

# The Battle of Emridy Meadows



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## Prelude

The village of Nulb began to fester with all manner of evil folk (circa 550 CY), culminating with the founding of the soon infamous Temple of Elemental Evil. The troubles began soon thereafter. Local caravans, gnome clans and the neighboring village of Hommlet, became easy targets for bandits from that region. The people of the region endured more than a decade of raids and harassment, but they remained complacent until matters reached a head in 568 CY. The bandits and cultists constructed a moathouse east of Hommlet to utilize as an outpost from which to launch further and more aggressive raids. Then the agents of the Good discovered that, not only was the Temple mustering a small army, but that the cult of Elemental Evil was actually under the direction of a powerful demoness.

News of this evil quickly spread from the Viscounty of Verbobonc to the ears of Prince Thrommel IV, Marshall of the combined armies of Furyondy and Veluna and also a renowned paladin. Compelled to take up the quest, the Prince left behind his concerns to the north and promptly called upon his most pious knights, clerics, and his own picked guards to bring down this profane temple. The host of Prince Thrommel crossed the Velverdyva River in the spring of 569 CY and joined with waiting contingents summoned from Veluna and Verbobonc.

Accompanying these forces was Serten of St. Cuthbert, the lone member of the Citadel of Eight to volunteer aid to Thrommel's cause.<sup>1</sup> The allied column began their slow march to the southeast. It did not take long before they were joined by a welcome council of demi-human bands from the Lortmils, Kron Hills and the Gnarley Forest who had similarly decided to take action against the growing presence of evil at their borders.

The allied forces first encountered the enemy on the open fields called Emridy Meadows. The Meadows were a march of a day or so from the temple, several leagues south of Verbobonc City and northwest of Hommlet. The bulk of the Temple's human forces, comprised of mostly mounted bandits, brigands and mercenaries had moved to slow Thrommel's advance. Elven scouts reported that a much larger than expected army of creatures approached from the south. Knowing the Temple might empty its entire horde early, Thrommel fell back upon a contingency plan drawn up in council. In an attempt to draw the Horde of Elemental Evil away from any population centers, he ordered the

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<sup>1</sup> Otis, a fellow member of Serten's in the Citadel of Eight contended that the Citadel was too absorbed in their own affairs and neglected more important local events. Otis left the Citadel well before the Battle of Emridy Meadows and his whereabouts during that campaign are unknown, but his prophetic claims surely had an effect on the undervalued Serten who answered the call to Verbobonc. Otis would redeem his absence from the battle a couple years later, as a ranger knight and a secret agent in the town of Nulb, watching activity around the Temple.

withdrawal of the entire allied column north, to a strategic position near the east bank of the Volverdyva River. Despite some later historical accounts, there was no significant fighting at Emridy Meadows, for the only action that day was light cavalry skirmishes screening the withdrawal to a more favorable battlefield.<sup>2</sup> Outnumbering their foes by more than three-to-one and eager for their first combat victory in the region, the Horde of Elemental Evil predictably pursued Thrommel's forces north.

## Battle

At dawn the horde was roused early from their rest by the signal horns of the allies preparing their formations for battle. The packed ranks of the allied contingents were arrayed so that 500 pikemen were protected on their flank by the Volverdyva River while at the center was displayed the colorful banners of 400 light cavalry and 100 heavy cavalry led by Thrommel himself. On the left flank, 200 Lortmil dwarves and 100 Kron Hill gnomes deployed along with about fifty elven archers of clan Meldarin taking up positions in between.<sup>3</sup>

The Horde of Elemental Evil was comprised of two forces. On the hordes' left flank rode 550 human cavalry made up of bandits and Nulbish thugs with little experience in warfare beyond raiding poorly-defended caravan trains. To the bandit's right was a much larger force of humanoid infantry, a host of 3500 orcs drawn from the dark forests to the southeast and even the very depths of the Oerth. Also among them howled frenzied warbands of gnolls some 500 strong. Towering over all of them marched nearly 20 crudely armed ogres, culled by the Temple from the surrounding wilds to provide heavy support.

With reckless abandon the cultist lieutenants commanded their human cavalry ranks to engage the right flank and center of the allied forces, not that the rabble of humanoids gave them much choice. Once they

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<sup>2</sup> The actual placement of Emridy Meadows was the hardest part of my research as very few reliable maps try to define its location. The most consistent written sources placed it ten to "several leagues" south of Verbobonc City. However, the actual placement had to be more accurately southeast along the well-documented road towards Hommlet because once Thrommel calls for the strategic withdrawal north he leads the Horde between the bend of the Volverdyva River and the Gnarley Forest and not back to the gates of Verbobonc City. I was appalled to discover that later semi-canonical (and possibly more widely-read) Emridy publications glazed over this critical maneuver and assumed the entire battle took place on the meadows south of the city. So the true battle in fact takes place east of Verbobonc though any map you will likely ever see will claim the entire battle site to be the location where the armies only skirmished on the first day.

