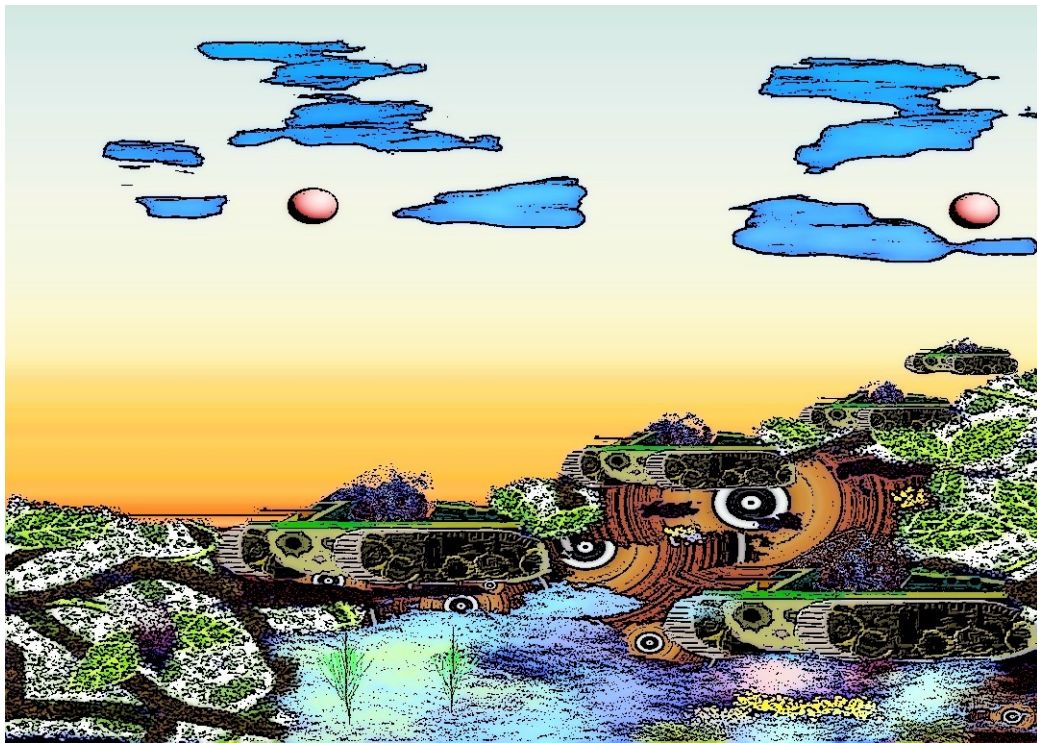


Bird man

Spirit Flight

““General Ce-Ra sat in the back of his land ship watching the inhospitable land roll away like an unwrapped carpet.



*Illustration 28: Madrawt land ships were really huge tanks with a bubble where a gun would have been; a bubble housing men in seats comparable to infantry assault vehicles. But it was the size of the land ship that made it a transport ship on tank tracks. One heavy caliber machine gun was mounted up front. Anything in the ship's path was squashed flat.*

“A few more hours and Vortigern will be dead,” Reeman Black Hair reminded him with a twisted grin.

“No, he will still live, but slowly dying under your hands Reeman. The empire will be leaderless and we will help ourselves to its limbs,” Ce-Ra who trusted Reeman so much he explained everything.

## Bird man

They knew Alexander Caesar Vortigern had made a bad mistake coming to Maonos to mollify him over the failure of the Peace Marriage. He should have stayed in orbit deep in imperial space and let others die for him as usual.

The order to advance had been given; Madrawt's were leaving their grouping areas, snaking their way across the planet's surface. His dismantled fighter jets taken down as utensil cargo but now reassembled and getting armed this moment.

Soon very soon his army would take the human imperialists by total surprise.

The Peace marriage was brilliant strategy; it had driven the wedge between Tzu Strath and Vortigern much wider.

"Reeman, go finish off the captured Bird man," Ce-Ra not wanting to share any more of his vision of conquest.

Saw himself wearing the human emperor's robes on Earth on Vortigern's throne. He would then return home and proclaim himself Emperor of the Madrawt's.

Who could oppose him with such forces and slaves?

Slaves to fight or they would be given alternatives?

Truly an emperor not like Vortigern who relied on bribes and lies to remain in power.

The word of the Madrawt Lord was law and those who faltered lined the Appian Ways on stakes and crosses.

Out of reach of land wild beasts but not the passing cruel public who would poke with long sticks left for that job.

Each breath would send sharp splinters into the condemned, long splinters.

One thing he concluded smiling, the Madrawt's knew how to dish out death and enjoy watching others suffer.

## Bird man



*Illustration 29: A Madrawt trooper carried a flak shield that warded off laser and conventional weapons. Behind the shield a taggart for disemboweling and a heavy caliber hand gun for close quarter melee.*

It was the Madrawt way and made them feared throughout the universes.

