



HEROQUEST



HeroQuest Voices *Peoples of Glorantha*

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

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

Illustrations: Tom Sullivan.

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

A Personal View of Heortling Life, Staves from the Storm Priest
Greg Stafford and Sandy Petersen



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

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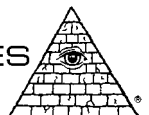
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A Personal View of Heortling Life

What My Father Told Me

Who are you?

I am Aski Harbardsson, thane of the Varmandi Clan.

Who are we?

We are the Varmandi Clan. Old Man Varmand came here and lived with his family up in the branches of the Oak of Vengeance over there. When the Many Kings vied for attention Varmand's grandson chose King Colymar as his leader, and got the Two Great Gold Rings as a sign of alliance. Colymar's grandson King Borngold lost two sons on this land fighting for our rights, and we have never broken from their tribe.

Are we a great people?

The greatest. The world is full of many kinds of people, but none can measure up to us. Orlanth, our great god, saved the world from doom when all other gods hid during the Gods War. King Sartar, Founder of our ancient kingdom, preserved the world from destruction by braving dangers without ordinary weapons. Old Man Varmand knocked a grizzly bear cold with his bare fist. My father fought in three great battles and filled this house with trophies. I have killed eleven men in combat, all of them justly and fairly, even though they were Lunar soldiers and did not deserve it.

What is the difference between men and women?

Beyond the obvious sexual differences, women are more cold and calculating, less emotional, and more inclined to be peaceful and stable.

Men are more passionate: we love to fight and shout and run all about full of the battle frenzy, ready to do and to die then and there. Afterwards we love the smell of the new flowers, or even of the dry desert dust which reminds us we are alive. I love to breath deep on a frosty starlit night, and to hold a woman in my arms and exchange caresses under the covers. My children fill my chest with joy, the clan moot makes me laugh and shout with friends, where we love to clash our weapons on a vote, and to preen before our fellows, boasting truth and pride in our accomplishments.

Women are more thoughtful, careful of their mortality. Most of them seek children, and protect them with the fierceness of a she-bear. They usually think before they act rather than acting on their feelings. But I cannot say anything without mentioning the men and women who have changed roles in their clans. Warrior maidens are known in every clan's past, and some say Starbrow is making a new sisterhood of them right now.

Where do we live?

This stead is our home. Our clan owns it. From those hills where our sheep graze, to the forest where we hunt the red deer, down to our fishing river there, is what Orlanth gave to the Old Man. Many generations ago our clan longhouse was in the second valley over, the one with the birches, but it was the Varmandi Clan. My uncle told me he knew where there were other old buildings, ruined, in the north of where we saw the fox that day. Those must have been ours too. We have always been on this land.

How do we live?

Hard work, bent over the plow and treading its furrows, then reaping the bounty of the Mother, is our life. Every man plows, or wishes to, or works for those that do. Even Orlanth plows. And we hunt, fish the rivers, tend the sheep in the hills, and trade for special goods.

Our food is barley, wheat, and rye—Ernalda's bread is our staple, eaten in porridge, breads, and ale. Only the poor, like your no-good cousins at the Rotroot place, eat only root vegetables; "More cabbage, less bread," they say. We are well off, so we eat pig, chicken, cow, and the wild game of the good red deer. For shelter, we have log houses for us and barns for the animals. Have you seen the things called chimneys which those rich people built in Apple Lane?

Our property is odal or personal. Odal property is everything which the clan owns, like the land and the trees and the animals and buildings. The clan owns them, and we have personal rights, like us always being able to live in this, the Solid Oak stead, and to dispense of the sheep we breed from our flock. Personal property is whatever you get on your own, like the herd of black bulls which the Anmangarn Clan's chieftain has, or the horses born of the pair which Branbrig's ancestor took, or this, my trusty sword Mooncutter.

What is important in my life?

You are a member of the clan. Soon you will have your adulthood rite—do not shame us before the rest of the family. Then you will be an adult, and no longer have to listen to me and the elders in silence. You can join into the discussions, and your words will bear their own weight. You should be looking for a wife now. I hope you have chosen someone rich and friendly when you dance those nights away in the barn. I see the girls looking your way. Do you know which of them has a rich dowry? Which of them will be good to raise your daughters if she leaves you?

