

THE TURAKIAN AGE



Steven S. Long

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A Setting Book for *Fantasy Hero*

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A WORD OR TWO OF APPRECIATION

Dedication: I'd like to dedicate this book to my friend Wendell McCollom, who's run so many wonderful *Fantasy Hero* games for the "Monday Night Gaming Group" for so many years now (and hopefully many years to come). Thanks, Wendell!

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INTRODUCTION



Bright the tall sky
Firm the wide earth
Inviting the path
Lead it to wisdom, or folly?
—from the *Benethar Sacur*

Fantasy Hero is an exciting and intriguing game — but like any other RPG, it takes time to set up a campaign world and present it for the GM's and players' use. This book, *The Turakian Age*, takes most of that work out of your hands. Within these pages you'll find a richly-detailed campaign world, full of ideas for adventures and characters... and wondrous settings in which to place them.

Chapter One, *The Turakian Chronicles: A History Of The Turakian Age*, presents the history of the world up to the default campaign starting point — the year 5000 of the Second Epoch — including a detailed timeline that incorporates dates mentioned in other chapters. (If you want to know about the history beyond 5000 SE, you can read about it in Chapter Eight, but you have to get the GM's permission.)

Chapter Two, *Commoners And Kings: The People Of Ambrethel*, describes the races commonly chosen for player characters. It discusses, in broad terms, what each race is like, where it lives, what it likes to do, and so forth. Package Deals are included for the races, as appropriate.

Chapter Three, *Strange And Wondrous Lands: The Realms Of Ambrethel*, is a kingdom-by-kingdom review of the lands of the Turakian Age. Each realm's description includes vital statistics for that land, information on its history (and current events), and a review of its geography, society, and more.

Chapter Four, *Beneath The Looming Shadow: Life In 5000 SE*, covers daily life in Ambrethel. It discusses subjects most characters would know about, to one extent or another — calendars and zodiacs, marriage and burial customs, the prevalence of magic and how it affects society, and the like.

Chapter Five, *Warrior, Wizard, High Priest, Thief: Turakian Character Creation*, provides Package Deals, game element notes, and other information vital for creating player characters and NPCs for a campaign set in Ambrethel. It includes details on things like thieves' and mages' guilds, barbarian tribes, and famous warriors.

Chapter Six, *Mysterious Ways: The Gods Of Ambrethel*, explains the religions of Ambrethel. It covers everything from the names and attributes of the gods, to priesthoods and churches, to the theological differences between the branches of the High Faith.

Chapter Seven, *Mystic Lore: Turakian Magic*, picks up where *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire* left off in describing Turakian Age magic. After reviewing the nature of magic in Ambrethel, it describes two new arcana (Theurgy and Ulronai Warrior-Magery), provides a selection of unusual regional spells from various parts of Ambrethel, and describes some Turakian Age-specific divine magic and enchanted items.

Chapters Eight and Nine are the GM's section, so don't read them unless you're running a Turakian Age campaign or have your GM's permission. Chapter Eight discusses how to run a *Fantasy Hero* campaign in this setting. It also includes the GM's Vault (with all the secret, GM's-eyes-only, information pertaining to the previous chapters) and a generous selection of plot seeds. Chapter Nine includes some monsters and NPCs to help the GM get the game started.

OTHER RESOURCES

Obviously, no single book can *completely* describe an entire world... particularly not one featuring magic, monsters, and endless adventure! Besides *Fantasy Hero* itself, there are several other books you may find helpful for running or playing in Turakian Age campaigns.

First and foremost is *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*, which contains thousands of spells. Although it's suitable for use in any *Fantasy Hero* game, the *Grimoire* specifically represents the Turakian magic system. Chapter Seven includes plenty of spells so closely related to the Turakian setting that they weren't appropriate for the *Grimoire*, but the vast majority of Turakian spellcraft is in the *Grimoire*, not this book.

Second, Hero Games has two books of creatures, monsters, and similar foes for characters to confront (or for wizards to change shape into or summon). *The HERO System Bestiary* includes nearly 200 creatures, most of them Fantasy-style fantastic beasts or ordinary animals such as lions, horses, and wolves. *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders* is a book of Fantasy monsters; it features over 100 monsters (none duplicated from the *Bestiary*). Additionally, for many of the monsters MMM describes specific, named beings from the Turakian setting. If you want to learn about the cloud giant Aristocles the Mighty and his struggles against the

fire giants of the south, or get the character sheet for the dark elven ranger Hraynul Shadowstep so he can bedevil your PCs, MMM is the place to look.

THE HERO UNIVERSE

The Turakian Age setting is part of the *Hero Universe* meta-setting that encompasses all of the Hero Games settings for the 5th Edition rules. You can read more about the Hero Universe by going to <http://www.herogames.com/FreeStuff/freedocs.htm> and downloading the free document describing it.

Briefly put, the Turakian Age takes place from approximately 73,000 BC (when civilization arises again after the wars of the gods during the late Primeval period nearly destroy the world) to 65,000 BC (when the peoples of the world overthrow Takofanes the Arch-Lich, causing an arcane cataclysm that remakes the world). It's followed by the Valdorian Age, the Atlantean Age, and several other time periods before history as humanity now knows it begins.

At this particular stage of the Hero Universe, magic is of course at a very “high” level — that's why wizards and priests can cast spells, magical items exist, demons and gods can appear bodily in the world, and so forth. While a high level of magical “background energy” is a prerequisite for the existence of superhumans (as discussed in *Champions Universe* and related books), superhumans as they appear in the Champions Universe timeframe don't yet exist. While it's true that many wizards, demons, demigods, and other beings of the Turakian Age are every bit as powerful (in their own way) as any superhero or villain, they don't possess “superpowers” (as that term is normally defined). The flavor/nature of magic during Turakian times isn't “properly aligned” to create superhumans; instead, magic allows for the existence of spellcasters, arcane learning, and mystic monsters and beings.



chapter one:



THE TURAKIAN CHRONICLE

**A HISTORY OF THE
TURAKIAN AGE**

THE FIRST EPOCH



The history of Ambrethel is a chronicle of both triumphs and tears — of victories dearly won and greatly treasured, and of defeats most bitter; of terrible evils cast down only because of the sacrifices of noble men; of mighty wizards, fell gods, fierce monsters, and powerful kings. The Turakian Age is a time of heroes — an era when only the bright swords and wondrous magics of people like your PCs can hold off the dread, looming shadow of Kal-Turak, Ravager of Men.

This section of *The Turakian Age* covers the broad swath of Turakian history over the 8,000 years of the era. Of necessity, it can only touch upon the high points and most important events; a detailed history would be many times larger than this book. The descriptions of kingdoms and lands in Chapter Three provide more details about the histories of the various realms, as does the timeline at the end of this chapter; the GM can fill the gaps as he sees fit.

THE EARLIEST DAYS

The pages of the *Benethar Sacur* and the legends of the Ardunan lands tell that long ago, on the southern shores of the Sea of Mhorec, the gods created Men. They shaped clay, and water, and fire to form three brothers — Ordon, Khor, and Sirrenos — and wives and followers for them. The Three Brothers settled the lands around the great inland Sea, establishing farms and villages, cities and strongholds, keeps, and temples to the gods who created them.

But their peaceful life soon ended. From the south came armies of fierce dragon-men — the Drakine. Taller and stronger than Men, and bent on conquest, the Drakine came against the Three Brothers with swords and magic. For the first time, Men took up weapons against other beings, fighting for their lives and freedom.

For many years, the people held out against the Drakine, but the Three Brothers soon realized defeat was inevitable. A great council was held, that all the people might say what they thought should be done. Some refused to give in to their reptilian tormentors. “Though death and destruction be our fate, we will meet them honorably, with sword in hand and fire in our eyes!” shouted Sirrenos, and many roared their approval of his brave defiance. A few said otherwise, that Men should submit, accepting the Drakine yoke as the price for peace and security.

But most of the people had a different thought. “Why should we stay here to suffer and die,” said Khor, “when there are other lands for our taking,

where no Drakine have ever walked?” And so it was that the Great Migration began, when Men spread across all the wide world. Ordon took his people and traveled west, through the Valician Hills and into what Men would one day call the Westerlands. Khor’s people followed him through the Great Pass, into the lands their descendants would call Vashkhor and Vornakkia. Sirrenos refused to leave, preferring to stand and fight even with diminished forces, but soon his wife Tarisa prevailed upon him at least to go north, to the other shore of the Sea, where they might have respite from the Drakine, if only for a time.

None of the journeys of the Great Migration were short, or easy. Many families and clans fell by the wayside, refusing to go further out of weariness or because they found a land desirable to them. And it was during this time that Men first met many of the other peoples of the world — the Dwarves, who lived in the hills and mountains; the Elves, who lived in many places; and others besides. Sometimes these early meetings were peaceful; at other times they gave birth to suspicion and strife.

HOW OTHERS TELL THE TALE

Not all who live in Ambrethel agree with the tale Men tell. Some tribes of Men, such as the Indusharans and the Thūnese, claim their gods created them first, and that all other Men are lesser folk.

Dwarven chronicles, chiseled in angular Dwarven runes on the *Felegar Zarbeth* (“Wall of our Forefathers”) in every great stronghold of the Bearded Folk, claim the gods created the Dwarves first, hammering them from stone and thunder. They gave the mountains and hills and all their riches to their firstborn children, leaving the lesser lands for Men, Elves, the Drakine, Orcs, and other peoples.

Elven history begins even before that of Men. The Elves say that when the gods created the world (page 212), at the same time they created the Elves, who have lived where they would in Ambrethel ever since. Elven chronicles record thousands of years of exploration, wars, and adventures before they ever mention Men or Drakine, though most scholars from other races consider these fabrications or myths.

The Drakine, whose gods are not the gods of other peoples, say they, the *Sarvath Delcor* (“People of Fire and Power”), were the first folk to walk upon Ambrethel. All other peoples came after, to serve the Drakine or be ruled by them (particularly the Seshurma, or lizard-folk, whom the Drakine despise). Men fled in fear before them, Dwarves and Elves dared not stand against them.

1-513 FE: THE FIRST KINGDOMS

The first recorded histories of Men mark the beginning of what is now called the First Epoch. Written by mages and priests — people like Boadlane the Librarian, Oldrusân Magisterios, Ilfarin the Blessed, and Runcifer the Arch-Wizard — they speak about the practice of magic and temple rivalries as much as anything, but do chronicle something of the lives of the earliest kings.

THE WESTERLANDS

The people of Ordon spread quickly throughout the rich Westerlands, establishing many strongholds and small kingdoms in all the lands west of the Valician Hills. In the hills and mountains they often found Dwarves and Gnomes, and in the forests Elves, and so avoided those areas, since they knew they had not the strength to conquer other peoples. In some places, other folk (particularly Gnomes and Halflings) mingled freely with Men; elsewhere, different peoples kept apart, meeting only to trade or fight.

As the decades and centuries passed, four great kingdoms emerged: Iluria in the lands west and south of the Thurisian Mountains; Carshalt in the lowlands between the Thurisians, Snowthorns, and Greywards; Amardan in what would later be known as southern Vestria and Mhendaria; and Storvak in northern Vestria and western Khirkovy. Many lands remained wild and dangerous, infested by monsters, bandits, and barbarian tribes.

Thronek's Realm

In 302 FE, the necromancer Thronek built a great tower in the western Snowthorns. His magic and evil servants soon posed a terrible threat to Storvak and Carshalt, some of whose lands Thronek claimed for his own. Within two decades his depredations were too great to ignore. King Hrorgel the Golden of Carshalt, of whose generosity and wisdom the bards still sing, raised his army and marched on Thronek's Tower.

When the army neared his Tower, the wizard sought parley — and then treacherously slew King Hrorgel with magic. As his armies of Trolls, Orcs, and undead routed the Carshaltan knights, Thronek returned to his tower. For decades no one dared raise hand against him, and as Carshalt splintered into several small, weak kingdoms, his power in the region increased. But in 434 FE, Amardan, Storvak, the Dwarves of Deepingdelve, and several lesser kingdoms allied to destroy Thronek once and for all. This time, the necromancer fled, taking with him his wealth and magical apparati and leaving his followers to their fate; no one ever saw or heard from him again.

MHORECIA

During the early First Epoch, the Drakine controlled most of the lands around the Sea of Mhorec, as well as Tornathia and some areas on the eastern shore of Lake Beralka. Large, powerful Drakine kingdoms such as Grenvor, Serthorin, and Basidrun

arose, extending their sway with armies of conquest. Where they met Men or Elves, they usually tried to slay or conquer them, but sometimes lived with them more peacefully.

Only to the northwest of the Sea of Mhorec did Men prosper. The sons of Sirrenos established kingdoms in the lands where the Sirrenic Empire would one day exist, and together they fought against the Drakine wherever and whenever they could. Their strong-walled cities and towns along the shores of the Sea maintained a thriving trade in many goods.

In 388 FE, the rulers of several Drakine realms south of Mhorec, including Serthorin and Tauset, decided the Sirrenic lands were too rich, and too dangerous, to leave be. But Tellumar Firehand, the most powerful of the Sirrenic kings, received word of their plans. He assembled an army of his own, the largest army of Men ever to that day, and marched south to meet them. The two armies met where the Dorasus River flows into the mighty Lornaca. Although outnumbered, Tellumar was a clever tactician, and lured most of the Drakine forces into a valley where his army had the advantage. By day's end, the men of Sirrenia defeated their Drakine foes, and the Battle of Two Rivers had assured the existence of their realm. Never again would the Drakine attempt to conquer the Sirrenic lands in whole, though border skirmishes over smaller territories continued until the Drakine Wars.

VASHKHOR AND VORNAKKIA

As the children of Khor spread into the lands bounded by the Tabriz Mountains and the Skyclaws to the west, and the Ayn Alach to the east, they established many kingdoms. In the central plains the hero Rhios, slayer of the manticores Vuneris, founded the realm of Vashkhor, building his castle and capital at Marasa on the shores of Lake Askoli. To the south, the mighty Coroglu River and its tributaries supported several kingdoms, including Caldiran and Shaldrin, with its capital at mighty Adairay.

But not all the descendants of Khor were content to remain between the mountains, where they were still too close to the Drakine realms for their liking. Continuing east, they found the northernmost pass through the Ayn Alach and, led by Belioth Farwalker, crossed that towering range in the summer of 412 FE. East of the mountains was a lush land, filled with forests and teeming with game.

Peace was not yet to be theirs, though. Not long after they built their first settlement, they were set upon by tribes of Goblins who claimed that land as their own. They drove the Goblins off, but at great price, for they slew Belioth with an arrow, and killed many others besides. Vornak Belioth's son claimed leadership of his father's people, though he had to slay his own brother to do so, and many of his people mistrusted him for it. But Vornak proved a strong and skilled ruler. Leading his warriors against the goblins, he drove the greenskins south before him, using wits and skill to overcome their superior numbers. Finally, in the hills south of the Sarsoun River, he brought the Goblins to bay once and for all, killing their chieftain Zarm Stronghand



in single combat and then slaughtering his foul folk. To this day people say that at certain times, one who listens carefully can hear the ghosts of the dying goblins screaming still, and so Men call that land the Screaming Hills.

Victory did not sit well with Vornak, who found the demands of rulership in a time of peace trying upon his patience. When his son Daxor was of age to take the throne of Shar, Vornak left, accompanied by a band of hardy warriors and other folk. They traveled south, seeking adventure. They encountered the Vulture-Men of Sind and fought them, then traveled further, crossing the Korsong and the Chekuru. The Talarshandi claim Vornak traveled all the way south, past more rivers and through the mountains, and founded their city, but few other folk believe this tale.

MITHARIA

No lore-book records when the Men of Arduna first sailed across the Serpentine Sea and landed on the shores of Mitharia. The Dwarves of Azarthond and the Elves of Shularahaleen both say they met the newcomers when Men arrived in the Mitharian lands in the First Epoch. But some Men believe the Dwarves and Elves are simply trying to claim their lands, over which they have sometimes fought Men, and that neither Azarthond nor Shularahaleen truly existed then.

Men founded their first Mitharian realms along the northern and central coast. Over the rest of the First Epoch they sailed south along the coast, down into Kumasias, and also traveled west and south overland. In time they encountered the Indusharan realms, already ancient and proud.

514-923 FE: THE RISE OF ILURIA

In the Westerlands, the latter half of the first millennium was marked by the rise of Iluria as the greatest realm of Men in the world. In the centuries after the fall of Carshalt, Ilurian nobles and knights turned their attentions northward and conquered several of the petty kingdoms left in the wake of Hrorgel's death.

Meanwhile, to the west, Amardan was weakened by a series of foolish and weak-willed kings, as well as a war in 596-601 FE with the orcs of the Greyward Mountains and their goblin-kin. The war left the Amardanian nobles more powerful than their king, and soon Amardan was less a mighty realm and more a collection of duchies and earldoms all paying lip service to the crown. When a blight ruined most of the Amardanian grain crop in 674 FE, starvation and illness beset the people, noble and commoner alike. King Tedor of Iluria sent wains of grain to save the starving people — wains driven by his knights and soldiers, who then stayed in Amardan, in effect taking much of the Mhendarian and Khelebian lands for Iluria.

By the mid-700s, the four realms of the Westerlands were in effect two. The Ilurian Empire controlled virtually the entire region, except for Storvak, which had gobbled up what little of Amardan Iluria had not. A few of the Vestrian lands, such as Colgrave and Skeld, remained free, ruled by dukes and princes who had effectively become kings, but most of the Amardanian people now served new masters.

TRADE AND TURMOIL IN MHORECIA

Around the Sea of Mhorec, centuries of strife between Men and Drakine passed into a time of lesser troubles. Although fighting sometimes still occurred over borders and valuable lands, trade often took the place of warfare. As both races became more skilled at ship-building, they created craft that could sail all the way across the Sea of Mhorec. Soon the cities and kingdoms of Men on the northern and eastern shores of the Sea were sending cargoes of timber, iron, grain, and more to the Drakine lands on the western and southern shores, receiving in exchange cotton, fruit from the Ulimar Jungle, and much else besides.

But things were not always so peaceful between Men themselves. The more powerful Sirrenic kingdoms and cities, including Tavrosel, Bretha, Talorné, and Nathair, sometimes squabbled and fought with each other as much as with the Drakine (though they swiftly put their differences aside whenever the Drakine threatened any of them). At times their conflicts turned bitter and cruel. Every subject of the Sirrenic Empire knows the story of Red Bohdan, king of Kaylind, who one stormy night kidnapped the children of King Venaman of Nathair and buried them alive in crypts below Anlar Tel so Venaman would die without heirs.

KHORIAN RAIDS

The situation in the Khorian lands was not much different. Vashkhor, Shaldrin, Caldiran, Ledris, and the other kingdoms between the mountains sometimes traded, sometimes fought. Ledris and Shaldrin fought a long war from 757 to 766 FE over control of a mountain pass and other lands; Shaldrin finally won due to the superiority of its archers and some timely help from the wizard Ambernaud, whose participation in the Battle of Canosa was never satisfactorily explained to either side.

But as much damage as the Khorians did to one another, still more was done by those who saw them as weaklings ripe for marauding. The first of these were the Ventati tribesmen of the highlands below the Tabriz Mountains. When Vashkhoran explorers, adventurers, and settlers began to enter their homelands, the Ventati reacted with anger, burning entire villages and butchering their inhabitants. Vashkhor, too embroiled with border conflicts against Malekun to respond, looked weak and vulnerable to the Ventati, who began sending raiding parties down from the mountains to loot and pillage. When the war against Malekun ended, King Abran of Vashkhor dispatched soldiers to respond. In a bloody battle in 839 FE, Vashkhoran swords and mail won out against Ventati spears and ferocity. A large horde of the barbarians was destroyed almost to a man. The survivors fled the field and retreated to their mountain strongholds, from whence they did not emerge for many years... though small bands of Ventati continue to raid into Vashkhor to this day.

