarding and protecting us through the centuries of unknowing - while we believed we were alone and had the right to live in bliss forever. My message to you now is that we do have this right, but henceforth must be worthy of it by having full awareness of its meaning and attendant responsibilities."

Esperon paused for a moment to see what reaction his speech was having on the people congregated before him. For the most part, they appeared to be following what he was saying, but whether this was out of mere inquisitiveness or a genuine feeling of involvement was difficult to say.

After waiting a few moments for his audience to absorb the essence of this message, the young King went on to evoke further the new context they were now facing.

"We have known this powerful and benevolent race by many names. To some they are legend, to others a dream, while

more believe they only figure in the stories we tell our children. But they do exist and are part of our past just as they must be part of our future.

"I am speaking to you of those we have called 'Hill-People', 'Sky-People' or 'Lords of Creation'; those who were our protectors in the beginning and seek to defend us now."

As Esperon spoke these words, many of those listening frowned and looked at each other with perplexed expressions on their faces. What was all this leading up to?

"I must tell you, people of my City, who I love above all else, on this day and in this very hour we find ourselves in dire need of help from these all-powerful forebears of ours. Who, I repeat, are not figments of our collective imagination, but as real as any of us. I have seen them, spoken with them and know they are ready to come to our salvation if we but call upon them.

You must understand, the enemies I spoke of a moment ago are, even now, preparing the overthrow of Paradise and scheming to tread its perfection underfoot. They are already stalking through the frontier lands of the Garden and have but one aim; to sweep through our City, subjugating us to their will and pleasuring themselves in our halls while they destroy everything Zandernatis was meant to be.

"So unless we can justify our right to maintain ourselves here in the face of this challenge to our destiny, we will see our civilisation slip from our grasp forever, to be replaced by unevolved barbarism and evil. This would be a tragedy for the whole world, for us in particular and for the benign race of fostering fathers and mothers, who seek only to protect us if we call upon them.

"Time is very short. So first, we must call upon our protectors in the Eastern Hills. They will come to our aid with all possible swiftness in their airborne chariots, armed with a will

and a mind to drive the enemy and the vile creatures inspiring them far from our walls and our Paradise Garden.

"But they have far to travel and cannot be here before the first attacks begin. This means we must arm ourselves and prepare ourselves to hold back the first onslaughts long enough for help to arrive.

"I know full well that with all this, I am asking something of you no King in Zandernatis has ever asked of his people before. However, no King has ever been faced with an attack upon the Golden City likely to come within a matter of hours. As is the case today. For, once again, we are in imminent danger of invasion, downfall and destruction and are lost unless we act with great speed."

The whole assembly, by now numbering many thousands, seemed to be struck quite dumb by Esperon's revelations. They could not believe it. Enemies? Attack? Downfall? Such words were hardly known anymore in the language of Zandernatis. And yet their new King spoke with such conviction and authority they could not ignore his words. It must be true, terrifying and impossible as it seemed. And apparently they would not have long to wait for the proof. All the same, after so many lifetimes of complacent faith in their glorious isolation, coming to terms with all this new information was quite a challenge.

One elderly man near the front of the crowd stepped forward and put a question that was foremost in many minds.

"Forgive my asking Sire, but could you tell us what we must do about this situation and also what it will mean having these protectors from the East to help us. Once the attackers have been overcome, can everything go on as before?"

"One thing is certain," replied Esperon, firmly, "nothing can ever be quite as it was before. This marks an end to the 'Age of Indolence' that has lasted for at least a millennium and basically

has just been one long celebration without any real significance because there was nothing in particular to celebrate. This is why we now have this momentous choice to make; are we to be conquered by the enemies' hordes waiting out there for darkness to fall? Or do we embrace our ancient forefather-mothers again and allow them to guide us through this crisis and subsequently make sure another of like kind never occurs again?

"This present threat has come upon us because of our refusal to acknowledge anything or anyone outside our walls; self-inflicted ignorance of our living in a world at all. To guard against such a situation ever arising again, we must maintain contact with others, particularly those from 'the Hills'. They can assist us now and in the future, helping us attain greater awareness and a desire to do so which we have sorely lacked for too long. Our ancestors called them the 'Lords of Creation'. But let us learn to call them 'Lords of Salvation', bringing us back from the brink of annihilation into a new age of creative, evolving advancement."

"So what do we have to do?"

"You must first permit me to summon them from Pardylis, their city in the Hills, from whence they will fly in their chariots to fight at our side. If we call upon them now, they can be here soon after nightfall, and once they have arrived, we should have little to fear. However, if the attack does begin at dusk, we will have to organise our own defences and be prepared to ward off the first assault.

"Of course, with no experience of war, our efforts alone will not be enough to repel our enemies, but we should be able to stay them for a while. I would therefore like to confer with those of you willing to lead teams of men and direct them according to the orders they will receive from me. Orders that must be

followed to the letter. If we can work as one cohesive force, we have a chance."

"But how can we be so sure there is the danger you speak of?" questioned another man from the midst of the crowd. "If you were to call the people from the Hills and they came and then there was no real enemy - how can we be sure they won't want to stay and impose their ways on us?"

"Because I know them. And their ways are ways of peace and love, not domination. As to the reality of the threat; if any of you doubt me for one moment, I can only invite you to go up onto the City ramparts and look out towards the North. There you will see trees, once green, now dark with the great flocks of Garrow birds settling on them. There were even some on the roof of the Palace when we arrived in the Square just now.

"I should perhaps add that I was brought here by one of the very chariots which will come tonight to save us. If you did not see it, you must have heard the chanting of the Valyons drawing it, not long before the great bell tolled."

Many glances were exchanged among those hearing these words, proving many had indeed heard the ethereal sound and wondered at it.

"You may also see some of the Denashurs out there in the Garden, although in general they shun the light, but should you catch sight of great bat-like form you will know what it is. They are providing shelter for the army, presently gathering its strength and resources for the attack tonight. And that is not all, for there are devil-serpents with them as well. You may not be able to see them yet from the walls, but they are there, crawling wherever there is any shade and only waiting for the greater dark of night before advancing towards us.

"We cannot guess what tactics will be employed by this evil force of misevolved creatures and the army they have tricked

into believing in its right to take Paradise from us; but we will do what we can.

Now, before all else, I must have your answer to this question - and remember, on your decision hangs the destiny of all we are and may become. Do we issue our call to Pardylis for the help of the people from the Hills?"

A moment's pause, and then a cry came from every mouth, bringing joy and hope to Esperon's heart. A resounding cry of affirmation, defiance and determination to combat the existential peril threatening them all. He held up his hand once more until silence came upon the gathering again.

"My friends, speed is now of the utmost essence. While I go with Hexard to send forth the summons for our aid, you must decide upon those who will be your captains. When we return here, we must have at least half a dozen young men ready to take command. We will describe the plans of defence to them and they, together with Hexard, will be responsible for carrying out what is finally determined. The rest of you must then abide by their word as you would by mine. So, your captains you must choose, but a General I give you already. Step forward Gorin."

Gorin was taken aback to be so highly honoured, but did as he was asked, stepping two paces forward to be beside the King where everyone could see him.

"If at any time I cannot be reached, it is to Hexard or this young man you must turn. His name is Gorin, and we owe him this one chance of being able to save ourselves from disaster. My father sent him on a mission to Pardylis, braving the dangers of the Forest and the Deserts, to bring me home to you at this time of need. His knowledge of what awaits us is as great as mine, so I ask you to hear him as you would me."

A great cheer went up for Gorin.

"And now to work. Pick your captains while we go to the Summoning Place. You must lead the way Hexard, for I am certain you are the only one who knows where it is to be found."

Hexard bowed his head slightly, then led the way down the steps with the King following him. Gorin stayed where he was, overlooking the huge crowd as it began breaking up into smaller groups, each one discussing the possible candidates for Captainship. Esperon then turned and, upon seeing Gorin was not behind him, beckoned him to follow, leaving the people in the Square to their deliberations.

There were thus three of them who passed around the side of the Palace on the way to the secret Summoning Place; three whose destiny had given them the power to change the course of history for ever!

VII – The Neo-Zandernatist phenomenon

chronicled by
J-L Bertrand, NZO Grand Master designate
1985 - 1999

Background

The movement that was to become the Neo-Zandernatist Order began quite informally in the early 1970s. Its founders were **Rodric H. Blane**, **Megan Bennet** and **Jean-Luc Bertrand**. These three were members of the logistics team at the Dickensen Institute in Melbourne when work on the transliteration and translation of the original Haakon Urn texts was underway.

With access to the ongoing work but, more importantly, daily contact with the eminent scholars carrying it out (such as David Waterford from the New Zealand Institute for Ancient Languages and Professor Summers from the University of Texas in Austin), these three young workers from widely diversified backgrounds soon became intrigued by what was going on around them.

They got together in their spare time and decided to focus on "distilling" the essence of what was in the process of being revealed. Initially, their motivation was mainly based on curiosity, but the more they discovered what lay behind the Zandernatis story and the context in which this ancient civilisation had been created, the more fascinated they became.

By the time the original manuscripts were stolen in 1976, the three of them had virtually completed the work of gathering all the information they could about the Zandernatist belief system underpinning the way the Golden City society functioned. Their investigations had revealed that much of this was built around a text referred to as "The Paradise Knowing" (Chapter XIII in "Destination" – and analysed by Dr. Graham Neaker, Visiting Professor in Pre-Philosophical Studies at Athens State University).

In the course of the next few months, they expanded upon those ten cryptic lines, adding information gleaned from other material extracted from the texts before the theft. The result finally became the first draft of a document they referred to as "The Greater Knowing".

NEO
ZANDERNATIST
ORDER

Manifesto

Being a statement of our original, inherent knowing before our selves and within our selves.

We, the children of our origins, hereby state:

We believe nothing. We know everything.
Our mission, through successive, evolving lives is to rediscover what we already know.

Each rediscovery is a wholly original facet of The Whole.
Thus, we are behoven to define it at this point in the illusion known as time.

We need no Gods, no priests, no religion, no holy books...
Since only we can be aware of what we comprehend at our present place in time.

And now, at last, our own time has come.

In application of which, we, the children of our origins, hereby state:

I - We must attune our lives to resonate with the wholeness of our beings
on however many planes we can perceive at this instance of our time.

II - Within this framework, we must situate our selves upon the Path that takes us
from our origins to being At One, and ultimately As One.

III - We should seek a state of readiness wherein we gravitate to like selves
for communion on all planes and in all conditions.

IV - Only the sacred book written by our selves can be our guide and basis
for referral as an expression of our state of knowing .

V - Once we know the measure of our evolution, our duty is to go forth and spread
awareness of awareness. Quietly or with bold announcement, according to our place upon the Path.

VI - At all times, we must stay mindful that as we do, so we are.
But we can only judge ourselves before the Oneness, since we have no authority for judging others.

VII - Every instant is a lesson and an opportunity.
All is for our good. All is as it should be. All is at once and a journey.
For we are the children of our origins.

In humble gratitude for being instruments within the Greater Scheme.

Further work on the precepts enshrined in this first "distillation" finally resulted in the Neo-Zandernatist "Manifesto", reproduced at the beginning of the present book. It was intended to contain the essence of everything the Zandernation civilisation had been founded on and, as such, to be an incentive for others to determine their own individual way. This latter aspect did, of course, include the deeper insight given by the existence of the Aerauma and everything they had contributed to establishing the Golden City and the principles on which it was based.

In the course of 1980, the three Dickensen Institute workers gradually realised that the principles laid down in their "Manifesto" had a potential they felt could be of great value to their contemporaries.

They even began to see it as the key to a whole new awareness and philosophy. Naturally, they wanted to share this worldview with others and began thinking how they might go about achieving such a goal.

The restrictions of compliance

It was at this point that they came up against what seemed to be an insurmountable dilemma.

Their own "Manifesto" states:

We need no Gods, no priests, no religion, no "holy" books...
Since only we can be aware of what we comprehend
at our present place in 'time'.

Complying with this precept meant they could not spread the word by proselytising or trying to "persuade" people to follow the Manifesto's principles. For it was clearly stated that the only way for people to achieve a higher level of awareness was for them to discover it for themselves:

Only the 'sacred book' written by our selves
can be our guide and basis for referral
as an expression of our state of 'knowing'.

Rodric, Megan and Jean-Luc then realised that in order to perform their duty of "spreading awareness of awareness", as indicated in the Manifesto, they had to:

…seek a state of readiness
wherein we gravitate to like selves
for communion on all planes and in all 'conditions'.

It was this "state of readiness" that posed the biggest problem. How could they be in a position to create the right environment for the

"communion" to take place which would inspire others to write their own "sacred books"?

"Opportune" synchronicity

As often happens when harmonies are flowing along the right paths and a selfless goal is defined, solutions invariably appear.

In view of what was involved, this particular "solution" was so opportune it would seem improbably "convenient" if such a device were used in a novel or a screenplay. Yet, time and time again, synchronicity invariably proves itself to be much "stranger than fiction"!

Rodric Blane was British, and came from a well-to-do family living in Berkshire. He had been working at the Dickensen Institute after having obtained a degree in Archaeology and Anthropology from Oxford University. Rodric's father, ex-Navy Commander Blane, was of Scottish origin, and his older brother Fergus still lived north of the border.

"Uncle Fergus" had always been something of a recluse, rarely leaving his country estate in the highlands of Scotland. He had never married and therefore had no direct heirs. So, when he died in 1981, his nephew Rodric was amazed to learn he had been designated sole heir in his uncle's will and had suddenly become one of the "landed gentry"! What made this newly-acquired status even more exciting was that in addition to all the land, he had also become "Laird" of the splendid twenty-five room "Castle McBlannen".

Once the implications of this event had sunk in, Rodric and his two colleagues from the Institute travelled to Scotland to visit the Castle and the 250 acres of woods, pasture and arable land that went with it.

Castle McBlannen in the Highlands of Scotland

The "Estate of readiness"

As soon as they arrived, Rodric, Megan and Jean-Luc all fell under the charm of the delightful old building with its sculpted windows, tower and turrets, its Great Hall, panelled dining room and impressive library. They immediately felt as if they had "come home" and this grand old building had been waiting for them.

It did not take them very long to decide they would make Castle McBlannen the place to which "like selves" would "gravitate" to find the "communion" and "conditions" necessary for them to "write their own sacred books" and develop spiritually in the process.

Over the next eighteen months, Rodric made enough money out of selling most of the land to pay his uncle's considerable death duties and refurbish the ageing building. During this time, Rodric, Megan and Jean-Luc also founded the "Neo-Zandernatist Order", making their "Manifesto" a statement of its principles and goals.

Initially, the existence of the Order was known only to its founders. However, they began working towards attracting "like selves" by

inviting various teachers and trainers to run seminars at Castle McBlannen on a variety of themes focused on self-development.
Little by little, certain teachers and some of those who attended the seminars were introduced to the precepts of the Manifesto, although the document itself was never shown to any of them and the "NZO" was never mentioned.

Then, some two years after beginning these activities at the Castle, in the spring of 1986, the first "Write your own sacred book" seminar was organised. It was led by Rodric himself, who proved to be charismatic and inspiring. During the course of it, he actually began sowing seeds of "awareness" among the participants. These included evoking some of the ideas floated in works such as Josef Blumrich's *"Spaceships of the prophet Ezekiel"*. As they became available, other books dealing with "alternative history" provided additional material to draw upon. These included *"The Angel in Annunciation and Synchronicity"* by Tammy Montgomery and *"The Sacred History, How Angels, Mystics and Higher intelligence Made Our World"* by Mark Booth.

Over the years, a considerable number of "like selves" "gravitated" to Castle McBlannen, finding it an ideal environment in which to nurture their awareness, Some of them even did go on to write their own "sacred books", creating a body of material that would subsequently prove to be a powerful means of "spreading awareness of awareness".

The NZO goes public

It was only with the death of Professor Harkwood in 2012 and news that the first volume of "Zandernatis" was finally to be published that the three Founders felt the time was right to bring their "Order" out of the shadows and announce it to the world. This, they did, in the unconventional way described in the first chapter of this book.

Many of the "like selves" who had been able to see beyond the "here and now", thanks to what they had experienced at Castle McBlannen over the years, suddenly recognised their affinity with what was stated in the Manifesto. This swelled the number of members in the Order

very rapidly, while still keeping it a highly confidential, even secretive organisation. Nonetheless, Castle McBlannen was soon identified as making a major contribution to the steadily growing "awareness of awareness" movement that swiftly became established in many European countries and North America.

VIII – The Summons

"Upon the turning of the days to the dawning of a need, the call shall issue forth, gathered from the roots of this creation, stirring all the flow of time into the changeless rock of history."

"Charter of Paradise" Paragraph XXXIX

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 2355-2377

The old alchemist led Esperon and Gorin through the corridors of the Palace along the now familiar route. Not a word passed between them as they followed his slightly hunched figure, hurrying on ahead of them, until he suddenly came to a halt some twenty measures from the entrance to the State Chambers. He turned and began addressing his two companions in a subdued, almost secretive tone, as if fearful of being overheard.

"You are quite right in supposing I am the only one to know of the Summoning Place. The secret of its location was entrusted to me by my father as he separated from his current life and, as tradition demands, I have kept that knowledge to myself, ready to give it to the ruling King whenever requested to do so. Needless to say, very few of them ever bothered even to find out if such a place really existed; much less enquire as to where it might be found."

"I suppose none of them had any need to," said Esperon. "But how much further do we have to go?"

"We're almost there," the old man replied, smiling. "At least, this is the entrance." He pointed to the sculpted bust beside which they had stopped, representing one of Esperon's royal ancestors, like so many others along the Grand Corridor.

"The statue?" queried Gorin.

"Yes. When the Lords finally left the City, the right of recalling them - should such an action become necessary - lay in the hands of the King, as it ever has. The King at the time - the very first King of all - was Primos. And here he is."

Neither Gorin nor Esperon understood what Hexard was saying, nor what the bust of Primos the First had to do with the Summoning Place. Nonetheless, they waited patiently as the old man turned to the statue, put one hand firmly on either side of the carved head and, with some effort, turned it completely round so that the face was to the wall.

As he did so, a panel slid noiselessly aside to the right of the sculpture's marble pedestal, revealing a dark opening through which could be seen a flight of steps leading down into blackness. Hexard had thoughtfully picked up a lamp on their way through his rooms and into the Palace, so he led the way, testing each step as he went.

Esperon followed, trying to peer ahead in the gloom to see where the stairway was leading them, but to no avail. Finally, Gorin stepped through the yawning aperture in the wall, sniffed the dry musty air uncertainly and then continued after his companions. No sooner had they gone down a dozen steps or more than there was an abrupt turn to the right followed by an even sharper one to the left. Consequently they were cut off from any light filtering down from above and had to rely entirely upon the fitful gleam emitted by the lamp in Hexard's hand, making the awkward stairs all the more difficult to negotiate.

They made several more turns as they descended the ancient flight of steps into the furthest reaches of the hill on which the Palace and the City were built. After some twenty minutes of steady downward progress, Gorin began to wonder when they might expect to arrive at the mysterious Summoning Place, for the air about them was becoming insufferably heavy and stale. The oppressive darkness, confined space and bad air gave him the uncomfortable feeling of being in a tomb; an impression which persisted even when they finally came to a level stretch of passageway. Here, the unwholesome smell was still all around them, the atmosphere made even more unpleasant by a thick layer of dust on the ground that swirled into the air and made them cough as their feet disturbed it.

They continued walking for some five minutes until Hexard suddenly stopped and moved aside for his companions to come level with him. This had not so far been possible in the narrow confines of the passage, little more than one measure wide. Esperon and Gorin saw they had come to a point where the stone walls about them fell back, curving round to form a semicircular chamber with a massive wooden door set into the flat wall in front of them.

The Summoning Place

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 2378-2446

Hexard held his lamp up to examine the door more closely before stepping back and turning to face the others.

"This is the outer portal of the Summoning Place," he said, "and only you, King Esperon, are entitled to go through it. If either of us were to cross the threshold, we would be risking our lives and the functioning of the Summoning Stone within. Indeed, only the rightful bearer of the Goldstone may even open the door, so we must leave you to do that."

"What will I find on the other side?"

"It has never been revealed to me, I fear," answered Hexard, shaking his head. "Even my father was not told, for such knowledge belongs only to those who must use it. But I feel certain you will know what you have to do. Here, take the lamp. We will stay and await your return."

Esperon took the lamp in his hand and, slightly trembling, walked towards the door. The wood had been polished as smooth as a plate of glass, without any handle or visible means of opening it. The only feature was a small circle of metal set at head height in the centre and barely visible from more than one measure away.

Instinctively, Esperon raised his hand towards it, covering the grey disc with his palm. At once, with a rushing sound like wind over water, the great wooden mass swung inwards, revealing a continuation of the passageway - and a brilliant shaft of light.

For a moment, the young King had to turn his face away from the blinding source of radiance and allow his eyes to become accustomed to it. When he was able to look again, he saw the way was now open before him and clearly defined; towards and through, the blaze of light. For not only was it streaming along the length of the rocky corridor beyond the portal, it also seemed to be issuing from the very substance of the walls themselves, bathing everything in an unreal, golden glow and setting the air aflame with dancing energy.

Esperon stood transfixed by the glorious incandescence for a few moments before, almost unconsciously, setting the flickering lamp down on the ground, having no further need of it.

Hexard and Gorin looked on as he stepped across the threshold, hardly daring to breathe, so awe-inspiring was the

spectacle of the all-pervading light and the young King about to make his historic journey to its source.

As he marvelled at it all, Gorin sensed the luminosity expressed the essence of all the City was, like a soul, a vital life force at the root of every form and concept having existence in Zandernatis.

It was sentient energy, pulsating slowly with resolute purpose to the accompaniment of a deep, throbbing sound similar to the distant pounding of a mighty drum. Once perceived, the rhythmic variations in the light intensity and the voice of the measured beat began to change, their vibrations growing faster and more pronounced. Like a human heart palpitating in anticipation of some excitement or exertion.

As Esperon moved along the corridor, the drumming sound became even louder and the pulsing waves of light more defined. It seemed as if the whole Earth had suddenly awakened to the forces it contained and the potential they represented; just as they were about to be unleashed.

The new King continued down the passageway, ever conscious of the mighty power surrounding him, wondering at its beauty and yet resolute with the purpose that brought him there.

He came at last into a large, dome-roofed chamber, hollowed out of the igneous mass in which the Golden City had its roots. All about him, the heartbeat sounded in the throb of the unseen drum and the light shot through the crystal rocks with ever-increasing vigour; from above, from below and on all sides. It was like being in a bubble of air rising through the birthplace of the stars, the bursts of radiant power coming so fast now their effect on mere human eyes was overpowering.

Esperon tried to shut out the multicoloured pulsations of brilliant rays, their vivid hues caused by the light splitting into primary colours as it passed through the chamber walls' crystal

formations. Yet there was no way of escaping their penetrating force, not in this enchanted place. All he could do was screw up his eyes, hoping he might be able to see enough before he was completely blinded and unable to identify the instrument he must use to accomplish his purpose.

Then he saw it. Standing in the centre of the chamber and apparently created from the same rock as the walls and passageway. At first glance, it appeared to have been sculpted from a huge outcrop of water-crystal, swelling from a narrow stem into a bulbous mushroom-like form some two measures across.

Esperon approached the object, the only significant feature to be seen. As he drew closer, he stopped for a moment, gazing with disbelief into the depths of the crystal dome. For there, seemingly suspended in the transparent formation of rock, was a field of limitless blackness, whose true nature could only be appreciated if it were observed from above.

For a second, it made him think of a gigantic eye, staring unblinkingly - but not unseeingly - out into the surrounding splendour. Yet there was more to it, something enigmatic and helplessly compelling.

Esperon gazed steadily into the well of captive darkness at the heart of the chamber of light, drawing relief from the brilliance shining everywhere else. He bent forward until there was nothing in his field of view but the vision of infinity. It was impenetrable, endless, expanding with every second, becoming more and more enveloping until it assumed the breathtaking aspect of the firmament on a cold winter's night. And, like the wintry heavens, it was full of stars.

The sight was so beautiful, Esperon could only gasp in amazement at such a perfect vision, for the glinting points of light held the same twinkling fire as their celestial counterparts; diamonds cast aloft in a moment of creative euphoria. Above all, there was one star outshining all the rest, steadily emitting an unblinking reddish light, in the very centre of the simulated firmament.

Once he had caught sight of it, Esperon's attention was unwavering. He found himself irresistibly drawn to its fire, fascinated by such magnitude and the way it stood apart from everything else in the inverted, star-studded vault of glittering constellations.

In a moment of sudden realisation, he then recognised what he was looking at. It was the Eternal Chariot, so familiar to him as the celestial beacon above Pardylis, imprisoned here with all the other stars in these crystal formations below Zandernatis! As he wondered at the significance of this discovery and leaned forward even more, he felt a strange sensation about his neck. It was as if something were pulling him, drawing him onwards in a course of action that, once engaged, could never be halted until it was completed.

Without taking his eyes from the Eternal Chariot in the captive sky before him, he felt for the Goldstone on his chest. As he lifted it into his field of view, he saw it was possessed with a new, inner fire - an intensely warm glow making its former splendour seem pale by comparison. A glow the Goldstone now shared with the Eternal Chariot, for both were aflame with the same crimson light. They blazed with a common purpose, the gem in perfect harmony with the star shining so brightly deep in the heart of the crystal-bound heavens.

As he witnessed this phenomenon, so Esperon instinctively understood that the two fires had to blend in order for the Summons to be issued. So without even thinking, he removed

the chain from around his neck, took the Goldstone of Zandernatis and laid it on the topmost part of the smooth, domed surface before him. Instantly, the jewel flared up and started pulsating in concert with the light flowing from the walls of the Summoning Place.

The throbbing beat then increased in volume, sounding throughout the whole substance of the rock, causing it to tremble with the might of the forces it was containing and threatening to split it asunder.

Nothing happened for a few moments until suddenly, almost faster than Esperon could comprehend, the Goldstone sank into the transparent matter of the great crystalline formation and started to diminish in size as though it were travelling away at incredible speed. He followed the trace of the jewel as it arced through the vast reaches of sky laid out before him on its way towards the centre of this artificial universe, drawn by the irresistible magnetism of the Eternal Chariot. The further it went, the smaller it became, until it was no larger than any other star. Until the two fires met and fused as one.

Instantly, the heartbeat within the Earth changed its note, building to become a rapid vibration increasing in frequency with every passing second. It was accompanied by an intensification of the light, rapidly attaining searing brilliance. Esperon's hands became transparent as he vainly tried to shield his eyes from its blinding power. With a cry that went unheard amidst the ascending scale of cosmic vibrancy, he fell from the side of the crystal mushroom, collapsing onto the floor and rolling over two or three times.

As he came to rest, not far from the mouth of the passageway, a remarkable change began to take place in the phenomena he was witnessing. The roof grew dark, and then the walls, as if all the power manifested in the light were draining down towards the floor, soon impossible to behold.

Esperon managed to crawl into the opening of the tunnel leading back to Gorin and Hexard before turning again to watch, in awe, as the mighty energy, previously surrounding him, came together beneath the foot of the mushroom formation. The frequencies then rose to an unbearable pitch as a veritable fireball came into being underneath the crystal floor. This was the very essence of all the pent-up forces imprisoned there since Zandernatis was created.

Finally, the light surged into the mushroom itself, streaming up the stem and flooding the captive night with a brilliance it had never known. This was a cataclysmic dawn, overflowing the bounds of that heaven to go on up and out, focused by the crystal lens into a beam of power.

The ray lanced upwards through the rocky ceiling of the chamber, bringing silence as the accelerated heartbeats and cosmic music exceeded the range of human perception. It then penetrated the foundations of the Palace, reaching up to attain the summit of the Golden Tower standing directly over the Summoning Place.

Any who were outside looking up at this moment would have seen a powerful shaft of light suddenly filling the top of the tower with dazzling radiance, before being deflected off into the East.

It all happened within a second, but the message reached its destination in the skies above Pardylis in less than one hundredth of that time. The Summons had been issued and, thus expressed, the Mediatorum directed it to the waiting forces massed on the Flying Fields.

A minute later, the first wave of sky-craft had risen into the air. It was followed by another and yet another, until a total of one hundred and thirty-two chariots were winging their way towards the Paradise Garden in response to the call for help. The mighty fleet rose into the afternoon sky with so much power in

the Valyons' voices that it seemed all creation could begin again with the inspiration of their song. For it was a song of joy and a song of hope; at last the Aerauma were returning to their children, and time would be able to move forward with renewed harmony and purpose.

Just as it had begun.

After the Summons

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 2447-2479

There was complete darkness and silence in the Summoning Place once the enormous reserve of energy had been unleashed. In fact, the contrast was so complete with what had gone before, the new King could barely remember where he was or his reason for being there.

With his head still spinning, Esperon managed to scramble back to his feet. The physical effort suddenly brought everything flooding back to him, together with awareness that he must return to the Square as soon as possible and organise the City's defences. He fumbled his way along the passageway leading from the underground chamber, keeping his hands on the smooth surface of the walls as he went. It seemed to go on for ever.

Then, some way off, he discerned something glimmering, but so faintly it was barely perceptible and could have been a trick of his eyes. Then a voice called his name and he managed to utter a feeble reply.

He tried to stumble along a little faster and, in doing so, saw the light grow stronger, shortly becoming recognisable as the comforting glow from Hexard's guttering lamp. Friendly hands reached out to help him as he crossed the threshold of the Summoning Place, collapsing onto his knees, as if all strength had been drained from his being.

Hexard bent down and, with Gorin's aid, brought Esperon to his feet again. They had feared for his safety when the drumming built up to its high-pitched crescendo and the light intensified just before the signal was emitted. Gorin had wanted to go forward in search of Esperon, but the old alchemist held him back, saying if the new King had perished in performing this duty for his people, there was no sense in them being destroyed as well. They could only wait for the message to be sent and for Esperon to return.

His counsel had of course been right, as usual.

With the King between them, they slowly made their way to the foot of the steps. By then, he had partially revived and was able to climb almost unaided, although at first he could only ascend a few at a time and had to take frequent rests.

After the long climb, the three of them at last emerged from the aperture in the wall behind the statue of Primos the First. They silently watched Hexard turn the face of the sculpture towards them again. As noiselessly as before, the panel slid into place, shutting out all sight of the steps and the impenetrable darkness beyond.

Still without saying a word, they turned away and walked down the Grand Corridor towards the staircase leading them down into Hexard's rooms. Once they were there, the old man quickly prepared a potion to revive and fortify Esperon completely. This he swallowed thankfully, feeling its warmth coursing through his veins like liquid fire, strengthening him after his ordeal and preparing him for the greater one to come. He smiled weakly at his two companions.

"So, it is done," he said. "They must be on their way by now, for there can be no mistaking the significance of what has just occurred. But first of all, we have to decide how we are going to repel the first wave of attacks, if they do begin tonight."

"There can be little doubt of that," answered Hexard, solemnly. "Our first problem will of course be to deal with the 'allies'. Once they are checked, the army itself should be less of a problem. In fact, they would probably fall back if they saw us winning over their Garrows and Denashurs."

"I wish we could be certain of prevailing against them," said Esperon. "As you say, the Feblings are unlikely to attack until they feel we've been sufficiently demoralised by their hideous vanguard."

"Certainly. Only not knowing how they will be deployed puts us at a great disadvantage. What sort of options do they have?"

The three of them spent some time discussing the various strategies the enemy might adopt during the first critical phase of the assault and the most effective countermeasures they could imagine. Bearing in mind the defenders' total inexperience in the craft of war.

Finally, after much deliberation, they decided upon a plan of action, which they hoped would hold back the first onslaught until the Aerauma arrived.

They were under no illusions however; their plan was at best a mere postponement of the inevitable. If, for any reason at all, the support they expected were not forthcoming, they knew it would only be a matter of time before the vastly superior - and far more organised - forces ranged against them crushed all resistance.

Nonetheless, despite so many imponderables, they were determined to do everything in their power to save the day. Thus, with resolution in their hearts, they headed for the Square again to address the people and direct them in their defensive strategy.

