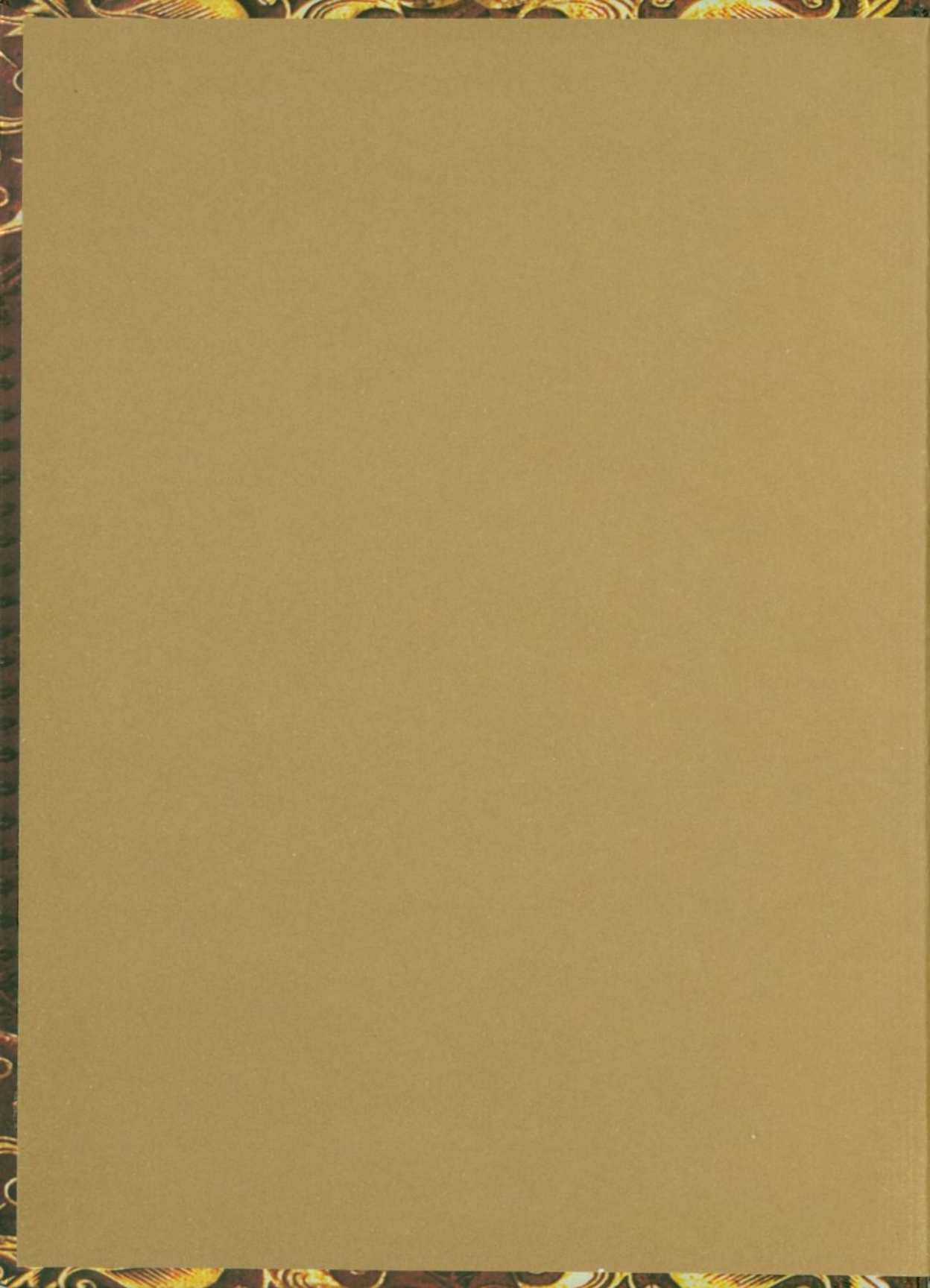


THE LARA  
DOCUMENTS







# THE LARA DOCUMENTS

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Translated by:

- ✠ tobras
- ✠ Whilram
- ✠ belford
- ✠ J.D. Barnes
- ✠ Marcus Wheeler
- ✠ turjan
- ✠ Blade Lakem

*RESEARCH DONE IN 2007–2008*

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## INTRODUCTION

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Shorah b'shemtee,

I've come to request the assistance of my fellow explorers on a project. Let me describe it for you.

Recently, I was approached by a young explorer who claimed to have come to the restoration due to a trunk he'd found among the effects belonging to an ancestor of his. This trunk contained numerous documents of a possibly D'ni origin.

According to notes in the trunk, both in English and in Spanish, they belonged to one Domasio Lara, a prospector from Mexico who got lost in a network of caverns in northern New Mexico, south of the San Luis valley. There, he discovered a devastated 'Caverna del Oro', which he assumed was the mythic El Dorado. He gathered up papers, maps and such as proof and returned to the surface. However, he was not believed and passed on his findings to his descendants.

And now I've managed to obtain the documents in question. While I see no obvious indicators in the documents of forgery, I cannot rule that out. I intend to determine whether these documents are authentic, or a well-done hoax.

This is where I need the help of my fellows. There are more documents than I can restore and examine alone in any reasonable amount of time. So I am asking for your help to restore these documents. This is a restoration project much like the DRG's stained-glass project, or those sponsored by the good folks at Subterranean Restorations.

There is quite a diversity of materials. There are illustrations, maps, descriptions of Ages, documents that may be stories or historical accounts and more. There are even trivial documents, such as personal correspondence and recipes.

So I am asking that explorers restore some of these documents and submit those restorations to me, so I can collect them and use them in analysis. If you have any questions, or would like a suggestion of what sort of restoration you can help with, please let me know by sending me a private message on this forum. Feel free to ask questions on this thread as well.

Once I have catalogued the entirety of the collection, I will then look towards chemical analysis of the materials themselves to see if they can shed some light on their origin.

I will be conducting a Town Hall to discuss this project in person next week, arranged by Eleri of the D'ni Network. Also, check the Guild of Messengers site for information and

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updates. I hope to release completed restorations on roughly a weekly basis, possibly through the Guild of Messengers as well.

Thank you for your time,

J.D. Barnes

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Last update: 11/30/2007

### THE LARA DOCUMENTS

**Q.** Where did these documents come from?

**A.** I received these documents from an explorer by the name of Nathan Galaviz, who said that he got them from the estate of his grandfather, who in turn got them from Domasio Lara.



**Q.** What sorts of documents are there in this collection?

**A.** There is a wide variety of documents. Some seem to be descriptions of Ages, others stories or historical accounts. There are also personal communications and even trivial things such as children's stories and recipes.



**Q.** What language are the documents in?

**A.** Mr. Lara's notes are in English and Spanish. The other documents are in D'ni.



**Q.** Are these documents authentic?

**A.** I do not know—this project is part of my attempt to determine that. As is the nature with this sort of thing, it is possible we may never have definitive answers on the authenticity of the documents.



**Q.** When was Mr. Lara's trip supposed to have occurred?

**A.** In the 18gos. That would place his trip not long after the remaining D'ni left for Releeshan.



**Q.** Can I use information from the Lara documents for this other project I am working on?

**A.** I plan to make all of the restorations publicly available. However, I would strongly suggest that you not use the information from this restoration effort unless you are prepared to deal with the possibility that the information will be shown to be erroneous or, worse, forgeries.

### *DOMASIO LARA*

**Q.** What do we know about Mr. Lara?

**A.** According to his descendant, Mr. Galaviz, Domasio was a prospector from Mexico who became lost in caverns he discovered in northern Mexico. Beyond that, we know very little. I have been able to find a marriage license from 1893 in New Mexico that lists a marriage between a Domasio Lara and a Meliana Galindo. The name Meliana appears in some the correspondence of Mr. Lara's found in the trunk.



**Q.** Do we have any definitive evidence supporting the veracity of this expedition?

**A.** No. There are details that align nicely here and there, but they are circumstantial at the very best. They could easily be the product of a well-researched fiction.



**Q.** Did Mr. Lara visit any Ages while in D'ni?

**A.** Assuming the veracity of his story, his notes did not indicate that he'd visited any Ages.



**Q.** What did Mr. Lara find out about D'ni?

**A.** As far as I can tell, he had no idea that he'd discovered D'ni. He seems to have thought D'ni was actually the source of the myths surrounding El Dorado, apparently due to the fact that the lake gave off a dim orange light.

### *THE RESTORATION PROCESS*

**Q.** Who is involved in this restoration?

**A.** I am heading up the efforts, though it will involve the efforts of many explorers. The good people at Subterranean Restorations have agreed to apply their expertise. The Guild of Messengers has agreed to help distribute information and the D'ni Network has agreed to provide an Internet location to place restorations for public perusal.



**Q.** Is the DRG involved? Dr. Watson? The Guilds?

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A. I have been unable to secure assistance from the DRG at this time—their resources are focused on finding additional funding and maintaining the basic services in Cavern. Likewise, Dr. Watson is focusing on other projects that have more definitive sources, such as the D'ni Language Restoration Project he is working on with the D'ni Linguistics Fellowship. I do hope to talk with the Guilds to see if there are any resources they'd be interested in contributing to the project.



Q. Are you going to use any chemical processes to determine the authenticity of these documents?

A. I am hoping to pursue many different avenues for testing these documents. But first, I would like to catalogue and record all of the information they contain before, say, subjecting parts of the original documents to chemical analysis.



Q. What documents should I restore?

A. I would suggest you focus on the restoration of documents on topics that interest you. If you are having difficulty with deciding where to focus, please contact me and we'll discuss it.



Q. How do I access the documents so I can begin restoring?

A. If you are familiar with the restoration projects that the DRG has run in the past (the stain-glass projects), I am using an identical process to distribute the documents to researchers as they did.



Q. Do you want a 'snapshot' of the restored document itself, or just a translation of what it says?

A. While snapshots of restored documents are welcome, they are not necessary at this stage of the restoration. Rather, I am most interested in cataloging and recording the information in the documents. English reproductions of the document or just the information therein are sufficient, much like the DRG notebooks you find in the Cavern. Restored images from documents can be submitted individually or in the context of the page on which they reside.



Q. I do not know the D'ni language. How can I assist in restoring these documents?

A. There are a number of linguists in our community who might be willing to help. However, at this stage, you do not need to show the linguistic intricacies of the document in your submission, unless you are so inclined. An English version of the document will be sufficient at this point.

### LARA 001: CAHY'LEH'S LETTERS

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#### LARA 001.001: TRANSLATED BY TOBYAS

My longtime friend,

I pray that the Guild of Maintainers is treating you well. I have enjoyed my first few hahrtee with the Guild of Surveyors. I trust that you have learned much about your trade from your instructors, as have I(1).

However, I feel that there is something that I am not being told, things that seem almost deliberately ignored or, worse, hidden. When I attempt to inquire about such things I am met with blank stares at best and lengthy, angry lectures at worst. In younger times, you were always good at seeing through cover ups. I am hoping that you could help me.

One of the most useful tools that we have in the Guild of Surveyors is the "fah-lahn Triangle." The use of the "fah-lahn Triangle" is simple. You simply need to draw squares on each side of a triangle and then measure the area of the squares. It works that simply so long as one angle has measure 15,625(2) torans. What you find is that the sum of the areas of the two smaller squares is equal to the area of the larger square(3).