Even worse than the Ventati were the Sharthak — the shark-men of the Vornakkian Gulf, who sent raiding-parties first against coastal towns, and in

later years against towns and cities along the Coroglu and other navigable rivers. Able to approach underwater, and thus unseen, the Sharthak could strike from surprise and escape swiftly with their plunder. On two occasions they even swam up to Lake Askoli and attacked Marasa itself! Unable to fight the Sharthak with weapons, King Chanton of Caldiran chose to fight with guile instead. He sent a clever priestess, Jakinda, to stop the raiding-parties. She called upon the powers of the god Avanos to transform herself into a Sharthak, then made her way to their undersea cities, where she cleverly spread dissension and manipulated the leaders into conflict. Soon there was civil war among the Sharthak, and the raiders returned home to fight.

924-928 FE: THE DRAKINE WARS

Iluria's period of expansion and power came to an end early in the tenth century. For many decades the Drakine kingdoms of Mhorecia, Tornathia, and around Lake Beralka had watched with concern as Iluria and Storvak both became more powerful. In 920 FE Banako, King of Korlothia and well-known for his great hatred of Men, persuaded the rulers of several other Drakine realms that Iluria had to be destroyed. Enticing them with tales of the riches, power, and land to be had when the Ilurians were vanquished, he began preparations for a massive invasion, often disguising what he was doing with magic.

The Drakine armies struck in 924 FE, attacking multiple targets from the western shores of Lake Beralka to the lands south of the Thurisian Mountains. The largest force, led by King Banako himself, besieged the city of Iluria and destroyed it in late 924 FE, killing Emperor Vartan and burning his rose gardens to the ground. This left the young Prince Dekran as the new emperor, but he and his Larenthian Guard of knights were in retreat with a large remnant of the Ilurian army toward Fellburg, through lands where legions of Drakine warriors roamed almost at will.

Just when it appeared that Dekran could not escape, the Larenthian Guard escorted him across the Vladryan Bridge, and then half their number returned across the bridge to face their attackers. For the next two days, a scant hundred knights and warriors held off a force of Drakine more than a hundred times their size, giving Dekran time to escape.

Dekran made his way to Cyradon, where he was crowned emperor. While he gathered to him what he could of the Ilurian army, Emperor Dekran sent his sister Lusine as an emissary to Storvak, begging for King Salvor's aid. With the help of the Elves of Elvenholme, Lusine made it safely to Orel, where King Salvor not only agreed to come to Iluria's aid, he married her.

By late 926 FE, the war started to take a different turn. Pressed by the Storvakian army in the north and the Ilurian army (which had some help from the Dwarves and Elves as well) in the south,

the Drakine began a slow but inevitable retreat back to their own lands. When the Ilurians trapped the main Drakine army on the western bank of the Tarnwater and Emperor Dekran singlehandedly slew King Banako, the retreat became a rout. Only the timely intervention of Drakine necromancers, who invoked a potent spell that laid waste the entire region and slew thousands of Ilurian soldiers, prevented Dekran from ending the war right there.

During the latter half of the war, it was Men who were the invaders, and Drakine the defenders. Banako's seat, Korloth, was besieged and razed (in no small part due to the potent areomancies of Valgarath Battlespell), and many a Drakine city was put to the torch. Sensing the weakness of the Drakine realms around Mhorec, who had sent many soldiers to Banako's crusade and now seemed ready to come to the aid of their brethren across the mountains, the Sirrenic kingdoms allied and struck a powerful blow against Serthorin and Denova.

Wearied and weak themselves, the armies of Men chose to accept when the Drakine sued for peace. Their military might broken, the Drakine were forced to cede many lands to Men, and to pay Emperor Dekran his father's weight in Ironheart emeralds as recompense for the death of Vartan. Never again would the Drakine of Arduna pose a threat to Men, or try to conquer their lands. Reduced to a fraction of their former power, they have spent the centuries since as traders more than warriors, living in the shadows of the realms surrounding them.

929-952 FE: AFTER THE WARS

But the Drakine Wars were not wholly without effect on the realms of Men. Much of the Westerlands was ravaged by the war, with only the Vestrian and Khirkovian lands escaping the conflict entirely. Although his realm was greatly increased by the addition of Tornathia to the Ilurian Empire, Emperor Dekran was in no position to hold what he had taken. His army was greatly weakened by the loss not only of soldiers, but powerful mages such as Valgarath and Alzamar, and he himself took such hurt in the final battles that he was unable to sire children. He died a few years later, plunging the Empire into chaos. Five different men claimed the throne, none with the power or authority to sweep his rivals from the field. As they struggled in the Ilurian court, and sometimes on the field of battle, for dominance, the Empire disintegrated around them.

By the time one of them, Stavros of Fellburg, defeated his remaining rivals in 939 FE, the Empire could not stand. Though Emperor Stavros struggled valiantly to keep Iluria together, it was too far gone to save. Local kings and dukes had become accustomed to ruling their lands without any interference from the emperor, and had no desire to return to the old ways. Stavros died in 951 FE, a broken, bitter man; no Emperor replaced him.

953-2768 FE: THE GOLDEN AGE OF ARDUNA

For nearly the next two thousand years, an era of peace, prosperity, and progress reigned throughout Arduna. Ever since then, bards and storytellers have referred to this time as a Golden Age. These were the days when the wizard Vashtori catalogued and revised the spells of Conjunction, when Aarn began to grow into the greatest city of the world, when the pious priest Sanhedrin wrote *The Skyfather's Wont* while divinely inspired by Kilbern himself. In the Westerlands, new realms such as Thurgandia and Umbr arose, while to the east the Drakine realms lost power and Vashkhor continued to grow. Talarshand and Zhor Cacimar became the pre-eminent cities of Vornakkia, but many others were founded and thrived as well.

1749 FE: THE FALL OF STORVAK

By the 1700s, the kingdom of Storvak was tottering. The kings had become increasingly weak in the face of powerful nobles and cities, border realms rebelled constantly, and in the east the Gorthunda often raided with impunity. When Queen Many found her husband, King Gavril, in bed with one of her chamber-maids, she slew them both in a fit of jealous passion, precipitating civil war. Every noble able to muster a troop of knights claimed the throne, and soon there was fighting in the streets of every city and the fields of every duchy. Skeld and Toreth became free realms (not that they'd ever truly acknowledged the overlordship of Orel), and half a dozen other kingdoms sprang up. For over a dozen years, the situation remained fragile; wars and skirmishes were frequent, and the people eked out a miserable existence while their rulers squabbled amongst themselves.

1765 FE: THE RISE OF KHIRKOVY

In 1765 FE, one of the most powerful of the Storvakian lords, Prince Dumos Brazov, struck by surprise from his seat at Karzoi, decimating the forces of his two chief rivals and conquering their lands. It took him more than another decade to bring the other lords under this thumb through conquest, guile, or diplomacy. In 1782 FE he declared himself *tassar*, or king, of the realm of Khirkovy and was crowned by a conclave of princes and priests.

1943 FE: VESTRIA ASCENDANT

A similar sort of peace came upon the Vestrian lands in the mid-1900s. Felric of House Lophranc, Grand Duke of Odellia, went to war against the kingdom of Colgrave in 1943 FE to win possession of the rich lands around the headwaters of the Silverrock River. To the surprise of many, including King Lofric of Colgrave, the outnumbered but better-trained Odellian warriors smashed through the Colgrave lines and triumphed over Lofric's army after a bitter, day-long battle. After putting Lofric and all his heirs and family to the sword,

Felric declared himself the ruler of a new kingdom, Vestria — thus making clear his intention to conquer all the Vestrian lands.

Farlothian proved no trouble to Felric; its farmers and fisher-folk cared little who ruled them so long as they were left in peace, and so King Laigar swore fealty to King Felric and became Duke of Farlothian instead of its king. But neither Skeld nor Toreth bent the knee to Vestria so easily; both were proud and stubborn lands, accustomed to handling their own affairs after nearly two centuries of freedom from the Storvakan yoke. Two decades of bloody fighting King Felric required to slay their rulers and compel their allegiance... but to this day, few Torethi or Skelda can say the word “Vestria” without spitting afterwards.

2465 FE: THE BLOOD EAGLE SOARS

Free, after many centuries of conflict, from the threat of Drakine conquest, during the Golden Age the Mhorecian realms of Men were able to concentrate on their struggles with one another. For the most part these “wars” were trivial border conflicts or minor skirmishes, easily soothed over with diplomacy and gift-giving in the interest of maintaining trade, but occasionally one of greater heat would flare. The *Lay Of Proud Towers*, which chronicles the battles through which the people of Tavrosel won their freedom from the kingdom of Nishera, tells of one such war.

In 2465 FE, King Alachar of Monselica decided the time was ripe to expand his power. Under banners depicting his symbol, the blood eagle of the Skyclaw Mountains, Alachar’s armies marched south from Anlar Tel to attack Brindazia. In a pitched battle near the Mistwoods, Alachar triumphed, breaking the back of the Brindazian cavalry and putting its footsoldiers to flight. After a three-month siege, Alachar sacked Tor Vilos and set his brother Peltas to rule there in his name.

Returning to Anlar Tel, Alachar proudly declared himself the true son of Sirrenos and founded the Sirrenic Empire. As if to prove the truth of his words, he next turned his armies against the kingdom of Berruna and conquered it after a two-year campaign. Though it would fall to his sons and later heirs to establish overlordship of the other lands that today make up the Sirrenic Empire, the seeds of imperial greatness had been sewn.

2768-2808 FE: TARNISHED GOLD

Most historians date the end of the Golden Age, or at least the beginning of the end, to 2768 FE, when without provocation the dragon Intravius attacked and destroyed the town of Amberleaf on the shores of Lake Beralka. That seemed to signal a period of strife and turmoil. Orcs, Trolls, and Goblins all became more numerous and active, often leaving their mountain and forest strongholds to attack the lands of Men, Elves, and Dwarves. The Dwarves of Gendersbad fought a bitter war against several tribes of Greyward Orcs in 2777 FE, and in 2800 FE the Trolls of Tharnrek conquered a large part of central Khirkovy and held it against the tassar’s soldiers for more than a century. Throughout the world, dark



portents appeared, and many diviners dreamed ominous dreams of a strange, dark spear.

2809-2853 FE: THE LORD OF THE GRAVEN SPEAR

Nightmares of the dark spear became more and more common in the early years of the twenty-ninth century, peaking in 2809 FE and then stopping as mysteriously as they started. Many wizards and priests, including the famed sorcerer Belzorath and Phynos the Dreamlord, cast spells and undertook quests to uncover the meaning of the dire dreams, but all their efforts came to naught. It was only in later years that scholars realized 2809 FE had seen the birth of a terrible threat to all of Amberleth.

In 2827 FE, a fierce and powerful warlord arose in the lands north of Lake Beralka. Strong, and armed with a rune-carved spear that hissed and smoked like red-hot steel plunged into the cooling-bucket, he had no name anyone knew. Those who spoke of him called him simply the Lord of the Graven Spear, or the Spearlord.

None of the petty kings of the region were a match for him. He slew one in single combat, and then began slaughtering the man’s army until the survivors swore fealty to him. With them at his back, augmented by a force of demonic warriors



who came unhesitatingly to his call, he conquered the other kings. He gave his realm no more name than he gave himself; Men referred to it as the Spearlands.

THE ULRONAI ATTACK

A shadow of fear descended on both the Westerlands and Mhorecia, as the kings of Men wondered where the Lord would next turn his armies. But before he could begin another campaign of conquest, the Ulronai came against him. A proud and warlike people of the Valician Hills, the Ulronai possessed a strange arcana that granted many of their best warriors great powers in combat. Why they attacked the Lord, when they had never before stirred from their hills, no one can say. At their head was a captain named Rhelvurath Stonebrow, whose dark hair was marked by a single blood-red lock, and the body of his troops included not just seasoned warriors and hunters, but old men, women, and children — virtually the entire Ulronai people, come to war when the noble kings of the Westerlands stood paralyzed by fear.

They met south of what Men later called the Keldravian Greatwoods, near a hill where some long-forgotten people had carved strange heads into large stones on the summit. There the hopes of the West were dashed when the Lord of the Graven Spear slew Rhelvurath in single combat and decimated the Ulronai forces with his demonic army. The survivors, warriors and followers alike, were butchered in an orgy of blood-spilling that has left

the land around Stoneface Hill dark and foul-smelling to this day. Only a few — crippled warriors, women, children — were spared. Upon them the Spearlord pronounced a terrible curse: “Go forth from this place,” he said, “into the wide lands, but nowhere will you find peace or companionship. From this day to the ending of the world, no man shall ever trust the Ulronai, or befriend them, and you will all wander without home or lands until you perish.”

2829-2840 FE: THE YEARS OF CONQUEST

Pausing only to ally himself with the Dwarves of Gasharth, the Spearlord marched his armies west around Beralka, ignoring for some reason the weak Drakine kingdoms south of the inland sea in favor of the realms of Men in the Carshaltan Lands. As he fought, his spear hissed and sang with devilish glee, and when it slew someone, its runes glowed evilly and it seemed to become even more powerful.

The Spearlord and his forces fought several battles in 2829 FE and 2830 FE, triumphing each time; by the end of 2830 FE, he controlled most of the Carshaltan Lands (what is now Umbr, Mezendria, and Mircasëa) and parts of western Khirkovy. As his power increased, so did the size of his army; evil things flocked to his banner from the deep and shadowy places of the world. Orcs and Goblins from the mountains joined by the hundreds, and the Trolls of Tharnrek allied with him as well. Only the Elves kept him at bay; few of the Lord’s soldiers who dared to step beneath the trees of Elvenholme lived to leave the forest.

In 2831 FE, the Lord split his vast forces in two. The greater part of them he led south and west, around the Thurisians to strike at the heart of old Iluria. The rest, under the command of Varghl Hôntash (“Blackmaw”), a half-trollish renegade Wolf-Lord of the Gorthunda, went north and west, attacking Khirkovy and Vestria.

It took three years, but slowly the Lord’s armies conquered the Westerlands, meeting at long last at the Vladryan Bridge. Men, often aided by Dwarves and Elves, fought valiantly against the conquerors, but no army seemed able to stand against the demons, foul sorceries, and more mundane weapons wielded by the Lord’s captains. And where the Lord himself went, death and destruction followed on a grand scale; never had the altars of Mordak been so busy, and Men said the smoke of the sacrificial fires was so great it made the Blue Gods weep.

After taking two years to rest his armies and gather the reins of power firmly in his grasp, the Lord set forth on the path of conquest once more. Leaving several of his most trusted lieutenants to rule the Westerlands as his regents, he took his army into the sparsely-settled Tornathian lands, conquering the city-states there one by one and again avoiding the Drakine kingdoms north of Tornathia.

Knowing the Spearlord would soon turn east, the kings of the lands south of Mhorec realized they had to band together to stand against him, lest he take them as he had the Tornathian cities. Assembling a great army, they met him at



Cheldar Pass. With the help of the Firelords, a band of noble-minded fire mages, as well as many adventurers and mercenaries, the Mhorecian forces fought long and well, but they had no hope against the Lord's might. After three days the Battle of Cheldar Pass was lost, and the armies of Men retreated as best they could.

It took four more years, until 2840 FE, for the Lord of the Graven Spear to complete his conquest of Mhorecia, and Men, Elves, Dwarves, and other peoples fought against him nearly every step of the way. He now ruled half the world, but his armies were exhausted. He returned to the west. Using powerful wizardries unlike any seen before or since, he raised from beneath the waters of Beralka near the mouth of the Shaanda River a great city, majestic and yet frightening in its baroque and arcane splendor, as his capital. He named it Sargelieth Zir, and from there he ruled.

2841-2853 FE: THE YEARS OF RULE

The rule of the Lord of the Graven Spear was a strange and sometimes confusing one. For a sorcerous warlord who seemed to revel in acts of great viciousness and depravity, and who served the darkest of evils gladly, he ruled with a relatively mild hand. He insisted on obedience and loyalty, and on a tribute from each region of his kingdom of sacrifices to Mordak and other Scarlet Gods — if he received those things, he left Men to do as they would. But when confronted with rebellion or disobedience,

he responded with terrifying harshness, such as when he burned the city of Vescara to the ground, with every resident inside it, for failure to provide sacrifices.

Despite the Spearlord's cruelty, Men ever rebelled against him, unwilling to stomach his evil or his trafficking with foul powers. In this they often had the aid of Elves and Dwarves, and sometimes even of Drakine (even though the Lord let the Drakine kingdoms be). Many groups of heroic adventurers, such as the Company of the Oak, fought against the Lord's minions, thwarting his plans on several occasions.

2853 FE: THE DEATH OF THE SPEARLORD

It was just such a band of heroes, Caleryn Silver-sword and her followers, who brought about the Lord's doom. A seer once told the Spearlord that should he (the Lord) ever die, his death would be brought about "by the Sun and the Moon." The Lord scoffed at such foolish-

ness, convinced that even if the Sun and the Moon could attack him, his magic would protect him from their assault.

One day the Lord set sail from Sargelieth Zir down the Shaanda River to visit his Mhorecian lands. Using a powerful spell (provided to them, some legends say, by an Ulronai wizard), Caleryn and her comrades pierced the Lord's arcane defenses and used the First Spell Of The Crimson Ring to board the ship. Striking from surprise, they slew the Lord's trollish bodyguards and his court wizard Súrimay, and then confronted the Lord himself. But the Lord never went anywhere without his dread Spear, and as quickly as an adder strikes he laid low two of Caleryn's band.

But Caleryn herself was an experienced adventurer, a Sister of Saléa with a blade consecrated to the goddess... and her husband, Taal Lormon, was a Sunlord priest, mighty in his faith and divinely-given power. They struck together, her sword and his sun-axe plunging deep into the Lord's body. In the sky the Sun flared, and the Spear shattered, its shards falling into the waters of the Shaanda.

The Lord of the Graven Spear fell, and his fall shook the entire ship. Across his realm, his demonic servitors wailed as if with pain and vanished, and his undead minions crumbled to dust. In Sargelieth Zir the towers shook and collapsed, and the ruins sank beneath the waves, never to appear again.

THE SECOND EPOCH



Historians date the beginning of the Second Epoch to the death of the Lord of the Graven Spear and the collapse of his empire, though of course his life and deeds affected the Westerlands and Mhorecia for years to come. Deprived of their leader and his demonic support, the Lord's armies could not stand against the rebels who sprang up throughout the empire. Before long, most of the realms the Lord had overthrown and conquered re-established themselves; in other places, new realms arose in the wake of the old.

2914-3261 SE: TROLLS, EMPIRES, AND PHILOSOPHERS

The sudden absence of the Spearlord and his soldiers left the people of the Westerlands and Mhorecia free once more — but also, in many places, defenseless against raiders, bandits, and those hungry for power. In the north, raids by the Gorthunda and other barbarian tribes increased, and in many places Orcs and their kin became bold and dangerous.

2918-2921 SE: THE TROLL WARS

North and west of the Snowthorn Mountains, the Trolls of Tharnrek maintained their hold on the reins of power even after the Lord's fall due to their might in war and strange trollish magics. But the Men of Khirkovy wanted their lands back. Aided by the Vestrians, Umbrians, and the Dwarves of Deepingdelve, they attacked the Trolls in force.

For nearly three years, Men fought Trolls across the cold Khirkovy plains and in the Suralka Hills. Step by step, battle by bloody battle, they drove the Trolls back through sheer willpower and force of numbers. When they pushed the domain of Tharnrek to its traditional borders, the weary armies of Men retired from the field, leaving the Trolls to lick their wounds and nurse their grudges.

2936-3050 SE: THE RISE OF ORUMBAR

While the Drakine realms of Arduna had long since faded in power and influence, the Drakine of Mitharia were in a far different position. Having not fought a disastrous war against Men, they remained relatively powerful compared to the younger realms of Men, Leomachi, and Pakasa around them. Their kingdom of Orumbar, on the south shore of Lake Kalkana, was one of the most prosperous of the South.

But King Asukala was not content. From his golden throne in the city of Hamba'ne, he looked

out and saw himself surrounded by the upstart kingdoms of Men — Thessalonia, Veloria, and others. To his west, the Pakasa, the cat-folk, held the lands along the lower Diolaso River and exacted heavy tolls on Orumbaran trade. The incursions of other peoples into the lands claimed by the Drakine were not to be borne.