MELBOURNE ECHO Wednesdav Julv 3. 2013

Harkwood heir threatens legal action against Gregson and Keirle-Smith

Philip Harkwood, son of the late Professor J. G. Harkwood, declared today that he would be suing Professor James Gregson and G. Keirle-Smith for **"Criminal Copyright Violation"** if they go ahead with publishing their *"sensationalistic re-hashing"* of his father's meticulous work on the so-called "Haakon" (Antarctica) texts.

It has been rumoured that Phillip Harkwood has been negotiating **screen rights** for the *"Song of Gorin"* with an undisclosed British film company. Mr. Harkwood refused to comment on this assertion however, saying he wished simply *"to honour his father's memory and the integrity of the work he accomplished."*

Philip Harkwood, *heir to the Harkwood estate*

In defence of Paradise

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 2480-2560

When Esperon, Hexard and Gorin came out onto the steps in front of the Palace, they were confronted with a very different scene from the one they had left. For now, instead of a disparate, uncomprehending mass of people, a much more orderly gathering met their gaze. One that seemed to be gripped by a new sense of determination, quite unprecedented among the people of Zandernatis.

During the absence of the King and his companions, many had climbed up onto the City ramparts to see for themselves the dark shadows stretching across the trees of the Garden, as well as the intense activity in the air above them. The sight had made

them feel incredibly vulnerable, bringing home the ominous message delivered by Esperon and Hexard. As a result, they now awaited the words of their young ruler with keen anticipation. For they knew they were about to play a crucial role in one of the most decisive moments in their civilisation's entire history.

A few paces in front of the attentive crowd stood six young men, presumably those chosen to be Captains. As soon as he saw them, Gorin realised two were familiar; Fordern and Werlyn, who had been among those accompanying him on the first stage of his journey through the Garden towards the Paradise Gate. They had perhaps been able to talk about some of the things they saw during that day's travelling, helping to convince anyone who still doubted the seriousness of the situation. The other four men were unknown to Gorin, but they all had a look of resolve on their faces and seemed as well-suited as any in the City for the task ahead.

Once they caught sight of Esperon and the others, the six Captains began to make their way up the steps of the Palace to greet them, as a resounding cheer rose from the throats of the assembled people.

Fordern and Werlyn smiled at Gorin as they approached and were then received by Esperon. They then introduced the other four who had been chosen; their names were Anrol, Dalond, Pagdin and Keranthil, all of them young, strong, and willing to do whatever was demanded of them to defend their City's cause.

Gorin felt saddened Drian would not be there to play his part in the events that were about to unfold. When his former companions learned of his fate in the Forest of Dissemblance, they resolved to do all in their power to exemplify his courage by their own actions in the coming battle. Hexard also received the news with a heavy heart, although he had feared something

of the kind would happen when the others returned without him after Gorin's departure.

Esperon consulted with his Captains for some minutes, outlining the plans they had drawn up. Each one agreed to take charge of a particular aspect of the strategy and direct its execution before and during the fighting. The King wished them good fortune in the crucial hours ahead, and they then set about forming and instructing the six teams they would be commanding.

Esperon spoke once more before the crowd dispersed, advising all his brothers and sisters of the way they should conduct themselves during the trials they would soon be facing.

"Before you embark upon your labours essential for the defence of our City in this hour of war, I wish to give you all one last word of encouragement. We have little time before us, but if we work with a will, we can be in a state of readiness for whatever the hours of darkness may bring. Serve your Captains well, you have chosen them wisely. They are about to begin the process of selecting those who will be specifically under their command, but everyone else must also be available to do whatever may be asked of them as the day goes on.

"This applies mainly to the women, of course. Those of you under Pagdin's command will be needed to tend the wounded and keep the men supplied with food. But the rest of you must stay away from danger in your homes. Your greatest contribution will come after all this is over, caring for those who have suffered and making Zandernatis our home again once it has ceased to be a battleground.

"While the fighting is going on, keep your doors and windows tightly bolted and admit only those you know; the enemy must have no chance of penetrating any of our buildings. Although the assault is likely to begin with some kind of attack from the air, we have no real way of knowing what form it may

take and must be prepared for the worst. So follow your Captains loyally; may fortune and the course of history be in our favour."

The six Captains quickly picked the men who were to serve under them for the first stage of the defence operations and then began carrying out the master plan. Being the least afraid of the Garden beyond the City walls, Fordern and Werlyn led their teams down to the golden portals in the north-facing walls. They set to work, removing the struts and beams that had held them tightly shut for centuries. After much levering, pulling and straining, they finally managed to prise the mighty gates open wide enough for a working party to pass through.

A crowd soon gathered, gazing in disbelief when they saw the way open to the outside world. It was something no one had seen or wanted to see for many generations. Initially, the several hundred men under their Captains' command felt uneasy at the idea of going out into the unknown. However, Werlyn soon had them organised into work-groups carrying all kinds of digging implements with specific tasks to accomplish. At his command, they then began marching through the portals in an orderly line to begin the massive work ahead of them.

At a word from Fordern, they ranged themselves along the northern and north-eastern sections of the City walls, while Werlyn began to mark out lines on the gently sloping ground with a sharp stick. As it was only two hours after noon there were still several hours of sunlight left, which meant they should be safe from any attack by the land forces for a while. Even so, they wasted no time and constantly posted lookouts just in case there should be any threat to their operations.

As the men began working, Fordern and Werlyn kept a careful watch on the way they were digging, encouraging them and helping with the work themselves. Before long, the outline of a mighty trench about the foot of the walls had been drawn,

extending along the northern side and some way round to the East. They then started excavating it down to the rock on which the city was built, shovelling the soil away to form a line of earthworks. This made the fosse nearly three measures deep in places. It was hard, muscular work and the men of Zandernatis were not used to anything so strenuous, but they all worked valiantly and with a will.

Meanwhile, a large group of men led by Anrol had gone into the palatial building housing the City Museum. It was all but abandoned now, for the days when people went into it seeking culture and an understanding of the past had long since gone. Nonetheless, despite the evident neglect hanging about the place, all the exhibits were still on show, and many of them would be extremely useful in the forthcoming conflict. In particular, there was an enormous collection of weapons and armour dating from the (First) Heroic Age, long before the City gates were closed. In those days, many brave young men were still fired by the spirit of adventure. Groups of them regularly sallied forth to do battle with the Dragons and Geolons lurking just beyond the limits of the Paradise Garden, lying in wait to plague those with the courage to follow the Old Way.

Under Anrol's instructions, the men opened the display cases and took down the pikes, lances, bows and two-handed broadswords hanging there. Many of them tried on the various types of protective armour, some finding a breastplate that fitted, others a coat of mail, while the rest took up shields, placed helmets on their heads and knives in their belts.

By the time the men emerged from the museum, all of them had some kind of protective clothing and were armed with a means of defending themselves. Very few knew how they should wield whatever it was they were carrying; but at first sight, they looked a potentially formidable fighting force. In fact,

their lack of uniformity suggested a desperate ruthlessness far removed from their nature in reality.

Anrol himself knew precious little about the use of the weapons, although he was one of the few people who had visited the museum before. This meant he had some theoretical knowledge of the way they used to be employed. He spent the rest of the afternoon doing all he could to instruct his men in the art of war, showing them how to brandish a sword, throw a lance and use a bow.

After a while, the men began to develop a taste for their newly acquired skills, and might even have enjoyed the sport if the reason for it were not so grave. It was almost like a return to the days of the Heroic Age to see the arrows flying through the air and hear the clash of sword on shield as each man practised with whatever he had taken from the museum. In fact, it was so evocative of the old times that Anrol grew increasingly enthusiastic and optimistic; an attitude he soon communicated to the men under his command. This meant that within a few hours, nearly all of them had acquired the basic skills needed to handle their weapons, making them look like a force to be reckoned with.

The group of men assigned to Dalond were by now with him on the City ramparts. He had posted them at various points all around the walls, but was concentrating on the northern and north-eastern sides as it was from these directions the first attacks were likely to come.

His main force was occupied with erecting sturdy wooden stakes every three or four measures along the ramparts. The tops of these were then wrapped in lengths of cloth and bound tightly with rope. Then, buckets containing an oily, evil-smelling preparation were brought up onto the walls, spreading a pungent reek over the entire City. This was then ladled onto the cloth-bound stakes with wooden spatulas, covering them in the

substance that soon cooled and became hard in the warm sunshine.

As they worked, Dalond's men had an excellent view of the progress being made by the trench-digging teams below, and could not fail to be impressed by how fast the operation was moving ahead. They were also constantly reminded of the reason for this frenetic endeavour when they looked out towards the trees of the Paradise Garden. For there, the dark shadows cast by the massed Garrows and Denashurs were steadily extending as more of the "evil allies" flew in to take up new positions.

Even from this distance, the ominously brooding silence reigning out there, waiting for nightfall, was almost tangible. It sent a cold shiver through all who saw it and put renewed purpose into every effort the defenders were making.

Another team of men was also making preparations for defending the City's ramparts. Keranthil was supervising this detail, instructing his men to set up piles of wood and other combustible material at regular intervals along the walls. The timber was coming from all manner of sources, for there had never been such a huge demand for fuel before. So in addition to logs and other rough firewood there were also tables and chairs, cupboards, barrels; anything not absolutely vital for the defence of any particular building.

Once the woodpiles were all in place, Keranthil ordered his men to erect a sturdy wooden frame over each one. A series of enormous cauldrons, brought from the Palace kitchens, were then suspended from these structures. They were filled to the brim with oil and poised to make it easy for their contents to be poured over the parapet at a moment's notice. There were thirty of them in all, a number Keranthil considered adequate, given the limited time at their disposal.

This work was not completed until the sun began to sink towards the western horizon, at which time the Captain called for fire and ordered his men to torch the woodpiles. The flames licked up immediately, playing around the great bulk of the cauldrons hanging above them and slowly heating the oil they contained.

While all this activity was taking place on the walls, Pagdin's men were busy organising the battle plans in the streets of the City. A number of healers were working with them to organise a series of emergency stations where the wounded could be treated before being transferred to a main centre close to the Palace. His men were also charged with seeing Esperon's instructions to keep all doors closed were respected.

Once all this had been taken care of, Pagdin sent out teams to forage for anything potentially useful as a weapon. This enabled him to arm most of his men, in case reinforcements were needed on the walls.

In the course of the afternoon, there was a level of industry in Zandernatis unprecedented throughout all the millennia of its history. As Esperon looked across the City from the Palace, he mused over the irony of what was now unfolding. It had taken the threat of annihilation to goad his people into action and jolt them out of their indolent complacency. However, it was now obvious everyone fully understood the threat facing them and was totally committed to thwarting it.

News Letter

NEO ZANDERNATIST ORDER

Castle McBlannen - From At One to As One - Friday 14 June, 2013

Spreading question marks via social media

The upheaval brought about by social media in recent years has issued a major challenge to "conventional truth" in that everyone now has almost limitless means of sharing their opinions, convictions and reasoning. We refer less and less to "figures of authority" such as politicians, teachers, priests, rabbis, etc., preferring instead to put forward our own original viewpoints. And if social media are used in certain ways, some of these "original" notions can spread like wildfire (or "go viral").

Since the NZO is devoted to spreading "awareness of awareness", encouraging people to discover exactly where they are on their own evolutionary paths, we feel it important to fully embrace these channels of communication. They are a powerful means of reaching out to many, many thousands, even millions of people.

We have already seen what can be achieved by books like those making up the "Zandernatis Trinity". They have already triggered something of a "revolution" in the way many people now view questions like "Where did we come from?" and "What is our purpose?" Similarly, concepts such as reincarnation, the co-existence of past, present and future, as well as the notion that "we are architects of our own reality" have all begun to emerge from their former esoteric enclaves to become increasingly accepted by growing numbers of the general public.

Reaching further

It is now time for us to build on this great tide of awakening awareness and spark a further wave of ascending consciousness. We can do this by using the many social media tools we referred to above. Blogs, forums, posts, comments, networking, etc. Contributing to as many of these as possible - introducing topics, gently lifting the veil onto an alternative world-view - will be a sign for those who are ready to take the next steps on their paths. However, do not forget that **your role is merely to foster questions**. Never to answer them!

The first NZO Convocation and Initiatory Convention was held at Castle McBlannen in Banffshire, Scotland, to coincide with the Spring Equinox earlier this year. Some 220 people attended the Convocation, just over half of them staying for the full three days. 27 Members of the Order remained for the Convention which was held at a separate, confidential location. The highlight of this event was an "Appellation Ceremony" during which the venue was named the "New Paradise Fulcrum".

Rodric H. Blane hailed the occasion a "great success", noting that this was the first time the Order had been able to organise a "public" event since it was founded over 40 years ago. "This is an inspiring sign of the times," he declared. "With the account of the Zandernation civilisation now in the public domain, we can at last accelerate awareness as laid down in our Manifesto and do so for all those who can identify with this Path."

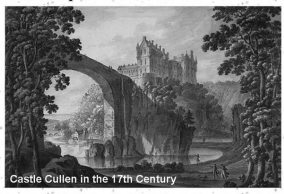
First New Paradise Community founded in Scotland

"Recreating the roots of Golden City culture"

In June of this year, the first of six planned New Paradise Communities was opened at a remote location some thirty five miles north of Castle McBlannen.

"This is a pilot scheme," announced Rodric Blane at the opening ceremony, attended by the full staff of Facilitators and Mentors as well as local government officials. "Its primary aim is to recreate certain aspects of the Zandernation ethos within the context of the 21st century that residents can then apply in their individual efforts to create a more positive world."

Each NPC focuses on one particular aspect of Zandernatis. "Experiencers" (who usually stay for between one week and two months) are invited to apprehend and explore this particular insight into Golden City culture while in residence for subsequent sharing in their personal circles.



Castle Cullen in the 17th Century

The premises in which this Community is housed were once part of a large castle that dominated the surrounding landscape.

Standing on a hill, its remoteness evokes that of the Golden City, making it an ideal location to contemplate the notion of "isolation" which latterly had such an overpowering hold on Zandernation society.

Those seeking to raise awareness in the broader world will find this experience of "glorious isolation" powerfully stimulating. An object lesson in what to avoid at a time when awareness must be raised!

Write Your Own "Sacred" Book

An NZO seminar at Castle McBlannen

The Library at Castle McBlannen

15 - 21 July 2013

A unique opportunity to define your place on the Path.

Held in the Castle library, the seminar is led by **Megan Bennet.**

The six day programme covers **seven** topics:

- **Sacred writings** from East and West + "The Book of Magres"
- **Analysis** of "The Paradise Knowing" and the "NZO Manifesto"
- **Why should you** write your own "Sacred Book"?
- **Creation and sharing** of precepts; your "Awareness Roadmap"
- **"Sacred Book" structures**, formats and language
- **Initial overview**, themes, drafting, listening to the Inner Teacher
- **Your "Awakening" chapter**, setting the scene...

Cost: **2xADE** (Average Daily Earnings) + £145 for accommodation and meals)

Outreach group report

In the last few months, several NZO outreach groups have been seeking contacts with religious bodies and communities throughout the UK and other countries.

Very often, this has been very difficult as "devout" members of most confessions sincerely believe they own the only keys to "truth". The greatest difficulties have been encountered among orthodox Jews and Muslims who find it very difficult to accept the concept of "multiple" layers of truth geared to the advancement of each particular individual.

Some members of our groups have even been accused of blaspheming against their "Holy beliefs". Subtle suggestions that we should perhaps learn to move on from "beliefs" and "faith" towards genuine "knowing" were almost always rejected categorically, even aggressively.

Encouraging progress is however being made among those who are disillusioned by conventional religion and are seeking their own answers to the "eternal questions". These are people ready to discover the path they have already chosen to tread. Our mission at this time is of course to help them find it.

On 31 May 2013, the **Corporate Extension Fund** stood at **£6,693,456**

Ramparts and trenches

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 2561-2628

There were so many men on the ramparts it was difficult to make out what each one of them was doing, while down in the Palace Square, Anrol's men were trying out their newly acquired weaponry. Esperon smiled grimly as he heard the sounds of their practice battle mingling with their cries of triumph as they discovered some new way of swinging a sword or throwing a spear one measure further. It was only to be hoped that such earnest jubilation would also be present when it came to the real thing!

A little later, just as Keranthil gave the order to light the fires beneath the cauldrons of oil, Esperon left the Palace and moved among his men, finally joining up with Gorin and Hexard. It was already remarkable to note how much he was respected by those under his command, inspiring in them a confidence and loyalty hardly commensurate with the brief period he had been on the throne.

As the work of preparation was nearing completion, his words of encouragement were even more important, for after the efforts of the day they would now have to face the rigours and unknown terrors of the night. Yet he never faltered for an instant, although he feared with all of them and for all of them. He was the King now, and it was incredible to observe how he had so completely assumed such great responsibility and become in every way worthy of the respect due to a great leader of his people.

King Esperon, Hexard and Gorin went up onto the walls just as the sun began to lose its intensity and redden with the veils of approaching evening. The King looked anxiously towards it and then at the lines of men standing in readiness on

the ramparts. He nodded in approval and then addressed Hexard.

"We seem to be ready here, but time is now very short. What progress are they making with the trench?"

"Practically finished I think."

Esperon leaned over the parapet and looked down at the teams of diggers working under Werlyn and Fordern's command. He watched the two Captains running up and down the line of earthworks, urging their wearying men to make one final effort before darkness prevented them from fully completing their task. For despite their goodwill, the men were working much slower than before, fatigued by the unaccustomed toil. However, a great deal had been achieved and the fosse now presented a formidable obstacle to any advancing forces. The King called down to Fordern as he passed by, directly below.

"How's it going down there?"

"Not so badly," came the reply. "The ground is softer than we thought it would be, but it will probably take us another hour to finish off completely."

That was cutting the schedule rather fine, for in another hour the sun would almost be on the point of setting and all the men had to be back inside the walls before it did. But if everyone kept up the same steady rate of digging, then it was still possible. Esperon gave an encouraging wave to those who were so stout-heartedly digging the City's first line of defence. He was about to turn back to the men on the ramparts, when a cry from Gorin drew everyone's attention to a new threat.

"Garrows in view!" He was pointing out beyond the line of trenches to where a formation of black dots was clearly rising into the evening sky. Within moments, they had grown in size and, sure enough, could be identified as a swarm of the baleful

creatures winging their way towards the City walls. They began uttering their fiendish cries while still over one hundred measures distant, climbing then, before diving at tremendous speed towards the men working in the trench.

Panic swept through everyone. All the men threw down their implements with cries of fear, scrambling out of the fosse and running in all directions. Several were wounded by stabbing beaks and razor sharp talons. The birds then rose high over the City again, leaving Fordern and Werlyn with the task of gathering and reassuring their teams of men, urging them to return to their work as every minute counted now.

Meanwhile, the Garrows flew around the perimeter of the City, shrieking all the time and striking terror into the hearts of all who heard them. Suddenly, they changed course and came swooping low over the pinnacles of the Palace, down towards the Square where Anrol's men were practising with their weapons. Some of them scattered in the face of the aerial attack, but many stood their ground, swinging their axes and swords with almost carefree abandon. One man had become so proficient with his sabre he even managed to strike one of the birds as it flew over him, severing the head in midair. Although perhaps a lucky kill, it had an immediate effect upon the other flying creatures. They immediately shot high into the air again, shrieking like tormented souls, gathered themselves into a close formation and headed away at great speed. No doubt to warn the assembled forces they might meet rather more resistance than they had initially anticipated.

Once the evil flock had disappeared into the gathering gloom, work continued as before in and around the City. The chance slaying had greatly heartened Anrol's men, encouraging them to redouble their efforts and become even more capable with their chosen weapons.

As work resumed after the Garrows' brief, exploratory attack and sounds of preparation again echoed through the City streets, Esperon conferred with Gorin, Hexard and the Captains whose men would be in the forefront of the defensive effort; Anrol, Keranthil and Dalond. The King reminded them of the need to be ready for any eventuality, as the enemy's strategy might present itself in many different guises. They could be certain of one thing only; there would be much more to deal with than merely the blood-chilling cries of the Garrows. There were the serpents to overcome, and the Denashurs, not to mention the well-prepared warriors who would be coming in their wake.

For the rest, they had to depend on their own judgement and trust the preparations they had been able to make would hold the attackers long enough for reinforcements to arrive. Whatever happened, they would not have long to wait now, for the sun was sinking fast and the wreaths of night were drawing about it in long fingers of purple cloud. Half an hour more and daylight would only be a fond memory.

Work was completed outside the walls as dusk began to sweep over the Paradise Garden and the sombre volumes of mountains and mist in the West sucked the last drops of angry blood from the dying sunlight.

The men who had laboured so hard to construct the trench were recalled, having completed their mission. They had only to close the gates again and make sure they would resist any attempt to break them down. Fordern's men set about this task with a will, rapidly building a strong framework of sturdy wooden supports along the inside of the portals. They then tightly lashed them to the gate structure and set out a line of heavy stone blocks against them for good measure.

As this work was proceeding, Werlyn took his men into the City for refreshments provided by the kitchens set up under Pagdin's command. Fordern's men were likewise nourished when they returned from the gates, after which they helped pass round a fortifying soup to all those manning the defensive positions along the ramparts. It was well received, and did much to bolster the morale of those who had nothing to do now but wait. They drained their bowls, set them down and warmed their hands by the brightly glowing fires beneath the huge cauldrons as the flames danced higher, throwing a warm, cheerful light on their faces.

Few of the men were showing much cheer in their expressions now, however. Few of them even spoke, and if they did, it was because the strain was now becoming unbearable. There had been so little time to make all these preparations and now the last expectant minutes were dragging by like so many hours.

Gorin climbed to the top of the silver tower in the Palace, from where, with his keen night vision, he would be able to see the first threatening movements out in the Garden. Esperon joined him later, having satisfied himself everything was ready and nothing had been overlooked. Anrol's armed men had now taken over the positions on the ramparts, while those under Dalond stood down to provide reinforcements if needed. Keranthil's command was on full alert by their huge cauldrons, feeding the fires and checking the oil's temperature.

The air was heavy with expectancy, weighed down with the imminence of mortal danger and the nerve-rending tension it generated. Tension that would remain until their adversaries finally swarmed in from the North-East, to replace it by the desperate urgency of fighting for survival.

As all these preparations were completed in Zandernatis, high over the Deserts of Jerah, the one hundred and thirty-two chariots speeding westwards met up with Daen and Aelaguel, who were greatly heartened by the sight of the mighty aerial host coming towards them. They did not learn of the circumstances surrounding how the summons was issued until some time later, but the moment itself was cause enough for rejoicing, showing all their efforts had been justified.

Drawing nearer, they saw that in the hand of every winged warrior shone the silver brightness of a keen-edged sword. In addition, huge nets spun in threads of glinting metal hung from the leading flying craft. They trailed out behind the chariots in shimmering veils of gossamer, like wreaths of star-filled mist.
The two Aeraumen turned their chariot round to come into line with the oncoming Sky-Force and then gladly brought the song of their steeds into harmony with the rhythm of the others.

And what a song it was!

The whole heavens resounded with it as the glorious chants swept the chariots on like a cluster of comets, armed with light and a fervent desire to drive the invaders back from the walls of the city the Aerauma had crafted. On, ever on, the eternal song of flight rose to even higher peaks of exultant joy, unified in the common purpose, at one with their City children's' prayer; to transform it into a song of victory!

IX – TV debate on the NZO's growing influence

This is the (translated) transcription of extracts from a debate broadcast by French news channel BFM TV on 25 September 2013 as part of its *"Vérités Emergeantes"* (Emerging Truths) series. It came in the wake of growing evidence of the NZO's activities in several European countries, following publication of the Order's Manifesto just under nine months before this programme was broadcast.

Those taking part were:

Anchor **Jean-Pierre Evanne** and **Dr Graham Neaker** (who worked on "The Paradise Knowing", a document from the Haakon Urn writings said to have inspired the Neo-Zandernatis Order's "Manifesto"; see "Destination" chapter XIII.
Others taking part (by video link) were:

Antoine Garance (BFM's correspondent in Montreal) and **Marie Hudoin** (Personal Evolution Centre, Chartres, France).

J-P Evanne: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Today's "Emerging Truths" is looking at the surprisingly rapid growth of the Neo-Zandernatist Order. For those of you unfamiliar with this movement, it is a rather mysterious group of people who have found refuge and inspiration in writings said to reveal the existence of an ancient civilisation in Antarctica, dating back tens of thousands of years.

To talk about this, I am very pleased to welcome Doctor Graham Neaker, Professor in Pre-Philosophical studies at Athens State University, who worked on one of the most important documents found under the Antarctic ice in 1962 that, apparently, sparked off this whole movement. Dr. Neaker, what can you tell us about this?

Dr G. Neaker: First of all, may I say how pleased I am to have an opportunity of talking about this discovery and the "Paradise Knowing" in particular. Because there does seem to be a certain amount of misunderstanding about this civilisation.

J-P E: I believe it was essentially a "Godless" society?

Dr. G.N.: That is not strictly true. Although it was the only ancient civilisation we have ever encountered that did not need any kind of "religion" as we know it.

J-P E: And why?

Dr. G.N.: Simply because no one feared death. In fact, they even looked forward to it as an opportunity to return in a new body and enjoy the delights of youth and celebration all over again...

J-P E: You mean they believed in reincarnation?

Dr. G.N.: They didn't *believe* in it. For them, it was a given, because they could remember almost every detail of their previous lives.

J-P E: I see. So where does the "Paradise Knowing" fit into all this?

Dr. G.N.: It appears to be one of the very few documents dealing with any kind of belief system in the Haakon writings, although it is very succinct and can be interpreted in many different ways.

J-P E: So what connection does this have with the so-called "Neo-Zandernatist Order" we have been hearing so much about lately?

Dr. G.N.: Well, whoever issued the "NZO Manifesto" which appeared all over the Internet on 1 January this year (2013) was obviously perfectly familiar with the "Paradise Knowing".

J-P E: And there's going to be a book published about these findings next spring (in 2014), I believe...

Dr. G.N.: Absolutely! But someone in the know clearly wants to anticipate the impact this information is going to have...

J-P E: Any idea who this might be?

Dr. G.N.: Not at all, but it isn't really important. What counts most is that these ideas seem to be resonating with huge numbers of people, young and old, all over the world. Like a kind of tidal wave...

J-P E: Thank you Dr. Neaker. At this point, I would like to call upon Antoine Garance, our correspondent in Montreal. Antoine, is the NZO gaining much of a following in Canada?

Antoine Garance: Good evening. It certainly is. There are two Chapters here in Montreal, and seven or eight more in other parts of the country, though mostly in Quebec for the moment.

J-P E: Why do you think this is so popular in Canada?

A.G.: Canadians identify quite easily with this kind of approach to beliefs and understanding, probably because they're so individualistic themselves. It's very much live and let live here... so the kind of

personalised worldview the NZO talks about ticks all the right boxes. For example, many younger people are finding real hope in this fresh approach to values and self-improvement. You've only got to look on Facebook and Twitter to see what's happening…

J-P E: Thank you Antoine. Now we're going to call on our third guest of the evening, Marie Hudoin, from the Chartres Personal Evolution Centre. Marie, can you hear us?

Marie Hudoin: Yes, very well, thank you.

J-P E: First of all, can you tell us something about the work you do at your centre in Chartres?

M.H.: The Personal Evolution Centre was set up to help people use the powerful telluric energies found here to stimulate their personal development.

J-P E: How did you come to link up with the NZO?

M.H.: We were contacted by Jean-Luc Bertrand, one of the Order's founders. And it soon became obvious we share the same goals.

J-P E: Meaning?

M.H.: The NZO and our own Evolution Centre both aim to "raise awareness of awareness" and regenerate human consciousness. The paths are somewhat different, ours being focused on the powerful concentration of energies here in Chartres, while theirs follows the precepts on which the Zandernation civilisation in Antarctica was founded.

J-P E: Some people are afraid the NZO is some kind of "Secret Society" or worse, a dangerous "sect". How do you see them?

M.H.: Sects usually brainwash all their adepts into following the same dogma. Whereas the NZO encourages its members and everyone else to define their own individual path to development. Absolutely nothing is imposed upon anybody. That applies to us as well.

J-P E: So what relationship do you have with the NZO then?

M.H.: They organize seminars here to help people define their own "knowing". Just like the ones they've been running at Castle McBlannen for the last 25 years. Attracting the growing number of people who've had enough of being told what to think by religions, the media and politicians... or rather being told not to think at all...

J-P E: Thank you Marie. Coming back to you, Doctor Neaker, what does all this show?

Dr. G.N.: As we've heard, I think it shows the NZO is meeting a very real need and gathering strength in many parts of the world.

J-P E: Where do you see it going from here?

Dr. G.N.: It's still too early to say. But the Order recently set up a Corporate Extension Fund[47] that has now been registered as a Charity. And a number of very wealthy philanthropists, many from the IT sector, have already donated considerable sums of money to the Fund, This will enable the organization to spread its ideas to much wider audiences, so we can expect to see the NZO's influence extending into some rather unexpected spheres in the months and years to come...

[47] See footnote to the NZO Newsletter on page 590.

X – The Great Battle

"The first great conflict Earth
had ever known - and one which
decided the future history of
the planet."

"History of the Second Heroic Age"
(written in 3029).

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 2629-2821

As the last vestiges of blue-green twilight faded away in the Western sky, Gorin increased his vigilance from the top of the silver tower. His keen eyes scanned the ominously darkened trees to the North-East, watching for the slightest sign indicating the opening of an enemy initiative. At his side, Esperon became increasingly tense as the seconds crept by, each one bringing the totality of night that much closer. He even began wishing their adversaries would attack, bringing an end to the uncertainty and plunging everyone into the heat of action. Then, at least, they would be able to see what they were up against.

Just then, far away, something moved. The shifting of the deepening shadows perhaps, or the tops of the distant trees swayed by a chance breath of wind? No, it was more than that. For an instant Gorin thought he was seeing the entire wooded area rising into the sky as a solid mass, but he knew this could not be. It was no illusion either, for there was a mighty

movement going on, blotting out the dim horizon in waves of threatening gloom.

The great hordes of flying creatures allied with the Febling armies were in the air, massing for their first concerted onslaught on the City's makeshift defences. Without saying a word, he pointed towards the ominous blackness hanging like a malignant shadow against the darkly coloured sky. Esperon saw it as well, drew a sharp, deep breath and then lent over the edge of the tower, calling out a single word of command across the City; a word everyone was waiting to hear with dread in their hearts.

Immediately, Anrol's men snatched prepared brands of flaming wood from beneath the cauldrons of oil and used them to ignite the line of stakes standing along the ramparts. Moments later, they were all aflame; the dark, bituminous material plastered over them burning slowly to give out a smoky but steady light. The entire north-eastern perimeter of Zandernatis was thus transformed into a wall of fire. This must have come as a complete surprise to the approaching creatures, for as soon as the torches flared into life, they significantly altered their formation.

Instead of remaining grouped together in a solid mass as before, they spread out, dispersing themselves over a much wider area. This allowed them to be distinguished as an infinite number of black points interspersed with occasional stars blinking through uncertainly. Nonetheless, this change in tactics did nothing to stem the winged force's progress towards the City; they still came on relentlessly, like a swarm of savage insects, intent on the kill.

A second later, their calls came to the ears of those awaiting their arrival; harsh, angry cries growing stronger and louder with every second. Seeing this, Esperon left the lookout position

on the silver tower and ran down to lend his sword to those his men would be wielding when the attack actually began.

Gorin followed him, and by the time they arrived on the ramparts, it was difficult to distinguish anything in the sky other than a massive cloud of approaching birds. He too was now yearning to be in the thick of the action and had armed himself in readiness to do all he could for the cause he had adopted so wholeheartedly. The King addressed his men, giving them a final word of encouragement before they turned away, with grim faces, to confront the onrushing tide of airborne malevolence.

The first of the great black Garrows flew in over the torch-lit walls, uttering grating and derisive cries that chilled the blood of all who heard them. More followed, in successive formations numbering over one hundred birds at a time, all beyond the reach of the hand-held weapons possessed by Anrol's men. The poor light also meant the archers were unable to try their luck with a shot. The defenders therefore bode their time, waiting as the creatures circled the City, continually emitting their shrieking calls that grew in intensity as their numbers swelled.

