

An Accounting of The History of Hoyle and Later Wars as it Pertains to the Duchy of Elysia both in the Past and Present

by Lady Willissa Grace Entemoor, as scribed on the 13 day of March in the Year 623

Foreword

The history that follows is based on research performed in the Duchy of Elysia between the years of 595 through 623. It was first prepared as a report of recent events, requested by the Duke of Elysia in April of 623, from all Elysian Nobles. To provide context for this report information has been pulled from those who participated in these events or information found through research and ancient writings.

In the interest of clarity, I have divided the account between what people likely understood to be happening (Part 1) and what was actually happening (Part 2). The knowledge that follows is critical to the kindred peoples and is intended to inform our rulers about a significant and ongoing threat.

Part 1: The Rise and Fall of the Hoylean People

The Hoyleans are the ancestors of the Elysian Gypsies and had a great but briefly flowering civilization in the region of Elysia over 1200 years ago. Their Capitol city, Hoyle was located within what is now the Barony of Woodhaven. They were highly advanced in what they called the Ethereal Arts, and which individually were known as the Essential, Elemental and Ephemeral schools of magic. Although our present-day Earth and Celestial schools are close approximations to the Hoylean Essential and Elemental schools we have no direct counterpart to the Hoylean Ephemeral magics. They are derived from Time.

It must be noted however, that the versions of these magics in use by the Hoyleans were infinitely purer. Modern Celestial and Earth magics are mingled together and each include elements of Time. This is evidenced by the fact that formal rituals in either discipline use components that trace back to all three Hoylean schools of magic. There is a reason for this, but that will come later.

The city of Hoyle was adorned by three massive towers, each dedicated to one of these three Ethereal magics.

The Elemental Tower was made of obsidian, black as the deepest night, hard and smooth as a polished diamond. It was shaped like a tall pyramid and covered with silver runes. A large beacon sat at its pinnacle pulsing with a power visible to anyone gifted in the Elemental arts. It was said the magic of this beacon was so piercing, that it could be perceived as far as the top of the Iron Fist Mountains.

The Essential Tower was made of wood, strong and supple, rising like a mighty oak tree over the roofs of the city. Its core was adorned with large, branching ramps that spread upward to the sky while its roots ran deep, hidden within the very sinews of the earth. It was said the harmonics of its power caused vibrations in the ground that could be felt by Essential Adepts as far as the Eastern seas.

But of these three, the Ephemeral Tower was considered the true wonder of Hoyle, for it was made of purest crystal glass. Rising up in intricate curves and spires, its mirrored facets reflected back the glory of Hoyle in a patchwork of changing scenes that rippled back and forth across time itself. This public display of temporal prophetics was at once both captivating and terrible, for all Hoyleans were gifted with The Sight, and few could walk by unmoved.

In its glory years, Mages from every land flocked to Hoyle. They came to see the wonders of the Towers, but they stayed to learn. And for a time, Hoyle flourished as these powerful Mages working together, shared their knowledge and skills to create new disciplines, artifacts, rituals, effects, and essences. Wealth flowed into and out of the city, commerce was thriving, and many called it a Golden Age of hope and prosperity. But if this were true, it did not last for long.

In time, the Arch Mages of the Ethereal Towers grew jealous of their secrets. Records we have now show they felt increasingly compelled to purify their circles. They became loath to co-mingle their magics between the different Ethereal schools. Worse, they grew suspicious of the Ephemeral arts and those that practiced them. There were whispers of unnatural acts, the creation of temporal liches, practice of necromancy, misuse of entropic fields and of terrifying attempts to manipulate time. And then, resurrections began failing across the city. In their fear and despair, people blamed the Ephemeral adepts.

These views were quickly taken up by the Hoylean people and their rulers. Laws were passed, forbidding the casting, use or possession of any item that mingled Essential and Elemental magics together. Cross schooled adepts were marked and

shunned. Ephemeral adepts were arrested and beaten at first, but it was not long before those that were taken simply disappeared. There were whispers of torture and obliterations. Attempts made to destroy the Ephemeral Tower could be clearly traced to the Elemental Adepts yet, no one stood up to decry them. Hate grew and laws grew harsher, until there was little trust and no mercy left in the city.

Over this time, we know that the Ephemeral Adepts, concerned for their safety, grew desperate. It is believed that the Ephemeral Tower repelled the early attacks because it was never fully anchored into the Earthen plane. But as these attacks grew in frequency and power the very foundations of the Tower began to tremble. Trapped in their Tower with no way to escape, the Adepts gathered and cast a mighty ritual, in what history can only guess was an attempt to move the Ephemeral Tower to a safer place. That ritual appeared to suffer a backlash, and the resulting implosion was so massive that broken glass could be found in every part of the city of Hoyle and for leagues beyond, for many years. History itself records that the Ephemeral Tower and most of its Adepts were scattered or destroyed in that backlash and that all knowledge of the practice of the Ephemeral arts died out with them.

