

THE POLITICS OF BURDOTH, Part II: KLADES

In Part One we discussed the ideology and ramifications of the Drenn system. Now it's time to turn our attention toward an older institution, the klades.

WHAT WE KNOW

Frankly, there's not a lot to go on, at least not in terms of hard fact. We can piece together something about the nature of klades from various pointers and hints, but practically nothing about their structure or how they operate. The lack of information seems baffling, especially as "[t]he real power in Ardoth is controlled by the klades, the chell, Khodre, Khodre's relatives, and a few other...influential families."¹ Not only that but the klades are also a "...major social institution."² Klades are variously defined as communal child rearing groups, trades unions, or guilds. They provide "schooling [and] training"³ for klades members and 'associate' members, have apprenticeship programmes, and issue authorization to trade in their areas of jurisdiction. In some areas the klades clash with the municipal authorities, and in some they *are* the municipal authorities.

HISTORY OF THE KLADES

It's been said that "Klades were entirely a development of the [Gauss] valley,"⁴ but we don't explicitly know why this should be. Again, it's a matter of reading between the lines. One possibility is that with Paul Gauss' discovery of durlig in the valley, humans were able to end their migratory existence and settle down. This would necessitate some form of government, perhaps rising organically, from the association of these hunter-gatherers. The result could have been embryonic klades. We do know that a "town grew out of the durlig fields that Gauss planted."⁵ But, the klades were originally child rearing groups and not necessarily the collection of wage earners and producers that would typify a klade centuries later. It's not clear why the Gauss Valley should have altruistic child-rearers not found elsewhere or why so many infants should survive while their parents perished, thus creating the imbalance of children and adults that would force small groups of parents to nurture many children. Healthier adults would naturally result in something of a population explosion, but there's no reason to think that this would get completely out of control.

Maybe the proliferation of Dhar Corondon at that early stage wiped out many adults. Certainly the early Gauss settlers did not have access to Earth-tec, and desperate hunting parties would have been no match for the beasts. Neither could they hide from them in the conventional sense, as the Corondon's tra-sense would sniff them out. Perhaps a particularly virulent plague, only effecting adults, swept the valley. It seems unlikely, but we do know that the human population has waxed and waned over the millennia due to fatal epidemics.

This article isn't intended to answer these historical questions, but to deal with klades as they are now, and the role they play in Burdothian society. Since most players are likely to be tauther I'll keep the discussion tied to Ardoth's social system where possible. A larger piece about klades all over Burdoth is beyond my current scope; as we'll see klades vary enormously, and an in depth look at Gauss would be a whole new article. Gauss does have a role here though, as I believe that city is controlled by 'democratic' klade-government, while Ardoth is ruled by the Dharsage appointed chell. Additionally,

¹ Companion Jorune: Burdoth, p. 6.

² The Sobayid Atlas, p. 8. The single most informative material on klades is the page 8 sidebar.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Companion Jorune: Burdoth, p. 22-24.

⁵ Companion Jorune: Burdoth, p. 22.

klades in the Gauss valley are not under the same pressures as those in Ardoth. Gauss is more of a closed market, while Ardoth's klades are in fierce competition with foreign importers.

SOME CONTENTIOUS ISSUES

I'd like to get a few things cleared away before we go on to look at the way klades might function. It's been noted that "growing up in a klade is not much different from growing up in a nuclear family"⁶; I fundamentally disagree with this statement. Growing up in a commune of many siblings with a group-centred education would be significantly different from a standard two parent upbringing. I'd recommend Gene Wolfe's 'Shadow of the Torturer' for an example of what a science-fantasy guild would do to the world view of an orphan raised within it. Everything the child thinks will be coloured by the education it has received from the klade fathers and mothers, the whole world view of these children is easily shaped (and perhaps manipulated). There are modern day bodies that could be pale reflections of the klades in this sense: British public schools, certain Roman Catholic orders, and even the Michigan Militia and related groups. The psychological strain on klade children could be significant, depending on how well they accept the 'tribal' identity of the group.

There is a further aspect of klades that I find hard to believe,

Children raised in klades will learn proficiency at whatever the klade is associated with. At the age of 20, they are free to remain with the klade or choose another.⁷

I cannot see a klade allowing their 20 year investment in a member walking away without so much as a by-your-leave. At the least the klade would probably ask for some sort of monetary compensation for losing the worker. The individual would have to 'buy out' his commitment to the klade, who has fed, clothed, housed, and educated him throughout his life. This is probably beyond the means of the klade member. On the other hand, it may be unlikely that any given member will want to leave the security of the klade. The community is the only one they will have known, and the prospect of life outside it may be too frightening. One should not underestimate the invisible ties that bind.