This technique is useful mostly for determining the distance between two landmarks when there is some other object, like a large boulder, in the way. My problem, however, arises rather quickly. Surely it is not difficult to realize that it is possible to draw a line accurately measuring 1 span. It is equally easy to draw a second line, also of measure 1 span, 15,625 torans away from it. Finally, using a straight piece of metal, I can connect the ends of those two lines. The problem arises when I ask the length of the third line.

Using the "fah-lahn Triangle" I created, we can see that the two smaller squares have measure of 1 square-span and so the larger square has measure of 2 square-spantee. This means that the side of the larger square is some number that when times itself becomes 2. I won't bore you with the details, but if I can show that this number does not actually exist, yet the line obviously measures it. When we encounter this while working, we approximate by picking two numbers and saying it is a certain number of parts of a whole. For the number that multiples by itself to 2, we usually say that it is 1 whole and 6,469 parts of 15,625. We can measure to more parts if we are doing higher precession work, but the truth remains that the actual calculated length of the line cannot be said as parts of a whole even though it is obvious that everything is either a whole or a part of a whole.

All the members of the Guild of Surveyors I have discussed this with have simply shrugged it off saying that I simply have not been accurate enough in either my measurement or my expression of the parts. I now come to you, my trusted friend. Surely the Guild of Maintainers also makes use of calculation in the course of their activities. Have you encountered such similar problems as this?

Truthfully, I hope that I am wrong. If we are finding lengths of paths that shouldn't exist, what does this mean of the Age we live in? I know that contradictions make an age unstable and thus unsuitable for life. Does a contradiction like this mean that D'ni is unstable?

Fondly,  
Cahr'leh

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### FOOTNOTES

(1) This comment indicates that the author is young. However, his command of language indicates he's quite a bit older than the age of admittance at the time of the Fall, which was four hahrtee old. The age of which one began in a Guild must have been different at that time. -J.D.

(2) In this translation, decimal numbers have been used instead of D'ni base-25 numbers, for ease of reading. -J.D.

(3) After careful consideration I have determined that this is the D'ni equivalent of the Pythagorean Theorem. At first the number 15,625 seems a bizarre choice, even if it does become 1,000 in the D'ni number system. However, we can see that 15,625 is exactly one quarter of 62,500 which corresponds to 4,000 in the D'ni number system. So one quarter of 62,500 torans is equivalent to one quarter of 360 degrees. Since it is obvious that the author is talking about a right triangle because of the use of the right angle, we can see that the technique described here is fairly similar to one of the many proofs that we have for the Pythagorean Theorem. -tobras.

### LARA 001.002: TRANSLATED BY TOBYAS

Cahr'leh

Your letter intrigued me to do some research. I talked to members of several guilds to try to determine what people thought of the idea. Apparently this is known fairly well and appears in many Guild training courses. It is fairly well accepted that, although we cannot know these numbers exactly, we do not really need to. However, there are more of these numbers than just "square side" 2. A member of the Guild of Stone Masons proposed this problem. I take a cube of stone and measure its volume to be 2 units by sinking it in water. What is the length of the side? Something that, when multiplied by itself twice,

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equals 2? A "cube side" 2. These strange numbers are simply that: strange. There are as many of them as there are branches on the Tree. (Translator Note: I believe he is talking about the Great Tree of Possibility which is a concept based around the writing of Ages.) Normally I would be tempted to agree with most others and say that it is an error in measurement. There are, after all, limits to how well we can measure. However, we are assuming conditions to the 25. Generally I was told that people tend to use estimations when building something, but when planning it out it is almost as if they are using several different types of measurements: one for 1 span, one for "square side" 2, one for "square side" 3, and so on.

Now, I know you as one who likes puzzles, so you might be interested in a puzzle proposed to me by a member of the Guild of Mechanists named Koh'shee. Start with a circle with a "dividing line" of length 2 spantee. Draw a second "dividing line" 1,000 (1,000 D'ni = 15,625 Decimal) toran different from the first. You will now have a picture of  $1/4$  of a circle. Connecting the two points on the circle and using what you discovered about the 1,000 Triangle will give you "square side" 2. Notice that this is the same as using the "horizon" on this angle. Also notice that the arc of this circle is more than "square side" 2. Now, cut the 1,000 angle into two 500 angles and make a third point on the circle. Use the "horizon" again on these two angles and add the results. Since each "horizon" is a little more than  $3/4$ , the sum is a little more than  $3/4 * 2$ . Keep repeating this process and you get closer and closer to the length of the arc in the circle. This value, Koh'shee tells me, is something that the Mechanists use a lot in their work with gears despite the fact that it, like "square side" 2, must be estimated. He also tells me they often estimate this when doing small projects by using  $11/7$ .

From an Age writing perspective, I can tell you that these same concepts will work in every Age on the Great Tree that we deem stable and most that we deem unstable. I imagine that it would be very difficult to write an Age where these numbers did not exist as they are a construct of your mind and not of a writer. So either the whole Tree is unstable or this is not a contradiction. Either way, I wouldn't worry too much about it. D'ni is stable enough and obviously passed the rigorous battery of safety inspections we put it through. We do live here and have been living here for our entire lives. I am absolutely convinced that the Age of D'ni is stable. Also keep in mind that the smaller the inconsistency, the longer the lifespan of the age. When a writer mixes up words and creates a big contradiction, Ages tear themselves apart as the seams rather quickly. If these numbers are an inconsistency, they are a minute one. D'ni will be around for as long as the Great Tree of Possibility.

Keep exploring but always do your research,

Ardis

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## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES:

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This document contains a lot of mathematical notation and seems to provide a lot of insight as to how the D'ni wrote and thought about mathematics. This might be a veritable Rosetta Stone of information. I have put all of the things I believe to be mathematical terms in quotes in the main body of the letter. I will now go through them and explain how I came to discern their meaning and translation. —tobras

"Square side" — This appears to be the D'ni form of the square root. Not surprisingly, the D'ni seem to have kept their tie between geometry/design/engineering and the abstract mathematical concept of numbers by permanently paying homage to the relation between the radical and the side of the square.

"Cube side" — Unsurprisingly, the D'ni have extended the square root to the cube root the same way we do. Unfortunately this document makes no mention of the existence of a forth or higher root. I highly doubt they would use a term like "hyper cube side." This is something to look out for in future documents.

"Dividing line" or the alternate translation "Separating line" — used in this context it appears to directly refer to the diameter of a circle. However, I might speculate that these terms may refer to any line of symmetry in a geometric figure.

"Horizon" — This appears to be a trigonometric function as the author makes numerous references to using it on an angle at the center of a circle to determine the distance between two points on the circle. With the approximate values given the horizon of an angle looks to be  $2 * \sin(\text{angle} / 2)$ . Technically with this we could create an additional trigonometric function "cohorizon", but it is unclear if the D'ni used anything like this. An additional note about this is in regards to the name. The name appears to come from the idea that a surveror's view of a new age seems to be a circle. Then, the distance between two points on the horizon can be calculated knowing the angle between the two items and the visibility of the day.

The number that would be calculated using Koh'shee's method is  $\pi/2$ . This is an interesting curiosity about D'ni mathematics as this seems to be another aspect which seems based off of a quarter of a circle. On the surface, we use a measure of angles called radians.  $\pi/2$  happens to correspond to a quarter of a circle.

"Multiplication" — I have used the symbol \* in place of the D'ni symbol of multiplication. After a little bit of research the D'ni symbol for multiplication is the letters of the word for "with" or "by" (t' in English letters) written on top of each other inside of a box.

"Division" — Just like with multiplication, division is denoted by two letters on top of each other drawn inside of a box. The letters are te which corresponds to "of" as in "a member of." This is hardly surprising considering the words that Cahryleh used in the first letter of this series.

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As for the equation itself, the D'ni numerical system is rather unique in that all the numbers have boxes around them. As a result when writing a number with multiple digits the whole number is written inside of a long rectangle. This has been seen in many places all around D'ni and their ages. Here it seems that D'ni extended this to their equations. The same long rectangles are written around whole expressions seeming to indicate, truthfully, that an expression is actually just a different way to write a number. Incidentally, this may explain why we have never see equations anywhere as the D'ni simply treated them as numbers and found little use for the equations themselves in formal letters. Additionally the D'ni have a unique way of writing an equation. The advantage of their system is that it allows us to write expressions without the use of order of operations or parenthesis. So, an expression like  $2 * (3 + 4)$  would be written  $2\ 3\ 4\ +\ *$  all in a large rectangle with double lines separating the different numbers. At the very least, this particular D'ni man had this habit. As we discussed, it is possible that not all of D'ni shared this notation.

—tobras

## LARA 002: D'NI PARABLES

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### LARA 002.001: TRANSLATED BY WHILYAM

A young D'ni man was walking through a park in J'taeri when he spotted an old man painting. The old man sat facing a wall which encircled the park. The young man shrugged at the strange old painter and went about his job. He returned later to find the painter still there. Again he shrugged and left. The next day, the young man did not have to work and so went to the park. There he found the old man still painting.

"What do you paint, diligent one?" He asked as he approached the old man from behind.

The old man turned to face the young and smiled. As he moved, the young man glimpsed the painting. It was a beautiful portrait of the King. Like a viewer<sup>(1)</sup> of the living man and the young man was shocked.

"Your clothes show you are of the lower classes. You have never seen the king as I have. From who did you steal that painting?"

The old man continued smiling. "I paint what inspires me. It moves me. It gives me purpose. God<sup>(2)</sup> shows me the King so I may glory them both."

And so it continued until the old man died and the paintings went to the Guild and eventually to the King when he saw them. And the young man continued until he died and neither God nor the King knew of him.

---

### FOOTNOTES:

(1) Literally it is the abstract noun-forming suffix -tahv attached to the verb "to view" not "to see" but view so it literally is the noun that views. It seemed, in the context, that it was like the painter had a portal or a viewer to look at the King the detail was so fine but no it didn't specify an imaging device. —Whilyam

(2) The works all said "Yahvo". However as Yahvo is the D'ni's god, it seemed like the translation would be incomplete if it were left. —Whilyam

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### LARA 002.002: TRANSLATED BY WHILYAM

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One day an adventurous D'ni man went to the king<sup>(1)</sup> and declared he wanted to go on a grand voyage on the sea of a dangerous age to prove his love and faith in his king, his wife, and God. The king was hesitant and told the man of his foolishness.

"Go away. You will die on that journey and would serve me, your wife, and God better by living and helping D'ni to prosper."

The adventurer frowned. "That may be true, my king, but were I to go, that I braved these dangers for my wife, king and God, regardless of the end, would that not be a testament to my faith?"

The king frowned now as well. "You have a twisted view of faith. You may not go."

And so the man left. However, by the night, God visited the king and told him to allow the voyage. And so it was. And the adventurer's crew saw with him many wondrous things and learned much. And on the last day a storm too the adventurer and the crew returned minus only him. And though all of D'ni was sad, it was the strong opinion of all that no one had greater faith.<sup>(2)</sup>

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#### FOOTNOTES:

<sup>(1)</sup> The king in this piece seems to be Shomat. Though it's unclear. It could also be Arlesh or Ja'kreen. —Whilyam

<sup>(2)</sup> When it reads "it was the strong opinion of all that no one had greater faith." "strong" would be directly translated as "hard" or "hardest" in terms of density. I felt strong would be the more accurate translation. —Whilyam

### LARA 002.003: TRANSLATED BY WHILYAM

A D'ni man was travelling through another Age. He was a famous explorer and had enjoyed visiting other Ages. This Age had many offworlders who lived on a flood plain. One day, the man was exploring with his offworlders when the Age began to flood. It flooded so quickly that he could not get out and he did not have a Book so he was trapped. The waters continued to rise and soon the man would be washed away. The offworlders cowered and did nothing so the man prayed and God appeared before him.

