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COTC ABOUT-FACE?

The so-called “Compromise on the Compromise”, the proposal to codify elective succession to the Talossan throne, may soon be revisited. Originally proposed in March 2021 as a result of the “Ranked Choice Referendum” of January of that year, the bill seeks to implement an elective succession to the Talossan throne. Held every seven years, Conclaves would see the reigning King or Queen face what amounts to a vote of confidence, with a two-thirds vote to vacate the throne coming into immediate effect. Should that be the case, a supplementary Conclave would choose a successor candidate, who would then face popular approval.

The bill’s history is not without controversy. The Ranked Choice Referendum, held in January 2021, ultimately returned a very narrow majority in favor of an elected head of state, with the status quo being the other option to survive to the final round of balloting. As a result, the 55th Cosă saw the “Talossa Shall Choose Its King Amendment”, which was vetoed. The 56th Cosă saw the reintroduction of this amendment, which did not survive the Cosă a second time, but its successor, the “Compromise on the Compromise”, did – only to meet the same veto and then the same first-Clark death at the

beginning of the 57th Cosă. Needless to say, the royal veto of a bill popular enough to achieve a two-thirds Cosă majority was poorly-received by those who wished to make the monarchy more accountable to the people.

One of the other large sticking points for the pro-reform side was the 180-degree turn by certain parties from support to opposition, effectively rendering the bill DOA. Perhaps just as surprising, then – or not surprising at all, depending on who you ask – is that same party’s interest, led by the sitting Distain (who also led the initial reversal), to now champion this cause once again. Speaking as a guest at the Free Democrats’ Party Convention this past March, Distain Breneir Tzaracomprada (MC - TNC) stated, in part, “I support the immediate end of the reign of King John.” His speech no doubt raised eyebrows both within the TNC and the opposition, given his founding of a party that now squarely sits as *the* monarchist party in Talossa, counting such staunch royalists as Sir Xhorxh Pol Briga and Dame Litz Cjantscheir among its ranks. Sir Briga himself was one of the CotC’s most vocal critics during its first go-round, arguing that any form of election for a head of state would automatically transfigure Talossa into a republic in substance, if not in name. (We note

that in a republic, the default of a vote is not “the President stays in office until voted out by a supermajority”, a key difference for which tens of millions of American Cestours are likely grateful.)

While definitely confusing for both those supportive of and opposed to the change, ultimately this sign is a good one overall. It shows that the TNC is not completely immovable on Talossa’s transition to democracy – though the Distain has noted his party’s support is likely to be a free vote as opposed to a whipped bill. Additionally, at least one major monarchist has already raised several concerns, including a claim that the monarchy has too *little* power. (We thankfully note he currently holds no Cosă seats.) In other words, the opposition may end up providing the majority of support in the Cosă, a somewhat unusual occurrence. However, with the Cosă currently divided as it is, no amendments to the Organic Law can pass without cross-aisle support anyway.

The other question is that of timing. The May Clark will be the sixth and final Clark of this Cosă, so if the parties involved wish to see this measure on the General Election ballot this summer, they had better get a move on.



BE Reform Efforts Cont'd

The renaming efforts of the Benitian Provincial Chancellery continue, with a candidate name proposed after narrowing down all proposals made. *Belacostă*, (taken from the Talossan for "beautiful riverbank"), emerged as the clear preference of respondents to a poll on the Benito Witt board. A motion titled the "Third Time's The Charm Act" is currently at debate in the Benitian Assembly, which if approved would subject the proposed name to a referendum. Should the latter pass, the name would enter into effect, making Benito the "province so nice they named it thrice". Proposals to rewrite the Benitian (or potentially *Belacostă*) Constitution to simplify the provincial government's structure have also been floated, but no solid changes have been brought to a vote as of yet.

A Return to Our Roots?