It may be that the klade gives the dissenting member a stark choice: leave if you wish, but never come back. This is in effect a form of exile.⁸ This strong disincentive has a very practical side; any given klade will not want its trade secrets openly bandied about, or taken to a rival group. The exile of a lapsed member could be a very real geographical one. Some klades would not even allow this concession. The most obvious example is the Fusheen Klade - they don't train assassins and then let them freelance themselves to all and sundry. Bladesmiths would be another example of secretive klades. It needn't be so serious an occupation though. A significant fracas would result if the Shelpedy Klade got into a war with the Oriem Klade. Both make candies and sweetmeats, neither wants its secret recipes known to the other.⁹ This is one reason why the 'tricks of the trade' will not be taught to associate members (in essence, the non-boarders). Knowledge is power after all, and from musicians to hired killers no-one gives away the secret techniques of the klade.

A WORD ABOUT NON-HUMANS

The klades are not as discriminatory as the Drenn system, but there are certain considerations. Muadra children are never raised in mixed klades, and never by parents other than maudra. Obviously the Gendil Klade (caji orb weavers) is a muadra community, but this also means that no muadra are

⁶ 2nd edition Players Book, p. 49.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ A similar choice was available to orphans brought up within Shaker communities, who at the age of 21 could either embrace the faith or leave, never to return. All links were severed irrevocably.

⁹ Witness the economic warfare between Coke and Pepsi for a modern equivalent.

present in the largest non-specialised klades in Burdoth. Characteristics of some non-humans would preclude them working in certain trades. A woffen, for example, would be a liability around a loom when it was the moulting season. In this case a racial propensity means that woffen would however occupy many shast posts in Burdoth. Some klades in Burdoth are almost exclusively non-human: for example, the Aggum Klade (Bronth tarro trainers), the Olillion Klade (Thivin animal breeders, mostly thombo and grint), and the To Ween Klade (Thriddle farmers). The To Ween shows that the basic unit of the lerrin (farm), run by one family or a small group of families, is almost a klade-in-waiting.

THE BASIC PRINCIPLE OF KLADES

I define a modern klade as a continuous association of producers, who maintain the right to control production, practice a level of self government, and have industrial autonomy. Some klades may retain customs and rituals that have their roots in the earliest klades: solemn vows, oath taking, and the mingling of blood, for example. These artificial families were originally created with non-commercial aims, but klades have become a sort of aristocracy of labour. They still have significant civic spirit, but now also have economic and political aims. Klades will have the greatest power where central government is weak, where the State is remote geographically or financially. Thus the Gauss klades essentially run the Gauss Valley, while the Ardothian klades are continually set against the Dharsage, the chell, and the growing merchant class in Ardoth.

SIMPLE AND COMPLEX KLADES

The simple klade is one which practices one trade, and is run by a basic hierarchy often comprised of just one leader. The communal lerrin is thus a close model of the simple klade. A simple klade is unlikely to have any political power, and is almost exclusively a local organisation. By that I mean that a simple klade is unlikely to have many connections with other larger klades, with the municipal authority, or with the national State.

The complex klade is likely to be made up of more than one klade, making it a kind of federation or union of unions. These klades may be mutually supportive, but are not necessarily so. An example of a supportive complex klade is the Bohod Klades, which comprises the Barrij (rope and net makers), the Bohod (weavers in silk sails), the Shelt (sail makers) and the Yampher (sail menders). Note that the winemaking Shoukt are in the Bohod Klades, showing that diversity still exists in this complex klade centred around the ship building industry. Complex klades may be grouped together by virtue of coming from the same area, for example the Gauss Valley Associates¹⁰.

There is likely to be more power politics within a complex klade, and more antagonism between rival complex klades. For example, the Pesade Klades and Lorgin Klades are at each others' throats in Ardoth. A complex klade is also likely to have its own support staff, such as cashiers, book keepers, porters, brokers, carriers, agents, and messengers. These careers are the ones that may be offered to associate members, leaving the family secrets in the hands of a select inner circle.

STRUCTURE OF KLADES

We know that klades operate apprenticeship programmes, so it's logical to assume that these apprentices have tutors or masters. But, the day to day work of the klade continues. Thus there is a producing class, which we'll refer to as the journeymen¹¹. These are the artisans of the klade, and occasionally the agents of the klade. It is these journeymen who have most contact with outsiders, wearing and displaying the klade patch¹² in dealings with the general public. Note that I'm assuming that all three classes are life-long members, probably schooled in klade matters from as early as 4 or

¹⁰ I seem to remember reading that the Lorgin klades originated in Thantier, but I'll be buggered if I can find the reference.