Eager for glory, Asukala assembled his armies and began a campaign of conquest. His first target was Thessalonia, to the south and east of Orumbar. The Men of Thessalonia were mostly fisher-folk, farmers, and craftsmen, no match for legions of Drakine warriors. It took only a short time for Thessalonia to become part of Orumbar.

But the rest of Orumbar's conquests were not so easy. Recognizing King Asukala's intentions, most of his other neighbors strengthened their armies and prepared for invasion. Asukala lost his life in an ultimately fruitless attempt to invade Thrayshara, but his desire for empire had infected his sons, and his son's sons. They continued his campaigns, pushing the borders of Orumbar south. Over the next century, they drove the Pakasa over the river, and conquered other kingdoms, and so the Empire of Orumbar was created.

2953 SE: NAATH KORIAN

Tornathia suffered greatly under the rule of the Lord of the Graven Spear. Accustomed to ruling themselves, the city-states of the region did not take well to the Lord's armies, and as a result he put many kings and nobles to death to enforce his commands.

After the Lord's death, power struggles consumed several of the cities, with opportunistic merchants and nobles fighting for rulership, influence, and wealth. Trade, the lifeblood of Tornathia, often suffered, and bandits and raiders were a constant threat in many places.

In the late 2940s, a group of merchant-princes, unwilling to tolerate this state of affairs, pooled their wealth and personal guards. Using their money to recruit more soldiers, hire mercenaries, and purchase the services of battle-mages such as the sorcerer Holkur, they established their dominion over all the city-states. They christened their realm Naath Korian, and themselves dukes — a ruling oligarchy determined to prevent lawlessness from crippling commerce. Their realm lasted for nearly a thousand years.

2993 SE: THE DOCTRINE OF HARGESH

But the most important event of the early Second Epoch was not a battle, or a conquest, or the establishment of a kingdom. It was the birth and life of a pious man of peace.

In 2971 SE, Hargesh was born in Marasa. Raised by a family of devout scholars, he learned to read and attended temple school to become a priest. After being ordained into the priesthood, he soon developed a reputation as a troublesome questioner and expounder of strange philosophies. Unwilling to tolerate him, his superiors sent him to an isolated monastery in the Ayn Alach.

But that proved a mistake, for monastery life gave Hargesh little to do but think and write. One day while picking olives, he received what he later described as a vision from the Blue Gods. They appeared and spoke to him, revealing esoteric wisdom. Abandoning his olives Hargesh rushed back to the monastery and spent three days writing, pausing neither to sleep nor to eat lest he forget so much as a single word of what the gods told him.

After he finished his work in 2993 SE, he had an acolyte make a copy of it, then took the original with him and set out on foot for Marasa. As he went, he preached to anyone who would listen a new doctrine. The most fundamental beliefs of the priests, and the words of the holiest books, were wrong! Hargesh now possessed the true wisdom, and he would give it willingly to any who wanted it... and force those who did not to listen, if he must.

By the time Hargesh reached Marasa, his words had caused such a furor throughout Vashkhor (and even other lands, like Shaldrin and Malekun) that the city guard met him at the gates to take him prisoner. But he spoke in a voice so loud all of them, and every craftsman and peasant watching, could hear the power of his words. "Their eyes opened to the Holy Truth," as the scholar Marwan later wrote, "they led him into the city not in chains, but in triumph."

As word spread of the Hargeshite doctrine, turmoil afflicted the land. Traditionalists quarreled with converts, and sometimes those quarrels turned violent. Seeing their power imperilled, the priesthood threatened the rulers and people with dire punishments if they did not reject and renounce the words of Hargesh. Their dire pronouncements barely stemmed the tide, though other nearby realms suppressed the Hargeshite creed (sometimes at swordpoint). Within a century, all of Vashkhor had converted to the "holy truth" of Hargesh's doctrine. He died in 3064 SE, profoundly honored throughout Vashkhor, knowing he had revealed the truth to Men, and the truth had triumphed over ignorance and doubt.

3070-3203 SE: RIPPLES IN A POND

The rise of the Hargeshite doctrine in Vashkhor did not affect just that realm. It spread to other lands, some of whom rejected it as heresy, others of whom embraced it as had Vashkhor. Disagreements between Hargeshites and traditionalists became all too frequent.

Nor did Vashkhor discourage these clashes, even when they turned violent. With the fervor of a convert, it promoted the Hargeshite philosophy both at home and abroad by building temples, funding priests to proselytize, and supplying explorers who carried the words of Hargesh across

the Baskalay River and settled new lands there.

On the other side of the Great Pass, the Sirrenic Empire did not accept the Holy Truth of Hargesh, regarding his teachings as heretical. Realizing Vashkhor would become even more aggressive in promoting the Hargeshite doctrine, the emperor and his court appealed to other realms in the area through both threats and diplomacy, and also moved the imperial capital to the more defensible (and commercially important) city of Tor Vilos. One by one, the few petty kingdoms in northeast Mhorecia that did not already belong to the empire joined the fold, preferring the protection of the Lapis Throne to the prospect of forced conversion.

But in focusing their attention on Vashkhor, the Sirrenic emperors neglected other parts of their realm. To the west, a dark wizard named Vulthar Zond, said by some to be a renegade Ulronai, made himself a power with the might of his sword-arm and his spells, founding the kingdom of Thaler Saar. In 3230 SE, the Thaleran army occupied Talorné, using strange magics to keep the Sirrenic legions at bay.

3110 SE: THE DIAMOND LORD OF INDUSHARA

In southern Mitharia, many kings had grown increasingly concerned with the empire-building campaigns of Orumbar. After 3050 SE, when Orumbar conquered the last of the realms south of the Diolaso River, the Drakine settled down for a time to consolidate their gains and rebuild their forces. For more than half a century they left Mitharia in peace, but no one had any doubt the lust for conquest would soon take them once more. In the early 3100s, when Orumbar began eyeing the lands on the other side of the Diolaso, the Indusharan and Nesharan lords responded by building up their armies, recruiting battle-mages, and strengthening ties of alliance. But one of them had a different solution in mind: fight fire with fire.

In 3110 SE, Haraj Samaresh of Halore decided that only by massing all the soldiers of Indushara into a vast army commanded by himself could he face the Orumbaran threat. Lacking the military might to conquer Vendiya and Malegyon, and not wanting to waste the lives of his soldiers, he turned to the powers of magic to achieve his aims. He invited the other haraja to a great feast. There his court wizard, the sorceress Supriya Mayanura, laid upon them a spell of control so subtle even their own court wizards could not perceive or counter it. Following an impassioned speech by Samaresh, the rulers and nobles of the other realms willingly swore fealty to him and pledged their full support to oppose the Drakine. They declared him the *Ha-Haraj*, the Diamond Lord, ruler of all Indushara.

His strategem a success, Ha-Haraj Samaresh did two things to ensure the safety of his realm. First, he negotiated a treaty of military alliance with Neshara. The Nesharans, though puzzled by his sudden ascension, could not quarrel with his logic; they had no more desire to fall under the Orumbaran yoke than the Indusharans did. Second,

he built a grand capital, Ajmur, where the Tambura River joins the Diolaso, and fortified it so that even a dozen armies of Drakine warriors would hesitate before attacking it.

Samaresh's plans and efforts succeeded — the Orumbarans never attacked Indushara or Neshara, and he and his heirs ruled as Diamond Lords for over 200 years.

3333-4914 SE: THE RISING SHADOW

In 3333 SE, a strange conjunction of the Moon and stars blotted out the Sun over all of Ambrethel. Terror and panic ensued among the common folk, and a great pall of evil fell over the minds and hearts of the mighty. The darkness passed almost as quickly as it came, but the disturbing shadow of the soul it created only faded. Only centuries later did Men learn that the Great Eclipse proclaimed the birth of Kal-Turak the Ravager, but from the moment he came into the world all evil seemed to wax in power — slowly and subtly, perhaps, but grow it did.

The signs and consequences of heightened evil were soon evident, and violence often followed in their wake. For example, in 3386 SE, a group of wizards and Hargeshite priests led Ingushel in revolt against the Sirrenic Empire, butchering women and children in the process. But the Empire itself acted little better when it re-took Talorné from Thalera-Saar in 3413 SE.

Many chroniclers and adventurers noted an increase in the activities of Orcs and orc-kin at

this time. The worst of their depredations was in northern Mitharia in 3477 SE. There the half-orc, half-ogre war chieftain Orzeg called together the elders of the Orc-clans of the Maha Torend and compelled them to obey his rule. The Orcs boiled out of their mountain warrens, descending on the Karellians who lived south of the Asha River. Those whom they did not slaughter outright became slaves. The Karellian army was unable to oppose them effectively, due to troubles elsewhere with the Dwarves of Azarthond and the Keskari barbarians, and so the Orcs kept what they had taken.

3439 SE: THE HARGESHITE DEVASTATION

But by far the greatest evil of those days was unleashed by Vashkhor to end its doctrinal dispute with its neighbors once and for all.

Having finally conquered its ancient rival Malekun and imposed upon it the Hargeshite faith, Vashkhor looked to the south, particularly to Caldiran — a traditionalist kingdom — and Shaldrin, a land where most people had adopted the Hargeshite belief. For years, Vashkhor's efforts to encourage Hargeshitism in Caldiran had failed miserably, much to the frustration of priest and king alike.

Then, in 3439 SE, a revolt broke out in Shaldrin, overthrowing the Hargeshite-leaning royal family and installing traditionalist usurpers in their place. As disturbing as this development was, King Emre's spymasters soon reported even more dire news: not only had Calidrian orchestrated and supported the revolt, but Caldiran's agents were nearly ready to unleash a similar attack on Vashkhor herself!



Emre cared little for doctrinal disputes, but he could ignore neither the righteous fury of the priests (who supported his rule) nor the unquestionable threat posed by Caldiran. With heavy heart, he agreed to the plan proposed by the *lataro* and the *shaa-robats*.

In secret, the most powerful wizards and priests of the Hargeshite faith gathered in Marasa. For five days and five nights, they cast a terrible ritual, one of such power and fury that the invoking of it slew four of them. Then they unleashed the Devastation.

For the span of a night and a day, potent magical forces ravaged Shaldrin and Caldiran. Fire rained from the heavens, and waves of virulent pestilence swept over man, beast, and plant alike. The Coroglu twisted in torment in its bed, and the proud towers of Demmeth and Adairay crashed to the ground. Hundreds of thousand of people, king and commoner alike, perished, and the very land itself was broken. To this day, the Hargeshite Devastation, as Men call it, remains a sere and unforgiving land, filled with ruins and inhabited only by a few hardy nomadic folk.

Legend says that King Emre, filled with anguish at what he had wrought, threw himself from the top of the Mhengarethian Tower. But the *Chronicles Of Vashkhor* tell nothing of this. They report simply that “the unbelievers of the south were destroyed by the fires of the gods, and the realm of Vashkhor expanded thereby.”

3519-3530 SE: THE SZARVASIA-DRAKINE WAR

Trade and territorial disputes between Szarvasia and the Drakine Realms — Basidrun, Vendrigal, and Khorrin — flared into war in the early 3500s. Ordinarily diplomats could resolve such matters, but this time the presence of Kal-Turak complicated matters (as was later learned).

When the troubles began, a stranger appeared at the Golden Court in Velkathy-Tashan. Dressed in sumptuous robes, with a countenance both fair and majestic, he said his name was Kal-Turak, and that he was a wizard of some power. Kithara, the court wizard of Szarvasia, mistrusted him, but few others shared her concerns. King Kelleman, impressed by the exotic stranger, accepted his offer to negotiate a resolution to the disputes.

Using his magics, Kal-Turak transported himself to Yvaria, where he presented himself to the king of Vendrigal in the form of a tall and noble Drakine. There he made the same offer, and it was accepted.

After several months of diplomatic foot-dragging, Kal-Turak used his necromantic Arts to create doubles of himself in both guises. Then he sent them to the appropriate courts and secretly arranged for them to be “murdered.” Each king, enraged that his “ambassador” would be so foully treated in full defiance of the law, declared war.

For ten years, battles and skirmishes flared along the Ordring River and through the Nagyrian Mountains. Major engagements were few, though Kelleman’s army and war-wizards threatened

Chiref, Tallarsa, and Yvaria on occasion, and the Drakine burned Banska-Morav. After King Athor of Khorrin was slain in battle in 3530 SE, the Drakine sued for peace; the Szarvasians, weakened by the fighting and sick of war, agreed, asking only for minor concessions.

3927 SE: SPIDER-DEMONS IN MITHARIA

Early in the fortieth century, the wizard and spider demon-worshipping priest Yargeth received a holy command from his foul arachnine gods. They wished to destroy the holy relics in the Grand Cathedral at Capell, capital of Brabantia, as the first step toward conquering Mitharia. They commanded him to perform the task. Assembling a host of spider demons and other foul creatures, Yargeth transported his army into the city, where it wreaked great havoc on the surprised populace.

The Cathedral would surely have fallen, for none of the Brabantians could stand against the spider demons, and Yargeth’s magic shielded his host from the powers of the sacred ground. But it happened that a group of bold adventurers, the Thurgandian Wanderers, was passing through on its way south. Mustering their blades and spells, the Wanderers took up the conflict against the demons, slaying four of them before the enemy knew what was happening. Yargeth tried to keep his forces focused, but in a rage they turned on the Wanderers. The adventurers withdrew, slowly leading the demons away from the Cathedral... and then they struck back with strength, combining holy powers with mystic might to destroy the fiends. The Cathedral, and indeed all Mitharia, was saved. Yargeth fled and has not been seen since; it’s thought the spider-demons he worshipped dragged him to the Netherworld to live out his life in shrieking torment.

4561 SE: ANGAROTH THE DEFILER

In 4561 SE, the most powerful chieftain the Ulg-hroi have ever seen rose to power. Known in Arduna as Angaroth the Defiler for his habit of desecrating every Blue temple and chapel he could find, he led a great force of his people south on a great raid for plunder and sacrifices. With him at their head, the Ulg-hroi crossed the Evling and descended on the western lands of the Sirrenic Empire, and the Lord of the Devils revelled in the blood and carnage they strewed in their path. Garelsketh and Inmarr both fell to the devil-possessed Ulg-hroi warriors before the Sirrenic Legions turned them aside with sheer force of numbers. They followed the Little Evling and Evling almost all the way to the Sea, but then crossed over and ravaged Tyrantium and the Drachenloch Hills.

Then the horde turned west, into the Valician Hills. With greater speed than anyone could imagine, they rode through the hills and into Valicia, where they looted Tirion before heading north through the pass and back into the North. With the last of their strength they sacked Waymeet, slaughtering their hated Gorthunda foes by the hundreds. Their evil work done, they rode hard and fast to the east, back to their ancestral lands where the



rest of their people awaited them. The Gorthunda tribes followed on their heels, hot for revenge, but the magic and trickery of the Ulg-hroi shamans got Angaroth and his followers home safely, where not even the Gorthunda dare to go.

4841 SE: THE SCARLET PLAGUE

In 4841 SE, a terrible plague struck the lands of Kumasia. Beginning at Adakh, it quickly worked its way south as far as the Okura River. Its victims broke out in scarlet, boil-like eruptions and experienced fever and great pain; well over half of them died of it, and the curing-spells of the priests seemed oddly weak and ineffective against it.

The plague spread to Tornathia and southern Mitharia, but rulers there were forewarned and used priests and wizards to keep the epidemic from spreading too far. By 4843 SE, it died away for good even in Kumasia, leaving Keshman, Korem-Var, and Thordar to rebuild their shattered trade networks.

4915-4999 SE: THE LOOMING SHADOW

After centuries of study and practice, and working his evil in secret and through pawns, Kal-Turak was at long last ready to reveal himself to all the world, declaring his intention to bring all of Ambrethel under his rule.

In 4915 SE, an earthquake shook the world — though its effects were mostly felt in Arduna, the Mitharians and Thūnese experienced tremors, too. Priests and spellcasters around the world simultaneously felt intense mystic agony. They soon learned the cause of the disaster: using long-lost spells of great and terrible power, Kal-Turak had raised his Wall, cutting off the furthest North from the rest of Arduna.

But that was not all. After teleporting into the heart of the land he'd claimed, Kal-Turak used his spells and demonic servitors to build Darkspire. Almost overnight, a vast and awesome tower came to look out over the North... and down over the rest of the world. Now all of Ambrethel knew the name of Kal-Turak, and his intentions were as obvious as his tower: he would make all the world his domain, and all its people his slaves.

Power attracts those who wish to wield it themselves. Over the next several decades, Orcs, Orc-kin, and evil Men, Dwarves, Elves, and Drakine journeyed north, found ways to climb or go around the Wall, and came to Turakia to serve Kal-Turak. Soon it seemed that all the evil of the world was coalescing around Darkspire like a storm.

5000 SE: AMBRETHEL TODAY

The year is now 5000 of the Second Epoch. Since raising Darkspire, Kal-Turak has been quiet, but turmoil and unrest have risen in the world. Ogres, Orcs, monsters, and bandits have become more active and bold than ever, attacking villages and towns as well as groups of travelers. Kings and armies have grown restless, and ancient rivalries and enmities have surfaced anew, sometimes in greater strength than ever before. And all Ambrethel waits to see what Kal-Turak will do next.

Into this world step your heroes.

TURAKIAN AGE TIMELINE



Unknown: Men arise on the southern shore of the Sea of Mhorec and establish their first civilization. The Drakine try to conquer Men, leading in time to the Great Migration when Men spread throughout the world, encountering Dwarves, Elves, and other peoples along the way.

1-2853: THE FIRST EPOCH

1-300: Four kingdoms emerge in the Westerlands: Iluria, Carshalt, Amardan, and Storvak. In Mhorecia, several small kingdoms arise in the Sirrenic lands to the north of the great Sea, while Vashkhor, Caldiran, Shaldrin, and other realms are founded between the mountains.

302: Thronek, one of the greatest spellcasters of the First Epoch, raises his great tower in the western Snowthorns, and through the power of his magic soon dominates the surrounding lands. The Trolls of Tharnrek pay him tribute and serve him gladly; Men and Dwarves accept his “rule” less gladly, but lack the strength to oppose him.

328: King Horgel the Golden of Carshalt raises an army to attack and destroy Thronek. Thronek calls for parley, and then, before the horrified eyes of Horgel’s retainers, slays him with the Spell of Withering. Thronek then unleashes his trollish and orcish hordes, backed by many undead servants, against the Carshaltan knights, slaying and dispersing them. Horgel’s attack fails miserably, leading in the coming decades to the splintering of Carshalt into many small kingdoms and principalities. Thronek maintains his power for many years to come.

388: The people of the Sirrenic lands defeat the Drakine at the Battle of Two Rivers.

412: Led by Belioth Farwalker, a group of Men cross the Ayn Alach. After Belioth is slain by Goblins, his son Vornak becomes leader, eventually defeating the Goblins and then exploring further south.

415: Vornak dies of an infected wound.

434: An alliance of Westerland realms attacks Thronek, who flees his tower and becomes forever lost to history.

504-06: The Gorthunda cross the Evling River to raid the Sirrenic lands.

514-923: The expansion of the Ilurian Empire

596-601: War between Amardan and the Orcs of the Greyward Mountains leaves Amardan weakened.

674: Blight ruins the Amardanian grain crop; King

Tedor of Iluria sends aid as a pretext for effectively taking over much of Amardan.

c. 750: By this time, Amardan has ceased to exist; most of its people now swear fealty to Iluria, but others to Storvak.

757-766: War between Ledris and Shaldrin; Shaldrin wins due to its superior archers and the assistance of the wizard Ambernaud.

783-812: With the help of his court wizard, Calmir, and the dwarven enchanter and engineer Vorgan Mage-Smith, King Egin tears down and rebuilds Iluria, the seat of his empire, making it one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

784: The kingdom of Tavrosel falls to the kingdom of Nishera.

821-857: The Sharthak of the Vornakkian Gulf raid along the Khorian coast and up Khorian rivers, even attacking Marasa.

839: The Vashkhorans deliver a bloody defeat to Ventati raiders plaguing their lands, sending them back to their highland strongholds.

883: King Bohdan of Kaylind kidnaps the children of King Venaman of Nathair and buries them alive beneath the city of Anlar Tel.

