

TULEME ISLAND PORT 1

A port capable of accepting ocean-going ships has been built on Tuleme Island. At the top of a steep switchback trail lies a barge port. In between, overlooking the harbour and out to sea is a small keep with catapults and ballistae, ready to defend the port from pirates or the navies of other nations. A breakwater is in the process of being built, but for now, the harbour is subject to the vagaries of nature. Kaldor is becoming used to the idea that it finally has access to the sea, and the possibilities are beginning to dawn on a lot of people. The merchants are already aware of these possibilities, of course, and so is the Crown, especially the Exchequer Royal, Earl Troda Dariune. However, he and others are also aware of some discontent among some people...

Advantages & Disadvantages

1. The establishment of the port would have both advantages and disadvantages to Kaldor. The disadvantages are almost all in the short term, and are offset by the longer term advantages.
2. In the beginning of the project, the cost to the Crown of establishing the port will almost certainly exhaust the Royal Treasury, and may lead to a rise in taxes, which will ultimately be borne by the peasants on Kaldor's manors. In the longer term, the port will pay for itself many times over in taxes (duties, excise, bonding fees, vessel registry, pilotage, etc.).
3. There would be increases instability in the economic climate in the short term. In the long term, economic activity would increase significantly, presenting many more opportunities than are currently available. Of course, this will also present some instability, but that is normal.

The surrounding nations may cause political strife for the Crown. For example, the Sindarin may not appreciate the increased traffic by humans so close to their borders. Chybisa may try to undercut the Kaldorans at Burzyn. The Melderyni crown may object to the economic impact on Thay and Laket, and the Council of Eleven may quietly move to see that the embargo on technology and ideas is extended to the new port. The Kaldoric crown would almost certainly be obliged to negotiate with the surrounding kingdoms prior to any port being established, especially to Elshavel and Cherafir (Burzyn could be reasonably ignored).

Consequences

Let's assume that Kaldor establishes the port, and manages to convince the Sindarin that their sovereignty will be protected, and to hell with anyone else. What might the consequences to eastern Kaldor be?

Thay & the Genin Trail

The Larun of Cherafir arrive in that city in mid-Peonu, an event eagerly anticipated by local merchants. Goods that are abundant locally, but rare overseas are exchanged for exotic fruits like oranges and lemons, spices like pepper and saffron, cloth like silk, and other commodities that are luxury items on

Hârn. Much of the cargo of the Larun is loaded onto local ships and transported to Thay, where it awaits the yearly caravan to Tashal, and the Summer Fair. In this way, goods from overseas diffuse throughout the island. This offloading of goods, storing them in Cherafir, loading them onto other ships, sailing to Thay, offloading and storing the goods in Thay, and then loading up a caravan for the long and dangerous journey to Tashal is a very expensive process.

It is likely that the new port at Tuleme would be quickly utilised by Kaldoran and foreign merchants alike to reduce the risk and expense of transporting the exotic goods from far-off lands to Hârn's premium marketplace – the Summer Fair in Tashal. The Larun would probably continue to call at Cherafir, since the city is a well-established port of call, but it may continue on to Tuleme to offload the majority of its cargo. Even if it doesn't, it makes a great deal more sense, economically, to load the local shipping and sail for Tuleme, rather than Thay.

The consequence is that Thay may wither and die economically speaking, and the Genin Trail along with it. Laket in northern Melderyn would be hard hit, but Thay would probably be devastated. As it would no longer be the southern terminus of the Genin Trail, it would suffer a significant down shift in economic activity, and would need to rely on local markets only. The city's population would almost certainly shrink.

Chybisa

The Ulmerien River is navigable as far as Burzyn, so Chybisa has a port capable of accepting the smaller ocean-going vessels. However, Chybisa is a very small market, and has little to offer a captain looking for new economic opportunities. What few goods Chybisa needs and has to trade can be brought from Thay by traders along the Genin Trail, especially the once yearly caravan to the Summer Fair in Tashal. Exotic goods, spices, silks etc. are brought in from Thay and are for sale when the caravan reaches Burzyn in late spring. The Genin Trail caravan is the largest of the four caravans to head for Tashal, and it's probably vital to Chybisa's small trading community.

With the establishment of a port at Tuleme, and the virtual death of the Genin Trail as a transport route, Chybisa would have to rely on local shipping down the Ulmerien River to Tuleme for its goods to reach market, and to get access to foreign goods in demand back home. It could rely on the overland route to Thay and to Oselbridge, but it makes much more economic sense to ship down river and around to Tuleme. The Chybisians would never be able to gather together a large enough caravan to counter any threat the Pagaelin may pose to them, thus making the journey overland much more dangerous. Safety only lies in numbers in Pagaelin territory.

However, the benefits to Chybisa of building Tuleme may actually outweigh the disadvantages of the Genin Trail closing down. With a solid port ahead, there is every reason to expect that many small coastal ships would be eager to call in

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to Burzyn on their way to or from Tuleme. It would be more convenient if there were a port closer to the coast than Burzyn, but sailing up the Ulmerien River may be relatively easy. The prevailing winds are from the south-west, and sailing back down the river is simply a matter of taking down the sails and letting the current carry the ship back to sea.