When you die we will burn your body with rune-carved logs. Your children will shout your name and the priest will summon the wind to send your soul to Orlanth. Your son will inherit your goods and your rights, just as you shall inherit mine.

Who rules us?

Gentle Vastyr is our leader now, since Rastorlanth did not return from the last rebellion against the Lunars. Vastyr knows all the times to plow, all the ways to help a birthing cow, all the signs of whether the frost is over, all the proverbs and stories to keep boys and warriors from fighting. He was selected by the women, you know, who fear more war and have been seduced by the feminine powers of the Red Moon. Not enough men survive to lead the Colymar to war again. Not until you and your age mates come of age will we dare.

Our clan is loyal to the king of the Colymar Tribe, and we will maintain that history of loyalty as long as it is honored by both sides. We are bonded by history and tradition. Only something terrible and severe—perhaps the King of the Colymar becoming an initiate of the Red Moon—could break that bond. All the clans who follow the tribal kings do it by free will. We can change anytime we want to.

The Kingdom of Sartar is no more than a dream. Once, not long ago, all the tribes of Dragon Pass joined together under



the rule of the House of King Sartar. Now they are all dead. The kingdom is no more, save that an heir be found and we all choose to fight for him.

What makes a man great?

All people can be great if they follow the virtues of Orlanth: courage, wisdom, generosity, justice, honor, and piety.

Another thing you should know: we always fix what we have made wrong. We care for ourselves and the world and take responsibility for our errors. We can break and we can fix. We are powerful, and we are responsible.

What is evil?

Chaos is evil, for Chaos is to gods as death is to life. Chaos takes and can never give, for it is not natural, not even in the way that trolls are natural, like when they ate all the sheep on Aksander's Ridge. Chaos tries to make Orlanth stop moving, stop bringing the rains, stop tending the plants and herds of Ernalda.

Things that are bad are those things which try to restrict our traditional way. Orlanth gave us our life because he intended us to live this way. Anything which defies us and tries to make us obey rigid laws or to worship stupid gods is bad. One time the Emperor of the Universe tried to make Orlanth obey written laws, but the Emperor was killed for it. His children, the Emperors of Dara Happa, were killed by our grand-fathers for trying to conquer us. Now a new Emperor has come, and maybe it will be time for him to learn something soon too.

What is my lot in life?

You should strive to work hard and marry well, raise many brave sons and daughters. You should go to the holy meetings and send your prayers to Orlanth and Ernalda. You should keep your spears sharp, maybe make a couple of extras, and visit that penny-pinching Gringle when you go to Apple Lane to see his strong hats.

If you do those things, and live a good life without some evil monster breaking all bounds of normalcy by raiding our farm again, then you will get the Solid Oak stead to tend after I die, and fill it with your own children to bring glory to the wind. If you are lucky and skilled you can be the clan chieftain, and live in Vastyr's big house with warriors and men of courage. Maybe you'll be rich enough to have a chimney built.

How do we deal with others?

Our clan is our family—they are the air we breathe. Even those no-good cousins at Rotroot are blood kin, and they will never starve as long as a Varmandi is alive with a pack of food.

Friends are better than treasure. You do not have to keep friends who are trash like those Rotroot brothers—you are known by the friends you keep. Bolik is a friend, you know, not kin, but I would die or stand in court for him as quickly as for a kinsman.

When you see someone you don't know, use the greeting. Everyone who follows Orlanth knows the greeting. If they do not answer rightly at least you know where they stand. When my brother was outlawed he traveled all the way to Pralorela, a year of walking and hunting, and everyone he met greeted him properly.

Be careful with strangers. Most of them are harmless and many are entertaining. Remember that they are different, and do not know our ways. Take offense slowly when they insult you or act stupidly—they are not blessed with our god's knowledgeable ways. You can learn much from them. But if they are enemies, fight them fair and foul, do your best to kill them.

Who are our enemies?

We have two great foes today. The Lunar Empire is our greater foe, along with everyone in it. The people there mock true life with perversity. Their customs are dirty. Their gods are evil. They seek to destroy everything of our way of life. None are to be trusted. They are of Chaos.

The Orleving Clan is our foe, too. Ever since Orlev of the Eye-spear stole the goddess from Iskalli Varmandsson we have been their foes. We bested them with the Seven Beaver Pelts, and they harmed us with the Bison's Claw. When the Lunar Empire attacked us the Orleving Clan joined their army to wreak further harm. Curse them and their ancestors.

