

Lost Roads of Lociam

A collection of Lectures

By: Rasmus Strand

Illustrations: Peter Edgar, Jaynesis Ong, Bryan Mathewson

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A lecture on the theories of magic

As presented by Archmage Rhyin, the small auditorium of the Second Open Library, Wisdom's Halls, winter of 1441
As transcribed by Heanion, Scribe of the Circle of the Forgotten Sea.

Lecture was held before a group of Demon-hunters-in-training

"Thank you all for attending this short lecture tonight, I know you are busy with your studies and I appreciate you taking the time to humor an old man. I am here tonight to talk to you of the theories of magic, which some of you have already begun to study, while others are focusing on other areas for now. Nevertheless, this is vital information and understanding it will help you perform your task and succeed.

During this lecture we will cover four distinct topics; the power of magic, the simple or Lower magic, the magical language Arcane and finally Higher magic. Please save your questions until after the lecture is completed.

The power of magic is a byproduct of the struggle between Order and Chaos. Chaos is exerting an incredible amount of force on the shields of Order protecting our universe, and as these two titanic powers clash the vibrations in the shield makes the universe sing with power. This power is the power you wield when you employ magic. You may need to tap the power of your magical essence, or your soul, to use this power, but it is a vast pool of potential.

Some may think that they themselves power magical change through the power of their soul alone, but that of course is ludicrous. There is not enough power in a mortal soul to even light a fire magically, let alone do anything complex. The power you exert is merely the device through which the power of the universe flows. You act as a conduit, a channel for that power to flow through. You direct and shape it, but you don't cause it, or create it.



The power of magic is all around us all the time, a background hum of all of creation, and we are normally unaware of it, as we are unaware of the air, until it changes, moves, discolors or is polluted. Then we can notice it. The same thing is true for magic. We are, as sentient beings, normally quite adept at spotting changes in the flow of magic caused by conscious acts. This is what is known as an Astral sense, and under normal circumstances a person with magical strength above normal will have a greater acumen for picking out information from this Astral sense. Of course you can also study, subject yourself to the experiences and learn to tell the difference between magic and magic, just like you can train yourself to be a wine-taster, or smell blood on the wind.

The more potent the effect you wish to create, the more power you need to direct, and the bigger the effort is for you. That is why simple things can be taught to pretty much anyone with a hint of talent over the course of their professional education, while more powerful magic takes years of study to accomplish.

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This brings us to Lower magic. This is the kind of magic that most anyone learns when they are receiving their professional training growing up. It is true that some learn less and some learn more, but that is just because there is a difference in talent and ability to grasp the power presented. Normally you learn a handful of useful effects as you grow into maturity in your professional role, as determined by your trade. A warrior will learn skills that will help him or her fight, a courtesan to entertain, a healer to mend, and a craftsman to build and trade, and so on. As a magician you study all of these Lower magic forms in order to better understand the workings of magic. You, as demon-hunters, not only learn your own specialized forms, but also the warrior forms, to better fight the evil you seek out.

Lower magic is the simplest of all magic, but yet complicated enough to be a pursuit all of itself. Most people learn to use Lower magic utilizing one of a dozen common teaching techniques. I prefer the Signs of Herneon when I teach my students. It involves teaching them to think of a rune, a highly complex rune that stretches out not like a sign on paper but as smoke in air or ink in water, moving and changing. By focusing your thought on this complicated symbol in your mind, you form the correct pattern for magic to flow through, and create the desired effect. The bigger the effect the more complicated the Sign will be, of course. Herneon was a great magician, who taught this method to the eastern tribes before the wars against the trolls began, and then wandered into the arctic north. You can still find the roadshrines he built, enduring longer than even great kingdoms and castes.

Lower magic is by no means a simple thing, and unless you have a great deal of talent and power, it will drain you from the effort, so use it sparingly. However, as the effect is limited, and cannot normally be altered, it is very safe, and although you can fail in your attempt to form the correct pattern to direct power through, you cannot harm yourself by trying, other than expend what energy you have. Higher magic is not so forgiving.

With that in mind we can talk about Arcane, the magical language. It is using this language that we, using the Signs of Herneon as an examples, can form new signs by combining elements together, piecing together an adaptive sign for the specific effect you want. The more you know of Arcane the more complex the patterns you can make with it as its aid and the more efficient you can make them.

Now how does this work you ask? Well, think of it like this. Think of something strange. A wolf playing a violin, for instance. Now while you hold that picture in your mind try to recite the name of your father, his father and father, and so on, backwards. This takes an incredible amount of concentration, especially if I tell you to have the wolf with the violin to start reciting the passages of the King. This is because you are trying to do this unaided.

On the other hand, if you use a language to form these specific patters in your mind, you can do it a lot easier. For instance, if I tell you to picture a wolf playing a violin while reciting the passages of the King, then walking backwards as the sun comes up behind him you can easily imagine it, because you know the words for all of these things. The same thing happens with Arcane. Allow me to demonstrate.

If I know the word for "refractional creation", that is, the act of creating through a reaction which is too small to generate the effect we need, and that in this creation we want to make basic fire, which I also know the word for, then I could, theoretically, snap my fingers and have fire appear.

[scribe's note. Archmage Rhyin speaks in Arcane, a long sentence of sounds]

See? A tiny spark. This is because the words I speak form a pattern in my mind through which I can use some of my own power to draw the power of the universe through, and create an effect. Of course, if I wanted the fire to go anywhere, or last, or be of a specific size, I would need to know the words for that too, and the incantation would grow more and more complex, harder to remember, and even more complicated if I wanted it adaptable, say, aim the fire at a specific target. However, it would open a lot of doors of potential. The more words we know the greater the powers we can potentially command, and the more power it will take to harness that potential.

Luckily, Arcane also offers a way to cut a few corners, so that when you know enough, you can improvise, abbreviate and adapt to situations, and as such lessen the strain this activity takes.

[scribe's note; Archmage Rhyin speaks in Arcane, a few complex utterings]

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So even with this much simpler conjuration I can make more impressive sparks that last longer, and with a lot less effort on my part.

So why don't we just teach the "efficient" words and let all the students pull off the grand effects immediately? Because efficient is the opposite of flexible in this case. Take for example... Round. Yellow. High. Far. Warm. Bright.

Imagine a spell built like this. Not very efficient, when considering I could just as well use "sun" but imagine all the other things I could describe using those words that "sun" would completely fail to convey. You need to learn the basic words first, and realize that as your vocabulary expands you will not only be able to express more, but become more efficient in your descriptions. Knowledge is truly power.

Now Higher magic is just like Lower magic, in as much as a three-mast sailing-ship is just like a leaf floating on the water. While Lower magic forms complex patterns in the mind of the user Higher magic builds patterns in the world, rather than just in the mind of the user. Some effects of Higher magic either are, or can be used as, thoughts, much like very complex Lower magic. This is just like Lower magic, but Higher magic thoughts are formed by pieces of Arcane, as language forms thoughts, and forms thought-patterns that channel magical energy to form effects.