<sup>3</sup> Elves of Clan Meldarin are well-known for their bowmanship. The Meldarin are also favorable toward humans and gnomes, as such they have the highest number of half-elves among their clan.

saw the shields and heard the taunts of their traditional enemies, the majority of the horde immediately charged the allied left flank. The enraged mass of humanoids was allowed to push aside the smaller demi-human ranks in a hasty attempt to encircle the rest of the allied army. Thrommel's pikemen and screening cavalry also allowed the charging bandit cavalry to penetrate their line leaving them between the bend of the Volverdyva River and packed in with the encircling mob of humanoids. These assaults triggered the Prince's trap. As if a single man, the whole allied army simultaneously pivoted counter-clockwise to encircle the Horde in the pocket.



As Thrommel's knights quickly turned to counter-attack the humanoid main body from the rear, 150 more elven warriors came from hidden reserve in the Gnarley Forest to close the killing arc.<sup>4</sup> With their backs to the river and their leadership in disarray, the Horde of Elemental Evil was completely routed. Most fought to the death, but scattered groups did manage to break out of the allied lines only to be hunted down or drowned in flight. A few survivors were allowed to flee south back to their Temple to carry a message of what was to come next.

Prince Thrommel wasted little time in rallying his weary troops and collecting their fallen. The most storied among those slain at Emridy was Serten of St. Cuthbert who fell during the final moments of the battle zealously defending the Prince to his last breath. The death of Serten later proved to be a major loss to the allies' plans for their next phase in the campaign, the siege of the Temple of Elemental Evil.

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<sup>4</sup> Elves of Clan Sherendyl also of the Gnarley Forest have a reputation as excellent warriors. Though the Meldarin were more apt to ally with non-elves, Sherendyl elves could not possibly pass on a chance to battle humanoids.