It was not long after this that war broke out. No one is entirely sure what started it, but we do know that Dwarves from the north first attacked the city, claiming restitution for the destruction of the Horningwood forest and injuries to their King. If you recall, the Horningwood forest is the very forest we know today as the Stonewood. History has long said that it was created from a backlash of a ritual King Ringold Oakenstone conducted, but we now know the attempt to move the Ephemeral Tower created the forest and injured many of the dwarves including the King. These Dwarves were like a match to a powder keg, and whatever fighting they started appears to have escalated well beyond their grievances. Before long, the Hoyleans turned on each other and all the hate and misery pent up from years of repression and fear spewed out.

History records that the Elemental Tower was blown up in a spectacular fireball seen arcing through the heavens. When it finally fell, it is rumored to have formed the crater that we now know as Lake Scarlet in Meddlar. One can only guess what wonders lie at the bottom of that Lake had we means to explore.

The Essential Tower was burned down to the ground, choking the sky and city with a fine white ash that coated every surface. Although the tower and its contents were lost, it's rumored there were vast cellars throughout its underground roots that remain to this day, and that part of them form the network of caves inhabited by the Ellentari, Dark Dwarves and other races that dwell beneath the surface.

The city of Hoyle was reduced to rubble. The remnants of the Hoylean people scattered or were left under siege or fighting among themselves.

Until our time in Elysia back in 592, there was not much more known about Hoyle. Even the details I have provided above were supplemented with knowledge from our research in our time. We knew they loved music, dance, and games, incorporating them into their magics as well as their lives. People would occasionally find some of their colorful coins, but none dated after the year of 558. And because they were a game loving people, and very meticulous about rules, you will still hear people insist that a game be played, "according to Hoyle" when they mean that the rules should be played as written.

Part 2: The True Power of Hoyle

I will now retell parts of the story above with what I learned between the year 602 and the present.

The ancient city of Hoyle has long been known to be the ancestral home of the Gypsy people before its destruction turned them into the travelers we know today. This city rose to greatness during what might be called a very brief and Golden Age for the Ethereal Arts. And, as we discussed above, at the height of their knowledge, the Hoylean adepts constructed three Towers, one for each of the Ethereal Arts.

What we now understand is that unknown to these Hoyleans, the efforts to build these Towers were aided by an ancient evil that we call under various names, the Morumbrians, Dark Wraiths, or Shadow creatures, whose purpose is to control and feed upon the life essence and magics of sentient beings. We believe these evil beings creep into our plane when conditions favor the passage, and that they can wait, dormant for long periods, until conditions are right to rise, infiltrate and conquer. They feed on the purest forms of Essential (Earth) and Elemental (Celestial) forces, but Ephemeral (Time) forces are deadly to them.

These evil beings start by tainting individuals to bend them to their will. A single Great Wraith can control hundreds of individuals, sometimes lightly, spread among them all, or can suddenly manifest the fullness of their power in one. They can

also move about in pure shadow form in search of a tainted individual to enter. Indeed, if you are ever in a room and suddenly see small rat-sized shadows flow up a wall and scurry across the ceiling - run!

Once in control of a group of individuals a Wraith will work to secure access to a food source. They target Circles of Power, powerful artifacts and other relics of strong Ethereal magic as well as the very spirits of those they taint. When necessary, they can raise up an army to make war on those that oppose them and are always working to locate and destroy sources of Ephemeral magic.

Note this carefully! These Dark Wraiths work best in darkness and secrecy. They are parasites not predators and are most effective when others are unaware of them. As such, they prefer to work through tainted individuals, but if cornered, will fight openly. But this is to be avoided. These Dark Wraiths can move in and out of a tainted individual at will and are resistant to our weapons and magic but enormously powerful and deadly unmasked. You can kill the vessel and never touch the Wraith. ***This makes them difficult to fight and almost impossible to destroy.***

To this end we believe that they tainted many Hoylean Adepts to encourage the building of the great Ethereal Towers and to initiate the strict separation of the magics. We believe this was done because the Morumbrians cannot use these magics as effectively when they are less pure and because those of the Ephemeral school are deadly to them. You should know that many of the wise have worked ceaselessly through the intervening years to keep our magics more blended in hope that this would turn these creatures away. Unfortunately, it is likely that our enemy has found ways to tolerate this mixing of our modern Celestial and Earth magics or has found a way to purify them and remove any traces of Time before consuming them.