That said, there is every reason to believe that the future growth of Chybisa will be further downstream of Burzyn, so the ships don't have so far to sail. Once the marshes at the mouth of the river are drained, a river mouth settlement would soon grow into a respectable town, but that's probably a long way into the future, beyond 800 TR.

Oselbridge, Kobing & Qualdris

With the virtual death of the Genin Trail, Oselbridge's reason for existence ceases, and it would quickly become a ghost town. Kobing's innkeepers and trade guildsmen would be hit hard by the loss of the caravan trade, and there may well be a significant outcry from Baron Firth. However, there is no reason why the town couldn't survive relatively unscathed, since it is primarily a pastoral community anyway. There would be less impact on the innkeepers and tradesmen of Qualdris, as it is the crossroads of the entire southern region of Kaldor. There are probably many smaller caravans (between one and five wagons) going about the region anyway, and these would continue, and maybe even increase in number as the port becomes more established.

Tashal & the Summer Fair

The greatest effect within Kaldor would be on the city of Tashal. The increased trade brought about by the establishment of the port on Tuleme Island would see a short term increase in the size of the Summer Fair in Tashal – probably leading to a spurt of civic building within the city. However, once the port is established, the Summer Fair will move, most likely downstream to Jedes. There are probably several reasons why this would be so, and some of them are listed in my Salt Route article. But the biggest reason is – as usual – economic. It's cheaper to move goods by boat than by land caravan.

The Salt Route would divert to Jedes as the nearest point where the goods could be loaded onto barges for the trip upriver. Goods from overseas would flow through Tuleme and also go upriver to Tashal, be traded, then flow back down river to Tuleme for shipment overseas. Eventually, merchants from the Salt Route caravan would start buying the overseas goods at Tuleme Island itself, and shipping their goods downriver in exchange. This considerably shortens the distance they have to travel. Of course, they might be required to travel to Tashal to seek other goods, such as furs from Orbaal. Eventually, canny traders from Olokand would bypass Tashal with the goods bought from the Orbaalese, and sell directly to merchants from the Salt Route caravan, or even to foreign merchants. Goods from the Silver Way could be loaded onto

barges anywhere suitable along the Nephen and floated all the way down to Jedes, too.

The end result would be a new fair being started in Jedes, since it makes no sense to transport goods upriver unless you have to. The Summer Fair would collapse, and cease, and Tashal would become of significantly less importance to Kaldor.

Jedes & the Salt Route

Merchants are always looking for a bargain, and if they can sell their goods for an acceptable price at the beginning of a market, they will. This gives them the opportunity to buy other goods, and sell them, thus providing a greater number of opportunities to make money. So the merchants from western Hârn would gather at Jedes and trading would begin. Some merchants from western Hârn would probably finish all the trading they need to do in Jedes and no bother to go on to Tashal. Instead they may decide to load up their wares onto a ship and head off to Aleath or Golotha without waiting for any of his colleagues. This would allow him to reach market with his goods long before his competitors, and thus make a large profit. Others would see the results and do the same thing next year. And so the effect would snowball.

Eventually, all goods would flow downriver to Jedes, and all trading would be done there. Why travel to Tashal when all you need is right there in Jedes? And why would the new fair be in Jedes and not on Tuleme Island itself? Well, to be honest, the fair could be held on Tuleme, but one reason why I believe Jedes is better is the size of the island. Tuleme Island is quite small, and with a port at each end of the island, a trail up the steep slope, bonding houses, piers, taverns, inns and brothels, there is very little room for a fair of any size. It's possible, but less likely in my opinion.

Trade Within Kaldor

The type of transport that carry cargo within Kaldor could shift, as well. With the establishment of Tuleme, there would be a growth in the number of barges (talbars) using Kaldor's rivers. There would be some competition to carry cargo, so more of the kingdom's cargo would probably be shifted via talbar as it became cheaper. Kaldor is lucky in that it has many navigable rivers within its boundaries that facilitate the flow of trade. The use of carts, wagons and pack animals would not cease, of course, because you need to move goods from the riverbank to the hinterland. There are still large tracts of the kingdom that only have minor streams, useless to barges. Still, talbars would be a common sight on the rivers.

Other Effects

One major cause for concern is that the rate of return on investment may be slower than expected. There may be many factors at work to cause this; slow economic activity overseas, alternative ports and markets dropping their fees, difficulty getting the word out to the captains of merchant vessels outside Hârn, even moves by the Council of Eleven. If the return on investment is too slow, the Crown may not be able to main-

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tain the port...or anything else in Kaldor, which could lead to a period of political instability. Which might drive away trade, which reduces the rate of return further...and so the ripple effect grows.

Another effect is cultural. The establishment of a port may open Kaldor to the influence of outsiders. Although the physical layout of Tuleme Island itself makes the establishment of an Alienage such as exists in Cherafir very easy to achieve, there may still be a leakage of ideas and attitudes from overseas. Kaldor may well become more cosmopolitan than at present. This may well cause the conservative elements within Kaldor to call for the port to be closed so that "cultural contamination" can be halted. These attitudes are most likely to come from Vemion, as the area has a significant Jarin population, and have managed to avoid much of the intermingling that occurred during and after the Atani Wars, and escaped the attention of Lothrim and his armies.