

17 Lessons in Politics

1313, the 1st month, 4th day:

It turned out to be a sizable amount of treasure under that false bottom. It was just over 100 florins. That would be enough money to build the Inn. After Drakon explained the venture and why I could not help my sister and future brother in law, except to locate an investor, Loup quickly agreed; Drakon would have one of our officials drawn up a partnerships agreement and Royal Charter. I wrote Abrith explaining I had found an investor and asking him to bring Perum and Flavia to the castle for a meeting with Loup. If they are to be business partners they should at least have met.

During our meeting I could see Loup paid close attention to our physical interactions, I think he was curious about this boy to boy physical attraction. After our business concluded and Drakon went his way, Heron and Damao came; inviting Loup to attend our fencing lessons, as the captains of guard wanted to insure all those from the pirate ship that were being given weapons, knew what to do with them. Loup was delighted for the opportunity to train, he had been denied it for almost two months now. He turned out to be competent and a match for me and Iason but no match for our body guards. At the end of it I ran circles around all of them. In sports we may all participated but some of us excel at this or that. No one I know excels at all skills. Our coach thinks I will do well in most.

We would be holding large sports games at the spring equinox. These games will be for both men and boys. The games for the boys will be divided by age groups 12 to 14, 14 to 16 and so on. While in the bath Loup asked Damao where he could find a prostitute since he was greatly in need of those services. Odo asked male or

female and while Loup blushed Odo went on to offer his services at no cost. I could see Odo was determined to seduce our new friend but Damao felt the need to be a parent and suggested he find some other 10 year olds to play with. Odo left in a pretend huff and Damao told Loup and all of us where the prostitutes did business and what the fee should be. Heron turned to us saying, "information you did not receive from us." Which brought a howell of laughter from all. Loup is not learning Greek very fast but he has only been here a few days; fortunately we all know a little Italian by now.

By custom, boys under about 16 are not welcomed by the prostitutes, however if the boys is persistent and has the coin he can get the service. Children under 10 are off limits regardless of gender. Girls under about 14 are not permitted by their families to get to close to boys anyway. The Palace Girls under 14 are by custom off limits to any older males. The Palace Boys under 14 are discouraged from the girls and most are not welcomed anyway. Over 14 it is catch what you can. A number of females over 16 are concubines of one man or another, they are not paid as such and are only partly kept, in the common uses of the term. Everyone who lives in the castle complex contributes to its running or the running of the government. No one has said anything much about Iason and I. We are just not interested in girls other then friends. Volos told me that will change for us soon, "nature has her ways." I guess since Iason's wife will be picked for him and I can't have one we are not all that interested. I guess like our Fathers we will just need to see that kind of sex as an adventure. Ikaros claims to the older boys, the ones his age, that he has no shortage of willing partners.

1313, the 1st month, 15th day: (TN: The sections preceding have been lost.)

This was more than one day's worth of activity. I am very tired nor can I imagine just what has gotten into Iason. In the past few days he has been demanding of my attention. Not that I mind, I crave his attention as well but he has been so ardent that my penis is red and swollen from over use. He is now snuggled on our bed with Odo. I suspect it has something to do with Odo's success at seducing Loup and his spending several nights in our bed. One thing is certain, that boy will never be the same again. It only took Odo a few days to make his seduction.

Much to Flavia's displeasure he and Perum became fast friends as well as business partners. Perum's educated anus was the glue and after he returned to Koalhurst, Loup became a frequent visitor to our chamber much to every one's delight. He is well endowed and now highly skilled at all the arts of male sex. Flavia may not like it but as Abrith remarked she will learn to live with it as long as he keeps her satisfied and pregnant. I don't think it was Loup she was jealous of but Ikaros, as he is more girl than she.

Father and Uncle have been consumed with our guilds. They are attempting to reform a number of them. Over time several have grown just a bit to powerful for their liking and with power seams to come a resistance to change. A few are reluctant to allow expansion, creating what Father said was an artificial shortage and driving up prices. He was also much displeased at the number of sick and injured apprentices our census uncovered.