For over twenty minutes, the airborne forces gathered high over Zandernatis, wheeling and circling, diving now and then, but always well beyond reach of the defenders' swords, lances and arrows. It was distinctly unnerving to be aware of so many menacing creatures in the air above while remaining utterly powerless to counter them. Some of the men under Anrol's command even began to show visible signs of failing courage as the constant cacophony of cries rang out like the lamentations of dammed souls. Yet they had no other choice but to stand their ground and wait for the attackers' next move. It would surely not be long in coming.

Attention was so concentrated on the birds flying and screaming overhead, no one paid much attention to what was happening on the approaches to the City walls. Until one of Keranthil's men, tending the fire beneath his cauldron, happened to look over the edge of the parapet.

What he saw held him paralysed for a moment, rooted to the spot in abject terror. Then he found his voice, at first no more than a stuttering croak, but soon he was bellowing with all the force of his lungs and gesticulating wildly, diverting attention from the Garrows' aerial activities. Esperon and Gorin rushed to join the defenders, high on the battlements, from where they all gazed in horror at the spectacle of a large portion of ground moving towards them! At least, it appeared to be the ground, but closer inspection and the way it was moving forward, revealed its true nature.

In reality, it was a vast horde of serpents, all moving as one in a slithering mass, inexorably advancing towards the walls. The reflection of the torchlight on their green, leathery bodies lent an additional aspect of horror to the scene, making it seem like the measured progression of some relentless, viscous tide. It swept onwards, wave after wave of regular motion in a serpentine flood bent upon engulfing everything in its path.

The defenders drew some comfort from having the high City walls separating them from this new threat, but even so, it was a deeply disturbing sight. Everyone wondered what might lie behind such an apparently futile advance. Once the line of earthworks had been reached, surely the snakes would be unable to make any further progress.

Then a new sound was heard, rising up out of the night in the far distance, adding a hideous variation to the persistent cries of the Garrows overhead. It was perhaps lower in volume, but penetrated everything with its ghoulish tones, sounding like

the moaning of the wind chasing itself across endless, trackless wastes. The longer it went on, the more insistent it became, jarring the nerves and undermining the confidence of all who heard it.

Gorin sensed this must be the call of the Denashurs, the third evil species allied with the Feblings and potentially the most dangerous of all. They were no doubt preparing themselves for their participation in the attack, but so far, there was no visible sign of them. Neither was anything to be seen of the Feblings themselves; only their hellish partners in jealousy had so far braved the circle of light.

As time went by, some of the men even began wondering if the torches alone were defence enough. The attackers were cave dwellers after all, so perhaps the glaring light of the flames would be enough to keep them at bay. This would leave the Garrows and serpents powerless to do anything other than try to demoralise the defenders with their presence. So that even with such vast numbers, it was difficult to see how the Febling army could hope to achieve very much against the impregnable strength of the City walls. Even if those manning them did lack adequate weapons and sufficient training.

Just as the men began speculating what kind of tactics the invaders could possibly employ next, or indeed if there would be a proper attack at all, the first ball of serpents struck a group of Anrol's men gathered on the battlements. It took them completely by surprise and several seconds passed before those around them realised what had occurred. One or two of the men had seen it approaching; a huge, formless mass coming fast out of the darkness. It burst upon them and became a mass of writhing, hissing, biting snakes, struggling to free themselves from each other and inflict as many venomous wounds as possible before being cut to pieces by the men's swords.

The serpents managed to spread out over a considerable area of the ramparts within a few moments of hitting the ground, largely because they had already started the process of disentanglement while still in the air. Fortunately, most of the men the deadly ball had fallen upon were wearing armour taken from the museum, protecting their arms and legs from the poison fangs.

Not all of them were so lucky though; five of the youngest defenders were bitten before all of the evil creatures had been hacked to death. The efficacy of the serpents' venom was soon demonstrated when two of the men, wounded in the face and neck as the snakes fell upon them, died within a few minutes of being carried away from the walls into the care of Pagdin's nurses.

The other three, who received their bites on the feet or ankles, became violent before succumbing to the poison. As it happened, none of them were holding any weapons when they were bitten, for if they had been armed, they would certainly have done great injury to those in their immediate vicinity.

The lethal substance in their veins seemed to give them ten times their normal strength, and it took six of their sturdiest fellows to restrain them from carrying out the murderous threats they began making. Like everyone in the Golden City, they had all been peaceable men, and yet in those initial moments they shouted only words of hatred, lusting for another's life to take with their own. The victims raved on in this crazed way for several minutes before finally collapsing, their life force expended like a snuffed-out candle.

After this incident, Esperon ordered all the men to stand well apart from each other to minimise the effect of any more serpent balls lobbed towards the City. The Feblings evidently had some kind of catapult out there in the darkness for

launching their hideous projectiles, but it must have been some way back, for even Gorin could see nothing to betray its whereabouts.

Another cluster of serpents came through the air, this one falling well inside the City walls, where Dalond's men were able to deal with it quickly, avoiding any casualties. Their swift action demonstrated that, provided everyone acted fast enough, there was not too much to fear from these living missiles, although no one stopped to think what they might do if several were to land at once.

In dealing with the sudden threat posed by the serpents, everyone largely forgot about the Garrows whose presence - and ineffectiveness to do anything beyond create a fiendish noise – was almost taken for granted by now.

Few had therefore noticed they were now flying lower, darting about in all directions and even perching, in twos and threes, on the topmost pinnacles of the tallest buildings. Little by little, they built up their presence along the rooftops and arches, clinging to any architectural feature they could grasp with their long, bony talons. All the time this insidious occupation was taking place, the birds maintained their constant, ear-splitting cries. A ceaseless cacophony underscored by the unseen Denashurs' howling; wild, piercing voices uplifted in eager anticipation of something no one dared to imagine.

Communications between various elements of the defending forces were severely hampered by this bombardment of sound. As a result, Esperon and Gorin had to use messengers when they wanted to send instructions to any particular group of men, rather than use their own voices to issue commands.

More serpents came over the walls, one great bunch of squirming horror after another, some falling exactly on the ramparts as the first had done, while others landed well beyond

them. In fact, the range was so wide that the teams of exterminators led by Fordern, Werlyn and Dalond had great difficulty keeping track of where they came down, allowing many to escape among the narrow streets. Their task was made a little easier by the soft glow given off by the stones of the buildings, against which the snakes showed up as dark shadows, but it was impossible to track down all of them.

In consequence, the number of serpents alive in the City steadily built up, presenting a significant hazard to the organisation of the defence effort. On the walls, several more men were bitten and died by the fangs of the odious beasts. One of them amply demonstrated the need to disarm any others so wounded at once, for he ran amok, whirling his huge two-handed broadsword about his head and slashing into a group of men who were trying to deal with another ball of snakes that had just landed. The venom-crazed victim managed to kill three of them outright. Four more were severely wounded and at least another six felt the edge of his sword before he lunged forward, lost his balance and pitched over the parapet to his death.

As more and more serpents came hurtling through the air, the writhing tide outside the walls drew nearer to the edge of the trench dug during the afternoon. Gorin watched as the first of the hideous creatures came to the line of earthworks, crawled up and slithered down the other side into the excavated area. Others followed, barely breaking the continuity of their movement, as if the piles of heaped earth were no more of a hindrance than outcrops of rock to a swiftly flowing stream.

He wondered what the intention might be, for surely they could come no further and would only succeed in suffocating each other if they continued pouring into the trench. Then a huge ball of the squirming creatures landed right beside the position where he and Esperon were observing the course of the

battle, emitting a pungent, sickly odour inducing the most intense nausea. Gorin felt his senses reeling and saw the King gripping the edge of the parapet for support, his face pale and drawn. The immediate counter-attack demanded in the face of this peril thus became extremely difficult during those first, vital seconds as the serpents disentwined themselves. With a supreme effort, Gorin swallowed the retching feeling welling up within him, drew his sword and advanced towards the snakes, cutting them away with great sweeps of his blade.

Seeing him fighting with such a will, Esperon managed to gather enough strength to combat the sickness he was experiencing, but not before narrowly escaping a fatal bite from one of the creatures at his feet. It was poised to spring when Gorin saw the danger and darted forward to plunge the point of his sword into the fanged mouth. Anrol then ran up with some of his men and between them they soon managed to destroy all the serpents before any of them could do any serious damage.

There was little time for elaborate expressions of gratitude, but the King smiled at Gorin and held him in a firm handclasp amply demonstrating his recognition of the courageous act. No words were spoken, for in the same moment, without any warning, the Garrows began to play a new role in the battle.

From a much lower height, and still giving out their fearsome cries, they dived on the defenders manning the walls, stabbing at them with their long, sharp beaks and clawing at them with their talons. This considerably hampered the men's efforts to control the serpents, for now they had to contend with deadly adversaries in the air and on the ground.

As a result of the Garrows' intervention, many more men received fatal serpent bites while others were wounded in the face and neck by the birds' sharp beaks and claws. The great black creatures apparently had no fear of the flaming torches,

and in fact several were even trying to knock them over and thereby reduce the level of light on the ramparts.

Due to the ongoing struggle with the snakes, and now with the Garrows, few men were available to concern themselves with setting up and relighting any torches extinguished in this way. Even those who did, from Dalond's command, were unable to work efficiently due to the danger posed by the many stray serpents Anrol's squads had been unable to eliminate.

An announcement featured on many Facebook pages, blogs and Communities targeting business, publishing, media and entertainment sectors in January 2013.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Incorporated in London on **1 January 2013** by an anonymous philanthropist, the Pre-Mythica Experience Corporation has issued the following Mission Statement to define its fundamental principles:

1. In a world where so-called "entertainment" offers almost nothing but negativity, violence, commercial greed and hopelessness, the PMEC is devoted to creating experiences meeting the needs of evolving humans.
2. These will encompass learning experiences, self-discovery experiences, reading experiences, motion picture experiences and "experience experiences".
3. The PMEC is essentially a not-for-pecuniary-profit organisation funded by donors and its own activities. These alone will bring it the wealth of infinite fulfilment by being able to fuel and accelerate the shift in attitude our Mother, Earth, so desperately needs.

Tactical defence

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 2822-2910

With so much happening, it looked for a moment as if confusion would overtake the defenders of Zandernatis. Yet somehow, Esperon managed to maintain unity in the operation by carefully deploying the resources he had available, ordering reinforcements to areas under pressure, while allowing those who fought well to stand down for some minutes before sending them back into the fray.

Everyone could see their King, with Gorin, high on the ramparts, surveying the scene and both doing their part in combating the merciless offensive from all quarters. They were the object of several particularly savage attacks from the Garrows, coming in wave after wave, clawing at their helmets and trying to stab at their eyes.

The two of them managed to hold their own however, beating off their assailants, tirelessly flailing through the air with their swords and cutting several out of the sky. It gave the men heart to see the two of them so valiantly standing up against the assault of such a fearsome enemy.

Someone shouted, "Here's one for King Esperon!" as he sliced a Garrow's head from its body and brought it plummeting down. After that, the cry was taken up on every side, rising to such a tumult, it was even able to contend with the airborne screams for supremacy of sound.

For a moment, there was a lull, the Garrows holding back their attacks on Gorin and Esperon, who were thankful for the respite this gave them to catch their breath and clear the immediate area of mutilated, feathered carcasses. They were covered in the creatures' blood and sweating profusely with the tremendous effort they had made, but continued to maintain their good spirits.

Gorin glanced over the edge of the wall to see what the serpents on the ground were doing and then recoiled in horror as he grasped their evil intent.

"They're climbing the walls," he yelled. "Look!"

Esperon rushed to his side, leaned over and looked down. Sure enough, the great serpentine mass, still extending as far as the eye could see in the dim light, had completely filled the trench and was beginning to scale the walls. How they were able to cling on to the smooth outer stonework was a question neither Gorin not Esperon stopped to consider. It was enough to know there was a great body of venomous snakes, less than three measures below them, preparing to slide over the brink of the parapet at any moment.

Esperon urgently summoned a messenger and sent him with a command to Keranthil. His teams had somehow managed to keep the fires burning brightly beneath the cauldrons throughout the first stages of the assault, despite concerted efforts by the Garrows to prevent them.

The messenger had no sooner departed than another wave of aerial attacks began, this one spearheaded by a score or more birds diving out of the night sky towards Gorin and Esperon, their harsh screams piercing the darkness before them. They seemed to have sensed the particular importance of the two young men on the highest point of the ramparts and were now singling them out for special attention. Gorin raised his sword in readiness to deal with the approaching threat, in the same moment becoming aware that this attack was unlike those preceding it. For each of the birds was grasping something in its talons - something squirming. There were three or four deadly serpents entwined around the legs of every Garrow and it was clearly their intention to drop this grisly load onto the King and his General.

A blow from Gorin's sword felled the first of them, Esperon claiming another a moment later, then occupying himself with the slaughter of their victims' deadly allies as they tried to extricate themselves from the grip of their dead carriers. Again and again, their swords flashed through the air, as some of the other men came to their aid. In the end, they managed to kill all of the serpent-bearing birds, though not without some loss. Two of their defenders had been bitten in the neck and lay twitching in the throes of death amidst the bloody pile of dissevered, evil smelling carcasses.

Cries of the dying, the sound of steel on soft, scaled or feathered bodies, the Denashurs' wail and Garrows' screeching all created the gruesome counterpoint making up this awful symphony of war. Zandernatis, once so fair and beautiful, was now stained with blood and littered with the bodies of its children, many hidden under what remained of those fell creatures responsible for their untimely end.

It was a terrifying place now, gripped by desperation and frenzy on the part of every man who bore a sword, striving to protect all he had held dear for so long. Then a new sound came to the ears of those still capable of concentrating on this macabre fugue of destruction; the sound of beating drums and the booming of a mighty gong, reverberating above all the clamour of fighting to herald the arrival of the Febling army.

Their evil allies, masters of the jealous inspiration at the root of this horrific rape of Paradise, had done enough. The resistance of the City people was on the verge of breaking and the Garrows had worked well at extinguishing the torches emitting their repellent light along the walls.

The natural glow of the City itself was not strong enough to worry the Febling warriors and now, with serpents swarming

up towards the defensive positions on the parapet, even that was barely distinguishable.

So on they came, marching to the rhythm of the thundering drums, following in the wake of the few remaining serpents still crawling relentlessly towards the fosse and the walls beyond.

Esperon and Gorin gazed out into the obscurity of the night, more sombre than before due to the depleted torchlight, and saw the glint of metal as the foremost line of soldiers approached. Two strong, burnished notes resonated from the gong, followed by three reverberating drumbeats. The advance halted, leaving the enemy army less than sixty measures from the City gates, waiting for the most propitious moment to make their next move.

The assault begins

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 2910-2932

Keranthil gave the order for ten of the massive cauldrons to be tilted over the edge of the parapet, sending their boiling liquid foaming down the face of the walls. The deluge caught many hundreds of serpents in the process of scaling the smooth stones, sweeping over them and casting them back into the trench where they perished with those gathered there. A nauseating stench arose from the blistered, twisted bodies accompanied by acrid fumes, hanging over the surface of the oily morass like a yellow shroud.

For the moment, it looked as if the snakes' land assault had been repulsed. Furthermore, there were so many collected in the fosse when the oil descended upon them that a counterattack appeared very unlikely. As for those climbing the walls, any escaping the boiling flood were rapidly dealt with when they did eventually reach the parapet. A swift slice of the sword and

they went tumbling back to join the seared remains of their fellow creatures.

Comparatively successful as this operation may have been, it did not solve the problem of the large numbers of serpents already within the City. Neither did it help ward off the Garrows. These were now becoming increasingly adept at plunging towards men on the wall, shrieking as they came. In an attempt to dodge the winged attacks, many lost their balance and toppled to their deaths among Dalond's serpent-clearance details in the street below, or lurched over the ramparts, falling towards the sickening chaos in the trench.

The drumbeats sounded again, this time more insistently than ever, signalling the lines of Febling warriors to move forward. They advanced like a slowly spreading stain across the land; a dark shadow on blackness, insidious and unrelenting. A company of Anrol's bowman, still in position on the wall, aimed at the oncoming army and let off a volley of arrows, some of which found their mark. Nevertheless, they were largely ineffectual in staying the determined progress of the enemy host.

Some of the men became unnerved by the apparent futility of their efforts to hold back the Feblings, resulting in a growing feeling of desperation threatening to replace their original resolve.

Esperon soon noticed this disquieting change in his men's mood, but could do little more than try to encourage them with his own example. They were, after all, completely unused to this kind of situation and although the initial onslaught had been faced valiantly enough, their courage was waning. For not only was there the ever-present danger of serpents underfoot and malicious birds in the air, coupled with the unceasing cacophony created by the flying creatures, they now had to

contend with the advent of fresh Febling troops. No wonder their confidence was gradually ebbing away!

Certainly, if the enemy were by some means to succeed in gaining a foothold inside the City, the defenders were unlikely to offer much resistance in hand-to-hand struggle. Quite apart from their lack of training, they were still weary after the day's toil and increasingly intimidated by everything going on around them. This meant a properly equipped and disciplined force would have little trouble in bringing about their downfall.

As the dark line of invading warriors continued its march towards the walls of Zandernatis, the King turned his eyes away from them and, for the first time that night, looked anxiously into the East. Gorin followed his gaze, wondering with him, how long it would be...

It then became apparent that the Feblings intended to concentrate their initial efforts on the gates. A large column of men bearing a massive battering ram detached itself from the main army and advanced towards the City at a quicker pace. Anrol urged his bowmen to take up positions on either side of the portals from where they could send a hail of arrows towards the oncoming invaders. Several fell, but further shots were prevented by the engagement's most savage attack from the Garrows, the birds swarming over the archers and forcing them to the ground by sheer weight of numbers, pecking and clawing as they did so.

This diversion provided some cover for the assault force, but as they came within range of the archers, the rows of men flanking them raised shields over their heads to deflect anything the defenders might pitch upon them from the ramparts. The gong was heard once more, sounding a repetitive note through the darkness. In time with it, came a great thudding sound, echoing through the streets of the Golden City like a death knell

as the mighty tree was swung against the golden gates, again and again and again. Esperon believed they would hold for the time being, as they were sturdily built and Fordern's men had done a good job reinforcing them. Nevertheless, they could not indefinitely withstand the kind of battering they were now receiving.

While this attempt was being made to breach the City defences, other elements of the enemy forces were preparing a large number of ladders, just out of bowshot; presumably hoping to scale the walls where their serpent allies had failed. Gorin watched these activities intently, observing how they were dragging the ladders forward from the surrounding obscurity and then assigning teams of men to each one, in preparation for what would obviously be a massive assault.

He then felt Esperon tugging at his arm, turned and followed the King's uncomprehending stare. For, incredible as it seemed, there was a desperate struggle going on above the gate - on the very walls themselves. Meaning a number of Febling warriors had already managed to scale the ramparts!

Gorin could not understand how they could have got there, for none of the scaling ladders had been used so far; and then he saw what was happening in a moment of realisation that filled him with dread. For down from the blackness of the night sky swept the great form of a Denashur, wailing as ever its eternal song of abject damnation and bearing two armed soldiers in its huge claw-like feet! Several more of the creatures followed, each depositing a pair of Febling warriors on the wall before taking to the air again and disappearing into the darkness.

There were already twenty of the invaders battling for command of the ramparts above and to either side of the gates, with more being flown in every minute. If they should succeed in winning this vital position, then the men who were trying to

beat down the golden portals could work unhampered and be assured of support inside once they had made a breach. Esperon hurriedly gave his messenger a new command for Keranthil and then ran back with Gorin towards the thickest of the fighting, dodging the incessant attacks from the swooping Garrows on the way.

Anrol's men were battling valiantly with the new threat, doing their best to contain the Feblings in a small area, making it as difficult as possible for the airborne reinforcements to land. They also managed to push several of the intruders off the ramparts, sending them screaming towards the flagstones at the foot of the walls, twenty measures below. It was a hard and bloody fight, in which the defenders had a slight advantage, since they were able to attack the enemy on two fronts. However, their serious lack of experience in the use of arms was tragically demonstrated time and time again, when a false move left the way open for a Febling sword to plunge home.

As Esperon and Gorin approached the point where the struggle was fiercest, another Denashur came in low with its human cargo. As it was about to set them down, Gorin was clearly able to see the faces of the two soldiers held in its claws.

They were young men, no older than he was, clad in simple but effective armoured tunic and each carrying a wicked-looking short sword. By the light of one of the few remaining torches, they were able to get a good look at both the King and his companion who were preparing to deal with them as soon as they touched the surface of the wall. Yet they did not land. Instead, a strange expression came over their faces - one of puzzlement, rapidly changing to something darker and more evil. Then they were pulling energetically at the leathery legs of the Denashur bearing them, dropping one of the short swords in the process. In response to the command, the great winged

creature rose again, increasing the plaintiveness of its wails and carrying the two warriors back into the night towards the main body of the Febling army.

Gorin and Esperon looked after them, curious as to why they had held back, for the prospect of armed resistance had not so far deterred any others from landing. Gorin stepped forward and examined the sword dropped by the young Febling. He experienced a strange feeling in the pit of his stomach as he recognised the way the hilt was fashioned. It was in the form of a serpent's head; just like the hunting knife he had found in the Paradise Garden next to the slaughtered horse[48].

All these thoughts were instantaneously swept away by a frantic cry ahead and the sight of one of Anrol's men reeling from a deep sword cut in the arm inflicted by one of the Feblings. Gorin stepped forward and dealt the invader a mortal blow. Esperon smiled grimly and began to strike out on his own account, swiftly felling two of the enemy and gashing the leg of a third.

The men took great heart at seeing their King fighting alongside them and, for a while, prevailed against the Feblings. They slew several of those who had already gained a foothold and adopted a new tactic towards those being brought in by the continuous stream of Denashurs.

This consisted of hacking at the dangling legs of the warriors as they approached. In most cases, a crippling wound could be inflicted, putting the soldiers out of action before they even touched the ground. Since space was so limited, the assault was comparatively easy to control using this method. Many of the incoming Feblings thus found their end at the hands of the defenders, who then cast their bodies onto the heads of those still trying to batter their way into the City.

[48] See "Pre-Destination" Chapter VII – "The Silver River"

A yelled command pierced the complex sounds of battle, causing Esperon and Gorin to turn towards its source further along the wall. They saw Keranthil's men had just poured the contents of the remaining oil cauldrons over the ramparts' edge into the trench, forcing back the enemy's advance guard as it tried to deploy the scaling ladders. Several Feblings had been severely scalded by the shower of boiling liquid and were running wildly in all directions, adding their screams to the shrieks and moans of their airborne allies.

Keranthil shouted another order and a dozen of his men reached towards the fires used to heat the cauldrons, drawing out flaming brands. These they carried to the parapet, holding the burning branches aloft for an instant before tossing them out and down through the void, to land in the trench below.

The mass of oil ignited instantly, running along the length of the fosse like one of the snakes whose pyre it became. The flames leapt up towards the sky with a hungry roar, casting aside the darkness and even causing the defenders to stand back for fear of being singed. Their surprise at the efficacy of their firewall was nothing compared with the Feblings' reaction to it. The sudden blast of heat and above all the intense light caused those nearest the City walls to recoil and stagger back, beyond the searing brilliance of the conflagration. Those attempting to break down the gates were also caught completely unawares, with few of them managing to effect an escape. While those who did survive were unable to understand where the scorching flames and dazzling light were coming from. All they could do was wander blindly, until they stumbled into the inferno and were consumed along with everything else.

Even the Garrows were for a moment confounded by this new tactic in the defenders' strategy, suspending their attacks and regrouping their forces some distance from the City. It was

as if they were holding some kind of conference to decide what their next move should be.

The Denashurs, who hated light even more than the Feblings themselves, uttered deep-throated growls as the flames made their first appearance, before ramping up their cries in pitch as they retired to higher levels. Those that had been carrying Feblings when the fire flared up released their burdens into the inferno as they rose away from it. One was so crazed it could not even save itself, but went careering over the rooftops of the city wailing all the time, still bearing two warriors, until it flew into the slender pinnacle on top of the old Temple of Learning, knocking it senseless. As it slid down the roof of the building and fell to the ground, a group of Dalond's men were waiting below, swiftly severing the grotesque head with its huge sharp-toothed mouth from the ugly body. They did not have to concern themselves with the Feblings it had been carrying, for they had been killed instantaneously when the creature's weight fell upon them after striking the pinnacle.

For a moment, Esperon breathed more easily and, together with Gorin, surveyed the scene before him. It was lit by the lurid glare of the flames licking around the great walls of Zandernatis, presenting a strange, terrifyingly unreal spectacle. There was nothing to be seen but the evidence of destruction, devastation and bloodshed in all directions.

It was a seemingly terrible change of fortune for a City that had spent the three thousand years of its history largely devoted to the pursuit of delight and pleasure.

XI – Pre-Mythica Pictures press conference

At 9 a.m. on Tuesday 27, May, 2014, a Press Conference was held at the Savoy Hotel in the heart of London's West End by Pre-Mythica Pictures, a subsidiary of the Pre-Mythica Experience Corporation.

Journalists from the national, general entertainment and cinema magazine press, together with correspondents from the broadcast media were invited to attend what was billed as ***"A major announcement from the Pre-Mythica Experience Corporation and Pre-Mythica Pictures".***

Rumours had been rife over the previous ten days concerning the PMEC's recent founding of PMP, fuelled by the fact that the identity of the Corporation's Chairman had still not been made public. Despite the PMEC being a British company, this had led to some speculation that one of the Hollywood majors was in fact behind the enterprise.

An air of great expectancy hung over the large meeting room as, at 9 a.m. precisely, Richard Hugh Phillips, the Corporation's Executive Vice-President, made his entrance. He took his place at the centre of the long table facing the assembled journalists, photographers and camera crews, opening the Press Conference by introducing those taking part.

Pre-Mythica Pictures announces acquisition of film rights to "Zandernatis"

Media scramble at the Savoy

Journalists from the broadcast media, movie magazines and entertainment websites flocked to the Savoy Hotel last Tuesday for a Press Conference organised by Pre-Mythica Pictures.

This event was widely rumoured to be an official announcement concerning screen rights to the "Zandernatis" trilogy of books by Gordon Keirle-Smith based on ancient texts found in Antarctica in the 1960s. The first of these, "Pre-Destination" was published in April, with the other two volumes due for release within the year.

The PC was chaired by **Faith Harvey** from the PMP Production team, who began by confirming that Pre-Mythica Pictures had indeed negotiated rights to "Zandernatis".

Spectacular and uplifting

Also announcing she would be co-producing the films (together with **Nicolas Pittern**), Faith said the aim was to release the first of them "within three years". At this point, Director **Boyd Mastell** explained that all three episodes would be shot at the same time. Studio work would be carried out in London with all exteriors shot at "breathtaking" locations, although he declined from revealing exactly where.

Faith Harvey then added that the great amount of visual effects work needed in the films would be carried out by top CGI studio GraFlix.

"It's the only team capable of creating the kind of spectacular and uplifting images these films demand," she explained.

Investors' meeting

The PC was followed by a separate, well-attended meeting at the British Museum for potential investors in the Zandernatis Trilogy. By all accounts, "Zandernatis - the movie" is getting off to a very good start!

XII – Stars in the East

"Triumph at the price of loss,
Victory made bitter by the sacrifice.
This is the war to end them all, they say…
Ever knowing we must die,
So we may die again…

"History of the Second Heroic Age" Part II
(written in 3029).

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 2933-3064

Far away to the East, Gorin suddenly caught sight of a cluster of stars that had not been there moments before. He watched them for a few seconds and then directed Esperon's attention to the point near the horizon where they were burning with a steady fire, which even as they looked, was becoming brighter.

At last!

The King breathed a sigh of relief. Taking advantage of a temporary lull in the din of battle, he set about issuing new directives to his men. In the City below, Fordern and Werlyn were charged with clearing the streets from the serpent menace, exterminating as many as possible before the enemy massed itself for another attack.

Meanwhile, Keranthil and his men were instructed to keep the fire in the trench burning as long as they could. Provided it continued to give out light and heat, it was doubtful if the Feblings would be able to mount a concerted assault. Not from

the northern or eastern sides in any case, and they had little time now to move all the way round to the South.

Having given his commands, the King looked to the East once again, where the new stars had already become the brightest objects in the sky; showing themselves to be not just a few but several score in number. Like a whole galaxy rushing towards the City at tremendous speed.

Sooner than he had expected, Esperon heard the raucous cries of the Garrows intensifying again as they gathered over the Palace Square, swooping down moments later to harass the men searching for serpents still at large. Whether this was a prelude to some new Febling offensive, or a bid to maintain pressure inside the City walls, was never clear - for the renewed attacks did not last very long.

Two or three minutes after their reengagement, the Garrows were rising into the air again, leaving the defenders on the ground unmolested. They had more urgent work to do, for a new foe was approaching, heralded by distant music contrasting violently with their own harsh, discordant voices.

Seconds later, the first of the Aerauman chariots swept low over the City, the wondrous song of the Valyons instilling new vigour into the battle-weary men of Zandernatis.

Although none of them had ever seen, or heard, any such thing before, somehow they all sensed it had come to aid them in their struggle against the dark forces drawn up outside the walls. Every man was transfixed, staring intently at the sky as, one after another, the flying craft were guided round to form a vast arc, soon to be completed in a perfect circle.

Like a diadem of bolides, the formation turned above the City, casting a strange, unearthly glow upon the battleground beneath. It revealed a host of things the darkness had concealed;

many of them tragedies, alien to the order of Paradise as conceived by those now returning to rediscover it.

To accompany the great, resplendent crown of light majestically revolving over Zandernatis, there rose a new and glorious melody from the chanting Valyons. It built up to ecstatic heights making every heart throb with the same exhilarating rhythm, at peace and confident of the triumph now assured. For Esperon, it rang as the fulfilment of an impossible dream; the culmination of events destined to extend beyond his time, long after the Golden City and its people had ceased to be. For henceforth, with this coming, not only was their civilisation and way of life destined to undergo fundamental change, but an entire worldview was set to evolve.

The Aerauman return

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 3065-3133

The Feblings' allies were completely taken by surprise at the arrival of the winged forces from Pardylis and undecided as to how they should respond. The odds of success were clearly no longer in their favour. As for the warriors, they were terrified by the appearance of the shining sky-craft, large numbers breaking ranks and making off into the protective shade of the trees as fast as they could go. Many believed the Aerauman forces must be agents of Divine Retribution, visited upon them for their part in the attempted overthrow of the Paradise state.

The evil architects of this offensive were not so easily dissuaded, however. The Denashurs found the chariots' radiance too disturbing, initially withdrawing to higher levels from where they could oversee the development of events. Under the present circumstances, only the Garrows were in a position to bring victory back within the grasp of the dark forces. Having also risen high above the City upon first

becoming aware of the new presence, they now flew out and down, clear of the chariot ring and the walls. They then swarmed back towards Zandernatis, keeping close to the ground until just before coming to the line of fortifications they shot skyward, bringing them up underneath the airborne procession. At this point, they all let out a series of the most fiendish screams they could muster, taking the Valyons and their winged masters completely unawares.

The Garrows' cries sounded base and obscene as they cut into the flying steeds' beauteous song. By virtue of their very incompatibility, disruptions in flight occurred similar to those Esperon and Gorin had experienced on their return journey to the City. This forced several teams of Valyons to leave the circular formation while the charioteers fought to regain control of their lurching craft. With the birds' piercing shrieks repeatedly interrupting the buoyant song, the remaining winged horses became practically unmanageable. The cries even threatened to bring down large numbers of the Sky-Force that had seemed invincible only moments before.

Two or three chariots had to make very rough forced landings outside the City, fortunately without any harm coming to their occupants or the steeds, although the chariots themselves suffered considerable damage. After the initial onslaught of disruptive sound, the rest of the aerial host managed to reorganise itself quite swiftly, thanks to the chariot pilots' superlative skill. Nevertheless, they could not be certain of maintaining control in the event of a more sustained attack.

With victory suddenly appearing within reach again, the Garrows renewed their efforts to destroy the Valyons' melodic unison with their discord. This time they succeeded in bringing down two more chariots, obliging the rest of the Sky-Force to

seek temporary refuge at a greater height while deciding on their next move.

Aelaguel and Daen conferred at some length with the other chariot captains on ways of combating the evil creatures without exposing their steeds to undue risk.