920: King Banako of Korlothia begins planning for the Drakine Wars.

924-928: The Drakine Wars pit Man against Drakine. The Drakine attack destroys the Ilurian Empire (and the city of Iluria itself), but they over-extend themselves and expend too much of their power. Men strike back, eventually driving the Drakine deep back into their own lands, beginning the decline of the Drakine as a power in Arduna.

927: The warrior-woman Anarra slays the dragon Tharganel Zeth and founds the realm of Tyrantium.

939: Stavros of Fellburg becomes the last Emperor of Iluria; after his death in 951, the Empire falls apart completely.

953-2768: Golden Age of Arduna.

1102: The first Thûnese ship to visit Arduna docks at Aarn.

1218: The priest Sanhedrin writes *The Skyfather’s Wont*.

1389: The independent Duchy of Mezendria is absorbed into Dalamgar.

1435: The priestess Thoraina finds the Talisman of the Twisted God in the ruins of Iluria.

1588: King Axurin of Shar dies of a mysterious

fever, and the Council Of Shadows takes over rulership of the realm.

1749: The realm of Storvak falls due to civil war and internal dissension.

1752: The Nataka overthrow and replace the Kes-hatar in Kumasias.

1765: Dumos Brazov begins the founding of the realm of Khirkovy; he's crowned its king in 1782 FE.

1858: Tarsellan the Pious brings the High Faith to Dragosani.

1876: Bretha loses the land of Ingushel to Brindazia.

1943: Grand Duke Felric of Odellia conquers Colgrave and establishes the kingdom of Vestria. Over the next two decades he conquers Farlothian, Skeld, and Toreth as well.

2112: The Slaves' Revolt in Talarshand. Anselon the Bold and some escaped slaves from Talarshand found Eltirian.

2119: Talarshand battles Eltirian, but loses.

2135-2178: Brindazia loses Ingushel to Nathair, then regains it.

2143: King Skairben of Heltica sells Vanerof to Duke Ulhamric Kielmar, who becomes its king.

2208: The six nobles of Halore band together and declare their independence from Vendiya.

2238-2240: War breaks out between the Sharians and the Black Goblins.

2346: Tavrosel successfully revolts against Nishera.

2346: Hlostin dies, willing Hlostin's Armor to his former apprentice Gaynelle.

2443-2470: Selvaine Aliere rules Umbr. Over the next hundred years, he and his sons expand the realm, conquering Derathon and Jevrain, until Umbr controls the land from the Greyward Mountains to the shores of Lake Beralka.

2465: King Alachar of Monselica conquers Brindazia and founds the Sirrenic Empire.

2467: The Sirrenic Empire conquers Berruna.

2483: Vanerof conquers Heltica.

2506-10: Umbr wars with Dalamgar, taking from it Mezendria

2537: The wizard Vashtori begins his great work of collecting, cataloguing, and revising the spells of the arcana of Conjuraton.

2560: Sitherian conquers Telvadar.

2563: Vanerof conquers Brabantia.

2579: The Kuru slaves of Kurum-Sathiri revolt.

2607: Trolls, Giants, and other creatures from the Trollscarp attack Azarthond.

2611: Vanerof conquers Eldrasan.

2618: Talarshand battles Eltirian, but loses.

2646: The Fire-King conquers Zhor Cacimar and rules it for nearly thirty years; refugees from the city found Halathaloom.

2712: The Teretha kings choose Volkar as their first High King.

2768-2808: The Golden Age ends in a period of increasing strife and ominous portents.

2777: War between the Dwarves of Gendersbad and the Orcs of the Greyward Mountains.

2786: The dragon Intravius destroys the town of Amberleaf.

2800: The Trolls of Tharnrek conquer part of central Khirkovy.

2809: The Lord of the Graven Spear is born.

2813: Saradar the Builder begins constructing the city of Uur.

2814: Tassar Danyor Brazov dies in battle against Trolls, bringing the House of Brazov to an end.

2827-2853: The Lord of the Graven Spear, a powerful warrior with a demonic weapon and the backing of powerful magic, tries to take over the world. He slaughters most of the Ulronai, pronouncing a dreadful curse of untrustworthiness on the few survivors, and then completes his conquest of the Westerlands by 2834 SE. From 2836 SE to 2840 SE he takes Tornathia and Mhorecia, then creates Sargeloth Zir and settles down to rule. He rules until 2853 SE, when a band of adventurers slays him.

2834-2837: War breaks out between the Sharians and the Black Goblins.

2854-Present: THE SECOND EPOCH

2883: Verlichten begins several years of fruitless warring against Thurgandia.

2918-2921: The Troll Wars. Men retake the conquered Khirkovy lands from the Trolls of Tharnrek and push them back to their traditional borders.

2892: The Grand Duke of Fellburg attacks Thurgandia and seizes much land; a decade of war follows, in which the Thurgandians gradually push the forces of Fellburg back to that land's traditional borders.

2920: Vanerof loses Brabantia to Ostravia.

2929: Sitheria conquers Khirusulia and Eldrasan (taking the latter from Vanerof at the Battle of Cedisa Woods).

2936-3050: King Asukala of Orumbar begins a campaign of conquest that eventually turns the kingdom into an empire.

2960: Bretha conquers Hrastarin, but the king escapes and engineers a return to power within 20 years.

2953: A group of nobles takes over Tornathia and establishes the realm of Naath Korian.

2971: Hargesh the Philosopher is born in Marasa.

2993: Hargesh begins promoting his new doctrine, and it sweeps through Vashkhor over the next century.

3041: Baron Arbel Sheridar kills his chief rivals and creates the kingdom of Keldravia.



3064: Hargesh dies.

3070-3203: Concerned about the threat of possible Vashkhorian expansion and proselytization, the Sirrenic Empire moves its capital to Tor Vilos and absorbs into itself, through conquest or diplomacy, all the remaining independent kingdoms of north-eastern Mhorecia.

3110: Samaresh of Halore takes control of Vendiya and Malegyon with magic, becoming the Diamond Lord of Indushara.

3111: The Men of Pharonia revolt against Orumbar, but are defeated.

3123-37: Besruhan conquers Rheshian.

3154: Vulthar Zond conquers the kingdom of Thalera-Saar from the Sirrenic Empire.

3187-3261: Increasing conflict between Vestria and Khirkovy over control of Toreth and Skeld. Several battles occur, culminating in the Battle of Baltaros, where the Vestrian army defeats the Khirkovy knights. King Dorgal of Vestria erects the Battle-Stone, an enormous monolith, at the site of the battle to mark the border between the two kingdoms.

3200s: Men from Vashkhor carry the Hargeshite doctrine into the lands north of the Baskalay River and found new realms there.

3212: T'allissa Darkveil claims to have stolen the Screaming Staff of Madwyl from the treasure-vault of a Basidrunian nobleman.

3222: Keldravia attacks Umbr, capturing the Ymordan Hills and other territories east of the Whitburn River.

3230: Thalera-Saar conquers Talorné.

3245: Sitheria conquers Haloreth.

3247-49: Conflict among the Devyldran tribes results in the leader of the Sdana family becoming the first *harin*, or king, of Devyldra.

3254: The line of King Dorzhan of Ezakiraly dies out; House Boldisar takes the throne, renaming the realm Szarvasia.

3260: Lurmosh returns home and begins uniting the Orcs of Kumasia.

3261: The Battle of Baltaros establishes the border between Vestria and Khirkovy.

3262: The Orcs of the southern Thraysha Mountains and the Kumasi Jungle unite under Lurmosh and come down to the lowlands to found the realm of Thordar.

3264: The Battle of the Okura — the Orcs under Lurmosh repulse an attempt by Keshman to conquer their new realm.

3297: Sitheria inherits Orholt.

3333: A strange eclipse portends great evil for Ambrethel. It is later learned that Kal-Turak was born at the moment of the eclipse.

3346: Wyndara Blaitheclock and her companions go to slay the dragon Methvegar, and never return.

3351: Vanerof conquers Brabantia from Ostravia.

3352: Algashar, an adventuring sorcerer, discovers and breaks the spells of the Diamond Lord of Indushara, freeing Malegyon and Vendiya from his control. To avert war, the haraj of Halore pays an enormous ransom to both realms.

3355: Velkara invades and conquers Temirec.

3360: Malegyon conquers the folk of the Makari Plains.

3377: House Vorstenbrock dies out; House Brandhame becomes the kings of Thurgandia.

3386: Ingushel revolts against the Sirrenic Empire and wins its freedom.

3400s: Besruhan extends its borders by conquering the lands around Evasli and Locaria, and builds a new city at Two Rivers.

3413: The Sirrenic Empire retakes Talorné from Thalera-Saar in a series of bloody battles.

3439: Vashkhor unleashes the Hargeshite Dev-

astation after non-Hargeshite Caldiran successfully engineers a traditionalist revolt in mostly Hargeshite Shaldrin.

3448: Talarshand battles Eltirian, but loses.

3449-3462: The Time of Twelve Kings in Eltirian.

3477-3481: The sorcerer Algashar secretly takes control of the royal family of Umbr, using them to enrich and aggrandize himself.

3477: Led by Orzeg, the Orcs of the northern Maha Torend swarm over south Karellia, conquering it and renaming it Vorash.

3477: Vashkhor conquers Malekun.

3487: Vasak of the Seventeen Stones dies.

3490: Orzeg of Vorash is stabbed to death by a jealous she-Orc, plunging the realm into orcish anarchy.

3493: Under the leadership of King Herne “the Liberator,” Brabantia wins its freedom from Vanerof.

3511: Wars between the kingdoms of Thurgandia and Verlichten drain Verlichten’s coffers and manpower. In desperation, Verlichten sells a Charter of Free City to Aarn to gather the funds to hire mercenaries. But the mercenaries fail, and Verlichten, now shorn of its greatest source of revenue (Aarnese taxes), soon falls to Thurgandia and becomes a barony of it.

3519-3530: Szarvasia and the Drakine Realms go to war over territorial disputes concerning land along the Ordring River.

3528-3531: War breaks out between the Sharians and the Black Goblins.

3538: An earthquake destroys much of the city of Arvalis; the wizard Storgrim oversees its rebuilding.

3557: Trolls, Giants, and other creatures from the Trollscarp attack Azarthond.

3561: Sitheria conquers Ryclif.

3571: Someone steals Hlostin’s Armor from the son of Sir Arszet.

3578: The wizard Sicard uses his newly-discovered “anti-magic” to slay the evil sorcerer Lothuor during Duel Arcane in the streets of Sollare.

3587: King Wolfgang of Thurgandia conquers Fellburg.

3614: Orcs and Orc-kin from Vorash attack Teretheim, and are repulsed.

3642: Besruhan invades Hrastarin.

3643: The Mhendarian Palatinate conquers Khel-ebria.

3644: Besruhan’s conquest of Hrastarin is complete, but Velkara invades, repulses the weakened Besruhani army, and takes Hrastarin for itself.

3656: The priest Andross founds the Anvilites.

3662: The people of Sorinsarsoun revolt against the rule of Shar.

3683: Brescar’s Fleet attacks Thûn and is destroyed.

3711: Velkara invades and conquers Nurenthia.

3714: Eldrasan wins its freedom from Sitheria with the help of Vanerof, effectively becoming part of Vanerof once more.

3717-3720: Sitheria invades Neshara, but is eventually stopped and driven out.

3732-34: King Rezor of Szarvasia conquers Nagyria.

3763-3775: King Utraic V’aareb of Thalera-Saar conquers and rules northern Tyrandium and the Drachenloch Hills.

3783: The guilds of Zhor Cacimar overthrow the king and establish the Guild Council to rule the city.

3803-3810: Sitheria tries, and fails, to conquer lands on the Baghlan Plateau.

3811: Ortarses the Great becomes king of Halathaloom.

3812: Besruhan invades and conquers Cheldar.

3812-3834: The Imres Regency in Vestria. Duke Gervinus of Farlothian effectively usurps the throne. When the true king, Hubard, comes of age in 3829, he fights and defeats Gervinus to reclaim the realm.

3812: Vashkhor conquers Ledris.

3817: Velkara invades and conquers Temirec.

3819: Imbroce leads a revolt in Hrastarin and frees it from Velkara.

3847: Troll-King Gelljod opens Tharnrek to the world and begins trading with the realms of Men.

3849: A trade war between two of the Dukes of Naath Korian turns into a real war. Within two years, the Dukes have so weakened themselves that the city-states they rule rise up and slay them. Their freedom restored, the cities form the Tornathian League so they can better protect themselves from invaders and other threats.

3872: A band of Elves, led by Melurashondar, takes refuge from a horde of Hargeshite fanatics in the forest that will become known as Melurashondar’s Retreat.

3874: Emperor Valagarn of the Sirrenic Empire abdicates and builds Valagarn’s Watch.

3879: Talarshand battles Eltirian, but loses.

3880-3887: The *Haraji* of the Stranglers in Vendiya.

3920-4041: Vashkhor conquers and rules Sedrosa, eventually abandoning it as too difficult to rule.

3927: The wizard and spider demon priest Yargeth attacks Capell in Brabantia with a host of spider-demon warriors, hoping to steal and destroy the holy relics kept in the Grand Cathedral there as a prelude to conquering central Mitharia. He fails when a band of adventurers, the Thurgandian Wanderers, helps the city’s priesthood defeat him.

3943: A terrible plague strikes Shar, leading to the Compact Of Ghouls.

3987: The wizard Methren is known to possess Vasak’s Battlestone.

4011: Aarn erects the colossus Avalar to commemorate the 500th anniversary of gaining its freedom.

4030-4035: The Devyldrans conquer the peoples of the Devyldra Plain.

4031: Darazian Silverfist founds the Golden Basilisk order of paladinhood.

4037: Khrisulia wins its freedom from Sitheria; Ansgar the wizard becomes its king.

4061-4063: War breaks out between the Sharians and the Black Goblins.

4067: Lahia of Halathaloom discovers *thakra*-root.

4069: King Uredon of Keldravia is killed in battle against Umbr.

4110: The Sorcerer's War in Eltirian.

4111: Orcs and Orc-kin from Vorash attack Teretheim, and are repulsed.

4133-38: Agoston's Interregnum: A renegade Szarvasian adventurer, Agoston the Usurper, conquers Aarn, kills many of its nobles, and rules it for five years.

4138: Vashkhor conquers Kozahn.

4156: The warrior Ullshazzar and his companions slay the dragon Methvegar.

4189: Eldrasan gains its freedom from Vanerof with the aid of Ansgar the Khrisulian, who gives its new king, Krelis Vargestri, five powerful magic items to help him maintain his realm's independence.

4213: The wizard Methren leaves Vasak's Battlestone to his son Gebaral, who gives it to his wizard-ess wife Vellissa as a wedding present.

4216: Vanerof conquers Brabantia.

4225: Ulg-hroi and Gorthunda raids into Thaler Saar (and to a lesser extent, the Sirrenic Empire) increase. King Murgeth builds the Thaleran Wall, anchored by the great fortresses Tirevoth and Tirevarim, to protect his people.

4225: Berruna revolts against the Sirrenic Empire.

4240: Gebaral, Vellissa, and Vasak's Battlestone are lost on an expedition into the Sunless Realms.

4267-68: The House of Aliere dies out, plunging Umbr into civil war. Duke (later King) Gestren of Umbr makes Mezendria and Mircasëa independent realms after their dukes aid his quest for the throne.

4268: Velkara invades and conquers Temirec.

4295-99: Besruhan invades and conquers Neldacar.

4300s, early: A series of revolts in the south rocks Vashkhor, but the rebelling regions are eventually brought bloodily to heel by the hierakte's armies.

4355: The elven adventurer-mage Melcathrianion is lost on an expedition into the Sunless Realms, taking the Screaming Staff of Madwyl with him.

4367: War between Tharnrek and Deepingdelve; the Dwarves claim a pyrrhic victory after the Battle

of the Frigid Peaks.

4368: Vanerishadra's War in Elvenholme; Elvenking Tirailioarestunar is slain, and his son Tirion-sathymar succeeds him.

4382: A group of wizards including Ghemrunil of Besruhan and Zalmorren the Falconer founds Arutha.

4389: The Priests' War in the Sirrenic Empire.

4392: Vashkhor conquers Eldali.

4400s: Mezendria effectively comes under the rule of Keldravia, until Umbr manipulates events behind the scenes to get the Mezendrians to reassert their independence.

4404: Vashkhor builds Axairion.

4423-4427: Korem-Var breaks away from Keshman.

4433-4441: Duke Basantian of Khelth holds Emperor Roghius of the Sirrenic Empire a virtual prisoner in the imperial palace, effectively ruling the realm in his stead.

4456-4462: The first major war between the Sirrenic Empire and Vashkhor.

4457: Thaler Saar tries and fails to conquer Talorné again.

4475: The Battle of the Ymordan Hills: Mezendria defeats Keldravia and reasserts its independence.

4502: The magically-extended life of King Ansgar of Khrisulia finally comes to an end... but then he returns to life as a lich and continues to rule the realm.

4518: The Geshreth *sahisha* displaces the Chelgen *sahisha* to become rulers of Vendrigal.

4522: Agotha the Warrior Queen of Szarvasia conquers Izmiria.

4527: The people of Andovern discover some rich silver mines in the nearby hills.

4529: With the aid of the Dwarves of Korregdar, Brabantia wins its freedom from Vanerof.

4532: Heltica and Rosskeld win their freedom from Vanerof.

4536: Talarshand battles Eltirian, but loses.

4561: Angaroth the Defiler leads the Ulg-hroi on a war of destruction and plunder through the Sirrenic Empire, Tyrandium, Valicia, and the Gorthundan Steppes before returning home to enjoy his ill-gotten riches.

4568: War occurs between Teretheim and Garaktora, but ends with a peaceful parley.

4570: Hierakte Torzel builds Cahsu Malesh.

4571: Emperor Trecothian the Mad of Besruhan invades Velkara and suffers a terrible defeat. The Senators' Revolt occurs, ending the rule of the emperors of Besruhan.

4578: Prince Marekon of the Sirrenic Empire conspires with the Gorthunda in an effort to seize the throne.

4611: King Lormar of Heltica gives Rosskeld to Menhrod as his own kingdom.

4612-25: Valicia effectively becomes part of Keldravica when the queen, a Keldravian princess, secretly uses magic to manipulate her husband into handing power over to her father.

4618: Calikorian of Valicia dies shortly after giving the Tablets of Zaranthu to the Sithian Lorehouse.

4632: Orc artist and engineer Rônag begins building the city of Quellesh.

4634: The dragon Skarm attacks and destroys the city of Eliakar near the northern marches of the Sirrenic Empire, taking all of its wealth to increase his hoard and creating his Desolation.

4634: Noreg tries to unite the folk of Vorash under his rule, and largely succeeds.

4641: Noreg dies, and his “realm” falls back into orcish anarchy.

4652-4654: Devyldra and Halathaloorm fight a war.

4689-4702: The Gorthunda overrun much of the northern Westerlands, conquering and ruling Khirkovy for a time, and wreaking great devastation in Vestria and parts of the Carshaltan lands.

4690: King Hazerac II enacts the Third Perpetual Law of Eltirian.

4712: A terrible storm strikes Aarn, causing great destruction.

4717: King Vhorlac Thaar of Thalera-Saar forges the enchanted sword Korrm.

4734: Velkara invades and conquers Temirec.

4758: Shalathcar the Reformer discovers and routs out corruption among the Talarshandi priesthood.

4758: Battle of Mossy Valley in Fellburg. A marauding band of Orcs nearly obliterates the forces of Duke Fredick; the Duke and survivors escape over a river with the aid of Gorbadel's Spell Of Water-Walking.

4758: The Monster War occurs in Ostravia when monsters led by the fire giant Grenjar Darkbeard ravage the land, only to finally suffer defeat at the hands of King Garlach.

4773-75: The Wolf-Winters occur in Vestria, killing both Men and animals with their bitter cold.

4781-4783: The second major war between the Sirrenic Empire and Vashkhor. It ends with the Battle of Bretha Plain, which establishes the boundary between the Sirrenic Empire and Vashkhor.

4783: Kiralak the Protector builds the outermost wall of Kurum-Sathiri.