¹¹ I can't hide the connection between basic klade organisation and that of our guilds in the middle ages. I admit it, a lot of my research was in this area.

¹² See the Sobayid Atlas, p. 8.

5 years old. Outsiders can buy an education for their children, but this will vary enormously from klade to klade. Again we have a divide between the 'front' of the klade and its inner mysteries.

There can be tensions between the classes, with apprentices lowering costs for the klade and thus suffering some jealousy from the journeymen, and the masters keeping their own numbers low (or attempting to restrict mastership along hereditary lines). In fact klade organisation could lend itself to oligarchy, and certainly an almost continual in-fighting between competing power blocs in complex klades. This does not mean, however, that they will crumble due to internal strife. Klades will unite against a common enemy and are still pledged to defend common interests.

There will be gradations of apprentice, journeyman, and even masters of course. These will vary from klade to klade, but in general administrators and officers are usually elected or chosen for fixed terms, often of one or two years. The method of selection will reflect the diversity of klade organisation, but examples might be secret ballot, straight appointment, formal examination, or random selection. The Shencle Klade avoids corruption by having a small child draw the names of that year's supervising officers from a padlocked case (the child itself selected randomly from the assembled masses on election day). Traditionally the highest office in the klade is Klade Father or Klade Mother. Though this refers to the ancient role of overseeing child rearing, it is more likely in present day Ardoth that these people are on a par with influential kesht, rich families, and powerful generals.

Large, complex, klades will be essentially autonomous. Note that in Burdoth only drenn are allowed to hold land. I can't see how this holds up in relation to the ancient klades (more on this later). A klade established centuries ago will have its own land, money, contracts, and legal precedent. In fact Ardoth's Klade Bay has just that, each klade making laws as part of a kimmit and larger kim. Quite literally the Klade Bay is a law unto itself. Within the limits of its jurisdiction the Klade Bay is self governing, and it can probably make its power felt beyond the capital.

AIMS AND METHODS OF KLADES

The aims of klades are threefold: economic, social & moral, and political. The latter aim is dealt with in the section below. Economically they are concerned with the organisation of the defence of their trade, with the welfare and honour of their craft. A klade will seek to be in almost total control of the production and sale of its goods¹³. This forms a kind of official guarantee to the consumer. A whole list of regulations and statutes will probably cover trademarks, where the product was made, what price should be charged for it, how it should be sold, and what system of weights and measures should be used. Sanctions on transgressors are strict, and may include banishment. Note that there is a strong desire to reduce competition, and to ban outside influence. The more parochial klades will seek to ruin or drive out freelancers. Ardoth's Lorgin Klades are known for this kind of abusive behaviour. This approach can also stifle creativity and hinder genuine progress, for example the Kindrich Klade (armourers) would probably try to suppress a rival's attempts to re-design or improve basic armouring, if in so doing the vested interests of the Kindrich would be harmed.

Socially and morally the klade motto is solidarity. They give each other mutual support in the form of collective bargaining. Many klades retain the ethic that led to the formation of klades and take in orphans from war or disaster. Of course this gives them a continual supply of apprentices. But, the klade also looks after its own when there is no financial incentive to do so. When members become sick or elderly, when they are bereaved or suffer grievous loss through natural disaster, the klade will be there to support them.

¹³ Hence accusations of price fixing from independent merchants and thivin.

KLADES AND THE BURDOTHIAN STATE

We must remember the relatively small place which organised industry occupies in Burdoth. Indeed, "[m]ost of the Burdothian economy is based on agriculture."¹⁴ Once the needs of subsistence are fulfilled Burdoth's imports/exports seem to be raw products or easily transportable luxuries. With durlig being increasingly harvested by aerator, klades like the Liggnie will be hard pressed to compete. In fact this is a **direct** clash between the Dharsage earth-tec arsenal and an independent klade. This must be touchy¹⁵. In fact, "Both offices [the Dharsage and chell] have attempted to subdue klade efforts to expand economically"¹⁶. The State rarely pokes its nose into economic affairs, unless it is for its own financial gain, and some klades will possess wealth the Dharsage would rather have for himself. However, the Dharsage is likely to be more careful around the Gauss klades.