Normally Higher magic cannot easily be contained in something as inarticulate and fleeting as a thought, and is cast as spells. Spells are vocal incantations, streams of words spoken in Arcane which forms patterns of thoughts, but apart from the simpler effects, it does it form the patterns in order, one after another, as the spell progresses, and proceeds. A lot of energy is expended in this, but the effects are far more spectacular. Using spells are not only a vocal exercise but a physical as well, moving in a particular way, often using gestures to amplify the effect. Now strange as it may sound I have seen magicians with only one arm perform spells and it does not seem to impede them. A mute, however, seems to be at a disadvantage.

Now in order to direct even more intense energy you have to channel a lot more energy and it is not possible through a vocal incantation without the exertion of a massive effort. To facilitate this you can instead draw a rune. A rune is a multi-layered "word" in Arcane written over itself over and over to make an even more complex pattern, and through this power is directed, to create a powerful effect. These are not only more powerful, but also more lasting, and you can scribe your rune and then wait to channel its effect for a set amount of time, or even for a condition to occur. It sets the stage for truly versatile magic.

The final stage of Higher magic is that of the ritual; a time-consuming way to affect the world, but a tool to make large-scale and lasting change. A ritual takes hours to perform, and involves vocal incantations, drawing of runes, motion channeling and possibly even material components to make the direction of energy powerful and precise enough. This takes a lot of effort, a lot of power and a lot of training, but with it you can truly do great and terrible things, things that will last for generations to come.

Higher magic is divided into Spheres, where you master a certain field of magic, and the more advanced your studies in Arcane, the greater your grasp will be. Allow me to explain.

A person may have studied the Sphere of Fire for but a few years, and still be able to conjure forth the Earth's Deep Fire, a most potent effect driven by a ritual which draws from the ground a great burning mountain, while another practitioner has studied for his entire life and still can only make lead melt with some effort.

What is the difference between them? Their study of Arcane. The former has studied Arcane to such mastery that he can describe the most powerful and potent effects he can imagine, and with his training in the Sphere of Fire allow them to come true, whereas the latter has only learned a few different words, and cannot express all the things he could imagine. On the other hand, with the amount of study of the first example he would succeed once per year of constant trying out his ritual, with many mishaps and a lot of wasted effort and time, whereas the latter would achieve his smaller with near-perfect accuracy every time.

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There is no correlation at all between the skill you possess that allows you to succeed in using your effects and the number of effects you know. This is because the two are governed by different fields of study; the Sphere determines your success-rate, and Arcane the range of effects you have access to. A magician can focus on excelling in either of these two, or balance the two out so that they progress at a similar rate.

It is worth noting that once a magician has, in such a fashion, reached mastery in his Sphere and Arcane, and then learns to use another Sphere, he will instantly have access to every effect it teaches, as his grasp of Arcane is so vast to begin with. It is a good skill to have, Arcane, but a highly demanding one.

So which is the better Sphere I hear you ask? Of course there is no such thing. They all fill explicit purposes, and can be used for a variety of different tasks. There is potential for great wonders and great destruction in all of them, and while some are subtle and cunning, others are direct and very visible. The choice of Sphere is often dictated by the nature of the student. Some simply do not have the mindset to handle the Sphere of Change, and needs the more direct nature of the Sphere of Fire. Others are too subtle to effectively deal with flame and fire, and needs the Sphere of Wind to suit him or her. Having at least dabbled in a handful of Spheres I must say that the choice of Sphere is something which defines the nature of the magician and what deeds he or she will do in the future.

This concludes our lecture. I will be here for another few days before I return to Breach's Peak, and the Circle of the Forgotten Sea. There are meetings there I have to attend to hasten the advancement of some of our students. If you have any questions please just find me and I will happily answer them for you. Thank you for your time."

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A lecture in current anthropology

As delivered by the Right Reverend Hekkion Mar at the Square of the Spoken Word, Wisdom's Halls, spring of 1442

Transcribed by Scribe Aineeooy, 3rd librarian of the Second Open Library, Wisdom's Halls

"In my journeys I have come across many stories of peoples and races, and during my lifetime I have collected them all in my book "The Speaking Races of Maoc". Although I have not collected a complete work on the subject, and I am still working on addendums, clarifications and known flaws, I can here present a part of the book to you.

Our world is divided into three major Peoples. These are the First, Second and Third. There are some minor races that seems not to belong to either of these, like the trolls and giants, but they are, for the purpose of this lecture, incidental. I go into further details regarding this in chapter 23 and 24 respectively of my book.

The Second people is of course the most prevalent and numerous, and includes all the human races. These were, as you all know, created a thousand millennia ago by Whorm and has remained fairly unchanged through the ages. They were created at the same time and scattered across the world, each as to their need and nature, and have remained largely that way, although minor migrations have occurred. Most of these have been migrations after cataclysmic shifts in the environment, such as the mass-collapse of the Meressian ridge some thousand years ago which displaced dozens of Salgod Clans and tribes from their old homes and sent them through the world in search of new ones.

While the Second people are diverse in manner and nature, they are alike physically, with only minor differences between them. What separates them is largely the environment where they dwell and the adaptations they have undergone to thrive in that area.

The Bamfyver were given the gift of the word, of wit, charm and statesmanship. They have always been successful merchants, traders, community-builders and so on. Their influence has grown in the last fifteen centuries with the introduction of the kingdoms and states, as a unified currency has helped them in their primary field of expertise; trade. Some of the most notorious villains, scoundrels and conmen of the known world are, quite naturally, Bamfyver. However, the reverse is also true. It is no surprise that the greatest House of Kings ever to tread on Maoc, the House Sa, were Bamfyver. While this House and Dynasty is no longer among us, their influence will not diminish or fade as long as humans cherish law, equality and freedom.

The Baufer are a hardy people, living on the coast and on fleets sailing the coastal waters of Maoc since their creation. Boatbuilders, tradesmen and fishermen, they have always been a merry race, masking great endurance for hardship and stamina for toiling endlessly in great mirth. The ships they build are second only to the sliver of elves that still dwell on the waves of the sea. Among the blots on their record we can find fleets of corsairs and pirates, but also some of the hardest sailors and kings of the world, including the Fleetmasters of the Sea of Conglomeration, striking out from Hope's Point, to forge towards Vai-qau.

The Laaner of the wetlands was during the darker times of the Second People dominant on Maoc. They did not use fleets, warmachines or even cavalry, just brute infantry to subdue all other races before them. They are principally responsible for the expansion of the human races and the wars against giants and trolls that gave the Second People room to build the civilization we have today. As the area expanded their power waned, and now they have all but returned to their former state; largely nomadic tribes wandering the marshes and wetlands. In some places the Laaner built empires under the dark banner of gods now forgotten, and you can still find shrines and temples with the black chimaira carved in the rock as a reminder of those dark times. Among atrocities and brutal barbarism, among the Laaner we also find great heroes, like Kol-Wymm the Red, who fought the undead of the Black Crusades.

