



HEROQUEST



HeroQuest Voices *Peoples of Glorantha*

Concept: Nick Brooke. § *Project Manager:* Nick Brooke.

Edited by: Mark Galeotti and Nick Brooke, with Chris Gidlow and Stephen Martin.

Illustrations: Manoel Magalhaes, Tom Sullivan.

Layout: Stephen Martin. § *Runes:* Issaries, Inc.

A Personal View of Western Life

Greg Stafford and Sandy Petersen; additional material by Nick Brooke

Teachings from the Wise Ones

Greg Stafford and Sandy Petersen; additional material by Nick Brooke and Stephen Martin



*Legion are the peoples of the world, many and varied are their ways.
All are connected by the cosmic webs of Arachne Solara
Who brings and binds all together, in life as in this book,
Who takes and rends apart those who would tear her webs.*

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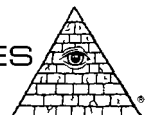
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A Personal View of Seshnegi Life

What My Father Told Me

Who are you?

I am Sir Harfien, the loyal man of Count Igini Hedenveld. All honor to you, young squire my son.

Who are we?

We are the Vandervasse family of Bormandy. We serve Count Igini Hedenveld. Because the Hedenvelds are sworn to King Guilmar, we are part of the Kingdom of Seshnela.

What makes us great?

The Hedenveld family has ruled Noyelle for fourteen hundred years, and we have served them for nine hundred of those years. Our family is rich in history. In 716, Sir Kerner Vandervasse killed the steed of the Dark King's nephew with his bare hands. In 948, Sir Oleg Vandervasse exiled forty-nine of his relatives for treason against Count Homarr Hedenveld. In 1198, Sir Henrag Vandervasse became Supreme Advisor to the Ecclesiarch of the Church. In 1320, the Vandervasse family was outlawed by the King of Seshnela and we became robbers. In 1368, we were pardoned and restored to Bormandy. In 1581, Sir Grugen Vandervasse met and spoke with Saint Dormal in Pasos. Remember your dates, my son: our family history is our family treasure.

Where do we live?

We live in the shire of Bormandy in Noyelle, the westernmost county of the mighty Kingdom of Seshnela.

How do we live?

We are fed by the farmers of Bormandy. In summer we eat veal, salt cod, apples, peaches, beans, cabbage, barley, and rye bread, and drink cider and barley beer. In winter we eat beef, venison, dry cod, and barley and rye bread, and drink apple and peach wine.

Our clothes are simple; trousers, long-sleeved shirts, gloves, and boots. In winter, we wear heavy cloaks, coats, and hoods. On High Days, we wear black capes with blue velvet edging, as a sign of our rank. Ordained knights also wear a breastplate.

Each branch of the Vandervasse family lives in its own manor. Six such manors are spread throughout Bormandy. Summerland is the oldest and greatest manor, and is always occupied by the family head.

The Vandervasses own the fruits and hunting rights of all Bormandy as long as we can muster twenty-five mounted soldiers, according to ancient custom. Each year, we send Count Hedenveld one hundred seventeen quintals of peach wine, forty-seven dressed stags, two bronze greatswords, and maintain two knights in the Count's private service. Also, each year the King commands us to send six wagonloads of red cabbages and fourteen quintals of peach wine to the Theurgic Amphitheater at Hingswell.

The family priest, Old Wizard Marlet, and his apprentices heal us of injuries and the old women in town heal us of our sicknesses.