Back to the metropolis, and note that it is the Dharsage and chell who issue permits and licences throughout Ardoth. They must tread a fine line here between discrimination and acting in the public interest. Going back to the statement that rich families control a lot of power in Ardoth, this could indicate that patronage is shifting away from the klades and toward individual favourites. If the most prized contracts and licences go to the politically well connected, the rug is being partly pulled from under the feet of the klades. However, the Dharsage still relies on certain klades for indispensable services, the most obvious being weapons' manufacture; foreign nations are unlikely to trade in the tools of warfare with the acquisitive and expansionist Burdothian State.

The larger klades realise that political rights are a means of defending economic interest, and they will attempt to guide public affairs to their advantage. As a political entity the klade is almost a mini-republic, and its members receive their civic education (and propaganda) from the klade elders. As previously mentioned, the general political influence of a klade will depend on the area in which they exist, and also the type of trade they practise. As the Dharsage attempts to carve out a coherent national economic policy, the klades will be in danger of losing their grip on political power. The more regulations the Dharsage - via the chell - can impose on them, the easier it is to control and limit their influence.

Klades will by nature be xenophobic, but the reason is economic as well as cultural. The importation of foreign workers and foreign goods can have significant impact on the klade business. Migrant workers often undercut nationals, and the quality of work cannot be guaranteed. In attempting to establish friendly relations with Jasp, Sychill, et al, the Dharsage risks the ire of Burdoth's own native producers. The growing importance and wealth of merchants also impacts on the klades, as the wealth shifts to the traders and brokers, klades will lose some of their status.

There are some other thorny issues, such as the Dharsage's rights of taxation, road and river tolls, and the necessity of klade involvement in the building of militias. As the influential families show, the aristocracy of money naturally succeeds to an aristocracy of birth; the rise of Dharsage favoured entrepreneurs (and their entourages) threatens the klades¹⁷. In some quarters the producing klades are being dismissively referred to as "blue-nails". The rich young bloods can't take the power away altogether though, and there are other factors to consider in determining the status of a given klade. The more honourable, lucrative, or ancient the klade, the more firmly it will be entrenched in the political and/or economic life of the realm.

¹⁴ Companion Jorune: Burdoth, p. 5.

¹⁵ Significantly, only three responsibilities are explicitly shared by the Offices of the Dharsage and the Offices of the Chell - Cletch (taxation), Appointments (patronage) and Klade Relations.

¹⁶ Companion Jorune: Ardoth, p. 26.

¹⁷ On balance they can also pain the Dharsage, for example the DharWhiu family - albeit South Khodren immigrants - are establishing their own political network in the capital.

KLADES AND THE DRENN SYSTEM

This deserves a separate mention, as the drenn system helps to put the klades in their place. By standardising the social structure of Burdoth and enforcing those social relations, the klades are being frozen out. The larger and older the klade, the truer this will be¹⁸. The klades themselves receive short shrift from the Tauther Guide¹⁹. In essence the drenn system asks the klades to qualify for privileges that they already possess. The klades have a natural tendency to close ranks, but they must have links with each other, with the chell, and with the wider national State. The tauther/drenn system does not accommodate them or encourage them to do so.

SOME CONCLUSIONS : MERITS AND DEFECTS OF KLADES, THE FUTURE OF KLADES

At their best the klades provide an invaluable service to the consumer. They guard against adulteration, falsification, or dishonesty. Klades stamp goods with a character of finish, solidity, and relative perfection. Honourable klades will keep the profit margin within reasonable limits. The simple klades only deal in small quantities, restricting clientele to a local market. The chance of being ruined or of making a fortune is limited. Their members are safe in a sometimes uncertain environment. The klade is a refuge against trouble, illness and old age. It can be a great family and a self-contained city, the spirit of which can contain a fine sense of honour. The larger klades have provided precursive methods of banking, maritime law, and the art of production on a large scale.

On the downside, an instrument of defence for those who are within easily degenerates into one of tyranny for those who are without. The ardent civic spirit can be transformed into an exclusive corporate one. The klades can stifle growth, and behave like some kind of demented mafia if things don't go their way. The danger is always that self interest will overtake group solidarity and equality. Clashes with the municipal authorities and inter-klade squabbling detract from the communal or harmonious aspects of klade life.

The klades must rise to the challenge that the tauther/drenn system represents. Anti-klade measures are in effect and this is one of them. I can't quite see how the Gauss Valley embraces the drenn system, at least not in its current form. We're told that the "...integration of cultures has existed almost as long as trade between the two cities²⁰." I assume that this refers to the concept of drenn as honoured citizens, rather than militaristic Dharsage lackeys. The klades will need to find some way around it, or they'll have to cave in and take part in the drenn system. I can't see that happening, and the Klade Bay must be a royal pain in the butt to Khodre Dhardrenn. The further one goes from Ardoth the more powerful the klades will be. In Gauss and the Sobayid they should have significant - if not outright - control of some population centres.