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The Liniek have been largely nomadic longer than any of the other human races, and only very recently started to form into Clans and Houses. This is due to the resources they live off needing vast spaces. The Liniek are outstanding horse-breeders, riders and herders. Indeed, for countless generations the horses and the Liniek Tribes have lived in a harmony unlike any other we can find on Maoc between man and beast. Of all the roaming bands of bandits on Maoc, none are more savage or ferocious than those of the Liniek, but on the other hand, from those Tribes have scholars and pathfinders that have learned more and seen more than most mortal men, such as Haelwo the Stout, who was the first man to travel from the east coast of Maoc to the west on foot, a journey that took his entire lifetime.

The Kooger have always been community-builders, often building villages and even cities in the canopy of the great forests. In the past when they were predominantly savage nomadic tribes they were warlike like the Laaner, but since the majority of them settled into communities, Clans and Houses, they have turned this into a constructive drive. Archers without parallel and trackers of some renown, they have also bred some of the most cunning thieves in all the world. However, from their many Clans and Houses have risen heroes and stalwart defenders of the human races, including King Rhodean the Proud, who fought the demon hordes at Breadground and Verdict's Fall.

The Mykier were formed with an affinity for magic which is unmatched within the ranks of men. We are not yet certain if they were this way and therefore travelled into the lands of ice to commune with the spirits of the glaciers and storms, or if they lived there to begin with, and during their discourse with these powers grew in magical might. Regardless of order their gift is now quite formidable, and you will find a Mykier within most magical circles and schools all over Maoc, usually within its top ranks. Of course, not all use this gift with benevolence, such as the Lomar rangers, who throw fire to gain wealth and power. Others, like the Arcmage Rhyin, have used their considerable knowledge, wisdom and power to benefit all the mortal races of Maoc, and to him we owe a great deal of gratitude.

The Napteri are, compared to the other human races, somewhat apart, as they can and often do live their entire lives under water. While this was suited for savage ages where they were nomadic dwelling in travel across the coastal floor deep under the sea, the establishment of Clans, villages, cities and Houses became more troublesome for them, especially in trading with "land-dwellers". Many Napteri settlements are therefore coastal, or on islands, with their structures ranging both above and below the surface of the water. Ferocious predators, such groups as the Crestreavers, have often given the Napteri a bad name, while Unogi and his Free Companies have served with distinction in many wars fought in the name of his church, that of the Banner of Marcon Sa.

The Obdin have enjoyed relative solitude out in the desert for many generations where no other humans have ranged. They are therefore often considered "exotic", and they are a strong-willed, hardy and industrious people. Few others can endure the conditions they live under every day, and while trading over the vast stretches of dead (and living, gods forbid) sand has gained them much in riches, the trace of the lone nomad is still in them, and many are considered isolationistic and aloof. Such villains as the Silver Baron of the bloodied sands of Herios have ranged far and wide, away from the sands that spawned him, to wreak havoc on traders in his region. To offset this we can look at the marvels of the statesmen of Yuh, who built their city on an oasis now thousands of years ago, and who have held this city through countless wars, campaigns and rulers, and it remains as once it was, a jewel of the deep desert.

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The Salgod are like the Obdin a hardy people, industrious and strong-willed, but perhaps more interested in the beauty of their crafts and the riches they can obtain than their sand-living brothers, who treasure their freedom and ability to come and go as they please higher. The Salgod are gifted craftsmen of many different areas, and miners without peer among humans. They can toil for endless hours for the good of their community, and were among the very first to establish Clans and Houses, building vast complexes of mines and tunnels to make the very first villages and cities of Maoc. It is not strange that groups of Salgod workmen built the First Kingdom's capital all those years ago. Blots on the record of the Salgod would include the fearsome bandits of the Ashen Tips, which are still capturing slaves for sale. Out of the Salgod-kingdoms also came the Master-Smith Ermorium Dessa, who learned from the dwarves the mastery of his craft.

The Second people might have had a few more races, including the Sunori, which was a winged race, and rather more mythical ones as the Yswiea, which was ethereal. We have also heard of humans of mixed stock, where races have mixed, but this seems to be exceedingly rare. Most of the time the child of parents from two different races are either stillborn or is born to the race of the mother. It is also worth noting that of these children born most of them are female. Why this is so is unknown, but studies into this field are proceeding.

The First People are older than the human races by such a wide margin that it becomes hard to measure it in a way we can understand. We can, however, chronicle some of the things they have done during the time of the Second People, including the wars, the cities and the exodus into Blazepeace. Now they are all but gone from the world, having hidden away in the deep wilderness or in their spired city, which is gone from all reckoning and knowledge of the human races. They are not, as one might imagine for such old races, primitive and barbarous, but indeed seems to have been created with a great deal more sophistication than we as humans have yet to achieve.

The First People is divided into three groups; elves, dwarves and animal-peoples.

The elves are wardens of the world they were given to by their creator and mother. It is unsure how many different races there are, but there are more than those of the Second People. It appears that they are organized much in the same was as the human races; by region and climate, but for a different purpose. The elves don't become a certain way because they live in a specific region, but seem to be "assigned" to an area to guard and care for it. Elves seem content to live in a relatively small area all their immensely long lives (some say eternal life, but I have seen the graves of elves, so I know they are not immortal). Elves, as they grow from adolescence into adulthood do tend to wander a bit though, and see the world. Elves grow to be exceedingly old, if not immune to age completely. I have spoken to some who have met with the first children of the Elf queen, their god and creator.

If these beings are indeed one and the same their age could not be measured in years; they would be old beyond the reckoning of species and even the land itself.

By my information there are elves of the coast, glaciers, mountains, woods and plains, just like there are human species for such areas. The elves of the sea are not aquatic like the human Napteri, but rather live on their fleets, which travel not along the coast but out passed the horizon. There are winged elves that reside in the sky as well. Then there are three more kinds of elves, and it appears that they guard things that are not so localized. It seems as though one kind guards history, another magic, however that may work, and the third guard the elves themselves from both external threats and internal strife (I would assume). There are, as far as I know, no known hybrid elves anywhere, and there never have been. The elves have been very reluctant to tell me much more, but I am setting up an expedition to visit some of their embassies, and see what else I can find out. I will publish it in my next book.

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The dwarves are a bit more forward and open about their family-tree, as it were. It appears that the two main dwarf lines were created over a disagreement between gods as to the interpretation of their father's (some sort of dwarf god-god) words. So the two main lines of dwarves are the white and the black, where the white are the industrious miners and craftsmen, and the black are savage reavers that plunder and steal. There are also two minor factions of the dwarves, one that are raging with their father's furious fire, and grow restless when not embroiled in war and conflict and the other... takes a bit of an explanation. Dwarves were early on in their history beset by enemies from all sides, and grew to hate and fear open spaces, for it opened them to attacks from every side. Even now most of the dwarves dislike or even phobically fear open spaces. They grow nervous when under the open sky unless there are walls about them. Darkness, confined spaces and the roots of the mountains never faze them, but a broad sunlit mesa will see them cautious or even fearful. One kind of dwarf defies this, and lives on the open ocean in great big metal ship called Umlers. I have never seen a shipyard for one of these, but been on and near some of the ships themselves, and they are wonders of the world.