Guilds are essentially associations of masters in particular crafts, trades, or professions. Here they go back a long way; to the time of Iason the 2nd, further in some other places the scholars tell us. In origin they were clubs which observed religious festivals together

and attended the funerals of their members. Soon after the idea reaching Parga they acquired other functions. Their economic function was to control standards and to enforce the guild's monopoly of particular activities, in a particular territory. Since Iason the 2nd only charted them for the kingdom and not a specific place in it, we at least have state wide standards. That is or seems to be a good thing. Their political function became to participate in the government of the city-state. Iason the 5th made some changes to restore the power back to the citizens and reduce the guild's role to advisory on political matters. In some other cities, notably Florence at this time, only guildsmen are eligible for civic office, thus excluding both noblemen, unless they swallowed their pride and joined, as some do, and unskilled workers like the wool comers and dyers. Not the case here, our civic offices are held by appointees of the King and they will have a guild when Arden's boys graduate and are employed. The Byzantines are closer to our model but depend more on political and family ties than merit.

Guilds are also patrons of art as is the crown, commissioning paintings for guildhalls, contributing to the fabric fund of temples and churches and collaborating on collective projects we hope with the Argoanuts. The guilds do not see themselves as equal. We in government do. In Florence, the 7 'Greater Guilds', including such prestigious occupations as judges and bankers, outrank the 14 'Lesser Guilds'. In Venice the glass blowers and related guilds are the most powerful, along with the bankers. The scholars warn that as long as times are good and the economy is expanding guilds will grow but if hard times arrive or if demand is reduced for guild products and services, fewer opportunities for journeymen to become masters, and greater hostility between master and man, will result.

A shift of economic interest from trade to land will mean a decline in the social standing of the crafts. Not likely a problem here since all the land is owned by the state and users can only get long term leases. We also have a limited opportunity to grow as our population is in fact controlled by our resources. The balancing act for us is to keep the guilds about equal in power and wealth while making sure opportunities and products meet the needs of the people and the state.

Father went on at some length about the number of sick and injured boys and young men from the guilds. He was also displeased about the lack of education some of the guilds were providing or allowing. He simply told them to find ways to improve or he would. They had one year to do it.

The wrangling went on for some time. Uncle Iason was adamant that all craftsmen working in the castle i.e. directly for the state be guild members but the guilds had to agree to make sure a sufficient number of apprentices were made available to them and that when one of the masters, in our employ, selected an apprentice the guild must accept them.

Karyakos was adamant that the guilds accept and seek help from the scholars, teachers and new schools being established as well as the Ingegnere Generale and his people. He went on to suggest that the ingegneres set up guilds such as civil ingegneres, architects, surveyors and so on, separate from the military. He also admonished them to insure their secrets were recorded properly by the scholars and put in safe keeping, so knowledge and formulas would not be lost to our decedents. (TN: it is from those archives that Arden's journals have come to us.)

The King reminded them they had an obligation to the people and themselves to become as innovative and productive as possible, our means are small and our population stable, any surplus should be exported. He urged them to send masters and apprentices to other places to learn new techniques and methods. Just as the crown sends scholars abroad to learn new ideas.

The King also suggested that groups such as midwives, male and female prostitutes, alchemists and others form guilds as well. He went on to suggest that those groups, not now organized, should be assisted by those that are. This idea got mixed results mostly negative. That was not acceptable to the King, if necessary he would just make laws to regulate such services. Most of the objectors thought that was acceptable until the king reminded them that once the state got into the business of regulations all became fair game. He pointed out that in other places, Venice and Florence to mention two, presently unorganized groups like pre weaving textile workers and dyers were agitating to form guilds. Something we had done long ago.

Karyakos pointed out that the most common occupation in the land was agriculture, into which he included animal husbandry, winemaking, fishing and the like. He pointed out that few if any of these groups wished to form guilds and that the existing guilds would be uncomfortable if they did.

"It is in your interest to keep agriculture out of this as they would become the largest and therefore the most powerful group. We all must eat and most of us enjoy wine and honey. The makers of casks and baskets have guilds the makers of that which fill them do not. For these groups he was proposing a different kind of guild. One he termed an association. The charter of these associations

would not allow them to regulate that which needs no regulation or is covered by the State or guilds themselves. They would be able to recommend standards the members could follow. He was thinking more along the lines of continuing education and a sharing of techniques and practices. We have done this informally for thousands of years, he said. Breeders of animals or farmers of hemp, growers of olives have always shared among themselves.

