

# The Cerilian Book of Trade

BY BOB REED

*“A prince must rule with wisdom and justice, and above all he must understand the land, and the heart of his people. The Life’s blood of Diemed is trade, the Maesil its arteries and the very heart is the narrow sea. The trade of the world passes up and down the Maesil, and much of it through the port of Arele. The clothes on your back, the plate you eat off of, all but the wine you drink is dependant on, and a part of that trade. The Welfare, happiness, and prosperity of the people as well. Diemed is strong so long as trade exists, and the wise prince encourages, nurtures, and protects our trade, for the good of the people...”*

*From “The Mirror of Princes”  
written by prince Madoc Diem  
for his son Riegan, 560 MR*

In the world of Birthright, the eyes of most players are on the struggle for control of the land and physical power, or on the magic of the land and its flow. Of equal or even greater importance are the flow of goods, both bulk commodities and luxuries, and the flow of bullion in its raw form and coin. Without these things, regents lack the cash to build or to fight wars; the wizard lacks the cash to pursue his research, or cannot obtain the rare components to cast spells, or objects to enchant. With healthy trade, economies grow, people prosper, and civilizations and kingdoms are built and grow strong. In countries where trade does not exist, or does not prosper, purely agrarian communities struggle for survival- even more vulnerable to drought and famine, lacking the ability to import food to alleviate conditions, and the coin to do so if the means otherwise existed. Such backward kingdoms have greater difficulties in making internal improvements. The wise regent has a hand in trade, regardless of his class, and makes improvements such as building roads and bridges to encourage trade. Even those regents who do not engage in trade themselves realize the value of a bridge, or a river castle to extract tolls on merchants, and provide them with another avenue of income.

### **The Merchant Class**

The original Birthright books have set up a class of “Guilders” – a shady thief class that is an offshoot of the unrealistic, typical “Thieves Guild” and have given them a hand in trade. This book is intended in part to correct this, and create a merchant class – in many cases merchant princes, whose wealth can be as great, and power as far reaching as any landed prince. In truth, some of these men own nearly as much land, and live as ‘nobly’ as any prince or noble of any country in Anuire, and the Khinasi lands. In truth, the Brecht nobility is almost entirely composed of such people. Some traditional princes and noblemen derive some of their income by trade, and so further blur the lines, but these princes do not rely entirely on trade, and if trade goes poorly, do not face or risk the same ruin as nobility relying almost entirely on trade for their income, and without a throne and crown to back them. A landed regent has recourse to taxes, and in fact routinely places duties on merchandise entering ports of entry or large cities set up as ‘staples’ in their

countries, as well as levying tolls at bridges, city gates, and toll stations on rivers as a means of producing income.

Wise landed rulers do not make such fees or taxes too burdensome lest the trade they are tapping take other routes, and bypass their territories. The merchants who pay such duties merely increase the cost of goods at point of sale to cover the cost of doing business. They can do this to a point, but if they increase the costs of their goods higher than their competitors, their businesses can suffer disastrous results. A wise landed regent puts some of their profits from such duties and tolls into maintaining and improving their overland trade routes, and ports of entry. Such duties and tolls are not detailed in game turns, but are reflected when trade routes are negotiated, represented by the landed regents approving the trade route's "cut". In detailed role play, entry and travel by non-landed regents should be played out, and such characters paying out of pocket tolls and entry fees.

A merchant character can begin as a blooded regent, or have the fun of beginning his career working for a regional or international trading firm. A merchant character is created by using the guidelines for the Merchant Class in the Palladium rulebook – bloodlines and blood line strengths are generated using the normal Birthright guidelines. Merchant characters that are blooded regents derive regency points from trade routes controlled; guild holding controlled, and by the standard means described under the Guilders class guidelines.

### **The Flow of Trade**

*"I began my career as an office boy in the home offices of The Brechlen Land-Sea trading company, learning the basics of accounting, and observing the senior partners trading. I had my first break in business when I was appointed a clerk for a trading post in Gortz, in Lutkhovsky, a place of deep forbidding forests and snow, frozen half the year round. The land is wild and forbidding and in need of trade-goods. The conditions create the finest imaginable furs – sable, vair, miniver and ermine, that they pay a fortune for in Anuire the city, thick and luxurious. The local trappers trade them for cheap axes, thick wool, and brass pots from Elinie and Tuornen – the profit potential was staggering. In the first year we secured 50,000 fine pelts, which we packed into barrels, along with a cargo from further south of fine beeswax. Our profit was more than 100 fold for our efforts, and by carefully investing a large part of my salary into the trade (what else could I spend it on in that frozen hell-hole?), I secured the foundation of my fortune, and when the company was renewed 5 years later, I was able to buy myself into a junior partnership..."*

Ludwig Khole, "Memoires", 550 MR

Trade itself is divided into two basic types, the essential trade of bulk commodities – grain, oil, stone, lumber, ore, wool, etc, and the trade in luxury goods. The bulk of all trade is in bulk commodities – firstly, no town or city over a level 4 population can feed itself entirely from the surrounding landscape. Large towns and cities require constant supplies of food to be brought into them to feed the population. These needs create regional markets for foodstuffs – cattle, grain, fish, wine, oil, beer, where local producers bring these goods for sale, and where any excess is brought together and transported to their final point of destination. Such trade is generally short distance, and preferably conducted using waterways, to reduce the costs of transportation, as the value of the good is low in comparison to their bulk.

Luxury goods have a far higher return for their size – rare spices, spell components, luxury textiles, gems, ivory, rare woods, etc. Finished goods also have a higher rate of return than bulk commodities. The primary market for luxury goods is the courts of regents, and the homes of wealthy aristocrats and bourgeois. These are generally most commonly traded in regional centers, such as Arele, and Anuire the City, or Blackgate and Ariya the city. The trade is carried on to a lesser extent in smaller courts. The market for finished goods is generally much more wide-spread, in example, brass goods from Elinie and Tuornen – cooking pots, hollow wares, and cast bells for churches are sold up and down the Maesil river valley, and sometimes much farther afield, as in the example cited at the beginning of this section.

How trade routes are formed, as per the rulebook, the general rule of thumb is that two provinces of unlike terrain are the ending points of trade routes, to this, we add that long distant trade routes between international port cities of unlike culture can be endpoints of trade routes, even if they are of similar terrain (the goods being traded being a rarity in each location, otherwise unavailable). This will be explained in detail in the next paragraph. This as a rule will not be modified, unless a trader wishes to open or control a bulk commodity route for necessary foodstuffs to a large city. Such bulk commodities routes must not exceed two provinces in distance for a land route, or 6 provinces for a water route. Such bulk commodities routes generate 2 GB less than a standard trade route. Finished goods trade routes generate standard GB production, and function as per the rulebook.

Luxury goods trade routes: These can be the real moneymakers. The potential return for highly prized luxuries – especially if they are not native to a region can be staggering. Some bulk commodities locally can translate into luxury goods in lands where the desired product is simply unobtainable. Two examples of this are sugar, which is a bulk commodity in the eastern Khinasi lands becomes a luxury good in Anuire, while quality hardwood, a bulk commodity in Southwestern and central Anuire, is a luxury good in the Khinasi lands. The longer the trade route is for a luxury good, the greater the potential for profit (and the higher the risks in trading). Land routes that are long do not generate as high a profit as seaborne routes – reflecting the difficulty of transportation, as well as the tolls and duties that must be paid on such goods.

Luxury goods trade routes that are at least 6 provinces in length generate +2 gold bars over a normal trade route. Trade routes in luxury goods 10 provinces or longer apart are international. Khinasi to Anuire, Vos to Brecht, etc, going from one entirely different culture to another \*double\* the value of GB, if a sea route, or give a +3 bonus if a land-route, reflecting the cost of tolls and duties passing through different kingdoms.