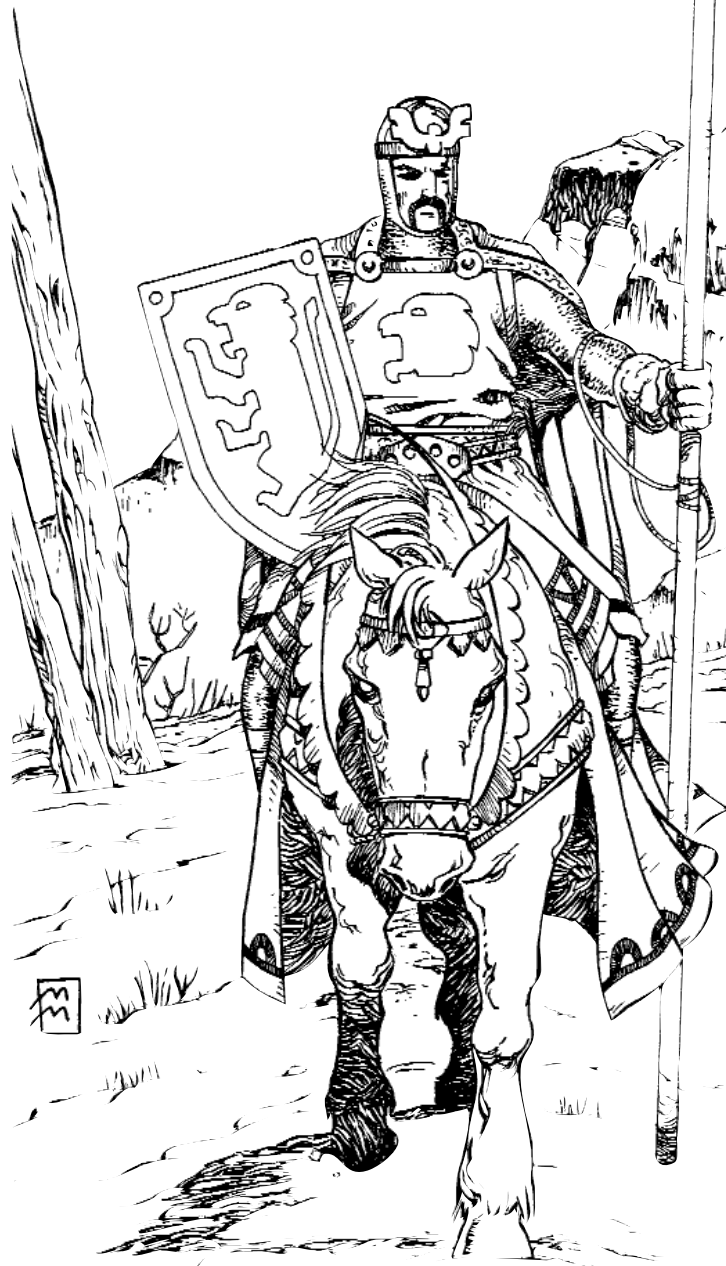
What is important in my life?

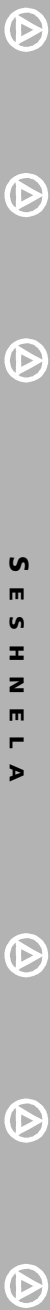
When a new Vandervasse is born, he is taken to Summerland and blessed by Wizard Marlet. At the time of the Spring Festival he is brought before Count Hedenveld for official recognition as a member of the Vandervasse family.

The summer after a Vandervasse boy grows tall enough to leap over the Age Pole without touching it he is ordained by Wizard Marlet to the office of Squire. When, several years later, he has proven himself in manly sports, he is taken to Marlet and blessed with his weapons. Then he must travel on foot to Count Hedenveld, and if he is personally accepted by the Count he gets a surcoat, helmet, and dagger.

Strictly speaking, only Vandervasse knights are permitted to marry, though if you are never knighted, you may keep a concubine. The children of concubines are, by definition, not Vandervasses.

At death we are buried, and Wizard Marlet blesses the grave and soul of all Vandervasses upon their death. He also blesses the future happiness of all knighted Vandervasses each year at Wintertide.





Who rules us?

Most of our folk are peasants; herders, woodsmen, plowmen, and craftsmen. Such must be defended from vile pagans and robbers. That is the task of our house, and especially of its knights. The duty and obligation of the Vandervasses is to provide soldiers and knights. Not everyone qualifies for true knighthood. Some Vandervasses must spend their lives over-seeing the peasants and orchards.

A healthy land also needs magic, and we knights share the place of protector with those who wear the white robe: the wizards, whose name means "Wise Ones." Their words are our guidance, though they lead us not into battle or in court.

Both we and the wizards are governed by the nobility. Though we are ruled by the Hedenveld family, only the eldest Hedenveld, who has been crowned Count, may properly claim our support. It is to his office that we swear, not to him.