Drastic measures were called for, as the situation would not improve with time. Finally, a strategy was adopted and some thirty chariots immediately separated themselves from the main force and headed off in a southerly direction, leaving the others to find greater safety at an even higher altitude. This move also managed to dislodge the Denashurs from their position over the City, sending them into rapid retreat towards the darkness above the forest as soon as they saw the chariot force climbing towards them.

In the meantime, Daen and Aelaguel, at the head of the breakaway company, sped off until they were almost lost to sight by those intently watching their movements from the ramparts of Zandernatis. Then, cloaked by distance, they put the plan into action; unfurling their gossamer nets, testing once more the balance of their keen edged swords and, above all, whispering special words of encouragement to their fabulous Valyons.

Neither Gorin nor Esperon could understand what was happening when they saw the bright points of light staying so high above them. They realised the Garrows presented a very real danger, but could not imagine them being an insurmountable obstacle for the Aerauma! Also feeling uneasy, many of the defenders began wondering when the chariot force would make a more decisive move. The Garrows already looked like they were massing for another attack on the City!

The Denashurs were stealing back as well, their mournful cries revealing them to be approaching as close as they dared, ready to play their part again as soon as the light from the burning trench was low enough. For despite the efforts of Keranthil's men, it was now showing signs of dying down, particularly close to the portals. Esperon even feared they might soon have to contend with Febling warriors brought in by the giant bats again.

He did not of course realise the enemy army had been thoroughly demoralised by the appearance of the Aerauman force in the sky. As a result, they were momentarily much too frightened and disorganised to take advantage of any situation, no matter how much it might seem to have swung back into their favour.

Suddenly, with a united cry sounding uncomfortably like one of mocking triumph, the black Garrows struck again, flying so close to one another they appeared to be one huge feathered ball, descending on the area where the greatest serpent clearing operation was underway. At the same time, as they were attempting to claw and maim every man in sight, watchful eyes on the battlements observed thirty stars in the South suddenly begin to grow brighter.

Spread widely apart, the chariots sped towards the City, a sword in the hand of every charioteer. Stretched out between their craft, a huge expanse of woven mesh weaved and billowed in the wind of their motion, catching starlight on its silver threads.

They flew low to avoid detection, as close to the ground as they dared and as fast as they knew how, for without the element of surprise they would be lost. All thirty sets of reins were rippling to the same rhythm, the relentless, headlong approach skilfully controlled by the chariot pilots who never

ceased urging their Valyons to intensify their magical chant. They sped forward with increasing swiftness until the walls of Zandernatis loomed ahead and it seemed as if the whole force must go crashing into them.

Imitating the Garrows' earlier manoeuvre, the rhythms were changed at the last possible moment and the Valyons' heads pulled up, allowing the chariots to clear the city perimeter with less than a measure to spare. Over the gabled rooftops and ornate edifices they came, their song as strong as it had ever been and their billowing nets spanning the sky in readiness to ensnare whatever they encountered.

The Garrows heard the strains of the flying hymn too late, for their rasping cacophony drowned out everything else. Before they had time to realise what was happening, there was light all about them and a mighty chorus, unified and strong, surging onwards in the wave of sound that, for one vital instant, stilled their ghoulish clamour.

Then, as they rose into the midst of the chariot force, they felt themselves becoming entangled in something invisible, hampering their movements, imprisoning them, tearing at their feathers and pulling them inexorably together.

The birds' shrieks of pain and surprise were terrible to hear and for a moment, the charioteers feared it might disrupt the all-important song of their steeds. Yet so perfect was their control and so deftly did they use their reins, that the Valyons were encouraged to sing with even greater vigour; thereby increasing their speed and maintaining their concentration.

The net was now bulging with thousands of feathered bodies, so inextricably bound together the creatures' frantic efforts to escape were only succeeding in adding to the confusion. Some tried to avoid being caught in the trap by flying out towards the furthest extremity of the chariot line. Only to

find the Valyons were too quick for them as they raced forward, creating a huge horseshoe formation from which the panicking Garrows could not escape.

The chariots in the centre then lessened their speed while the outriders sped round to meet each other. This enabled them to form a great circle around the struggling, helpless birds, now pecking and clawing one another in their desperation.

More nets were cast over them, ensuring none would be able to get away and the whole formation rose into the sky, bearing its screeching, cawing burden towards the City limits. However the chariot commanders kept control of their winged teams may never be known, for under those circumstances, such a feat almost belonged to the realm of miracles. Daen had picked his finest teams and the most even tempered of all the winged steeds, but even he was surprised none of them had faltered throughout the course of the operation.

Swiftness was now essential, for the element of surprise had to be fully exploited; not only to benefit from the birds' incomprehension, but also to minimise the chances of there being any lack of coordination in the trap.

Once the circular formation and its panic-stricken burden had passed over the northern wall, the chariots turned, swept down and released the nets, plunging the Garrows into a still-burning section of the trench. Sparks and embers flew high into the air as the whole weight of the imprisoned birds, still vainly struggling to break free from their silver-threaded bane, were engulfed by the devouring flames.

One final cry then came from the evil, hideous flock; a cry of collective death, sounding like all the dammed of hell, seared into silence in the same white-hot second.

Vanquishing the Denashurs

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 3134-3220

Aelaguel and Daen turned their chariot skywards to lead the others away from the sudden, unnatural silence following the destruction of the Garrows. In looking back towards the ugly scene, they saw billows of thick, heavy smoke were beginning to rise from the dead birds' charring carcasses, obscuring the loathsome pyre from view.

A pungent odour hung in the air, stinging the nostrils and bringing water to the eyes; even the Valyons were affected. To escape this discomfort, the thirty chariots circled to gain more altitude before heading off to join the main force.

Aelaguel then suddenly realised the clouds of black smoke coming from the trench were providing welcome darkness and cover for the only remaining, and perhaps most deadly, of the Feblings' allies; the Denashurs. He could dimly make out a whole group of them flying around the ramparts above the main portal. It was difficult to determine how many there were, but certainly more than could be handled by the men defending the position. Daen brought the team of winged horses round and began speeding down again, the other chariots following closely behind.

As they came in low over the City wall, most of the great leathery-winged creatures flew away from them, their howling voices diminishing as they made off into the darkness as fast as they could. They were not pursued, for several remained behind, too intent upon attacking the one man still standing on the wall, valiantly defending himself, to notice the oncoming threat.

Aelaguel immediately saw it was Esperon, and by the look of him, he would not be able to fend off his assailants much longer. He was clearly exhausted and there were many more

Denashurs than he could possibly cope with alone. Their wailing cries, terrifying though they were, seemed to have no marked effect upon the Valyons, perhaps because it was a more constant sound, unlike the jarring shrieks of the Garrows.

Daen was thus able to bring the chariot very close to the parapet above the gate where Esperon was still bravely holding his own. Yet he was so sorely pressed, and his attackers so close to overwhelming their prey, that even the approach of the radiant source of light failed to have its usual effect upon the creatures.

Under these circumstances, Aelaguel decided there was only one valid option. So, while Daen held the chariot within easy distance of the battlements, it only took the Aerauman a few moments to fly to Esperon's side; sword in hand weaving and cutting through the air all the way down.

The young King looked greatly relieved when he saw help arriving. He summoned his remaining energies and managed to wound one of the Denashurs passing above him severely, causing it to veer and plunge to earth just beyond the gate. The respite was brief, for more were coming in its wake and there were others operating inside the City, preventing Anrol's men from coming to Esperon's rescue. The foul beasts certainly seemed to be aware of his importance and were determined to reach him, no matter how many of them died in the attempt.

It soon became obvious that even with the help of Aelaguel's sword, Esperon could not continue for long; his strength was ebbing away with the effort of the life-and-death struggle and there was no sign of his adversaries letting up the pressure of their attacks. In one movement, his winged ally slid an arm about the King's waist, grasped him firmly and rose above the ramparts, flying as swiftly as possible towards the chariot circling above.

Once the Denashurs realised their prey was being spirited away, they became consumed with fury, their lamenting cries rising to a fever pitch as they came in hot pursuit.

Their powerful wings enabled the bulldog bats to overtake the fleeing pair with ease, flying above them and creating a powerful downdraught to hamper their flight. A second later, one of the beasts swept down, its sharp talons tearing into Aelaguel's upper wing muscles, almost causing the fugitives to fall from the sky. Defensive sword thrusts proved impossible, for the creature was on top of them and it was difficult for the Aerauman to move freely while holding Esperon tightly.

More Denashurs swept in to the attack, one attaching itself to Aelaguel's legs, while another tried to impede the wings even more, clinging onto them like a dead weight. Esperon could smell their putrid breath as they circled about him and his rescuer, also sensing the Aerauman was beginning to weaken in the face of their merciless onslaught.

Another Denashur flew up beneath them and succeeded in digging its clawed feet into the King's arm, thrusting its shaggy, beady-eyed face towards his, the disproportionately large mouth gaping wide open to reveal a set of needle sharp teeth. Esperon closed his eyes, waiting for the creature to strike. But it did not. Instead, he heard the chant of Valyons passing very near, felt the pain in his arm lessening as the grip relaxed and the Denashur finally tumbled away, mortally wounded by Daen's sword.

Upon seeing Aelaguel's plight, the Chariot Captain had brought the craft around behind them, from where he was now engaged in cutting away the remaining assailants. The close proximity of the light-emitting sky vehicle was a great help in this operation, for it made the Denashurs almost blind to what was happening until it was too late.

Once the bats had been dealt with, Aelaguel and Esperon were helped into the chariot that then rose away from the walls to turn high above the glowing City. There it met up with the others, their crews having barely had time to realise what was going on before it was all over.

Sitting on the floor of the chariot, Esperon was breathing heavily, exhausted and suffering considerable discomfort from the wound in his arm made by the Denashur's talons. Aelaguel lent over and put a comforting hand on the King's shoulder.

"We are here, Esperon," said the Aerauman reassuringly. "Here at last, and the battle must almost be done by now."

"Done for my people perhaps," replied the King, with a trembling voice. "But not for me."

"Not for you? Why not?"

"Because they've taken Gorin. Just before you reached me. It was while you were all climbing away from the trench after finishing off the Garrows. The smoke came between the light and us. We'd been together on top of the gate, just making sure they didn't try to bring in any more Feblings. Then the Denashurs came, I don't know where from, and they tried to take both of us. Perhaps I saw them half a second before Gorin did, but I couldn't do anything. They came up from behind and took him in their claws. He tried to use his sword but another tore it from him. I couldn't see any more because they were all around me as well…"

Aelaguel's expression became grave at this news, making no comment for some moments before finally asking, "So you think he's been taken prisoner?"

"He must have been. The one carrying him made off towards the West, instead of dropping him into the trench as I feared it would once he was disarmed. They must have had a

special reason for wanting him, because no one else was carried off in such a way."

"A most unfortunate development."

"It's more than unfortunate, Aelaguel. In the short time since we met, I've come to respect Gorin very much. And regard him as a rare and true friend. What's more, he fought very bravely tonight, his example encouraging many who might otherwise have lost their nerve in the face of such a fierce attack. He also saved me from being bitten by one of the serpents when they started hurling them at us. For that alone I will not rest until I know what has become of him. Quite apart from the debt we all owe him for making my return here and your coming possible. We must go after him."

"Under present circumstances, I fear it would not be the most practical course of action to adopt, Esperon."

"What? It's the least we can do."

"We must choose the right opportunity," explained Aelaguel. "Because although the Feblings may be largely defeated, they are by no means without strength. For us to venture out into land occupied by them at night, when they have most of the advantages, would be unwise. Furthermore, we would not want them to be frightened into taking any hasty action endangering Gorin's life. There's no knowing what they might do if they suddenly see our chariots coming after them. We cannot mount any kind of rescue mission until after sunrise. Besides which, your place is with your people until things have been organised. And the fighting isn't over yet."

Esperon lapsed into a resigned silence, knowing Aelaguel was right. He struggled to his feet and looked out over the side of the chariot towards Zandernatis, appearing deceptively peaceful from such a great height, almost as if nothing out of the ordinary had taken place. Only the deep red glow along the foot

of the walls, where the last tongues of flame were still licking the blackened stones, betrayed anything of the momentous events that had taken place in the course of the night.

As they circled lower, the bodies of several fallen Feblings could be distinguished near the gates and close to the earthworks. Meanwhile, in the Palace Square and in all the public places, groups of men led by Werlyn and Fordern were continuing to hunt down any serpents they had so far failed to detect.

Glancing up, Esperon saw the main chariot force now engaged in combat with the few remaining Denashurs, hounding them across the sky until they were sufficiently exhausted to be overcome. Their continuous wail of lamentation was then punctuated by high-pitched screams of dying agony as they were impaled upon the Aeraumen's silver swords, cries cut short by their fall to earth and the silence of their oblivion.

As they had sown hatred and jealousy, so they received the wages of their evil counsel in the only manner they could understand; the death they wished on others.

After the storm of war

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 3221-3251

For the second time that day, Daen landed in the great Square. The chariot finally came to a halt not far from where a group of Fordern's men were finishing the work of clearing away Garrow and serpent carcasses, as well as making sure none of the slithering creatures were still at large in the vicinity.

When Esperon stepped down from the sky-craft, a great cheer of greeting went up from his men, but he barely had any spirit to respond, for his heart was heavy and he was impatient to go in search of Gorin. He therefore only spoke briefly to those who had fought and toiled with such courage, leaving them to

their tasks and to their wonderment at the sight of the Valyon drawn sky-chariots and their winged occupants.

Once more on the ramparts of the city, Esperon looked out over the scene of battle with Aelaguel at his side. High above them, the cries of the Denashurs were becoming more and more indistinct as the main Sky-Force pursued them out over the dark fastnesses of the northern forests.

At a lower altitude, a small group of craft was searching for signs of the route taken by the retreating army. Very little could be determined before daybreak however, as the vanquished, light-shy warriors were unlikely to reveal their position at night. And even if they did, this information had little strategic importance now, given recent events.

The awe-inspiring sight of the Aerauman arrival had already been more than enough for the Feblings, and when they saw how the Sky-Force dealt with the Garrows and Denashurs, their military ambitions had rapidly melted away. All that remained was one single desire; to regain their own territory as fast as possible before they too met their nemesis at the hands of the Winged Gods.

Grey fingers of dawn showed far off in the East as the Aeraumen and the sorrow-filled King contemplated Zandernatis. With the arrival of day, the few remaining Denashurs fled in terror back to the darkness of their caverns, somewhere in the distant mountains. The brightening sky also made the search for any surviving serpents much easier, for they too were afraid of daylight and had little spirit to attack in the open.

The battle was finally over and Paradise had prevailed.

As the golden glory spread across the heavens, pushing back the enveloping veil of night, Zandernatis was revealed in the unlovely but triumphant aftermath of bitter conflict. An age

had ended, and a new one was beginning as the host of shining chariots came sweeping in out of the morning sky. The Valyons' chant sounded more harmonious and pure than it had ever been, thrilling the souls of all who heard it and giving them hope for a perfection they never could have dreamt of hitherto.

As the airborne song echoed through the streets in that stupendous moment, so the winged Aerauma smiled serenely, guiding their air-stepping Valyons down to Zandernatis. The resplendent light of dawn was shining in their eyes and they were joyous in their sight of it, exultant to return to this great and Golden City, fruit of loving toil and home to these their children.

XIII – Movie News Profiles

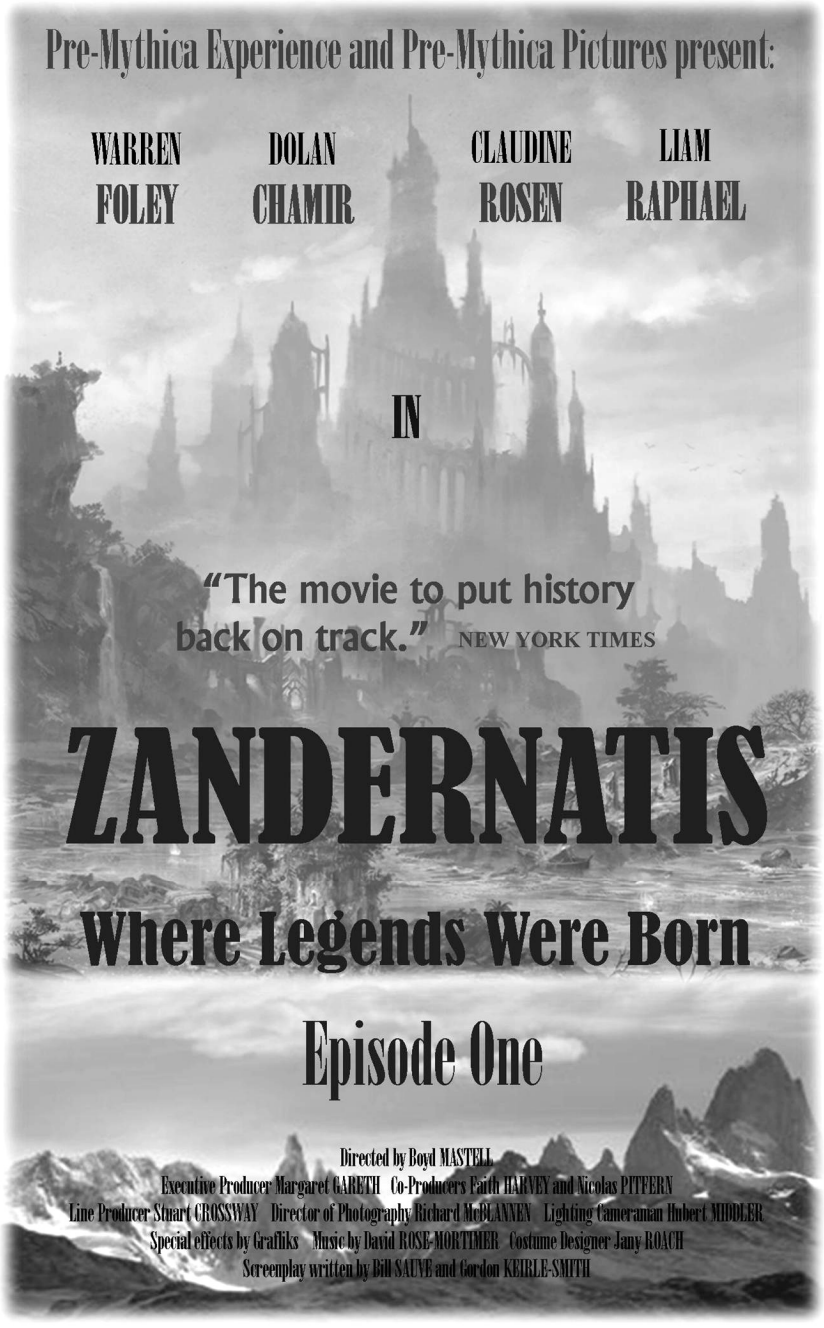
Professor Gregson**, who of course played a key role in bringing "The Zandernatis Trinity" into the public arena, was recently interviewed by a leading US film magazine which, to respect copyright restrictions, we shall call **"Movie News International".

*The journalist, **Claire Carling**, wanted to have the Professor's reaction to news that a trilogy based on the "Zandernatis" books was currently in pre-production at **Pre-Mythica Pictures**. It is particularly interesting to read this article if we bear in mind the BBC2 interview with Professor Harkwood dating from 1976 which was published in "Destination" (Chapter IX). At that time, Harkwood accused Professor Gregson of, "turning these remarkable records into a work of cheap fantasy fiction, pandering to the most undiscriminating readership".*

In the present interview, Professor Gregson protests against the approach the PMP team is said to be adopting. He accuses them of being "mainly interested in box-office returns" at the expense of "raising awareness above a mere storyline" and "making this knowledge part of humanity's historical heritage".

Implying he might be able to "prevent shooting" if his wishes are not taken into account, this stance looks like a re-run of Harkwood's vehement intolerance in 1976.

Or does it? Read on, and decide for yourself…


Pre-Mythica Experience and Pre-Mythica Pictures present:
WARREN FOLEY
DOLAN CHAMIR
CLAUDINE ROSEN
LIAM RAPHAEL
IN
"The movie to put history back on track." NEW YORK TIMES
ZANDERNATIS
Where Legends Were Born
Episode One
Directed by Boyd MASTELL
Executive Producer Margaret GARETH Co-Producers Faith HARVEY and Nicolas PITFERN
Line Producer Stuart CROSSWAY Director of Photography Richard McBLANNEN Lighting Cameraman Hubert MIDDLER
Special effects by Grafiks Music by David ROSE-MORTIMER Costume Designer Jany ROACH
Screenplay written by Bill SAUVE and Gordon KEIRLE-SMITH

MOVIE NEWS PROFILES

"Zandernatis" on the big screen?

Claire Carling quizzes Professor Gregson

Claire Carling: Professor Gregson, perhaps we should first remind readers that you were a member of the Editorial Committee working on the famous Haakon Urn manuscripts on which the "Zandernatis" books have been based.

James Gregson: That is correct. We were finally able to start publishing this material last year, over fifty years since the texts were discovered in Antarctica.

CC: As I understand it, you were unable to publish this material any earlier due to opposition from the Committee Chairman.

JG: Indeed. The late Professor Harkwood opposed any idea of making it public. He even faked a robbery to prevent publication going ahead.

CC: Quite. But you believe it is vital for information about this discovery to be made available to everyone.

JG: Absolutely. It is knowledge that should be part of humanity's historical heritage.

CC: But the "Zandernatis" books do more than just tell the story in the *"Song of Gorin"*. You've also added all kinds of other material.

JG: We have. Because without it, people might be lulled into believing it's just another "fantasy epic". Aimed at "*Lord of the Rings*" fans hungry for more made-up legends...

CC: But it isn't.

JG: Of course it isn't! The additional material in the "Zandernatis" books proves the authenticity of "*The Song*". Further backed by all the reports of work underway by other highly respected researchers such as Dr Kittner at the PLMRI, Henry Sutcliff, Dr. Neaker, Pierre-Louis Dutoit...

CC: And now there's talk of making a film - or rather a trilogy of films - based on "Zandernatis".

JG: There's talk of it, yes.

CC: I believe you're not very keen on the idea.

JG: Not at all. In its present form.

CC: But surely this would bring news of the discovery to a global audience. Margaret Gareth at Pre-Mythica Pictures seems to think it would make an amazingly spectacular movie...

"We're confident this is going to be a really stunning movie...

...our VFX team partners are just bursting with awesome ideas..."

Margaret Gareth, Executive Producer, Pre-Mythica Pictures

JG: No doubt. I'm sure the special effects people would have a field day. But once again, we're interested in doing rather more than a remake of "*The Hobbit...*"

CC: Why should it be that?

JG: Because they don't want to make a film of "Zandernatis". They only want to film "*The Song*".

CC: You mean...?

JG: *"The Song of Gorin"*. Period. Nothing about finding the urns in 1962. Nothing about Past Life Research. Nothing about the implications for our lives today..."

CC: Could this delay the shooting?

JG: It could do more than delay the shooting. It might even prevent it.

Photo credit: Klaus Wissmann

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"We must reveal the context and broader implications...

So people can see this is a real story based on true historical facts."

Professor J. Gregson

MOVIE NEWS PROFILES - "Zandernatis" on the big screen?

CC: So how exactly would you like to see the film adapted, then? Surely Gorin's awakening and quest has more big screen potential than the background material, even if it is fascinating...

JG: Perhaps it has. But we must reveal the context and broader implications. For example, the film should open with the Haakon Urns being found... So people can see this is a real story based on true historical facts.

CC: What do the film-makers say? Margaret Gareth, the Executive Producer, for example.

JG: She's the one most against the idea of anything that isn't in *"The Song of Gorin"*. She doesn't want to *"confuse audiences by diluting the power of the narrative"* as she puts it.

CC: How do the others in the team feel about that?

JG: They're not so categorical. But Margaret Gareth is more interested in box-office returns than the unique opportunity a film like this would have to start raising awareness above and beyond a mere storyline...

CC: So what do they say?

JG: The co-producers can see my point of view. They also think the film should open in Antarctica showing Phillip McFarrel actually discovering the Urns deep in the crevasse...

CC: Do you think there will be a compromise?

JG: I very much hope so. Although in fact, when it comes down to it, there's only one person who really counts.

CC: Who's that?

JG: The Chairman of the Pre-Mythica Experience Corporation, which owns Pre-Mythica Pictures.

CC: Of course. The big mystery! And there's still no clue as to who he - or she - might be?

JG: For some reason it's a very closely guarded secret. Obviously someone who prefers to pull the strings from behind the scenes...

CC: All very intriguing... Perhaps we'll know one day.

JG: I'm sure we shall. Maybe sooner than most of us think.

CC: Would you still oppose the project if this... Chairperson... decided to follow the Gareth line?

JG: I would. Although I'm realistic enough to realise that I only have moral authority on this issue. The Chairperson's decision is likely to be final. I just hope it's the right one...

CC: We all do. Thank you, Professor Gregson, for your contribution to this month's Movie News Profiles.

HOTSPOT NEWS

Liam Raphael tipped for the role of Gorin in upcoming 1st PMP "Zandernatis" movie

Reliable sources suggest that virtually unknown Anglo-French actor Liam Raphael has been approached to star in PMP's forthcoming movie "Zandernatis" Episode One. Said to be the first in a trilogy due for release over three years.

LOCATION... LOCATION... LOCATION...

There is much speculation as to where the Pre-Mythica Pictures epic trilogy "Zandernatis" will be filmed.

Director of Photography **Richard McBlannen** lets us in on the secret...

"We obviously have to try and find locations with dramatic landscapes that look convincingly like pre-glacial Antarctica. We thought about New Zealand, but LOTR got there first...

I can reveal that we are now leaning towards southern Chile where the landscape is dramatic, wild and untamed... With several likely sites for the Golden City - and even more for Pardylis!"

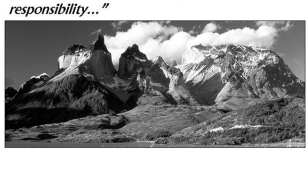
William Sauve (co-screen writer) adds:

"We believe that shooting in locations that have proven links with descendants of the ancient Antarctic peoples will add a unique additional touch of authenticity to this film. In fact, throughout, this aspect of the entire story and its background have been our main priority."

Boyd Mastell (the film's director) states his viewpoint:

"We believe this film is going to break new ground. For not only is it the first time any film has been made based on ancient documentation of this kind, but also the first time a film has ever been shot in settings identified as authentic by means of past memory regression.

"I am of course referring to the research carried out by Dr. Kittner and his PLMRI team in Puerto Arenas. It gives the film a whole new level of meaning and all of us involved in it a much greater sense of history and responsibility..."



XIV – The Aftermath

"The enlightened peace,
wherein we are truly
worthy of its wonder."

King Esperon I
(The "Dawning Speech" 3024).

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 3252-3329

A feeling of great rejoicing came over the Golden City of Zandernatis with the defeat of the Feblings and their evil allies. So used to celebration, the people were now prepared to mark this turning point in their history with the greatest feast they had ever known; an act of solemnisation in recognition of the rights they had won to perpetuate their state of Paradise. Sadness fell on those whose kin had been slain in the course of the fighting, but such warriors soon became regarded as heroes and martyrs, making it an honour to have had one as a husband, son or brother. A sentiment soon transformed into excitement and anticipation as the bereaved looked forward to welcoming the fallen back in the next generation.

Above all, the advent of the winged saviours from Pardylis was an aspect of the victory calling for a special kind of jubilation. Thus, no sooner were the vestiges of battle swept away and all the wounded treated, than preparations began for a public banquet and dance in the Great Square before the Palace.

According to convention, the ruling King was always in charge of organising the City's major festivities. However, Esperon found he had little heart for such relatively trivial matters with the abduction of Gorin still weighing heavily on his mind. Despite this, he did everything to conceal his true feelings from all those around him, apart from Aelaguel, who fully understood his state of mind.

On another level, he was keenly aware this was the finest hour in the City's long history. Zandernatis had been reborn in that night of fighting and he sensed a fresh vigour coursing through the whole population. The young King also realised he was now in a position to take advantage of this new mood by instilling direction and purpose into the lives of those he led. Furthermore, the presence of the Aerauma was providing an amazing stimulus to achieving this goal. They were opening people's minds to an outside world ignored for so long and to the unbounded possibilities a new way of life would bring.

Affairs of state were thus exciting and held hope for a future such as no one had known for many hundreds of years. Yet Gorin's fate hung over the King's head like a dark, threatening thunderhead in an otherwise cloudless sky, dulling his appreciation of the new age and plunging him into the depths of melancholy.

When the last of the ministers responsible for arranging the celebration banquet had left, Esperon went to the window of the audience room and looked out towards the northern wall and the dark mass of trees beyond. There was nothing very remarkable to see there now; the woods that had sheltered the invading army looked much as they ever had, lush and green. As for the ramparts, the only signs of anything out of the ordinary having happened there were the blackened torch stumps and the remains of Keranthil's fires, framed by bare

timbers. The hard-pressed cooks had already arranged for the cauldrons to be taken back to the Palace kitchens where they were needed for the banquet.

Down in the Square, other teams of men were setting up rows of long tables and benches in readiness for the feast. Glancing up at the sun, already high in the sky and climbing towards its zenith, Esperon wondered what chance there might be of Gorin being there to see it set. He, above all others, deserved a place of honour in the forthcoming revels due to begin at dusk. There must surely still be time to fly after the retreating Feblings in an attempt to find out what had become of him?

He was about to call one of his courtiers with the intention of having a message conveyed to Aelaguel, when the door opened and Hexard entered, looking weary, his black robe crumpled and his fine, white hair in disarray.

"Hexard, where have you been?" demanded Esperon. "We've seen nothing of you since before the battle."

"I was with Pagdin's men, helping with the treatment of the wounded. Many of them were in need of salves and herbal potions, and of course there were the snakebites…"

"You couldn't do very much for those who were bitten could you?"

"Not unless they could be brought to us within a few minutes," the old alchemist answered, shaking his head sadly. "As the venom made them so violent, it was by no means easy to administer the antidote. But we did manage to save three men, bitten in the street not far from where I was working."

"Do we know how many men were lost altogether?" the King asked, anxiously.

"Perhaps seven score, but we cannot yet be certain. It is sad to think those who met transition in this way cannot join us in

our celebrations. For we have seen the prophecies fulfilled today and henceforth can go forward to a new era. One which shall see the highest aspirations any of us have ever known."

"Indeed," said Esperon, nodding thoughtfully. "But tell me Hexard, you know the prophecies so well. Do they say what becomes of the one sent out on the mission to bring the King's son back from his quest?"

"I believe not; at least there is no specific reference to what becomes of him. But I think he would be expected to stay in Zandernatis as an honoured citizen, as indeed he deserves high recognition for what he achieved in our name. However, Gorin must decide that for himself. He might of course wish to return from whence he came. Although I doubt it."

"For the moment, I'm afraid Gorin is not in a position to decide anything," said the King in a faltering voice. "Because last night, during the final moments of the battle, he was carried off by one of the Denashurs. There were several of them attacking us and they tried to capture me as well, but two of the Aeraumen came to my rescue. If only they could have come sooner..."

Hexard's face clouded upon hearing the news of Gorin's abduction. "That is indeed not good. If he is in Febling hands now we should prepare ourselves for the worst; I fear greatly for him. They will treat him harshly and we may never know exactly how or where he met his end."

"Don't Hexard. Please. Not while there is still hope of rescuing him. I only wish I could understand why they chose to take him in particular. After all, he was indistinguishable from any other soldier on the ramparts; yet as far as I know, he was the only prisoner to be taken alive."

"They must have recognised him."

"How could they know his part in all of this?"

Before Hexard could reply, their discussion was interrupted by the arrival of Aelaguel, back from supervising the tending of the Valyons. They were now peacefully grazing just beyond the City walls, while the charioteers began to mingle with the men and women of Zandernatis. The presence of the winged newcomers was a source of great wonder for everyone and, at first, they were a little hesitant in making contact with those they regarded as saviours.

Meanwhile, for the Aerauma, participating once more in the activities of the Golden City brought back many fond memories, gladdening their hearts to see the new happiness and security they had been able to bring to the descendants of their Aerling offspring. It was therefore not very long before Aeraumen and Zandernations were working together on preparations for the evening's celebrations with common purpose.