### **Dangers to Trade Routes**

While the rewards for merchants engaged in long distance trade can be great, the risks can be nearly as great as the rewards. The following list outlines some of the most common dangers.

1. War: This can completely disrupt, permanently damage, or otherwise be a nuisance to trade. In special circumstances, war can increase trade.

Trade routes to a country at war –

- If the trade route does not pass directly through a war zone, there is no affect to it, until 3 consecutive turns of war pass. At that point, unless the trade consists of war material, trade drops off 50%.
- If a trade route does pass through an active war zone, then it provides 2 GB less per turn in revenue, reflecting the added costs of disruption. A 50% chance exists that each turn for complete disruption, and no revenue.
- If the trading city at either the beginning or ending point of a trade route is besieged, then the trade route is disrupted for that turn.
- War also increases the profits of a guild holding producing war material being exported to a country at war, and the subsequent duties provided from such production for a regent holding the materials producing province to the maximum potential for the duration of a war, assuming a trade route exists from such a war materials producing province to a country at war.

2. Brigandage/Piracy: When this occurs, roll a d4 to find the damage to the route, and then a saving throw on a d20. The cost in damages to the trade route in GB is the d4 roll, and on a roll of 10 or less on a d20 roll, the cost is doubled. This reflects the loss of a ship, or wagons and teams, as well as the cargo in the case of a catastrophic loss.

3. Weather: Normal weather conditions and fluctuations are calculated into the original Birthright rules for trade, and so are ignored. A catastrophic event, such as a drought can drive the price of basic bulk foodstuffs (grain, meat) upward radically. A bulk food commodity route into such an affected area has its profits raised by 1 GB (cumulative) per each game turn until the next harvest. An affected area such a bulk commodities food trade route \*originates\* from that is hit by a drought or a famine loses 50% profits the first turn, and then generates no more profit until the next harvest.

4. Market Glut: It is possible for the careless merchant to bring too much of a product or type of goods into the same market, and thus negatively impact profit. Most merchants do not do this deliberately, unless they wish to undercut a rival, and thus force a rival to close his route. The merchant thus intentionally causing the glut now has cut out his competition, and can raise his prices to a more profitable level than before. An area suffering from a glut of product suffers a 50% reduction of profit to the competing trade routes. A glut in game play can be caused when 2 players or more, or NPC's set up trade routes importing the same product to the same province. If the goods are luxury items alone, or if extraordinary conditions (like a drought) are causing an increased need, the impact is slight, or negligible, to a trade route. A rarer form of 'glut' is when a bulk commodity that is a luxury in a distant land is reduced in value by having the commodity provided closer to or at the point of sale. Historically, the prices of silks dropped in Europe a little when they began to manufacture silk in Italy. The value of silk was such that even with greater availability, it retained much of its value as the market for cheaper silks grew. This sort of market glut is rare, and can be the cause of war when established routes are disrupted by new manufacture. If the product is desirable enough, while the overall value of a product drops, as the price drops, the market size increases, and so this modifies the effects of market fluctuation to a certain extent.

### Travel

*“... on the one hand looking up to the heavens of the mountains, and on the other shuddering at the hell of the valleys. ‘Lord’, I said, ‘restore me to my brethren, that I may tell them not to come to this place of torment.’ Place of torment indeed where the marble pavement of the stony ground is ice alone, and you cannot set your foot safely; I put my hand into my scrip, to scratch out a syllable or two – behold, I found my ink-bottle filled with a dry mass of ice. My fingers too refused to write; my beard was stiff with frost, and my breath congealed into a long icicle. I could not write...”*

*A Franciscan monk, crossing the Dhoesone pass,  
February, 556 MR*

*“The vast forest called the Erebanien [where] the thick trees made it dark even at mid-day, and the narrow winding roads within it became a labyrinth in which many travelers often lost their way and ended up dead, and often too they were robbed and murdered by thieves.”*

*Moergan Bremble, merchant, 490 MR*

Travel in the Birthright setting is not an easy or sure undertaking. Difficulties and dangers a modern traveler can hardly fathom abound. Seasonal changes can lengthen travel, even along well-maintained roads, and can make certain routes impassable. Winter

and spring are the two seasons affecting land travel most severely – heavy snows and ice in winter, and rain, mud, and flooding in spring. In desert climates summer heat can make a route impassable due to water sources drying up. Winter storms make high mountain passes impassable to merchant trains, and extremely hazardous or impassable to the individual traveler. Being caught outside in a severe winter storm and being unable to find shelter and warmth somewhere is a literal death sentence

The late autumn and winter are the most hazardous months for sea travel, winter storms increasing substantially the risk of shipwreck and sinking. To reflect this in the rules on an individual level, after the first winter month all land travel requires twice the normal time to complete, and these conditions prevail until the second month of spring. Trade routes that cross high mountain passes are closed throughout the winter phase and generate no revenue for that phase.

At sea, the chance of severe storm weather in winter is 25% above normal. Ports in the far north are closed by ice for winter and shipping in that latitude ceases until spring. Trade routes in temperate or tropical climates can continue through the winter phase, but a saving throw must be made for each trade route kept open during winter. A fail indicates minor losses, 1d4 GB worth, and then a second roll must be made. If the second saving roll fails, a catastrophic loss ensues and the route generates no income that turn.

Some races do not suffer the effects of severe winter weather like others, or to the same degree. The Vos, for instance use beasts of burden that thrive in winter weather, and additionally use such devices as snow-shoes, making travel over deep snow possible for Vos on foot.

Considering the risks involved with travel and the shipment of merchandise, various methods of alleviating some of the possible calamities probable in trade have been devised. The following is a list of methods available to the PC's and NPC's to avoid potential ruin.

**Insurance:** In international trading hubs (Anuire the City, Arele, Blackgate, Müden, Ariya, Suirien) the concept of insuring a cargo exists. The potential of damaging loss is mitigated by spreading the risk (and profits) around. People interested in investing in a trading venture insure a percentage of the cargo in return for a share of the profit. If the venture is successful, the profit is shared, and if the cargo is lost, the merchant whose cargo it is does not suffer total loss. The actual details of how this is done is complex, but to simplify the process for game play, the player wishing to insure his cargo on his trade route pays out ½ GB per 5 GB of normal worth of the trade routes worth per turn. If a catastrophic loss is suffered, instead of no income, the route generates 1 GB per 5 GB worth of the trade route. Multiple catastrophic losses back to back on the same trade route will make the owners goods uninsurable, until a year passes on the same trade route without catastrophic loss.

**Convoys:** Although no protection against bad weather, the convoy of a number of armed merchant ships can be a deterrent to piracy. If the ships have a naval escort, either

hired by the merchants pooling their money, or provided by a friendly regent, this can be a strong deterrent to piracy. Pirates generally wish an easy mark, and are not generally willing to engage a naval vessel unless absolutely necessary. Pirates wish that a target merely surrender at the pirates demand, and generally will let a crew go free (even with their ship) after taking a cargo. To ensure ships will generally do this, they make an example of the ones that do resist – killing the crew and passengers save for one or two left to spread the cautionary tale.

As a result, the average pirate will not engage a convoy, and even an extraordinary pirate will not engage one unless the reward potential is extremely high. The sorts of targets to tempt the daring will be listed in the next section under letters of credit and imbalance in trade. In game terms a convoy has a 95% likelihood of being ignored by pirates. The disadvantage of the convoy is that it can only move as fast as the slowest vessel in it, so ships with a perishable cargo or ones with a strict time-table will take the risk of going unescorted, as will parsimonious (entering a naval escorted convoy costs a small fee) or independent-minded captains.