## Bird man

Fear won the battle before a single shot was fired.

Groveling for mercy and of you spared them death, they became slaves.

And the real threat to his dream was Mingo Drum.

Those people understood Madrawt thinking and that was the danger. They would never be fooled into becoming slaves; their types fought to the death.

“The only Madrawt you can trust is a dead one,” a Mingo quote, “how true,” Ce-Ra mused.

And below Reeman Black Hair stood beside a table displaying various surgical and electrical instruments, pans displaying freshly removed organs.

They came from somewhere and by following Reeman’s smile we see the Bird man on a table.

His head propped up so he could see all that was going on; even his eyelids on the sparrow like eyes had been removed as did some ancient Buddhists to ensure they did not sleep but meditate. *Reeman wanted him to watch the dissection in progress.*

“You could save yourself so much pain,” Reeman offered **a lie**.

A lie because the Bird man knew of Reeman’s reputation and knew he was doomed no matter what.

His absence would not be reported and when it was, so? He was just another casualty in the war against these fiends.

His Legion Hippogriff was entrenched amongst the Giant’s Road far from the City of Flaming Crystals. His legion had the honour of holding the border against the Madrawt’s.

All Reeman’s questions he knew nothing of. He was a trooper without the

## Bird man

confidence of his Lord Mingo Drum Vercingetorix so how could he have heard of a human woman? Nor did he know the war plans of Mingo.

How could he, he was just a warrior.

Reeman knew too the man knew nothing; no one could withstand not telling the truth while he played inside their bodies.

But he did like someone who refused to die like this Bird man, it prolonged his deadly game.

“Finish him off,” Ce-Ra commanded also knowing and he was hungry, fed up hanging about and the amusement of the situation was wearing off.

And Glen Zowanski paid good money for Bird men genes as he sold them to the cosmetic industry for those who sought flight: after that he skinned the subject as the skin made good lampshades, it acted like a prism, some said because the skin molecules had crystal deposits in them.

The screaming Reeman enjoyed and since Ce-Ra had left he wasn't hurrying, Madrawt's never rushed things they enjoyed doing.

\*

General Ce-Ra was both right and wrong about Tzu Strath. He was upset at the loss of his daughter. It was devastating, but somehow he believed she would live, she had his genes in her. He had four reasons to justify his faith; she wasn't with Ce-Ra, he had seen the shadow of a Bird man and knew Mingo Drum would investigate, and Nostradamus his hunchback spy was out there and where he was there was hope.

And Bird people rarely killed humans without a good reason.

With this knowledge he began to prepare to undo his emperor's wrong.

## Bird man

“You are not wroth it Vortigern,” he mused as he pressed the yellow alert button. His forces would be ready for treachery whether it came from his emperor or Madrawt’s.

And something General Ce-Ra had not figured, Tzu Strath was human with human feelings. Ce-Ra’s basic mistake with humans was that he had contempt for them which blurred his vision and made them weaklings all because that contempt extended from disgust for their leader, Emperor Caesar Alexander Vortigern.

“You are not worthy to be an emperor Alexander Vortigern, and since you are not then you do not get my respect and loyalty or of my men and women that follow me,” Tzu Strath and Tribune Henry standing rock still behind him smiled.

All hoped Tzu Strath would seize the imperial throne and Henry believed the popular populace would back Tzu too for he was a hero.

And the rest of the day Tzu Strath sent instructions to his friends, human and alien to be ready for war. Which kept the smile on his tribune’s face; he was ready.

See, all humans were not like his emperor!

\*

Diviciacus was not like his emperor so he thought. As he saw his emperor relaxing on his golden throne, engraved with suns, moons, comets and gargoyles representing many alien and human forms and beliefs.

His son Conchobhar the so called heir apparent amongst his courtiers had arrived. Now celebrations were in full swing with dancing girls attracting the attention of their male audience for they provoked deliberately.

## Bird man

Many girls tonight would gain their ambition, a pregnancy and a small income from the father. Diviciacus did not blame them, the economic situation was deteriorating.

Officials were corrupt.

The top was rotten.

And Diviciacus watched a black human woman from some distant planet dressed up like a chicken.



*Illustration 30: "Cluck cluck," went the chicken.*

Her ebony skin glistened sweat.

A minor official threw her a bag of dollars.

A small bag or the dancer wouldn't be able to attach it to her bikini bottom.

All smiled, so did Diviciacus.

## Bird man

But he lost the smile when he realised she was trying to become possessed by her minor god. The emperor had announced the only way forward spiritually was through the Purification Rituals of The Temple of Light, but watching the girl she seemed nearer to spirit flight than the emperor and his organised rituals.

Diviciacus therefore threw two gold solid heavy coins at her.

She accepted and the minor official was annoyed until he saw who threw them.

Graciously and wisely he retreated.

Time for Diviciacus to do spirit flight.

He led the woman away.