4798-4814: Vasukay cures a plague in Malegyon and becomes its *de facto* ruler, but is finally revealed to be a rakshasa who caused the plague in the first place.

4812: King Valeraine of Umbr founds the Knights of the Fiery Star.

4814-4847: Nobles' Council's interregnum in Sedrosa.

4817: The Eltiriani priest Angalac suffers a terrible fall, and has to give up his ownership of the Talisman of the Twisted God so other priests can use healing magic to save his life.

4818: Troll-King Forbai sacks the city of Ossani and wars against Khirkovy inconclusively.

4833: Sa'akiv the Red Necromancer erects the Tower of Bone and claims the Whispering Waste for his own.

4841: The Scarlet Plague strikes Kumasia.

4850: Rosskeld and Azarthond go to war briefly over mining rights.

4870: Orcs and Orc-kin from Vorash attack Teretheim, and are repulsed.

4872: The Serpent-Men attack Halore.

4888: Thalera-Saar tries and fails to conquer Talorné again.

4889: A rebellion occurs in northern Vashkhor, only to be put down violently by the hierakte's armies.

4893: The Goblins of the Roga Hills attack Karellia.

4902: Sargath the Vampire Lord takes over Dragosani.

4915: Kal-Turak reveals himself and his intentions to the world by creating his Wall and raising Darkspire. Many Orcs, Goblins, and evil folk flock to his banner; for them he builds Gorgashtar and Vithoomshoraz.

4926: The Seven Sorcerers conquer Vûran.

4928: Trolls, Giants, and other creatures from the Trollscarps attack Azarthond.

4934: The Dragonriders of Ka'Rûk attack Zhor Cacimar, but are driven off with the help of a band of adventurers.

4939: Tassar Faddan of Khirkovy nearly dies of illness.

4946-4963: Zhargaron's Fist takes over Sitheria and rules it until deposed by King Dorénick.

4956-4959: War breaks out between the Sharians and the Black Goblins.

4964: Talarshand battles Eltirian, but loses.

4991: King Valvarus declares Khepras's “independence” from Vashkhor. Hierakte Sairhan sends troops north who destroy Ellassa, kill Valvarus and all his kin, and leave Khepras an anarchic wasteland.

4993: Larren launches his effort to reform the Heltican High Church.

4996: Kaddar ascends to the throne of Vendiya, but dies the same year; his *harasha* (queen), Upala, takes the throne after his death.

4998: All four children of King Irrus of Thrayshara die in a boating accident.

4999: King Zemmon of Eldrasan dies; his bastard son Vassilus, a former stableboy, takes the throne.

chapter two:



COMMONERS AND KINGS THE PEOPLES OF AMBRETHEL



The most numerous by far of the Greater Races, Men live throughout the world — from the cold lands near Kal-Turak's Wall to the steaming swamps and jungles of Vornakkia and Kumasia, from the rich shores of Vestria to the high peaks of the mountains. Their adaptability and ability to turn their hands to virtually any type of skill or task gives them power that even the other Greater Races lack.

While all Men are basically the same, there are several distinctive races of them living in Ambrethel. In addition to the barbarian races (page 184), these are:

WESTERLANDERS

Westerlanders, the children of Ordon according to their most ancient legends, live in Arduna in the lands west of the Valician Hills and the Drakine and Ironheart Mountains. During the First Epoch they crossed the Serpentine Sea and settled throughout Mitharia, primarily in the regions north of Lake Kalkana.

Westerlanders have fair skin, and tend to be tall compared to other races of Men. Their hair comes in all shades, though some are distinctive to certain regions. For example, most Szarvasians have dark, wavy hair; Tornathian hair is similarly dark, but curly instead of wavy. Lighter shades — blonde and red — mostly appear in Mhendaria, Vestria, Umbr, and Khirkovy. The men are as likely to be clean-shaven as bearded, and most women wear their hair long (shoulder-length, at least).

For Westerlander men, the typical garb is a shirt, or a tunic falling no further than the knee, trews, and shoes or boots; the colder the weather, the heavier the clothes. Women wear long-skirted single-piece dresses, or long skirt and blouse combinations. Both genders add a cloak in cold or wet weather; men (and some women) may also wear a doublet/jacket, a vest, and/or a hood at various times.

Among the common folk, clothes usually have little coloration and are tailored for sturdiness as much as anything. The wealthy and noble may wear elaborate clothing in multiple colors made of the most expensive fabrics and materials imaginable (sumptuary laws may even forbid some persons from wearing certain colors of types of clothes).

MHORECIANS

The Mhorecians are Men who live in the lands around the Sea of Mhorec — or more broadly, between the Valician Hills/Drakine Mountains/Ironheart Mountains and the Tabriz Mountains and Skyclaws. It's a rich land of fertile fields and many rivers. The Drakine once ruled most of it, but their power faded after the Drakine Wars, and except for Seldrion they no longer have kingdoms here.

Northern Mhorecians, including the Tyrandines, Thalerans, and inhabitants of the Sirrenic Empire, look and dress much like Westerlanders, though their skins are a little darker of hue. In the southern Mhorecian lands, such as Besruhan and Velkara, the garb tends to resemble that of the Khorians more than the Westerlanders, though Khorian-style robes cut short to the length of Westerlander tunics are not unknown. Some kingdoms, such as Temirec, have their own fashions.

KHORIAN

The children of Khor, the Khorians live in the land now called Vashkhor, between the Tabriz Mountains and Skyclaws and the towering peaks of the Ayn Alach. They have tan or brownish-colored skin, usually lighter in shade than that of the Indusharans except when darkened by the sun. Women are often slightly lighter-skinned than men. Both genders have black hair and dark eyes. Men usually have beards and moustaches — bushy (and often unkempt) ones among the peasantry, carefully trimmed, oiled, and sometimes dyed ones for the rich and noble. Priests (of whom there are many in Khorian lands) shave their heads and faces.

The typical Khorian garb is a sort of robe; in northern regions, it's heavy and made of darker cloth, in the south it's lighter and usually white or tan. Men's robes are double-breasted, tied with elaborate sashes or belts (you can often tell a man's status, and perhaps his profession, from the type of sash he wears), and long- or short-sleeved depending on the climate. Women's robes are always sleeveless, and button or tie down the front (for commoners) or back (for women who have maids), and may be daringly cut if desired. (In cold weather, women wear a sort of wrap, made of heavy cloth or fur, around their shoulders and arms.) Women demonstrate status not only with the richness and stylishness of their robes, but by wearing lots of jewelry; the only jewelry Khorian men wear is finger-rings. Sandals are common footwear in the south; shoes and boots in the north.

VORNAKKIANS

Vornakkians live in the region of the same name, from the north of Shar to Cape Farewell at the tip of the Vornakkian Peninsula. Its people have the coloration of the Khorians, though sometimes with lighter shades of hair and eyes, but their garb differs. In Shar and Sorinsarsoun, women wear clothing similar to that of Westerlander women, while men dress in calf-length tunics, boots, and distinctive vests (often with ornate embroidery or other decorations). Both men and women wear jewelry.

In Vûran, the basic garb is similar for both men and women — a single-piece, ankle-length tunic — but with two differences that distinguish

the genders. First, the men's tunic is shapeless and belted at the waist, while the women's is cut to fit the figure and never belted. Second, by the decree of the Seven Sorcerers, Vûranese men can only wear clothing in colors of blue, green, and brown, and women in white, yellow, black, and orange (red in all shades is reserved for the Sorcerers themselves, and their servants).

The garments of the Peninsula vary from city-state to city-state. For example, the Talarshandi are known for wearing mostly green and yellow garb, while the elaborately-decorated Cacimarian clothing comes in a rainbow of colors. Due to the hot, humid weather of the Peninsula, clothing tends to be light in all but formal situations; some commoners wear little (or nothing) most of the time.

THÛNESE

As with so many other things, the Thûnese look and dress in a way that sets them apart from the other Men of Ambrethel. Despite their tropical home, they have pallid skins which they protect from the fierce Thûnese sun by wearing long garments: typically, for both genders, a long, light-colored tunic, pants or a skirt, and a distinctively-shaped hats made of woven reeds (or like materials). Slaves, almost always of other races, wear much less — often just a loincloth and perhaps a light, short tunic.

Thûnese sorcerer-priests wear long robes made of rich material, embroidered with arcane runes and holy symbols in two panels running down each side of the body. Red, green, black, and gold are the colors used for the robes. They cover their heads with featureless skullcaps.

KUMASIAN

The Kumasians — the Men of Keshman and Korem-Var — are a strange race, thought by some to be a blend of western Westerlander, Tornathian, and Indusharan. They are a sort of coppery-brown skinned people often described as exotic-looking by Ardunans; it's said in the Westerlands that a man who takes a Kumasian wife will have luck and prosperity all his days. Their hair tends to be dark, but sometimes an unusual reddish-auburn shade called *imbeth*. Their eyes are also dark in most cases.

Kumasian men wear pants and a loose shirt- or tunic-type upper garment called a *shikadi*; usually it's left open in front, making it as much a sort of billowy vest as a tunic. Younger Kumasian women wear, by the standards of most peoples, shockingly little — their upper garment is a short vest-like thing, and their lower a small, kilt-like skirt. Both pieces of clothing are often elaborately colored, embroidered, decorated, or cut as a way of showing off the wearer's taste, wealth, and figure. When they get older, Kumasian women wear loose, flowing single-piece dresses (a sort of long *shikadi* that doesn't open in front). Both genders wear sandals or go barefoot in the interior, but favor shoes or boots in the chillier northern coastal regions.

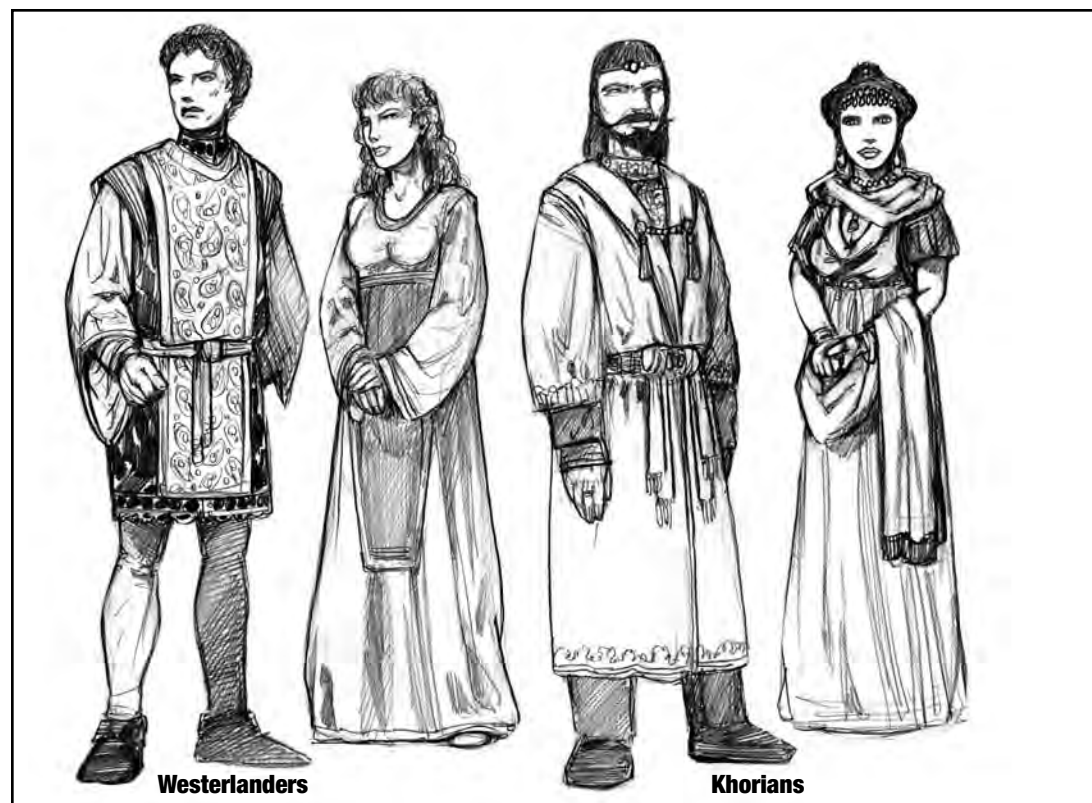
INDUSHARANS

The Indusharans are a brown-skinned folk with a culture and customs strange to the folk of Arduna, but vibrant and deep nevertheless. Shorter, on the average, than Westerlanders, Mhorecians, or Khorians, they have dark hair (almost always black, unless dyed) and equally dark eyes.

THE THONA

The folk of the mountainous land of Thon-Sa, though usually grouped with the Indusharans by most scholars, are in fact a separate people. Where the Indusharans are brown-skinned, a Thona's skin has an amber or yellowish tone, and his nose is flatter and broader than the aquiline Indusharan nose.

Since Thon-Sa remains chilly even in summer-time, the Thona wear heavy, often fur-lined, garments. Men favor pants, an undertunic, and a heavy, quilted, knee-length jacket. Women wear heavy robes which are usually more brightly-colored and richly decorated than men's clothes. Noblewomen, who need not leave the well-heated confines of their houses and palaces, wear sheer, relatively light, finely-cut single-piece dresses.



RENOWNED ULRONAI

As of the year 5000 SE, some of the living Ulronai of great renown include:

Deltarion Bloodlock (possessor of a *thaluhrindar*, or blood-red lock of hair, and thus considered a possible fulfiller of prophecy; see page 307)

Doranien Dastriensson

Lunádi Farseer (perhaps the greatest female warrior-mage ever known)

Morrion Dragon's-Claw (a vengeance-driven hunter of Goblins and Trolls, who slew his parents)

Varunai Three-Edge (an aged master warrior-mage, the trainer of Deltarion)

THE ULRONAI CURSE

In game terms, all Ulronai characters *must* take two Disadvantages to represent the Ulronai curse:

Distinctive Features: Ulronai (Not Concealable; Causes Major Prejudice; 20 points): there's no way for an Ulronai to "disguise" his status as Ulronai; other people can always "sense" his racial heritage somehow.

Social Limitation: Ulronai (Very Frequently, Major; 20 points): Ulronai suffer a minimum of a -3 penalty on all Interaction Skill rolls relating to peaceful, positive relations with persons of other races.

In warm weather, Indusharan men may wear as little as a simple loincloth, particularly if they come from the lower ranks of society; others wear vests and pants. In colder weather, they wear a long-sleeved jacket-like garment that buttons in the front and reaches almost to the ankles, plus boots and pants. Indusharan women wear an elaborate two-piece garment called a *risalat*. It consists of two long pieces of cloth, colored or otherwise decorated as the woman sees fit and can afford. The longer piece is wrapped around the legs, from hips to ankles — loosely for women who have to walk and work, tightly for upper-class women waited upon by slaves. The other piece wraps around the upper body, always leaving the midriff bare. The style and pattern of the upper wrapping is an art in itself, used to indicate mood and intent. Depending on how she wraps her upper garment, an Indusharan woman can communicate feelings of anger, submission, love, seduction, command, contempt, and the like. (A character with High Society or KS: Indusharan Culture can make a roll to interpret the meaning of a particular style of *risalat* wrapping.)

THE ULRONAI

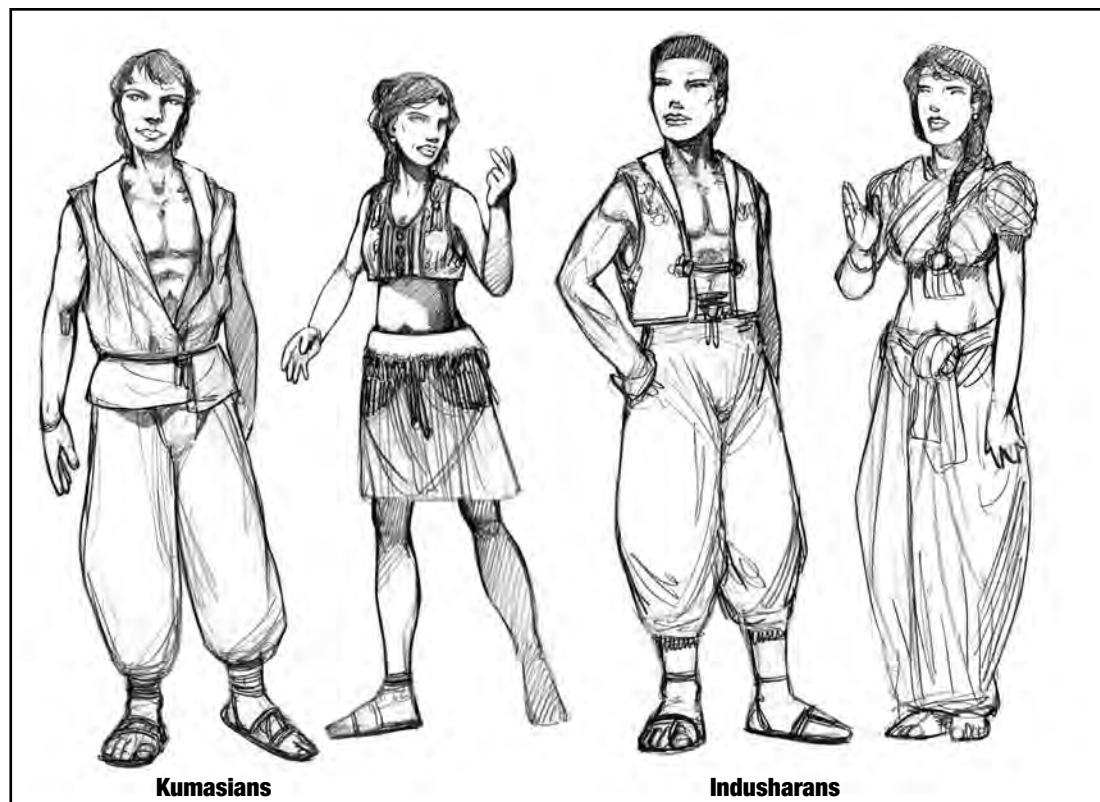
The Ulronai, a people driven to a nomadic lifestyle after nearly being exterminated by the Lord of the Graven Spear (page 14), are thought to number no more than a few thousand throughout the world, most of them in the Westerlands and Mhorecia. They're light-skinned like Westerlanders. They tend to wear whatever clothing they can make or get their hands on that's appropriate for the climate, though they seem to favor Westerlander garb. They usually have blue, grey, or green eyes. Their hair tends to be brown, black, or an unusual shade of grey; all

shades turn to a white-grey as they age. Both genders wear their hair long, but women leave it unbound, whereas men tie it back in a ponytail bound by a silver ring called a *salashyr*. To take a man's *salashyr*, even after defeating him, is a grave insult that can only be avenged by the death of the thief.

The Ulronai claim descent from Ulro, a great warrior-hero (hence Ulronai, meaning "people of Ulro" or "children of Ulro"). Their tales say Ulro was born not of a woman, but of a sword, and took up that same sword to slay monsters and demons when he was only three years old. After fathering the Ulronai race and creating *Talacórium* (its unique warrior-magic; see page 240), Ulro faced a being known only as the Demon of the Moon and slew him in single combat, but was himself slain in turn by the foul creature.

The Ulronai Curse

As mentioned on page 14, the Lord of the Graven Spear laid a terrible curse on the Ulronai — a curse so powerful and profound no one has ever found a way to break it, or even weaken it. It makes other people mistrust and fear the Ulronai as a people. They're regarded as thieves, dangerous troublemakers, lower-class scum... in general, as undesirable to be around. The one flaw in the curse is this: it only applies to the Ulronai *as a people*. It affects the general perception of the Ulronai, and it applies between any person and an Ulronai not known to him. But if an Ulronai manages, despite the curse, to make friends with an individual of another race, so that person knows and conceives of him as a distinct person, the curse no longer applies between them. That Ulronai can interact with that person normally — even though that person will continue to hold negative opinions about "those other Ulronai."



Kumasians

Indusharans

DRAKINE



Drakine (the term is both singular and plural) are reptilian humanoids with draconic features. Taller and broader-shouldered on the average than a Man, a Drakine has a comparatively long neck with a draconic head, short fangs in its mouth, short claws on its fingertips, and a tail. On its back are large masses of tissue and muscle that show where it once had wings, though they no longer resemble wings in any way. A Drakine's skin is usually a brownish-coppery color (but see below).