**Letters of Credit:** It can be very dangerous and risky to ones wealth and personal well-being to travel carrying a large amount of cash. Landed regents can get away with this, for few would remotely consider attacking their king, and when they move their wealth they tend to be accompanied by hundreds of servants and soldiers. A method of moving wealth safely has been devised for the merchant or common citizen – the letter of credit. Trading houses or companies with international and even regional offices have devised a system where a deposit is made at one office, and for a small fee a letter of credit is issued with the name of the depositor, who is often a person known at both ends of the transaction. One can also be issued to be “paid to the bearer” (this is more dangerous, as anyone can use it). The person then brings the letter of credit to the office at the other end of the journey, presents it, and receives their money. In a world where many cannot read, it is a fairly safe way of transporting large sums of money. The average robber would either not understand what the letter of credit was, or would be unable to use it. All offices of a trading house issue letters of credit, and generally cash does not have to be transported until too large an imbalance of bullion is built up between offices. At that point money must be sent in hard currency from the point where a surplus exists, to the point of deficit. Such a large amount of coin is a tempting target for brigands and pirates, and can provoke an attack even on a convoy if awareness of such a transfer comes to such robbers’ attention. Obviously such transfers are made in convoys, under heavy guard, and with numerous tricks employed to ensure the transfer is made safely. Such transfers are avoided by trading houses for as long as possible.

### **Merchants Holdings**

A merchant regent who forms a trading company acquires holdings as any other regent. Like other regents, they should at least detail their “Home Office”, and the more detail they provide, the more material a DM has to work with, and so more enjoyable game play can be had. The merchant regent needs to choose either a regional or international hub (usually in the regents home country) to be the Home Office. The home office must be at

a regional or international hub trade city, because that is where the prime market to sell goods is located, and it is also the point of collection for local goods bought to use in foreign trade

The home office consists of a complex, usually a compound in a compact form built on a courtyard plan with strong well built buildings. The office (and vault) in front, warehouses to the rear, stables, farrier/smith, cartwright on one side, and sheds for carts and harnesses on the other.

Besides the buildings being strongly built, the front is made fashionable, to attract customers and create a sense of confidence to the investor or depositor, and credibility to the business. The buildings are strongly built to protect them from rioting mobs. They are secure and guarded, but they cannot stop an army.

The merchant does not live at the home office, but invariably in an equally strongly-built, ornate mansion, usually built on a courtyard plan, and located in a fashionable part of the city. The house is a display of wealth and success, and attests to the good taste of the merchant. Additionally, the house provides extra storage for luxury goods for sale, on a smaller scale, but as secure as in the warehouses of the home office. The courtyard will contain stables, and all the outbuildings usually associated with a townhouse-mansion. Such mansions cost at least 3 GB to build, but rarely exceeds 6 GB, so as to not undiplomatically outshine a landed regents palace (and possibly cause him to turn covetous eyes on the merchant). In addition to the regent merchant's townhouse, the merchant often purchases land or builds a country home outside of the city, in order to live nobly, and be seen to live nobly

It is important to note that the fully developed trading companies on the historical Italian model, with all its benefits only exist in Brechtur, Anuire and Suirien. The Khinasi have not developed a model beyond the simple partnership, and Vos merchants are regional merchants, not international trading houses...

### **Branch offices**

At the end point of every trade route there must be a branch office. This is the point of sale for incoming goods, and the point of collection for goods to be delivered to the home office. These are usually located in regional or international hubs, for the same reason home offices are located in hubs. If a regional city is not a hub currently, but has merchandise desirable for trade, as soon as it acquires two branch offices, it becomes a hub.

Branch offices are most often located near to their rivals of the same nationality, but separated from foreign rivals. In some cities they are segregated this way by law, in others they do this by choice. In cities prone to xenophobia (or with xenophobic merchants), these communities are sometimes walled for the safety of the foreign merchants in case a riot breaks out – the walls are incapable of stopping an army. Branch offices are smaller versions of the home office, with the same amenities. Branch

managers often live in large handsome townhouses, although less palatial than the company owners homes in the home city.

### **Trade Route Assets**

Ships and/or wagons are the assets needed to run trade routes. The cost of these assets is calculated in the costs associated with the initial set up of a trade-route, and their maintenance is a part of the maintenance costs of the route.

For every 2 GB of value of a trade route, the regent has 1 ship dedicated to a sea route, or 4 wagons and their attendant animals, or 20 pack animals dedicated to a trade route on land. The size and type of ship, boat, wagon, cart, or pack animal is dependant on whether the route originates from a regional or international trade hub, the country of origin, and the taste and pocketbook of the owners. A brief list and description of some of the ships, vehicles and animals used by some of the most active trading nations follows.

### **Anuireans**

The types of ships used by Anuireans largely depend on whether the trade routes go north or south of the straits of Arele.

#### *North of the straits*

Taliniean and Boeruinean, and some Taeghan and Brosenghaen vessels are built 'clinker' fashion. The method of construction used is similar to the method of building Rjurik vessels. The skin of the vessel, of tough oak is as much sewn together, and the frames are then inserted. Many of these boats have flatter bottoms, both to hold more cargo, and allow them to be beached on beaches and mud flats – an important consideration in this part of the world as good large ports are few and far between. A caravel built vessel would have to anchor offshore and painstakingly unload it's cargo in small boats in the same conditions, which would be a lengthy process.

The classic climate built Anuirean vessel is the cog, a single-masted vessel of a size anywhere between 20 tons and 500 tons, with a rear-castle, while mid to larger sized vessels of this type have a forecastle as well. Small coaster versions of this type can be undecked or half-decked, while mid to larger sized ones are full decked. These vessels are incredibly sea-worthy, they will twist in the hull before splitting a seam, from damage that could hole or sink a caravel built vessel of the same size. They can be manned by a very small crew – 3 men, in the smallest examples, although most have more crew. One of their disadvantages is their build has a tendency to give them the pitch and roll characteristics of a cork in a heavy sea. They are not very fast, and they have a difficult time sailing into the wind, because of their single square sail. The largest examples newly built are starting to be built with two masts. In Talinie, sailors have begun copying the Diemian example from the late war, and are giving the rear-mast a lateen rig, which has been improving the sailing characteristics of the type, both in tighter possible steering, and being able to tack into the wind.

In Talinie, Dhoesone and Boeruine, all regional and international trading vessels built are cogs, the principle difference between ones used for regional vs. international trade being size of vessel. It is important to note that these ships are very little different from warships, and can be used for that purpose with the addition of a temporary forecandle if the ship does not already have one, and taking on soldiers or marines, and perhaps a ballistae or an engine of war (if the cog is large enough). Another thing to note is that in the case of larger examples, the solitary mast or mainmast can be huge, very thick, made up of multiple tree-trunks fitted and lashed together into a single mast. Most of the ships built in Talinie are cogs, although the duchess has built a few great-ships, and those trading southward from Taeghas often use Nefs built caravel fashion. Roughly half the ships used by Brosengae are cogs, the others are Nefs, and now some Brecht designs.

Regional trading vessels in these countries are either small cogs or balsingers/barges (clinker or caravel built). These are lower to the waterline, without forecandle or stern castle, and are rowed as well as sailed. Routes going north from the city of Anuire tend to use cogs, while those south bound tend to use Nefs.

