

The Sacking of the Monastery of the Purification

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The Sacking of the Monastery of the Purification

by [The_Wyrm_Ouroboros](#)

Summary

This is a past tale of the man who would become known as Maddox Hardigan.

See [the collection information](#) for notes about werewolves, and [the Appendix on the Dynamic in 'World, Broken'](#) for information about the A/B/O elements in this world.

Notes

From modern parlance of the A/B/O dynamic to that used in the story:

The Dynamic: *Génos*, the breed

Alpha: *polemistís*, plural *polemistéés*, warrior

Beta: *voithós*, helpers

Omega: *kyrión*, lord/lady.

The Moontouched are, of course, shapeshifters; not all are A/B/O, just as most humans are not.

The Approach

29 July 1583, Friday. Late afternoon.

They came to him in the taproom of a noisome inn near Rheims.

Immediately upon their entering, he knew they were there for him; three Moontouched of the Eastern Orthodoxy did not travel into Catholic France -- into its former capital, of all things, and a true stronghold of the Faith -- without great need. Of course, great need was what they *all* claimed when they came to him. It wasn't usually true, but he pretended it was until they showed him the money they were willing to pay for their 'great need'. The ones who only had great *want* usually paid more.

He, in turn, was not difficult to find; a single Moor (or so they assumed from the turban on his head and the ebon tint of his skin) alone in Christendom is a murder victim waiting to happen, and in fact he'd been dragged into an alley and murdered earlier that week. As usual, death didn't take; the money in the purses of the well-paid cutthroats were funding his drink even now, trying to decide whether or not he wanted to pay a visit to the thugs' benefactor.

"You are Mohammed of Kush?"

He looked up at the older, brawny Moontouched leaning on his table in a manner which he could, if he chose, decide was threatening, then at his cross-armed companion -- another posture, strength attempting to impose itself upon weakness. *When will they learn?* he wondered to himself, then pulled in a deep sniff and considered the scents.

"Let the *kyrión* sit down," he said in French, his voice mild, his accent strange. "I speak with employers, not bodyguards."

The one pressing his fists into the table bared his teeth at him and growled, then yelped as 'Mohammed of Kush' gave his cheek a trio of stripes from his fingernails. The lightning backhand was slow in returning to his cup, the black man keeping his gaze upon the cross-armed one. "I *said*, I speak with employers. Let him sit."

For a moment it looked like it would turn to further violence, which would have been a pity; he would have had to kill the two *polemistés*, Moontouched or not, because their stupid pride would have muddled their brains and made them try to kill him. Maybe they would have even succeeded ... but death at their hands would have taken as well as from the cutthroats'.

"Lightly, Kristos," the third person's soft, high tenor said, speaking Greek. "We are here for his help, not his harming."

The cross-armed guardian moved aside at a touch, and the third one -- Moontouched and of the *Génos*, that segment of the population that had the few aggressive warriors, the even fewer breeding creators, the more populous secondary helpers, who were almost normal humans (or normal Moontouched, he supposed) -- moved to sit on the bench across from

him, pulling his hood back from his face. He was, little to Mohammed's surprise, beautiful; a stirring at his groin, the exuding of his own *polemistis* pheromones, recognized the draw of the youth. Greek, yes, as his bodyguards were; the subtle indicators of the Moontouched in his face were celebrations, not threats.

"Please forgive Kristos," the youth said in French good enough to make him acceptable as an ambassador. "He was bonded to my dam, and has sworn to deal with her killer. I am Alexios Vatzatzes."

Mohammad took a slow sip of the sour beer, watching the youth settle down, cataloging items of interest. His clothing was durable and well-made, showing the wear of the sea and road from the Balkan Peninsula, but the thread keeping it together was doubled, the stitches closer together, an indicator of a better category of tailors than ordinary folk used. A few small trinkets he wore -- lead, undoubtedly -- were indicators of pilgrimages, more than a peasant might manage. "You are not from around here," he lightly teased the youth, who smiled.

"No, indeed I am not. However, I have traveled many miles to find the Nubian guard of the High Priest of Israel, and here you sit."

"Hmm. I thought that tale long dead."

"The immortal *polemistis*? As dead as you are."

The Ask

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Mohammed settled back to regard the beautiful young man -- Alexios, he ought to remember that -- as the slattern brought a pitcher of the sour beer sold by the tavern keeper, plus three additional cups. "So. You came to find me for a reason."

As he expected, the yet-unnamed *polemistís* sniffed at the pitcher, splashed a swallow into a cup, and dumped it into his mouth. His expression went grim with distaste, but he paused as Mohammed said, "Don't spit. The taverner will take offense; he's proud of it, thinks it better than wine. Which I wish he would sell."

The third nodded, and forced the liquid down. "It is vile."

"It is," conceded Mohammed, "but I do not come here for the beer; I come here to see who is trying to find me. Your name, *polemistís*?"

"Leonidas. Georgiou."

"A pleasure to make your acquaintance." They exchanged warrior's nods, and Mohammed watched as the Moontouched *polemistís* poured a splash of beer into each of the three new cups, then handed them around. "So. You found me. Why were you looking?"