As to the tainting of the Hoylean Adepts, we know that the Elemental Adepts were beguiled by the promise of great power. They endured the evil of being tainted and served as active agents in return for arcane knowledge and abilities. ***These mages formed the basis of the Citadel Cabal*** which we battled years ago in Elysia. More recently ***this group is linked to problems we experienced this January in Adron and are likely to be behind the uprising of the Blood Fist Orcs in Stonewood.***

The Hoylean Essential Adepts, already conditioned to shun Chaos magics, resisted the initial offers of power, and were forced to submit, a condition that would be harder to hide. We think some were forcibly transformed to Greater Undead, given tabards with the mark of the Ephemeral Tower, and sent out to terrorize the city. What is known without doubt is that all the Adepts that escaped this tainting hid in the Ephemeral Tower where they could not be reached by the Morumbrians and there they worked on a plan.

Together they conspired to hide the Ephemeral tower and to do this, they cast a magic so powerful it pulled the Tower between planes and outside normal space and time. They poured glass, hidden in a temporal anomaly down upon the city and the surrounding lands to create the illusion the Tower was destroyed. The powerful magics they used caused anomalies so concerning across what is now the Duchy of Elysia that they were likely a factor in the raising of the Crystal barrier. The best-known of these anomalies in the present day are the Stonewood Forest and the Hoylean Library.

The attack of the Dwarves, after the tower was hidden, was a ruse, an excuse to rise and bring down the Essential and Elemental Towers already lost to the Morumbrians, without letting them know the attackers were on to them. ***This I know personally because I was sent back to fight in those battles with a group of Melorians.*** We were the ones who warned the Dwarves ahead of these events, and later, all the untainted Adepts gathered in the Ephemeral Tower, of the evil they were facing and how much worse it would be if the Wraiths fought us directly. Remember, they prefer to be in the shadows, so we wanted any battle to appear like a local skirmish that escalated into civil war.

After the Tower was hidden, we fought a terrible battle that destroyed the Elemental and Essential towers and many of their Adepts. Under the guise of a civil war, we hunted down and used temporal artifacts to utterly consume the Morumbrian Wraiths and release their minions from bondage. Coming from the future, we knew that despite a great victory, our work would not be complete and that the Wraiths would rise again. But we did our best to give the people of the past a reprieve before the enemy recovered.

It was after the great battles, and while I was back in time and within the Ephemeral Tower, now hidden, that the Ephemeral adepts sent children ahead to the future to escape the Dark Wraiths and to remove them from the evil and hate they had endured in Hoyle. In doing this they hoped to preserve the ability of their people to develop and use temporal artifacts since this ability is in the blood of their children. It was then that the Ephemeral Tower was filled with artifacts and information on how to destroy the Wraiths. It was during these years that the foundations were placed and the building that became known as the Hoylean Library was constructed and the magics binding it to the Ephemeral Tower were cast. It was also in this time that Tyrre came into conjunction with the Plane of the Shadow Bane.

I, Lady Willissa Grace Entemoor, along with the Melorians who traveled with me, summoned the beings called Lumishars and enlisted their help for the wars yet to come. Together we planted the seeds for the Melorian Order in the entrance to the library and set up the conditions for Theocletus Meloraeum, many years later, to discover and share the Melorian bonds.

And so it was that after 160 years had passed (about 1000 years ago in our time), that Theocletus Meloraeum and those of his time were once again fighting the Morumbrians and losing. They took refuge in a building on the outskirts of what is now Vindale and found the information that would turn the tide. It was there that he discovered the Hoylean Library, and where the technique for bonding with a Light Wraith and inducting others was perfected. With this information we know that through him he passed that skill to all who were willing, and they successfully fought back the last of the Morumbrian incursion that started in the Hoylean year 1220 (-560 in our calendar) and lasted over 170 years. They never knew that the library was only the threshold into the Ephemeral Tower. That knowledge was intended for the future, almost 1000 years later, when the next Morumbrian incursion on the plane of Tyrra was to take place.

And so it was that in our year 595, that the Elysian Melorian Guild once again found the entrance to the Hoylean Library. Little knowing it was but the threshold into the lost Ephemeral Tower, we took up residence. Gathering about us a group of inducted Melorians and kindred of the local Gypsy clans, we worked for close to a decade to gain access to various tower rooms, thinking they were just parts of the library. Using a combination of harmonic and temporal magics and learning the use of the Hoylean calendar we walked the threads of time to battle the enemy in both the past and the future.

In 602, while the battles against the Dark Wraiths were at their peak, I was summoned by members of my order to walk the threads with them and perform a task I was not to divulge to anyone until after I returned. That task is now done, and I have told it here. I went back in time to Hoyle and helped prepare in the past for the battles we were to fight in the future.