In what could be an interesting form of homecoming for the Talossan population, several more recent citizens and perspectives have hailed from the Midwest United States. Bureau of Home Affairs director Bentxamì Puntmasleu, naturalized last September, lives in the Greater Talossan Area. The coolest newspaper editor in Talossa is roughly an hour and a half from the GTA, while two current prospective citizens (Talossan names TBA) are only a short drive

from a *Haxh* of their own (one in Wisconsin, one in Illinois). Though neither have yet to officially immigrate, it would be interesting to have enough people for a "mini-TalossaFest", an opportunity for the Midwesterners to get together, shoot the breeze, imbibe the national bullion, and strengthen the bonds of Talossanity in a way largely unseen in the years since the Old Growth grew apart.

60th Election Prep Begins

The Chancery has opened registration for the July 2024 general election, which will elect the 60th Cosă. Senators will also be elected for Fiovă, Benito, and Maritiimi-Maxhestic. No word yet on which incumbent senators will be seeking re-election, but Benitian appointee Iason Taiwos will not face a special election as he was appointed at the beginning of this current Cosă session anyway. The election begins June 15.

TalossaFest L Plans Underway

The Bureau of Home Affairs, under director Bentxamì Puntmasleu, has begun the planning for TalossaFest L, a celebration of our nation's 50th year of independence. Tentatively scheduled for the summer of 2029, this edition of TalossaFest would be the first in many years, and Puntmasleu has stated his goal "to see the greatest number of Talossans

gathered to date". While few concrete ideas have yet come out, with five years left to get plans together, the BHA has time to refine things.

BHA Recruitment Begins

Home Affairs Director Bentxamì Puntmasleu has initiated a recruitment drive in the Greater Talossan Area. Consisting of fliers designed by Mic'haghl Autófil, Puntmasleu's intent is to raise awareness among the Cestours of the area of Talossa's existence. The fliers also appeal to readers' interest in helping to shape Talossan history, as well as emphasize our nation's (admittedly haphazard) track record of charity and community giving. We would like to commend the Director for his efforts to reconnect Talossa with its heritage and homeland, and express our fervent hopes that his efforts bear fruit.

3rd PPT Judging Ongoing

The third *Pretz per Tomas* Poetry Contest is nearing its completion. Organized by Breneir Tzaracomprada, the contest has seen entries from at least four poets (though one of Ián Plätschisch's entries was created by ChatGPT). Last year's winner, Carlüs Vilaçafat, was featured on Tzaracomprada's YouTube channel, *Fora Talossa*, and was also made Talossa's Poet Laureate.

FREEDEM CONVENTION ENDS



The Free Democrats of Talossa have concluded their annual convention, held during February - March of each year. This year's convention saw quite a bit of activity, with multiple amendments to the party's constitution and platform adopted. The procedures for suspending and

expelling members received revisions, and the party's platform, largely unchanged for several years (per TalossaWiki) had various planks updated to reflect concerns on the future of the monarchy, the accessibility of the Talossan political system for the average Talossan, and the issues that continue to plague most provinces regarding activity and good governance. The convention also saw the election of Miesträ Schivă as Party President (succeeding Üc Tărfă), and the re-election of Antaglha Somelieir as Party Secretary. Whether these policy updates prove effective at rendering their party fit to return to government, however, is a question that will be answered by the voters over the summer.

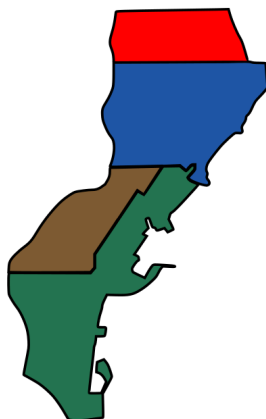
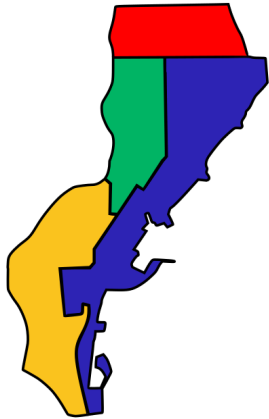
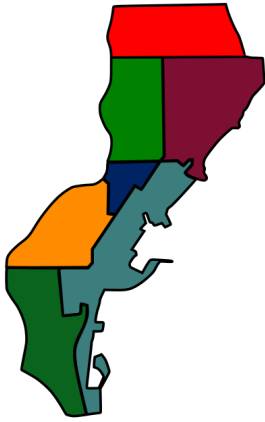
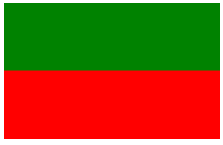
Provincial Mergers Revisited?