However, celebration was no longer everything. Upon entering the room, Aelaguel knew immediately what Hexard and the King were discussing.

"The first scouts have just returned," the Aerauman announced.

"What did they find?"

"The Febling army appears to be on the run. And instead of following the roads they cleared for their advance, they have taken the most direct route back to the Greywoods.

"This meant they had to go through some of the thickest parts of the Garden Forest. As far as we can determine, they are already beyond the northern limits of Paradise. Although it is day, they are still running blindly on, keeping to whatever shade they can find and only going over open ground if they have to.

"Therefore, I think we can be certain they will not seek to do us, or the City, any further harm. In any case, now the evil

influence of their allies has been destroyed, they will have no more incitement or desire to attack again."

"Was there any sign of Gorin?" asked the King, anxiously.

"None of the scouts reported seeing any prisoners, but they were flying very fast and it would have been difficult for them to be sure."

"Then we must go and search for him. Unless..."

"Unless what?"

"Could they have killed him and left his body behind because they were unable to take him with them?"

"There was certainly no sign of him between the City walls and the tree-line," replied Aelaguel. "We have been over every measure of the ground and only came across Feblings slain in battle, plus the various assault devices they left behind."

"But they may have left him in the woods, somewhere further on."

"You can only know that," said Hexard, "by following them. One thing at least is certain; if you do not find him then you may be sure he is still alive, for his captors would have no interest in carrying a dead body with them."

"True. We will know one way or the other. Come Hexard; wish us luck in our search for him."

"Hexard?" Aelaguel looked directly at the old man in the room with Esperon for the first time. The Aerauman slowly walked towards him, hands outstretched and smiling tenderly with eyes radiating the light of understanding. "So, we meet at last. I wondered if we ever would."

Hexard recognised the winged figure before him at once, gazing into those clear, steady eyes without saying anything for several moments. Both of them were beings of great age and understanding, having attained much wisdom throughout the course of their evolution. Yet within each, there was an

irrepressible sentiment all the knowledge and enlightenment in the world could not entirely suppress. Hexard took Aelaguel's two hands in his own and finally said, simply, "It is good we are able to see each other in the flesh after so many years of contact on other planes."

"And though we may know each other's' minds, there is, in this act, the proof of our success. It has all come to pass."

"Indeed it has. Now Aelaguel, go with Esperon and seek the one who transformed the abstract prophecies into the reality of today. Go and search for Gorin; for he has need of us now, just as we needed him."

Aelaguel nodded and left the room with Esperon following behind. Hexard watched them go and sank slowly into a chair, an unaccustomed dampness glistening in the corners of his eyes.

Into the North

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 3330-3448

Their anxiety mounting with every second's delay, Aelaguel and the King set off immediately, only stopping briefly as they crossed the Square to speak with the men setting up the banqueting tables. As they approached the chariot and team of Valyons on the far side, Daen, who had been making the sky-craft ready for flight, turned to greet them.

"All is prepared," announced the Captain. "We can leave at once. With only one chariot, there is less danger of alarming the Feblings as we did this morning. There were ten of us, and they probably thought we were coming to wipe them out as we did the Denashurs last night."

"We knew you would want to set out as soon as we had the scouts' reports," explained Aelaguel, laying a hand on Esperon's arm. "So I asked Daen to prepare this chariot for our use. We will fly over the route followed by the retreating army until we

come to the limits of the Garden, where we last sighted it. Our search can begin there."

Esperon quickly climbed onto the chariot's platform, followed by the two winged Aeraumen. Daen then guided the steeds into position for a clear takeoff run across the Square and began coaxing the first whispers of chanting from the Valyons' mouths. Work on the preparations for the festivities temporarily stopped as the sky-craft gathered speed. All eyes watched in awe as the great wings on the singing steeds' backs took up the rhythm of their full-throated song and they slowly rose into the air.

The chariot Captain then eased their heads round, gaining height all the time until they had sufficient altitude to clear the City's blackened northern walls and head out over the woodlands of the Paradise Garden. From the ground below, the marvelling people of Zandernatis continued to gaze out in the direction the chariot had taken until it was no more than a minute speck in the sky.

Daen kept the craft at treetop height, making sure they would be able to identify anything unusual as they flew over it. As yet, there was no indication of any Febling or animal life in the foliage and clearings beneath them. However, the broken trees and trampled ground below revealed that many men had swept through this area in a great hurry very recently.

"What happened to all the Garden's creatures when the Feblings came through?" asked Esperon.

"It's difficult to say with any certainty," replied Daen, "but they had good warning of the invasion when the enemy began their infiltration a few months ago. Then, when they started clearing access routes through the Garden, most of the creatures just moved to other areas south of the City. Any remaining

behind probably left as soon as the serpents started advancing, ahead of the main army.

"So in fact, few are likely to have suffered directly from the attack and will presumably return once they realise it's safe to do so."

"What's that down there?" Esperon pointed to a large stretch of open ground set in the midst of dense forest. It looked too sharply defined and too regular in shape to be natural.

"One of the old landing fields," replied Aelaguel. "Actually, we could put down there now and see if there are any signs of the army's progress nearby."

Daen agreed and circled round to get into position for landing in the open area. Just skimming the tops of the trees, they came in to make a somewhat bumpy touchdown. Their vehicle then bounced over the cracks and partially overgrown ground, giving its occupants a rough ride until they finally clattered to a halt.

"There are several of these old landing areas in the Garden," explained Aelaguel as they all descended from the chariot. "They were constructed in the days when it was believed there would be a lasting, active relationship between Pardylis and Zandernatis. A few even date from before then, when we came here from our city to survey the territory and assess its potential as an area for evolutionary development. Those original grounds were used as temporary bases, with chambers and galleries running underground where the chariots could be kept and the Valyons tended. There are no such facilities here, but this must have been one of the last to be built and I doubt it was ever used very much."

Esperon gazed around at the trees bordering the landing ground below, marvelling at the engineering prowess used to clear an area of these proportions in the midst of such wild and

tangled profusion. The levelled strip itself appeared to be finished in solid rock, although the encroaching undergrowth had obscured a considerable proportion of its surface.

Aelaguel was probably right in assuming there had never been much activity here, for there was very little trace of the usual ruts in the ground, such as those at the Flying Fields.

Leaving Daen to attend to the steeds, Aelaguel and Esperon made their way down into the forest to look for signs of the retreating army. After walking a little way through the trees, they soon came upon evidence of the fleeing warriors.

Even in the gloom of the leafy canopy overhead, the trail of destruction was clearly visible; ferns and grasses had been trampled underfoot, vines and creeping plants torn from the nearby trees and some sizeable bushes completely uprooted in the panic of the Feblings' flight. Half hidden by the dense foliage lining the path, Esperon found a sword dropped by one of the soldiers, a helmet and a coarse cloth pouch containing an evil smelling preparation of dried and shredded leaves. However, there was no sign of anything to give them the slightest clue as to what had become of Gorin. They therefore made their way back to the landing ground in order to continue their search further on.

The chariot soared into the air as gracefully as ever, only just clearing the topmost branches again. Daen remarked that, they were nowhere near their present height originally and now demanded a great deal of extra effort from the Valyons. Moments later, they were coasting above the verdant abundance of the Garden forest again on their way towards the distant line of mountains in the North.

They continued over the wooded tracts of the Paradise Garden until they reached a point where an area of rough, open grassland sloped gradually away from the forest. It was not an

ideal landing ground, but Daen managed to bring the team to a halt in a much shorter distance than usual, without any undue discomfort for the passengers.

The purpose of stopping here was to give Esperon and Aelaguel a chance to examine the place where the army had emerged from the trees. As before, they found much evidence of the Feblings' presence. It looked as if the whole company had gathered there, on the edge of the woods, summoning up courage for the headlong dash across the open, sunlit ground separating them from the next stretch of forest.

The point where they had all finally come crashing out of the shelter offered by the trees was easy to distinguish, as was the clearly defined trail of flattened grass leading away from the spot. Several discarded swords and lances were lying on the ground, together with a few articles of clothing and some scraps of food. This suggested the fleeing warriors may have eaten a hurried meal before braving the glaring ordeal of the merciless sunlight.

Apart from this evidence, there were no further indications of the men's passing; no sign of them having had any prisoners or of any executions having taken place. It was therefore reasonable to suppose that if Gorin had been with them at this point, then he was still in their hands. He would have been taken across this open ground to the line of trees opposite and through them, towards the limits of the Garden.

Esperon began to despair, feeling their chances of discovering any indication of his friend's fate dissolving with every passing moment. It must be too late now, he reasoned. For once the Feblings had reached more familiar country, all hope would be gone.

Nevertheless, when he and Aelaguel had completed their examination of the army's brief resting place, they remounted

the chariot and took to the skies for a third time. Daen then directed their course towards the edges of the great northern forests and the actual frontier of the Paradise Garden, close to where the routed invaders were last sighted.

They landed on a gently undulating strip of ground, some thirty measures from where the Feblings had entered the clumps of thickly growing trees. So eager had they been to regain the shelter and protection of the shade that any remaining discipline had obviously broken down completely, resulting in what must have been a wild stampede. Many had obviously lost their footing, stumbled and were mercilessly trampled by the waves of men behind them, their mutilated bodies left lying along a considerable length of the forest edge.

It was not a pleasant sight, but Aelaguel and Esperon forced themselves to examine those who had fallen, even though many no longer had any recognisable features. They were half afraid one of them might be wearing a Zandernation tunic, but all those they came across were definitely Feblings. Still without any clue as to Gorin's whereabouts, the King and his winged companion penetrated the forest itself, walking very cautiously over the flattened undergrowth. They advanced, listening attentively for any sounds ahead, just in case the fleeing army had regrouped once they had crossed the open ground and was resting before continuing towards the mountains. Coming upon them unawares seemed improbable, but they preferred not to take any chances, for here the odds would be very much in the enemy's favour.

Within a few moments, Aelaguel and Esperon were in the midst of the green, leafy gloom of the forest. It extended as far as they could see, becoming dimmer and more shadowy as the trees and plants grew closer together; the vines, branches and ferns twisting about each other to form a canopy of verdure

allowing only a faint, unnatural twilight to filter through. The contrast with the bright sunlight outside was so great, the two travellers had to stop a few moments for their eyes to become accustomed to these new conditions.

"How far is it to the edge of the Garden from here?" asked Esperon peering ahead.

"Not very far now," replied Aelaguel. "The actual border is rather less distinct in this area than in the East. There is no Forest of Dissemblance on the other side either, merely a continuation of this one, with the Greywood trees gradually becoming more and more predominant.

"Then, beyond the trees, there are the foothills of the Fading Dusk Mountains, and this is where the first small Febling settlements can be found. Most of their communities live entirely underground though, in the great caverns under the higher peaks, about three thousand measures further on."

The King and the Aerauman continued along the broad track left by the great army as it crashed its way through the forest. They began wondering what they might be able to do against such a large body of men should they be confronted with them, and how they could possibly hope to rescue Gorin if he were still in the Feblings' hands. Despite these misgivings, they went on, searching amongst the uprooted bushes, flattened grasses and ferns for any sign, no matter how slight, that might help them learn about the fate of their lost compatriot.

After some half hour of following the course of the retreat, they arrived on the banks of a narrow, swiftly flowing stream. It came bubbling through the trees along a stony bed, splashing and gurgling delightfully to provide a welcome relief from the oppressive silence of the forest. Heavy imprints in the mud on either side of the watercourse showed the Feblings had crossed

at this point, their trail continuing into the obscure shadows beneath the trees on the opposite bank.

"This is the frontier of the Paradise Garden," said Aelaguel. "From this point onwards, the Greywoods begin to grow as the land rises away from the lower levels where the Garden was created."

"How still it is," murmured Esperon. "No sound of life, not a bird, nor any creature at all… Even the wind has lost its voice."

They looked around at the dim, green groves surrounding them, ever conscious of the unreal stillness infusing the whole scene. It was as if the forest had been struck dumb by the fury of the soldiers' headlong dash as they passed through. Only the rushing water made any sound, and, as they listened, even that seemed distorted now, its course maimed and crushed by multiple hundreds of running, blundering feet.

Esperon walked to the edge of the stream and looked across at the tangled growths on the far bank. He sensed their profusion to be already wilder and untamed, free as it was from the enveloping harmonies of Paradise that governed everything within the Garden's boundaries.

"So it was around here the Feblings were last sighted?" he asked.

"Yes, as the chariots came over the trees they reported being able to see a great movement on the ground down here. The men themselves were difficult to see, but the way the foliage was being shaken indicated something was happening. Apparently, the area of activity went across the forest like a wave, becoming all the more marked as the men below heard the Valyons' chant and panicked."

"How long ago was that?"

"Maybe two hours. Not much more."

"So we should carry on," said the King. "But do you really think we've any chance of finding anything or doing anything, now they're on familiar ground?"

"There's no way of knowing," answered Aelaguel. "But we should continue for a certain distance, until either we catch up with them or can at least determine what progress they have made. They can't be very far ahead of us now, not after a night of battle and their frantic retreat this morning. They will be too exhausted. Once we know where they're encamped we can decide on the action to take."

Esperon nodded in agreement, trying to master the misgivings he felt threatening to overwhelm him. He drew a deep breath and followed Aelaguel across the stream, out of the Garden and onto the path leading towards the realm of the Greywoods.

Conscious that at any moment now they might hear sounds of the soldiers ahead of them, they walked with great caution, following the well-defined trail of trampled ground. The cohorts of men preceding them had of course made their progress easier, for all the obstacles in their path had been swept aside. There was barely a twig left intact to be snapped and betray their presence. Nonetheless, they trod warily, stopping every few minutes to listen for anything unusual.

The Greywood Forest

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 3449-3507

After some ten minutes' walking through the murky shade of the silent forest, the ground became more uneven and stony before rising gently towards the first of the mighty trees that gave these woods their name.

Its trunk was so thick, it would have needed ten men with arms outstretched to encircle the bole; and there was a legion of

these arboreal giants standing behind it. They reached up to unimaginable heights, as straight and true as the soaring columns in the Great Palace, with barely a blemish on their smooth, grey bark.

The two travellers entered the breathtaking, natural architecture of this vast, colonnaded hall. The almost impenetrable canopy of intertwining foliage overhead cut out virtually all light, making progress difficult. But once his eyes had become accustomed to the gloom, Esperon was able to take in every aspect of the forestal majesty around him. He paused for a second, looking up towards the vault of leaves, way above. Aelaguel also suddenly came to a halt, head inclined slightly to better catch a distant, barely distinguishable sound.

The King looked at his companion enquiringly, but said nothing.

The Aerauman then grasped Esperon's sleeve and led him to the side of the track they had been following, motioning him to remain silent.

They waited for several seconds, neither of them moving a muscle or even daring to breathe, for fear of giving away their position.

A moment later, Esperon also heard it. A wild beast perhaps, crashing its way through the forest undergrowth? No doubt startled by the hordes of fleeing men and trying to escape from them as fast as it could go; a clear indication they could not be very far behind the main body of the army now.

The sound became more distinct, confirming it was indeed coming from up ahead. As it approached, Aelaguel drew Esperon behind the great bulk of one of the Greywoods, allowing them to observe the source of the commotion without revealing their own presence. A moment later, they caught their

first glimpse of what had been making so much noise, magnified out of all proportion by the utter silence of the forest.

It was in fact not an animal, as they had supposed, but a man, running as fast as his legs would carry him down the gentle incline towards the stream and the Garden frontier. The slope of the ground lent speed to his progress. Nevertheless, he was still exerting a tremendous effort to move over the well beaten path as swiftly as he was able. From time to time, he had to alter his course due to the enormous trees barring his way. This was when he blundered through some of the few small bushes and ferns left standing after the army's retreating stampede, creating the sounds Aelaguel had first detected.

Initially, it was difficult to make out any details of the approaching runner in the semi-darkness. Furthermore, he kept appearing and disappearing behind the huge forms of the Greywood trees. So it was not until he was almost upon them that Aelaguel and Esperon realised, in the same instant, he was wearing a Zandernation tunic! It was Gorin!

The Aerauman and the King of the Golden City stepped out of their hiding place into the middle of the path, so the fleeing Gorin could see them. Almost delirious with joy, Esperon ran forward, his arms opened wide in greeting and tears welling up in his eyes as he cried, "Gorin, dearest Gorin, we've found you!"

As he came into the fugitive's field of vision and called his name, so Gorin slackened his pace, disbelief clouding his already exhausted and terrified face. He finally stopped running altogether, stood still for a moment as he stared first at Esperon and then at Aelaguel before backing slowly away from them, shaking his head and sobbing as he spoke.

"Don't," he said. "Not now, not after..." He sank to the ground, his whole body trembling and his breathing coming in

shallow gasps as he fought for air after the tremendous exertion of his flight.

Esperon drew near and knelt down beside him, putting his arm about his friend's shoulders and supporting him. With a vain effort, Gorin tried to push him away, and then fell forward onto Esperon's neck, shaking uncontrollably.

"Gorin," said the King. "It's all right. We're here now. You're safe. You're with us."

Gorin shook his head. "No," he said. "I cannot be. Not after what I've done, what I've been made to do."

"Gorin, Gorin," said Esperon. "Calm yourself… We have been so worried. We came searching for you as soon as we knew where the army was heading, and even feared we might be too late."

"Too late for what?"

"Too late to save you from whatever the Feblings would do to you. We feared for you. Gorin, everyone feared for you… But now it's all over."

"I don't think it is," said Gorin. "But then I don't think I know anything anymore. It's all a hideous nightmare. I can't be what they say I am. I can't be. Because then..." His voice died away as if he were afraid of following the thought to its logical conclusion.

"Why were you running?" asked Aelaguel. "Are there any Feblings chasing you?"

"No, no. They won't want to come back this way. They guarded me closely until the flying chariots caught up with us. That put them all into such a panic I suddenly became the least of their concerns, so I lay low until they had gone. Then I headed back towards the Garden as fast as I could. Although I don't really know where I should go anymore. Or where I belong."

"You belong with us of course," said Esperon. "You know you do. After everything you've done for Zandernatis and the Aeraumen, your rightful place must be with those who owe you so much. We could never have achieved anything without your courage to make the perilous journey to Pardylis. And now, everyone in the Golden City is waiting to honour you and celebrate what you were able to bring about."

"It isn't as easy as that," said Gorin, shaking his head. "Nothing is very clear now, and the more I discover, the more confused everything becomes. It was better knowing nothing."

"Can you walk, do you think?" asked Aelaguel. "Let's get you to the chariot as soon as we can. Just in case some of the Feblings do decide to come after you."

"I don't think they'd even care now," answered Gorin as he slowly rose to his feet, helped by Esperon. He breathed deeply a few times, tried to take a step unaided and then gratefully leaned on his friend as he made his way forward.

"Why shouldn't they care?" asked Aelaguel.

"Because they totally despise me," replied Gorin. "And they were only taking me back to be paraded in front of others who would despise me even more."

"Don't try talking now," said Esperon, "You're too exhausted."

Gorin nodded with resignation as they set off down the slope, towards the sound of the bubbling stream dividing the forest from the Paradise Garden.

"We'll soon be there." the King reassured him. "Daen is waiting for us, and once we're safely in the chariot and on our way home, you can tell us about everything you've been through."

Gorin bowed his head and walked on, still leaning on Esperon's shoulder, although he felt strength beginning to flow

back into his legs. As he walked, he thought over the series of frightening and contradictory events he had just experienced. They whirled ceaselessly round in his mind, the dark secrets gradually gaining ground and threatening to overwhelm any sense of achievement he could still feel.

The three of them continued on their way down the sloping path, crossing the stream and finally coming to the open ground again - with all the hideous evidence of what had happened there laid out before them.

Gorin surveyed the tragic scene, emotions welling up within him. “They were almost mad with fear by the time they got here,” he muttered. “It must have been the sunlight. The blinding glare… It drove them out of their minds.

“I nearly fell twice before we got to the stream, but they kept prodding me with their spears. Then suddenly, everyone panicked, shouting and pushing in their frenzy; a mass of screaming, fear-crazed men trampling on each other and sweeping me along with them.

Aelaguel and Esperon comforted their charge as best they could, guiding him away from the bloody scene on the edge of the forest and towards the chariot. Daen was greatly relieved to see Gorin again, greeting him kindly, sensing the pain the young man had undergone during his arduous ordeal in captivity.

With no further ado, they all climbed onto the sky-craft’s platform and were soon in the air again. As they finally set their course towards Zandernatis, Esperon gave his friend some fruit and a draught of elixir to help him relax. A few moments later, Gorin began to feel it taking effect, gently numbing the memories awakened by the scene of the stampede and his nagging sense of confusion.

Esperon smiled gently as he saw Gorin growing calmer. "So, now we are safely on our way, do you feel like telling us what happened to you over the last few hours?"

"If you like. Although none of it makes much sense. It can't. But maybe you'll be able to reassure me and say it was all a nightmare and I've woken up without knowledge or memory of anything, just like before."

"Just tell us as much as you can," said Aelaguel reassuringly. "After you were taken off the walls by the Denashur. We'll try to understand."

Gorin's story

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 3508-3594

Gorin nodded, closing his eyes, visibly trying to focus his thoughts. He drew a deep breath and then began speaking in low, hushed tones:

"I'll try. It was not long after the chariots had arrived, and we'd seen the way they dealt with the Garrows. I was fighting with Esperon on the ramparts above the gate, because we feared there might be a last, desperate attempt to capture it.

"Under cover of the smoke coming up from the trench, a whole swarm of Denashurs flew in on us. Until then, they always had either serpents or two of the Febling warriors in their talons. But these were carrying nothing. They came up from behind, almost before we knew what was happening. One of them dug its claws into my shoulders, held on and lifted me clear from the ground.

"I tried to cut at it with my sword, but another of them came and knocked it from my hand. There was nothing I could do. I remember wondering why it had picked me up like that, when all the other creatures were only concerned with killing as many defenders as they could.

"Then I thought they might be trying a new tactic and I'd be dropped into the burning trench. But we flew on through the smoke until we cleared it. By then, we were some way away from the City.

"The pain from those claws in my shoulders was terrible and I must have fainted, because the next thing I knew my feet were bumping against the ground and there were men all around me, staring and prodding me with their lances as if they couldn't believe I was really there."

"These were Feblings?" asked Esperon.

"Yes. They were everywhere, their armour shining in the light coming from the fire and the walls, their dark eyes glaring at me with a look of such hatred I thought they were going to kill me on the spot.

"There was a lot of activity going on around the place where I landed. Much of it disorganised, mainly because of the shock they all had when the chariots appeared in the sky. They were terrified of them. Then there were the cries and the wing-beats of those bat monsters sounding everywhere, never stopping.

"As I got used to the dim light, I saw there were two men standing in front of me, the same two Esperon and I had seen before, coming in on the legs of a Denashur. But for some reason they'd flown off again as soon as they saw us. I realised then what happened; they had returned to the camp with the news, and then sent in the bats alone to take us. They obviously wanted both of us alive, although at the time I couldn't see why or how they'd singled us out in particular."

"Luckily, Aelaguel managed to save me from being carried off as well," said Esperon. "But only just in time."

"A good thing, because I don't think they would have bothered taking you with them, not in their mood after the battle

was finally over. They couldn't believe it had happened. They were left in such a state of desperation, some preferred to kill themselves rather than deal with the terrible humiliation they felt seeing their hideous allies defeated."

"But surely their destruction released the Feblings from the evil influence the allies had over them," said Aelaguel.

"True. But the men were so conditioned by their presence and by having them direct their thoughts, many of the rank-and-file soldiers could not think anything out for themselves. And they were also petrified at the sight of the flying chariots and winged beings. They saw them as Divine avengers bent upon wiping them out. That's why their retreat was so hurried and disorganised."

"Yet despite the state of panic they were all in, they made sure they took you with them," said Esperon. "How did they manage it?"

"One of their captains, perhaps made of sterner stuff than some of the others, detailed half a dozen men to guard me closely during the retreat. They seemed to realise I had some kind of special importance and although they themselves were frightened out of their wits, they made sure I didn't lag behind. If ever I faltered in my step, they poked me in the back with their swords, cursing and jeering at me because I couldn't go any faster. I had no idea where they were taking me, and no clue why I interested them so much. But one thing worried me more than any other aspect of the whole situation."

"What was that?" asked Aelaguel.

"They knew my name! I heard some of my guards muttering it under their breath, and then one of them actually called me 'Gorin' as he swore at me and jabbed with his spear. When I asked how they knew who I was, they all sneered and began pushing me on all the harder. I was forced to keep up

with them through the forest while the sun was rising, and never for a moment did they slow down. During those first hours, there was very little opportunity to find out anything new. Everyone was far too concerned with escaping to bother about saying much to me.

"Even after the sun was high in the sky, they still kept going. Some of them found it difficult because of the bright light, but as long as there was some shade from the trees, they didn't stop.

"Finally, we came to the edge of the wooded area, and all the men gathered to look out over the area of grassland they had to cross before they could be protected by the forest again."

"From what we saw back there, it looked like they rested on the edge of the forest for a while."

"They did," confirmed Gorin, "but only long enough for the stragglers to catch up and everyone to have a few scraps of food. Although they gave none to me. But while we were on the edge of the grassy area, my guards dragged me in front of one who, by his dress and the respect he commanded, was obviously their leader.

"He was taller than the rest of them, with huge black eyes and a dark, bearded face. Yet there was something in the way he looked at me that didn't seem to go with his fearsome appearance. Something I could only feel to be a kind of tenderness. Then he shook his head and the proud haughtiness returned. But only for a moment, melting away again as he said very slowly and very sadly, 'Why, Gorin? Why did you have to do this?'

"That was all. I didn't understand, nor could I see how the commander of these warriors had learned my name. So I said nothing. Then he came right up to me, looking deep into my eyes as if searching for something. But what? He was a stranger

to me, an enemy; all of them were. Then he spoke again, and this time his words defied all reason. How could I possibly come to terms with something so devastating? Undermining everything I'd come to believe in…? He said he was my father."

Aelaguel and Esperon looked at Gorin in disbelief. What was he trying to tell them? For an instant, both thought he was delirious, but saw by the grave expression on his face he was not. Whatever it was the Febling leader told him had clearly affected him profoundly.

Gorin's companions made no immediate comment on this incredible disclosure, preferring to wait for further explanations.

"If that man really is my father," he continued in a voice now barely more than a whisper, "then I have betrayed him in a frightening, unforgivable way. He even said no son could ever sink to anything more wretched, more despicable and no Prince could ever commit a more treacherous act.

"The terrible thing is, I have no memory of anything to help me know if all this is true or not. Perhaps he thought I was someone else, and yet if he did, all the men he led made the same mistake. I tried to tell them I remembered nothing of him, or anyone, but it only made them even angrier, cursing and scorning me, calling me 'scum, 'liar', 'turncoat'.

"It reminded me of a terrible vision I had in the Forest of Dissemblance when I was travelling through it with the unihorn. I couldn't make anything of it at the time, but I see now it must have been connected with all this. It was horrifying to be surrounded by those men, jeering at me, despising me… And I could say nothing to prove them wrong.

"After all, I can't remember where I originally came from. Only that I woke up one morning in the Garden and was directed on to Zandernatis where Hexard was apparently expecting me. So perhaps I am this man's son. But if so, then

everything I have felt up to now must be wrong, and I should only feel shame instead of the joy and pride I had in being part of all these events."

"No. You should still feel that pride," urged Aelaguel. "No matter what else may have happened, a righteous balance has been restored, through you. And none can forget it. For by bringing about the defeat of those evil creatures, not only has Zandernatis been saved from the ravages of a jealous war, but the Feblings have also been delivered from the influence of their so-called allies.

"They will now have a chance to grow anew and prosper along their own course of evolution without attempting to seize upon and follow another, for which they are as yet unprepared. And also re-establishing contact between the Aerauma and our lost children in the Golden City surely merits the overthrow of those evil tyrants. The destinies of entire races have been changed by what you were able to achieve. As a result, the world will be a finer, more ordered place to evolve in. There is nothing but honour and virtue in what you have done."

"But I have been the instrument of my own people's downfall!" protested Gorin. "No matter what may have come of it, I still cannot forget him saying they were my people. And that friends of mine, kinsmen of mine, were killed in the battle. Including two brothers! Two of his sons, young men who, with me, were once the joy of his life, he said. The despair and utter incomprehension in that man's eyes is something I can never forget.

"Then, when I insisted in saying I had no knowledge of my place amongst the Feblings, he scorned me and spat in my face, deriding me with the rest of them. Later, he spoke to me again, but in a more taunting tone of voice than before, saying he would remind me of the last time we saw each other. It was just

before I left to go on a long hunting trip, he said, perhaps eight moons ago. I was protesting at his refusal to send ambassadors to Zandernatis in an attempt to persuade the people there to open their gates to the Feblings.

"He said I had been the one who wanted contact with them, even counselling the use of arms if necessary. But his refusal had angered me and so, powerless to do anything alone, I went away to hunt and, he had hoped, forget about the whole question. Then, two weeks after I left, the first of the allied creatures appeared among the Febling people. Apparently, they succeeded in persuading them where I had failed, telling of the riches contained in the City, what luxury was there, how everyone was forever rejoicing. While the Feblings had to scratch a living from the soil and labour until their backs were ready to break.

"They invaded everyone's minds, making the idea of attacking Zandernatis an obsession, persuading them it would be the easiest thing in the world to accomplish.

"Before long, all the people were preparing themselves for the operation, including the man who said he was my father. By then, he too believed it would be a just and righteous war, further encouraged by the creatures' promises of assistance in the assault. They had opened his eyes, he said, making him see I had been right, although he believed weapons would talk much more effectively than any ambassadors.

"Yet when I returned from my hunting trip and discovered the changes brought about by the allies, all I did was spurn them, he said. Instead of embracing the opportunity they were giving us. Why was I unable to share his new vision? he asked. Why didn't I see he was leading his people along the path I had urged him to take? Why did I forsake my ancestral home, just as plans were underway for the greatest step forward in our

people's history? Treacherously abandoning everything to warn the City people of what was about to happen. I hadn't even consulted him, he said. I just left on an impulse, to join the enemy.

"I tried telling him I knew nothing of all this, how I had wandered into Zandernatis in my unknowing and memory-less state, seeking clues to my identity and from there was sent out on a mission of salvation… But he would have nothing of it."

"And did you tell him what that mission was?" asked Esperon.

"Yes. At least, I said I had gone to recall the King's son from the hills in the East, where he had been living with another race of people and they worked out the rest for themselves. Although they were still mystified and frightened by the Aeraumen, unable to understand who or what they actually were. But I didn't get the chance to explain any more because they all began jeering at me again, and I couldn't make myself heard.

"It was a horrible experience. I would rather they had killed me as an agent of Zandernatis than have to believe I betrayed my own kin. If I really did such a thing, I am my own people's worst enemy. And if I am one of them, I must be your enemy as well."

"Gorin, don't say such things," pleaded Esperon. "How can you possibly be our enemy after all you have done? As Aelaguel told you, everyone has benefited by the events of last night, and from your courage in bringing them about. In the end, even the Feblings must see you rendered them an immense service. Even if what you are saying is true, you acted in good faith, for the sake of what was right. You have no reason to feel any remorse."

"Perhaps. But it is so painful to accept. I came to Zandernatis having no identity and then found one in doing what I could to help you and your people. And now, after

wondering so long about my origins, it seems I would have been better off never discovering them. Don't you know anything more about this Aelaguel? Surely you can tell me, now everything has been revealed."

"I'm sorry Gorin, but I can add nothing new to what we already know. I never had any idea who you might be, apart from the messenger who came in fulfilment of the prophecy. The only person who can tell us anything regarding this is Hexard, for he was more directly concerned with sending you to Pardylis and the only one who might know where you came from originally. There is no more we can say until we are back in the City and can consult with him."

"He was certainly very worried when he heard you had been captured," said Esperon. "And I know he'll be much relieved to know you're safe."

"Then we must wait and see what he can tell us," said Gorin, with resignation.

Silence fell upon the chariot riders as they drew nearer to their destination, with Gorin in particular still vainly trying to come to terms with the whole series of frightening and contradictory events he had just experienced. For despite the soothing effects of Esperon's elixir, he was unable to forget the sheer incomprehension he saw in the Febling leader's eyes completely. Not to mention the way he had so scornfully spat in Gorin's face, disowning him as a son fit to bear his name.