In warm regions, Drakine wear loincloth-like garments around their waists, often decorating them with embroidery, jewelry, or the like; women add a strip of cloth wrapped around the breasts (and likewise often decorated). In colder weather or climes, tunics, cloaks, and boots made of leather and furs predominate. Both genders like to wear metal jewelry — often large, ornate pieces such as bracers or leg-bands, since their scaly skin doesn't chafe.

THE DRAKINE PERSONALITY

The Drakine claim descent from the great dragons of old — according to their most ancient legends, the gods first created the dragons. But dragons proved too strong and fierce, unwilling to worship or serve, and so the gods took several of them and from them formed the Drakine. The *Sarvath Delcor* ("People of Fire and Power"), as they call themselves in their own language, were the first civilized race of Ambrethel; Men, Elves, and other peoples were created to serve them, or be ruled by them. They particularly feel this way toward the Seshurma, whom they regard as weaklings — flawed attempts by other, lesser gods to create a people as glorious and beautiful as the Drakine.

Although Men often think of Drakine as cruel, even evil, because the two peoples have long contended for land, treasure, and power, the Drakine are no more "evil" as a race than Men, whom they resemble in their intelligence and adaptability. Many Drakine seem to share in the aggressiveness, even rapaciousness, of their dragon forebears, but others are gentle, scholarly, pious, or charitable. In short, they differ little from Men in most respects.

DRAKINE SOCIETY

Drakine families tend to be small. Most drakira (Drakine women) give birth but once in their lives, and often die in the process; after age 30, drakoso (Drakine men) outnumber drakira by a wide margin. Thus, many families consist of a father and a single child. Even if a drakira survives her first child, she rarely wants to have another, and difficulties with the first pregnancy may make that



impossible in any event. To ensure that the children are properly raised, many families join together in *sahisha*, a term that might loosely translate into Vestrian as "gathering of families for mutual benefit." A *sahisha* allows its member families to pool resources to rear the young, go into business, fund a trading or adventuring expedition, or the like.

To most Men or Elves, one Drakine looks more or less like another, differing only in height, facial features, and so on. But the Drakine themselves can distinguish subtle variations of color within the scales of their skin, which usually reveal something about a Drakine's ancestry or homeland. Although the Drakine don't divide themselves into "clans" or "tribes" the way some other races do, some of the scale-color patterns they recognize include:

Sunscale: A Sunscales Drakine's skin is lighter in color than normal, with a sort of golden-coppery tone considered beautiful and attractive. Most Sunscales come from the Westerlands. Sunscales

Drakine tend to be taller and stronger than the average Drakine, and thus make fine warriors; in the days of the great Drakine kingdoms, some rulers fielded entire legions of Sunscale.

Bloodscale: Some Drakine have scales of red or reddish-brown hue, known as Bloodscale. Despite the fearsomeness of the name, Drakine lore holds that Bloodscales are creative, intelligent, and kind people, not fighters or killers; they're thought to make good ambassadors and merchants as well. Bloodscale Drakine are most common in southern Mhorecia and Vashkhor.

Sometimes Bloodscale displays a rust-like coloration instead, known appropriately enough as Rustscale. The Drakine believe Rustscales are unlucky, doomed to misfortune and woe. Since few Drakine wish to have this bad luck rub off on them, Rustscales often become outcasts who support themselves through begging or thievery.

Nightscale: Nightscale Drakine have dark brown scales; in some cases, they become almost black, and legend speaks of a few jet black-scaled Drakine with mighty powers of both war and wizardry. Many Nightscales have a vocation for the priesthood. Usually this color pattern is found in Orumbar, where it's considered a sign of the favor of the gods.

DRAKINE LANDS

Much of the air of superiority and power implied by the early Drakine legends has been lost over the millennia as the Drakine themselves have faded. In the early First Epoch, the Drakine established many kingdoms in Arduna, and often ruled over Men; their cities were places of wonder, and their armies powerful and well-armed. But they dared too much, and tried to destroy the mightiest of the realms of Men, not realizing Men possessed one great advantage over them: they have many children, and have them quickly. Thus the armies of Men they encountered in the Drakine Wars were far larger than they expected, and the defeat and slaughter they suffered they have never fully recovered from.

Today, Drakine can be found throughout the world of Ambrethel, though they favor the warmer regions. They usually live in small communities

amidst other populations, mingling freely with other peoples as the mood or need takes them (many prefer the company of their own kind). Only in the Drakine Realms — Basidrun, Vendrigal, Khorrin, and Seldrion — do they still rule lands in Arduna. But in Mitharia, the mighty Empire of Orumbar is theirs, for the southern Drakine learned the lessons of their northern cousins and established their empire through diplomacy and guile as much as military conquest.

DRAKINE PURSUITS

Clever and nimble-fingered, Drakine can succeed at just about any trade. Due to their size and strength, they make fine warriors (and bandits), explorers, and adventurers, and often favor such pursuits.

DRAKINE PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	+3 STR
6	+2 DEX
6	+3 CON
4	+2 BODY
3	+3 PRE
5	<i>Fangs:</i> HKA 1 point
8	<i>Claws:</i> HKA ½d6; Reduced Penetration (-¼)
2	<i>Drakine Skin:</i> Damage Resistance (2 PD/2 ED)
5	<i>Drakine Eyes:</i> Nightvision
5	<i>Tail:</i> Extra Limb, Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 47

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
None	

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

Options

Cost	Ability
+1	<i>Sunscale:</i> +1 STR
+1	<i>Bloodscale:</i> +1 PRE
-5	<i>Rustscale:</i> Unluck 1d6 (or more)
+5/+2	<i>Nightscale:</i> Luck 1d6 and/or +1 to Faith rolls

DWARVES



Dwarves (in their tongue Ghoralzod, *Thurak*, singular *thuru*) are short, stocky folk standing about four to five feet tall, but with disproportionately broad shoulders and barrel chests; they have the same average weight as Men. Tough and sturdy, they're much stronger than their size suggests, and can withstand much more pain, toil, and exhaustion than Men — dwarven endurance and hardiness are legendary. They also enjoy greater lifespans than Men; some live as long as four centuries.

Dwarven men have long, distinctive beards. Sometimes they specially braid or dye them, or tie small decorative objects or trophies to strands of them. Having his beard cut is a great disgrace for a male Dwarf. They tend to wear their hair long, sometimes with small war-braids down the sides of the head, though baldness is not uncommon among them. Dwarven females do not have beards, and wear their hair long (and often intricately coifed).

Dwarven clothing tends to be similar to that of Men, but cut to fit their size. Women wear single-piece dresses, often elaborately embroidered or otherwise decorated due to the typical dwarven pride in craftsmanship and appearance. Men favor tunics, pants, and boots.

THE DWARVEN PERSONALITY

People of other races often consider Dwarves stern, dour, secretive, close-mouthed, suspicious, and quick to anger. If offended or harmed, they can hold grudges for a long time, even generations or centuries. Many Dwarves are greedy, with an inordinate love of gold, silver, gems, and fine craftworks. In Tornathia, Men say, "When you trade with a Dwarf, count the coins twice."

On the other hand, dwarven honor and loyalty are bywords among most folk; a Dwarf often takes as much offense at an insult to one of his friends as the friend takes himself. They admire fine skill with crafting, and are quick to offer praise to a talented artisan. Dwarves also love good times, good song, and good food and drink.

DWARVEN SOCIETY

Dwarven society tends to be very rigid and regimented. Sons usually grow up to do what their fathers do, rulers and nobles strictly (and harshly) enforce dwarven laws, and alliances between kingdoms, families, or individuals last nigh unto forever.

Most dwarven families are small, with no more than one to three children at most. However, extended families tend to stay together, living in the same part of the same realm for mutual sup-



port and advantage. Dwarven greed often gives way to generosity among a Dwarf's own family; for example, a Dwarf can expect his family members to shower him with rich gifts on his birthday. Occasionally a Dwarf "adopts" another Dwarf (or, even more rarely, a non-Dwarf) into his family as a sign of respect and affection.

DWARVEN LANDS

Dwarves prefer to live in the mountains and hills, often in enormous underground halls carved and decorated as only dwarven skill allows. Other Dwarves favor above-ground castles and keeps; for example, the Dwarves of Azarthond live in cities and buildings little different from those of Men except in size.

Deepingdelve, or *Zorak-Zar* ("Ancestral Fortress") in Ghoralzod, is generally considered the largest, wealthiest, and most powerful of the dwarven kingdoms. To some extent, all Dwarves consider the King of Deepingdelve their leader, and accord him great respect.

DWARVEN REALMS

Name	Location
Algarhaime	Thurisian Mountains
Azarthond	Northern Mitharia
Blinndighaime	Snowthorn Mountains
Deepingdelve	Snowthorn Mountains
Delgalakh	Skyclaw Mountains
Gabanaldazar	Tabriz Mountains
Garaktora	Maha Torend
Gasharth	Snowthorn Mountains
Gendersbad	Greyward Mountains
Gfnru	Ayn Alach
Harkhonn	Skyclaw Mountains
Hordarsa	Ironheart Mountains
Korregdar	Thraysha Mountains
Mandalgov	Ergun-Ulan Mountains
Norross	Thurisian Mountains
Rodathur	Skyclaw Mountains
Tarkoll	Ayn Alach
Zargund	Greyward Mountains
Zarkoreng	Ironheart Mountains
Zorak-Thundu	Tabriz Mountains

Because neither Men, Elves, nor Drakine like to live underground or in mountains, the Dwarves usually don't have to compete with the other Greater Races for living space. It's possible for a dwarven kingdom to exist right next to (or even underneath!) a realm of Men without any problems. In fact, the two peoples may develop ties of trade and military alliance that make them fast friends. On the other hand, Dwarves often have to defend their homes from marauding Goblins and Orcs, who also like to live underground; and sometimes Gnomes want to live in the same places that Dwarves do.

The Dwarves award no titles of nobility or knighthood; deeds, not words, are their measure of worth. A Dwarf of noteworthy accomplishments will be recognized as such by all, and accorded the deference or authority his actions merit.

The accompanying text box lists the major dwarven realms of Ambrethel.

DWARVEN PURSUITS

Dwarves' skill with smithing, mining, masonry, and similar crafts is as renowned as their vigor. They make some of the finest weapons, armor, jewelry, and other goods known, often trading these things with other races for the food and other supplies they cannot obtain underground or in mountainous regions.

While most Dwarves prefer to stay at home, enjoy the comfort of their halls, and accumulate wealth, others feel the call to explore and adventure... and still others know that they can only keep their valuables if they're willing to fight to defend them. Dwarves' toughness makes them excellent warriors. Many a "Tall Folk" warrior who has underestimated a Dwarf because of his size has paid the price for his ignorance and pride in blood. Even Dwarven women sometimes become warriors; they're known as Axmaidens. Both men and women often learn *Kadhurek*, a special style of dwarven ax-fighting (use the Dwarven War Art on page 91 of *Fantasy Hero* for this).

Size, often-cramped underground quarters, and other factors lead the Dwarves to favor axes, hammers, picks, and maces as weapons, though short swords and daggers are by no means unknown. For missile combat, they prefer crossbows and short bows. Since their strength and endurance let them bear the weight of armor easily, they favor heavier armors and shields. This includes *kharek*, or "dwarven chainmail," a type of heavy mail (DEF 7; see *Fantasy Hero*, page 190). The Dwarves rarely make *kharek* for members of other races; if they do so, it's a sign of high favor.

But not all Dwarves are warriors. Many remain craftsmen all their lives, taking great pride in producing ever-finer works. Some become so possessed by greed that they turn to thievery or raiding; less wicked-minded Dwarves may become merchants instead, earning the gold they so love honestly. While few Dwarves seem to take an interest in the Arts, dwarven wizards are not unheard of; they seem to favor Alchemy, Earth Magic, Enchantment, Rune Magic, and Thaumaturgy.

DWARF PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
2	+2 STR
6	+3 CON
4	+2 BODY
2	+2 PD
2	+2 ED
3	+6 END
5	<i>Dwarven Eyes</i> : Nightvision
2	<i>Dwarven Longevity</i> : Life Support (Longevity: lifespan of up to 400 years)
3	<i>Dwarven Toughness</i> : Resistance
Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 29	
Disadvantages	
Value	Disadvantage
-2	-1" Running
Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: -2	
Options	
Cost	Ability
+6	<i>Typical Dwarven Cultural Skills Package</i> : Add any two dwarven PSs at 11- (such as Blacksmith, Engraving, Gemcutter, Jewelmaking, Masonry, Mining, or Woodcarving), Trading 8-, and WF: Axes/Maces/Hammers/Picks
+4	<i>An Underground Folk</i> : Bump Of Direction; Only Underground (-1) and Detect Depth And Passage Slope While Underground (INT Roll)
+5	<i>Knowledge Of Stone</i> : KS: Stonework 11- and +3 to Concealment; Only To Detect Hidden/Concealed/Cunning Stonework (-1)
-10	Psychological Limitation: Stern, Dour, And Temperamental (Common, Moderate)
-10	Psychological Limitation: Greedy (Common, Moderate)
-15	Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of Orcs And Goblins (Common, Strong)



Elves are tall, often willowy, fair-skinned and fair-haired folk. In Shalionderentine, their (to other peoples) long-winded language, they call themselves *Toltiradalyrunorio-nasirom* (“Children of Toltiradalyrunorion,” their name for Kilbern) or *Virythulasiolar* (“Those Who Walk In The Sun,” a term that distinguishes them from the Dark Elves, or *Hwalurulasiolar*, “Those Who Walk In The Night”).

Elves are uniformly slender and fine-boned, with delicate features considered handsome or pretty by the standards of Men. They range in height from five to six feet, though some families are known for being a little taller. Their hair and eyes come in all shades, including some unusual eye colors (such as violet or golden).

Elven men usually wear tunics, pants, and boots similar to those of Westerlands men but more finely made. Elven women who are adventurers may dress similarly, but in most situations wear one-piece gowns and dresses made of fine materials. Usually these dresses are simply cut, impressing with their elegance rather than ostentation, but some elven women favor more elaborate clothes.

THE ELVEN PERSONALITY

Quick-witted and often quite learned, Elves can be fascinating conversationalists and intriguing companions. Many of them possess a boundless curiosity, and willingly share what they know in exchange for the tales, news, and lore possessed by other people and races. They have a deep appreciation for beauty in its many forms, be it a burning sunset, a woman of grace, or a slowly-opening flower.

Elven longevity shapes the elven personality. While they remain well aware of history (they have special scholars, the *nynadrialorin* or “timekeepers,” who keep elaborate elven histories), they lack a true understanding of the *effects* of time. Intellectually, they know tomorrow is the day after today and that two weeks from now is not “now,” but emotionally one time is just like another to them — they have ultimate patience, since they feel a date two decades from now is “just around the corner.” They don’t quite comprehend why Men “rush about” so much, trying to accomplish things quickly. Elves tend to take their time about things — they think nothing of waiting decades or centuries for some event. Many other races seem to regard Elves as “flighty,” since they often care little for current events or “emergencies” — to Elves, even the longest-lived of other races are young, and what seem like tremendous difficulties to others pass away after a few short decades.

Many (though by no means all) Elves tend to be somewhat suspicious of other races. They’re not necessarily hostile or unfriendly (though some are); they simply prefer the company of Elves to that of other races. They have difficulty relating to races shorter-lived than they, and may avoid forming friendships with non-Elves to avoid the heartache of watching their friends die quickly.

ELVEN SOCIETY

The Elves divide themselves into twelve clans (*panorukinala*) based on descent from the legendary Twelve Fathers of the Elves. Each of the Twelve took on a particular task to help his brothers, and thus the clan descended from him is associated with that task or profession as well. (But these are just stereotypes, not laws; an Alanethalakaderi Elf could easily become a warrior, hunter, or anything else — he doesn’t have to be a scholar or mage.) In fact, the Elves sometimes refer to themselves collectively as the *Yanutoropanorukinala*, or Twelve Clans.

The Twelve Clans are:

Aladrethririamoril: Members of this clan are the priests, spiritual leaders, and philosophers of the elven people. They tend to dwell in or near holy areas. The clan’s symbol is a silver bell.

Alanethalakaderi: This clan contains many great elven scholars, *nynadrialorin*, and mages. Alanethalakaderi Elves tend to be sedentary and solitary. The clan’s symbol is a 4-pointed star.

Elebardashiman: The Elebardashiman are considered to be the best hunters and trackers of the Elves, and often challenge the Idensasoreni in archery. Elebardashiman Elves tend to be wanderers, always on the move, and have much more interest in the world outside their homes than most Elves. The clan’s symbol is a hunting horn.

Fendirililiqwan: The Fendirililiqwan often become traders, travelers, and adventurers. They tend to be more active and impatient than most Elves, and are the Elves most likely to encounter or befriend members of other races. Most Elves consider their wanderlust eccentric (at best); the Elves have sayings such as “crazy as a Fendirililiqwan” or “eager as a Fendirililiqwan.” The clan’s symbol is a swan’s wing.

Halfanuriameli: Elves of this clan love the water; they make skilled swimmers and sailors. They live near seas, rivers, streams, lakes, and other bodies of water; their dwellings may feature fountains. The clan’s symbol is a green teardrop.

Idensasoreni: Renowned as the greatest archers and warriors of the Elves, the Idensasoreni serve their



brethren as soldiers and defenders. They tend not to share the elven suspiciousness of outsiders, and may become adventurers. The clan's symbol is a silver arrow.

Klayethavarudim: The Klayethavarudim are the poets, bards, and authors of the Elves; they are often skilled in other arts as well. The clan's symbol is a harp.

Nedranagorani: This clan produces Elves who are said to be excellent guardians, wardens, and judges; many are elevated to the status of *Kaltorimedariani*, or "Protector of the King" (a form of elven "knight-hood"), for their noble deeds. They have a reputation for accomplishing difficult feats in a cool, efficient manner. The clan's symbol is a hawk.

Rathimanzeni: Rathimanzeni Elves are excellent smiths, wrights, and craftsmen. They're also known for wine — both their skill at making it, and their capacity for drinking it. The clan's symbol is a goblet.

Satisralanori: The Satisralanori are the "horticulturists" of the Elves. Skilled at tending plant life and trees, they devote their lives to making elven lands as beautiful as possible. The clan's symbol is a red rose.

Urindarohesarin: The Royal House of the Elves, from which come its nobles and kings. The clan's symbol is red antlers on gold, with a blue twelve-pointed star between them.

Vanurishinaili: The Vanurishinaili are the architects and engineers of elvendom. They delight in the well-built structure, the artistically-arching bridge. The clan's symbol is a white tower.

Elves from one clan may freely marry into another; the wife becomes a member of her husband's clan. Elven society is patrilinear, but women tend to have much more power and responsibility in society than females in the realms of Men. Families tend to be small, often no more than one or two children.

Elves have extremely long names that incorporate all of the individual's ancestors' names (and their honorifics) as well as the individual's own honorifics. When dealing with Men and Dwarves, Elves use short "nickname" versions of their full names.

ELVEN REALMS

Elves can live virtually anywhere, though they favor temperate forested environments. The major elven powers in the world — Elvenholme and Shularahaleen — are both essentially large forests controlled by Elves. However, smaller forests may have smaller elven communities, and some Elves prefer to live by the seaside, in the mountains, or among Men in cities.

In their own lands, Elves rarely build cities; they prefer to spread out more. Elves live in whatever dwellings they wish — elaborate treehouses crafted by *thelananeradasalir* (see below), houses like the cottages of Men, palaces and towers of elvenstone (a type of bluish-white stone found nowhere but Elvenholme, and a mystery even to the Dwarves), caves (usually ornately sculpted), or in no dwelling at all.

The Elves in a particular realm are ruled by an Elvenking (*Fyleritoltiradalyrunorionasirom*), though most acknowledge the Elvenking of Elvenholme as "High King of the Elves." An Elvenking has absolute authority within his realm, but since contention rarely arises among the Elves (particularly in smaller realms), an Elvenking's duties consist mainly of presiding at banquets and royal hunts, dispensing honorifics, settling minor disputes, and so on.