### *South of the straits*

South of the straits, and in the straits of Arele itself, the old traditional imperial form of large merchantman is the Nef or Nave. This is a two-masted, lateen-rigged vessel that has both forecandle and rear-castle, and is fully decked (many have multiple decks), and they are traditionally steered by means of a steering oar, although many new ones use rudders. They are very round in the hull, and have a large capacity of cargo for their size. They range between 200 and 800 tons, and they are not very fast ships, but with a lateen rig they can use a small crew. They can be square-rigged or combination-rigged as well. They are always caravel-built, frame first, and of lapstrake construction. Different rigs can marginally improve speed.

The cog is also used, although usually in its smaller form of around 100-200 tons, for trade in areas with poor ports, or for ships plying both the northern and southern strait entrances. These are identical to their northern cousins.

Caravellas: These are smaller, regional trading vessels, more rakish in the hull than Nefs, and far faster. They range between 75 – 200 tons displacement, and are lateen rigged with 2 masts, although the very largest can have 3. Most of these caravellas have stern- castles, but most do not have forecandles, and many carry sets of sweeps. These are generally the preferred ships of pirates in Southern Anuirean waters. Not only is it a commonplace merchant vessel, and so easy to disguise, but its speed and maneuverability make it a good choice for the task, and instead of cargo, it can carry many men for short distances. Like the cog, they can go into shallow waters, and can even beach on sand or mud.

Small ships of the Forecandle/Carracks: These are a newer design, originating in Diemed. They are a cross between the great-ships of the Diemian navy, and the caravella, lower and smaller than the great ships, but with the lines of a caravella, and slightly larger than

the caravella. The ones built so far displace 400 tons, and are as fast as a caravella, and have both fore-castle and stern-castle, and have 3 full masts – the first two square rigged, the rearmost lateen rigged. They also have a small, temporary mast on the rail of the stern-castle that also sports a small lateen sail. It is caravel built, and the ones so far built have a set of 8 sweeps for use as needed. The ships were designed and built for the prince of Diemed's own trade routes (international), and to date, other than two cogs and a Nef still in service on these routes comprise all of the prince's private merchant fleet on his international routes, and as of yet, the ships are unique. They can carry a reasonable cargo for their size, but they were designed for speed, so as to be able to move without a convoy, and to be able to fight effectively. It sacrifices some cargo space for finer lines. Although not carrying the full large castles of a great ship, the carracks have frame structures fore and aft as an integral part of the castles, to be able to erect temporary platforms and screens above and slightly inboard of the existing castles, to increase their formidability as warships. These are normally stored below, but can be erected by the crew inside of 20 minutes. They carry a pair of ballistae additionally as well. These will most likely replace any cogs active in the navy as funds allow.

**Esneques:** These small fast ships are only used in regional trade. They are one-masted and lateen rigged. They are overgrown fishing boats with finer lines. They have no stern-castle or fore-castle, but a round topped cabin in the boat's stern. They are in the 30-75 ton displacement range. These fast little vessels are sometimes used as scouts or couriers.

**Rowing/Sailing Barge:** These are deep, low hulled, double-ended oblong vessels that are used in coastal trade. They are undecked, or half-decked. Smaller ones ply the river trade, and the largest ones are easily capable of crossing the Straits of Arele. They are used in regional trade, and displace 20-100 tons. They are ungainly, slow-moving cousins of the balsingers and river galleys.

**Others:** The list above is not exhaustive, and only covers the larger ships. The seas north and south of the straits, as well as the straits themselves are plied by hundreds of smaller boats, ranging between 3 and 20 tons, open or half-decked, and single-masted. Most are employed in fishing – whole villages and towns on the coast sending out dozens, scores, or even a hundred or more such vessels in the case of the largest ports. In communities where this is organized into an industry, the fish are brought in, gutted, salted or smoked for preservation, and brought to large markets for sale and distribution. Fresh fish can also be transported distances, and are regularly through the means of keeping them alive in barrels to the point of sale. Some of these smaller vessels are used as coastal traders as well.

## **Brechts**

The Brechts are justly famous as a mercantile people, and they rely most heavily on the sea and rivers for transporting goods, considering the geography of their kingdoms. The types of ships they have evolved have been designed in consideration not only of the nature of the Great Bay itself, the sea of Black Ice, and tributary rivers, they have also evolved in reaction to the dangers presented by Brecht opponents – Rjurik pirates in

longboats in the old days, as well as imperial vessels during their involuntary participation in the empire, and in reaction to the monstrous Awnsheghlien inhabiting the Great bay and northern waters.

Being uniquely placed between the other four human races has given them an advantage in trade for a long time, and what would require an arduous journey for an Anuirean ship – nearly circumnavigation of the continent for trade for an Anuirean ship to Eastern Khinasi, is a comparatively short trip, half the distance or less, for the average Brecht ship. As a result, speed of travel has been slightly less emphasized in design, in order to increase cargo capacity and building the ship strong, and lastly requiring a small crew to maximize profits. The height of the sides or bulwarks of the ships have been emphasized to make them more difficult to board, and more difficult for an aquatic Awnsheghlien to encompass with its tentacles. The Brecht keelboats, busses, hulks, and hulk-busses can brave any sea in the world, in nearly any weather. They cannot win races against faster Anuirean or Khinasi designs, but they survive in conditions in which no Khinasi ship and only the strongest Anuirean ships can hope to survive in.

**Keelboat:** This design is currently only used as a regional trade vessel and for river trade, due to newer designs having larger cargo capacities. The design resembles nothing so much as an Rjurik knar, and indeed the Rjurik argue it is a larger, slower derivative. It is higher-sided than a knar, and the smallest ones built displace 50 tons, while the largest displace 150 tons. The ship is the speediest of Brecht merchant vessels, and sometimes if speed is of the essence, small luxury cargoes that are high-priced are transported in them. They are clinker-built construction. Most have sets of 10-20 oars.

**Buss:** This is an enlarged form of keelboat, and if it has a forecastle fitted it resembles an Anuirean cog, save with a rounded bow. Like its parent design. It is clinker built and sports a single mast. They range in size from 300-600 tons displacement. They are the fastest of the larger capacity cargo vessels made by the Brechts, with little to differentiate them from Anuirean cogs, save for their larger capacity for length and slightly taller sides. They are used in every nautical endeavor from whaling to shipping furs. These ships make up roughly 50% of most Brecht merchant fleets.

**Hulk:** This ship was developed to carry cargo more efficiently, and be more difficult for pirates to take, as well as being more effective warships when pressed into service as such. This is as far a clinker-built technology can take ship development. The ship draws more water than a comparable sized buss. They range from 400 -1000 tons displacement, and are two-masted. Many carry two yards on the mainmast, and they are square-rigged. These ships are taller than Anuirean ships of comparable length, often 10' taller as a difference. The added height makes them effective fighting platforms, placing foes at a disadvantage in grappling and boarding. Only Anuirean great ships rival them in height at the forecastle and stern-castle. Like all Brecht ships, the hulls are coated in tar as a preservative and protective measure, and unlike Khinasi and Anuirean ships, only the forecastle and stern-castle are painted. It is these hulks, and the larger hulk-busses that Anuireans think of when they think of “black Brechtur ships”, which bring luxury cargoes to the port of Anuire the city, and other ports. These are dual purpose ships,

equally adept at war and commerce – full of cargo, they bring home a fortune, full of marines, they are floating fortresses.