"You are a mercenary, is that correct?" The voice of the *kyrión* was not intentionally seductive, any more than a shapely woman's body was; it simply *was*, especially when combined with the calming scent of him.

Mohammad was fairly certain the 'calm' was not meant for himself. "If the price is right, I will do violence at the word of another man."

Alexios nodded slowly. "We have need of such as you."

"There are plenty of *misthofóros* in your home country," Mohammed observed, using the Greek term for a soldier-of-fortune.

"You have a very strange accent," growled Kristos next to him. "Your words are all wrong."

"I learned them many different times, from many different people," agreed Mohammed. "Sometimes I mix them up. What of the Greek *misthofóros*?"

Alexios gave Kristos a steady glance, then returned his focus to the ebon man. "There are none willing to help, in Thessaly or Macedonia. The Ottomans are strict, and our goal is ... a difficult topic to breach with anyone worth hiring."

"Mmm. That suggests that you sought others between there and here." Mohammed drank another half-mouthful.

"Yes and no," Alexios admitted. "Outside Lacedaemonia, an ancient master of weapons and the making thereof told us of you while still working his forge -- he said that as a youth, he knew you, that you had taught him all he knew of the making and use of weapons. You had gone west, he said, to fight in wars in Italia, and never returned, leaving the forge to him." He shrugged, taking a sip of the beer, grimacing but swallowing. "This *is* vile."

Mohammed shrugged. "So you heard a rumor and went chasing it. More miracles, you seem to have found it. Why do you need *me*??"

Alexios looked at Kristos for a moment, then sideways at Leonidas, who shrugged and conceded, "You will have to tell him at some point."

Alexios nodded, returning his focus to Mohammed. "We need to kill the archimandrite of the Ypapantis Monastery, and all his followers."

His eyebrows lifted. "The Monastery of the Purification?"

"You know it?"

"I know Greek, but I think I know the place. Meteora?"

"One of the monasteries there, yes. Most of them are human."

"Ypapantis is not?"

Again, Alexios looked at the others. "No. Staffed by the Moontouched since its founding."

Mohammed took another sip, swallowing and rubbing his lip clear of the remnant. "That sounds ... counterproductive for you."

"On the contrary. The Treaty of London --"

"I thought that was broken."

"The human politics side, yes."

Mohammed frowned. "There was --"

"Another treaty."

"Between the Moontouched and the humans."

Alexios smiled slowly. "There was."

The black man settled back, fingers slowly turning his mug. "Wolsey, of course, on the human's side. Who on yours?"

"His mother," Kristos grated. He'd taken one *pro forma* sip of the beer and occasionally raised it to his lips but, Mohammed guessed, never tasted it again.

"Unpopular?"

"She was murdered for it."

Mohammed looked back at Alexios. "How long ago?"

"Six years, five months, and nine days," Kristos replied before Alexios could speak.

It didn't take a genius to figure *that* one out. Mohammed guessed, "Sent by the archimandrite."

Kristos nodded.

"He leads a faction," explained Alexios, "who decry the treaty, despite how it has benefited all. They demand -- and employ -- ancient prerogatives of culling. They had a number of allies starting out, perhaps a third of our kindred, but the successes and benefits have swayed many of his former followers. Others ..."

"Have been killed?"

Alexios nodded. "During their attacks or by assaults on their strongholds. They fight to the death."

"Is this their remnant?"

"We believe so," Leonidas replied. "Some are suspected of hiding in Wallachia, Transylvania, the other Carpathian states, but they're keeping relatively quiet. The archimandrite is their leader."

"Killing him will make a martyr of him."

Kristos snarled.

"Just pointing it out, big guy," Mohammed said, lifting his hands. "You might consider putting him to the question before executing him." Once the perpetually-angry man had settled back down, he turned back to Alexios. "So, thus for the task requested, *kyrión*. What is your payment?"

"What is it you wish?"

Mohammed unleashed a slow, evil smile. "I get to sack the place."

Chapter End Notes

Items of Interest:

[Lacedemonia](#)

[Ypapantis Monastery](#)

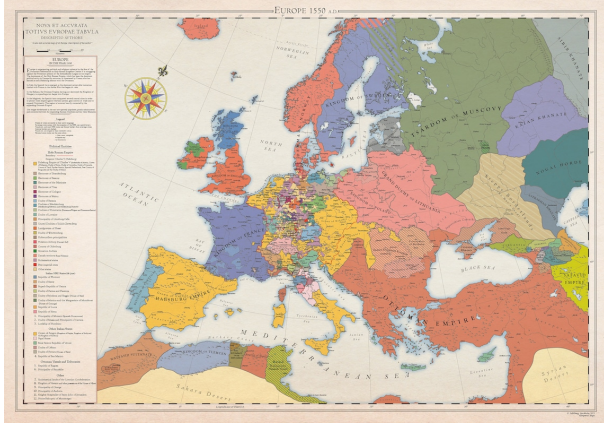
[The Meteora Rock Formation Complex and the Monasteries Built Therein](#)

[Archimandrite](#)

[The Treaty of London \(1518\)](#)

[Wolsey](#)

[Europe in 1550](#)



The Leave-Taking

29 July 1583, Friday. Late afternoon.

She turned and smiled as he came into view through the trees; she was washing clothes at the little stand she'd had him build beside the stream, the rippled sheet of metal pegged to a board having clearly made it easier for her. He, naturally, immediately felt himself swell; she wore only a thin pale underskirt around her hips, the generosity of her dusky teats on display for him to admire as he started to cross the clearing. Too, the underskirt was soaked, clinging to her buttocks and hips and thighs, blatantly exposing the curves and folds of her mysteriously hairless mound. Lifting a hand, she halted him mid-clearing without saying a word.