Regulation of standards or sharing of information and techniques that benefit one group or another benefit the whole; unless one group gains the power to control prices or exchange. Giving a guild the power to regulate the activities of its members comes very close to that. Any monopoly outside the direct control of the state poses a danger for a democratic society, even one like ours, which is in fact an elected oligarchy. That is why your charters all specify you will act in no way that restricts supply of the goods and services you offer the people of Parga. In effect the crown will regulate your monopoly power if needed. That is also why we control such things as the number of horses so that the plethrons of feed or pasture, devoted to them, will not decrease food for people. Same as for plethrons of hemp and flax. If by increasing the productivity of food producing land, some of that can be redirected to hemp for example, you rope makers or weavers may have more raw material and surplus products that can be exported. Since we raise a limited crop of these things, allowing the price to rise during times of scarcity or fall during plenty will not cause more or less to be grown. We control this price as you know, which must by necessity relate to the cost of production.

Word has come to us that in the Frankish, German and Anglo-Saxon lands they have received so much rain and now snow, that most of the harvest lay rotting in the fields. Much of what was collected is

rotting in the barns. It has so far been a very cold winter. If the next growing season is poor, these places, whole duchies in some areas, will see wide spread hunger. Wide spread hunger is a precursor of pestilence. Several bad seasons will spell disaster. Since these places are controlled by nobles and most of the farmers are surfs, tied to the land, many will parish. The nobles and merchant classes are more mobile and can go to where food is more abundant.

Those are larger lands, Parga is small and our geography not unlike the island home of our distant ancestors. If we dig deep enough into our history we will find that everyone here is related to everyone else. We are one large family although we call ourselves a clan. King Iason for example is directly related to every major family in this clan and I am related directly to most of them. Because we are an island we are so tied economically and culturally together that blood ties have become less meaningful over time. We, King Iason and I, work very hard to prevent divisive elements and differences between us from succeeding; we must all work just as hard to prevent social attitudes, faith based ideas and customs of other places from causing divisions. We pass no judgment on their society, although we may greatly disagree with them. We expect the same acceptance of our society from them. Some religious leaders will say because this or that person believes differently from you he is less a person. We must ask ourselves can my brother, cousin, uncle be less than me? I say to you, no man, not even the king has the right to brake the laws of the land, every man has the right to be wrong in his beliefs.

Something like a famine or great pestilence here will test us as a people. Just as our ancestors pulled together in times of difficulty, we must do the same. They did so because they agreed to disagree about many things, perhaps everything except their civic principals.

Our history shows no periods of long or difficult famine. We do know poor harvests and unfavorable growing seasons can and do occur; from our estate records about every 11 years. Fishing harvests have poor and good periods as well. We keep enough grains, dried fruits, nuts and so on in storage, mostly on the State's estates, to feed about half of our people for a year. I am no prophet and I hope no Cassandra.

What I see in the world outside disturbs me as much as it must have disturbed our ancestors. It looks as though few know anything about their history and if they do know, have not learned any useful lessons from it. Our best protection is the preservation of the meritocracy long established here.

Guilds in other states, place more importance on heredity than performance. Often they place more importance on power and greed than advancement of the art. This is a trap you must not let yourselves fall into. As hard as it may be for any master, he must recognize when his student has surpassed him and honor that performance. Better a man's sons choose other professions than his and do well at them, than be forced into something for which they are not suited...."

We pages were a little long in the council today. When we returned to our apartment we found Odo giving cock sucking lessons to two new 12 year olds, the twins Kastor and Polydeukus. He was using Dysme and Alexandros the younger for them to practice on. I was most impressed with his teaching technique and with the results. But I wanted Alexandros' long fat penis in my bottom before dinner. Iason and I interrupted the lesson and not only got our butts fucked by two of the palace masters but our cocks sucked by two very

skilled twins. While Alexandros and Dysme fucked us and the twins sucked us, Odo made sure we were kissed and nibbled on frequently. I was going into higher and higher levels of delight when I blasted my load into the young boys mouth. These twins were the most natural practitioners of oral pleasure I have yet seen. Not that I am an expert yet. After we were done, while Dysme was getting them ready to play Ganymede for our men; they told us that being twins they had always been close and slept together and just always sucked each other's penises.

They sure did look good and so much alike that Dysme put colored leather strips on their wrists to tell them apart. Red for Kastor and Blue for Polydeukus. They sound just alike and even act alike. They not only looked like each other they also looked exactly like a young Karyakos. Right down to the same little dimples and even a couple of small moles on their chest, right above their left nipple. These boys are my brothers, for sure. They were absolutely beautiful to behold, blond and blue eyed, long of leg with small round buttocks. They knew Iason quite well, having been schooled together and played together while growing up. He could tell them apart but none of us could.