Gorin was still grappling with the bewildering haze of contrasting loyalties in his mind as the lofty towers of Zandernatis finally came into view and the chariot began to lose height. It was a welcome sight. One that even brought a faint smile to his tensed lips. Even so, in the light of everything that had happened in the last few hours, this was certainly going to be a very singular homecoming!

XV - Initial Pre-Pro meeting report for “Zandernatis”

Having inherited his father’s intellectual property rights to the transliteration and transcription of the Haakon Urn texts – including the source material for the “Zandernatis” Trinity - Philip Harkwood subsequently sold the film rights of “Zandernatis” to Pre-Mythica Pictures for an undisclosed sum.

The PMP Board did however make one provision; that publication of the “Zandernatis” Trinity should be allowed to go ahead with the rights for the books themselves retained by Gregson and Keirle-Smith. Harkwood’s lawyers claimed the “Trinity” to be a “derivative” work, but PMP demanded an out-of-court settlement to end the dispute, as it risked damaging public opinion. They argued that the researcher and “re-teller” deserved recognition for their tremendous dedication to the work over such a long period of time. Furthermore, the books would also drive anticipation of the films in the lead-up to their release and any risk of the project being dragged down by endless and potentially bitter litigation should be avoided.

This chapter contains a digest of extracts from the first Pre-Production meeting for “Zandernatis” at PMP. They cover areas such as film structure, shooting locations and schedule, visual effects and casting.

Pre-Production Meeting for "Zandernatis"
Key points

19 December 2014

Attended by:
Margaret GARETH (Executive Producer), Faith HARVEY and Nicolas PITFERN (Co-Producers), Stuart CROSSWAY (Line Producer), Boyd MASTELL (Director), Richard McBLANNEN (Director of Photography), Bill SAUVE (Screenwriter), Herman GARNER (Grafliks VFX), Daniel WILSON and Sophie GREETON (Location scouts).

Margaret Gareth opened the meeting, reminding everyone that the proposed trilogy of films to be developed from the Zandernatis books would be breaking new ground, as they would be the first "fantasy" movies ever made to be based on actual scientific facts.
Boyd Mastell added they would have to tread carefully in order to strike the right balance between preserving the essence of the original storyline without entering too much into some of its more "controversial" implications.

Bill Sauve pointed out that the production team had an important decision to take as far as the "controversial" content was concerned. Just how much – or how little – of the "ancillary material" in the books should be featured in the films?
Boyd Mastell replied he felt the Antarctica sequence at least was essential, and should be followed up by some of the other factual content. But he did agree the more "speculative stuff" would go right over most people's heads and might even alienate some audiences.
In response to this, **Margaret Gareth** said she believed the discovery of the urns in Antarctica was "superfluous" and that the film should dive straight in with Gorin's "Awakening". However, she suggested setting up a schedule of script conferences to hammer out these issues in detail.

Stuart Crossway asked for formal approval of the plan to shoot all three Episodes at once, releasing them at one-year intervals. This was accepted unanimously for obvious economies of scale and sheer practicality. Particularly as far as location shooting was concerned.
At this point, the two Location Scouts were invited to report on their findings.

Daniel Wilson and **Sophie Greeton** informed the meeting that they had just returned from the Patagonian region of South America which covers the southernmost regions of Chile and Argentina.

They described the "spectacular" scenery that would provide impressive settings for the "Paradise Garden" sequences, with dramatic mountains that

would also serve as perfect foundations on which to build CG imagery of Pardylis and the sequences with the Aerauma and their Valyon drawn chariots. They also reported on the unpredictable weather that could offer unique opportunities to capture highly atmospheric moods. They showed some of the photographs they had taken during their stay to demonstrate what they meant. **Hermann Garner** was a little dismissive of such shots, saying his teams would be able to create similar effects very easily. However, the location scouts then got everyone's attention when they announced that Patagonia also featured a number of spectacular ice fields; in particular the Perito Moreno Glacier in Argentina, which would certainly be an

excellent location for the Antarctica, sequence - if it was decided to include it at the beginning of Episode One.

Margaret Gareth welcomed this news and said it might sway the decision to include the Antarctica sequence since no major additional costs would be involved in shooting it if the crews were already in the region. **Richard McBlannen** also confirmed that these locations had the potential of creating some very powerful footage that would already be "fantastic" in its own right, making a very positive contribution to the overall effect of the action.

It was decided that all studio shoots would be done in the UK, either at Pinewood or Elstree.

Discussions continued on the subject of casting. **Boyd Mastell** stated he was in favour of using "New Talent" almost exclusively, so audiences would not be influenced by characters cast members may have played in previous films.

Faith Harvey and **Nicolas Pitfern** then returned to the issue of timeframe in order to define a realistic production schedule. Since these films are likely to be very CGI-heavy, this will probably be the area that determines how long the films will be in production and when the first of them can be released.

Questioned on this point, Graflix VFX Supervisor **Hermann Garner** confirmed that taking the time required for the CGI (Computer Generated Imagery) work into account, as well as the shooting schedule for all three Episodes, plus the editing, it was unlikely that the first film could be released within less than three years.

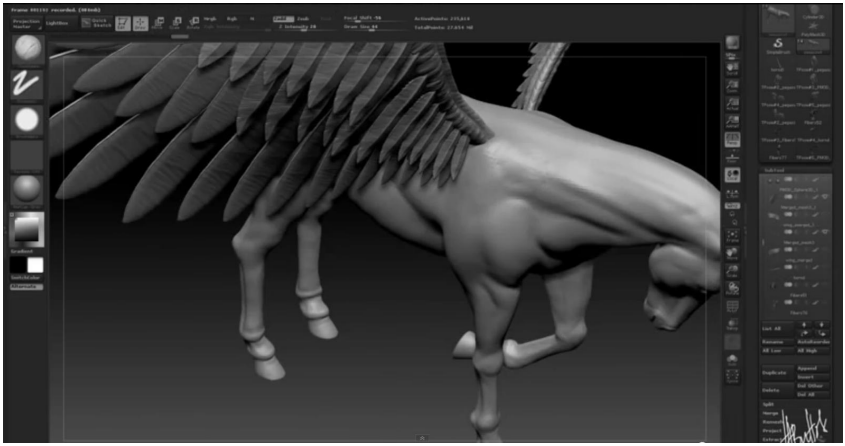
Boyd Mastell then asked what kind of effects and techniques were likely to be used and how they would be implemented, bearing in mind that the objective was to make everything as undeniably real as possible – just as the original books had done.

Hermann Garner replied by describing the type of tools he would use for one of the most CGI-intensive sequences: Pardylis and its "winged creatures". He explained this would involve a major matte painting for the wide exterior. Then, fully CGI winged horses, chariots and Aeraumen would need to be designed and developed well in advance for mid ground and distance use.
The process for approaching this and similar shots would entail 2-3 months of concept design, reference to real horses, other examples of Pegasus[49], giant

[49] Image; Winged Unicorn by Johfra

eagles and mythical creatures, historical chariots, and development for the appropriate artwork.

Once a direction to follow had been established with regard to scale, flight technique and visual look (skin, hair, coloration, texture), the 3d modelling would begin, firstly as a basic rig to help ensure wing and leg movements look correct, as well as weight and lift from the flight. Flocking techniques and flying styles, speed and acceleration from appropriate muscle groups of beasts and beings would be taken into consideration. By way of illustration, he presented a screenshot of preliminary work on one of the Pegasus-type “Valyons”.



Hermann also explained he would need to shoot some motion capture tests of horses, men and large birds to assist with movement reference and also translate that movement across to the CG models. Once the Lead VFX supervisor and Director are happy with the initial concepts and movement tests, the detailed modelling process would then begin in earnest, including full texturing and rigging. These models would involve creating a base mesh in Maya, ported to Zbrush for sculpting before fully rigging back in Maya. A full storyboard of each sequence would then be developed with the Director and an animatic created to assist with timings and CG camera moves.

He added that the exhaustive rendering process would involve up to 9 different passes for each shot including mattes, depth passes, normals, shadowing, ambient occlusion, diffusion, reflection, specular, beauty, etc.

Close-up shots and foreground creatures would be shot in live action on greenscreen with tracking markers so that 3d camera tracking could be used to add CG wings at a later time in the compositing stage.
He concluded his description of all the steps necessary for this one sequence by explaining that the lengthy final compositing stage would bring all elements together and add many details, additional lighting, FX depth of field, motion blur, grading, dust, flares, atmospheric layering, etc.

Hermann invited questions, but none were forthcoming.

He then presented a very impressive concept for Pardylis and asked if the other members of the team were interested in knowing what techniques he would be using for this kind of sequence.

Margaret Gareth intervened at this point and suggested it was perhaps a little early to be discussing this kind of detail and thanked Hermann for his input.

Discussions then moved on to budgetary considerations and in particular, investor take-up following the meetings organised since PMP announced its acquisition of the film rights to “Zandernatis”. These details have been summarised in a separate report, which will be circulated to those concerned in due course.

XVI – Potions and Explanations

"When ends are but beginnings,
truth rarely shows itself without disguise."

from "The Magres Commentaries",
written in 2985 - 2987 by Hexard,
Alchemist to King Esperon I.

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 3595-3638

As the chariot bearing Gorin and King Esperon back to Zandernatis circled lower in readiness for its landing, a great deal of activity could be seen down below in the Palace Square.

The contrast with the deserted, grief-stricken City of the day before was very noticeable. There were now brightly coloured flags adorning all the principal buildings, long low tables in position around the edges of the great public place and a platform for the musicians who would be playing for the dancing throughout the evening.

Everything was, in fact, very much the same as it had ever been in times of popular celebration. Before the threat of war came upon the land, and before the passing of the King with an absent heir plunged the City into unfamiliar despondency.

Yet the festivities due to take place that evening would be profoundly different from any other revels held in the City for more than sixty generations. On this momentous day of days, the preparations for rejoicing had a hitherto unknown

dimension. Simply because, for the very first time in three millennia, there really was something to celebrate! The Aerauma had returned, to save the City from mortal danger and make a crucial contribution to its evolution. After such a long absence and the bitter trials of the past few hours, their presence in Zandernatis now came as an inspiration to their descendants; announcing the dawn of a new age for all its people.

Despite the many and diverse things going on in the Square as they landed, Gorin was far too engrossed in thinking over recent events to take much notice of them. For now, the whole question of his identity was looming before him again, just as it had at his first awakening in the heart of the Garden. If Hexard did indeed know the secret of this ultimate truth, then he wanted to be told, whatever it might be and no matter what it might imply. He looked around the gaily-decorated Square as they landed, his eyes searching desperately for the familiar, dark robed figure among the crowds of busy workers.

There, sure enough, he was, anxiously awaiting the chariot's return. He came hurrying towards them as soon as the craft had come to a complete standstill, arms outstretched in welcome.

"Gorin, Gorin!" cried the aged alchemist. "Oh, how wonderful to see you again! Are you all right? Where did they find you?"

"Among the Greywoods, just beyond the Garden," said Aelaguel, swinging down to ground level.

"I was so concerned for you," said Hexard, embracing Gorin once he and the King had been helped down from the chariot. "You're looking pale. Were you badly treated?" His smile faded a little as he looked anxiously into Gorin's eyes and failed to see the slightest sign of any relief, joy or even hope; emotions which, under the circumstances, should have been overwhelming him, now his perilous ordeal was over.

"Hexard, I think Gorin is entitled to some explanations," Esperon said in a quiet, level voice, completely transforming the old man's expression into one of puzzlement.

"Why, what happened? And why are you all looking so serious when we ought to be celebrating this moment of reunion? Unless..."

Hexard's face clouded as he looked from the King to Gorin and back to the King again, waiting to be told in words what he was now beginning to suspect.

Esperon was brief. "It seems Gorin was taken from the City because he was recognised by two soldiers about to land on the ramparts, who then sent in Denashurs to abduct him. When he finally arrived in the Febling camp, most of those there seemed to know him by name. Their leader even claimed to be his father. He managed to escape while being taken back with the army as they retreated, apparently to parade him in front of his family, friends and all who knew him, as a traitor unworthy of his people."

"And I must know if everything they said was true," blurted out Gorin, staring imploringly into Hexard's eyes, desperately wishing the old alchemist had the power to say it was all a lie.

Hexard bowed his head and turned away, averting his gaze from the tense, beseeching expression on Gorin's face. Then, still with downcast eyes, he began to speak in a low, barely audible voice.

"This was what I feared when I learned of your capture," the old man said. "And for you to have been confronted with these things in such a way is not as I would have wished. But as this matter has now been raised, we should perhaps go to my rooms were we can talk over what has happened."

Saying no more, the old man led Gorin, Esperon and Aelaguel across the Square towards the Palace, his wrinkled features bearing witness to the volume of thoughts welling up within his mind.

As they made their way across the great public place, many of the young men who had fought during the battle came up and took Gorin's hand, some slapped him heartily on the back while others led rounds of cheers in his honour.

Despite all these accolades, Gorin felt himself detached from their cries of welcome and words of gratitude, as if the praise were for another who had done what he had no right to do. Esperon too was silent, pondering in his mind the strange truth that seemed to be emerging and, in the same moment, discounting it as irrelevant in the light of what this young man had achieved. Whoever he was.

Gorin was unable to register the crowds of men and women swarming around their small party, pausing in their labours of preparation for the evening celebration. They lined a triumphal path across the Square to applaud and acclaim the return of their General and the young King, personifying their new sense of purpose.

Most of those jostling around the two heroes had heard the story of Gorin's capture by now and understood at least some aspects of the significant role he had played in the events of the past few hours. They greeted him as their champion, just as they venerated Esperon as their King.

However, despite the increasing enthusiasm, cheering and praise coming from all quarters, the tumultuous welcome still rang hollow in Gorin's ears. The only word he could hear in his mind, tolling like a bell, was "Betrayal... betrayal... betrayal..."

He was therefore greatly relieved when at last he and his companions were able to escape the bustling euphoria of the

welcoming throngs and regain the familiar exclusion of Hexard's room beneath the silver tower in the Palace.

Moments of truth

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 3639-3682

There was an uncomfortable silence as they all stood in the musty-smelling chamber, waiting for someone to begin speaking. Hexard fussed around for a few moments, arranging the stools and benches to accommodate his guests, using this as a pretext to prevent his own state of tension from becoming too apparent to the others.

Finally, he invited them to sit down and make themselves as comfortable as they could, while he went over to the great table on which lay several of the dusty old tomes he had taken down from the lines of shelves around the room.

These included all the reference works Gorin had consulted during his sojourn with the old man, together with a few others, apparently rather less ancient.

Hexard turned to one of these first of all, pausing for a moment's meditative silence before opening it at a page covered with formulae. He peered closely at the yellowed inscriptions for some seconds, then glanced up towards a line of bottles filled with coloured liquids, as if to make sure everything was in place and within easy reach.

He nodded his head slowly and straightened up, closing the heavily bound volume as he did so. He then began to address the room's three other occupants, his voice level and controlled, with scarcely anything to betray the powerful currents of emotion moving behind it.

"As you may imagine, I would have preferred other circumstances than these to explain the truth behind recent events. But now, since you Gorin have been in the hands of the

Feblings, some aspects of them have been revealed to you, although their true perspective in relation to the greater scheme of things remains untold.

"It is at least a merciful thing that no more harm came to you than could be inflicted by words, together with the agony of conscience you are at present experiencing. Something I hope may be largely dispelled by the facts I am about to reveal."

Hexard paused for a moment to allow his words to register before turning to indicate the pile of books before him.

"The secret and the reasons behind what has happened lie in the ancient writings. Particularly in the Book of Magres. As you may remember, this has preserved for us the infinite wisdom laid down in the 'Tables of Divine Design', containing the original plan of all creation and with it, the definition of a law by which all things must abide.

"It was not, however, a question of embracing this great conception, for there is no definition, as such, of what it might be. It is far too all-enveloping for us to apprehend on the physical plane.

"No, we are merely charged with recognising the exaltation of this law and, by our acting in harmony with it, to approach the ultimate point of knowing. Part of this eternal progression has been played out around us, and by us, during the past few months. For the momentous events we have just witnessed have an integral - and largely predetermined - place in the advancement of our world. However, they are for an end we cannot know, because to do so would be to render evolution unnecessary and set us on a plane beyond the need of incarnation.

"I would therefore prefer to speak no more of this at present. An awareness of higher principles does not always enable us to resolve our own, very human, problems in the

midst of the trials besetting us on our path towards the distant goal, whatever it may be.

"I merely wish to draw attention to the fact that everything has come to pass according to the great design the Book of Magres so faithfully sets before us. This being said, the ultimate enigmas are never spelt out; they are left for us to unravel in a passage through the substance of comprehension, which is time.

"I therefore observed the approach of stressful tribulation, looming up in the path of the City's history with unfailing confidence in the verity of these writings. I saw them as inevitable as night succeeds day when the sun has set beyond the mountains.

"Just prior to this mighty trial, I knew there would be a moment when the City son, heir to the winged throne, would depart upon his strange, dream-inspired quest. All this was prophesied and clearly described, just as it happened. Esperon left us at the appointed time, his departure marking the beginning of the transition we have been undergoing during these recent struggles.

"As he went, to seek out the distant towers of the legendary Sky Peoples' home, he was setting in motion a chain of events conceived long before. This was in harmony with every element of our being and development, past and future, whose fulfilment was pre-ordained as an essential part of our ascendance towards the supreme heights we will one day attain.

"Yet speaking of this is to speak in terms of great passages of time, for the moment beyond our grasp. Suffice to say that Esperon's adventure played a vital role in equipping him with the knowledge and courage essential for the accomplishment of his major task; namely to issue the Summons when needed and understand what it implied for the people of his race. This, at least, I think you have now recognised Esperon, after your own

study of the ancient writings and the awareness you now have of the relationship between our City and Pardylis."

"Yes indeed," replied the King. "And of course, it was only by leaving that I was able to learn of the invasion plans the Feblings were preparing."

"Exactly. Essential to the progression of events. For although the design is inviolate, it also incorporates an essential liberty; freedom of choice, or rather self-determination. Ultimate ends may be achieved by a variety of means; it is perhaps a seeming paradox to our limited minds, but the overarching scheme demands us to be aware of the decisions we make - and suffer the consequences of them. While at the same time, we must comply with the broad outlines of the path awaiting us.

"The danger therefore came and was brought to your attention, Esperon, empowering you to act. It was a danger you, Gorin, also recognised some time before it was upon us."

"I did? But how?"

"Because, Gorin, the day you came to Zandernatis after being directed here by Lord Kutjaran was not, as you supposed, the first time you had visited the City."

Hexard's admission

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 3683-3740

Gorin stared disbelievingly at Hexard, unable to register the full impact of what the old man had just said. Aelaguel and Esperon also looked astonished at this revelation and leaned forward, anxious for a more detailed explanation.

"But how could it not have been the first time? I would have remembered."

"No Gorin. You would not have remembered. Because I made quite sure you did not. The answer is contained in this phial."

The old man reached up and took down a small bottle of dark green liquid from the shelf behind him and held it out for all of them to see. "A special potion to obliterate all personal memories, save the subject's name."

"You mean you gave me that so I would forget… who I was? Where I came from…?"

"Yes Gorin. I'm sorry about having to withhold the truth from you until now, but I think you will see it was essential to take such measures."

"Essential?" Gorin's stupefaction was complete, preventing him from saying anything more for several moments. Then, when he finally tried to gather his thoughts together, he was barely coherent; "You say... Here before... And couldn't remember… Have I been here many times then…?"

"No, only once. And of course, it wasn't all you had to forget. But let me begin at the beginning. You see, Esperon's departure heralded the imminent approach of the trials and great changes described in the prophecies. Once those events were set in motion, I knew they could only end in our having to face a momentous challenge to our very existence.

"My own knowledge of what was going on in the Garden was enough to tell me that the Feblings, with their recently acquired evil allies, would not be long in preparing themselves for an attack. And that was when you came to me."

"The first time."

"Yes. It was one night when I was waiting for Drian, Fordern and Werlyn just outside the door you used to leave the City on your way to Pardylis. I saw someone moving in the darkness beyond the dim light of the walls and at first I thought it was one of them.

"They had actually gone out to collect some special herbs I needed for an infusion I was preparing. I thought perhaps there

had been some kind of accident, so I went forward to meet the figure. He stood still when he saw me approaching; looking around to make sure I was alone.

"I then saw it was a young man, but not anyone I knew… And judging by the clothes he was wearing, not anyone from the City either. It was you, Gorin."

"Me?" said Gorin, still half-dazed by everything he was now being expected to believe.

"I came to within two measures of you and stopped, while you remained perfectly still," Hexard went on. "And then you began speaking to me in a level, almost monotonous voice I can hear even now as I think of it.

"Without any preliminary greeting at all you said, 'I have a message for the leaders of the Golden City', and when I heard those words, I knew of course you certainly could not be one of us. And although I had never ever seen one, I knew you must be a Febling."

Gorin shook his head slowly and then buried his face in his hands. "Then I am," he breathed, with a note of despair in his voice.

Esperon put his arm around the young man's shoulders and tried to be comforting, but Hexard's confirmation of his worst fears had rendered him beyond consolation.

"I gave you assurances that, through me, you would be able to deliver your message," said Hexard. "I then conducted you to these rooms, with the promise of conveying the news of your arrival to the King. My original intention was to organise an audience with him the following morning.

"And then..." the old man hesitated for a moment. "Then you told me much more about yourself. Including who you were, details of your family and the status you hold among your people."

"Status?"

"Yes, Gorin. You are the eldest son of Nyort, the Most High Chieftain of the Febling clans. Obviously the man who told you he was your father when you were taken prisoner."

Gorin stared blankly, his mouth hanging half open. He felt numb; incapable of knowing how he should react to this incriminating confirmation of what his "father" had told him. Esperon also stared in surprise, but said nothing. Only Aelaguel made any comment on this stunning news.

"And so it was a Prince who went in search of the City Prince. 'Charged with the task of bringing him back at the time of need, when Zandernatis was threatened,' as written in the Book of Magres. A fitting culmination to the long years of evolution, perhaps symbolically showing the Feblings themselves are now much closer to the City people than before. Even if the creatures of darkness did hold sway over them for a while.

"With the source of that negative inspiration now removed once and for all, they should be able to move rapidly forward to a much more advanced state. Something we can perhaps all assist them in doing."

"Yes, but even so, think what I've done," murmured Gorin. "If this is all true, I am heir to the leadership of my people, just as you were Esperon. So my actions were indeed a betrayal of my own father and my own race.

"It's just the same as if you had thrown the Golden Portals wide open and brought the Febling army marching through them to overwhelm the City. Such an act is unpardonable; it must be. And to make it all worse, even among you, I must be considered one of the enemy."

"Gorin, no," cried the King. "Not unless you can look at us now and no longer see your friends. How can all this really

change what you have done for us and the way you have enabled a great evil to be driven from the world?"

"There is more to it," added Hexard. "Because you came to Zandernatis for a very special purpose; nothing at all to do with any intention to betray your own people. You came to warn, to negotiate even, but not to betray."

"Then however could I have agreed to go on a mission that would ultimately endanger my own people? I would never have done such a thing. It can't have been of my own free will..."

"You certainly had no thoughts of undertaking such a mission when you came here. You knew nothing of Esperon's departure seven months before; neither did you know anything about the prophesies, the Hill-People or the possibility of someone from outside the City summoning their help.

"Indeed, your reason for coming here had nothing at all to do with the complex destiny we now know lay behind all these events. You simply came because you were an honourable warrior. An enemy perhaps, but one who held fast to a code of conduct that would not allow you to engage in an attack on an adversary who had been given no chance of parley or an opportunity to surrender. You were an ambassador, perhaps an unofficial one, *but in no wise a traitor."*

The London Observer, dateline: 15 May 2013

More revelations from declassified CIA files

The latest batch of top secret CIA files to be declassified and made public include records of meetings held at the Agency's headquarters in Langley, Virginia, during the first six months of 1976.

While scanning through the huge amount of material released, Conspiracy Theorist blogger William Daughton (founder of the original *"What We Shouldn't Know" blog started in 2004 and closed down in 2011)* unearthed some interesting facts.

These concerned two visits paid to the Langley HQ by a certain Mr. Arkwood on Monday 17 May and Wednesday 19 May 1976. A closer examination of the records shows that he signed in as "Director of DAGRI[14a] Corp." His meetings were recorded as "IX45 compliance" discussions. IX45 is a codename often used when referring to "undesirable information". There is every reason therefore to believe that "compliance" in this respect refers to suppression of the said "undesirable information".

These clandestine meetings occurred only two weeks before the Haakon Urn texts were "stolen" from the Dickensen Institute in Melbourne. At the time, this was thought to have been the work of religious extremists. However, the discovery of the original texts in Professor Harkwood's cellar following his death suggested that he had hidden them to prevent his scientific work from being "cheapened" by the efforts underway to make it "accessible" to a wider audience... Needless to say, this latest revelation of the Professor's "CIA connection", throws a whole new light on the real motivation behind his behaviour.

14a Professor Harkwood clearly never expected anyone to track down his movements in Washington during his 1976 "vacation" in the USA. If he had, he would certainly have made a better effort to conceal his name and would not have used the acronym of the Dickensen Archaeological and Geophysical Research Institute as the name of his "organization".

Unfurling the truth

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 3741-3897

Gorin remained perplexed at this revelation which appeared to absolve him from the most heinous crime of all. Yet it seemed too easy.

"But Hexard, how could I...? he began.

"I will tell you Gorin, and maybe you will think I acted wrongly. In a certain way perhaps I did. But the ends must justify the means, for now we can see how history has been changed by the action we took, and how our peoples have turned towards a new path of advancement.

"I think we must all agree this goes much further than merely rendering one battle more honourable, since the outcome would not have been changed in the slightest by your initial intervention. Parley was impossible and a mere warning of the threatened onslaught could not have prevented the City from being overwhelmed. Our race would then have been subjugated to yours until ultimately everything came under the domination of the ally creatures' evil powers.

"You did however believe your people had a right to share some measure of the benefits we enjoy, but without invoking the horrors of a war waged on a psychologically weak and defenceless race."

"This is incredible," said Gorin, still bemused. "Yet I don't see how you got me to go along with your plan if I really thought my people were entitled to a share of what the City offered."

"We'll get there. Don't rush me. The key to the whole situation was the presence of the 'dark allies' – the term you used for them. It seems you were away on a long hunting trip when they first came among your people. By the time you

returned, they were already dominating the thoughts and ambitions of everyone you knew.

"Apparently, you had long advocated making contact with the Golden City in an attempt to gain some of the advantages such a relationship could bring.

"You had even envisaged the use of moderate force to persuade us to accept these proposals should we refuse to see your point of view, subsequently trusting in the Feblings' sincerity to prove their ability to adapt and blend into Zandernation society. You fervently believed such a partnership was the only way out of the stagnation your people had fallen into; but never under the terms imposed by the 'allies' - for they sought only to dominate and destroy.

"Your original plan was therefore no longer viable because of this evil influence, fanning your people's traditional, indecisive dissatisfaction into an unreasonable and unreasoning hatred. You recognised the danger of this trend when you saw the changes it had brought about on the members of your own family within just a few months.

"In particular, your father was prepared to take steps far more drastic for all concerned than the negotiated settlement you had long advocated. As the danger grew and attitudes became more extreme, you finally decided to come to the City and try to avoid the conflict that would mean disaster for us and in the long run for the Feblings as well."

"So in the end, it was better for me to facilitate my own people's defeat, is that what you're trying to tell me? Rather than let them win what would probably only have been a short lived victory?"

"You didn't actually express it in those terms at the time, but it's good if you can see things from such a perspective now. In any case, your main purpose in coming here was to deliver a

warning of the approaching danger and its gravity. Particularly because of what had happened to your people since the "allies" took over. You gave the example of your mother, who had apparently been transformed from the kind, gentle woman she had always been into some sort of monster, eaten up with jealousy and hatred.

"You told me she hungered for the pleasures of the City like one possessed, and was willing to do everything to obtain them, urging your father to prepare an attack. Indeed, he was so preoccupied with his plans you had no opportunity of seeing him during the few days you were with your people after returning from hunting. But you learnt enough to realise he had also been radically influenced by the allies.

"Your decision was then quickly taken; you had to bring word to us, and at least give us the chance of avoiding the confrontation for the good of all. You described the mass of slithering serpents flowing about your dwellings in a repulsive tide. You also spoke about the cries of the Garrows drowning out the natural birdsong around the entrances to your underground homes. And also of course how, in the caves themselves, the Denashurs had taken up residence, forcing many families to seek shelter elsewhere.

"With every piece of ground gained, each new precedent established, the potency of the creatures' evil influence became stronger, bringing about a veritable metamorphosis of your people's character. What had once been justly inspired ambitions were turned into a savage lust for blood; a universal greed only absolute possession and our extermination could satisfy.

"So, instead of your 'revolutionary' ideas being something no one would consider before the creatures came, they suddenly didn't go nearly far enough. Goaded on by their new masters,

your people had no interest in reaching any kind of compromise with the City people because it would deny them the excuse for indulging in destruction and wholesale slaughter."

Gorin remained silent as Hexard made all these revelations, reflecting upon the new light it certainly threw on the circumstances shaping events. Yet even this news could not wholly justify what he had done, or explain how he had managed to stay so detached from everything going on around him.

"But why wasn't I influenced by the allies then, along with all the others?"

"The reason is twofold. First of all, you were absent when they moved in and established themselves among the Feblings. Secondly, you were made of much sterner stuff than your fellows and could see what was happening to them. Making you even more determined to surmount it.

"Then, when your wishes for a peaceful solution were finally overcome by the forces of evil dominating the reason of those you had known and trusted, your resistance became even stronger. Until you finally believed coming here was the only possible way of escaping from such a horrendous dilemma."

"And after that?"

"Well, then comes the part of the story which, perhaps, makes me seem to have been in the wrong; though as I said before, we must judge these particular events by the final result and not the intermediary stages.

"You see, when you were here, speaking to me of your origins and motivations for coming, I saw how the age-old prophecies might be fulfilled. How in you and through you, there might be hope of saving Zandernatis from destruction. For you are not one of the City people and therefore not bound by

any of the laws and precepts restricting their actions and dominating their thinking.

"In addition, you would have no fear of travelling outside in the Garden and even beyond it, as they normally would, simply because you came from beyond it in the first place. And of course, you are also a Prince, as Aelaguel has pointed out. But there would have been no point in my asking you to do such a thing directly, for your object in coming here had not been to help us. Not at all! You merely wanted to avoid a terrible bloodbath and try to reach some kind of negotiated outcome, despite everything."

"So you gave me some of that," Gorin pointed to the bottle of green liquid in Hexard's hand.

"Eventually I did, yes," admitted the old man. "But first I listened to what you had to say. I tried reasoning, explaining the people of your race probably needed to go through a certain number of evolutionary stages before they could assume the kind of responsibilities they would have living in a city like Zandernatis. Responsibilities, I remember observing, our own men and women have not altogether come to terms with. Indeed, if they had, we would probably not have to face these present troubles. And then I treated your eyes."

"My eyes?"

"Yes. When you came into these rooms, you found even the normal lamplight too bright. You were used to the almost total obscurity of the Febling caverns, only moving beyond their shelter of darkness after nightfall.

"It was obvious you would find the coming daylight unbearable, so I suggested applying some special lotion to your eyes, enabling them to withstand stronger light. You agreed, and as a result your discomfort was eased, allowing you to become much more relaxed."

"Would that explain why I had terrible headaches in the desert when the sun was so strong?"

"Probably. The lotion is very efficient and has a lasting effect, but I wouldn't be able to guarantee it under really extreme conditions. Anyway, while I was administering it, the idea suddenly occurred to me of perhaps administering something else."

"The potion to make me forget who I was and where I came from?"

"Exactly. But I must emphasise Gorin, it is not irreversible, any more than the lotion for your eyes. I have another preparation to counteract it and an unguent to bring your eyes back to their original sensitivity. They probably still are quite sensitive actually, but this would reduce your present tolerance of stronger light and make you exactly as you were before."

"And I had no idea what you were giving me?"