**Hulk-Busses:** This form of ship outwardly resembles the hulk, but inwardly the construction is very different. They are frame-first constructions, like Anuirean Great-Ships and caravellas, and the scantlings and timbers are massive. Like a hulk, the hulk-buss is high-sided, and they are physically larger than the hulk. They range between 1200 – 1500 tons displacement, and a rumor is current that the prince of Danigau has one of 2000 tons. The hulk-buss has 3 masts, and the masts of one of these giants is huge, built of composite construction of multiple tree-logs fitted and lashed together, and the mast castle will comfortably hold 20 men in combat. The ship is square-rigged, with multiple yards on the mainmast. The rear-mast carries a lateen sail, to aide the giant in maneuvering. Like the hulk and buss, the hulk-buss is steered by a rudder, and in this case the steersman is aided by a block and tackle to keep such a ship on course.

**Other types:** As with other nations, numerous smaller vessels ranging 3-20 tons displacement abound, mostly employed in fishing. Like Anuirean counterparts, these smaller boats are single masted, and are open hulled or half-decked, although without exception, they are clinker-built. Unlike in Anuire, these vessels are not employed in the coastal trade, that role being filled by keel-boats.

### **Khinasi Vessels**

Before Deismaar, the Basarji (now known as the Khinasi) were the second most advanced seafaring race on Cerilia, second only to the Masetians. Their sail-powered vessels making daring voyages from their home country to Cerilia and beyond, at a time when most other human civilizations were using glorified, overgrown rowboats, and tentatively hugging coastlines. As the Basarji settled the southern coasts of Cerilia, and built their civilization on the ruins of the Masetian one after Deismaar, they concentrated on exploring fully the southern coast and building their civilization.

Seafaring settled into a comfortable east-west pattern, and contact was gradually lost with their homeland. As the empire of Anuire expanded into their territory, and subjugated individual city-states, the resistance to this foreign invasion welded the Basarji into a great naval power. Ultimately, they defeated the previously dominant Anuireans in a great naval battle, capturing the emperor Allendaele, and creating a new golden age for the people now calling themselves the Khinasi, after their great leader, El-Arassi. The Khinasi were in an ideal trading position, the temporary Anuirean occupation had created a taste for Khinasi goods, and a large market for Khinasi commodities, and now the Khinasi having achieved naval dominance were in a position to control and exploit the flow of commodities into Anuire, and bring back Anuirean silver and gold in plenty, but this ultimately led to complacency. Centuries of dominating and regulating this trade – typically by a Khinasi merchant taking a boat-load of luxury goods that he bought for a reasonable price in his home market, and sold for a fortune in Osoerde, , enabling the merchant to buy property to lead a comfortable life in his home town. Such merchants would make a fortune in one or two years of runs, selling his boat to his family

or friends so they could repeat the process to their benefit. This very leisurely pace of trade is still practiced today. This complacency was aided by the last 500 years of warfare in the empire, which had not allowed the creation of rivals for control of this flow of goods, since the eyes of the empire were turned inwards to its own turmoil.

This complacency has led to a stagnation of naval technology, as there has been no pressure to advance designs. The designs of Khinasi ships have proved adequate for seven centuries, and so no new advances have been made, and a growing lack of shipbuilding material has exacerbated the situation.

Dhoura: This is essentially, with slight modifications, the same sorts of vessels that brought the Khinasi to Cerilia. These vessels are built skin-first, as in some northern designs, save instead of trunnels and nails, the skin (planks of wood) is held together – sewn, in fact, with ropes made of date palm fibers. These ships are regional traders. They are sharp-prowed, shallow draft, and steered often by steering-oars, although some have rudders. They do not have forecastles. They are two masted, with the rake of the mast forward, and are lateen rigged. They are maneuverable and fast, but their cargo capacity limits them to regional trade, and they are not built strongly enough to survive storms in northern waters. They are comparatively cheap to build, and they carry the bulk of local trade, as well as being perfectly suited for extended travel on the Suidmare, and as far as the Dragon archipelago. They range from 50-200 tons displacement.

Dhow: This was the last major technological advance in naval matters under El-Arassi. Although its lines are reminiscent of the Dhoura, it is larger. They can be made much larger due to the advance of building the boat frame-first. The skins of these vessels are still sewn on as the Dhoura. They are rakish craft, low in the water for their size as compared to northern boats, and they are flat-bottomed. They can be built to great size, with this method of construction, and this is the one point where the Khinasi have advanced in naval technology. Most of these are 200-500 tons displacement, and sport 2 or 3 masts. They are longer than Anuirean or Brecht ships of this displacement.

In Khourene, where ship building material is plentiful, and trade and pilgrimage very active, they have made these ships to unheard of lengths and sizes – some 200' in length, and carrying 5 or 6 lateen rigged masts. These particular monsters, displacing 1000 tons or more make routine scheduled journeys down the entire south coast of the Khinasi lands as far as Ariya, bringing Ivory and spices and gems to the market there, but more importantly, taking passengers for the pilgrimage to the basilica of St. Halia (Haelyn) in Khourene's capitol, and magicians to swear their oaths in Min-Dhouasi.

These giants, although lighter-built than northern vessels are sturdier than most Khinasi sailing vessels, and could venture further than their normal routes. Carrying a fortune in luxury goods 4 times a year to Ariya, they would be a tempting target for piracy, save they move in convoy, have strong compliments of marines, and have armed escorts accompanying them. Once or twice in the last hundred years attempts have been made on them, but only one has ever been lost in this fashion. Like other Khinasi ships, these have no forecastle.

**Dromones:** These galleys are copies of, and improvements on ancient Masetian and imperial models from the wars of liberation. They are well built, and expensive to build, but they are capable of swift voyages and maneuvering, in good weather. They are fully decked, which gives protection to the oarsmen. When used in the merchant trade, they are used only for valuable cargoes. They carry a single mast with a lateen sail, and most are armed with a ram-beak. They average 150-250 tons displacement.

**Others:** As with the other sea-going humans, the Khinasi have numerous smaller vessels. For the most part, these are built like Dhoura, but on a much smaller scale. These are almost always undecked, and carry small single masts with lateen sails. The vast majority of these vessels are engaged in fishing, with a few employed as coasters. They range between 2-20 tons displacement.

### **Suirien Vessels**

The people of Suirien are a unique case. They are for the most part of Anuirean origin, being descended of the original colonists of the island. As a result, their ships are offshoots of Anuirean technology, and reflect growth and innovation based off old imperial designs rather than from Khinasi tradition, although they do build Khinasi style ships for Khinasi customers. The people of Suirien are more aggressively geared to international and regional trade than any other country in the Khinasi lands, and even in Anuire itself.

The merchants of Suirien control the trade route to the Dragon Isles with an iron grip, importing the finest silks from there, as well as galingale and the rarest of spices and spell components, jade, and other rare luxuries. Independent traders dare the route, but studiously avoid ships from Suirien, who view their presence as a near-act of hostility. The only pilgrim ship from Khourene ever lost was lost to Suirien naval vessels a little more than 20 years ago (as of 565 MR), who attacked and sank it because a large consignment of Dragon Isles silks were aboard, due to the efforts of a young Ariyan merchant named Hassan El-Hadid. The incident began a brief war between Khourene and Suirien, in which a peace was eventually negotiated between the co-religionists by the patriarch of the temple of Halia, Khourene ceding rights to trade with the Dragon Isles to Suirien as a condition of peace. The other important item of trade they control the bulk of is sugar; large amounts (of the best quality) are grown and processed, although it grows elsewhere. The Suiriens control 80% of the sugar trade. They are the largest and most important source of sugar to Anuire, and they keep the cost of sugar dear.