The final kind of dwarf is what is called a high dwarf, and they are the bridge between the four others. They are wise, calm and dangerously cunning, and are often found running and ruling strongholds, mines and underground cities.

The dwarves are a hardy people, and live for extended spans, often several centuries. Those growing to a really old age are revered within their clans and strongholds, as living ancestors, and are often steeped in cunning and acumen that the world has largely forgotten. Their crafts, too, honed over a dozen of human generations are beyond compare.

Finally, the animal-people seems to be a bit less coherent than the others, and split into many different families. What can be said however is that they are all humanlike in stature and built, but that they have animal-like heads. Some think that the animal-people are shapeshifters or that they can speak to animals, but they are not. Legends speak of a time when they could, but it is not true any more. Some of the races have even lost the ability for true civilized thought, and live as savages and barbarians, quite unlike their more noble cousins among the first people. The animal-people live to great ages, even though normally not as exceedingly old as the dwarves.

There are bear-like animal-people, along with wolf-like, catlike and ratlike. They are rather reclusive and I have found out less about them than I would have wanted. There are also insect-like animalmen and the Hiszsini, which are lizardlike, but they are both considered to be fallen, and not included in the normal thoughts of the animal-people since they do not trade or interact with other species regularly. Finally there are the charkion, which appears to be a sort of strange fusion between a catman and a bat, in that they are catmen with huge bat-like wings. These are very strange, and seem to have a massive talent for magic unmatched among the others. Their history also seems to be different from the other animalpeoples, but I have yet to find out the details behind this.

The Third people are a recent addition to our world, and while not demons per sé they are the mortal beings most akin to chaos. While this unsettles some, it has turned out that the Third people are wonderfully industrious, inquisitive and fast learners, and work very hard with whatever task they receive. As such they have grown to be a strong trading partner for many human settlements and kingdoms. Relations between them and the First people are at best frosty and at worst plain hostile and violent. The Third people are concentrated in the west, with their main city being that of Rummageburrow, but they are extending themselves up and down the coast and along traderoutes to set up settlements further east.

The Third people are normally short-lived by human standards. They expire from old age before a human would reach middle age, and those they do grow old never even match old humans. There is probably some sort of flaw in them that make them sick or weak, but I have not been able to spot it, and they appear healthy and vigorous enough in their youths.

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In their fervour to create mortal offspring the gods of the Third people seems to have copied existing races extensively, rather than create their own. Their copies of elves and dwarves I have seen but rarely, and there is no mistaking them for the noble races they emulate. They are often malformed, but powerful. The copy of the animal-people is even stranger, and rarer. They seem to be an amalgamate of some or all of the animal-people at once, and are either a wide array of different species, or have no set form in of themselves. I have seen some with bear heads and lizard bodies, others with rat-tails to cat-headed insect-bodies, and so on.

The most numerous of the Third people are the human-like. They are not humans, something which even a cursory examination will determine. Some of these are malformed while others are striking in beauty and intellect, far outstripping the race they copy. They do not seem to be divided into races like the humans, but rather form a non-uniform race that shift from generation to short generation.

There are also two completely new races of the Third people that more than anything resembles mortal demons. These are exceedingly rare as far as I have been able to determine, and the division into two groups is that of focus; one is massively physical, and the other cunning and magical. While strong in their special field of interest, they are terribly weak in the other. There very little else I know of them at this point.

Finally there are two races of the Third people which seem out of place. These are more akin to the First people, but are certainly younger than even the human races, and the first mention of them are only a few generations old. These are the living stone-people and the violent goat-like animal-people called the Permin. Where they came from I do not know, but it is most puzzling and a topic for much discussion.

This concludes the lecture of the three peoples of Lociam. I would be remiss in my responsibilities if I did not make mention of three more races that do not seem to belong to any of these three races, however.

First of all there are the trolls, who are much older than the human races, but I have spoke to elves who knew of the world before there were trolls in it. It appears they just happened upon the world sometime during its dawning ages, conjured by whatever foul creator they may have had. As the wars against humans decimated them, a lot of the knowledge of their past seems to have vanished, even among themselves, and now that they are reduced to just a few tribes and no longer mighty nations, it is possible we will never find out of their origins.

Secondly there are the giants, who suffered a much similar faith, and were once mighty across Maoc, but no giant kingdom still stands now. They are pushed back into the deep wilderness, and they are reluctant to even speak to humans, let alone hold a civilized discussion of their racial past. It appears that they are age-old, possibly as old as the trolls, but certainly not as old as the First people.

Finally there are the mysterious Assarm who appeared during the dawn of time in a very specific location, and lived there in harmony with other races, and then, as their area was ravaged with earthquakes and floods, completely disappeared. Remains and stories of them persist to this day, and they looked truly terrifying, with a multitude of legs, large head with many eyes and a single arm with two hands at its end. Whatever deity created them had a very different view of life than all the others, and then left them to perish when their lands cracked asunder and fell into the sea.

I hope you have found this lecture informative, and ask that you have further questions please direct them to the librarians. They can furnish you with a copy of my book. I am mounting another expedition into the west now, and then into the north, to gather more information for you all.

Thank you and have a great morning!"

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Lecture in the worship of the Savior

By Priest Halgian the Third

Read from the steps to Temple of the Savior, Wisdom's Halls, Spring of 1442

As transcribed by Jolis, Fourth Scribe of the Second Open Library

I have been asked to briefly tell you about the life of my congregation during the course of the last year. I was told that this would enlighten you, even though we are but a small congregation that live in the shadows of the Weeping Mountains, and I cannot understand why it would important to anyone, but I am more than happy to tell you all you want to know.

About a year ago, as the snow melted from the fields, we all gathered in the church for the first time since the new year. The old church is far too cold to be in during the winter, and its roof and walls let in both snow and wind. I alone live there, but in the more well-insulated back rooms, not the main hall itself. All I do during the winter is tend the shrines and make sure the images are covered and don't get wet. However, when the snow is gone, we all gather and celebrate. We sing our praises to the new year, and both shrines get lit candles.

Oh yes, you wouldn't know about he two shrines. While I am a priest of the Salvation-church, and the church I have is for the Salvation-church, in worship of the Savior that gave us peace and light. However, at the west door we have a second shrine for the Man-father. We owe him much, and the power of the Man-father cannot be denied, along with its long-standing alliance with the Salvation-church that formed its early history. So we have a shrine by the door, and sometimes people leave flowers and fruit by it. Travelers that pass can also stop there to pray at it.

But not in the winter - the road is snowed in and the shrines are covered in blankets not to be ruined. I tend them, brushing snow from them and lighting fires every once in a while. So, as snow melts I start readying the church for the coming year. Some of the farmers help me, as I am getting old, of course.

Where was I? Oh yes, the melting snow. So we hold our first congregation of the year, greet all the newborn, mourn the dead and so on. If there are any new couples in any of the villages around the church then they can announce this at any meeting of the congregation, and this tends to happen all year round, but as we have not met for so long before this prayer, the announcements of births, deaths and couples tends to take up some time, you understand.