"No. At least you had no idea how it was going to work. And there, I must admit, I did deceive you. But at the time, I knew if you took it, you would know nothing about it afterwards anyway. All such recollections would be obliterated along with everything else.

"Of course, I had some qualms about how you might react to the truth when you were eventually faced with it after taking the antidote. But it never occurred to me you might be confronted with your father before this could happen.

"My purpose was helped by the fact that you were clearly intrigued by this room and everything it contained, despite yourself. It was something quite outside your experience and you asked many questions about all the instruments, bottles, retorts and books I have here.

"I gave you some answers and talked about a few of the potions and remedies in my possession. Then, as you seemed

more and more at ease, I asked if you would also like me to give you something to strengthen your already considerable resistance to the evil influences of the allied creatures. This would put you beyond their powers once and for all, I said. Free to make objective judgements for the good of your people. Naturally, you showed great interest in this and were very keen to try it …"

"And that was the forgetting potion?"

"It was I'm afraid. After swallowing it, the subject becomes very drowsy in a matter of seconds. A period of 'walking sleep' follows, lasting a few hours before total unconsciousness sets in. This stage can be as long as a whole day and upon waking, no personal details of the subject's life up until that point remain accessible. Only the name is retained."

"So how did I get out into the Garden again if I was unconscious?"

"I led you by the hand while you were still in the 'walking sleep' state. We used the Outside Society's door you went through later with Drian and the others. Once you were in the Garden, Shimla the stag and some of the other forest creatures took you to the hillside, watching over you until you were sleeping deeply. The messenger Falcon, Huor, then kept watch to see how you would react when you finally came to your senses again.

"It was something of a gamble you see, for although I knew you would wake with no memory, I could not be certain how you would deal with such a disturbing situation. Lord Kutjaran learned about you as well, through the messages conveyed by Huor. But he only knew you were to be directed to Zandernatis where 'someone' would be waiting… Allowing you to go on believing you were coming here for the first time.

"Your arrival was of course the most crucial test of all. Even the faintest memory of having been here before might have caused you to remember more. This is was why I was so concerned when I saw the knife you had picked up in the Garden. Such a strong association could well have started a chain reaction leading to a total recollection of everything. But you came through that test or rather, the effectiveness of the potion did, and you know the rest."

"So in fact, you took advantage of Gorin's visit to engineer the circumstances which would enable the ancient prophecy to be fulfilled," observed Esperon.

"If you like. But in fact, there is no mention in the Book of Magres specifying exactly how this was to come about. But it did come about. And so, the ancient text was accurate."

"We may say that now," Esperon replied. "But it seems very much like manipulating history to me."

"No," said Aelaguel. "Hexard is right. The opportunities were presented and he recognised them. In this way the wisdom of the prophecies is shown, being on the one hand an indication of what will be, while still remaining dependent upon the free will of those who are involved in its fulfilment.

"I don't think there was very much free will in it as far as I was concerned," objected Gorin. "After all, with nothing but total blankness behind me there was no sense in taking any other path. Doing what was asked of me seemed the only way of discovering who I was."

"Well, now you know," said Hexard. "And now you have the opportunity of making that knowledge even more complete."

The old man reached up to one of the shelves and took down another bottle similar to the first, the only difference being the liquid it contained was whitish in colour.

"A few drops of this and everything obscured in your memory by the first potion will come flooding back as if it had never left you for an instant."

However, before Gorin could respond to the old alchemist's offer of a final solution to the questions plaguing him ever since his awakening, the King began to speak. His voice was low in key, but resolute, each word carefully considered and pronounced with heartfelt sincerity.

"This is, I think, the moment to express once more the thought we would like you to keep in the forefront of your mind," he said.

"No matter what may be decided or said or done, you must understand that nothing learned here this evening can ever diminish the immeasurable debt owed to you by all my people.

"Not realising the full implications of what you were doing is quite immaterial - for it cannot change the quality of tremendous courage needed to go through with it. Indeed, in a certain respect it demanded more, as under these circumstances you had no concrete terms of reference. Everything was a totally new experience.

"Despite everything, you cannot deny it has all turned out for the best. You took decisions that have benefitted everyone. It is therefore by your judgements, your acts and their repercussions that you will be remembered. We have not been overrun and your own people are free of their evil masters. This could never have occurred without the timely intervention of the Aerauma.

"They, in turn, could not have come to our aid if you had not brought my father's summons to me in Pardylis. You made it all happen. Your honourable motives brought you here, seeking peace and justice for everyone. And your courage enabled them to be achieved.

"This may not be the kind of peace you envisaged at the time, but it is a righteous and enduring one."

"Furthermore," added Aelaguel, "the present state of affairs does not in any way conflict with your original idea of how they should be. In fact, you could not know that as things were, the kind of cooperation you had in mind between your race and the people of the City would have been impossible.

"Everything has changed, thanks to you. It was your clear conception that transformed your idealistic dreams into reality. The Feblings will have learned a great deal by this experience. Once they have recovered from the effects of losing the battle and realise they are now free from the domination of evil forces, their own natural evolution should enable them to move towards renewed contact with Zandernatis and with us.

"This is of course a question for the Jurisdiction and, ultimately, the Mediators. However, I am certain a whole new era will open up for them as well as for all of us, before too many years have passed."

"So you see Gorin, it all promises well," said Esperon. "It is my most sincere wish - and the wish of us all - that you stay here in the Golden City as our honoured guest and noblest champion. It would be quite unthinkable for you to do otherwise."

"Well, I certainly can't go back to my own people. They want nothing to do with me."

"Perhaps not at the moment," said Aelaguel. "Yet one day, and maybe not too long hence, the bitter memories of this great trial will have passed and then things will change.

"This may give you the opportunity of rendering them an even greater service by bringing about true reconciliation. It is something only you can achieve, by virtue of your princely rank amongst the Feblings and your status as a revered hero of Zandernatis."

"I only hope it will turn out as you say."

"So Gorin," said Hexard, "you know everything we can tell you. With this knowledge and new sense of identity, you can now fully appreciate life in the Golden City where, for the time being, you are obliged to stay.

"Then, when time has healed the wounds of feeling, your dual identity will help you understand those who reject you now. It is then, perhaps, your finest work will be accomplished.

"But you still have this present choice to make; one allowing you to rediscover every facet of your lost self. So, do you wish to regain all aspects and all knowledge of your former way of life and thoughts…? Or not.

"You only have to take a draft of this elixir..." He held up the glass vessel containing the whitish preparation. "And you will instantly remember everything - including whatever was omitted from your original explanations.

"Some of these memories will of course be very pleasant; your childhood for example, and the excitement of hunting, as well as the fond recollections you must have of those you love.

"For example, you may have a wife and children and will think of them; although to be separated as you are now, and under these circumstances, would probably cause you much pain.

"More unpleasant things will also inevitably return to your conscious mind. Seeing those you knew and loved consumed by the allies' evil influence for example. Sowing the seeds of jealousy and indiscriminate hatred, destroying all independence of thought.

"You will also remember your own ambitions, scorned at first and then rejected as being too conciliatory once the serpents, Garrows and Denashurs were in control.

"It would be a sudden, almost cruel confrontation with a reality quite alien to you at present; and yet you have the right to repossess it. You may perhaps wonder at the suffering you feel you have inflicted, despite assurance that you have brought us none and all these things were part of our united destiny. For being is evolving, and as we are, so no one can content himself with rest."

At these words, Gorin closed his eyes, trying to take in everything Hexard was telling him. He suddenly felt as if he were standing on the precipice again, just after his awakening in the Garden. Where did his future now lie? Would it be shaped by his past? Or destroyed by it?

"You are the only one who may judge whether it is better to know all that has been; none of which may be altered. Or whether you should continue, from this day on, with the new identity you have acquired in achieving what you have, unhampered and unaffected by the old.

"It cannot change your ultimate capacity to do much to redress the balance of errors committed in the past, but might have some effect upon your appreciation of the present. However, in this matter, we have no right to impose our will. Remember, the choice is entirely yours."

Hexard held out the bottle containing the potion towards Gorin.

For a few seconds there was absolute silence, and although the moment was perhaps no longer than a dozen heartbeats, it hung upon the air for what seemed to be an indeterminate length of time.

Then Gorin rose from the bench where he had been sitting and slowly bowed his head. He turned to Esperon and Aelaguel, smiled a strange enigmatic smile betraying a multitude of transient feelings, and then turned away.

He slowly walked to the door, his calm demeanour and purposeful, unhurried movements minimising the profound significance and magnitude of what he was renouncing with his departure.

An instant later he had gone, through the narrow passage and beyond the outer door. To mingle among the crowds gathering with the dusk in celebration of the victory and the new age now dawning upon the Golden City of Zandernatis.

XVII - Making Zandernatis tangible

With the Zandernatis books published and the films about to go into production, those with a vocation to raise awareness of humanity's real origins and what they can teach us, began exploring new ways of making these truths an integral part of universal experience.

For an insight into how these ambitions might ultimately translate into reality, we are publishing an important PMEC Board memorandum of intent. This lays down the broad outlines of a project defined at a meeting specifically held to discuss how Zandernatis and everything it initially represented could be made tangible again.

All those attending were particularly keen to distance this initiative from every previous attempt to create (or re-create) "worlds" linked to sub-cultures generated by movies and/or the books on which they were based. Such precursors were considered to exist only with the purpose of numbing their visitors' discretion and beguiling them into spending as much money as possible on junk food, junk souvenirs and junk memories.

The Board decided a "tangible" Zandernatis re-creation must have far higher ideals and stand as a beacon for a whole new way of apprehending life, perception and purpose. This is of course very much an ongoing project, but the memorandum reproduced here does give us a fascinating foretaste of what could ultimately spring from that momentous 1962 discovery in Antarctica.

"Ara-Edit, Ara-Predit - Intera-Sedit"

Pre-Mythica Experience Corporation

3 Springvale Terrace, London W14 0AE, United Kingdom

MEMORANDUM

Subject: *NPG project meeting on Friday 3 March 2015*

From: Richard Hugh Phillips, *Executive Vice-President PMEC*

To: ------ - -----, *Chairman of the PMEC and Members of the Board*

Overview: *The meeting was held to review pre-planning progress for "Project Re-Creation" following the recent sub committee initiatives and feasibility studies. It gave all parties a greater sense of cohesion and a broader view of the ultimate objectives as a whole.*

The discussions covered virtually all major areas of the project and have been condensed in this document to ensure all those concerned can share the same terms of reference.

Provisional name: *New Paradise Garden*

Concept: *This is to be an "Experience Park" based on the Zandernatis Trinity, featuring many of the characters, settings and events described in the books and portrayed in the films. However, the aim is not to create just another "Theme Park" with white knuckle rides and endless queues, whole streets of souvenir shops and fast food outlets.*

This Garden will recreate the Zandernatis ethos via a series of "experiences" designed to leave a lasting impression on all those who live them. The aim will not merely be to entertain our guests, whether they come in person or visit remotely, but to inspire every man, woman and child who feels a need to personally experience the reality of the Paradise Garden, Zandernatis, Pardylis and the presence of the Aerauma.

Location*: A number of possible locations for the physical NPG have been considered, but the most suitable would appear to be Switzerland. Not only is the country centrally located in Europe and*

very well served by rail and air, it also offers astounding mountain landscapes, evoking the grandiose settings described in the Zandernatis books. Finally, Switzerland has not been involved in any war for over 200 years, making it stand apart from the rest of Europe where the imprint of many conflicts can still be sensed by those with the necessary innate sensitivity.

***Ground plan:** As far as possible, the area covered by the Garden (325,000 sqm) will broadly echo the shape of Antarctica. It will consist of four areas open to the general public: **The Garden**, with all its creatures, **Zandernatis** with its magnificent Palace and Square and **Pardylis** with a comprehensive re-creation of the Oarian Plaza and the imposing buildings around it. An additional **Dickensen Institute** area will be devoted to the scientific and existential aspects of the discovery in Antarctica, also evoking some of the controversial notions it has engendered. (See accompanying plan for further details).*

*The Garden will also feature an extensive **organic farm** to grow and produce practically all of the food and beverages served in the Garden's several "**Organic Restaurant Experience"** dining areas.*

***The Experiences**: These will broadly fall into three categories allowing visitors to choose the kind of experiences they are ready to live.*

1: Experiences based on "The Song of Gorin"

*- Meet the **Harelops** in their Bower*
*- Visit **Lord Kutjaran's Arbour** and get a first glimpse of Zandernatis.*
*- Swim with the Silver River **Water Nymphs** in their grotto.*
*- Attend a **Feast** in the Palace Square – and experience "recognition".*
*- Meet **Hexard** in his rooms and climb the Palace's silver tower.*
*- Hear **Claedon's reminiscences** and go through the Paradise Gate.*
*- Test your resolve in the treacherous **Forest of Dissemblance**[50].*
*- Ride with Ecinlorne across the **Deserts of Jerah**.*
*- Follow Gorin to **Pardylis** (blindfolded) and discover the Sildar Tower.*
*- **Fly with Daen** in an Aerauman "sky-craft" drawn by chanting Valyons.*
*- Enter the **"Summoning Place"** and recall the "Lords" to Zandernatis.*
*- View the **Great Battle** in a massive holographic "3-DD"[51] re-creation.*

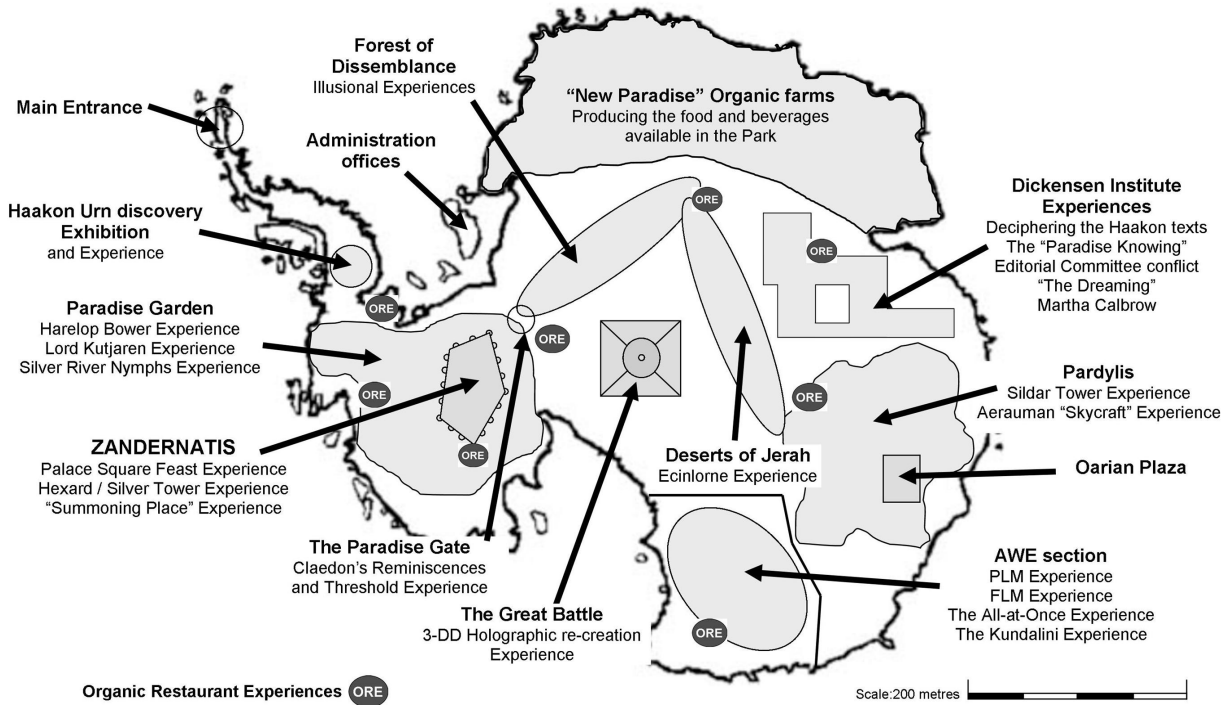
[50] This experience will not be suitable for very *young children.*
[51] 3 Dynamic Dimensional

"Ara-Edit, Ara-Predit - Intera-Sedit"

Pre-Mythica Experience Corporation

3 Springvale Terrace, London W14 0AE, United Kingdom

PROVISIONAL GROUND PLAN FOR THE "NEW PARADISE GARDEN"



2: Experiences to deepen understanding of the "Haakon revelations"
A series of "insights" giving visitors an opportunity of learning more about the Haakon Urn texts, what they teach us about the Zandernation civilisation and the impact they are having - or are likely to have - on contemporary society.

These will include:
*- An **exhibition** at the main entrance giving details of the **1962 Vostok Traverse Expedition**, its findings and transfer of the Haakon Urns to the Dickensen Institute in Melbourne, Australia. Visitors wishing to fully experience this historic moment can also take part in a **full re-enactment of the discovery** below the Antarctic ice (appropriate protective clothing will be provided).*

Talks, tableaux and presentations:
*These experiences are all to be found in the recreated **Dickensen Institute**, located next to the "Pardylis" section of the Garden.*
*- Watch the experts specialised in archaeology, hieroglyphics and semantics working on **deciphering the Haakon texts** and discuss the challenges they are facing.*
*- See Dr. G. L. Neaker present and explain the **"Paradise Knowing"** and what it tells us about the Zandernation belief system.*
*- Attend an **"Editorial Committee"** session: Witness the angry disagreements between Professors Harkwood and Gregson.*
*- Find out more about the **"Dreaming"**, its role in saving Zandernatis, its perpetuation in Australian Aboriginal culture and relevance today.*
*- Hear **Martha Calbrow** talk about her "Dreaming" experiences and visions of events linked to her past lives in Zandernatis.*

3: Experiences to accelerate personal development:
*For those seeking to attain greater perception and understanding of what really lies behind the Zandernatis legacy, opportunities to achieve these goals will be found in the secluded **AWE** (Awareness Wakening Experiences) section of the Garden.*
*These can only be accessed by those with the innate readiness to do so and should not be engaged upon lightly. Careful **assessments** of "candidates" for these experiences will be made to ensure they are all fully prepared, have made sufficient progress on their own Paths and*

understand the implications of accelerating the processes of advancement.

The AWE programme consists of:

- ***The PLM Experience:*** *Using a technique developed by Dr. H Kittner and his team at the PLMRI in Lucerne, this Past Life Memory Experience awakens subjects' potential to "revisit" their past lives in stunning detail.*
- ***The FLM Experience****: Recently developed by Dr. Kittner and his team, this technique of reviewing future lives (based on past experiences and current advancement) awakens keen awareness of the present and can have a profound effect on the way subjects subsequently lead their lives.*
- ***The All-At-Once Experience****: In contrast with what Australian Aboriginals still call the "One-Thing-After-Another" view of time most of us have, this experience reveals "Cosmic Timelessness". Potentially life-changing, subjects are eased into this state very gently and are never exposed to more than they can comfortably apprehend.*
- ***The "Kundalini" Experience.*** *This will be the most powerful of all the Experiences offered by the New Paradise Garden. It triggers a (carefully controlled) process that endows subjects with multiple "psychic" powers, heightened awareness and communion with Oneness. In other words, Full Awakening - after which life can never ever, be the same again.*

Looking Beyond

There will only ever be one "New Paradise Garden", probably located as we have seen, in Switzerland. However, everyone in the world is entitled to benefit from the Zandernatis legacy and revelations. Intensive studies are therefore underway to make these experiences available at dedicated remote locations throughout the world. When this pivotal phase of the project has been completed, "Raising Awareness of Awareness" will take on a whole new meaning.

XVIII – The Great Sleep

"Triumph at the price of loss,
Victory made bitter by the sacrifice.
This is the war to end them all we say…
Ever knowing we must die,
So we may die again…

"History of the Second Heroic Age" Part II
(written in 3029).

From "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 3898-3912

Celebrations for the coming of the New Age lasted for several days. During that time, the people of Zandernatis gradually got used to the idea of having the Aeraumen in their midst. They also got used to the idea of being able to walk out through the City portals, venture towards the forests and then look back at their hitherto hermetically closed world.

However, since nothing ever stands still, subtle changes began to appear in the City people's thoughts and attitudes. They were of course grateful for what the Aeraumen had achieved for them. Yet some began to feel the ongoing presence of a "superior" race in Zandernatis was in fact restricting their "freedom of celebration".

This was by no means a major trend. Nor was it something openly expressed by the men and women who were now beginning to recover fully from the traumas of war.

Aelaguel and the other Aeraumen were, however, able to detect this nascent current of feeling. No mention of it was made to King Esperon or Gorin, who were both too caught up in the glow of gratitude and near-adulation shown by the population. Hexard was also aware of the changes slowly taking place, but he preferred to hold his own counsel.

Exactly thirty days after the Great Battle, Aelaguel and Daen took off from the Palace Square in late afternoon without any prior warning. There was barely time for more than a handful of people to gather when the song of the Valyons started to rise in pitch as the chariot gathered speed, watch it rise gracefully into the air and head off towards the East.

They returned two days later, landing in the Square just after dawn. Aelaguel immediately went to the Hall of Assembly, now being used by the Aerauma for their headquarters again.

Changes are announced

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 3913-3950

Still feeling a little dazed after having been woken so early, and so unexpectedly, Gorin was ushered into Aelaguel's room on the building's third floor overlooking the Palace Square.

"Thank you for coming," said Aelaguel. "Please forgive the early hour, but there is something we need to discuss."

Gorin mumbled a half-truth about the earliness of the hour not being a problem.

"The time was not right until now, but before saying anything else, I would like you to know how much I admired the decision you took when Hexard offered you the opportunity of recovering your memory. It showed you have fully assumed your role and become a true citizen of Zandernatis."

Gorin nodded, wondering what was coming next.

"This said, I have to inform you that changes are in the air."

Gorin looked puzzled. "What kind of changes?"

"There was a tremendous feeling of elation following the defeat of the Feblings' evil allies that also embraced us upon our return to the City we created three millennia ago. However, by its very nature, the grace of elation cannot be permanent, even in Paradise.

"This has led to us realising something of overwhelming importance."

Gorin was now fully alert, his heart beating fast in anticipation of some major development.

Aelaguel continued. "Ultimately, this state of grace can only decline, diminish and devolve. This was in fact what happened after our initial departure, soon after Zandernatis was created. Although it took much longer to take hold because everything was so new and exciting. There was also the permanent memory of every incarnation keeping spirits and ideals alive. It was a device we hoped would make the grace of Paradise self-perpetuating.

"This issue was discussed at a meeting in the Aar-Pardylis yesterday evening, during which Hirlute reported on consultations with the Mediatorum on the subject.

"Without going into excessive detail, it is now apparent that grace should never be granted, as it was to our descendants in Zandernatis, but earned. Just as a peak of euphoria can only dissipate and devolve, so too grace cannot be appreciated or sustained if it is freely given. Only when it has been attained through the trials and tribulations of experience can an essence be worthy of achieving it.

"In consequence, and upon hearing the wisdom in Hirlute's words, the Assembly made a solemn resolution, involving a certain number of important decisions. It is now my duty to

make you aware of them. I must however warn you against speaking of this to anyone under any circumstances. Is that clear?"

Gorin agreed, but felt an empty hollow of dread opening up within him.

"This may be a New Age, but it cannot be a mere imitation of the previous one. It cannot be allowed to sink into the complacency and indolence that attracted the dark forces of the allies and fired the jealousy of your people.

"Further steps must therefore be taken, which will be as hard for the people of Paradise as for us. In fact, ours will be the greatest burden to bear, having fleetingly believed the grace of the beginning could be regained. For we will ever know what went before, whereas those like you, who have no such recollections, can remain in blissful unknowing until they earn the right of true awareness."

Gorin tried to speak, but was silenced by a gesture from the Aerauman.

"That is the essence of what has been decided by the Mediatorum, endorsed by the Grand Assembly and shall be implemented during this 'Night of Rebirth' by the Aerauma in Paradise. When you see it, you will understand, and be the only one who can, instead of being the first page of an unwritten book.

"It is better if I go now, Gorin. Before I say too much. This is how it must be, and what must be, shall be. For the greater good. I can only add, that just as your decision to look forward and decline Hexard's offer to restore your recall was courageous, henceforth your ability to remember will make you even more singular. Giving you the authority to become the architect of a future based on earned knowing."

As Gorin tried to work out what all this might mean, Aelaguel stepped towards him, laying light hands on the young man's shoulders. With head bowed and eyes closed, the Aerauman infused Gorin with a sense of purpose and the assurance he would know what should be done, when needed, to implement decisions made on another plane.

Light over Zandernatis

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 3951-3995

As dusk fell over Zandernatis on what was to be the "Night of Rebirth", Gorin was standing on the ramparts, looking westwards at the darkening vestiges of the day.

In the streets, everything was normal, people were going about their business and preparations were being made for a Grand Ball in the Palace Square. There was music in the air, accompanied by laughter, banter and the eternal love of life that made existence in Zandernatis so delightful - and so undemanding.

To make room for the great event in the Square, all the chariots and their Valyons had taken off in mid afternoon, at least half of them heading off directly into the East while the remainder touched down outside the City. Gorin could clearly make out Daen's chariot and the Sky-Force Captain beside it.

As the sun retreated further beyond the horizon, the glow emanating from the City walls became more and more apparent, bathing everything in its familiar, unreal cloak of light.

Just as he was about to descend from the ramparts, Gorin happened to look eastwards. He froze for a moment. There was something new out there.

He looked harder, and was able to make out an indistinct point of reddish light close to the horizon. It seemed to pulse through the swirling dusty air, sometimes almost disappearing completely.

Gorin was perplexed. Surely, that had never been visible from here before…? His thoughts were interrupted by the sound of a familiar voice calling up to him from the street below.

"Come on Gorin, you're going to miss all the fun!" It was Fordern, sporting a smart, brand-new tunic and obviously very much in a party mood.

Gorin descended the steps and greeted his friend warmly, the two of them heading off together towards the bright lights in the Square ahead.

Although it was one of the most sumptuous events to have been organised in the City for many years, Gorin found it very difficult to enjoy the Grand Ball. He kept thinking over what Aelaguel had told him with an increasing sense of misgiving. In fact, as the evening wore on, he felt more and more detached from his surroundings. It was almost as if he were no longer there and everything around him; the music, the food, the people, had no substance. It all seemed to be part of a dream.

Then, as the Ball reached its climax, with the revellers dancing and singing, throwing themselves into the celebrations as if they knew what was coming, an icy cold wind began to whip across the Palace Square.

Within minutes, the bunting was flying through the air, the banners and garlands were torn from their hooks and the thick table coverings billowed like sails. This resulted in dishes, bowls and jugs of punch being overturned, tipping large quantities of food and drink onto the ground.

The party spirit dissolved rapidly before this freak blast of chilling wind. With everyone unprepared for such a dramatic change in the weather, people began to seek shelter in the lee of buildings and the narrow streets giving onto the Square.

Standing under the portico before the Hall of Assembly, Gorin wondered what this climatic phenomenon could mean. He watched as the wind continued to upturn tables, blow chairs across the Square and chase away all the revellers.

Within minutes, there was nobody left in sight. All the magic and gaiety of the Grand Ball had been instantly dissolved like a pinch of salt in water, leaving nothing but the wreckage of celebration.

The wind continued to blow for a few minutes more, creating miniature tornadoes that picked up scraps of paper and shreds of fabric to carry across the Square. Then, with a final flurry, the wind suddenly dropped and everything fell silent as if waiting for something to happen.

Gorin cautiously emerged from his refuge under the portico and stepped out into the Square, looking at the scene of desolation all around him. Everyone had fled and were probably all in their homes, trusting the dawn would bring them a "normal" day in Paradise.

The silence of the streets and the stillness of the air was such a contrast with what had taken place just a few moments before, Gorin had an overpowering impression the City was waiting for something to happen. He looked up at the sky, but everything seemed perfectly normal; it was a cloudless, moonless night and all the familiar stars were strung out overhead just as they had always been.

He cast his eyes around the Square again, observing the golden glow emanating from all the buildings and creating its usual, comfortable feeling of warmth. Until Gorin suddenly

realised there was something different about the quality of this ambient light. It was not quite as “soft” as usual. There was a touch of red or perhaps orange... A hue that was gradually becoming stronger.

He looked up again and saw why.

High over Zandernatis, a slowly pulsating crimson disc was making its way across the sky. The light it cast was descending in a flood of blushing colour, blending with the City’s natural golden glow.

Gorin gasped in amazement as he watched the Eternal Chariot slowly move into position directly above the Palace Square. Once it was there, the reddish light dominated everything, bathing the entire City in its rays. Whether this was because the actual strength of the light had been increased or was due to the “star” actually descending, could not be clearly determined. In any case, at this moment, Zandernatis could no longer be called the Golden City. It had become the Orange City.

At this moment, Gorin felt a great weariness come over him. He also began to feel pleasantly warm in the orange glow that was now enveloping him. His mind became suffused with feelings of contentment and reassurance. Whatever was unfolding, was taking place in the natural order of things. It was just as it should be and indeed, tomorrow would be another day.

The Un-knowing

a commentary by Professor J. Gregson

What took place in the course of the next three days could not, be recorded. Indeed, no one was ever really sure if it had lasted only three days. Perhaps it was less. Perhaps much more.

In any event, during this period, a new die was cast, as had been decreed by the Mediatorum and implemented by the Aerauma. For the good of their descendants in Zandernatis and for the good of all in every other Jurisdiction. It brought about the end of one age and the beginning of another. Some called it the Fall of Paradise, the Fall from Grace, and even the Fall of Man…

In reality, it was not a Fall from anything. Simply a choice of "natural selection". The definition of a new path in recognition of the knowledge that awareness must be sought and earned, rather than inherent. To give evolution genuine purpose.

The New Awakening

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 3996-4083[52]

Gorin regained consciousness slowly, his senses gathering together one after the other, as if they were being breathed into him.

He became aware of the soft bed he was lying on and the warm rays of the sun shining down on him.

He moved his hand to one side and felt the silky texture of the coverlet beneath him. With his eyes still closed, he reached up and touched the downy pillow beneath his head, as if it had been the source of all his dreams. He also sensed the delicate fragrance of flowers in the air, brought to him on a gentle breeze.

He lay immobile for several moments, as a strange sensation of incomprehension began to steal over him. Where was he? How did he come to be there? He must have slept for quite some time to feel so confused… Just be patient, he thought. Everything would come flooding back in a minute... And then it did.

He opened his eyes. He was lying on a bed in a small room next to an open window, with the sun shining through it. There was a vase of fresh wildflowers standing on a small table against the wall in front of him. He sat up, looked out of the window, and realised he must be in one of the upper rooms in the Hall of Assembly building, overlooking the Palace Square of Zandernatis.

It was a relief to find himself in familiar surroundings. He remembered what had happened here, how he had come seeking an opportunity to make contact with the City's people.

[52] Compare with the opening of "Pre-Destination" stanzas 14 - 19

How he met Hexard, who prepared him to come a second time and be sent on a mission to bring back the King's son, Esperon.

There had been the journey, with Ecinlorne, to Pardylis, the meeting with Aelaguel, the Great Assembly and a return to Zandernatis to defend it from the Feblings and their evil allies.

The Feblings! Of course, his own people. How could he possibly have forgotten his own people? And his own childhood… He had such fond memories of being a boy in the land beyond the Greywoods, of playing with his sister Gildrich, of his mother gently scolding him for being such a dreamer. And then of going hunting in the hills. He loved being alone with the might and the delicacy of nature. There had always been a strange communion with those forces, a oneness with them, setting him apart from his fellows.

He also remembered the jealousy he had seen steadily building among all his kin, and particularly his father Nyort, the Febling leader. His people nurtured a deep and festering grievance at not being allowed to benefit from everything Zandernatis had to offer. He had once accompanied a party of scouts who went to gaze at it from the edge of the woods. It had seemed so inaccessible, so unattainable and such a contrast with his own people's rudimentary way of living. Yet everybody knew, they could never hope to assail it, at least not unaided.

He also recalled his father's fury when he suggested they should try and make contact, try and negotiate some kind of agreement. In despair, he had gone off on a long, long hunting trip, seeking peace and communion with the forest, with the land, with the creatures.