A crown made of precious substances symbolizes an Elvenking's authority. The power and prestige of the Elvenking of Elvenholme is symbolized by the *Elathkorumiorurilindi*, or Eagle Crown, a great crown made of *coriomstithshar* and *velandi* in the shape of an eagle, said to have been crafted for the Elves by Thelnaridrunorikanir (Ishander) himself.

ELVEN PURSUITS

Elves have extremely long lifespans (over a thousand years). As a result, they tend to ponder matters carefully and spend a long time discussing things. Since they have plenty of time to talk, their language, Shalionderentine, strings many syllables (at least three, and often dozens) together into words of great length. A simple Elven greeting can take as much as an hour to exchange, leading to teeth-gritting aggravation on the part of non-Elves. On the other hand, Elven longevity also means they tend to bore easily; they're often in search of new experiences (and may become adventurers to obtain them), or enjoy mingling with non-Elves despite their disturbingly "hasty" way of speaking.

Elven Art

Imaginative and quick-witted, Elves often have a gift for song and other creative pursuits; not surprisingly for such a long-lived race, they're great artists and patrons of the arts. Elves admire a skilled artist more than a skilled ruler or warrior.

In addition to the arts known to Men, such as painting and sculpture, the Elves have several unique art forms:

■ *coriomsithsharanista*, the art of crafting *coriomsithshar* ("crystal-locked fire"), or gems — in the language of Men, gemsmithing. A "gemsmith" is known as a *coriomsithshartyrwaryn*.

■ *thelananeradasalir*, the art of sculpting trees and plants. This means tending the tree or plant with special songs over the course of decades to convince it to grow as the *thelananeradasalirtyrwaryn* ("treesmith") desires.

■ *carioltarensalir*, the art of composing *carioltaren*, or "dirges for the dead." These are special choral-like songs sung in memory of Elves slain in battle.

■ *velandianista*, the art of crafting *velandi*, or elven-silver. *Velandi* is an unusually hard metal with the appearance of silver; arms and armor made out of it are practically unbreakable. *Velandi* is extremely rare and valuable, even among the Elves.

Elves At War

Elves are renowned for their skill at archery; when possible they remain away from the main battle and rain a storm of arrows down on their foes. They use two types of arrows: *uneriovelsedine* ("feather-death-angels," arrows made of *sineri-aloristicari* [see below] without arrowheads) and *curindiavelsedine* ("silver-barbed death-angels," arrows with metal arrowheads). In HTH Combat they tend to favor swords (particularly longswords and rapiers), spears, staffs, and light axes. Though they often lack the strength of the tougher or more brutish races (such as Orcs or Dwarves), they make up for it with swiftness and skill.

The Elves rarely go to war. They do not fight amongst themselves except in situations of extreme disagreement, and their unwillingness to leave their forests keeps them from becoming involved in fighting in the outside world. Only a great threat — such as the marching of the armies of Kal-Turak — brings them to the battlefield.

ELF PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
6	+2 DEX
2	+2 INT
2	<i>Elven Eyes</i> : +1 Sight Group PER
5	<i>Elven Eyes</i> : Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group)
3	<i>Elven Sleep</i> : Lightsleep
4	<i>Elven Longevity</i> : Life Support (Longevity: lifespan of up to 1,600 years)
4	Running +2"

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 26

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
None	

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

Options

Cost	Ability
+2	<i>Woodland Dweller</i> : Survival (Temperate/Subtropical Forests) (INT Roll)
+4	<i>Elven Archery</i> : +2 OCV with Bows
+9	<i>Elven War-Skills</i> : +2 with Swords, Spears, and Lances
+11	<i>Elven Animal Empathy</i> : Animal Handler (Canines, Equines, Felines, Raptors) (PRE Roll +3)
+6	<i>Elven Artistry</i> : 6 points' worth of PSs related to art
+5	<i>Nynadrialorin</i> : Add KS: Elven History (INT Roll +2)
+13	<i>Kaltorimedariani</i> : Add +1 PER with all Sense Groups, +1 with All Combat, and Perk: Kaltorimedariani (equivalent to Knight)
+2	<i>Aladrethririamoril</i> : Add +1 with Faith rolls
+5	<i>Alanethalakaderi</i> : Add +1 with all KS
+5	<i>Elebardasiman</i> : Add Tracking (INT Roll +1)
+5	<i>Fendirililiqwan</i> : Add Trading (PRE Roll +1)
+2	<i>Halfanuriameli</i> : Add Swimming +2"
+2	<i>Idensasoreni</i> : Add +1 OCV with Bows
+2	<i>Klayethavarudim</i> : Add any one art-related PS at 11-
+3	<i>Nedranagorani</i> : Add KS: Elven Law (INT Roll)
+2	<i>Rathimanzeni</i> : Add any one appropriate PS at 11- (e.g., Blacksmithing, Vintner)
+2	<i>Satsiralanori</i> : Add SS: Plant-Lore (Botany) 11-
+3	<i>Urindaroheharin</i> : Add +3 PRE
+2	<i>Vanurishinaili</i> : Add PS: Builder 11-
-15	Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of Orcs And Goblins (Common, Strong)
-10	Psychological Limitation: Curiosity (Common, Moderate)
-28	<i>Dark Elf</i> : Add the following:
Cost	Ability
+0	Replace Ultraviolet Perception with Nightvision
+2	<i>Sunless Realms Dweller</i> : Survival (Underground) (INT Roll)
-10	Physical Limitation: Poor Eyesight, suffers -2 to all Sight PER Rolls in sunlight or bright light (Infrequently, Greatly Impairing)
-20	Psychological Limitation: Aversion To Sunlight (suffers -1 penalty to all rolls in direct sunlight) (Common, Total)

Elven Magic

Elven wizards frequently work their magic through a mystical wood known as *sinerialoristicar*. This wood, usually blonde or white in color, grows only in Elvenholme and the Shadowwoods, and its leaves have great healing properties. Sinerialoristicar is hard and strong, as hard as ironwood, and can only be carved by *velandi* knives. Elven mages can perform many wonders with this wood; it can hold many enchantments, even *sharuniathtiron*, the elven magefire that burns but does not consume.

In game terms, elven spellcasters often buy their spells with a *sinerialoristicar* staff, wand, or talisman as the Focus. Elven magefire works like normal magefire (see *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*), but burns the soul rather than the body, and so leaves the victim's body and possessions unharmed even as it kills him (thus, it only works on living beings).

The Dark Elves

Deep underground there lives a race of elves with black skins and light-colored hair. These are the Dark Elves, or *Hwalurulasiolar*. The two types of Elves have a great hatred for each other.

Elven legends tell how, many years ago even as Elves reckon time, a band of Elves was swayed to the worship of Isarowluthar (Mordak) and committed acts of great evil. To punish them, Toltiradalyrunorion (Kilbern) turned their skins black and made them live under the surface of Ambrethel, for so great was their evil that the gods did not wish to look upon them.

One of the most powerful races of the Sunless Realms, the dark elves have built vast underground cities and control much territory. They use strange, evil magics to augment their power, and they wor-

ship Mordak and his kin with fiendish fervor. Woe betide the surface-dweller who falls into their clutches; the best he can hope for is enslavement.

The Dark Elves have attacked the surface world on occasion. However, their dislike of sunlight, and the way it blinds them, limits them to moving about on the surface only at night or on very cloudy days.

Half-Elves

On occasion, an Elf and a member of the race of Men fall in love and wed. The children of these unions are known as *Half-Elves*. They have some of the attributes of both races — the grace and beauty of the Elf, the sturdiness and adaptability of Men.

A Half-Elf's Everyman Skills depend on where his parents live, or which parent he grows up with.

HALF-ELF PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	+1 DEX
2	+2 INT
2	Elven Eyes: +1 Sight Group PER
1	Half-Elven Longevity: Life Support (Longevity: lifespan of up to 200 years)
2	Running +1"

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 10

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
None	

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

ORCS



Orcs are dark- or green-skinned humanoids about the same average height as Men (or a little shorter, sometimes). They have the same general facial features as goblins — long noses; large, pointed ears; sharp teeth — though sometimes with flat noses instead. In their own language, Skhai, they call themselves *Kolrûk* (“the People”).

Most Orcs wear crude clothes made of leather and furs, or finer garb stolen from other people. They rarely wash or repair their clothes, simply discarding them when they become unwearable and obtaining others as they can. The Civilized Orcs of Thordar are an exception. They usually wear leather boots, pants, and vests (or linen blouses for women), adding fur-lined jackets in cold weather; they mark their clan or religious affiliation with decorations on the vest or blouse.

THE ORCISH PERSONALITY

The First Epoch heretical priest Binnarzem opined that Orcs were the first race crafted by the gods — a race so flawed the gods cast them aside into the wasted lands of the world and tried again, this time producing Man in all his glory. The Orcs claim Gella Thekar (Kilbern) took star-iron and mingled it with dark earth and the blood of a wolf to create them, and for this reason many revere wolves as spirit-creatures or keep them as honored pets and companions.

Whoever made Orcs, he gave them little in the way of admirable qualities. Greedy, selfish, violent, fractious, and temperamental, they frequently fight amongst themselves and look upon those weaker than they as a source of meat and plunder. The residents of Thordar prove Orcs can overcome their barbaric natures if they want... but few of them wish to.

ORCISH SOCIETY

In most parts of Ambrethel, Orcs are evil, brutal, and ruthless. They live in tribes or clans held together by a strong leader — usually a member of their own people, but sometimes an Ogre, Troll, giant, or evil Man. But leading Orcs is not easy; they’re quick to take insult, make trouble, or disobey orders if they think they can get away with it.

Orcs live in large, extended families which are part of tribes or clans. A chieftain leads each tribe, but only as long as he can hold power; lesser Orcs often challenge him, and eventually one finds his weakness, exploits it, and deposes the chieftain to take his place. Rarely does an Orc-chieftain with enough power to unite multiple tribes emerge... but when he does, other folk tremble in fear.



In some places — the peaks of the Ayn Alach or Thurisian Mountains, or the far North where Kal-Turak rules — some Orcs grow larger and stronger. Known as “Black Orcs” because their skin is so dark it borders on the black, they make even better warriors than ordinary Orcs, and often have the discipline and training to accompany their strength. In other places, like the mountains and hills of the Vornakkian Peninsula, there are “Grey Orcs” who are smaller and weaker than their green-skin cousins, but smarter and swifter as well.

ORC PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
2	+2 STR
6	+3 CON
6	+3 BODY
1	<i>Orcish Hide</i> : Damage Resistance (1 PD/1 ED)
5	<i>Orcish Eyes</i> : Nightvision
3	<i>Orcish Senses</i> : +1 PER with all Sense Groups

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 23

Disadvantages	
Value	Disadvantage
-2	-2 INT
-4	-2 EGO
-1	-2 COM

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: -7

Options	
Cost	Ability
10	<i>Fangs</i> : HKA ½d6
8	<i>Claws</i> : HKA ½d6; Reduced Penetration (-¼)
9+	<i>Black Orc</i> : Buy Fangs and Claws (above), and add +3 STR, +2 CON, +1 BODY
+5	<i>Grey Orc</i> : Remove +2 STR and add +1 DEX, +2 INT
-15	<i>Psychological Limitation</i> : Hatred Of [Another Tribe, Race, Or People] (Common, Strong)

ORCISH LANDS

Orcs usually live in wilderness areas — deep forests, mountains, hilly regions, and the like — or in the Sunless Realms. They may fight with Dwarves and Gnomes for control of caves and other underground areas. Only in Thordar (and to some extent Vorash) have they crawled out of their warrens and forests to form true kingdoms able to deal with other realms on an equal basis.

ORCISH PURSUITS

Orcs’ natural strength and hardiness make them ideal soldiers and bandits; their lack of intelligence and self-control makes it difficult for them to succeed at other professions in any event. A few, more intelligent, Orcs become assassins, bounty

hunters, rangers, rogues, or the like; some even show a gift for shamanism or crude wizardry. Save for the so-called “Orc-kin” (Goblins, Ogres, Trolls, and the like), they rarely mingle with other races, who find them repugnant (at best).

THE ORCS OF THORDAR

What the average man holds as true about Orcs rarely applies to the Orcs of Thordar — the so-called “Civilized Orcs” who came down from the Thraysha Mountains and Kumasi Jungle to form their own kingdom in Kumasia nearly two thousand years ago. They have established a society little different from that of Men. They have a king and court, build cities, and trade with other peoples; they’re well-known as skilled mariners. See page 127 for more information.

Half-Orcs

Whether through rapine or other means, Orcs and Men can cross-breed. Called *Half-Orcs*, these children grow up despised — either as a weakling by Orcs, or as a violent, barbaric mockery by Men. If they survive, they become adults with the strength and cunning of Orcs, but an intelligence and willpower more akin to that of Men.

HALF-ORC PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
2	+2 STR
4	+2 CON
2	+1 BODY
3	<i>Orcish Senses</i> : +1 PER with all Sense Groups

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 11

Disadvantages	
Value	Disadvantage
-1	-1 INT
-2	-1 EGO
-1	-2 COM

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: -4

THE LESSER RACES



Not all the races of Ambrethel are as widespread, numerous, or powerful as Men, Drakine, Dwarves, Elves, and Orcs. But they are fascinating nonetheless — and may make excellent choices for a PC's race.

THE ERQIGDLIT

The Erqigdlit are dog- or wolf-headed humanoids from the far north. The tales they tell around their fires on cold nights claim that once they were a tribe of Men who lived in the shadow of the Endless Ice, until they committed a great sin by trying to steal the Sun to warm themselves. For their hubris, the gods punished them, changing their heads to those of dogs and exiling them from their ancient homeland. Now they can be found throughout Arduna, and sometimes even in Mitharia, though they tend to prefer cooler climates.

Erqigdlit (the term is singular and plural) live in tribes (sometimes called “packs” by other folk) of 20 or more adult males, plus their females and children. A chieftain — the most powerful or clever warrior — leads the tribe, usually with the help of one or more priests or shamans. Other members of the tribe may challenge him for rule of the tribe, much like wolves fight among themselves to determine pack dominance. Some tribes stake out a home territory and build a village there, while others prefer the nomadic life or live among Men or Elves.

In addition to their canine heads, Erqigdlit have fur covering their bodies, which helps them stay warm in cold regions. The members of some tribes cut or dye their fur in distinctive ways. Their



fur keeps them from having to wear clothes, though they will add leather or animal-fur clothing in cold weather; they often wear belts or harnesses for carrying weapons and goods as well. Erqigdlit who live among other peoples usually wear at least a kilt- or tunic-like garment, the better to blend in with other people.

Erqigdlit are carnivores, eating plants only when no meat is available. The more rapacious and cruel among them do not qualm to eat humanoid flesh... even that of Erqigdlit from other tribes. Some tribes make an elaborate ceremony out of draining the blood from a captive and drinking it as a tribute to the demons they worship. Other Erqigdlit scorn to eat the flesh of Men and other peoples, preferring to hunt animals for their meat like other civilized folk.

Erqigdlit make good warriors and scouts; the wisest and smartest among them may become rangers. They typically wear hide or leather armors, use wooden shields, and wield axes and spears, but if they're commanded by or work with Men may have metal armors and swords instead.

ERQIGDLIT PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
5	+5 STR
3	+1 DEX
10	+5 CON
5	+5 PRE
5	<i>Bite</i> : HKA 1 point
1	<i>Erqigdlit Skin</i> : Damage Resistance (1 PD/1 ED)
6	<i>Erqigdlit Senses</i> : +2 PER with all Sense Groups
5	<i>Erqigdlit Nose</i> : Tracking for Normal Smell

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 40

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
-1	-2 COM

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: -1

GNOMES

Gnomes are one of the Short Folk, about three to four feet tall with a slimmer build than Dwarves. They are half-Dwarves, half-Halflings who can breed true; many Dwarven men believe Halfling women make excellent wives, so marriages between the two peoples are not unheard of.

Gnomes usually take mostly after their dwarven parent, with craggy faces (especially as they age) and beards, and they often live underground. They prefer hilly or forested regions (or, better still, hilly forests), where they expand natural cave formations or dig their own halls and chambers. They also share the Dwarves’ love for the crafts of the hand, and sometimes their greed as well.

On the other hand, like Halflings, Gnomes usually have pleasant dispositions; they appreciate the value of a good jest, a clever turn of phrase, or the comradeship of a friend. They enjoy good food and drink, and have a reputation as skilled brewers and distillers.

Gnomes can enter just about any profession, and mingle freely with other races. Gnomish warriors favor short swords, daggers, and similar weapons appropriate to their size; they lack the strength to make good use of the weapons Dwarves favor. Gnomes’ dexterity and size allows many of them to become skilled, stealthy rogues. Compared to Dwarves or Halflings, Gnomes have a talent for magic; spellcasters occur much more commonly among Gnomes than among the other Short Folk. Alchemy, Earth and Fire Magic, Sorcery, and Thaumaturgy are all Arts they tend to excel at.



GNOME PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
3	+1 DEX
2	+1 CON
5	<i>Gnomish Eyes</i> : Nightvision
1	<i>Gnomish Longevity</i> : Life Support (Longevity: lifespan of up to 200 years)
10	<i>Hard To Hit</i> : +2 DCV
3	<i>Easily Hidden</i> : +2 to Concealment; Self Only (-½)
4	<i>Hard To Perceive</i> : +2 to Stealth

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 28

Disadvantages	
Value	Disadvantage
-3	-3 STR
-2	-2 PRE
-4	Running -2"

-5	Physical Limitation: Small, down to half Man size and/or mass (1m, or ½") (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: -14

Options	
Cost	Ability
+4	<i>Typical Gnomish Cultural Skills Package</i> : Add any two gnomish PSs at 11- (such as Brewing/ Distilling, Engraving, Gemcutter, Jewelrymaking, Mining, or Woodcarving)
+1	<i>An Underground Folk</i> : Bump Of Direction; Only Underground (-1)
-10	Psychological Limitation: Greedy (Common, Moderate)
-15	Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of Orcs And Goblins (Common, Strong)

GOBLINS

Goblins are small humanoids, usually about four to five feet tall. Their dark or green skin gives them a vaguely reptilian appearance. Their long noses, wide eyes, large, pointed ears, and sharp teeth only enhance this impression. In their language, Vugrash, they call themselves *Reldeg*, meaning roughly “the Clever Folk.”

Goblins are a cruel and barbaric people. They raid settlements, commit acts of banditry and rapaciousness, and even eat the flesh of Men. Other races, particularly Dwarves, Elves, and Gnomes, hate them bitterly and fight them at every opportunity. However, some Goblins learn to live peacefully with other races, often becoming mercenaries, traders, rogues, scouts, or adventurers. In some large cities, such as Aarn or Tavrosel, small communities of Goblins live side-by-side with other peoples and interact with them freely and peacefully.

Goblins prefer to live in caves, hills, or forests, often competing with Dwarves and Gnomes for living space. The basic community unit is the clan, typically composed of three or more families — and Goblin families tend to be large, often with half a dozen or more children per couple, since the death-rate for Goblin young is high. A few clanless warriors or young males who have useful skills may attach themselves to a clan as well. A chieftain or shaman leads the entire group, enforcing his will through violence or guile as seems best to him. If he displays weakness, he can be sure someone in the tribe will challenge him for his position. Most Goblin leaders are males, with females relegated to

GOBLIN PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost Ability

- 5 *Goblin Fangs*: HKA 1 point
- 5 *Goblin Eyes*: Nightvision
- 3 *Goblin Senses*: +1 PER with all Sense Groups
- 5 *Hard To Hit*: +1 DCV
- 1 *Easily Hidden*: +1 to Concealment; Self Only (-½)
- 2 *Hard To Perceive*: +1 to Stealth

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 21

Disadvantages

Value Disadvantage

- 2 -2 STR
- 2 -2 INT
- 4 -2 EGO
- 2 -2 PRE
- 2 Running -1”

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: -12

Options

Cost Ability

- +2 *Jungle Goblin*: Add Survival (Tropical) (INT Roll)
- +2 *Mountain Goblin*: Remove -2 STR



secondary roles in society, but female Goblin clan-rulers are not unknown.