Then we hold meetings every two or three weeks in the church depending on the weather, until the first Passing, which is about halfway through spring. This is, as you know, when the white and red moon cross paths under the sun, and you set your calendar by it. This is when we celebrate the end of the Redressional War, which the Savior worked so hard to end. If this war had not ended the way it did and as fast as it did, it would have ruined almost every human life in the lands, and without the Savior it would not have ended as it did. For this we give thanks, and work to instill for the coming year how to work as hard as he did. Nearly everyone attends, and there are songs of praise, the giving of the last of the winter food to those who have none for the coming spring, and so on. It is all quite festive.

Spring is a busy time for all the farmers, so we don't hold many more big meetings like this until the middle of summer. This is when we celebrate the Day of Swords Drawn, which used to be a sombre and brooding affair when the Church first started practicing it, but now has grown into something better, I think.



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Oh you don't know the story? Well then. It was during the height of the Redressional War and the Savior and his disciples were traveling as an armed party through war-torn land, and talked to camps of soldiers on both sides of the fronts being drawn up. They numbered fourteen in total, and were never accosted or ambushed. Then, one day, in the middle of summer, on a windy peak on the Ridge of Uloni they came upon a group of elves numbering four. These did not let them pass, and the disciples drew their weapons to prepare for battle, as three of the elves drew fell blades to do the same. The Savior stepped in to stop any bloodshed and drew his sword, the Primeval Flame, which was long, curved, white, and covered with ancient runes. The ground shook and rocks rattled all around them at the force of this weapon being unsheathed. Then the fourth elf stepped up and drew his blade, and the day turned into night, and the wind died, and the stars scattered across the sky, leaving them in pitch black, with only the flickering flames of the Savior's sword and the starlight blaze of the elf's sword to light the scene. They both stood like this, two steps apart, regarding one another, across the tip of their blades, as the world shook and the sky heaved. The disciples fled and the other elves withdrew.

After an hour the ground stopped shaking and the sky once again became light with the sun overhead, and the disciples crept up the hill to see what had happened. They then found the Savior and the elf sitting on a rock sharing a meal. The Savior introduced their guest as Prince Zelogard, one of the oldest elves in the world, and how they had discussed the situation, and come to the conclusion that if their blades crossed the world would come to a violent end, the ground would crack, the mountains topple and the sky fall. They had instead talked of peace, and left as friends. It is said that this is one of the five meetings that lead to lasting peace. This is one we celebrate.

During this celebrations everyone has to wear a sword. It is tradition. So old heirlooms are brought out of storage, oiled and polished, and small wooden swords are made for children. While this day was once for reflections on the end of the world and the terrors of war, it has become a celebration of how war was ended and how reason and feeling prevailed over blind hatred and violence. It is a time to be thankful and rejoice in the power of the Savior and the peace he gave to us.

As summer wears on we work hard to repair the church and tend its grounds. There is also a collection for the Church as well, which gets sent on to the cathedral at Howler's Ridge. I tend to not be in the church much during this time, but walk through all the villages, tend to the elderly, help families in prayer to get good crops, good health, check the newborn; no matter if they have two of four legs, the first steps into life are always hard.

It is an intense time for me, and then it gets harder and harder as we get closer and closer to Second Passing, when the white and red moon cross paths over the sun, and we celebrate the Savior's birthday. This is when the offerings are made for the church, and we always try to build something in his name in one of the villages; a new house or farmstead, a barn or pond. It is good to work together to build, to add to the glory of the Savior's grace. At the Second Passing we hold a big celebration, and this coincides with the Man-father's most holy day as well; the day of the Undying Hosts. We offer prayers to this day as well, and prepare for the last of the harvest.

Harvest of course is not a time to go to church, as there is a lot of work to do in the fields, the barns and mills. Those who live in neighboring communities tend to take this time to visit their families here so that they can help out. Once we are done with all of the harvest-work which I won't get into detail about, you didn't come here to hear tales of farming, then we get back into the life of the church. As the season slowly darkens we do repairs on the church to keep the rain and wind out, at least most of it, and then, as we get close to the first snow we mourn the death of the Savior. There is no exact date to this, but rather a mood, and when the first snow falls and the sky is dark with stormclouds we gather in the church to offer prayers, sing songs and reflect on the fleeting nature of life. Many offerings are made to the shrine too, with things people have had time to make, to strengthen their prayers for a safe winter, that food will last, that noone fall ill or suffer accident, and so on. It is a dark day, but still a day to celebrate, as the death of the Savior marks the end of a fruitful life; he didn't die in vain, and his death and grave has given us the focus of our Church, letting it weather generations, and still bring us peace today.

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When snow grips the area around the church I alone remain there, and do so the entire winter. I get visitors from time to time, mostly bringing news and food, but sometimes needing me to counsel them or travel down from the church to one or another of the villages to tend someone who is dying. The winter is a time of contemplation for me, of reflection and prayer.

Yes? At the back. What? Have I seen any miracles? Why of course I have! Every year I see prayers granted, and once every few years we gather to perform mass-prayers, the entire congregation together, for some bigger thing we need. Last year when Halle the Fairhaired fell and his plow cut his leg so badly that he would lose them, his two sons sat for a week praying over his sickbed until he got out of it, fully restored, without so much as a scar, by the hand of the Savior.

I myself found a traveler at the gate of the church one spring evening eight years ago, with four black arrows through his back, and while I could not save his life my prayer made the wind sing with the warning that was his dying word, and a week later his friends arrived, armed and ready to avenge him, after they buried him. They donated a gold coin to the church as it appears the man that had died by my gate was an important messenger, and had not his words reached them, some kingdom would have been at war now. So this was avoided, by the word of the Savior.

Then I have to tell you of when young Juy Pilris fell over the side of the bridge and was killed in the shallows of the river. His father and brothers fished the little body out, and called for me. I was already under way having been roused from my sleep by the hand of the Savior, and the entire village gathered around the Pilris farm as the sun was coming up. They all sang the hymn of the Savior together, while his father cried and tore his hair, and Molu Pilris, Juy's brother, promised that if his brother could be brought back to them he would rebuild the roof of the church by his own hand. I joined in prayer for three days, and at the morning of the fourth day we were woken by the laughter of the toddler who was as healthy and alive as ever, by the hand of the Savior. Molu spent the rest of the year putting in new beams under the roof and retiling it, and it is the only reason the church is still standing, as the old roof was ready to collapse.

Such miracles we see in the service of the Savior. Such is the power of his name and word.

Now I won't keep you any longer, and hope that you at least know more of the tradition of our church. Feel free to drop by anytime you are nearby, we love guests. Harmony and eternal peace be with you.