**Naves:** These ships are descendants of and refinements of the old imperial Nef, the design being around for a millennium or a little more. They are tubby, like their Anuirean cousins, Suirien naves have a slightly sharper prow, and always carry a mixed rig of square and lateen sails. They are steered by a rudder, and are caravel built, and have both fore and rear-castle. They are a little faster than these Anuirean cousins due to these changes. Most important is the wood the ships timbers are made from, teakwood and mahogany. The timbers are exceptionally solid and rot-resistant. While most Anuirean

ships have a useful service life of 10-30 years, requiring major rebuilds depending on service seen. Suirien naves and galleys have a service life of a century or more on average, assuming they are not lost to accident or piracy. They displace 250-500 tons.

Caravels: These ships closely resemble their Anuirean counterparts, save it is known the type originated in Suirien instead of Anuire. These are the regional and coastal traders of Suirien. They are lateen rigged for the most part, and two masted, although many sport a square sail on the mainmast if the ship has 3 masts. They range between 50-150 tons burden, and although they are mostly employed in regional trade, they are fully capable of sailing long-distances – the Dragon Isles and back, if they are provided with enough provisions. They are handy sailers, and like the naves, their timbers insure a very long, profitable service life, barring accident or shipwreck.

Great Galley: These are the ships that Suirien is famous for – large and elegant, well armed galleys, capable of swift speed and maneuver. They are large, displacing 500-700 tons, but having less cargo space than sailing vessels of equivalent tonnage, having to accommodate a large crew of oarsmen. They are well armed, from the beak for ramming, to carrying 4-6 ballistae and a mangonel each, plus a contingent of marines. They have a stern-castle, with commodious cabins for the captain and important passengers underneath, but lack the small forecabin of purely military galleys. These can be added, but must be added in a shipyard should the Islands government require the navy be augmented temporarily to fight a war. There are a limited number of these galleys, as they are expensive to build, maintain and run. The State owns them, and rents use of them to Suirien merchants, and they are run in regular convoys that are posted and well known. Additionally, the galleys are escorted. There are 8 galleys comprising the Dragon Isles convoy, 4 comprising the Ariyan convoy, and 6 comprising the Anuirean convoy – 4 ending their route in Anuire the city, and 2 in recent years ending the route in Arele. The Anuirean convoy bears 80% of the sugar arriving in Anuire, while the Dragon Isles convoy is how the best quality silk and rarest spices are imported to Cerilia. The Ariya convoy is the method of these imports distribution, and the Anuirean convoy as well to a lesser extent. These ships are never found alone and are never unguarded. The surest way to start a naval war with Suirien is to attack or molest them in any way. As with other Suirien ships, these are built out of teak and mahogany, and are rot and worm resistant. They give long service; the oldest in current use is 120 years old, although plans are being made to replace it in the next year or so.

Others: As with all other seafaring races, small boats of between 3 and 20 tons are built for local fishing and trading purposes.

### **Other Transportation Assets**

In Anuire, and much of Brechtur, overland routes are serviced by carts and wagons of carrier companies, that merchants hire depending on which route they are taking, determining which carrier company is used – carters having monopolies over certain stretches of roads. . Some merchants own their own carts and wagons – this is commonplace in Khinasi lands, but rarer in Anuire and Brechtur. The carts used in

Anuire and Brechtur are virtually indistinguishable from each other, and very little is different between these and Khinasi models. Most are drawn by horse teams, ox teams being too slow. The costs associated with maintenance of land routes reflect the costs of hiring cartage companies, and their attendant maintenance costs, as well as tolls and duties.

Wagons and carts work best on well maintained roads. An overland trade route that does not have proper roads cannot bear trains of wagons and carts, and must instead rely on pack animals. Most roads in Cerilia are dirt roads, and it is to these roads in particular that the disadvantages of the depths of winter and spring weather described under the section on travel apply. In countries heavily involved in trade or keenly aware of the impact of trade on the economy, either local regents or cities reliant on trade occasionally invest in the paving of roads to make for the easier passage of wagons and carts in periods of difficult weather. Cobbled roads are not subject to the normal penalties for movement in bad weather as are dirt roads. Trade routes using wagons can move along cobbled roads in winter and spring months without penalty.

Trade routes without roads, and relying entirely on pack animals to maintain it have a penalty of -1 GB to profits, reflect the reduced load capability. This penalty does not apply to a route where pack animals must be used to traverse a short stretch of difficult terrain such as a mountain pass, or a short stretch of sandy dessert. The penalty is incurred where pack animals must be exclusively used for the length of an entire province or more. If the route requires pack animals to be used for two province lengths or more, the penalty is increased to -2 GB.

**Pack Animals:** More than any other form of transportation this is entirely dependant on the terrain involved and the culture employing them. In Anuire pack animals are exclusively horses, mules, and donkeys – twice the number of donkeys are required to maintain a trade route than any other animal type due to their small size. Despite this disadvantage, they are heavily employed in mountainous terrain due to their sure-footedness. Only mules and donkeys can be used reliably if much of a trade route passes through mountainous terrain. In Khinasi lands, the pack animals used are mules, donkeys and camels – horses are valued for riding. Only camels are used for carrying burdens across dessert. In Eastern Khinasi lands (Khourane, Min Dhoasi, etc.) Elephants are additionally used. Unlike other pack animals, a single elephant can carry most of a wagons burden, and so no penalty is accrued for their use as beasts of burden.

Brecht lands use the same animals for pack animals as Anuireans, and in the same fashion, in the few overland routes used. Vos additionally use Varsk in winter months, and they cross terrain in winter with no penalties – in the summer, however, they incur a -2 GB penalty due to reduced load capacity.

**Courier Services:** Large international trading companies have as necessary assets courier systems, to allow for effective communications, and to coordinate business undertakings. Every Sea route of an international firm has one courier vessel, of the fastest type available, and every land branch of an international concern has a relay of couriers to

branch offices, so as to allow for quick and uninterrupted communication. Regional concerns must make due with public and private courier services run by others.

Banking: Some of the largest firms have gone into the business of taking deposits, safeguarding money, loaning money, and paying dividends. Strict laws govern the practice of banking in Anuire, as the practice of usury is against religious law. In most Brecht lands, however, there are no such legal restrictions concerning interest charged on loans, and market forces alone govern such things, with bankers charging what the market will bear. If anything, the church of Saramie encourages merchants to earn as much profit on an investment as is feasible.

A firm that establishes such a bank earns an additional 2 GB per turn in a location with a bank. Banking is not without risk, however. Regents can and do ask for substantial loans. Normally, such sums are repaid, often by the expedient of allowing the firm to collect the proceeds of taxes in a province for a year or so, but sometimes a regent can default on a loan. If the sum defaulted on is a substantial amount, the defaulting can ruin a company financially. A regent who defaults on a large loan can no longer obtain such loans, for the length of their reign.

### **Examples of how things Work, and some Pointers**

The merchant regent has advantages and disadvantages that other player regents do not. The merchant character, more than any other type of regent has the potential to make money. If they are lucky, and play their cards right, these can be substantial fortunes. Controlling the flow of trade and businesses is how merchants gain regency points. While this is not a direct connection to the land, as in the magic of the land flowing through the realm wizard, or the direct connection of the land to a landed regent, it is a connection to the people, as the landed regent is connected to the people he rules. The people can benefit from thriving businesses and the flow of trade, even as they can be crushed by a lack of opportunity, or in the worst cases, suffer from famine from a lack of flow of bulk goods.

Money can be power and money commands people and resources, but the merchant regent must be wary because they do not command armies as a rule as landed regents do, and a wizard regent can ruin trade as surely and with as much finality as an army taking and sacking a city the merchant regent has offices in.

As a result, the merchant regent plays a careful game, seeking the favor of landed regents where possible, and doing their best to avoid the displeasure of wizard regents. It is unwise for the merchant to develop an adversarial relationship with these regents, if for no other reason than them being the merchants best customers. It is the landed regent's court that is the primary customer for the luxury goods whose sale makes the merchant a fortune, as it is the wizard regent that is the customer for rare and expensive spell components, as well as luxury goods.