I wondered how they would take to me. I was Karyakos' adopted son and a prince, they were his biological sons, all be it bastards. Given the way Kastor sucked me I think we will get along just fine. I think Ikaros had hoped Alexandros and Dysme would fuck him but Volos and Pyrros are never very far away and always game for a good fuck. Ikaros is that if noting else and he truly is a lot more. It is sad that he keeps his long cock for the girls and won't share with us boys. He was almost half way through his half year term of service; Iason and I like him so much we have asked that he be assigned to our household permanently. The First Steward comes for frequent

inspections

I was most impressed with the twins' singing and playing and I wondered if they were Dioskourol or youths of Apollo.

1313, the 1st month, 16th day:

I do not completely understand this boy to boy and boy to man sex business. At least where I am concerned. I sure like it and find nothing to dislike about it. Iason and I have a true passion for each other and that seems to be growing stronger. That I think I understand. What I don't quite understand is why over the past few months my personal desire for others has only grown and not diminished. At first it was new and exciting and pleasurable. It is no longer new but still exciting and my desire only seems to grow with my body. I know Iason and I are both early, most of the castle boys our age are not able to ejaculate. It just seems that a full set of boy lips or a large penis on a man, perhaps a well shaped butt, starts a desire in my groin that I can not, nor do not wish to, leave unsatisfied. I think if my body was able, I would engage in sex forsaking all other tasks and duties to do so. I must speak with my father about this.

1313 the 1st month, 21 th day:

Little of note has happened over the past four days. Yesterday the Doge's personal Representative arrived with several very handsome Venetian navel vessels. Admiral Pantaleon and his flag ship met them at sea and escorted the little fleet into our harbor. I assume our guests will not be with us much longer. Lugo will be leaving soon

as well. I will miss his company and so will our guardians who have seen much of his well shaped butt and stiff penis. I am amazed at how perceptive Odo is. He sized Lugo up and identified him as someone who would be interested in boy sex, regardless of what his culture and religion told him. I am told the in Venice many men engage in male to male sex but fewer than in Parga and most less publicly. I am glad for that and so are our guardians.

I trust that now Lugo and Perum are business partners, Lugo will be at the least an infrequent visitor. Uncle Iason suggested to Lugo that he might think about employing one of our junior officer Royal Guardsmen as a companion, body guard and personal assistant. He suggested Dario. Iason knows him reasonably well, as he like many others, grew up in the castle. I found him a very pleasant young man. Dario also speaks enough Italian to get by and is a Christian. Dario is very adapt with all kinds of weapons and had trained with our four, who all praised his abilities and strength. He has 17 years and a strong resemblance and closeness to Uncle Tertius. Since none of us have family names like the Italians do, he would be known as Dario de' Parga and Uncle Iason will grant him a title if Lugo thinks it best, as well as a leave of absence from the Royal Guards, for as long as he wishes to employ him, or he wishes to remain in Venice.

Ikaros told me Dario is a little on the shy and quiet side but he is a very accomplished lover of both men and women. He though him well suited to the idea of travel and adventure. Like all boys here he is well educated in letters, numbers and the arts, his best being an ability to draw. I take that to imply he is a keen observer and notices details others often miss. I now think I understand how our fathers manage to receive such good intelligence from places like Venice and Florence, without having any formal diplomatic presence there.

The Envoy did not make a presentation to the council this time. Most of the meetings with our fathers were behind closed doors. We were invited to one this afternoon. The Envoy was making the suggestion that we form a military alliance with Venice. Our fathers were polite and flattered but said no. “We already offer protection to any Venetian ship entering our waters and we would continue to keep pirates at bay and would cooperate with Venice and others in that effort.” They pointed out that our army and navy are just too small to do anything else but defend ourselves and any that seek refuge here.

We were prepared to use our good offices with our neighbors in any efforts to resolve differences and issues peacefully.

During the meeting wine was served to the Envoy, his group of officials and ourselves. Not us boys, we were given tea. The Envoy inspected the crystal goblets and decanter. He was amazed that the hallmark was not Venetian, but our own. “This glass is as fine if not finer than that of Murano. How did you learn to do this?”