Lost Roads of Lociam

A lecture on geography and cosmology

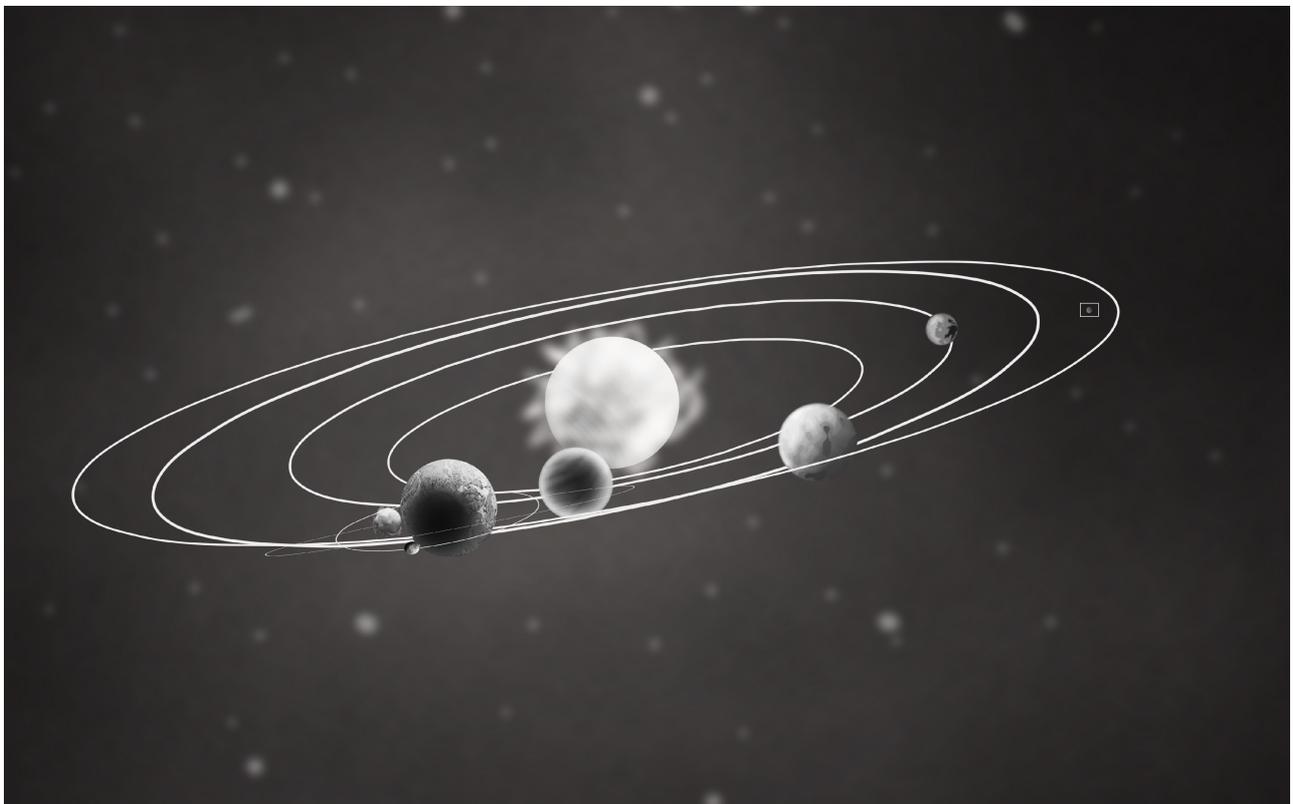
Held by Milian the Deadless on the steps of the Yard of Hope, Wisdom's Halls, Fall of 1441

Scribed by Illionnay, Third Scribe of the First Open Library

We live in a world so wondrous that we cannot express it in speech, picture or written words. The world is in fact so amazing that the only way to understand it is to experience it, to travel and explore, and see if for yourself. For the last five decades I have done little more than travel the world, see its sights and treads its roads, climbed its mountains and swum its oceans. I have seen but a little part of the world as we know it, but I have seen more than many who never leave their home villages their entire world. In this respect I guess I am privileged. Your attendance here with me this morning shows that you too have travelled, and that you too are curious, and that you too need to know what is out here. Allow me to give you an idea.

Now please remember that my account here is one of incomplete exploration and second-hand accounts from other travellers, but as the two coincide so well, and as the accounts I hear all hum to the same tune as it were, I think it is as reliable as we can get it. A lot of information I have also gained from visiting the three observatories at Galen, Haggaroth and Pointed Cry, where engineers with sharper minds than mine have used glass and mirror to build magnifying lenses capable of seeing further than any eye. These they have directed at the sky to see things moving out there passed the clouds. But I get ahead of myself.

I will assume nothing and start as if you were children, just very attentive and intelligent children. This should then give everyone an equal opportunity to keep up with what I have to say.



Lost Roads of Lociam

We live on a world called Lociam, which has, more or less, two continents and two oceans. This continent is the larger of the two, and is Maoc. It stretches further than anyone can travel in a single lifetime, from west to east and north to south. To the west of Maoc we find a mass of water known as the Sea of Conglomeration, and to the west of this turbulent sea we find Vai'qua, a slightly smaller continent. To the west of that, and reaching to the east of Maoc we find the Copper Sea. North of Maoc we find Evercold, a glacier that sits atop an ocean we cannot sail, since the glacier to amply covers it. If one were to travel across Evercold one would come to another sea, north of Vai-qua, but not within sight of it. South of Maoc lays a churning sea called the South sea, and if you sail across this you could, at least conceivably, reach the south tip of Vai'qau. I will speak more of these features at length later on.

But first let us take a step back, and look at Lociam as a whole. As big as we think this city or this kingdom is, or indeed Moac is, it is just a spot on the surface of the planet, and the planet belongs to a larger whole. The planet Lociam is in orbit around its sun at a distance I cannot even express amply, even though I have had it explained to me. Let us just say that travel between planets involve distances that the human mind can scarcely fathom, and be done with it for now. If any of you are truly interested you can stay on afterwards and I can get my notes.

However, Lociam is not alone in orbiting the sun. Now, we are just one of a handful of planets that swing around the sun, completing a revolution every year. This revolution is what gives us seasons, as the orbit also tilts the planet slightly, giving the north more sun in the first half of the year and the south more in the latter part. I can see that this is hard to imagine, but let's just say that it gives us seasons and move on, shall we?

There are three planets between us and the sun, and we can sometimes see them when they eclipse the sun slightly. As they are all smaller than Lociam they do not cover the sun, and just appear as dark spots that pass in a day or so on their way. The innermost two are burned little rocks I am told, and the third is somewhat larger, but far too hot to visit, should we find a means to do so. Beyond the orbit of our world there is a vast distance and then we find a larger planetary body that travels in a slow orbit around our sun, completing a revolution every eighteen years or so. We cannot see this clearly as it never eclipses the sun, but we can see blotted-out stars occasionally, and know of its passing.

Lociam also has three moons. One is white, and travels on a circular orbit around us, completing a circuit every 28 days. The other is red, and about half the size of the red, and travels on a further elliptical orbit, sometimes appearing within the spin of the white, and then almost its size, and sometimes further out, and just a distant red speck on the night sky. One such circuit takes 76 days. The motion of these two moons give us tides by pulling at the waters in the oceans. Again, take my word for it, or don't, and go find out for yourselves.