What makes a man great?

The greatest man is he who best fulfills the lifelong task that God has set him, as signified by his birth. We serve our Count and our King not only because we are bound to them by centuries of service and gratitude, but also because Count Vandervasse and King Guilmar are just and noble, worthy of commanding our respect.

Everyone who wishes to be good, whether knight or peasant, must be loyal to his Lord. A lord's word is the follower's will. If you are loyal to the death, you are forgiven all sins.

Nonetheless, you should be humble, and know your place. You must be chaste and faithful to your wife. Avoid pagan women, who mate promiscuously, like animals. Be merciful, kind, and generous to your lord, your family, and those you protect. Be courageous and ruthless as your lord commands you to war on the pagan threat.

What is the difference between men and women?

Men fight, farm, hunt, and defend the land. Women raise children, comfort, and tend house.

What is evil?

Pagan gods and heathen spirits are ever ready to lead us down the path to perdition. The Invisible God has shown us the way to immortality and happiness, and His word is to be followed in every way. The pagan gods and their sinful witchcraft must be shunned.

Disloyalty is the greatest vice. Harming your lord in any way dooms you to unhappiness in this life and loss of Solace in the next.

Too much pleasure must be avoided, for drunkenness, gluttony, and lust are all truly vices. But only too much, I say. The liturgists dun us daily with their fear of God, telling us that anything that is of the flesh is bad. I am not so sure: have they never sipped the chill wine or sank teeth into a fresh haunch of venison? Never felt the warm quiver of naked flesh? No, of course they have not, and their bitter vows turn them into damnable hypocrites or shrill-voiced saints admonishing us against life itself. So walk the path of experience and temperance together.

What is my lot in life?

You will receive the things promised, and then you will go to the Count. If he needs men, and if he likes what he has heard of you and what he sees, he will take you into his service. Perhaps you will survive as one of his mercenaries—may God see to it that you do. If he does not accept you then you will join one of the other bands.

I hope you have the virtue to join one of the good leaders who finds honest war for work and not one of the common robbers like those who pillaged us two years ago.

If you want a hard but glorious fight, you could fall in with the Crusaders, who are gathering to liberate New Malkonwal from the pagans in the east. But I fear their expedition will end as badly as the last one, unless the King supports it this time.

If you are lucky you will be recognized by someone, and you might be made into a knight. Your oldest brother will, of course, be a knight already. If you receive the honor you will have found success in the house of a nobleman and your future will be secured. You can take a wife and send your children here, or raise them in your new lord's house as fate decides.

How do we deal with others?

The family is first, of course, and in the family the father is first and the eldest son second. You must honor and obey him as long as you are here.

Loyalty to friends is important, but only as long as it does not interfere with a lord's wish.

Be cautious with strangers, but keep a friendly eye open towards them. Most people are good, if given the chance.

Do not trust foreigners. They do not understand our true way. Use them as you would, but do not fall for their wiles, which are many.

Learn what you can—you never know when it may be handy in a campaign.

Who are our enemies?

We have two great enemies: the godless pagans and heathens who covet our rich lands, and the heretical deviants who lurk within them. The onslaught of the pagans is blatant, and can be met by force of arms. The treacherous heretics, whether they be flagellant Losers, self-righteous Hrestoli, sinister Arkati, or atheist Zzaburites, are more insidious, and their evil seed must be opposed by all good Rokari.

In wartime, we ourselves must fight to protect the farmers and all Bormandy. Seshnela is continually threatened by pagans and heretics to the east and monsters from the north and west, so we must ever be ready to march with Count Hedenveld to fight for King Guilmar.

Who are my gods?

Gods? There is but one God: Makan, the Great Mind, our Invisible God. We also revere Malkion and Rokar, His Prophets. Through long tradition, our family knights take Talor and Gerlan as patron Saints.