"Please, my lord, save me from these waters." He said

"Did you not bring a Book?"

"I did not, my lord. I forgot."

"I gave to you the Gift<sup>(1)</sup> to protect you, to assist you, to make you wealthy and powerful, masters of all."

"I know, my lord. I forgot. I am sorry. I was traveling with many other people and believed I was safe with them."

"You are safe with me, they will not save you. Learn from this that you cannot trust offworlders."

"I will, my lord." Said the man.

And God moved the currents and the offworlders cried out as they felt they would be carried away, but the D'ni man felt the currents move around him and he stared still in the water. And so God moved the currents more and the offworlders were swept away and died and then God let the waters recede. And so the man was saved and he returned to the off-worlder village and he told them of what had happened and the off-worlders found God and learned of his patience and wrath.

---

### FOOTNOTES:

It's difficult to pin down the time when this document was made. There are credible reasons (ink type, paper type, writing style) this could come from the times of a variety of kings. The three times I was able to narrow it down to was the reign of Yablehshan, that of Asemlef, or some point just before the Pento War. I'm leaning towards it being written and published during the time of Asemlef, though, as a paper published during the time when outside groups were perceived to have been killing D'ni would have perhaps replicated that situation more (as in, the outsiders here harming the explorer instead of merely being of "no assistance". The weak and cowardly outsider/servant model seems to match more with Asemlef's reign. —Whilyam

(/) The use here of referring to the Art as 'the Gift' is significant here, as it underlines the idea that the author felt that the Art was a blessing from Yahvo. —J.D.

### LARA 002.004: TRANSLATED BY WHILYAM

A D'ni man was depressed. He took solace in drinks and sin and did nothing in his sadness. For many years he was like this and then God appeared before him.

"Why do you sit, child?" God asked him.

"I can do nothing, my master." The man replied.

"You have done nothing, child. But why do you sit?"

"You know, my master. My business has failed, my home is no longer mine, my wife has left me and will not return. I cannot continue as I am, my master."

"No, you cannot. But why sit?"

"Have I not said so?"

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"You have said what has happened in the past, but not what has forced you to do nothing to change your future."

"I can do nothing."

"That is an excuse."

"That is what is real." The man protested. "All I try to improve fails."

"For you attempt believing you will not succeed."

"I believe I will succeed. I want to succeed! Do you believe I enjoy being so low?"

"You want to succeed, but you do not believe you will."

"Would anyone not understand if they heard what has occurred?"

"That is an excuse. Do not craft them before me. Put your energy into glorifying me and your fortunes will change."

And so the man did with the belief that God was before him, the lighter for him. And so he rose in his power and wealth and his wife returned for she had left him for his sin. And even though he was a low one<sup>(1)</sup>, he went to be influential and active and all looked up to him.

---

## FOOTNOTES:

From what I can find, this story was published with the first two I restored. They seem to be written either when the D'ni first arrived as a form of motivation to build more and glorify Yahvo (which doesn't match up with the mention of the J'taeri district in the piece about the D'ni painter, though it could have had a more modern re-writing) or it could have been created during the reign of Kedri. The paper and ink styles from Rineref's period seem to have had a revival during that period (the paper is more rough, as is the ink, made relatively crudely and with basic materials). —Whilyam

<sup>(1)</sup> It is unclear whether 'low one' here means low of class, or refers to the lowness of depression and immorality the man had sunk to. —J.D.

## LARA 002.005: TRANSLATED BY WHILYAM

In the year 3908, a man named Likahth was apprenticing with three of his friends under a wealthy shopkeeper named Te'erah. Likahth had been friends with them since first schooling<sup>(1)</sup> and they were both in the same portion<sup>(2)</sup>.

While Te'erah rewarded them well for their work, Likahth found out from some older workers that Te'erah had many women and carried out relationships with them. When he learned of this, Likahth went to his friends and asked if they knew. The first friend had been here before Likahth and said that he had no knowledge of it but that something had

to be done. The second friend felt it wasn't his business. The third friend said he had been the one to organize the events.

So Likahth said to his first friend "how can you not know of this when it is so solid<sup>(3)</sup> with those who have been here longer?" and his friend had no answer. And to the second friend "how can it not be your business when your highest business is to honor god and this man is a dishonor?" and his friend had no answer. And to the third friend "how can you call yourself D'ni when you commit such a sin and promote it?" and his friend had no answer and Likahth never spoke to the three again for he knew that it was his connection and love of god which was most needed. And so Likahth left Te'erah's employment and Te'erah's workshop was hit by a disaster and fell apart<sup>(4)</sup> and Likahth, who had performed his talents elsewhere, become one of the wealthiest of the D'ni.

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### FOOTNOTES:

(1) First schooling seems to mean the primary schooling all D'ni children had before choosing a Guild. Makes some sense as they all would have been from the same district, same class level, social level. —Whilyam

(2) Portion seems to mean something like class level. As in, they were all at Guild-level class (though, given the timeframe, I suppose they could have been beneficiaries of some of more open Guild practices. —Whilyam

(3) Solid seems to be used to mean "well known" or obvious. —Whilyam

(4) Really muddy here in terms of details. Probably from endless re-tellings. No idea what work Te'erah was into, what kind of a disaster (physical, moral, financial) hit it or what "fell apart" meant. —Whilyam

### LARA 002.006: TRANSLATED BY WHILYAM

Two brothers, Hovir and Ti'jev, once lived in D'ni. They were considered lucky because they had been born at the same time. Both lived identical lives: having the same styles, the same manners, going to the same school, joining the same guild and rising to the same rank. It was said that they were as impossible to separate as they were to tell apart. One day, however, a beautiful girl fell in love with Ti'jev and they were married. Hovir found that his brother no longer had time for him as he rose steadily in the Guild ranks and Hovir became jealous. Ti'jev, while busy, often could not find his brother when he was free and, seeing his brother's jealousy, grew sad. When his guildwork lessened, he went to a private age to think and had an idea. He called upon Hovir the evening of the next day.

"Your jealousy and my sadness brings shame to our family and dishonor to god and we are each unhappy as we are. So let us switch places and see how the other fares."

## THE LARA DOCUMENTS

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And Hovir agreed and the two swapped clothes and lists of friends. Ti'ajev took on a scowl and made sure to not appear too clean. While Hovir took a long bath and carried himself with a tall smile<sup>(1)</sup>. The two parted to the other's dwelling. When Ti'ajev arrived at Hovir's home, he found the house modest and well-fit to him. When Hovir arrived at Ti'ajev's home, he found the luxury and beauty of all he dreamed of as well as the beautiful girl who had caught Hovir's heart as it had his brother's.

As time went on, the brothers became good in their positions. Ti'ajev was glad to escape the duties of his job and family, while Hovir enjoyed those duties he had dreamed of. The trick was carried on for one year. The brothers began to feel as the other had a year before. Ti'ajev grew bored with the tedious chores and the continued lack of his brother. While Hovir danced between his many duties and never fulfilled them well. So Hovir left for his brother's private age to think and had an idea. He went to his old house to talk with his brother.

"It is curious that, while neither of us enjoyed our past jobs, neither can the other do the same jobs. So why do we each try and do alone what together we may do better?"

His brother agreed and they switched themselves again and returned to their proper houses and fulfilled their duties on their own for one year before they felt they needed the other's help. And so, when Ti'ajev felt he had enough of his high-level tasks, he would consult with Hovir who had a tedious task he needed completed. And so the two served D'ni and god more and prospered more through each other. And, one day, god showed Hovir the path to a girl as beautiful as his brother's.

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### FOOTNOTES:

(1) Tall smile meaning big, I'm assuming. —Whilyam

## LARA 002.007: TRANSLATED BY WHILYAM

In the year 6138 DE (D'ni Era) during the reign of King Asemlef, the great people of D'ni traded with the natives of the age of Ishveer. Ishveer was a grand world of sparkling salt pillars in an endless prairie and its people were a tall, powerful race who were masters of a non-cultured<sup>(1)</sup> race they referred to as the Low-speakers. The low-speakers were monsters<sup>(2)</sup> with wide, flat heads, and an eye on either side. Their black-furred skin dotted with bright orange scales. Though, by a miracle of the Art, they had an inerrant<sup>(3)</sup> mastery<sup>(4)</sup> of the D'ni language, their customs were primitive and they were unfaithful to god<sup>(5)</sup>.

So it was a tragedy when the low-speakers rebelled against the Ishveer people and formed their own group. The king of the Ishveer spoke to an advisor to King Asemlef and requested weapons and food to assist with the low-speaker uprising. And Asemlef's advisor took the requests to the King and he agreed. Unfortunately, while the resources helped the Ishveer, the low-speakers triumphed and the Age of Ishveer was over-run by them.

King Asemlef called a meeting of his advisors.

"What does D'ni do now?" Asemlef pointed to a pile of the wares of the Ishveer. "What age will my people find things such as these?"

A prophetess stepped up amongst Asemlef's advisors. "Our duty as D'ni is to honor god. If we are blinded by goods, we slide towards sin. These people do not believe in god and do not honor him."

And so King Asemlef ordered the low-speaker's death. An order, he said, for to trade goods with them would be an insult to god. A force of our Maintainers arrived and quickly ended the low-speakers. After the battle, the prophetess told the king that god was thankful and that their souls were at rest.

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### FOOTNOTES:

(1) Seems like a D'ni way of saying "barbaric" —Whilyam

(2) "bahro" literally. —Whilyam

(3) literally "ever present" —Whilyam

(4) Mastery in the skilled sense, not as in master and slave. —Whilyam

(5) Haven't seen many documents on this, but it seems they had a combination of more barbaric rituals from a human perspective (animal sacrifices) and newer surface ideas (females were equal to males in respect to pecking order, debate was encouraged, and it seems some more complex philosophical ideas were coming from the race). The Ishveer masters, though, also seem to have their share of moral issues that seem to have been glossed over. —Whilyam

### LARA 002.008: TRANSLATED BY WHILYAM

Our people were lowered this day. The armored men came silently. Their eyes glowing bright green. They made a long straight line along the shore they appeared from and each drew a large tube from their armor. At a command the tube produced a deadly fog. Those who returned told of a horrible sensation. On the skin it felt like fire and in the lungs felt like water. Those who burned and drowned and lived have no sense remaining in them. They say they hear their laughter in their sleep. Metallic mechanic laughter. Nothing we try stops them. They kill our negotiators(1). They survive in all environments. Their armor repels our weapons. Some have taken refuge in our old homes and the secret caverns. The D'ni do not know of them. We can rebuild.

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### FOOTNOTES:

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① The word used is "shorahahn" –Whilyam

### LARA 002.009: TRANSLATED BY WHILYAM

#### *THE SOUL HEALER (REHVEELAYTA YRTAHN)①*

Long ago when Garternar was young, there lived a man in a small house known as the soul healer. The man lived alone and lived humbly as he was blind. By God's grace, however he was a master at seeing into people's souls. The man's face was slightly wrinkled, his chin was long and pointed, his eyes closed and sunk deep. One day a man came to the small house and talked to the soul healer.

"I honor and love God by buying from the poor and giving donations where I can," he said. "Yet I am still uneasy."

"You place too much in your money," the man replied. "God sees what you do, not what you spend."