“Our glass makers have been producing this type of glass since about 1100. When Prince Karyakos and I were boys, not much older than our sons,” he pointed to us, “your predecessor ask our fathers the same question. At that time as now, an invitation was extended to the guilds of Murano to exchange and share knowledge with us.” He smiled and nodded his head.

“Are your guilds willing to share such knowledge?” They were then and I am sure will now. I can tell you one of our secrets is the purest of sand is found here. It is not in great quantities but enough for our needs. As we both know, pure sand is only one factor and a

commodity found in many places. If your guilds are willing, we propose to send a master glass maker, a master glass blower and one senior apprentice each to Venice in exchange for a like group to come here. I would suggest they exchange jobs for a year. You will notice the stained glass in our windows is of exceptional quality and color and the clear panes are extraordinary clear and lack much of the usual distortion.

We have been making reading lenses for hundreds of years from mineral crystals of Quartz but during my grandfather's time our glass makers learned to make glass like this crystal," he held up a clear goblet, "but stronger, that can be shaped into lenses of extraordinary clarity. These occhiali (TN: This is an Italian term = eyeglasses or spectacles, it means 'it glances at them', that is what Arden used. I have tended to translate his Greek term as spectiles a tern that is often considered dated.) are now made in Pisa and Venice as well as here. You can see by looking at our scholars, the ones from Parga look different than yours; in that the lenses are held in a frame, that sits on the bridge of the nose and has struts that slide over the ears, keeping them in place without pinching the nose. At our new university, when it opens, we will have scholars devoted to the study of a new field we called optikos and light.

Our markets are small and our production facilities commensurate with that market. Parga is not a threat to anyone's markets nor do we offer large opportunities. We do excel at innovation and the production of a limited quantity of highly superior products. Instruments for surgery of exceptional quality and extraordinarily well decorated and of the highest accuracy scales, survey instruments and astrolabes, for example. We do not wish to gather riches to ourselves or impose our ideas or will on others.

By the same mark (TN: Arden wrote mark but I think he means token.) we do not wish to be imposed upon or exploited. That is why we don't care if others make and sell spectacles or even take credit for their invention, as they have done in Florence. What is important is every citizen of Parga that need them, has them. We are prepared as you know to sell surplus to our needs; since we must buy goods and materials from other places; this must not place them out of the reach of our citizens. We do not have great wealth or power like Venice or Florence. Those of us that seek such things must go elsewhere to find them. Our goal is to keep our population in balance with our ability to feed, house and provide for ourselves. The guilds here are chartered by the crown, as in other places they have a monopoly on some economic, cultural or social aspect of the state. The crown reserves the right to regulate monopolies so they can not make unfair advantage of the citizens or the government. We also can intervene in their operations should we see them placing unfair restrictions on innovation or on those seeking admittance to their membership.

This discussion went on for some time. It was obvious the Envoy could not respond to our offer for technical cooperation, it was strictly a matter for the guilds themselves. We would send our own envoy back to Venice with him along with the merchant ships and so on.

Just as we were shaking hands and finishing our meeting, the Alarm Bell rang in the tower and almost instantly our body guards appeared at our sides. King Iason went to the window and looked intensely at the messages being flashed from the harbor headlands. Our guests could not see what it was he studied.

“Three North African pirate ships are approaching from the south. They are making about 1 dolichos/ hour (1 stadion = 200 m, 2

stadion = 1 diaulos and 6 diaulos = 1 dolichos) and are 20 dolichos from the harbor entrance. He looked at the clock. That puts them here at best by the 4 th hour of the new day. Given that the sea breeze they now enjoy will become a land breeze in a few hours I would guess they arrive at the 10 hour of the new day. Ouranos please have everyone stand down until further notice, thank everyone for their quick response and have the captain of the guard make a response report to Prince Tertius. Shall we go and rest a bit before our evening meal Envoy?"

This was very exciting for a bit. I know the Envoy was very curious about how King Iason seemed to have so much information so quickly and without taking to anyone. The Envoy had asked to meet the sculpture and poet responsible for the wonderful statue of Ganymede that now graces the city plaza. Father invited him to dine with the Argoanuts and all of us. We extended the invitation to Lugo and the other members of his party. Now that the other three houses are away from the castle the Argoanuts had given the solders dining hall back to them until their new one is finished. For tonight we would use the Knights dining hall and include any of them that wished to attend.