Finally, one must bear in mind the rich diversity of klades. Simple basket weavers, skilled carpenters, a secretive order of assassins - all can come under the klade umbrella.

Author's Notes: That concludes Part II, I hope you're as exhausted as I am! With any luck this will stir some more debate. I didn't really think that klades had got the coverage or credit they deserved. I don't believe the klades are full of happy little shopkeepers, placidly watching the Dharsage change the face of their country. Hell no. Part III will deal with the Dharsage, the Chell, and maybe all those black hearted courtiers at the Dharsage Palace.

¹⁸ Those from simple, less secretive, or poorer klades will find it easier to mesh with the tauther/drenn system. Powerful klades don't have much to gain - they already own the land, they already serve on the kims. I suspect that the 2nd edition maxim that klade members could leave at age 20 was so that PCs could be ex-klade members.

¹⁹ See "Eebo Leem's Annual Address" in this issue.

²⁰ Companion Jorune: Burdoth, p. 24.

EEBO LEEM'S ANNUAL ADDRESS

Being a selection of points raised by the venerable Eebo Leem, master hairdresser and honoured member of the Ubrissa Klade, on the occasion of the Journeymen's Annual Dinner. Transcribed by Lem Dillion, entris-for-hire, in the year 3491 Post-Colony.

"Friends, first let me draw your attention to the disgraceful manner in which we are portrayed in the Tauther Guide - yet again! I quote from this year's edition, as endorsed by that thombo's ass, Chell Rhan Trohan

Enter the Klade Bay at your own risk. There are members of the githerin klades that think nothing of emptying the pockets of trespassers that look like easy targets.

You will find the offending remarks on page 31 my friends, though whatever you do don't buy a copy of this Sagist propoganda. I suppose it is better than the entry we got in '79, when the elder amongst you will remember "Enter not the Klade Bay, lest you be strangled, hidden up a chimney, and taken down once a year to be used as a hat stand on Day Terra."

That is the sum total of the information about our noble associations to be found in the whole of the Tauther Guide. I took it upon myself to seek out Drenn Appolinario Vivit - the supposed author of the piece - but was informed by his servant that the master of the house had decided, on a whim, to visit his sister in the Essanja. I had missed him by a matter of minutes, no doubt leaving by the back door. Let me tell you friends, Drenn Vivit will not be in our Scented House for a shave and nostril trim, if he values his life or his moustache. The Essanja! By my silky beard!

We have registered our complaints with the Office of Klade Relations - both of them - and petitioned our contacts in the Palace to get an amendment to the offending article. We of the Ubrissa will do our utmost to see justice served, though our influence has admittedly waned since the wives of the well-to-do were seduced from our service by the harlots from the Sobayid. May their crimpers be as crooked as the Chell's own mouth! Ah, but those are

ugly thoughts, and like the royal sisters such ugliness is best left undisturbed.

When will the Palace accept the benevolent nature of the Klade Bay? Our community work, the soup kitchens, the orphanages? Our self restraint in keeping a straight face when the Dharsage's son speaks in that squeaky voice of his? When the Palace's own machines spluttered and died on the plains, was it not the klades that came forth to feed the city? Aye, it was, and afterward our rate of interest on the loan was right and reasonable.

The thanks we get is to be accused of base thievery. The only thieves I know are the Drenn with their smiles like Ramian invaders - implacable! arrogant! bloody tax collectors! May their loins be cursed by the grunder rash, and thricefold. It is also an insult to the githerin klades I might add, who are committing no more street crime while we have contracted them to pelt the house of Rhan Trohan with all manner of refuse.

I have yet to touch upon our suffering at the hands of the yords, especially those we haven't paid off. Remember Topol Oriem? Hauled off and thrown into the herris for an accident that began with a cream pie leaving his hand and ending with said pie alighting on the head of a Red Cape. "And what will the charge be this time," I asked the ruffians, "assault with a breadly weapon?" Topol put a brave face on it, and cheered us up in the herris by whistling melodies learned in the Glounda.

Ah, the Sub Clock-Keeper to the Banquet signals that my time is drawing to an end. It is either that or he has swallowed a whole biffid fish and is thrashing around in some discomfort. So, let us raise our cups in a toast:

"May the money ever flow, may the coffers ever fill, may the winds be kind, and the taxman behind, and the Ubrissa triumphant again." Gauss bless you all, goodnight.