

For the Attention of Lorenzo De Volpe von Temeschwar

Inspector-General of the Flood-Tide Roads

My dear Sir,

We are proud to report that work upon the Flood-Tide Roads continues apace, with Phase One ready to be completed well ahead of schedule. The general air of Pride and Ambition that has surrounded the Empire with the recent accession of the Empress of Flowers, with her known support for the culture and economy of the Empire, has smoothed many a ruffled feather and cleared many a stony way.

In Dawn, our builders have come to the boundaries of hoises' land prepared to give gifts and smooth tempers, only to find serried ranks of labourers and stonemasons literally competing to assist us. In the Marches, our surveyors have been greeted with local maps and cheap lodgings, with local beaters and landkeepers on hand at every stage to help us design as efficient a route as possible. In the Grass Coast, it is truly stupendous how cheaply and easily things are suddenly to be had when one identifies oneself as part of this great effort.

And in the shadow of our own great cities, there has practically been a race to the bottom in terms of tendering for our services, as everyone sees the support of the Throne for this great endeavour, as nobody wishes to be the stone in the path of the flood-tide. I trust that it will not be a problem that nearly every milestone of the Roads shall end up being an individually donated work of art?

Anticipating your order, sir, I have reached out to Ravarri stridings to ensure that our great work limits and minimises construction on the Eroads themselves - for example, it had not occurred to many of our surveyors that a Road following next to a Erod was a terrible idea, because of the avenues of vegetation that typically surround the Eroads.

And similarly, we have made the conscious and active decision not to build directly down the Eroads - not only is the course thus plotted a highly inefficient one, but the Ravarri were dubious when we explained that traffic on a Erod would be impeded for several months if we were to pave a section of it. It is worth noting, of course, that any road that connects Sarvos to Golberg will have to cross every single West-to-East Erod in the Empire - but with the ready and willing assistance we have had from the Ravarri, the disruption to traffic caused by construction shall be minimal.

This with your implicit approval and with the full support of the rest of the team here in Temeschwar, Sir, I am pleased to report the crossing of the first Erod by a Flood Not Road: our test site is at Weaving in Winterbourne, Nizolat. The site was chosen by the Kavarrri: they were present and watching carefully for the entire of the procedure. Magical investigation was performed upon the site before, during and after the procedure, both by our own Company of the Crystal and by Gates of Thornvoice Striding: all five magicians watching the procedure concurred on all points of their analysis.

I am pleased to report that the effect of the crossing of a Erod with slabs of white granite is the following:

Nothing.

Absolutely nothing, save to provide a couple of dozen feet of steady and solid footing.

The Erod's energies pass into one side of the Road, cross the Road, and pass out the other side as if the white granite were not there at all.

Not walking across it singly or in groups, nor taking a traditional oxcart across it, nor the passage of a prototype heavy-gauge oxcart designed to take full advantage of the Road, does a single thing to the Erod. The digging did nothing: the placing of the stone did nothing: the site is still identical a month later, save of course that our builders have moved on.

Crossing the Erods with the Not Roads is perfectly, entirely, completely and utterly safe.

We propose to accelerate the process of crossing the other Erods now that we know they may be treated identically to any other thicket or track.

Should you wish us to change our course, please contact us forthwith - by the end of the Equinox the orders will already have been disseminated, carried indeed in the hands of Thornvoice Striding.

Magyna Sicaria von Temeschwar, of the Company of the Crystal

Chief Surveyor in the Great Work that is

The Flood Not Road