Who are our gods?

Orlanth the King is our god. He is ruler of the universe by virtue of his might and right. He has a great throne house in his city which moves about the sky, and there his family and friends decide the fate of the world. His wife is Queen of the Earth, his sons are the Thunder Brothers, his allies are War and Wisdom, Loyalty and Cunning. The elements are his weapons: lightning fire, winter winds, drenching rain, and the cloaking dark. Everyone else is his subject, from the Sun and the stars above to the darkness below.

What is there to do around here?

In the autumn when we have time to relax we have many sports besides those which keep us fit to bear weapons. We like to wrestle, and among some horse-fighting is popular. The old game of kick-the-ball is played in every clan. Singing is always a favorite, and clap-dancing is the best way to practice for the festivals when instruments are used and the gods themselves watch us. Swords-and-shields is the board game with the greatest challenge.



HE ORTLING

Staves from the Storm Voice

The Barbarian Priest Speaks

Where did the world come from?

*Dead the world 'til Umath the Free,
Broke Emperor's curse and moved the world.
Umathsons and stalwart liegemen set the world
in its present ways.
Now all feel the world's winds at their backs.*

Where did I come from?

*Humans are wind-born, freest of free.
Orlanth Breath-giver gives you first lungful.
Follow the winds, like Orlanth before you.
Yours is the path-choice, make it and live.*

Why do we die?

*Stale the world was, unchanging and solid.
No one could die, so no one could live.
Orlanth and Humakt, brothers in bravery.
Brought Death to the world and gave life an edge.
Slew they the monsters who undying plagued us.
First of them Unchange, who binds us to sloth.
Now there is Death, who prompts us to live life,
Slayer of foes who brings respite to friends.*

What happens after we die?

*Death is a comrade, a tool for our needs.
Orlanth found it, and fought it in turn,
Defeated Death fully, and brought the Sun out,
Fulfillèd is Quest, the Lightbringers' glory.
Death is the boatman, guide to last journey,
Carries you safe to the gods' brazen hall.
There presides Orlanth, his table for heroes,
Tell him your stories, take your right place.*

Why am I here?

*Life is for living, feel to your fullest.
Challenge the challengers, carve out your place.
Faithful to friends, relentless to foes
Loving to kith, fulfilling your wyrd.*

How do I do magic?

*Great among gifters, storm gods gave magic,
Taught runes to godi, first among followers.
Godi teach feats, wise men learn them.
Magic lets all men work with the world.*

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

...Chaos?

*Foulest of slime, curse of existence,
Twisted the god gifts, bred many foul monsters.
Only the Lightbringers, conquerors of Chaos,
Could right the wronged world, restore the Law.*

...Darkness Tribe?

*Mother of the trolls saw the world born.
Deloradella, eater of dead.
Hungry and cruel, like the dark days of winter,
Lurking at gates, waits for men to grow slothful.*

...Fire Tribe?

*Yelm ruled a world that was stale and changeless.
Orlanth, his enemy, released freedom for all.
Yelm met Death, he fled down the dark path,
Only Orlanth and Lightbringers walk that path alive.
Orlanth the liberator, freed loyal Elmal,
Brought him to honor into a thane's station.
Elmal follows his path, unwilling to break it,
But Orlanth is free to follow the winds.*

...Plant Tribe?

*Great among goddesses, Aldrya gave forests.
Bulwark of old world, preserver of trees,
She holds her counsel, favors not good or evil,
Friend or foe at the change of a season.*

...Sedenya?

*Lover of Chaos, mocks the gods' blessings,
Tangles the wind in her secret shackles.
Gives blasphemous secrets to lure the unwary,
Destroy her now or the world is enslaved.*

...Sorcerers?

*Woe to the atheists, they die without gods,
Souls sink slowly, fall empty to hell.*

...Spirits?

*Great were those who fought Orlanth's gifts,
Many were broken or made to be small.
Now the survivors are spirits for bushmen,
Kolatings coerce their small magic spells.
Notice and praise those spirits sundered,
Some can be helpful, perform useful deeds.
Do not give them worship, keep from them your soulforce,
That is for King Orlanth, their conqueror and liege.*

...Stone Tribe?

*Deep in the earth, stone god sits rocklike,
Frozen like elder, wracked with age.
No winds for Mostal, no challenges met,
Pity the dwarf god, pity his people.*

...Water Tribe?