His god Dispater Creator needed something in return for giving spirit flight; the woman would be a nice present.

Equilibrium.

Diviciacus and the women went to his private ship.

Only his priest guard was present and some others. Priests loyal to the Temple of Light.

Here she drank hallucinating drugs made from plants while musicians beat skin drums and small Bacchic pipes.

Now we introduce Diviciacus's friend and assistant, Kernwy. Diviciacus was teaching him to replace him while he cloned for a short while.

And it did not occur to Diviciacus Kernwy might not want replaced, once in power he would not give it up.

“One must plan ahead, it keeps human society going forward,” Diviciacus believed and also believed because of his position no one was fool enough to cross him.

Alexander the emperor believed that too!

## Bird man

And because Kernwy was Diviciacus's son meant nothing as he had many sons scattered throughout space.

And all were not fully human or human.

So long as their mothers had been beautiful at the time of conception Diviciacus didn't mind.

Space was full of dimensions and coloured light that through spirit flight he could enter.

And Dispater Creator could be mated with his female and animal soul forms.

The imperial doctors had invented a serum, a simple acidic solution that allowed compatible genes strands to pair themselves off between species.

REMEMBER, NO self respecting female/male in the empire didn't get this shot in the bottom.

It was recommended for space travelers.

The shot appealed to hidden fantasies within folk, it made cat woman real, Bat man solid and was creating new species of intelligent beings on frontier galaxies.

And General Ce-Ra had insisted Boudicca get the shot.

Tzu Strath had insisted she get the antidote.....that pleased Boudicca and Ce-Ra was wrong again, humans knew how to be cunning.

Ce-Ra saw an offspring from Boudicca as someone humans could support and help him as their emperor.

Madrawt's didn't know how to think straight, they didn't believe anything was wrong with lying.

Anyway:

## Bird man

Diviciacus had been asking the ebony dancer who she was, receiving answers that she was her mother goddess Nerthus the egg giver, the giver of life, she who flew across space and time on her spirit chariot pulled by cats.

Now the shaman priest Diviciacus now told her she was the goddess herself and she must be the maiden sacrifice to become the goddess to help in the war against the Madrawt's.

He went on and on that she would soon be in paradise.

She was the envy of all.



## Bird man

“To be possessed by her goddess and then to become her goddess and live with her goddess in the blissful after world.

Diviciacus then smoked his twentieth weed.

Diviciacus then went into a trance himself.

His spirit would reach out for Nerthus, be possessed by her and travel space and time, molecules and physical barriers to the mind of General Ce-Ra.

Again Diviciacus lay with the dancer; sexual acts played a big part in preparing the victim for willing sacrifice.

It brought his fever of god possession to new heights.

Then Diviciacus rolled away in a frenzy, foaming, his eyes glazed.

Just as Kernwy strangled the dancer to near death.

It made the dancer really excited and so never noticed Kernwy had stabbed her midriff.

As she was weak and gasping for breath Kernwy easily stuffed her head in a bowl of water till she almost drowned.

This was the holy triple death Dispater demanded for what he would give in return. Knowledge through spirit flight.

Except Diviciacus always had to do one better.

A fourth holy way to die.

*If such a thing existed.*

## Bird man

So Kernwy watched the dying dancer, she was moaning with pleasure, wanting to be with her goddess Nerthus the holy fertility one.

“Fire fire,” the woman moaned with ecstasy.

“Yes cleansing fire,” Kernwy replied and stood back to allow priest warrior guards to manhandle her, not gently either, and swing her back and forth and then let go.

Why hot ashes flew about as she landed amongst charcoal in an open pit.

The dancer did not feel any pain; Diviciacus had fed her so many pain killers she was away with the fairies.

Eventually the woman sat up and watched her charred limbs fall off.

She tried standing up but her blackened legs gave way.

Diviciacus shut his eyes, when he awoke he and his closest would eat the flesh of the goddess Nerthus and be part of her.

And Kernwy knew there had to be another way to attain spirit flight rather than this barbaric practice?

But in the meantime since it wasn't him being prepared as dinner, he would eat his fill.

No matter what Diviciacus said that she had been a willing sacrifice, Kernwy knew she had been too drugged out of her mind to know what was real and unreal. *But that was what spirit flight was about, unreal things become real.*

“When Diviciacus clones I will become High Priest of The Temple of Light. Things will be different; there will be true spirit flight without eating someone foolish enough to get herself eaten,” so Kernwy plotted murder.

Bird man

Diviciacus was going against the teachings of the Temple of Light,” Kernwy.

The teachings taught against human/alien sacrifice.

It also went against the law of the empire, unless it was a sacrifice to the emperor?

Who was superstitious and had taken part in these murderous rites to see the future?

THEREFORE NO CHANGES.

Diviciacus was losing Kernwy who was his son.

Kernwy's god gene had awakened.”””

Kernwy’s secret diary.

Vern Lukas.