Then there was the return, and the horrific discovery of the "allies" and what they were doing to his people…

How they had changed and in particular, how his gentle mother had become transformed…

But there were even more memories! New memories of ancient things. He was amazed at all the vivid images suddenly engulfing his mind, one after another.

Now, he was no longer a young man, nor even a young boy playing with his sister… He was a very old man, wise to the ways of the world, with a creaking, ageing body but an alert mind looking back, looking forward.

He was a woman! Carrying her third son, proud of her warrior husband…

He was a priest. Administering to the demands of the Tree God. Making others bow down to it, honour it, obey it.

He was a young girl. Carried off by a rival tribe. Abused, hurt, killed… The memories came flooding back, one after another, then overlapping, blending into a cascade of images and powerfully vivid emotions.

His retrospective reverie was rudely shattered by the sound of great lamentation rising from the Square below. It was a woman, sobbing in despair, her distressing wails reverberating from the walls to make her cries sound even more distraught.

Seconds later, the sound of another woman crying out and sobbing could be heard, until it was drowned by the building hubbub of everyone else reacting to what was going on.

Gorin sprang to his feet and looked out of the window.

He was immediately able to identify the weeping women, for they were surrounded by several other people, presumably trying to console them or understand the cause of their distress. In fact, from his position high above the heads of everyone else in the Square, Gorin could clearly see what was causing such anguish.

Both women were cradling a child in their arms, and even from such a distance, he could see that the two tiny bodies were lifeless. He rushed to the door, descended the staircase and

emerged into the building's main lobby. Moments later, he was out on the Square, mingling with the throng and trying to edge closer to the inconsolable women.

"Gorin!" He felt a tug at his sleeve and turned to see Werlyn, looking at him with searching eyes.

"What's going on?" he asked his old friend.

"We don't know," answered Werlyn, his voice sounding strained. "Everyone's just woken up. It seems we've all been asleep for quite a while. Perhaps even a few days. And some of the newborns didn't make it. There are many new mothers like those two all over the City. It's awful…"

Gorin tried to process what Werlyn was telling him.

Asleep for several days? Was that really possible? Looking more closely at the other people in the Square, he saw all of them had a strange, vacant look in their eyes, as if they barely knew where they were. Or perhaps even who they were.

"Has anything else happened?" he asked Werlyn. "Have others been affected?"

"I don't know. It's too early for anyone to know. All the people can think of at the moment are these cruel, senseless deaths. Infants - babies who will never know the joys of living. It's like a stab in the heart." The young man's eyes filled with tears and he buried his head in his hands.

Gorin frowned. He had never seen emotions such as these expressed by anyone in Zandernatis before. Death had never been that much of an issue as far as he knew, since everyone knew they would return in a new body to carry on enjoying life. Suddenly, something struck him…

"Werlyn," he said, as the young man emerged from his veil of tears. "Have you seen anyone in your family since you woke up this morning?"

"Why, yes. We were all at home. My wife is over there trying to comfort that poor woman." His arm waved towards a crowd of people gathered around the still sobbing mother.

"Do you…?" He hesitated, fearing the answer. "Were you married to your wife in your previous life? Or was she perhaps your brother, or your teacher, or someone else...?"

"What? What are you saying?" Werlyn's face became transformed, changing from an expression of utter sorrow to one of disbelief, even anger.

"I'm asking if you remember your relationship with your present wife before. In your last life. Or any of your past lives."

"What is this rubbish?" Werlyn stepped back, as if Gorin's sudden irrationality might be contagious. "There are people here suffering a tragic loss and you're asking stupid questions like that. What's happened to you?"

It was a question Gorin was beginning to ask himself. What had happened to him? And to everyone else in Zandernatis?

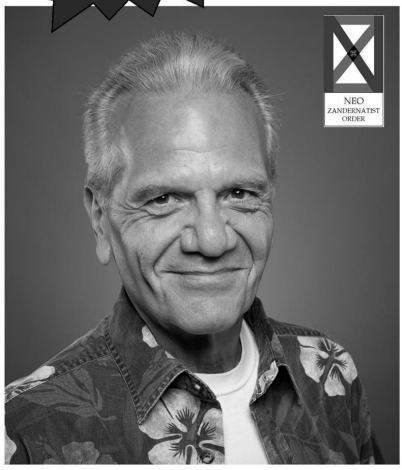
With a look of shocked disbelief in his eyes, Werlyn blundered off into the crowd in search of his wife and more rational people. Leaving Gorin to come to terms with the burdensome truth he now realised he would have to accept.

For a moment, he thought of asking other people around him the same sort of questions. But there was little point. He knew they would be just as incensed as Werlyn.

Aelaguel had called it the "Night of Rebirth". He had said Gorin would be the only one to understand it instead of being "the first page of an unwritten book". He saw what that meant now. He also understood it would be "for the greater good". And that "henceforth his ability to remember…" to remember his past, his many pasts… would indeed empower him to be the architect of a future in which knowing could no longer be freely bestowed, but must be earned.

CANNES FESTIVAL UPDATE

Mystery PMEC Chairman's identity finally revealed



After many months of speculation, the face behind the Pre-Mythica Experience Corporation and Pre-Mythica Pictures was finally revealed at a Media Briefing on the sidelines of this year's International Cannes Film Festival.

Held at the Martinez Hotel, close to the *Palais des Festivals* on Canne's famous *La Croisette,* journalists were expecting casting details for the PMP's upcoming "Zandernatis Trilogy", due to go into production next autumn. But since it appeared that "New Talent" would be used almost exclusively, no spectacular disclosures were anticipated.

However, when it was announced that the **PMEC Chairman** would be opening the Briefing **in person**, the mounting excitement among the audience suddenly became palpable.

"Time for the world to know…"

Moments later a tall, slim man with short, silver grey hair dressed in jeans and an open shirt with a bold floral pattern strode onto the platform. He took his place at the podium and looked out at the audience, never flinching for a moment before the barrage of camera flashes directed at him.

His first words of greeting, spoken with a soft, lyrical Scottish accent, instantly stilled the excited murmurs in the room.

"Let me introduce myself," he said, smiling as everyone leaned forward, hanging on his every word.

"It's time for the world to know where we're coming from," he said, looking around the room with a playful glint in his steely blue eyes.

"My name is Rodric H. Blane, and I have the immense privilege of being the Chairman of Pre-Mythica and also a co-founder of the Neo-Zandernatist Order."

"A whole new era…"

A moment's stunned silence was followed by the hubbub of everyone talking and trying to ask questions at the same time. Rodric Blane raised his hand to quell the flood of excited chatter.

"It's perfectly logical when you think about it," he continued. "The NZO has been quietly working to spread the truth about our Zandernation origins and their implications for over 35 years.

"But since publication of the books was announced, we have been able to operate more openly. As a result, we have received substantial support for our mission from some surprising sources, including a number of major IT corporations interested in improving our collective quality of life. And quality of life experience.

"This has given us the potential of reaching massive audiences via the PEMC and gradually help initiate a whole new era of responsible self-realisation."

The Knowing One

from "The Song of Gorin", Stanzas 4084-4106

It had been ten years and five weeks since the Great Battle took place. In that time, a great many changes had come to pass in the Golden City of Zandernatis. The portals had remained open and the fields beyond the walls were being cultivated again. Life was still good, but the almost compulsive need to "celebrate" was not as strong as it used to be. Other things had to be considered in order to live a balanced and worthy life.

Gorin the Wise, also called "The Knowing One" was having his weekly audience with King Esperon in one of the Palace's smaller salons. The King preferred the more intimate, less formal atmosphere it offered rather than the grandiose pomp of the official Throne Room.

Both men were looking out across the City, resplendent as ever in the light of early morning. The great carillon of bells had just fallen silent after ringing out their daily "Hymn to Paradise".

"It was ten years ago today Hexard died," said Esperon, still gazing out over the roofs and towers of the City.

"Indeed it was," said Gorin. "We owe such a lot to him."

"It happens to us all. But when a person like that goes, you sometimes wonder what it's all for."

"He did a great deal in his life. After all, without him, Zandernatis would not be as it is today. I wouldn't be here, and neither would you. Perhaps not even the City itself…"

"Do you think much about death?" suddenly asked Esperon.

"Death is a fact of life," said Gorin, guardedly. "Every end is the beginning of something new, whether it is a life, or a cycle or a phase… And that new life, cycle or phase will be what we make it and what we deserve."

"I know. You're always reminding me…"

"And you think it's easy to say."

"Not so much easy to say. Just hard to remember when you're up against a difficult situation."

Their conversation was interrupted by a discrete knock on the door. One of Esperon's aides entered the room carrying a small scroll. He approached, presented it to the King and withdrew.

Esperon unrolled the note and stared at it for a second, an expression of amazement coming over his face. He then looked up at Gorin, the beginning of a smile on his lips.

"Well," he said. "Maybe this marks the start of one of your 'cycles' or 'phases'...

"What is it?"

"There is a delegation of Feblings at the portal. They say they come in peace and wish to talk with us about the future…"

TO BE CONTINUED
AND PRECEDED

XIX - Future Dreaming:
Stories from the New Paradise Garden

After focusing all its attention on past life regression to reveal memories of lives in ancient Zandernatis since 2012, the PLMRI began extending its research to also encompass ***Future Life Memories*** *in May 2014.*

The purpose of this new departure was a desire to discover what effect the Zandernatis revelations would have on future society. In particular, there was considerable interest in discovering if the influence of the books, films and, above all, the planned creation of the New Paradise Garden in Switzerland, would reflect and contribute to the collective "consciousness shift" widely asserted to be already underway.

First experiments

Initially, Dr. Kittner and his teams worked with subjects who had already been able to clearly recall memories from their multiple lives in Zandernatis. As already reported, a considerable number of these had been studied at the Puerto Arenas centre in southern Chile. First results were encouraging, since the teams found it was relatively easy to project these subjects' perception towards lives "yet to come".

However, much to the researchers' disappointment, none of these produced any conclusive insights into future incarnations having any particular connection with the notion of "spreading awareness".

As a result, Dr. Kittner and most of his team returned to Switzerland in September 2014, where they began applying their techniques to subjects they had previously found highly suitable, but unable to access any memories reaching as far back as pre-glacial Antarctica.

Fresh perspectives – first glimpses

Almost as soon as research began into these subjects' future lives, a number of very interesting results began to emerge. For the moment, not all of these have been fully documented or analysed. What has been discovered however, is extremely tantalising to say the least.

Several subjects described living at a time in the relatively near future when awareness of Zandernatis and its culture were spreading rapidly throughout Western Europe and the Americas. This was because the story of the "legendary civilisation" in Antarctica – and the compelling evidence of its existence - had captured public imagination to such a degree that it was well on the way to becoming part of "popular culture". However, in contrast with many other such "fads", the "Zandernatis ethos" was clearly having a uniquely positive effect upon large numbers of people; subtly changing the way they came to terms with the notion of evolving across many lifetimes, free of the tyranny imposed and fabricated by "conventional" religions as instruments of political power. Then dawned the gradual, liberating awareness that this new version of truth was universal. Simply because it adjusted to every person's individual place upon the Path at that particular point in his or her (multiple) lives.

Visions of the New Paradise Garden

Out of the 35 subjects who have so far had future life experiences linking them in some way or another to this burgeoning new culture, seven have described visiting the "New Paradise Garden" in Switzerland. All of these visits appeared to take place at a time when the Garden had been in existence for between ten and fifteen years.

By this time, awareness of the foundation principles was very widespread, although fiercely contested by diminishing numbers of conservatives defending the monotheistic religions and self-styled "pragmatic" figures in society. In other words, it would seem that by this time, a great many had indeed been inspired to "go forth and spread awareness of awareness, according to their place upon the Path" (as described in the NZO Manifesto, statement VII).

Virtual Paradise Gardens

In one particular case, Dr. Kittner and his team managed to take one young man three lives forward, to a time when he/she was a young mother. She described an intriguing experience with her children in Mexico City. They walked into the spacious foyer of a fairly large white circular building with a domed roof. They were given a mask to cover their eyes and then a light, enveloping helmet was placed on their heads. They were then guided forward – and suddenly they were in the New Paradise Garden. They were there… really there! They could see… hear… touch, smell and feel… There was a light breeze… The sun was shining…

They all strolled around the Garden, enjoying the various experiences and everything they evoked. They were greeted by a group of adorable Harelops… They rode in a chariot with Daen, who looked absolutely magnificent with white robe and wings… They flew with the Captain over the Palace and then went on to Pardylis…

The wonderful thing about this visit was that nobody ever had to wait. It was enough to approach the entrance of whatever they wanted to see – and the doors would open exclusively for them.

They visited nearly everything: The Grotto, the Forest of Dissemblance (the children found that a little scary)… And then the wonderful organic farm, the Learning Centre, a gigantic 3D relief model of Antarctica where the layers of ice melted away before your eyes… As Zandernatis rose out of the ground to the song of the Valyons wheeling in the sky above…

At the end of the visit, their helmets were removed, they took off their eye masks and found themselves back in the main foyer again. On their way to the exit they stopped for a moment to look at a world map showing where all the Virtual Paradise Gardens were located: New York, Wicker Park (Chicago), San Diego, Canterbury, Chartres, Milan, Ulm, Johannesburg, Mumbai, Singapore, Hong Kong, Kinglake (Melbourne), Sydney, Buenos Aires, Providencia (Santiago)… and of course their own Mexico City.

Virtual awareness of awareness

The seven subjects who could describe visits to the "physical" NPG had similar impressions of the various experiences, although did find the queues rather long at times. Three of them also reported different kinds of memories resulting from visits to the AWE (Awareness Wakening Experiences) centre in a secluded part of the Garden. These included lying on a comfortable couch featuring a line of five circular insets of varying colours along its length, apparently corresponding to specific energy points on the spine. Once they were comfortable, their eyes were covered and they were fitted with an enveloping helmet also covering the nape of the neck.

These subjects described this experience to be quite unlike any other. Within moments they felt themselves becoming lighter, some described the feeling as "heady"… and a split second later they were in familiar surroundings again. At home. At work. With friends… They felt comfortable, at peace… And then they started perceiving things that were not so familiar. Colours and lights around the people they were with. Members of their families, colleagues, even people in the street… Yet somehow this enhanced perception seemed to be quite normal… as was an ability to detect the moods and even the health of those they were observing.

Their consciousness then seemed to extend further. To an awareness of the Earth that mothered them; Her maternal love – and Her suffering at the blind, egocentric greed of Her wasteful, destructive children. They felt an aching concern for all those unable to see what they were seeing, as realisation of a Greater Scheme brought compulsion to help those who looked away, and a yearning to right all the wrongs now so glaringly apparent.

After this consciousness-expanding empowerment, two subjects spoke of the experience as "immensely beautiful" and "profoundly revealing". The third went even further, describing it as a "life-changing worldview of multiple dimensions, multiple existences, multiple realities… And a single, compassionate purpose".

Dr. Kittner and his team were fascinated by these revelations and the implications they had for changing the mindset of a whole generation. As those who had been intrigued and absorbed by the books, captivated and uplifted by the films, sought opportunities to live the experiences for themselves at the New Paradise Garden in Switzerland and the Virtual Gardens all around the world. While those who felt ready could go further, experience and live the "Awareness Waking Experience" and, for a moment, glimpse "The Knowing".

Illusional time and ultimate freedom

Those who have never considered how it can be possible to see lives that have "not yet happened" are invited to explore some of the most recent scientific and spiritual convergences on this issue. We can also reflect on Albert Einstein's theories relating to time and space. For example, as the June 2010 issue of the "Scientific American" reminds us:

> *"Albert Einstein's theories of relativity suggest not only that there is* ***no single special present*** *but also that* ***all moments are equally real****. Fundamentally, the future is no more open than the past."*

In other words, the future AND the past are equally "open". **Time is unreal**, and if we have the possibility of remembering all our "pasts" there is no reason why we should not be able to "premember" our futures as well. Most of us believe we can influence our futures by what we do in this and subsequent lives. But if both really are "equally open", we must be able to influence the past as well! Hence the realisation that the passage of time, and time itself, are illusions. Therefore, if we really can influence <u>both</u> of them, EVERYTHING we have done, are doing, will do and become are totally within our control, making us…

entirely free to

"Shape our own reality"

NB: This is a contemporary way of expressing the ancient Australian aboriginals' ***"all-at-once"*** *notion that played such an important role in their understanding of* ***"The Dreaming"****.*

(As revealed in ***"Pre-Destination" Chapter X****, these peoples were descendents of migrants from Antarctica as the continent drifted south and gradually cooled many tens of thousands of years ago).*

XX – Zandernatis – a new creation from the Royal Ballet

In addition to the PLMRI's Future Life Memory research described in the previous chapter, one particular subject managed to bring back some remarkable visions of an event in the relatively near future, clearly demonstrating how much influence the Haakon Urn revelations would have on society.

The subject was a young English woman named Faye Castaling. She contacted the PLMRI in Lucerne in early 2015, volunteering to take part in the research programme because, "I'm always having really vivid dreams about things happening in the future. They're usually events of various kinds – things like concerts and public celebrations… Very often I see the dates when they're going to happen as well. I'd really like to know what it all means…"

Dr. Kittner was very intrigued by the phenomena she described and invited her to take part in the FLM programme.

From the very first sessions, Faye described attending the first performance of a new ballet at London's Royal Opera House in 2028 clearly inspired by "The Song of Gorin". Over a period of some three weeks, her graphic, highly detailed descriptions enabled Dr. Kittner and his team to "pre-produce" significant sections of the souvenir programme to be issued for that Gala evening.

This is a unique and fascinating insight into the growing influence the story of Zandernatis is destined to have on our society.

EVENING STANDARD - 22 May 2028

New Royal Ballet "Song of Gorin" production triumphs at "The Garden"

The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden Photo: Ross London

By our Arts Correspondant, **Douglas Andrews**

The world premier performance of 'Zandernatis", the latest Royal Ballet production, took place last night at London's Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Ballet history was made yesterday evening with the opening performance of "Zandernatis" danced by Natasha Kamiskaya, Philippe Coeurond and Johan Kummel, to music by David Rose-Mortimer and choreography by Nathanial Boudoin.

This new ballet casts an amazing spell. To begin with, David Rose-Mortimer's music is best described as "dream-like", possessing a unique quality which is perfect for this kind of "legendary fantasy".

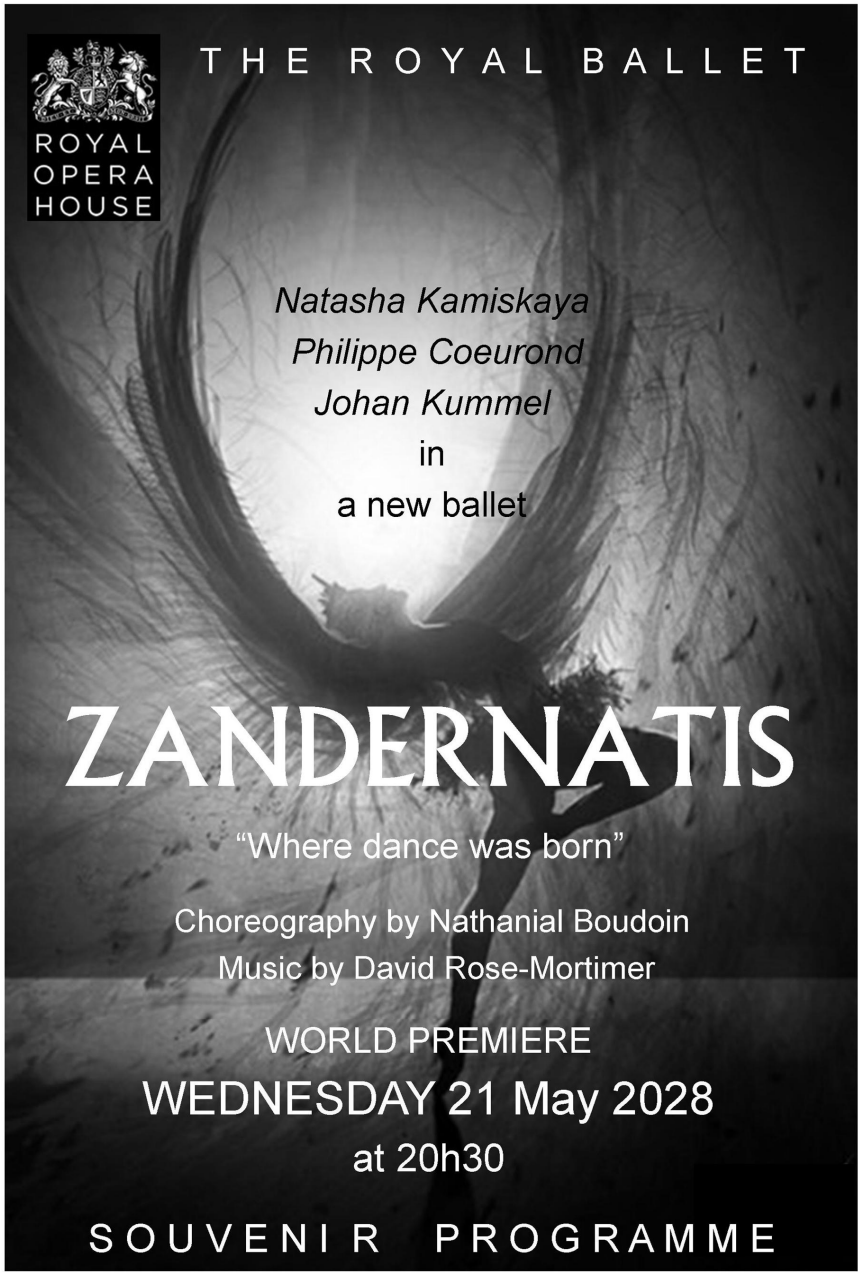
Loosely based on the books by Gordon Keirle-Smith and the films directed by Boyd Mastell, the ballet describes the quest of a young man, Gorin, who wakes up in Paradise knowing nothing but his own name. Rising French star Philippe Coeurond was perfect in the role of Gorin, expressing the young man's many moods with delicacy and superb technique.

Natasha Kamiskaya, who earned great acclaim in last season's production of "Galadriel" lived up to expectations by dancing the multiple roles of seductive water nymph, Gorin's unicorn guide Ecinlorne and the androgynous Guardian Angel Aelaguel.

Maintaining the tradition of regularly creating exciting new ballets such as "Alice in Wonderland", "The Winter's Tale", "The Feline Prince" and "Galadriel", the Royal Ballet looks like it has done it again judging by the audience's rapturous applause and endless curtain calls.

If you have read the books, you will be all too aware that the storyline has been severely, even savagely, truncated. However, what remains serves as a splendid pretext for some very sensitive choreography, performed with disarming grace by the principal dancers with the possible exception of Darren Summers as Hexard. His slightly lacklustre performance may be explained by the fact that his character is supposed to be several thousand years old.

Despite these criticisms, it is obvious that "Zandernatis" will rapidly become one of the most popular contemporary productions in the Royal Ballet's repertoire.



NB: Since the original artwork for this poster does not yet exist, we are unable to attribute it to the artist who will create it within the next 10 or 12 years. We therefore invite him or her to contact us upon becoming aware of this "pre-produced" version so that we can add the appropriate credits.

ROYAL BALLET

Presents

ZANDERNATIS

Where Dance Was Born

Staging	Malcolm Korfas
Choreography	Nathaniel Boudoin
Aerial choreography	Greg Bradshaw
Repetiteur Corps de Ballet	Karen Fillette
Music	David Rose-Mortimer
Story adaptation	Gordon Keirle-Smith
Set Design	Gareth Mayo
Costumes	Margaret Morrisot
Lighting Designer	Michael Northwood
Projection Designer	Carrie Fothergill
Special effects designer	Humphrey Ponce
Musical Director	Carlos Kizenski
Conductor	Mario Contesso
Orchestra	Royal Opera House Orchestra

CAST

Gorin	Phillippe Coeurond
Esperon	Johan Kummel
Laztana / Ecinlorne / Aelaguel	Natasha Kamiskaya
Hexard	Darren Summers
Lord Kutjaran	Daniel Prentice
Claedon	Semaj Nosreg

For the Royal Ballet

President: HRH The Prince of Wales
Director: Hubert Maswell - Associate Director: Felicity White
Music Director: Charlotte Cabal - Resident Choreographer: Daniel Warren
Artistic Associate: Sergio Barottini

Synopsis

Act I

- Gorin (*Phillippe Coeurond*) wakes up slowly in the Paradise Garden, confused, disorientated and with a blank memory. Suddenly, a company of Harelops appears and teach him how to dance. They take him to the Lord of the Garden (*Daniel Prentice*) who shows him the Golden City that Gorin is destined to save from mortal danger.
- En route for Zandernatis (The Golden City), Gorin falls into the Silver River and is rescued by Water Nymphs. He is almost seduced by Laztana (*Natasha Kamiskaya*) until he remembers his mission and leaves the imploring Water Nymphs behind.
- He is met at the gates of Zandernatis by Hexard, the City Alchemist (*Darren Summers*) who takes him to the Palace Square where an extravagant Ball is taking place. Gorin is caught up in the merry-making until Hexard hustles him away.
- Hexard shows Gorin a vision of Prince Esperon (*Johan Kummel*), heir to the Winged Throne who left the City on a quest seven months previously. Gorin is charged with bringing him back to assume the throne when the moment comes.

Act II

- Gorin meets Ecinlorne (*Natasha Kamiskaya*) outside the City walls. She leads him to the Paradise Gate where they dance a wistful trio with Claedon, the ageless Gatekeeper (*Semaj Nosreg*).
- Ecinlorn and Gorin penetrate the Forest of Dissemblance where they are beset by many illusions, temptations, tests and trials. They finally come to the Deserts of Jerah which they cross in a tumult of speed, sandstorms and strange, chanting lights moving swiftly across the sky.
- Ecinlorn leaves Gorin at the frontier of a "New Country" where he is greeted by two figures clothed in long white robes.
- After dancing together the two figures invoke the heavens and the chanting is heard again, approaching rapidly.
- They blindfold Gorin and the stage is plunged into darkness. The orchestra plays the dramatic "Whirlwind Interlude", accompanied by the chanting and the sounds of beating wings – until the timpani begin to sound a relentless rhythm mimicking horses' hooves thundering on the ground and finally coming to a stop.
- Light returns as the blindfold is removed from Gorin's eyes. He finds himself in a spacious square bounded by impossibly high buildings. He is in the company of Aelaguel (*Natasha Kamiskaya*), a winged humanoid (Aerauman) with a lithe, androgynous body.
- There are other winged figures flying in the sky above them. A chariot pulled by chanting horses passes overhead. They are joined by other Aerauma who perform a gracious dance of welcome for their new guest and introduce him to Esperon.

Act III

- Esperon and Gorin fly back to Zandernatis, learning the King has died and the Prince has inherited the throne.
- Hexard tells them the City is threatened by an army of jealous hostile warriors who have allied with "dark forces".
- Symbolised in a veritable choreographic and scenic "tour de force", the warriors and their evil allies (snakes, giant bats and black crows) pit themselves against the City defenders and their airborne saviours. Finally, the evil influence of the "allies" is overcome and the righteous prevail.
- The warrior's leader is brought before Gorin and Esperon in chains. He recognises Gorin as his son and expresses his eternal gratitude for being freed from his evil masters at last.
- The ballet closes with a great "Dance of Reconciliation" as the former enemies look forward to a new future together.
- They are so absorbed by their festivities that they do not see the Aerauma discretely taking their leave… Forever.

Background

It was Daniel Warren, the Royal Ballet's resident choreographer, who first thought of creating a ballet around the story of Zandernatis. He put the idea to Associate Director Felicity White, who quickly became very excited at the potential such a work would have of attracting a whole new type of audience to classical ballet.

There was of course a major difficulty involved in such an undertaking. How could a complex three volume work running to over 200,000 words and more than 1,000 pages be condensed into a wordless ballet lasting less than two and a half hours?

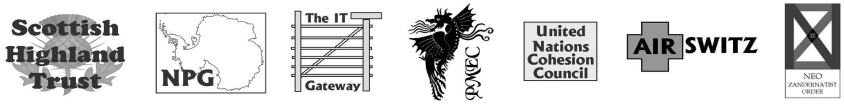
Music and staging would obviously have crucial roles to play, with choreography capable of clearly conveying the strong storyline while preserving the ethereal form of expression that gives ballet so much of its magic.

Felicity White and Director Hubert Maswell decided that if the story had to be drastically remodelled, there was only one person with the authority to do it – if he would agree.

Despite his advancing years, Gordon Keirle-Smith did agree, and in fact was delighted at the idea of seeing the work he had embarked upon over 60 years earlier finally come to the stage of the Royal Opera House.

At the press launch for the new production, he told reporters, *"Seeing 'Zandernatis' enshrined here, in this work and this setting, shows just how much its version of history has impacted our mainstream collective consciousness."*

The Royal Ballet thanks its sponsors for making this production possible:



Afterword

The meta-realist allegory has come full circle.

From an awakening in a pre-glacial, pre-mythical Paradise, we glimpse how in our modern age we can recreate the dream and bring it back to be an object lesson in hope, giving those who follow it something they can aspire to…

And so shall it be…

*In The **Oneness** of Time*
*In our **Self-Made Reality***
*of the **NOW.***

If you have enjoyed this book, please send your comments for publication on these pages to Gordon Keirle-Smith at this address: gordonkeirle@gmail.com.

One of the advantages offered by today's Print on Demand and e-book publishing is that editions can be constantly updated to include contributions of this kind. Please do take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to make "Genesis Antarctica" a dynamic reading experience and share your thoughts about the significance of *"The Song of Gorin"*, reactions in the media and the implications these revelations could have on society[53].

Here is an authentic unsolicited testimonial posted in February 2016 by Troy from Seattle, USA:

In the summer of 2014, I had a very vivid dream of looking at a map of Antarctica, with several different territories that had very odd names, and a gray area in the middle labeled 'Radioactive Anomaly Zone.'
The next thing I knew, I was pure consciousness and I was exploring the warm green tropical landscapes of Antarctica. I remember one part when I was roaming the tropical beaches of a peninsula. Shortly after that I woke up and recalled what I could of the dream.

After reading much of the Zandernatis Trilogy in the Summer of 2015, there were a few times I ended up meditating and connecting with an incarnation on Pre-Glacial Antarctica, who was a part of the Zandernation civilization during what was described in the books as 'the Heroic Era'. I remember being able to freely roam the lush green mountainous landscapes of the land because the gates of the city were open. I enjoyed being able to explore and sit by myself in meditation amongst the unique plants, trees, rocks and tall

[53] Spontaneous contributions from readers reproduced here are not subject to the Disclaimers made at the beginning of this book.

mountains. In that incarnation I was a very wise being, in touch with the natural environment around me as well as my spiritual nature. I was something of a wisdom teacher and way-shower for the younger and less awakened people of The Golden City. Maybe I was something of a shaman in that incarnation.

I have yet to recall more than one incarnation that could relate to Zandernatis and Pre-Glacial Antarctica, but will do my best to report them to The PLMRI when I do recall more. I am completely enthralled with Zandernatis and Antarctica, and think it would be worth it for research teams to explore the Icy Continent to attempt to find further evidence of Zandernatis and ancient civilizations that existed there. I firmly 'know' that I lived on Pre-Glacial Antarctica and that it was once a thriving land that had much to do with early human origins on Earth. I am willing to answer further questions by email.

neozorder@gmail.com

Time: February 6, 2016 at 9:47 am

About the compiler and reteller

Gordon Keirle-Smith is an English writer living in the South of France. Having lived a variety of "lives" in a broad range of different fields ranging from visionary artist to communications coach and entrepreneurial copywriter, he returned to literature in 2013, reviving his "fantastic pre-history" based on the Haakon Urn texts first drafted in 1973/4.

Further details and a great deal more exclusive material can be found on the Zandernatis blog at http://www.zandernatis.com. If you would like to be kept informed of the latest developments, discoveries and publications, you can subscribe on the home page. Your email address will never be shared and you can unsubscribe at any time.

Word-of-mouth is crucial for any author to succeed. If you enjoyed the book, please think about **leaving a review** on the Amazon site where you purchased it, or on Goodreads. Even if you only write a line or two, it can make all the difference and would be very much appreciated.

You can also get in touch by e-mail: gordonkeirle@gmail.com

SPECIAL THANKS

The compiler and reteller would like to extend
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