The man left. The next day another man came to the small house to talk to the soul healer. As the man approached him, the soul healer frowned.

"I will not let you into this house for your soul is tainted."

"But I have come here for help!" The man protested. Nevertheless, the soul healer still turned him away and the man left, bitter and angry.

The next day a woman came to the small house.

"Why does my husband's shop do so poorly when I work my hardest to help him?"

"Because you work for him and not for God," the man said. "God loves your dedication to your husband, but you must make time for God as well. Remember that God is the one who brought you to each other and thank him for the days that he brings you."

On the fourth day, a child came to the small house and spoke to the man.

"I love my mother and my father, but how do I love God?" he asked.

"How do you show that you love your parents?" the man asked.

"I tell them and make them little things."

"And you do things that make them happy? You obey them?"

"Yes," the child said. "But how do I talk to one I cannot see or give to someone who cannot reach out and hold?"

"God does not need to hear your voice to know you love him, though he can. He does not need to hold what you make to appreciate it. Simply tell him in your mind and he will know."

On the fifth day, an ancient man came to the small house.

"I have lived for five-hundred and twenty years and I have seen such cruelty and immorality from our people. Why did God not make us kinder and righteous?"

"Because that is for us to do. It is our greatest goal." The soul healer said. "I we were perfect, what would we strive for?"

The old man left and the soul healer closed his door for the night and went to his bed. As he neared sleep, the man heard the noise of someone breaking down his door. He stood and addressed the intruder he could not see.

"Do you think God would approve of you harming me because I turned you away? Do you think your soul will look better to God through this achievement?"

And the man who the soul healer had turned away stopped and left returning the next day to talk. This day the soul healer let him in.

"Why did you turn me away the first time?" The man asked."

"Because I saw your anger. That was in your soul."

"Then why didn't you let me I and tell me?"

"Because of all the ailments of the soul, anger is the most stubborn and must be dealt with by showing it. You saw your anger so now you will understand and heal your soul. Be kind, for that shows your honor of God. Anger leads to nothing but more of the same."

And so the man left and did as the soul healer said and became one of the most revered of the Ronar. And the soul healer grew old and honored God by helping many more people. And when his days ended, the whole of Garternar was saddened.

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### WHILYAM'S NOTES:

(/) The direct translation is "the soul helper". We don't have "helpers" in our culture, though. The man in the story seems more like a doctor or a healer, though I suppose it depends on which you prefer. —Whilyam

### LARA 003: IN THE CHINAMAN'S EYE

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#### LARA 003.001: TRANSLATED BY BELFORD

I walked into the Chinaman's Eye, and I saw an old man in an old army uniform. He sat at the smallest darkest table in the saloon. In front of him were a glass, a little black book, and a bottle of mezcal. The book was closed and the bottle was open.

I navigate by stories; I sit and drink with the most interesting one I can see. The closed book and the open bottle were the best story in the saloon, so I sat down and asked the man which one was better.

Well, he said, the bottle isn't good. It's the cheapest mezcal but that's what I like to drink. It's harsh and strong and it stings. If I drank brandy I would remember what's sweet in life, and if I drank whiskey I'd remember what's rich in life, but I don't drink to remember my life so mezcal is good enough for me.

And the book? I asked.

I haven't read it. So I guess the bottle is better after all, for a closed book and a closed bottle are neither any good to anyone. Have some mezcal, Father.

So I drank with the man who had been a soldier, and the husband of a visionary, and the friend of a Mexican prospector, and was now the owner of a book and a saloon in San Francisco called the Chinaman's Eye.



The soldier asked, Father, what do you imagine Heaven is like?

I had returned to the saloon, which I'd found out belonged to the soldier. He sat in it each day, starting in the afternoon, with the closed book and the open bottle in front of him. He drank his mezcal slowly as night fell, and now I drank mezcal with him and considered his question.

You'd think my job would be to know that, I replied, but of course I don't. We speak of a great and golden City, full of saints and angels, free of suffering. We imagine living there just as we live here, but with no disease or age, and bathed in the presence of God. It's not much of a story, bland and simple I'll admit, but what other kind can sinners tell?

Why, any story at all, the soldier said as I sipped my drink. Any story is a thought in the mind of a man, which means it must be a thought in the mind of God, and surely all of God's thoughts are manifest in Heaven.

That's true, it must be as you say. And didn't Dante write of the spheres of Heaven, the Moon and Sun, Mars and Venus and so on, each with its inhabitants and its nature?

Dante?

A poet of Italy.

Well I'm no poet, only an old soldier, but I've heard stories far beyond the Moon and the Sun. A story of a tree that rises to pierce the sky; a story of twelve golden islands in a warm silver sea. A story of a jungle full of singing serpents, of a desert of cracked ice that breathes its vapors up to stars no man has ever known.

Surely those are stories of wonders, and I would love to hear them too. Who spoke of such things to you?

That was my wife, and she only spoke of what she saw. All the years I knew her, she was blessed with visions of Heaven.



I sat down, and the soldier looked across the table at the bottle and the book that separated us. I reached for the bottle and left the book alone.

Sir, you spoke last night of your wife. But you never told me her name.

Why, she was Mary, a fitting name for a blessed woman I always thought. So many women bear that name, but then so many women are blessed, so many women and men that it's a wonder we are not all Josephs and Marys. Well, like the blessed Mary-- The soldier laughed then. --Your pardon, Father, I think of her often and speak of her rarely, here in this saloon which we once owned together. You were asking about my wife.

She had visions.

That's so. Not fits, you understand, not great babbling ecstasies such as you hear about.

Such as visit the Shakers or the Gift Adventists?

Do they, Father? I have not seen such things. Mary held only a great light, half-remembered and half-seen, that lived in her dreams and the edges of her sight. She was shy about it sometimes, but I loved hearing her visions, and so she brought them forth for me as words, simple bright words that a soldier could understand. And so I loved her.

Of course you did, what else could you do? But tell me her words. What was her Heaven?

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Oh, everything, as I told you yesterday, or perhaps it was the night before? Crystal bridges threading gulfs of sparkling twilight. Fern trees like sequoias sheltering grazing iguanas the size of elephants. Waves of curling violet cloud breaking on shores of splintered glass.

But chiefly the city, the Kingdom of Heaven, golden and pure, surrounded by seas of light.

Just as the Bible says after all, I laughed.

Surely, Father, and why not? It was the word of God that Mary spoke.

And the book? I asked very gently, touching the black leather that lay between us, the volume that the soldier had never touched or opened or spoken of.

The word of God as well, Father. Nothing else but that.



The next time I walked into the Chinaman's Eye, I bought a second bottle of mezcal. Two drinking from one bottle finish too soon, and I wanted to hear more of the soldier's life.

This book, I asked him. That was Mary's Bible?

Oh no, Father. That is, yes, hers; but the Mexican's before her.

The Mexican you say.

Just so, the Mexican, a prospector and wanderer, a dusty leather man. He walked out of the desert and into our saloon.

He must have liked your sign as much as I did.

Certainly he did, as you did, that's an old story and I'm glad you know it. The half-lidded eye: it says, I see some things but then others I don't. Appropriate for a place where men sit and drink mezcal, which is what the Mexican drank, harsh and strong and stinging.

But he had found no gold? Only Bibles, I suppose. A prospector who strikes Gospel is a rare miracle indeed.

Now you're jesting, Father, but strangely enough you're right. He had found no gold in the desert, nor silver either. Men with gold and silver do not drink cheap mezcal. But the Mexican had found a cavern -- had become lost in a cavern, to tell truth. He had wandered many days underground, or perhaps it was even weeks. And then he returned to the open skies with drawings, with memoirs, with maps and charts and sketches. Things he had seen, and then others he had not seen but merely discovered written down, in ancient tattered books and parchments.

But what had he seen?

Why, what else but a golden city? A lost and empty city buried in stone. A city in ruin, surrounded by a dying golden light. The fabled city that Pizarro and de Leon had sought; found by a Mexican prospector who knew he beheld El Dorado.



You need not pay for your mezcal here, Father, not in my saloon, not now that you know my wife's name. It is cheap drink besides.

Thank you. But I must ask --

Calmly, Father, it is all in the past and there is nothing but the story to be told. You are curious about the city of course, the golden city so like and so unlike Mary's vision.

Yes, curious, exactly so. We say much of Heaven, but never that it is a deserted city, fading away to ruin. It would be theologically unsound at best.

And in a cavern, to boot. Underground.

Insupportable! I laughed. I shall telegraph the Episcopal bishops at once. But truly, it was the city Mary had always seen?

It truly was and she was as wonder-struck as you. She had often described to me the colonnades and plazas, the arches and flying balconies, until I could see them as clearly as this glass before me. And there they were in charcoal and chalk, the papers lying on this very table.

The Mexican had a fine hand.

I wonder if Heaven has shadows in this mortal world. Cast like Plato's shades by the light of our Lord. El Dorado, Atlantis, Shambhala.... Or perhaps the original Shadow, Hell itself? The City of Dis found eternally empty, a place of punishment turned into the best joke ever played by His witty and infinite mercy.... But wait, what of your wife's other visions? The strange trees and stranger beasts, the castles of wire and glass, the unknown skies?

The Mexican spoke of those as well, but he had not stood among them. They were woven in tapestries in the city's halls, displayed in great windows of colored glass, illuminated in manuscripts. He had brought a few pages back, and Father you should have seen Mary's eyes shine to behold them. The conch-huts of the vine jungle! she cried, as if she had played beneath their spiral eaves. And behind them, where you cannot see, the waterfall!

And so the prospector sat here, where I sit, and told his stories.

He did, and Mary told hers. They poured out each other's obsessions, while I poured the mezcal and wondered that God's creation could contain so many things.



I apologized for my few days' absence. I have been seeing San Francisco, I told the soldier, and learning about California and the Territories.

Following our wanderer's footsteps?

Indeed but the trail is cold. You said he found his Gaverna del Oro in New Mexico.

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Yes, and is it not curious?

So many things are, but tell me, sir.

Why, curious that a Mexican would wander into New Mexico Territory, and fifty years after the war.

Wars fade into memory. And of course the Union has fought a greater war since.

Certainly, in the East, but here in the West an old soldier remembers. Mexico claimed this land, Alta California and Nuevo Mexico, the brilliant deserts.

And then Texas leaped into the Union's arms.

Just so. Mexico claimed the Nueces, we the Rio Grande, but was that the whole of the tussle? North and west ran the disputed land, into the high dry places... Caves have been found there before, Father, and since. I spoke last month to a young cowboy...

Sir?

Pardon an old man who wanders. The war, you see. We fought for land, through gunsmoke and fever, down past the Rio Grande to Ciudad de Mexico. And now I wonder if a voice whispered in the President's ear that treasure lay in the Nuevo Mexico wastes. If Santa Anna defended and lost a golden city, dearer than any painted desert.

It could be so but soldiers died just the same.

So we did, Father, as soldiers always die. Would an empty city have stirred our blood? In the end it was the gold of California, not the riches of El Dorado or of Heaven, that we won for the Union.

And you came here?

I had dodged bullets in Mexico but not the yellowjack fever. Army life held no more appeal. When I mustered out, San Francisco was already booming; I thought to build a saloon. To sell mezcal to prospectors with fire in their blood, to drink a little myself -- mezcal purifies a man's blood, there's nothing better for fever.

It has sustained you, certainly.

It did and it does. But mezcal is harsh and strong and stinging, it keeps you alive but it does not fill your life. I came to San Francisco for work. I found Mary and a vision of Heaven.