The failures of most provinces to serve as anything other than electoral districts for the Senäts have continued to provide fuel for proposals to reform Talossa's provincial system overall. The majority of provinces are largely dormant, with the recent exceptions of Benito and Cézembre. As a result, multiple parties have floated ideas on how to deal with this issue, including mergers, demotion to territorial status, and abolition altogether. However, it would appear that one of the major impediments to any provincial reform is the Senäts itself. Provincial mergers would result in someone losing a seat, which is likely to play poorly with the Senators themselves. As a result, the only way to bring about effective provincial reform may be to shrink to a unicameral legislature first.

Alt. Monarchy Reforms Seen

While the Cosă continues to debate the future of the King and in general the future of the monarchy, several other reforms have sprung up as alternate suggestions. Baron Davinescu has suggested allowing the King to name his successor. Miesträ Schivă has suggested a simple "legislative decapitation", removing Ián from the throne via Organic amendment while allowing the Cosă to later re-amend that same clause to name a new monarch. Alternatively, Schivă has also drafted a proposal to immediately place Secretary of State Txec dal Nordselvă on the throne, with the general succession method to be determined later by law. In this latter proposal, the default method is to have the Cort pü Inalt nominate an Heir Presumptive, who shall be approved by referendum. Glüc da Dhi has proposed a mechanism for succession by seniority (in terms of date of citizenship). The initial proposal to revisit the CotC (page 1) appears as of press time to be falling behind in terms of popularity to the "King Txec" proposal, but as of yet no concrete proposals have been brought to the CRL.





Letter from the Editor

Talossa, as a country neither truly federal nor unitary in nature, sits in a sort of odd, uncomfortable position with respect to its internal divisions. Most provinces are little more than an afterthought, their governments defunct, their halls of discussion gathering cobwebs. Provinces, in a dryly humorous way, exist as mini-Talossas of their own. Much as the country was largely founded as an exercise in self-aggrandizement by Robert I, provinces today largely serve as little fiefdoms where people can secure a nice title for themselves (and perhaps a Senäts seat) with almost no effort. There is little discussion, little interest. Obviously some of this stems from the patchwork arrangement of provinces geographically, as well as the ease with which inter-provincial communication is conducted; with the nation existing almost entirely in digital form, reaching *everyone* is just as easy as reaching your “neighbors”.

So what is to be done? The situation presents a catch-22. No one wants to give up their own little corners of the realm, and at the national level, major parties are suspicious of merger proposals as methods of altering the partisan makeup of the Senäts in a bid to gain an advantage.

There are three paths forward regarding the provinces: the Merger Convention, unicameral Ziu reform, and outright abolition. The third of these is a rather extreme step, and even we at *TN* do not endorse its adoption. (It is also practically guaranteed to be a non-starter politically.) The first would see a convention called to negotiate multiple mergers in advance, a mutually-involved form of “top-down” mergers that seeks to listen to provincial concerns while coordinating merger efforts across provinces. The second would remove the roadblock presented by the Senäts, minimalizing the concerns about partisan makeup.

The fourth option is to do nothing. But since when is that ever truly an option?

Adüc Talossa non isch pierdadă!

- Redacteir

*Cézembre not pictured because I wasn't sure how to fit them into a good merger plan