With a gesture, she commanded him, and he grinned in reply; sword and belt went to the side as quick as he could undo the buckle, the rest of his clothing following, to return bareness for bareness, arousal for arousal -- for she too was clearly desirous, the plumpness of her nipples turgid and yearning. Once he was naked before her, the majesty of his desire jutting up from his groin, she lifted her hands to reach for him. Into her embrace he strode, claimed by the potency of her omega scent (lightning and womanhood), the ebony of his cock pressing against the fallow olivine of her belly and breasts, his lips claiming hers, tongues entangled immediately as their hands rove with greedy ardour over well-known territory -- known well, but never exhausted.

He bore her over and into the grass at the edge of the creek; an instant later the linen of her skirt was hiked to her waist, thighs parting to invite him in, an invitation which he accepted with alacrity. Their voices rang together through the little clearing deep in the wood, ecstatic at their joining, legs wrapping around hips, deliberate thrusts pushing her into orgasm with speed only earned by long experience with and knowledge of her body, until her cries exceeded in sweetness the honey in the combs behind the stone cottage.

She returned the favor, then, after thrice being victim of his pleasure-giving; rolling him onto his back, she impaled herself upon his spear until he groaned for release, laughing and stroking his chest, slowing and denying him again and again until, at a softly-moaned '*s'il vous plait*', she sank herself down to take his knot, fingers gripping at the muscles of his belly as she locked tight around him and he flooded her with his seed.

Panting, the two of them stared at each other, her upright and straddling him, his organ still spilling his semen into her; clutching her hips, he pulled himself up to her, her shorter body made even of height by being in his lap, and the two of them kissed with fierce abandon. Still, his gently desperate 'if it pleases you' were the only words that had been spoken.

The laundry sat for hours, ignored, as they loved each other again and again, as the evening sun sank into night, as the swelling moon rose, just past its third quarter, to dapple the glade with silver light. The insects chorused around them, but the biting ones were held at bay; a pungent candle still burned upon the stand, infused with the grass-oil she used as a base for her hedge magic. It would repel the creatures until the candle should burn out.

Bound once more to him by his knot, laying against his chest, she asked softly, "How soon do you leave?"

"Midday on the morrow," he replied, stroking the marvelous length of her dark brown hair, grown well past her hips and now spread about them, a living shroud against the night's warmth -- yet another mark of her witcheries, for she had neither servant nor slave to lave and brush and order it for her.

She nodded, and let the knowledge of their imminent separation sink into their bones. "I will not be here when you return," she sighed -- unnecessarily, for he knew that with the long journey ahead of him, she would move her magicks into the wagon kept beside the cottage, and take herself off onto some strange sorcerous road.

It pained him, that she would not be here -- that she would vanish from his world until, like the angel she seemed sometimes to be, the anguish of his loneliness or desperation or burgeoning madness would call her to him once more, to provide balm to his pain and surcease to his agonies. He would find others between now and then, without a doubt ... but *they* would not be *her*. He traced the laceries of half a dozen mating bites upon each side of her neck, wondering yet again whose teeth matched those scars, wondered if he would like them, but knowing only that he would accept them, for they were *hers* -- and if *he* were to be hers, as he already was, then accepting them was what he would do, for of such a great thing was *trust* made.

His fingers nudged the cloak of her hair away from her buttock, to slowly caress the curve. "You will take care?"

She lifted herself up, their eyes long since adapted to the dark. "As I did after you left this day. One of the Moontouched came with blood and rapine on his mind."

His eyes narrowed, nostrils flaring. "They dared??"

She laid her finger across his lips. "Easy; I am unharmed. It was the unbound one; there is an agony there that will be served only by the lifeblood of his foe. He thought to ... give you reason to dedicate yourself completely to his vengeance; he believes he succeeded."

For a moment his eyes closed, and when they opened again, the fire of fury was banked, to be used in the future. "And after?"

"You must give him that which you wish now to deliver and the agonies his regrets will then need you to grant -- oblivion's mercy."

He blew out a deep sigh, seeing his current rage turned to future compassion. "Why must I love a witch?"

She laughed, and tickled him in the sensitive places that would arouse him most swiftly. "Witch, sorceress, wise-woman -- your mate and omega, 'u. There is food in the cottage, and we have one last night and morning to share joy." She eased herself off him, half-rising, and kissed him *most* thoroughly. "Come inside and breed both my wombs if you can."

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