Now you must tell me the end of the story, my son.

The story of a soldier and his wife, of a Mexican and his book? But I don't know the ending. How many of us fit our lives so neatly?

Not one man in a thousand I suppose. And even he likely wondered on his last day what ever happened to his socks.

The soldier laughed. So and just so. Well, Mary was fascinated by the Mexican, his tales and his papers. They talked late into the morning, comparing stories and writing notes, long after an old man had fallen asleep. Then Mary began to speak of leaving San Francisco, of journeying to the desert and searching for Heaven.

Forgive me for asking, sir, but were they intimate?

You mean, did she share his bed? I suppose she did but what does it matter? From the first I loved the light of Heaven in Mary's eyes. Now she pursued that with all the force of her soul, and I loved her the more for it. Besides (the soldier laughed again) I am an old man, and since Mexico my health has never been good.

Despite the mezcal.

Oh, indeed -- please attend to my glass, Father, it is empty. But Mary was... well she was not a young woman, but still, ten years younger than myself? Fifteen perhaps? And her years did not weigh heavily, you would not have thought her an old soldier's wife. No, I do not grudge

Mary a moment of joy. Joy that perhaps she thought lost in the life of a saloon-keeper and her old husband.

But in the end she left?

In the end... she did not run off with the Mexican, that is what you are imagining but it wasn't that way at all. He had given her this book, or perhaps she had taken it from his room; they shared many such artifacts in their investigation. One morning I came downstairs; the Mexican was asleep at this table and Mary was gone.

Merely gone.

Gone, left the Mexican and the book behind. He knew no more than I. He said she had been studying the book and then he dozed off. We agreed that she must have gone to the desert, but alone in the night? Without money or wagon?

Unaccountable but the heart moves in its own way.

Surely it does. Mary loved me, and this place, and I'm sure she loved the Mexican in her way, but the golden city was in her heart before any of us.



I am surprised, a bit more surprised every evening, to find you sitting here with the book unopened before you.

Oh, well you are a man of letters, Father. A book falls open in your hand, that should surprise no one. I am only a soldier.

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But it is all you have left.

Perhaps it is rather all that remains, and I wish it to remain so.

And you say that you are no poet, I smiled. But I take it the prospector moved on?

Ah, the Mexican, just so he did. A few days after Mary left us. He said he was going to the universities of the East, to see if learning might make clear what vision had not.

He did not go after Mary?

I do not think so. I gather he was married, I am not sure but I think it was so, and a moment of joy in the wild lands is not a life. But then perhaps he will turn his face to the desert, if not today then when he is old.

Silence passed a few moments, and I refilled our glasses.

You asked me, that first night, what the Bible said of Heaven.

So I did and you cut to the heart, Father. My thoughts turn to this book, I confess it after all.

You called it the word of God, even though you have never opened it.

It came from the city, did it not? And this is the path I tread, night after night... my Mary saw Heaven, not just as a golden city, but a silver temple and an mahogany village and a brassy market and an onyx ruin, all at once. Meadows and canyons and ancient forests, spires and seas and abysses, on without end.

Realm after realm, world upon world, a house of doors opening to every wonder imaginable by God.

You understand it. But what then is contained in God's Bible, in the book stolen from the altars of Heaven? Not just our little stories, a garden and a flood and a resurrection. Surely not.

Go on, I think I see but I cannot grasp it.

No one could grasp it, do you understand? Such a book would contain every story, every wonder, every thought in God's mind, which includes all thoughts.

You mean, Hercules at his labors. Loki stealing the hammer of thunders. Sedna combing the sins of mankind from her hair. All in the same book with our Father, the prophets and the psalms?

All those and more. A girl fleeing a castle in slippers of fur or glass. A boy who draws a roral sword from a boulder. A hero searching the world for one honest man. A king who sees his father's ghost and runs mad. And then...

Then? More?

...We turn a page, and find the stories turned round and sideways. Our Bible, our little stories must be only a shadow cast by the word of God. Move the light and the shadows dance...

...Joseph and Mary flee Jerusalem on a flying carpet, guided by Ariel to an island where a sorceress turns men into pigs. Atlas draws Excalibur from the root of the World-Tree and strikes down the pretender, Zeus, who falls to Earth in a shower of gold that sets Atlantis alight. Goliath tears off Grendel's arm and nails it above the door of David's temple...

...Sheherazade tells lurid tales to the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve, as their parents battle frost giants. The Jade Emperor plays chess with Pharaoh for the fate of the condemned Jesus; but he has already escaped Rome and lives to a vast age in the desert, fathering innumerable smiling children whose only flaw is that they turn to stone in sunlight...

...Mohammed journeys to India, where he leads the Wild Hunt to slay the Bull of Heaven. He founds a great kingdom there; its people call him Prester John. The kingdom is later overthrown by an army of dwarfs, who march seven times around his walls chanting Dreamtime songs which grow a forest beneath the city overnight...

...Hanuman the Monkey King battles Esau the Wild Man of the Hills, shaking the land asunder. The Great Wurm crawls up out of the cracks. King Solomon captures the Wurm in a clay lamp, seals it with wax, and places it on top of a glass mountain surrounded by brambles, so that only the bravest prince may win through and have his wishes granted...

...and round again: Mohammed and Solomon whispering secret stories to Sheherazade, Ariel slaying Goliath with a sling stone plucked from the eye of Odysseus, Jesus leading his people from slavery in Babel as Pharaoh circles the walls where mermaids part the Red Sea for a lump of magic gold brought by three kings to Eve daughter of Mary who spins it into straw breaking the Phoenix's back upon which rests the world...

...on and on, parable upon folk tale upon fairy tale upon legend.

No one could read such a thing, I whispered. It would contradict every faith ever held. Every belief.

Not at all, it would confirm them. People imagine that you discover God's truth by paring away falsehood, discarding lies and mistakes. They cannot imagine that there are no lies. That to discover God's truth is to encompass, to accept, truth upon truth until truth passes understanding.

And you say all this is contained in the little black book between us.

I can imagine nothing else that it might be. And now you know, said the soldier, why I fear to open it.



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I never saw the soldier again after that night. I was called away for a few days to attend a sick friend, and when I returned to the Chinaman's Eye, I was told that the proprietor had left town. No, the bartender said, he did not know why or when he would be back. No one had even seen the soldier leave. But he had left something behind, on the table where we had spent so many nights, and I was welcome to keep it if it struck my fancy.

It was seven years before I returned to San Francisco. By that time, the Great Fire had struck; no trace of the saloon remained, nor anyone who remembered it. I could find no word of the the soldier, his wife, or the dusty Mexican prospector who had walked out of the desert carrying stories.

I sat down in a different saloon, placed the unopened book before me, and drank a glass of the cheapest mezcal. It was harsh and strong and it stung -- like life, I might have said; but a soldier who was not a poet would have laughed at that.

## LARA 004: REGHAHROVAHT

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### LARA 004.001: TRANSLATED BY WHILYAM

#### *PREFACE*

When God first saw D'ni being formed, God talked to a low D'ni woman known as Hahno. God said to her that God would physically visit D'ni over the course of one hundred and twenty-five years to test the people's faith and morality. Once as a poor man, once as a rich man, once as an envious man, once as a dishonest man, and once as a pure man. God told Hahno to record how God was treated and to spread the word afterwards of what she was taught. She agreed and her life was happy and prosperous for twenty-five years.

### LARA 004.002: TRANSLATED BY WHILYAM

Hahno then was then filled with soft luck<sup>(/)</sup>. Her husband, Ainehm, left her and she had no money and moved to a poorer district. There she met a poor man living as a merchant of off-worlder goods. His name was Pabbto. The man befriended her and had the most handsome face which seemed to shine through the dirt which covered him. And he would take her with him when he asked the higher for money and she saw how they scorned him and hit him and rejected him, and she felt sorry for him. And while she suspected it, it was not until a man was immoral with her that she knew. With a single hand, Pabbto destroyed the man so wholly that no one remembered he existed. He then thanked Hahno and revealed he was God. God touched the ground and it turned into precious stones and God told her to take them as a thanks and then God left. And while the stones made her one of the wealthiest D'ni, she was sad, for while she was married, she had loved the poor man despite deception. And she returned to her husband, who had suffered as well, and while she did not tell him about God's hand in their wealth, together they saved and prospered for twenty-five years.

---

#### FOOTNOTES:

(/) Seems like a D'ni phrase meaning something like bad luck, but it also seems to refer to actual imperfections in whatever would turn around that luck. Confusing. —Whilyam

## THE LARA DOCUMENTS

### LARA 004.003: TRANSLATED BY WHILYAM

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Quickly Hahno rose to a position where she and Ainehm were among the richest in D'ni. Hahno and Ainehm were invited to a rich friend's age for a celebration of the birth of a son<sup>(1)</sup>. And there she met a senior Guildsman in the Writers Guild named Osookehn. After the celebration, the two met often to discuss politics and visions and other issues. One day Osookehn took Hahno to one of his ages and showed her around the facilities he had constructed. Toward the end of his tour, he showed her a massive slave house. The slaves there brought them food and drink and performed immoral acts for them. At this, Hahno stood and told Osookehn she wished to leave for she was offended at the immorality.

"What is morality but the opinion of our prophets?" he asked.

"Morality is God's command, not to be spoken of as such."

"And what is God but the scare-creature of our minds?"

"You have no faith."

"I have faith in what I see."

And so Hahno left and denounced the man in public. But the man was friends with many and his actions were approved and Hahno was scorned for not remembering her place and even Ainehm was silent. However, they remained quiet and humble and lived peacefully for twenty-five years.

---

### FOOTNOTES:

(1) This being the friend's son, not Hahno's. —Whilyam

### LARA 004.004: TRANSLATED BY WHILYAM

To have challenged a writer made Hahno a person who was interesting to other people<sup>(1)</sup>. Among them was a man named Ahnsekhk. He became quite close to her and they met often to debate playfully. Ainehm grew more distant and was sad. One day, upon her returning from Ahnsekhk's house, Ainehm confronted her.

"Why do you shame yourself before God?" he demanded.

"I do not."

"Why are you dishonest with me? Why neglect as you have? Why be unfaithful to the one who has supported you?"

And Ainehm grew violent and brought pain to Hahno.

"You bring no honor to God." He said.

And though in pain, Hahno called out still. "I love<sup>(2)</sup> and honor God as I love and honor you and hope you do of me."

And at that, the pain was gone and Ainehm smiled and a person came out of him and it was God. And after they greeted God, Hahno asked what had happened.

"The one who hit you was I to test your faith that love of the mind is greater than hate of the heart or violence of the body. The one who envied the one who took your time was Ainehm who now sees how he was wrong."

And so God left them and Ainehm first learned of God's duty bestowed to Hahno and was happy for he knew that God would move them correctly and they were happy and loving for twenty-five years.

---

## FOOTNOTES:

(1) The word here is a personal noun meaning essentially "person of interest". —Whilyam

(2) Love here being "targahn" love of the mind. —Whilyam

## LARA 004.005: TRANSLATED BY WHILYAM

After God left, Hahno and Ainehm were happy together and loved each other. It was in this time that they decided to become philanthropists<sup>(1)</sup>. A man came to them to offer them an age once owned by the Guild of Caterers. It was a massive food age and Hahno felt they could help feed poor D'ni with products from the age. And so they bought the age and the man and Hahno and Ainehm were friends. Ainehm began meeting with him more. Betting on races in Tahsheetahj<sup>(2)</sup>. Soon Ainehm lost almost all their wealth. One day he overheard the man talking with a rider he bet on, telling him to lose and Ainehm was sad. And so Ainehm told his wife of this and Hahno, knowing it was God, was calm. They would be humble once more as they had come to be. And they lived poorly and humbly for twenty-five years.

