***Blood Faith XIII***

To Thielvar of the High Council of Thirteen,

Most Enlightened Brother,

Illustrious Primate of the Black See in Byzántion,

Sublime Prince of the Secret Chambers,

Guardian of the Holy Remnant,

My esteemèd master, I write with great pleasure to inform you that I was able to perform the lithotomy, as instructed. I sought Pereles, as instructed, in the gang-ridden streets of the new city of York. But I quickly determined that he had departed thence at least one week prior. Among the possessions he abandoned in the fledgling nation across the sea, I found a brazen head, a key to the Rohonc Codex, a curious mechanism of ancient construction, and several Greek and Persian histories. I still recall the letter patent prioritizing the destruction of all keys to the Rohonc Codex. Since I am unaware of that bull ever being rescinded, I promptly committed it to the flames.

I consulted the brazen head, which proved to be quite invective, as to Pereles’ whereabouts. It did not know, but I managed to convince it that should it help me locate him that I would be instrumental in his destruction. It subsequently informed me how to use the strange mechanism. It was a ball of curious workmanship, with moving parts which revealed information to the properly initiated. The mechanism, which the brazen head called a Director, is able to lead the bearer to any part of the globe that he wishes. Furthermore, one may fix the Director on any individual and it will guide you unerringly to your quarry.

I do not know what mark Pereles intended to use the Director on, but the brazen head tells me that so great was its hatred of Pereles that it refused to divulge the secret of the Director to him. Perchance this is why he abandoned it in this country of misfits and malcontents. But I, thus endowed with its secret manipulation, quickly set it to lead me to its previous owner.

My pursuit of Pereles brought me back across the Sea of Atlas. By the Blackness of Belial I miss the days when I plied the open water on the ship of the deadly l’Ollonais! Pereles boarded a xebec, called the *Fada Verde*, in Casco Antiguo, near Tarshish. I caught up with him just as his xebec entered the Archipelago. The xebec was approaching Αίγιλα when I hailed them. I boarded their ship under the pretence of bartering with them. The crew put up a struggle but their frail frames were no match for the tireless thews of one of the Blood.

My altercation with Pereles was more protracted. Not since I had to track down that apostate Circumcellion, Gildo, has a dissident fought back with such tenacity. He had in his possession a Heretic’s Fork, which he used quite successfully as a weapon, managing more than once to pierce my skin with its several points. It would’ve been more fitting, though, had I been the possessor of such an instrument. But eventually he, like Apollonius of Tyana, the Count of St. Germain, Hieronymus Bosch, and many others, succumbed to my iron rod. Pereles was possessed of great virility and when I nailed him with my rod to the deck of the xebec, he still lived.

Once I had Pereles subdued, I inspected his belongings and then dedicated the ship to his *auto-da-fé*. The purifying flames scuttled the ship and destroyed his damnable heresies with him. Unfortunately at some point during my pitched battle with Pereles I was divested of the magnificent compass. I can only assume that it now cankers and rusts at the bottom of the Archipelago.

Having looked over Pereles’ possessions on the xebec, I fear I was not thorough enough with his quarters in the new city of York. I must urge the Council to contact one of our faithful brethren across the Atlantic and have them destroy the whole building. Such heretical ideas are infectious and breed fanatics. It is best to be even more fanatical about stamping them out.

—Gaius Messōrius Vēnātor