*Mover of Seas, changing forever.
Unlike other old gods, Magasta can change.
Orlanth fought him five times, and conquered,
Freed him again to rule his deep realm.*



Gods of the Wind

Chalana Arroy, the White Woman, healing goddess

*Her touch heals all, Lightbringers' white lady,
No hurt can withstand her soft ministrations,
She healed our chieftain when pain made him mad.
She healed the world, made Life come again.*

The Earth Goddesses

*Three are the bounteous goddesses of earth,
Three the number of their dark sisters.
All are our allies, friends of the storm,
Orlanth claims all earth as his kin.*

*The giving goddesses; grandmother, mother, and daughter.
Asrelia the crone, keeper of good things.
Ernalda the mother, bride to great Orlanth.
Voria, spring's daughter, herald of youth.*

*The grasping goddesses; sisters to the kindly ones.
Ty Kora Tek, hag-lurker in darkness.
Maran, violent sister to kindly Ernalda.
Babeester Gor, vengeful guardian, jealous of the
earth's rights.*

Ernalda, earth mother

*Mother of all, wise spouse to King Orlanth,
All hail and protect fair mistress of earth,
Every man must revere the arts of all women,
Mother and lover, her needs are our wants.*

Eurmalk, the trickster

*No jape nor trick too hard for the Trickster,
Stole fire from Vestkarthen to warm all mankind,
Was both boon and trouble to his traveling companions,
Stands loyally by Orlanth his lord.*

Heler, god of rain

*Orlanth took Heler from Magasta's dull lair,
Used him as weapon in wars against drought,
Heler the staunch, his name is a by-word,
Sheep to him sacred, Daga his foe.*

Humakt, god of death and war

*Orlanth's fell brother, noble Death-Finder,
Humakt is guardian, protector from foes.
Humakt brought Death to ennoble and free us
Gave us struggle to make our lives full.*

Inora, goddess of snow

*When mountains extend their cold to the lowlands,
Inora, White Princess, dances among us.
When summer arrives, sends snow from the valleys,
Inora, Snow Queen, reigns still on the peaks.*

Issaries, god of trade and communication

*Issaries found the way of the dead,
Broke Darkness of Silence which covered the world.
Issaries chose trails, was scout for the Lightbringers,
Now merchants and heralds worship his name.*

Kolat, the shaman

*Kolat's strange family, the spirit Seven Winds,
Three names are known, the Three Good Friends,
Three names are secret, Left Hand, Above, and Below.
Kolath is the secret helper, the hidden power.*

Lhankor Mhy, god of knowledge

*Finder of riddles, he knows the world's secrets,
Rescued all wisdom from ignorance's gloom.
Helped save the world during the Gods War,
Now lawspeakers and elders call for his praise.*

Mastakos, god of motion

*Mastakos Mover, the God with No Home,
Vigorous god, drives immortal storm chariot.
He alone handles Orlanth's mighty steeds.
Servant of Storm God, mover of men.*

Orlanth, King of the Gods, Storm God

*Orlanth Adventurous makes change in the world,
Rescued us all from stagnation and death.*

*Orlanth Thunderous brings life-giving rains,
Blesses the plowman, blesses his herds.*

*Orlanth Lightbringer led the Seven,
Rescued all life, all earth lauds his name.*

*Orlanth Rex, King of the Gods,
Rules in the Heavens and takes tribute from all.*

Umalk, father of the storm gods

*He was born with great noise, deafening, disabling
Like thunder in a cavern,
Like living in a horn.*

*His visage rolled over the earth with anger,
Rumbled across the sky with greed,
Filled the space with his gray brows and thunders.*

*Umalk's five sons ruled the world after him.
But he made the place for his sons and us to live.*

Urox, berserker god, Chaos-killer

*Untamed beast, savage passion,
His mad berserk fury beats even Chaos.
So doth wild Storm Bull lead the war against Chaos.
He holds vile Wakboth under mountains of stone.*

Valind, god of winter

*Savage Valind, god of winter,
Sweeps the earth with ice from the north.
Ally to Orlanth, sometimes wayward and willful,
Each year takes the earth in his grip.*

Vinga, warrior goddess

*No spindle or basket for Vinga the dauntless,
Red-headed daughter, warrior maiden,
Fought off the ice, fought water and darkness,
Defender of women and children in need.*