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## FOOTNOTES:

(1) The word here is a personal noun for someone who charitable. —Whilyam

(2) I've looked through the historical records I have, but I can't find a mention of this age. It either didn't exist or, more likely, was a gambling age running under the radar of the maintainers. —Whilyam

## LARA 004.006: TRANSLATED BY WHILYAM

It had been twenty-five years since God left them as the dishonest man. Hahno was two hundred years old. Ainehm had died five years earlier of a sickness<sup>(1)</sup> and Hahno was sick

## THE LARA DOCUMENTS

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as well. Hahno was very tired and she lay, as she had years before, on the side of an alley in a poor district, when a small child walked up to her.

"Peace to you, God." She said weakly.

"Have you learned from what you have seen?" God asked as the child.

"To love and glorify God. To be honest and kind and faithful to all who you see and who see you."

And so God had Hahno print what she experienced and had her submit it to the King. And then God let her sleep.

---

## FOOTNOTES:

(/) No records of an epidemic of D'ni. Looks like it could have been a sickness in the lower districts from bacteria in either a fishing district or a sickness from an age in one of the industrial districts as the histories have numerous mentions of both. —Whilram

Given that the plagues in D'ni history were considered significant events in D'ni history and that this story seems to refer to the sickness in an off-hand manner, I'd guess that this sickness is not one of those plagues. —J.D.

## LARA 005: GREAT STAIR LECTURES

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### LARA 005.001: TRANSLATED BY J.D. BARNES

Stone is always heavier in your own hand.

### LARA 005.002: TRANSLATED BY J.D. BARNES

My father was was a fine Maintainer and a good D'ni. But he was not always a kind man. And he was even less kind when he saw what he thought was wrong. In my 15 hahrtee(1), I had been very foolish and discontent child. I was shamed to be brought to my father by another Maintainer, as my friends and I had been found defacing statues in the Kali district. And, in my fear, I'd claimed that I'd done none of the actual destruction myself. Instead, I blamed one of my fellows.

My father, he saw through my deception. In silence he brought me home and stood me in front of one of his prize possessions. It was a figurine of a dancer, blown from Ghahn glass(2). He said it reminded him of my mother, who had been dead for 4 hahrtee. He stood me in front of the figurine and took my hand in his. And then he thrust my hand through the figuring, slicing my hand with its broken glass.

I screamed. I cried. And when I'd run out of breath, he said to me. "When you betray, you destroy something beautiful. All that is left is shards. And shards can only make you bleed." And he sent me to the Guild of Healers.

My father was not a kind man. My hand still carries the scars. But pain is the midwife(3) of wisdom.

I have seen many wonders throughout the Ages. Sunsets that have taken my breath away in Darjehm. The glittering cliffs of Bahr'ahn, the stone infused with crystals. The serenity of the gardens. But my father's lesson taught me that these sights were nothing(4).

True beauty was elsewhere. That beauty was not found in the structure of a crystal, but rather in the structure of people uniting together, and what they create. The husband and the wife that cares for a child. The brotherhood of Guildmen who share in a job well-done. The choir which weaves disparate notes into a song that would make Yahvo himself cry. Yes, D'ni has created many great things, many astounding Ages. But it is the results of people working as one that is the most noble(5) of creations.

And thus it is the greatest of the sins of D'ni that we, repeatedly, set to the task of destroying our own beautiful efforts. We set upon ourselves like diseased animals. Over

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Ages, over bookworlders, over the words of a prophet. We thrust our hands into the delicate and noble lattice of our connections and shatter them. And as my father pointed out, shattering leads to shards. Not pieces. Not components that we can use to rebuild. But shards that are all edge and point, that slide into our flesh, and our hearts. And from those wounds, D'ni bleeds.

We tell ourselves that we are a noble people. We meet in our neighborhoods and tell one another that we are good people, that Yahvo would be proud of us. But we must fit into the robe of our supposed nobility. That means we must learn to build with more than stone and pen. We must build with our good words. We must build with our good actions. We must build by reaching out our hand and say, "My friend, let me help you."

There will be conflict. There always is. But even in our disagreement, we must build. Our disagreement must be the stone on which the tool of our character is sharpened. We cannot build with anger, or greed, or guile. Rather, we build with honest passion, with respect for both the positive and the negative<sup>(6)</sup>. We argue with the goal to build what is right, what is strong and what is honest. Even if that means we must concede, or even surrender.

And this was my father's lesson to me. That I had chosen the wrong path. I had bled for it, just as my friend might have bled for my choice if my father had believed my lie. That is the choice we each have, every moment. Where we go, we can leave beauty. Or we can leave shards, and blood.

I hope you choose well.

---

## FOOTNOTES:

(1) This seems to be an idiom for describing the age between 15 and 20, similar to saying 'as a teenager'. -J.D.

(2) Ghahn was a desert age known for its sand, which had high-quality silica. Glass made from this sand was highly prized. -J.D.

(3) Not an exact translation, but the term midwife most closely describes the role in the Guild of Healers that assisted in the process of normal birth. -J.D.

(4) Literally "to the one". -J.D.

(5) Literally "noble to the twenty-five". -J.D.

(6) 'the positive and the negative' here is an idiom that seems to refer to sides of an debate -- the pro and con sides. -J.D.

## LARA 005.003: TRANSLATED BY J.D. BARNES

As she got older, my mother's sister<sup>(1)</sup> would watch the children in her neighborhood play. Their games always made her happy and made the pains of age seem lighter. She would tell me "Yahvo loves the innocence of a child." And so did she.

Before she died, I would come and sit with her after my daily duties were closed. I wanted to see this which Yahvo, and she, loved so dearly. A sense of wonder grew in me. In them, I could see the stirrings of those things which are most noble in D'ni -- here were flashes of compassion, empathy, honor, and nobility. They shared what they had, listened to each other's stories. When it came time to pretend, they did not contradict each other. Rather, they accepted what their fellows had said and built off of it until they'd developed a grand tapestry of story. I wondered when we, as grown D'ni, had lost such admirable innocence.

One day, there was a quite a gathering of children in an usually unused storage place. I followed them, curious to see what the game was. They'd found a nest of infant vermin<sup>(2)</sup> and then they'd set up a cistern of water. Their game was to drop one of the infants into the center of the cistern, and see how long it could survive. There were around six corpses floating in the water by the time I arrived. When I scolded them harshly to the twenty-five, they professed that they had no idea why I was angry.

These children did not know that their game was cruel. They did not know they were extinguishing life in the name of their own entertainment. They were innocent of such things. And that was when I learned that the innocence of a child is not always admirable.

These children did not know what is right and what is wrong, and as such they were capable of surprising amounts of virtue. And for that same reason, they were capable of surprising sadism<sup>(3)</sup>. Innocence is a state of darkness, in which one has no understanding of the Yahvo's creation. And one cannot choose a right path when one cannot see it.

True virtue is not that which is accidental. If I stumble in the dark and push a fellow D'ni out of danger, I have not been brave, nor kind, nor selfless. I have been the tool of another's good fortune.

I am brave when I choose to defy fear. I am kind when I choose to defy cruelty. I am selfless when I choose to defy greed. Without that choice behind my action, I am not virtuous, but an unseeing mechanism in the passage of time and cause. And I cannot choose, and thus be virtuous, without knowledge and the ability to discern.

We look at the child and envy them, for they seem to act so easily and perform virtuous tasks without the poison of bitter age. But these children do not act out of virtue, but rather without the constraint of bitterness. That is what we can learn from our children.

But it is up to the grown to create virtue through the tool that is knowledge, and not constrain ourselves by that poison which is bitterness. And that is truly what Yahvo loves.

## FOOTNOTES:

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(1) The wording here is literally "the sister of my mother", not any term like "aunt". It's unknown whether D'ni has a term for that sort of familial relationship. —J.D.

(2) The exact name of the animal wasn't used. —J.D.

(3) Literally "pleasure-from-agon". I felt sadism was an appropriate translation. —J.D.

## LARA 005.004: TRANSLATED BY JD BARNES

As a member of the Guild of Burial Workers, I knew a devout guildsman from the Healers and saw him at work many times while I attended to my duties.

During one such visit, I overheard him speaking to the family of a man, a Maintainer, who'd become with some sort of unknown disease from an Age he'd been exploring. This disease slowly wasted at his flesh, turning it brown and sickly. It also wasted at his mind, making him suddenly rage in a terrible anger he could not control. In these rages, he had struck his children, torn his hair out and destroyed his home. And then his mind would clear, and he would collapse in despair for what he had done. This family had come to have this man, once a fine father and a skilled Maintainer, linked to an Age for those who could not control themselves(1). They wept, and asked why Yahvo would allow such a thing.

He, in his compassion, said to them. "I cannot begin to understand Yahvo's designs(2). But I know that Yahvo does not give us a stone that we cannot carry."

Many hahrtee later, I was attending to my duties preparing the dead to be taken to Te'Negamiris for their final rest. And I came upon that which was my friend, the Healer. He'd been in an Age, attending to the sick there, when he was attacked by mad beast of burden. The beast tore him into pieces, and my friend died slowly, in agony.

And I muttered to his corpse "Yahvo does not give us a stone that we cannot carry."

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## FOOTNOTES:

(1) The D'ni equivalent of an asylum, it seems. —J.D.

(2) Here, design implies an architectural design, a schematic. —J.D.

## LARA 006: TE'NUR'S LETTERS

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### LARA 006.001: TRANSLATED BY MARCUS WHEELER

To Mor'ahn, my dearest friend,

Work goes well here in the Guild. Guild Master Kor'etah has pushed us hard to continue our studies. Much of our time is spent with the Ink-Makers, though it is mostly informal and relatively meaningless at this date. Our abilities are not yet of a necessary degree that would require us to work so closely with them. Aneris is well however, I'm absolute in my thoughts that he regrets your leave from the Guild of Book-Makers.

So much time has passed, yet I am eager for what is yet to come. Many of the newer Guild Members are more apt(6) to their work than our age was. It is very peculiar, though I do not regret it. In days like this, we need a right amount of happiness. It is clearly visible that we will not get it directly from the Guilds. Geit'ura has been proud of his latest group of Guildsmen. We all know how much he praises himself, and his works, but to hear him speak so highly of the Maintainers is unusual(2).

One such boy, barely old enough to be in the Guild, shows much promise by the eyes of the senior Guildsmen. He is apparently in the Guild of Surveyors, though from what I've heard he had intended to be a Writer. He seems very odd for a boy his age. He tends not to listen to his senior Guildsmen, especially when it comes to certain wildlife in many of our Ages. It would seem very peculiar to find a Surveyor (line of text smeared beyond recognition)(3) in that Age of all places! I merely hope that the Guild Masters will notice this behavior before appointing him to a high position.

I visited Reken in J'taeri the other day. Of course I had to let him run through my latest work before presenting it to Kor'etah. I sometimes wonder if he merely took this position to read from our books and take our lines of text as his own. And without notice, he presented Guild Master Kor'etah with a new Age! it's even being looked through by the Maintainers as one of the most well-written Ages in the History of today's Writers! I was one of the few allowed to visit the Age he calls Ut'una. Even more unusual was the position of the islands; they are almost identical in size and shape to Etan's last Age, Ke'mara. I am deeply troubled by this, but Maintainers from Etan's Age will be visiting Ut'una, I am sure they will find something interesting while they erect the pods(4).