The third moon is a not like the others at all. It remains in a fixed position, and allows us to pass it once per year, in the late autumn, and this passing is often accompanied by storm and darkness. It is said that this third moon, the dark moon, is inhabited by all means of demonic or grim creatures, and that there are those that have employed magic to travel there, but I have never met anyone who has witnessed this first hand, so I am not convinced it is even possible.

Sometimes we find that things that do not belong to the orbit of this our sun which gives us heat and warmth falls towards us out of the sky. We see them as streaks of light across the sky and sometimes they crash violently to the ground. Far from here there is an area known as the Great Craters, where half a dozen such rocks smashed into the world long ago, and left potmarks as wide as a man can see across from on high. Here lived a strange people that are now gone from the world known as the Assarm, but they are not the topic of this lecture. Forgive me this sidetrack.

Most things that fall from the sky never reach the ground but smash into the ocean or are consumed racing down towards us by some force.

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Our sun is one of many, and it is said that every star in the evening sky is one such sun, just at a vast distance, with planets around it just like ours, but not even the best of eyes at the biggest of observatories can properly see so far, so it is not determined with any certainty. I am not sure how such knowledge would benefit us in either way, as we cannot go there and visit.

Now, enough of cosmology and let's talk of the world where we live.

Lociam is hot in the south and colder in the north and there is a current in the ocean that moves with this heat. This brings warmer water from the South Sea up the east coast of Maoc up to Evercold, and then eastward across the Copper Sea. Another such current comes across the Sea of Conglomeration from out of the west, carrying cold water and then rushes down the west coast of Maoc towards the South Sea. It is theorized that was it not for this current moving cold and warm water, the south would grow hotter and hotter, while the north colder and colder until both became impossible to live in.

Let us speak a bit about the oceans.

First, the north sea, which is covered by Evercold the glacier, is only visible in some bays where the glacier has pulled back from the north coast of Maoc, showing a clear and cold ocean. We cannot sail much here as there are fragments of ice floating in these waters, but some enterprising traders stake routes along the coast, particularly in the northeast where there is a long stretch of open water on the north coast, letting them reach the Copper Sea and travel south along the coast, but then they travel against the current coming up from the south. Very few travel northwards, but if they did they would get help from this same current, and be very swift indeed. The fish in this northern sea are often slow and armour-plated, but there are also seals, whales and icesharks that travel these waters. Nearer the edge of the glacier itself and on its shelves you find penguins, flightless birds that swim like fish and walk like short men.

The south sea is a churning and dangerous sea, and I have not heard of anyone sailing across it successfully in a human-made craft. Unless you are very close to the coast and stay in shallow waters, the heat makes the currents here so violent that it can create spontaneous vortices and crush ships, so there are few trading-fleets that use this ocean as a means of conveyance. They mostly travel by land. You find small fishing fleets and coastal raiders, but these travel mostly by canoe and not by masted ship. The fish here are swift and poisonous to eat unless prepared in special ways, and the sharks hunt in packs and strike even close to the beaches. I have even seen sharks leap from the water to snatch people from overhangs over the water.

The Copper Sea, which stretches from the eastern coast of Maoc to the western of Vai'qua is not one that you can travel either. Churning currents and frequent violent storms makes passage further than a day out from shore virtually impossible, and I have heard of only a handful who have survived storms out from the coast. To travel to Vai'qua this way would probably be expedient, as it is a shorter distance than east across the Sea of Conglomeration, but it is sadly impossible. I have heard that there are sea-faring elves that have ships capable of such a journey, and that some of the sea-living dwarves boast that their metal ship, the Umlers, can make the journey as well. However, I have never seen this, or heard of anyone able to buy passage on one of these voyages.

This leaves the Sea of Conglomeration. This stretches from the west coast of Maoc to the east coast of Vai'qua, and is so named because of the islands that come and go in it. Islands can sometimes appear or disappear over night in the turbulent sea, while others last for generations, either slowly rising a finger's breadth each year, or sinking as much. There are charts of several of these islands, but the further west you get the sketchier these charts become, and the more dangerous the journey. To date, if a hundred ships have sailed from Maoc to reach Vai'qua only a dozen have done so, and only three or four returned with news. However, striving from the yards and grounds at Journey's Start, there are efforts underway to employ magic to travel the distance across the sea and so reinforce the effort to explore and colonize Vai'qua.