Everyone who was able showed up and the place was filled to capacity. I noticed Lugo had brought Dario so he must be thinking about the King's suggestion. Kastor and Polydeukus were serving our fathers and several experienced Palace Boys our guests. The Envoy was amazed at how young Odo and Goro were and the Argoanuts for that matter. I learned that Lugo was the Envoy's cousin's son and he mentioned several time how appreciative he and the Doge were of our generosity and friendship to their kinsman.

Uncle Tertius and Admiral Pantaleon joined us, late as usual but they did bring the latest news of the pirates. Along with their plan. The Army would deploy along the coast, our harbor defenses would be made ready. That was more exercise than necessity. His three squadrons that were at sea would close on the pirates during the night and in the morning cut off any possible retreat. As the tide would be running out at that time his squadron and the Venice's, if they chose to join, would close the trap. The pirates would surrender or be sunk. Pantaleon thought the pirates intentions were to try and take hostages to exchange for our prisoners. He figured they are both experienced and smart enough not to try and attack like the Florentines. We have all of our fishers off the water and will keep any merchants, now at sea, away. Since the pirates didn't see any of our warships in the area, and have not yet been challenged, they will think all is well. We also suspect they believed the battle with the Florentines was very costly to us. The Florentines are not publicizing the devastation their navy was subjected to.

The Envoy just had to ask how we knew when they would arrive and how we got the message to our squadrons, which were all well out to sea. Admiral Pantaleon told him, "they only have two choices make for our harbor or head away. We know their course and speed. We also know our ships have two to three times their speed so it is simple. If they decide to run during the night we can still catch them in the morning. At last light they were still on the same heading, fighting the southerly running current in this area, with winds as expected. The only chance they have of saving themselves is running now. Once they are in my trap I will destroy them once and for all.

But how can you signal your squadrons if they are out of sight? Oh that is easy, one can see from the deck of a ship to a maximum

distance of 10 dolichos From a height of land to 12 dolichos. Our squadrons are stationed 11 dolichos off shore and they keep their sails as low a possible making it very hard to see them from far away. I can not tell you exactly how, but I can say it is based on principles laid down by our ancestors and available to the pre Christian Romans. Our navigational aids are so accurate and refined that we can arrive at any point on earth within one quarter stadion of latitude and if we can see our shores, to get accurate time signals, less then one stadion of longitude. We can predict our tides within a quarter of an hour and one pous in height, under non storm conditions. This we can do for any ports between Kalamata in the south and Dubrovnik in the north.

Iason and I know the scholars have several instruments that can predict with great accuracy the positions of stars, phases and position of the moon, eclipses, positions of planets and so on with great accuracy. They told us these machines were based on the work of scholars and craftsmen of Rodos from about 75 BC on the new calendar. These combined with our highly accurate sundials, weight driven and water clocks and continued astronomical observations, give us great advantage in predicting tides and navigation in general. These instruments are some of our closely guarded state secrets.

Plotting a ships course and speed from the land is a simple matter of triangulation, a combination of geometry and mathematics again from the ancients. We do the same thing to survey on land. As long as we can see it, we can track it.

One of the Envoy's associates asked if the instruments did the calculating. Karyakos was much amused by this. I could see it in his face. "No, any of our citizens are well enough educated to do it." He

pointed at a 14 year old Palace Boy who came rushing over, returning a few moments later with a paper and quill. "I will lay out a problem for you Theodosios, while I do that please tell our guests what you do here and how old you are. Theodosios told them he was 14 and was a beginning apprentice stone cutter/mason. Karyakos hand him the problem, plane geometry and mathematics, written in eastern numerals not Greek. He quickly solved a series of algebraic equations to reveal the direction and speed of the mythical ship. Karyakos thanked him and he was off doing what ever he was on his way to when called. "Every citizen of this land learns to read, write, figure and some art form or music, male or female. We want every citizen to develop his or her talent to its maximum, that and only that, is true prosperity."

Soon the singers and players began performing. That is what Theodosios was on his way to do. The Envoy asked how we knew our ships were so much faster than others. "Ah, that lay in two factors. First our ships have something called a center pinna (fin), they are narrower, need less ballast and can cary much more sail. Our sails are of the finest quality and can be raised and lowered more quickly. Even the lightest breeze is efficent to move them. That is why your navy is purchasing them from us."