A Prophecy of the Hero Wars
*The Ship in the Sky shall rise again,
Sailing on the River of Broken Laws.
Waertag is on it.*

*The Waertagi shall come again,
Searching through the Fog of Broken Brithos.
Zzabur calls them.*

*Zzabur shall come again,
Raising up the Land of Broken Dreams.
Dormal fears him.*

*Law will sink the Ship in the Sky again.
Fog will overtake Brithos again.
The Golden Dream will break Zzabur's Curse again.*

Teachings from the Wise Ones

What the Wizard Says

Where did the world come from?

The world is the result of interactions between impersonal natural powers. Many forces of nature exist, working in extremely complex patterns. We collectively name these forces Makan, the Great Mind: our Invisible God and Creator. These energies have always existed and always will exist, as is written in *The Abiding Book* and as we can demonstrate through methodical experimentation, within the guidelines and theological confines laid down so wisely by Ecclesiarch Theoblanc.

Where did I come from?

Your mother bore you as a result of natural reproductive processes. Everything in the world has a natural origin. What makes you different from an inanimate object is your essence—that measurable part of you that gives you life.

Why do we die?

All natural mechanisms eventually break down. While our bodies can be maintained for many years, ultimately everything and everyone dies, even if only through happenstance.

What happens after we die?

Paths of knowledge have been discovered whereby we can earn identity and consciousness in Solace after death. This is why we worship Makan and keep the laws of Malkion and Rokar.

Why am I here?

This question passeth beyond your understanding. Each man has only one life, and it is his responsibility to live as well as he can. Only thus can we come to appreciate the works of the Creator and earn the right to eternal fulfillment.

How do I do magic?

Magic is the process of manipulating natural energies through skill and the authority of will. This requires natural aptitude and many hours of study. In any civilized society, the services of professional wizards are available to all, for appropriate fees.

Lesser cultures derive magic power from other-planar entities. These alternate methods of magic impose limitations upon their practitioners—priests and shamans are slaves to their magic, even as we are masters of ours.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about them?

...Air?

Those who worship the personification of atmospheric forces are like the wind: first blowing hot and hard, then wavering, and finally fading when needed most. The Aeolian heretics mistake a pagan deity for our Invisible God; they must be corrected.

...Aldrya?

Elves are animated plants. They have no souls of their own, and can never know Solace.

...Chaos?

When grouped together, the truly evil gods are called by this name. They are the spawn of the Devil, the raw Chaos from which Glorantha originally formed. Followers of these monstrous entities are evil and worthy of destruction.

...Darkness?

Trolls are a race of dangerous, brutal creatures who understand only strength. They feed the heathen spirit Kyger Litor to fuel their black magic. Trolls know about Arkat, from whom they stole the knowledge of sorcery.

...Earth?

Dwarves have uncovered the same natural laws that we know, and have no delusions about the reality of the universe. However, they lack the key truths of Solace in the afterlife, and so are doomed to senseless existence and meaningless death.

...Fire?

The shining orb of the Sun has been an object of worship by savages since it rose into the sky. Primitive peoples seize upon the visible sun as the most obvious sign for the ruling power of their universe, and anthropomorphize it.

...Heathen Spirits?

The ignorance of savages is proverbial. Study of the petty beings they worship shows why. At best these creatures are minor in ability, of local importance, or are so vague and distant that they provide only pitiful magic.

...Moon?

This goddess is the modern example of misplaced belief in artificial gods, in this case a large rock that has been induced to hover above the Pelorian Bowl. Like the belief in Gbaji, belief in this manufactured goddess will drive her worshippers into suffering, degradation, and death.

...Pagan Gods?

During the Great Winter, people were lost and frightened. In an effort to understand their world they imagined gods in their own image, personifying their needs and desires and the forces of nature. These gods are always represented as benevolent forces, but each possesses a dark side that is revealed only when it is too late. We are free of the self-imposed limitations induced by the personification of natural forces. We try to understand nature as it is. All other gods are, at best, lesser beings subject to the laws of nature and to worship any of them is folly, ignorance, and blasphemy.

...Water?

The deep and ominous sea holds a history a hundred times greater than the human world. The ignorant have personified their fears, and emotionally feed monstrous entities, which are thus empowered to make real those fears. But our wizardry is more powerful, as the Closing and Opening clearly show.

