

## TRANSLATION NOTES, CHAMBER OF KASTAYS

Grigor Tansad, Imperial Scientist, Entry 54

While Jelok busies himself clearing the rubble in the corner, my translation of the northern wall pictographs has been proceeding well. Despite feelings that something here is terribly wrong (or is it simply Jelok's jealousy arousing my suspicions?), I am slowly discovering what happened in this ancient place.

So far I have deciphered 11 columns of pictographs. The first few columns describe the ancient civilization — an industrial society with an oral tradition of communication rather than a written one. Their people seemed capable of constructing mighty cities of metal which rose into the sky. They waged occasional wars, but for the most part were a peaceful race. Little information is provided about their physiology, but I am guessing they were roughly humanoid in form. (Detailed translations are provided in prior entries.)

Around column eight I learned the name of the scholar who left these audio recordings. For some reason, Kastays locked himself in this chamber in what he called "the last days" to record the fall of civilization in this book (or song, as he calls it) of "endings." This "fall" apparently began when a comet streaked across the night sky. Several days later, Kastays says, a legion from a military outpost returned to this very city with a relic, what they called the "Plaque of Victory."

The story continued with the next column of pictographs, which is where I began today's translations.

Pictograph 12-A:

"Six days since the arrival of the 'Plaque of Victory' our city is wracked by violence. First it was minor — a small surge in crimes, most resulting in the victims' deaths. Then it became more pronounced, with small gangs ruling the streets, clashing in bloody battles at every corner and gate. Now companies of the city guard turn on each other and kill innocent residents, whom they claim 'betrayed them.' Each faction claimed they had heard the message from the plaque, and each claimed to be its chosen guardian.

"One faction, which had direct access to the 'Plaque of Victory' has removed it from its place in the gushaz (translation unclear: either a palace or temple, a place of reverence). They have brought it here, to my tower, to be hidden over all the city, that perhaps its mysterious power could soothe all the people from this height. In case my tower was overrun by marauders, I have hidden it in my floor vault.

"I know not what this 'Plaque of Victory' is. Is all this strife over a simple metal ingot, or is there some greater force at work? Many who revered it claimed to hear it speak to them. But now that it's in my possession, it speaks not to me. It only shows me things — roiling clouds seeming to enter my chamber and assault me, shadows of doubt rearing their gaping maws from the darkened corners, images from the corner of my eye which seem to threaten ... "