An example of how not to behave towards landed regents, and the danger in doing so can clearly be illustrated by the example of the late Harman Kalien, guildier, and usurper of the comptal throne of the county of Endier.

Endier is in the unique position of being the most important river port on the Maesil River, which is the major river artery of Anuire. This is due in part to it being the highest point of navigation for seagoing vessels on the Maesil. The vagaries of the current are such; due to the conflux of the Tuor River that it is the safest point to dock as the current on the opposite shore is treacherous. As a result, Endier has become a major city, where cargo is transferred from ships to barges or carts and wagons or from carts, wagons, and barges to ships. Endier is also conveniently sighted astride the major North-South road. These happy circumstances have made Endier into a prosperous and busy city – the ideal point from which to run a regional concern, or place a branch office for an international one. Guildier Kalien, a Brecht half-elf came into this city, ripe with possibilities about 22 years ago at the time of this writing (543 MR). He rapidly built up an extremely successful business, and became so vital to the necessary flow of goods that he obtained the then count of Endier's ear and became a trusted councilor. Within a few years time, the Endier family suffered a series of accidents and illnesses that left the count bereft of any apparent heirs, so the old man placed his trust further in his councilor, making him his heir. The old count suffered his final illness a few months later, placing guildier Kalien now in the position of being the landed regent of Endier, as well as controlling all of its trade.

The guildier was at the height of his career, but he made several errors in judgment, most of which would not have proven fatal on their own, but cumulatively brought the guildier crashing down in ruin. An important overall misjudgment was his inability to understand the strength of the long-entrenched feudal system in Anuire, assuming society was more flexible in social outlook, like in his native Brecht land.

The rumors that flew during the demise of all the apparent Endier heirs would have flown had the successor to the old count had been a natural heir, and had the deceased died under unimpeachable circumstances. That the heir was a foreigner who was not noble, and who was seen to climb to the throne over a pile of Endier corpses only compounded the trouble.

Kalien's act officially abolishing the nobility of Endier might be seen as a populist move politically, but what it in effect accomplished was to create a class of disenfranchised malcontents with a natural following. He was able to keep them in check by making a brutal example of the first plotter against him, and by maintaining an effective secret police. Unfortunately for Kalien, further policies he enacted created a powder keg under him, merely awaiting a lit fuse that was inevitably provided.

One can alienate the nobility of a regents country to minimize their power, but this is a dangerous game to play, as to do so one must rely on the unswerving loyalty of the masses. Such a game is difficult to play with consistent success, unless the politician is intensely charismatic, and/or has some sort of moral authority.

Kalien instinctively favored the class of people he was from – the wealthy merchants and masters of the craft guilds, and these controlled the political reigns. Unfortunately for him, the masses of the population are composed of farmers, labourers, craftsmen, journeymen and apprentices, who were often at odds with the class Kalien most favored. Once a social revolution is undertaken, the leaders have little control as to where it might stop. As circumstances turned out, Kalien did not fall to an unruly mob, but was able to manipulate them enough to be secure. They were merely a restive element that contributed to his demise as events unfolded.

The country of Endier was at that time in the unfortunate circumstances of being surrounded by powerful neighbors, most engaged upon the quest for the Iron Throne. It shared a border with the aggressive and powerful Ghoere, who coveted the wealth of the city, as well as its strategic position. Across the river was the powerful duchy of Alamie, whose duke, although having no claim to Endier saw it as a useful cat's-paw in his political games to reclaim Tuornen, and his fending off the baron of Ghoere. Opposite the Maesil was and still is the dark woods of the Spiderfell, home of the powerful and insane Awnsheghlien the Spider, who was dangerous and unpredictable, and to whom the land of Endier once belonged, in fact, if not by right of human law. The original Endier, Richard I sent him off, staving off the destruction of the infant settlement of Endier with a riddle to puzzle over, some two centuries before. He could return at any moment to bring death and misery with him.

The traditional and original threat to face the counts of Endier was the duchy of Diemed to the South. By imperial grant all of the lands encompassing the Spiderfell, as far as the river Maesil belonged to the dukes of Diemed, given them by the first emperor Roele. 200 years prior, the Diemian duke Vandiel II, who was an inefficient administrator, and singularly lacking in energy to rule lackadaisically promised Richard Endier I to the enfeoffment of the land now the county of Endier, if he could keep it, and take it from the Spider. Then he refused to supply or support the new settlement, only seeking to garrison it once it had become profitable farmland. This of course sparked a rebellion that was successful due as much to the lack of determined prosecution of the war by the duke as anything else. Sporadically over the next two centuries the Diemian dukes would attempt to regain what they saw as their rouge province. These efforts were invariably unsuccessful, due both to the courage and intelligence of Richard Endier's heirs, as well as the chaotic political maneuverings and sporadic warfare over the Iron Throne. Every Diemian duke emphasized and renewed his claim to this territory upon his coronation.

In the end the demise of guilder Kalien was brought about by external politics, and the architect of his demise was that master politician, the duke of Alamie. The instrument of that downfall was a youth, one Alaesce Endier, whose mother had fled with him as a child to Alamie during guilder Kalien's rise to power. The family was an obscure cadet branch of the Endier family, and would not normally have been in line for the comptal throne had not Kalien eliminated all other heirs. Alamie recognized immediately a potentially useful tool, and giving the family a modest pension and raising the son as a gentleman was an inexpensive means of creating great potential leverage that could pay

off a thousand-fold in the future. The duke of Alamie decided to play his pawn during a particularly difficult time of Ghoere's aggression. Alam had recently been forced to conclude an unfavorable peace with Ghoere, and on the ascension of a new duke of Diemed – an untried youth, he decided to dangle Endier as bait.

Allowing rumor of the youth's existence to leak out, he immediately drew the attention of Ghoere, Kalien and Dieme. All three sought the youth – Kalien to eliminate a threat, Ghoere to erect a puppet, to control the city, and Dieme presumably for the same reason. Alam's own interest was to place a friendly and grateful regent on the comptal throne, who could blockade the traffic on the Tuor River, during Alam's eventual bid to reclaim Tuornen.

He negotiated with all three regents – from Kalien, he elicited espionage services against the baron of Ghoere, in addition to a 'present' of a large sum of cash to show Kalien's good intent, along with a promise to not harm the youth, a promise Alam realized was worthless. From Ghoere, he extracted a public retraction of the unfavorable terms of the most recent peace treaty, but it was from Diemed he extracted the most.

Knowing the young duke had been raised as a paladin of St. Haelyn, and his rise to the throne was a mere fluke, Alam felt that of all the candidates he bargained with, Dieme would be the most likely one to keep any promise. He had literally just risen to the throne, and was unpracticed at guile. Better yet, Alam heard rumor that one of his blood abilities was Battle wise – here was a tool to cower Ghoere he thought, if appropriate arrangements were made.

Unknown to the other parties he agreed to hand the youth over to the duke of Diemed, first extracting a promise he would allow no harm to come to the boy, and secondly, by making him promise to do all in his power to elevate the boy to the coronet of Endier – he made the duke take this oath on holy relics, administered by Dieme's own archbishop. The bargain was sealed by the offer of the duke of Diemed's younger brother to marry the daughter of Alam – his only heir. The girl was an eminently suitable match for the duke's brother – both were of ancient noble lineage, the dukes brother would get to be co-regent when Alam passed on, and a mutual defensive pact was sealed by the bargain, aimed principally at Ghoere. Dieme's younger brother was in essence a hostage for the duke's good behaviour.