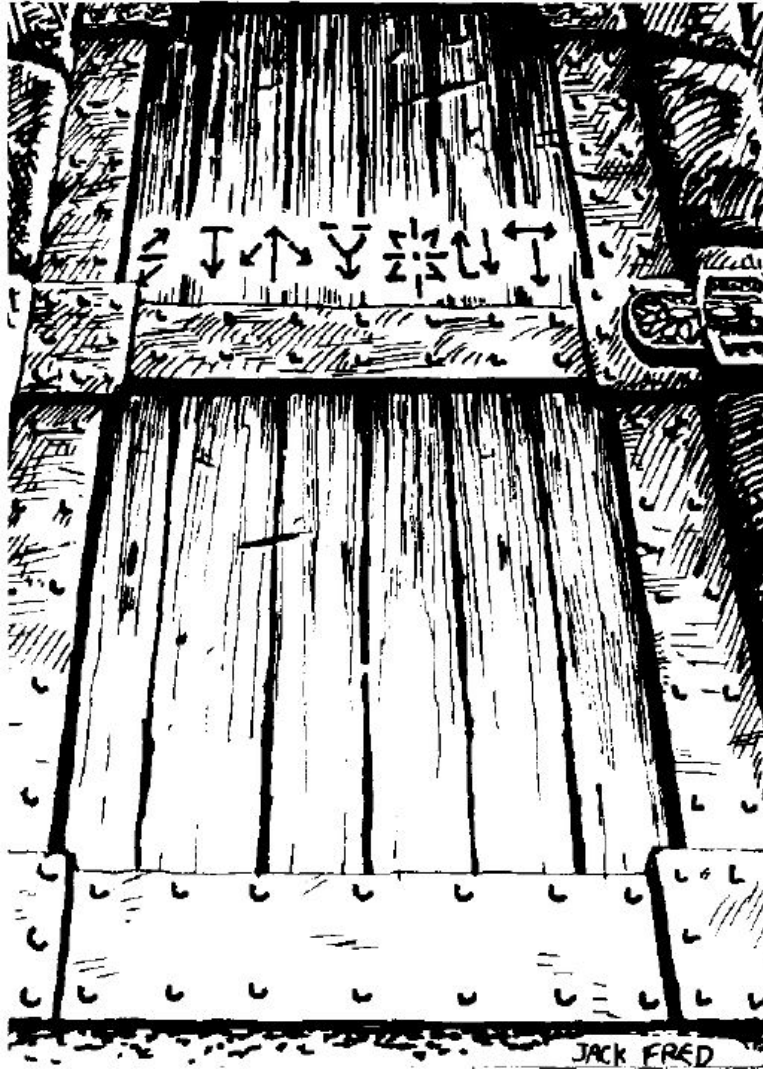
## Aftermath

News of the victory at Emridy Meadows spread fast to Hommlet. The first indication of the defeat of the horde came when strange men dressed in ochre were sighted running through the village in panic. The Temple of Elemental Evil lay within a couple days' march for the allied host. Their coming emboldened the local villagers and farmers who realized that the end of the Temple was at hand. The allied forces, having met no resistance on their march, were refreshed and well-supplied by the time they finally laid siege to the walled fortress of the Temple. The Cult of Elemental Evil futilely tried to withstand the seige with their scant remaining garrison of troops, but the temple fell within a fortnight. The army threw down the upper works of their fortress, just short of damaging the central Temple itself. Only a few of the vile leaders of the Temple managed to escape, and it is said these vengeful individuals were later to blame for the sudden disappearance of Prince Thrommel IV in 573 CY.

Thrommel feared that a raid on the dungeons of the profane Temple would be too costly. Given the presence of a major demoness (Zuggtmoy), Prince Thrommel summoned all his mages and clerics to cooperate in creating great seals to bind this evil within the deepest parts of her own dungeon.<sup>5</sup> Four pairs of large bronze doors, starting with the Grand Entrance of the Temple, were each bound with heavy iron chains and their seams filled with softened metal. Lastly runes were carved into the bronze portals bearing abjurations of arcane and holy power. With the final spells in place, Evil was contained at last. During the ensuing years, agents of Good remained nearby to keep an eye on the Temple and watch for the cult's inevitable resurgence.

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<sup>5</sup> I speculate that if Serten had survived until the siege, his aid might have been enough to allow them to go after Zuggtmoy directly. In this case, Serten would not necessarily be defending Prince Thrommel so much as the other way around. Naturally the Prince would have preferred to have the entire Citadel of Eight along on his quest and perhaps he still held out hope they would show during the two-week siege—certainly plenty of time for additional messengers to be sent. When no special help came, preparations were finally made to seal the Temple.



Nearly inconsequential during the siege of the Temple, the raiders' moathouse was the last piece to fall before Thrommel's quest was complete. While the Prince oversaw the binding of the Temple, he sent a splinter force with their leftover siege machines to take the small outpost. Remarkably a mob of villagers from Hommlet, long terrorized by the evils of this place, joined in to help surround and raze the moathouse.

There was no shortage of heroes at the Battle of Emridy Meadows. Viscount Wilfrick attained fame for his part in commanding the campaign. His fortune and gratitude was shown to Hommlet through the construction of a temple of St. Cuthbert and the beginnings of a walled castle bestowed upon Burne the wizard and his friend the warrior Rufus, both veterans of Emridy. Another fighter earning fame at Emridy Meadows was Ricard Damaris who lost a finger on his left hand and suffered a wound that left him the distinctive triangular scar on his face. Ricard would later return to the Temple of Elemental Evil with the

opportunistic Lord Robilar to help plunder its dungeons and earn enough to retire as the owner of the popular Green Dragon Inn in Greyhawk City. And brave Serten was given a grandiose funeral service in Verbobonc attended by many who fought with him at Emridy. Ironically, also in attendance were all his former companions from the disbanded Citadel of Eight who, for their own selfish reasons, had failed to take part in the most notable battle of the century.

**Conflict & Date:** Spring 569 CY

**Armies & Commanders:**

- Allied Army (1700 total)
- Prince Thrommel IV, Marshal of Furyondy and Veluna.
- Viscount Wilfrick of Verbobonc.
- 1200 humans, 200 dwarves, 100 gnomes, 200 elves.
- Horde of Elemental Evil (4570 total)
- Unnamed cultist lieutenants from the Temple of Elemental Evil.
- 3500 orcs, 550 humans, 500 gnolls, 20 ogres.

**Result:** The allied forces of Prince Thrommel IV slaughter the Horde of Elemental Evil.

**Casualties:**

Allied army

- 200 human
- 55 dwarves
- 25 gnomes
- 20 elves

Horde of Elemental Evil

- 4500+ (Survivors eventually fall at siege of Temple)

Sources:

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