Holies of the Invisible God

Makan, the Great Mind, Invisible God and Creator

The Invisible God is, was, and shall be. He is the force of nature, the Great Mind, greater than all other forces. In the time since the world was formed, two great men have discovered secret truths of the Invisible God, and have tried to show other men the path to happiness.



Malkion, First Prophet

Sometimes, mankind has fallen away from union and understanding with the Great Mind. Makan then sent prophets to visit us to teach us again how to find God through body and heart. Malkion was the first prophet of the Invisible God.

During the Ice Age Malkion discovered the ways of the Creator, spreading his knowledge among other men to help them survive amidst the evil of the era. Malkion's proofs are essential to intelligent action. He showed men the proper social classes and taught them to be happy with their lot in life. He taught us Solace.

Rokar, Law-Bringer

Rokar is our Second Prophet, who set the Church to rights in Seshnela, restored the laws of Malkion, and brought us Truth: One God, One King, One Church. He was burned at the stake for his faith, but divine messengers led his soul to Creator, confirming his status as a True Prophet, whose laws have come into full and divine enactment through the Estimable Ecclesiarch.

The Abiding Book

On Kaltan's Day in the year 646, a hand materialized from nowhere, holding a quill. A call came, and the command was: "Write!" And the Pen, in obedience to That Which is Most High, obeyed without stint. It wrote upon indestructible paper that appeared when needed, and bound itself to a book with covers of leather from no known animal.

So *The Abiding Book* describes its own origin. This supernatural work was created by the Great Mind to guide mankind through this dangerous world. It is the most impressive piece of Creation that has been witnessed in human history.

Saints

Though there is but one true God, there are many individuals who have discovered certain Truths, allowing them to intercede in worldly affairs to ensure the well being of the righteous who follow their ways. We term these individuals saints.

Xemela, the First Saint, sacrificed her soul to save her people from the Black Swelling.

Hrestol revealed crucial knowledge and rituals that enabled the followers of Makan to maintain their contact with him in the new age, after the Dawn of Time. He taught the Joy of the Heart, even as Malkion taught Solace of the Body, but heretics have distorted his message. Some even claim him as a Prophet!

Gerlant Flamesword is the famous comrade and liege lord of Arkat. He was forced to choose between his people and his best friend, and he rightly chose his people.

Are there no other Saints?

Of course there are, but beware the sin of iconism! You will hear some talk of older saints, of innumerable "holy orders," and we must acknowledge the part they played in the great story of the Church. Paslac the Ruler was indeed a splendid example, whom kings and lords had every reason to emulate until they had our enlightened Ecclesiarch, Theoblanc, to give them wise counsel and clear guidance.

Would that all such figures were as disciplined. In the Dawn Age, an evil conspiracy created Gbaji the Deceiver to stop the spread of Malkionism. They would have obliterated our civilization but for the efforts of Arkat the Destroyer. In an epic struggle he stopped Gbaji's great evil and killed that spawn of the Devil. But his fanatical purpose eclipsed his reason. He underwent voluntary subjugation to pagan gods so that, although he succeeded in his task, he was a failure afterwards and condemned by all. His story is tragic, a warning to everyone.

Some misguided Rokari worship individuals as saints because of their deeds, instead of innate holiness. The man called Dormal the Mariner came from afar to break the Closing of the seas, which vindictive Zzabur of the Brithini brought upon the world. He taught us the procedure we use now to send our ships again across the waves. This was very useful, but we ought not to pray to a key just because it opens a gate—better to thank the locksmith who crafted it, our holy Ecclesiarch, who knew to welcome Dormal to our land even before he led the Church.

Perhaps better examples, more relevant to this age in which we have the Eminent Theoblanc to guide us, are saints who confine themselves to their appropriate roles. Saint Edarad, for example. His Student Body works tirelessly to cleanse the taint from those who have mistaken sinful euphoria for spiritual enlightenment.

Above all, do not confuse reverence with veneration! The Ecclesiarch, in his great wisdom, teaches that worshipping the saints is false veneration, as if they were pagan gods. Thus, light a candle and say a prayer to the proper saint, but do not seek magic from the blessed ones except by the direct dispensation of the Ecclesiarch's anointed.