Before I must return to my work, I must ask: did you find the letter and book I sent you? I left it in the pub off of Tokotah. I'm sure you will find my trinkets in their respective locations. If all else fails, contact me again from Rezeero(5). I hope to see you again soon,

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my friend. I have planned a special visit between you and Kor'etah. Perhaps we will work together again, someday!

Your Fellow Guildsman, Te'nur.

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### FOOTNOTES:

(1) apt — I am assuming here. The document was faded, and hard to tell if it referred to positive or negative reactions. Due to further reading, however, I decided this word would fit correctly. —Marcus

(2) speak so highly of the Guildsmen is unusual — This leads me to believe that only very experienced, senior, or unusually potent Guildsmen were praised. This would lead to many being pushed to further impress their Guild Masters and advisors. —Marcus

(3) line smeared beyond recognition — Much of this line was unrecognizable. Some words were visible, but I had no knowledge of their meaning. Also, a line of Spanish was written above it reading: What lies they spread. —Marcus

(4) pods — This leads me to believe (due to the word Rezik) that the Guild of Maintainers were tasked with building pods in each Age, then linking to said pods in order to observe an Age until it was ready to receive a mark of approval from the Maintainers. —Marcus

(5) rezeero — I assume this refers to the Great Zero and using it as a means of triangulating the location of Te'nur's letter and book. —Marcus

## LARA 007: MUSICAL SCORES

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### TRANSLATOR'S COMMENTS:

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At the beginning I was not sure if this document is a music sheet, because to me it is not probable that the D'ni use seven notes like us. But the tagline in D'ni script on the top ("the winged creature rests") is a good indicator....

Forget music theory for the moment... (more later if you ask me) but just... If the D'ni use a scale of music with the "pure" interval like the 5th we get:

Do (for example). Sol (the 5th is the only chord to sound "pure" in acoustics, the perfect 3/4 of an octave...)

Do > Sol, Re > La, Mi > Si, Fa > Do .....etc.

in order of tone (from low to high) (ascending fifths on the octave--Do re mi fa sol la ti do).

Seven sounds....

But after some examination, I don't think that is "note". I think are a "degree" in a scale....

We see a number at the beginning of the first line ("one" and we don't know what the sign inside is yet...) I think it is the number of the scale (like our "scale of Mi" "scale of Do" etc...). How many scales the D'ni have, we don't know.... Which note is the scale 'one', we don't know....

After trying with many scales... we have chosen our "La" mode... (the melody is more realistic... but is very subjective)

The melody numbers are

1 5 4 3 4 etc.

so in degree of "La": La Mi Re Do Re ....

(in our "Do" mode should be Do Sol La Si La...)

We can see too that the piece is organised on three levels... Why...? Our theory is:

The three lines are the length of notes. The upper line is the short note, the middle line for the "normal" note (two times the long) and the lower line the long note.

Maybe the length of notes for D'ni is in seconds....

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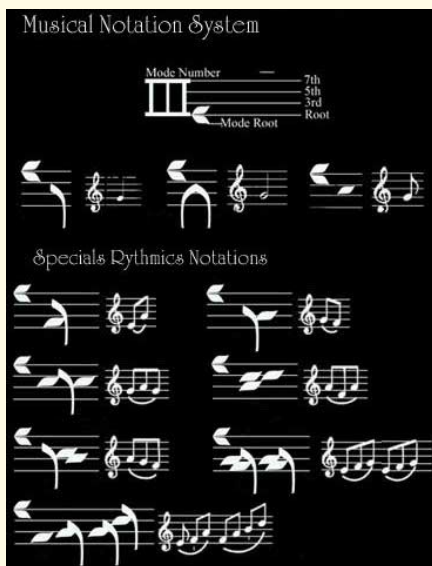
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Upper = 1 second

Middle = 2 second

Lower = 4 second

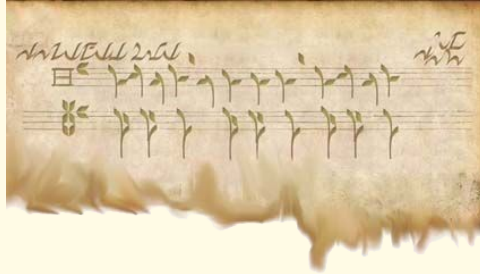
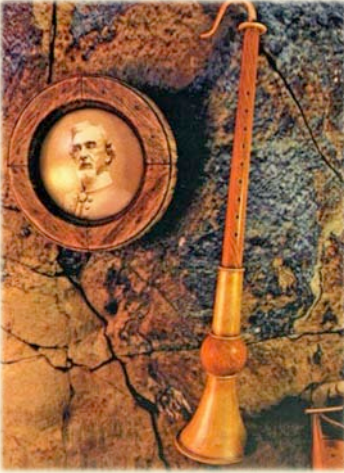
Well... If this document is a score... it is not for "performance" but for the teaching of tunes or for memorisation...



-turjan

LARA 007.001: TRANSLATED BY TURJAN

REBOOGIN TROMEX EDEREN, "THE WINGED CREATURE RESTS"



TRANSLATOR'S COMMENTS:

For the musical performance... she is very subjective... we have, on the score there are two measures. On the recording I have made 3 measures (it's an improvisation for give a sense to the melody... It's probable that this document is the first page of a tune...)

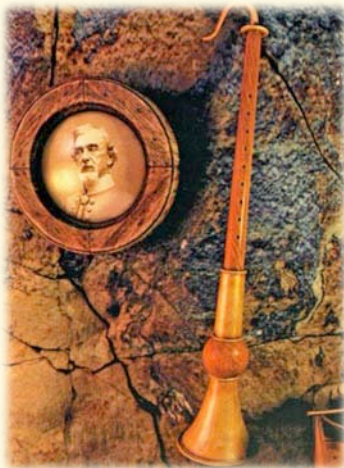
This kind of score is not for performance but more for memory (like the old "neumes" of middle age of Europe...) I think this piece is a popular tune, not classical.

—turjan

## THE LARA DOCUMENTS

LARA 007.002: TRANSLATED BY TURJAN AND OWEHN

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### KODOTARGAHNIJ, "I WAS LOVED"

1. remin dotargahn(4,2) kenen m'zoo(3) fahm b'rish
2. keneet gahrahnotee rish m'zoo b'shem
3. keneet birahntee rish mot leeahnioneet(4) ah set
4. dovahtee rish ah(5)
5. kooahntee rishsee dorahneet(6) te ah
6. veelarox kenen shin ril'gahth b'rifoon shem
7. kodotargahnij
8. gormet ken rildil
9. gormet tahgahm rildil tso shem
10. kamto kenem(7)

1. The woman I love is from me far to twenty.
2. There are twenty oceans from me to you.

3. There are twenty seas that separate us,
4. Twenty worlds,
5. Five hundred streams that range between.
6. My soul is no longer able to remember you.
7. I was loved.
8. Now I am nothing.
9. Now I know nothing of you.
10. Where are you?

The translation provided above is my literal translation: a more English version would be the following:

1. My love is so far from me!
2. There are so many oceans between us.
3. There are so many seas that separate us.
4. So many worlds apart...
5. So many streams that range between us.
6. My soul can no longer remember you.
7. I was loved,
8. Now I am nothing.
9. Now I know nothing of you.
10. Where are you?

## TRANSLATOR'S COMMENTS:

(1) The central vowel in *dotʔgahn* is a bit unreadable, but *ay* seems to fit rather nicely in context. —Owehn

(2) Here, a conjunction such as *mot* seems to have been omitted. The presence of *do-* seems to be consistent with other examples of this phenomenon, though we can't be sure when the omission is allowed or if it indicates a slightly different meaning. A similar construction appears in line 5, though *mot* is used in line 3. —Owehn

(3) In the text, this problematic word appears as *m'zuh* instead of *m'zoo*. Since there's no quantifier in front of *zuh*, and *zoo* fits better in context, I assume it was a typo. —Owehn

(4) The verb *leeahnion* seems to be related to the noun *leeahnith* from the Kenen Gor manifesto: in translating I assumed that both words had been derived from an adjective *leeahnih*, meaning something like "separate" or "divided". —Owehn

(5) I assume that this line is an abbreviation of the sentence (*keneet*) *dovahtee rish (mot leeahnioneet) ah (set)*, by analogy to line 3. That *pesky ah* might be there to warn us that

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the direct object *set* "us" should be remembered in this line as well, and appears the same way at the end of line 5. —Owehn

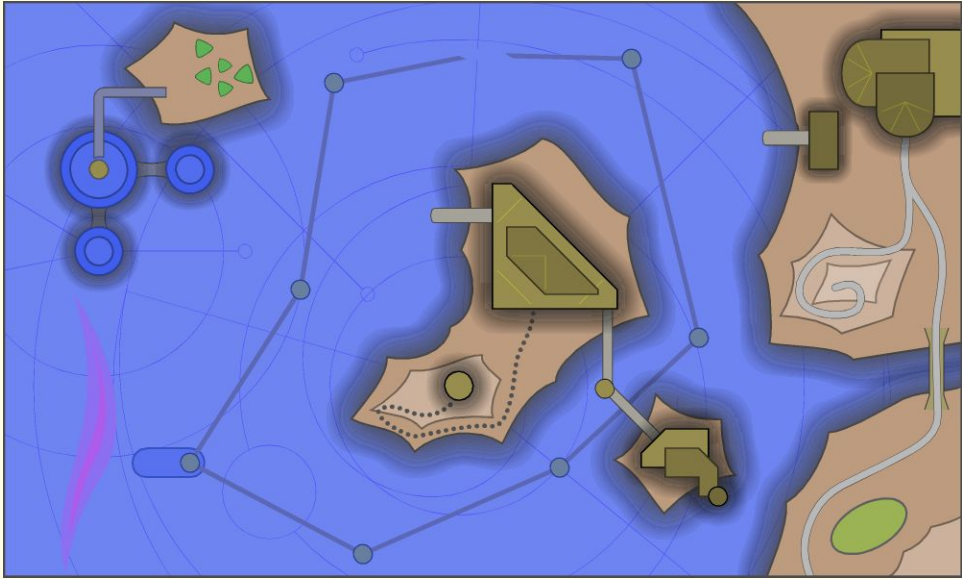
(6) I'm guessing that the verb *rahn* here is related to the adjective *rahnahl* "various". The common thread here seems to be the idea that the streams range over a large region. —Owehn

(7) Pity there's no punctuation here — I'm reasonably certain that this last line is a question, though it's possible that it's a continuation of line 9: "I know nothing of you (e.g.) where you are." —Owehn

## LARA 008: MAP OF UNKNOWN AGE

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### LARA 008.001: TRANSLATED BY BELFORD



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#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES:

What I **have** done is to trace the map's features into an illustration program. This does nothing to convey the beauty of the original work, of course, but I'm hoping that it will be of help to other restorers.

As you know, the map is heavily annotated with labels in D'ni. I have not even tried to reproduce this in my version; the lettering is badly worn and my D'ni is terrible at best. I have hopes that another restorer will be able to decipher and translate the labels—then we'll have some hope of figuring out what's going on in this Age!

—belford

### LARA 009: D'NI GAMES

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#### LARA 009.001: TRANSLATED BY BLADE LAKE M

This restoration actually came from several scraps I found in the documents, describing D'ni games of various sorts. The scraps were not in very good shape, so I am summarizing what I found here to describe how the game works. I did find a few small game tokens in the chest, made of stone. However, they didn't seem to match this particular game.