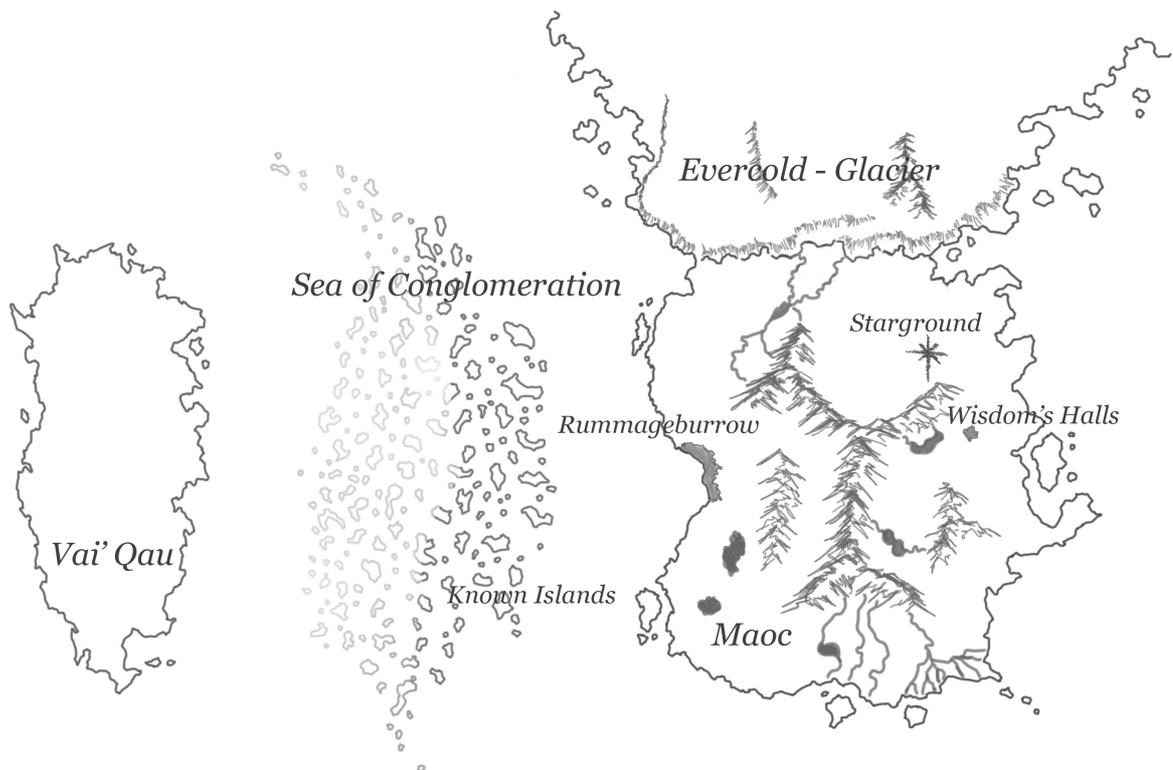
Lost Roads of Lociam

So now that we have almost sailed there, let's talk of Vai'qua. This continent is a lot smaller than Moac, but we have only just begun to explore and colonize it, and only set foot on a small portion of it. We have, however, encountered many peoples there, and from them gotten a fair grasp of how the continent is arranged. It appears that Vai'qua is elongated north to south, and a bit slimmer in the middle, but this is not confirmed yet. It slants upwards and the eastern end of the continent is a massive mountain range. As far as I know none from Maoc have been to these mountains yet, these are all second-hand accounts and maps drawn by native peoples. There appears to be both members of the First and Second people on Vai'qua, but the First people, that is, elves, dwarves and animal people, appear even rarer there than here, and even more secretive and reclusive. Contact with these have been very limited indeed. The Second people, humans of different races, are found, and while similar in many ways they are "strange" by our reckoning. There is of course a lot more to this, but it is for another time, as we are talking about geography here, not anthropology. Along the eastern coast of Vai'qua there is a current of warm water coming from the South sea heading north, and I guess that one could sail on this to reach the Evercold and then walk to Maoc from there, but it would surely be a journey that would make you long for the treacherous Sea of Conglomeration. Animals and plants on Vai'qua are different too, even things like giants and trolls are different there. It is a strange place, and it is a long-standing wish by many Maoc rulers to place colonies there and profit from trade both with the natives and with goods to import back home across the sea. So far, however, the things sent back are mostly curious artifacts and prisoners, not tradegoods, and certainly not in enough quantity or grandeur to warrant the loss of ships and life in the pursuit of them. This may change in time.

This leads us back home to Maoc. As this is a big continent and not a kingdom it is hard to summarize, but I can try.

To the north, Evercold makes its frost felt, all along the northern coast. Lands here are in tundra or cold forest, and summers short and often bleak, whereas winters are hard and cold, with arctic winds coming off the glacier and sweeping across the land. Fern and pine fill the forests, and traders travel by sleigh and ski. Lakes freeze over in the wintertime and farming is hard work, with tough soil and short springs and even shorter autumns. If you travel down the central line of the continent you will find the fork of a mighty mountain range, dividing the land in two. To the west a mighty delta of rivers, flowing out from the mountains and heading towards the frozen sea under the Evercold forms great lakes, and to the east the Icewound opens the Evercold and a massive cold river flows south from there. Further south you will find Starground, greatest of all the cities of Maoc, and possibly all the world, now that Blazepeace has disappeared, and no such cities have been found on Vai'qua. Home to the Mausoleum of the Savior, and the Cathedral of his Church, it grew from just the mighty tomb in the middle of the forest into this city, by the traffic of pilgrims. Some travelled there to touch the Mausoleum, and then someone built an inn by the roadside, someone else stable and bathhouse, and so a smith set up shop to shoe horses, and farmers travelled there to sell their wares, and the city grew. Now more than ten centuries old the city is ruled by a council and ruler, and the high-priest of the Savior's Church sends representatives to advise them. If you ever can I advise you to visit, it is a fantastic city.

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Of course, Blazepeace was said to have been more wonderful, but it has disappeared from all maps and only a handful of the First People know where it is, and they are not allowing visitors to their gates anymore. I have read accounts of the city and its size, how it was built on a foundation of glass allowing light to dive into the depths of the mountain where it was located, letting people live in daylight even underground, and of spires reaching into the sky and weaving together as a canopy would in a forest. I am deeply sad I have not seen this with my own eyes.

Travelling further south from Starground and you end up here, in Wisdom's Halls. This city never grew, and has no building older than any other. It was all built within a short span of years by the First People as a gift of peace to the Second People. It contains several great libraries, temples and schools, and in it nearly only scholars, priests and sages live, along with those required to keep the city itself running.

The further south you go from here the more the forests change from pine to oak and birch, and then to olive and eucalyptus as the temperature rises. Marshes stretch out from the foothills of mountain ranges and turn to rolling plains and fertile fields, and clans rule tracts of lands that stretch on forever. The coasts are home to fishermen, traders and pirates, but the further south you get along the coast the smaller the ships, fewer masts and lighter crews, until you get to the coastal turning from an eastern coast into a southern coast, and only single-mast boats and canoes travel these waters. While the coastal kingdoms sometimes live off trade, travelling in caravans north or by barge along the coast, most of the land further in off the coast are deserts where nomads roam.

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Travelling around the southern coast you find strange and ancient cities, sprung by deltas where rivers run from the mountains in the north towards the South Sea. Where the deltas remain the land is fertile and the kingdoms rich, but there are places where the rivers have taken another track, and the kingdoms are lost to the grip of sand and history. A bit further up from this coast you find great lakes in vast deserts, marshes or plains, one of them being the lake of Loo, where four centuries ago two opposing kingdoms each set up a fleet of over a hundred thousand ships to strike at one another in what is clearly the biggest naval engagement of all time, and all of this far away from any ocean. Strange how things like that can be.

If you travel north now you can see the Great Craters by the coast, but I would not recommend that you stay there. They are a haunted place, and while there are some that mine there, it is a strange and dangerous place, and very treacherous and shifting. Further east there are more mountain ranges reaching into the sky, with rivers running from them feeding marshes and rivers cutting through forests and plains. The current in the ocean here sweeps cold water from Evercold towards the South Sea, but you find seafarers braving the current to travel to the greatest port on the eastern coast, at the city of Rummageburrow. This city is not like any of the other great cities of Maoc, and I would know as I have been to hundreds of them. Rummageburrow has not one set of walls, but dozens and dozens, as it keeps growing like a moss on the coast, spreading all along it and inwards. The population grows so quickly that it is even impossible to keep a census of them. The Third People have their strongest hold here, the later races that came after man had settled Maoc, after it split from Vai'qua so many thousands of years ago. There are also some of the Second People here, traders making a very good live for themselves teaching the Third People the skills they are lacking. I know that the First People shun the city ever since persistent rumours started circulating that the Third People tried to burn Blazepeace a long time ago. The First even marched to war against the Third People, but we stopped them, as the Third People are such grand trading-partners and labour for all our endeavours. Human cities in the area around Rummageburrow rely on labour from Rummageburrow, and grow bigger much faster than a city of comparable wealth in the east.

Travelling further north you would see the forests again turn from oak and maple to pine and firs, and then the plains turn to tundra, and fields from tilling to grazing and to frost, and you arrive yet again at the south edge of Evercold the glacier, and the very north of Maoc again.

I have not undertaken such a journey, and it would take many lifetimes to accomplish, but it would be marvellous to try. I have travelled far and wide, but there are still many places I have only heard of or read about, and still wish to see and experience.

Please feel free to stay on and ask questions if you want to know more, but the lecture is now over, and I hope you found it informative. Thank you for your attention.