

# The Sundering of the Axe of Rule

*Historical Event · The Weohstannuk Empire*

**Date:** ~300 WE

## Summary

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Argos the Bear, War Chief of the Eastern Tribesmen, shatters the Axe of Rule against the ritual combat stone rather than yield it to Dorath the Younger after a defeat. His reasons die with him. The eastern peoples have not had a unified ruler since.

The ritual is straightforward in its written form: the Axe of Rule passes to whoever holds it, and is surrendered by formal combat. There are rules for the combat. There are rules for the surrender. There is no rule for what Argos the Bear did, because no one had considered it necessary to prohibit something so obviously contrary to the Axe's purpose.

What the witnesses recorded: Argos fought Dorath the Younger for control of the Axe in the stone circle at Thornvast, which had served as the ritual site for eleven successful transfers of power. He lost. He was disarmed. Dorath extended his hand for the Axe. Argos looked at Dorath for a moment that witnesses described as 'too long' and then struck the Axe against the ritual stone with both hands and everything remaining in him. The Axe broke. Argos died from the effort -- whether from some protective enchantment on the Axe or from the exertion is not established. Dorath never ruled.

The oral traditions of the eastern peoples contain seventeen different explanations for why Argos did what he did. They agree on no version. Kagrath of the Iron Horn, who knows the oral traditions better than most living scholars, says only that all seventeen explanations are compatible with a man who looked at Dorath for a long moment and decided the specific future that Dorath's rule represented was one he would not allow.

What Dorath would have done as ruler of a unified eastern peoples, in a year when the Weohstannuk Empire was already visibly fracturing, is a question that historians find inconclusive. Argos did not find it inconclusive. He found it decisive.