This game is called 'johvets' and seems to be a game of strategy and negotiation. I've seen similar games on the surface. The 'board' for this game seems to be missing, though some of the notes I found indicate that there are variations which use customized boards. (In fact, the game seems to have many variations -- 'house rules' were common).

The board is a map that shows a series of areas referred to as Ages. There are 8 on the map and each Age is divided into several regions of varying size and shape. Some of these regions are listed as 'link-in' points, which have a unique symbol on them. There are two -- four in each Age, for a total of 23.

There are three types of counters: units, link points and linking books. Units come in 5 different colors, denoting different players, each unit token has a unique symbol on it. Link points have a unique symbol on them. There is one linking book token for each link point token and for each link-in point on the map, and the linking book has the appropriate symbol for its corresponding link point.

#### WINNING

There are two victory conditions for the game -- either controlling three fourths of the link in points (permanent and link point markers) or controlling three fourths of the linking books.

A link-in point is considered controlled by the player to last have a unit occupying the region it is in. Even if they move out, they control it until someone else moves in. If no unit has occupied that region yet, it is considered uncontrolled.

A linking book is considered controlled when in the same region as a unit. A linking book in a region with no unit is considered uncontrolled.

## SETUP

To set up the game, you place the linking books for the permanent link points on the board in predetermined places (these are not in the same age at the link point for the book). Then each player places two units on two of the linking points in the same age. This means that each player starts off controlling two link points.

## GAMEPLAY

Gameplay goes by turns. Each turn is made up of the following phases:

- ✘ Negotiation
- ✘ Orders
- ✘ Resolution
- ✘ Supply

### NEGOTIATION

The negotiation phase is a time for players to talk amongst themselves and negotiate. There is no set time for this, though one document suggested that players agree to a limited time interval.

### ORDERS

The orders phase consists of each player writing down orders on a piece of paper, then giving them to a judge (who may or may not be a player). Orders can be given to each unit.

Valid orders are:

Star – This means the unit stays in its place. If no order is specified for a unit, this is considered the default.

Move – This means the unit attempts to move from its current location to a specified adjacent region

Move and Carry – This is a move, like above, but if a linking book is in the region where the unit starts, the unit takes it with them. If there are multiple books, the order has to specify which book to carry. Only one can be carried.

Link – Use a linking book. This takes the unit to the corresponding link point for that book. If the link point for that book is in the same age as the book, the order fails and is treated as a Star order. The book used to link remains where it was.

Link and Carry – Like link, this links you to a link point, but you also take another linking book with you if it is in the same region as you and the linking book being used. If there

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are multiple books, the order has to specify which book to carry. Only one can be carried. The book used to link remains where it was.

**Transfer** — If there is a linking book in the region a unit is in, the unit can pass the linking book to another unit in an adjacent region that is under a star order. Both units remain in place.

**Reinforce** — This is a special order. Then a unit reinforces, the player specifies another unit that it is reinforcing. So if a unit is moving from one region to another, you can specify that the second unit reinforces that move. The more units that reinforce the move, the more units that are required to counter it. A unit can reinforce a move or link into a region that it is already adjacent to. A unit can also reinforce a Star order, if it is adjacent to the region the unit is 'Staring' in. Reinforcement does not move the assisting unit, and has no effect on the Carry aspect of an order. A unit can only reinforce one specific order at a time. If the reinforce order does not match the action that the unit is actually doing, the reinforcement does not take effect. Note that any unit can reinforce any other unit, including those of other players.

### RESOLUTION

In the resolution phase, all orders are considered to take place simultaneously. The judge resolves the effects of the orders according to specific rules.

No region can have more than one unit in it at any time.

If an order has no other order conflicting with it, it happens -- units are moved or star, linking books are moved, etc. If one unit leaves a region while another moves into that same region, that is not considered a conflict, as they are happening at the same time.

When more than one unit tries to move into the same space, or a unit tries to move into a space where a unit is staying, there is a conflict. This is resolved by counting the number of units reinforcing the move on each side. If there is a tie, the status quo is maintained.

For example, if two units, A and B, are attempting to move into the same region, then neither moves. However, if a Unit C reinforces B's move, then there are two units behind B's order and it wins over A.

If on the next turn, B then Stars in the region and A tries to move in again, nothing happens, as there is, once again, one unit behind each order. If C were to reinforce B's Star order, then A still fails. However, if C supports A's move this time, then B loses. A moves into the region and B must flee.

As many units can reinforce an order as there are units in adjacent regions. Additionally, conflicts can have more than two orders involved (i.e. three units trying to enter the same

region). The order with the most units behind it wins. If there are any ties, the status quo is maintained.

A unit reinforcing an order or involved in a transfer is considered to be under a Star order if other units try to move into that space. If they must flee, it has no affect the Reinforce or Transfer order.

If a unit must flee, then they are moved to an open region adjacent to the region they were previously occupying - this is chosen by the player who is fleeing. They cannot flee into a controlled or conflicted region. Or, if there is a linking book available, they can flee through the linking book, assuming the ink in point is not occupied. The unit cannot carry a book while fleeing.

If there is no place to flee, the unit is removed from the game.

Linking adds a wrinkle to this. Generally speaking it's the same as a move. However, the linking unit does go through the linking book. If they would normally not be allowed into the space, they actually must 'flee' the occupied destination space as if they'd been pushed out (including leaving a linking book they might be carrying behind). If they have no place to flee, they are removed from the game.

### SUPPLY

After the resolution phase comes the supply phase. If a player controls the requisite number of link points or linking books at this point, they win.

A player gets one supply action for each link point that they have taken during the resolution phase. For each action they can add a unit, or write a linking book.

If they add a unit, it is added to one of the regions that has a link point they control. If none are available, a unit cannot be added.

If a linking book is written, the player places a link point token and its corresponding linking book in a region that is currently occupied by one of their units. The link point cannot move at any point, but the book can be moved normally from then on.

### VARIATIONS

I found several variations.

- ✘ The number of books or link-in points required often varied less than or more than 5 players
- ✘ One variation forbid the creation of new link points and books.
- ✘ Another variation specified that if a unit links into a space and would be force to 'flee' as a part of that, the linking unit would just be removed from the game.

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### COMMENTARY:

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This is an interesting game that takes some basic concepts, but adds a very D'ni twist to it through the mechanics associated with linking books. The inclusion of a 'negotiation phase' would imply that players working together would be a central concept in the game. This seems especially so in that almost half of these link points are occupied at the beginning of the game and it's purely numbers that determine the outcome of conflict. This also opens up the very real possibility of betrayal in alliances. An experienced player would have to expect to betray and be betrayed several times in a game.

—Blade Lakem

### LARA 009.002: TRANSLATED BY BLADE LAKEM

This second game (rather, series of games) comes with a bit of a math lesson, as describing the elements of it requires a detour into D'ni geometry.

The board is a figure called 'the star of Tsorahnee', named after an early member of the Guild of Analysts. Tsorahnee popularized the use of the figure as a game board, and as a basis for a number of mathematical exercises and lessons.

The star of Tsorahnee is described as 'a circle, surrounded by six identical circles. Then another six identical circles are added around those, creating three lines of circles, five each, that share as their center the original center circle. Then, lines are connected from the center of each circle to the center of each other circle.' (1)

The tokens are a set of what the documents call 'the perfect cuts'. These are five stones cut such that 'each side is the same size and shape as each other side, and all of these sides are at identical angles to their neighbors. Clearly, there are only five possible variations.' (2)

There are several games which were traditionally credited to Tsorahnee, using these elements.

The first game I found is for two players and uses the star and a single set of perfect cuts. The stones are placed in the inner ring of the star. The players take alternating turns. On a player's turn, their opponent chooses which piece can be moved. The player then moves the piece along any line to another circle -- they cannot 'jump' other pieces however.

The goal is maneuver pieces so that your opponent is forced to place three of the pieces in a row in adjacent circles (adjacent circles are those that are actually touching, not just connected by lines).

A second game uses two sets of perfect cuts, one for each player. They take turns placing them in circles. After pieces are placed, players take turns moving pieces along the lines to an empty space (pieces in the way can be 'jumped'). If a player gets three pieces in a row, they can remove one of the other players pieces. Game play continues until one player loses all of their pieces or cannot make a legal move.

## FOOTNOTES :

(1) What we call on the surface as Metatron's Cube. —Blade Lakem

(2) These are, of course, the Platonic solids -- tetrahedron, cube, octahedron, dodecahedron and icosahedron. The document doesn't specify them by any name, however. —Blade Lakem

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## COMMENTARY:

Another intriguing game, though this is much more abstract than the last. The use of games as mathematical exercises is prolific on the surface, and this seems to indicate that D'ni culture shares in that particular gambit (if you'll forgive the pun).

Also, I find the fact that the Platonic solids are called 'perfect cuts'. This seems to connect their conception in D'ni mathematics with stone cutting. This seems in line with the preponderance of stone-related metaphors in D'ni culture, having developed in a cave and all.

However, I wonder if the D'ni predilection for stone is not unique to the D'ni, but somehow relates to the Ronar. The Ronar, doubtlessly, knew of mathematical concepts as the Platonic solids. If the term 'perfect cut' comes from them, then the connection between the solids and the cutting of stone might also be based in the Ronar. But that's just idle speculation.

—Blade Lakem

### LARA 010: THE MISTAKES

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#### LARA 010.001: TRANSLATED BY WHILYAM

Do not punish mistakes. They are the teachers of us.

Do not avoid mistakes. Fools who think they can learn no more are the only ones who do so.

Rejoice you are not perfect.

Show your imperfection but do not flaunt it. It keeps you from pride.

Reflect on your mistakes. They polish the mirror of your soul.

Do not fault those without a plan. Do not fault those without a structure.

The fish do not schedule their days.

The river does not flow straight as a line.

The Tree(1) does not grow to a grid.

The Maker sees goodness in them.

Do not fault those who have gambled. Do not devalue them for it. Remember.

Ainehm gambled on races and lost. He lived a humble life and the Maker saw it.

Elath lost on the battles of slaves. But he saw his deeper mistake and redeemed himself.

The Maker forgave Dhoram though he bet on wars of others and of D'ni.

The Maker sees the soul and the face(2). It was killing others which Dhoram and Elath had to repent.

Do not fault those who drink. Help them gain forgiveness from the Maker.

In despair it is often drunk.

To despair it often leads.

In despair it often ends.

The Maker sees and helps. Do not belittle those who are in need.

Do not fault those who leave their spouses for it is often men who dictate love.

Remember.

Yulahm waited thirty years for an unfaithful man and left him for one who truly loved her.

The Maker sees no due to the people's arrangements. He sees only those who truly love.

The Maker faults those who marry for profit. The Maker faults those who force others into marriage.

The Maker rewards those who need no cord(3).

## WHILYAM'S NOTES:

(1) Meaning here seems to be the Great Tree or Possibilities, implying that the entire universe runs without a grand schedule, so don't worry if you don't. —Whilyam

(2) Similar saying to how we might say "façade". As in, God sees both your soul and your facade, your exterior. —Whilyam

(3) Likely meaning the cord that binds the couple on the fifth day, though it seems difficult to imagine the D'ni approving a joining ceremony without the joining bit. I think this is more an emotional point than factual, which fits the book's purpose as a spiritual "pick-me-up". —Whilyam







