

to the Hands of the Advisory Imperial Throne Council; and via it

to the Most honored and beneficent Lord, Monarch of all that he surveys, Ruler of the Heights and Depths, Commander of Armies, Conqueror of Adversity and Foes -- Alastair Archduke of Canberry and Emperor of the South.

from Jeremiah Offwhite, Guildmaster - the Guild of Spice Merchants, Herbers, Salters and Measurers, Canberry City

As it pleases your awful and mighty majesty - I have taken it upon myself as guildmaster to bring you an update on the situation about which I wrote you some weeks ago.

The efforts of your guardsmen, under the command of the most able Grand Dame Brionna, Captain of the Archducal Guard and terror of the unclean, has driven the salt black marketeers to whom I previously referred in my prior missive from the public streets, but despite arrests, not from the city. At least a half dozen of the unsavory characters remain. One is particularly disturbing as well as clever and moves his operation almost daily from one location in the lower city to another, today having taken up residence in the old Vinedusk Ostlery on Wall Street after just yesterday being in the abandoned winery on Crosslet Drive.

Frankly if the purity of their wares could be ascertained I would not be adverse to giving them transient memberships in the guild, as their product is much needed and one needs to be flexible. Their behavior however, particularly his behavior, does not lead me to think that they are here of good will.

In other news that may or may not be of help to the Archduchy, the Guild has come up with a partial solution for the poor. We are taking soaked herbs of a preservative nature and mixing them in with small amounts of preservative spice, honey, and salt in suspension in seed oil. Rubbing that oil into meat repeatedly will preserve the meat for a season - not as well as pure salting, but well enough for the full winter. We can sell the mixture at about one and a half times the old price for salt, so about half the present price for salt, that will take the sting out of the salt shortage for the commons and will enable many of the smaller merchants in the guild to survive as well if new reserves of salt should be less than rumor holds they will be.

Oh, I should note, the Guild has worked with the Brotherhood of Apothecaries, Alchemists, Chemists and Glass Blowers to make certain that the mixture will indeed preserve foods for the full winter and at least a bit beyond.

Most respectful regards.