Alam then gave Endier some of the money extracted from Kalien to equip the boy and a handful of followers. The remainder of Kalien's 'present' to Alam was substantial enough to cover the costs of keeping the boy and his family for the last 10 years, and so Kalien paid in full for his own troubles, in Alam's eyes.

To Alam's delight, the duke of Diemed welcomed the boy as a lost cousin, and backed the boys claim to the comptal throne with an army. Dieme's agents had already been in contact with the old nobility in Endier, who promised to support the duke and their young count in ousting Kalien.

As the army passed over the border of Endier, the Endieran army turned out to meet it – presumably for battle, but the majority of the Endieran army laid down its arms, and then swore an oath to the boy, picked them up again, and escorted the new count to the capitol. Kalien was captured, forcibly divested as regent of Endier – the regency being given to the duke of Diemed, who true to his word invested the regency in the young count in a public ceremony (all very carefully staged) in exchange for his vassalage. Thus the new duke of Diemed came to be seen by Endierans as a restorer of their own count and their freedom. These actions provoked Ghoere, who in turn attempted to invade Endier. The Diemian army, backed by the Endierans and an allied contingent from Alamie, led by Diem’s younger brother crushed Ghoere in the major battle of Bryene (the Diemian name for the battle), inflicting the first major reverse on Ghoere (who was captured in the battle), to Alam’s delight. The Endieran troops, in a heroic episode during the battle saved the life of the duke of Diemed’s younger brother, and the duke, in a gesture of gratitude from that time henceforward made all Endierans “free of the road” in the dukes territory (no Endierans pay any Diemian tolls), a gesture that the Endierans appreciated, and which went a long way to healing old wounds.

Thus for little or no cost to himself, Alam was free of an enemy, rid of an unpredictable neighbor, gained a son-in-law of the highest lineage, and through that means an ally who could not, or would not betray him. The principle reason for Alam choosing to bring Kalien down was that he took offence, as a noble of old blood, that an upstart commoner had usurped a noble regent (even one of such low lineage as the counts of Endier) and that the foreign upstart had dared ‘abolish’ the nobility of a country – an action that he could not allow to stand.

As for Kalien, after he had been deposed, not enough evidence could be found to prove his connection to the deaths of the Endier family, but he made his final, fatal error when he tried to have the duke of Diemed assassinated in revenge for his political downfall. The assassin was caught in the act, evidence was found linking Kalien to the attempt, and for this attempted regicide, Kalien met his end in a public square in Arele, at the edge of a headsman’s sword.

*...The jeering crowd’s cries echoed in his ears, and he felt the cold air as his pourpoint was turned down. He felt the hard cold wood under his knees, and wondered how had it come to this? It’s not fair! “Not fair...” he gasped... heard the priest’s toneless prayer to the side of him. He had been the regent of Endier! They could not do this to hi... The cold steel kissed his neck and there was an explosion of agony, as his eyes, even under the blindfold flashed white, before darkness finally surrounded him.*

*Guilder Kalien’s final thoughts at his execution, 553 MR*

A successful example of an international merchant can be found operating on the south coast of Anuire, his trade network stretching to Ariya, and as far as Khourene, to the great cities of Ilien, Arele, Anuire the city, and into the heartland of Anuire, and across

the straits to Seaward, Mires, and Novo Tier. This eminent and successful merchant is none other than Hassan El-Hadid.

Hassan began his successful business around the same time as Kalien began work in Endier, around 20 years ago. After several failed ventures as a youth (see a description of one such under the example illustrated in Suirien vessels), Hassan was able to develop a successful regional coaster business. He had greater ambitions than this, however. Investing in a ship capable of longer trade, he sought to bring some of the luxuries he knew to be in great demand in Anuire directly to it. He had seen and admired the Suirien model of large scale business (even if he held a grudge against them for an earlier reversal in fortune). He took the revenues of a season's trade, invested them in spices and silks, and dared a voyage to Anuire. He chose the port of Ilien as his initial site to do business, due to its status as a "Free City" – a neutrality that was respected, so not endangering a potential trade route by the ravages of war. He was able to smooth talk his way into the counts favor, and started to set up an office. His first shipload gave him an eleven-fold return on his investment – enough money to buy a second and third ship, and cargoes for them as well.

El-Hadid was thus able to span the difficult gap from being a regional trader to being an international one. Many who try to cross the divide come crashing down in ruin, but a lucky few bridge the gap. Hassan quickly realized in a few years time that if he truly wished to expand, and follow the Suirien business model, that he needed to expand his market. Ilien was a static growth city and the count's court too small to allow increased profits from consumption of luxury goods. He had begun to send large shipments of goods desirable to Khinasi back to his home, but he wished to increase the scope of his business. The nearest court of an appropriate level of consumption was that of Diemed. Avaniil was larger still, but war came to its borders too often. Anuire the city would be a natural choice, but there was no imperial court to consume luxury goods, and it was located in a war zone. Thus Hassan chose Arele as the next logical step.

To his delight, the duke marrying the prince of Avaniil's daughter created a court that was a boundless reservoir of customers for his goods, with hard cash to expend on them. Best yet, El-Hadid found the duke himself to be interested in, and sensitive to Khinasi culture. Most Anuireans held a viewpoint of assumed superiority, as if they were the enlightened ones, and the Khinasi the barbarians! El-Hadid was able to establish a rapport with the duke, who turned out to be a generous patron. Hassan thus moved his home offices to Arele. He expanded his business to include production of luxury textiles, using local weavers and the talented Diemian embroiderers. He also to exporting arms from Moere, and steel from Ghoere to his native Ariya, to not only make a profit, but to help support his prince-paladin. These arms he sells everywhere on the South Coast, and the gulf of Coryanas. As the duke expanded his territory up the Maesil, so Hassan followed in his trail, for where the duke went, he built roads and encouraged trade.

Hassan naturally fell into the role of supplying information to the duke of Diemed, and for these services has been made a gentleman, and his eldest son was taken into the duke's service, and eventually imperial service, as the empire was restored, and the duke

of Diemed as the emperor's son-in-law was elevated to prince. Hassan has eventually expanded operations into Anuire the city itself. Hassan has a bank in Arele and has purchased land in the country to compliment the manor he was granted, that he uses as a country retreat when not residing in his palatial mansion in Arele. In Hassan's more than decade in Diemed, he has yet to see a limitation to his potential trade, and so carefully and happily builds his networks of routes and goods. Furthermore, he plans to produce what luxury goods he can locally, to increase his profits. He takes full advantage of the duke's naval convoys to Ariya, and Diemian naval patrols of the Suidmare.

El-Hadid thus presents a model of a merchant-regent working in tandem with a landed regent sympathetic to trade. By avoiding adversarial relationships with the other types of regents, and occasionally cooperating with them for mutual benefit, Hassan has achieved almost every goal he has set for himself, and has minimized his potential losses. Not every merchant regent is so fortunate in his partnerships, nor has the diplomatic talent El-Hadid does to accomplish building such a widespread and successful business, but El-Hadid stands as a model to study for any regent seeking success in international trade.

*Hassan sat in his comfortable seat of cushions  
in his magnificent garden, enjoying the afternoon  
sun, watching his grandchildren at play with a pair  
of puppies of the finest stock. He smiled to himself,  
as he sipped the finest wine from Moere out of a delicate  
enameled and gilt glass from Min-Dhouasi. He contemplated  
the latest reports from the branch offices of Ariya and  
Khourane, and smiled once more. He gazed over to the  
newly planted orchard of mulberry trees, and thought  
to himself once more, that life was good, and  
Avani Merciful...*