While I was gone, in the region of the town of Stonewood, the Melorian Order and Gypsies, armed once again with these weapons, rallied the Nobles and local citizenry, and fought to destroy the final vestiges of the Morumbrian encroachment. The Lumishars (Light Wraiths) with which they were bonded, slew the Morumbrian Wraiths in a final mighty battle. The Light Wraiths departed as the plane of the Shadow Bane and the Tyrran plane moved out of conjunction. The Melorian Order members were stripped of their bonds and disbanded. It was at this that the Hoylean Library disappeared from Vindale and was thought to have been destroyed in the great battle. To be safe the Crystal Barriers were strengthened to ensure that anything cast out from that destruction would not escape Elysia and go outside the Duchy. **It was also during this time that the United Nations of the Bloody Fist broke the magical treaty, signed in 593 and attacked. The Duchy turned its mighty armies, fresh from the Morumbrian victories upon them, and utterly crushed the uprising.**

I was walking the threads on my way back from Hoyle when the Crystal Barriers were strengthened and found myself unable to return until Duke Thermo briefly lowered the barriers this past year. Trapped in the past, the thread I was walking dropped me into the year 399 where in the intervening period, I had the honor of meeting and even serving briefly with Theocletus Meloraeum. But that my friends, is a story for another time.

Today, we hope that our victory back in the 600's was total, but we fear it was not complete. Signs of this evil are once again appearing. **The Tribes of the Blood Fist Orcs near Stonewood are turning upon their forest homes and subjugating the people living in the town of Stonewood.** They have disrupted the trade in Stonewood, killed many Stonewood Woodcutters and seem determined to do damage to the forest itself. **They are armed with many strong artifacts and weapons that stink of The Citadel Cabal, long a stronghold of tainted Umbriants and artifact merchants. The Citadel is also implicated in a series of incidents in Adron that many of our people witnessed while traveling there in January of this year.**

Temporal pockets have been located across Elysia and even in other Kingdoms, that appear to have captured bits of Library content. Though originally thought to be anomalies formed by its destruction our experiences with **one of these pockets in Rockshire this past March have raised a more intriguing possibility. We think these anomalies may be Star Chambers.** Star Chambers are the manifestation of living beings known as a Time Flyers. Time Flyers are Hoylean Ephemeral Adepts who became so proficient in temporal control they transcended into non-corporeal forms. A Time Flyer is the most advanced form they can take, and in this form they can serve as portals in time. All of our experiences walking the threads of time back in Elysia during the early part of this century were initiated from a Star Chamber. **Ozen Blackbird, who has walked among these creatures and even taken the form of a Time Elemental, says he felt their familiar presence and a sense of concern and urgency when he entered the temporal pocket discovered in Rockshire.** He was also convinced that the items preserved in the anomaly were there for a purpose.

I believe events in the towns to which we have traveled over the past 6 months are a warning that we did not fully eliminate the scourge of Morumbria back in the early 600's and will not do so until we achieve two things. **First, we must find a way to**

identify tainted individuals so we can locate the Wraith controlling them, and, to avoid future incursions, we must find and destroy the bridges by which they are entering our plane. To do this, we need to make temporal weapons effective against these creatures.

This is all that I can share on these topics in this writing. Although some is conjecture, I have had the privilege to see the glory of Hoyle with my very own eyes and experience many of these events. I promise a fuller accounting of these adventures when the time is right.

By My Hand,

Willissa Grace Entemoor

p.s. Here's something my Master wrote pertaining to Resurrection and the Relationship of Body to Spirit and the Ethereal Magics. Its relevance is great given the potential for threat to our ability to resurrect.

It is said, in many ancient myths, that life, as it exists in Tyrre, is knit from star dust and clay and that our physical presence is achieved when our bodies and spirits are anchored to this plane by the river of time. So, when my students ask me, what does it mean when I resurrect in a circle, I tell them the following:

When a person takes enough injury to make their spirit flee their body, they step into the Ethereal Void, where all the elements that held them together float freely. Great tides in the Void will work to pull their life essence away from this sphere and out to the greater unknown, but, if a person is strong and their spirit is willing, they can resist.

The Body is but a shadow cast by the Spirit as it walks between the Void and the Earth. Where the Spirit goes, the Body must follow. When the Spirit senses the beacon of an Earth Circle while in the Ethereal Void it will move in that direction. Once there, the magic of the Earth Circle will collect the essential particles of the Body, blend them with its Spirit essence (which provides the pattern to be formed) and anchor them together in Time.

The key components of life were used by both the Hoyleans and our modern-day Mages.

<i>Elemental</i>	<i>Celestial (the Star Dust component)</i>
<i>Essential</i>	<i>Earth (the Clay component)</i>
<i>Ephemeral</i>	<i>Time (the River of Time component)</i>

Our very reality depends on this blending of these components and magics. When the Morumbrians forced them to be separated and pure, the circles no longer worked to resurrect, and people died before their time.