

Ruma Helrevy – Map Notes

Ruma Helrevy is a geographic region and a kingdom on Continent Peredur, which is commonly referred to as “The Dale”. The Kingdom of Ruma Helrevy once also ruled over the regions Trustan and Arthec, but that glorious period did not last long. Ever since, the people of the Dale regret the loss of the lands and the glory that came with their conquest. But in fact, it was clear from the beginning that the expanded realm was doomed before the conquest even ended. The northern conquest that began under King Gwalather Trewartha, the one who united the clans, was too successful and the conquerors not well enough organized. Therefore, they may have won the battles against the local clans and seized their towns and castles, but they never actually managed to gain control over the lands they just had conquered. In the end the cost of the conquest outweighed its benefits by far. Many of the noble families of the Dale spent their whole wealth trying to hold their newly gained northern lands, and thus lost everything.

The melancholy about the “Glorious Era” is one of the most characteristic traits of the people of the Dale, besides their tendency to drink. Hence it is not surprising that most of their delicacies are alcoholic beverages: Henlys’ Ale, Talan Kir, Whisky from Treavon and Henlys and white wine from Treavon and Torstan. Besides that, they also produce large quantities of red wine, which can’t be considered a delicacy. In general, people don’t miss an opportunity to drink. If one’s neighbor comes by in the late morning (for what reason so ever), it is considered the right moment to open a bottle of wine or whisky. The same goes for travelers: If you travel the Dale, you’ll often find yourself seemingly randomly invited for a drink, when passing by houses or farmsteads on the landside – well, unless you look too exotic.

Although the people of the Dale are in general very hospitable, they are wary about foreigners. They prefer to stick to their own kind, which makes it very hard for foreigners to become integrated. There is only a handful of foreigners that are widely known and accepted in the Dale: Grimhild Haraldsdottir (the Queen, wife of King Gawen Trembath); Wyah Droa (the court magician of King Gawen Trembath); Erik Strongarm (the Smith of Henlys); Bjarni Asgeirson (the innkeeper of the “Golden Hop” in Treavon) and only a few more. For (more exotic) foreigners it is therefore, especially when traveling in groups, essential to avoid making troubles at any cost. A group of missionaries from a foreign continent, which tried to convince people to forswear the old gods in favor of their (obviously not so almighty) lord of the light, had to find this out the hard way. They arrived in Torstan and immediately began to convert people to their religion. They had nice promises and so their fate spread quite fast amongst the poor and the hopeless. The king gave them his head, because he thought them to be nothing but a bunch of fools. However, after a while they became defiant and started to instigate an uprising against the religious authority of the Druids, which conserved the knowledge about the old gods. But their followers did not only start to question the religious authority of the Druids but started a witch hunt, which led to the death of Comuyre the ill-omened. He was a druid who had left his vale up in the mountains for the first time and saw a white crow on his way to Torstan, where he, instead of being honored by the king for preventing the courts bard, Myghal Trecollas, from getting eaten by a bear, was lynched by an angry mob. The king’s response came swiftly and brutally: All the one hundred and eight missionaries that were then situated in Ruma Helrevy were beheaded on the market place of Torstan and their heads were sent back to where they came from. Their followers who did not participate in the killing of the druid were given the chance to publicly unsay their conversion and pay a restitution. Those who did not take this chance, and only few did, were sold into slavery. After only two months after his arrival the lord of the light was erased from the religious landscape of the Dale. The only thing that remained was Myghal Trecollas empty hovel in the mountain (his body was burned per the old customs) and the word lighted became a second meaning. To be lighted means being crazy.

The only group of foreigners that are always welcome (no matter if they make trouble or not – at least to some extent) are merchants. While Ruma Helrevy does not depend on trade, exotic goods are a nice way to show your status. In return the Dale exports fish, iron from the mines in the mountains (which has almost the same great quality as the one from Trustan), wood and of course alcoholic beverages. Nonalcoholic agricultural commodities on the other hand have hardly ever been exported. These are only grown for the own consumption and the domestic market. This might surprise, because the Dale is rather rural, but the agricultural economy is not as developed as it would be necessary to produce enough excess that could be exported to other markets. The agricultural economy is mostly based on vegetables and goats, sheep and cows. Farms that only rely on cattle are almost only to be found in the smaller valleys where vegetables can't be grown efficiently. Besides classic agriculture, lumbering is an important economy in the Dale. Mining is also an important trade, especially in the western part of the Dale, but the iron from the Dale is not as good and as famous as the one from the nearby Trustan region. In the coastal regions fishery is most likely the largest commercial sector, before agriculture (we don't know for sure, because no one collects the exact numbers).

As already mentioned, the people of Ruma Helrevy believe in the old gods, those who have been around for thousands of years. Those who have formed the mountains of Peredur, its cliffs and its shores. The secret knowledge of the gods is preserved by some dozen Druids, who wander the Dale in various guises. Some even say they can turn into animals. Druids are always busy collecting more and more knowledge about the Dale and the whole of Peredur. But they are willing to stop if there is a person in need of help.

Besides from the Druids, there is another important group of people that are essential for the culture of the Dale: Bards. There are about four times as many bards in the Dale as there are Druids. Many Bards or at least the good ones receive some training from a Druid, who they accompany for a certain period. Unlike the Druids, they do not focus on the knowledge about gods but rather on historic knowledge about the Dale. Hence they bear some responsibility for the melancholy about the "glorious era".