Most Goblin adventurers are warriors, favoring short swords, short spears, and short bows as weapons. Sneakier Goblins may become rogues, and those with enough wit and talent sometimes learn the Arts of wizard or shaman.

HALFLINGS

Halflings are the shortest of the humanoid races, standing an average of three feet tall. Their short size makes it hard for enemies to strike them, and easy for them to hide, but also means they're comparatively weak.

Halflings are native to the Westerlands, and were first encountered there by Men during the Great Migration. Unfortunately for them, they occupied some of the most fertile fields and desirable land in the region, and it wasn't long before some Men chose to take their lands from them by force. Many Halflings were slaughtered, and the survivors fled or hid. Stealth became a way of life for them for many years until Men became more civilized and the two races could exist in peace. Today many kingdoms include Halfling towns and villages (such as Redleaf Downs in Vestria or

Myrwick Strand in Keldravia), and Halflings live in the cities of Men (where they often take such jobs as innkeeper, brewer, or baker). Although some have migrated to Mhorecia and northern Mitharia, they're still most common in the Westerlands.

Most Halflings are quiet, peaceful folk; they prefer to live in idyllic pastoral areas where they can farm and raise animals. They get along well with most other races, particularly Men and Gnomes, though some remember bitterly the ancient tales of how Men drove them out of their original homes. They're well-known for their prodigious appetites. Despite being only half as tall as an adult Man, a Halfling can eat twice as much as a Man can! As a result, Halflings often become superb cooks; most of them tend to be portly, if not extremely fat.

Halflings rarely become adventurers; they prefer safer, more sedate occupations. Those with a desire for more excitement often become rogues (a profession for which their size and agility suit them), rangers, archers, or bards.



HALFLING PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
6	+2 DEX
10	<i>Hard To Hit</i> : +2 DCV
3	<i>Easily Hidden</i> : +2 to Concealment; Self Only (-½)
4	<i>Hard To Perceive</i> : +2 to Stealth

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 23

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
-4	-4 STR
-2	-2 PRE
-4	Running -2"
-5	Physical Limitation: Small, down to half Man size and/or mass (1m, or ½") (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: -15

Options

Cost	Ability
+4	<i>Typical Halfling Cultural Skills Package</i> : Add any two Halfling PSs at 11- (such as Brewing/ Distilling, Cook, Farmer, Gardener, Innkeeper, or Woodcarving)
+18	<i>Halfling Hunter</i> : Add Tracking (INT Roll) and +3 with Ranged Combat

LEOMACHI

Leomachi (singular leomachus [male] or leomacha [female]) are a species of lion-centaurs — beings with the upper torsos of Men, and the lower bodies of lions. They live in the Makari Plains of Malegyon, though more than a few have migrated to lands in Orumbar, Neshara, the Devyldran Plain, or other nearby realms. They dislike cold and wet weather, and so avoid northern climes, coastal regions, and traveling on ships.

Leomachi are carnivores, though they can eat vegetables and fruit for a time if they must. They're skilled hunters, but to ensure a constant supply of meat usually become herders (which in turn means a nomadic lifestyle more than a settled existence). A leomachus's status within his community depends on how many herd animals (usually cattle) he owns — the one with the most cattle rules. A leomachus

LEOMACHUS PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
8	+8 STR
12	+4 DEX
14	+7 CON
6	+3 BODY
3	+3 PRE
10	Claws: HKA ½d6
2	Rear/Kick: HA +1d6; Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½), Linked (to HKA; -½)
1	Rearing Throw: +3 STR; Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Only To Throw (-1)
1	Tough Skin: Damage Resistance (1 PD/1 ED); Activation Roll 11- (covers Hit Locations 11-18; -1)
4	Swift Runner: Running +2"
3	Alert And Perceptive: +1 PER with all Sense Groups
5	Two Arms, Four Legs: Extra Limbs (two legs), Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 69

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
None	

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0



can also earn status through fighting skill, magic powers, or the like, but rarely enough to equal or exceed herd-status.

Leomachi typically organize themselves into tribe-like “prides.” Within a pride, the leomachuses rule, leaving the tasks of child-rearing and home-making to the leomachas (though some women scorn these roles to become warriors and hunters anyway).

Because their wealth is so easily transported, leomachi learn early to fight to protect what is theirs. In addition to their natural weapons (claws), they carry weapons and shields, and wear armor to protect their torsos. They favor bows, spears, and swords as weapons; by rearing up before they throw, they can use the size of their body to hurl a spear further than a Man can.



PAKASA

The Pakasa (singular paka), or Cat-Folk, are a race mixing the features of Men and felines. Soft fur covers their bodies, tails sway behind them gracefully as they walk, their large ears are ever-alert for odd sounds, and small (but sharp) claws tip their fingers. Like cats, they tend to be fast and agile, and have keen senses. They speak Rarshas, a language they share with their allies, the Leomachi.

Like Men, the Pakasa are all of one species, but have multiple races within the species. In addition to the standard Pakasa, there are the *Simburu*, or lion-folk (taller, broader-shouldered, stronger, and tougher), and the *Dumawe*, or cheetah-folk (lean and swift). All Pakasa prefer warmer, dryer climates, such as the Makari Plains and nearby regions. They rarely travel to Arduna, but a few inhabit Vornakkia and the southernmost regions of Mhorecia.

When they migrate to the realms of Men, Pakasa typically live in cities or towns, but in their own lands they prefer small villages, usually anchored by two or three large families. A Pakasa village always has a strong community spirit; everyone works together to raise children, ensure that each Paka has enough to eat (an oft-difficult task for a race that so strongly prefers meat to other types of food), defend the village, and perform other tasks. They often establish alliances with nearby groups of Leomachi, providing craftworks and other goods in exchange for meat.

PAKASA PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
9	+3 DEX
3	+3 PRE
8	Claws: HKA ½d6 (1d6 with STR); Reduced Penetration (-¼)
4	Cat's Swiftess: Running +2"
2	Cat's Pounce: Leaping +2"
5	Cat's Eyes: Nightvision
2	Cat's Nose: +1 to Smell/Taste PER Rolls
5	Tail: Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 38

Disadvantages	
Value	Disadvantage
-2	-1 CON
-2	-1 BODY

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: -4

Options	
Cost	Ability
+9	Simburu (Lion-Folk): reduce DEX to +2, add +2 STR, +3 CON, +2 BODY
+4	Dumawe (Cheetah-Folk): Increase to Running +4"
+10	Feline Bond: Animal Handler (Felines) (PRE +4)

THE SESHURMA

Seshurma (or Lizard-Folk) are reptilian humanoids with short fangs and claws, forked tongues, and tails. Some of them have short, bony spikes running from the top of the head down the spine to the base of the tail (and perhaps even onto the tail), but these are not large or sharp enough for use as weapons. Some clans or war-bands decorate their bodies with painted, tattoo-like symbols or patterns. In Seshurman, they call themselves *Hrâcorûs*, which means “Descended of Dragons” — though the Drakine, who despise the Lizard-Folk, angrily deny that meaning.

Seshurma prefer hot, wet, and/or humid areas to live in — marshes, swamps, jungles, coastlines. They dislike cold and dry weather, and avoid areas featuring such climes as much as possible. In Ambrethel, the largest populations of Seshurma are found in the Chekuru Jungle, Great Grey Swamp, Kumasi Jungle, Ulimar Jungle, and the Greenmaw.

SESHURMA PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
2	+2 STR
6	+2 DEX
4	+2 CON
4	+2 BODY
3	+3 PRE
10	<i>Fangs:</i> HKA ½d6
8	<i>Claws:</i> HKA ½d6; Reduced Penetration (-¼)
1	<i>Seshurman Skin:</i> Damage Resistance (1 PD/1 ED)
2	<i>At Home In The Water:</i> Swimming +2” (4” total)
5	<i>Tail:</i> Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 45

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
-1	-2 COM

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: -1

Options

Cost	Ability
+3	<i>Water Warrior:</i> Add Aquatic Movement (Environmental Movement: no penalties while in water)



Seshurma typically live in villages consisting of two or more extended clans; usually a matriarch (the oldest, wisest female) rules the community. People support themselves through hunting and gathering, trade, selling craftworks, and the like. The young hatch from eggs laid in the early spring by fertile females; many villages suffer from overpopulation, which makes them aggressive and daring.

Conflicts between villages or clans are common, so the Seshurma esteem fighting skills highly. Seshurman warriors favor lighter armors (leather, scale, wooden shields) and weapons (swords, spears), since they live in and around water. They usually make their war-gear out of stone, bone, shell, wood, and leather, since metal rusts easily in their damp homelands; they prize ironwood highly, and can make deadly weapons from it. If possible, a Seshurma tries to lure his opponent into or onto the water so he can exploit his swimming abilities for tactical advantage.

TROLLS

Trolls are large humanoids, smaller than giants but taller than ogres, with tough, almost stony skin. They may have fangs large enough to use as weapons, but are smart and strong enough to use weapons scaled to their size. They favor hammers, swords, and axes; their strength and hardiness makes them superb warriors. Although best known as fierce fighters, Trolls possess a strange magic and can become powerful wizards.

Although Trolls suffer no debility in sunlight, they tend to prefer darkness, and so are most active at night in many regions. They often live underground, in caves or great halls they build themselves, but some construct towers and castles instead. They favor mountainous and hilly regions. In the Westerlands, the Trolls have an entire kingdom, Tharnrek, of their own; elsewhere they tend



to live in isolated communities that rarely interact with other races (except, perhaps, to raid and plunder them). A few Trolls, drawn by curiosity, a love of learning, or wanderlust, live among other races or become adventurers.

TROLL PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
25	+25 STR
30	+15 CON
24	+12 BODY
15	+15 PRE
5	+5 PD
3	+3 ED
10	Fangs: HKA ½d6
9	Troll's Hide: Armor (3 PD/3 ED)
6	Long Legs: Running +3"
5	Troll's Eyes: Nightvision
6	Troll's Senses: +2 PER with all Sense Groups
4	Reach: Stretching 1" (see Size/Weight Package Deals in Fantasy Hero)

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 142

Disadvantages	
Value	Disadvantage
-1	-2 COM
-5	Physical Limitation: Large (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: -6

HALF-TROLLS

Occasionally Trolls breed with Men, producing *Half-Trolls*. Though not nearly as tall and strong as their Troll forebears, and lacking trollish fangs and senses, Half-Trolls are much stronger and tougher than most Men. They often become warriors, mercenaries, or adventurers.

HALF-TROLL PACKAGE DEAL

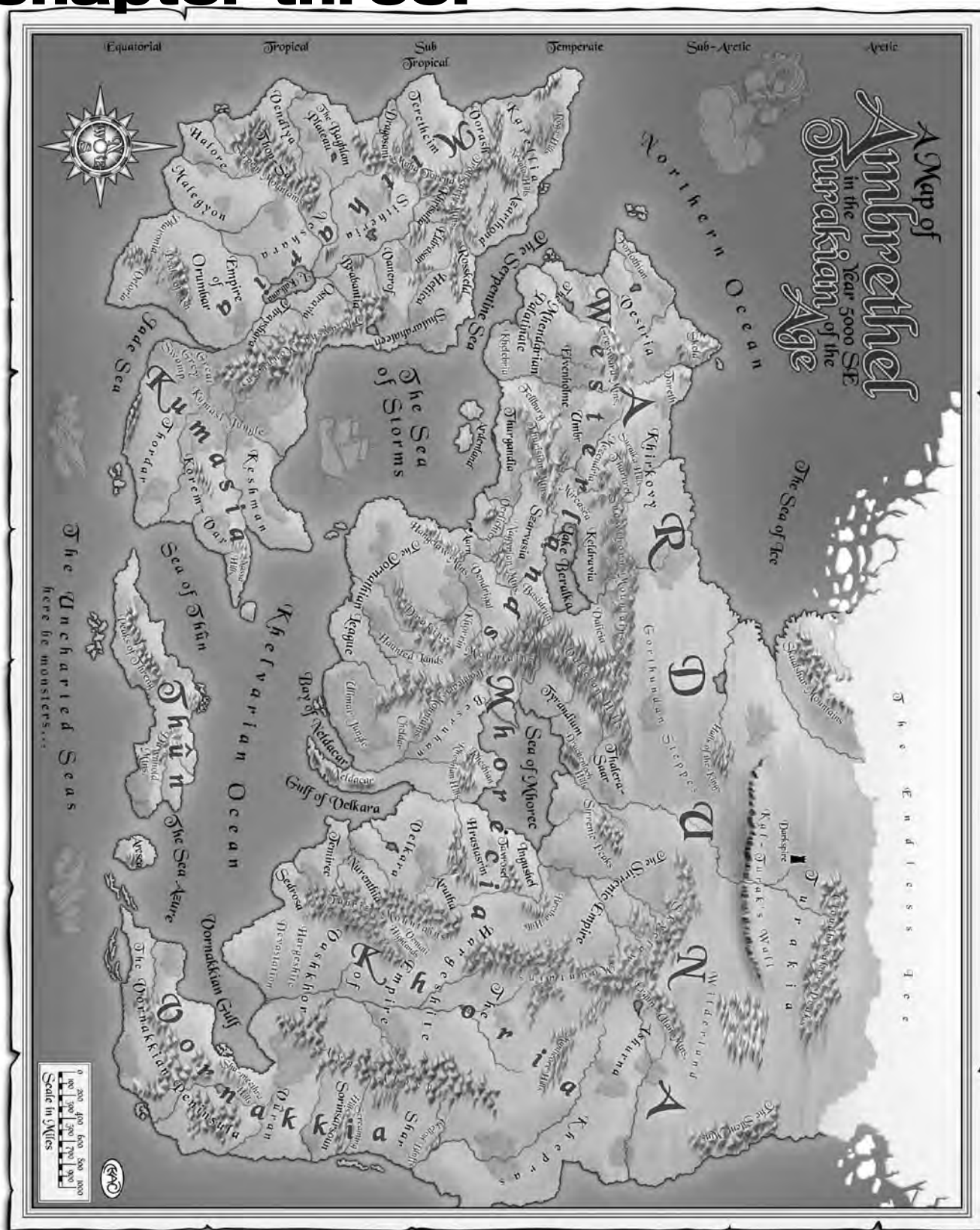
Abilities	
Cost	Ability
10	+10 STR
20	+10 CON
10	+5 BODY
5	+5 PRE
2	+2 PD
1	+1 ED
1	Half-Troll's Hide: Damage Resistance (1 PD/1 ED)
2	Long Legs: Running +1"

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 51

Disadvantages	
Value	Disadvantage
-1	-2 COM

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: -1

chapter three:



STRANGE AND WONDEROUS LANDS THE REALMS OF AMBERTHEL

THE WESTERLANDS



THE SIZE OF THE WORLD

The individual maps in this chapter have a scale showing how much territory they cover. However, as noted on page 6, Ambrethel is part of the Hero Universe, which means it is an Earth of long, long ago. The amount of land shown on the map of Ambrethel, even as large as it is, doesn't cover the entire globe. Roughly speaking, the equator runs through southern Mitharia, the lower part of the Kumasi Jungle, northern Thûn, and the lower Vornakkian Peninsula. That leaves most of the Southern Hemisphere of Turakian Age Earth for the GM to map out, should he so desire. Furthermore, since Arduna (the northern continent) is roughly the size of Eurasia, there's still plenty of the Northern Hemisphere for the GM to create, if he wants.

For a map of the entire world, see page 162.

Ambrethel is a large and diverse world, with millions of square miles of territory that include every possible environment and climate. This chapter describes its various realms and lands, with an eye toward details useful to gamers creating characters, scenarios, and the like.

THE REALM TEMPLATE

This chapter describes kingdoms and lands using a template that makes it easy for GMs and players alike to access information about each place. The template covers the following information:

Government: The type of government the realm has (often, but not always, a hereditary monarchy).

Ruler: The name of the current king or other ruler, if applicable.

Capital: The capital city, where the ruler maintains his court, headquarters, or the like.

Population: The types of peoples who live in the realm, with rough breakdowns by percentage. These are approximations; the GM should feel free to alter them to suit his own campaign if necessary.

Language(s): The tongue(s) spoken in that realm.

Coinage: The types of coins minted or used in that realm, listed in this order: copper; silver; gold.

Resources: Economic resources the realm possesses, such as lumber, fishing, or mining.



Religion: The religion that's paramount in the realm, such as the High Church or the Hargeshite faith.

Military: The approximate composition of the realm's military forces. Again, this information is just a guideline; the GM can (and should) change it to suit his game if necessary. As discussed on page 172, a force of 20,000 soldiers would be considered a large army.

Arms/Symbol: The coat of arms, national symbol, or other insignia of the realm.

THE FAR WESTERLANDS

Elvenholme

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: Elvenking Tirionsathymar

Capital: Ildra Borala

Population: Elves (97%), Halflings (2%), Gnomes (1%)

Language(s): Shalionderentine

Coinage: None (barter)

Resources: Elven crafts and services, lumber, game, furs

Religion: High Church (Elven)

Military: Light cavalry 18%, heavy cavalry 10%, light infantry 39%, heavy infantry 15%, navy 0%, magical/other 18%

Arms/Symbol: Red antlers on gold, framing between them a twelve-pointed blue star

Known in Shalionderentine as *Taléarintarath*, Elvenholme is the largest and most powerful of the elven realms of Ambrethel.

HISTORY

The Elves claim they settled in Elvenholme — once a larger forest, encompassing much of the Mhendarian Palatinate and Umbr — millennia ago, long before Men ever came to the Westerlands. For countless years they walked forest paths from the Serpentine Sea to the Snowthorn Mountains, living their lives as they would and fighting dragons, monsters, and Trolls when they had to. But then Ordon and his people arrived, and the Elvenlords, in their wisdom, realized the Elves would never have the numbers or power to compete with Men in the long run. Slowly but surely the Elves withdrew into the heart of the forest, Elvenholme, and left the rest of their ancient lands to Men, who cut down the trees and built their great cities.

For the most part, the Elves of Elvenholme, while on cordial terms with the neighboring realms, have preferred to have little contact with the rest of the world. Only when great threats to the entire Westerlands have arisen — the Drakine Wars, the Lord of the Graven Spear, and the like — have they joined with Men and Dwarves and taken up arms.

4368 SE: Vanerishadra The Apostate

However, the Elves are not always so peaceful among themselves. Though outright conflict is rare, the Elves are as prone to differences of opinion as any other race, and sometimes disagreements turn violent.

One of the worst such conflicts in Elven history occurred in 4368 SE, when an elven priest, Vanerishadra, rejected the High Faith of his forefathers. He claimed that the gods the Elves worshipped were false ones, and that the true gods — gods of the Elves, who had created them and made them superior to all other races — had revealed themselves to him in visions and dreams. As if to prove his words, he displayed mystic powers far greater than those of other elven priests and wizards.

This doctrinal split rocked Elvenholme (and even spread to Shularahleen and other elven lands). While most Elves remained true to the ancient elven faith, more than a few found Vanerishadra's message and creed strongly compelling. Arguments and debates long by even elven standards took place in Ildra Borala and throughout the land. When Vanerishadra "proved" the righteousness of his arguments by burning a temple near Ildra Borala to the ground and suffering no divine retribution, civil war erupted.

The fighting did not last long, but during the largest battle, in the Vale of Haldoritulirunoth, an arrow struck down the Elvenking, Tirailioarestunar. No one saw who shot it or ever claimed to have fired it. Despite that tragic loss, the king's army won... but Vanerishadra disappeared, never to be seen again, and without the strength of his convictions and demonstrations of his power, the persuasiveness of his doctrine seemed to vanish like mist in morning sunlight.

ELVENHOLME IN 5000 SE

Today, Elvenholme remains much as it has always been; the longevity of the Elves gives them and their land a timeless quality that seems almost enchanted to Men. Few things disturb the peace of the forest, though quarrels sometimes erupt when Men or Dwarves chop down trees on the forest's edge without permission, or poachers from surrounding lands enter Elvenholme to shoot the Elves' deer and fowl.

THE LAND

Elvenholme is a vast forest, its trees ranging from saplings to giants that have been alive longer than Men have lived in the Westerlands. In the northwest and east, where it abuts the Greywards and the Thurisians, it rises high on hills, and ferocious beasts or even monsters may lair there, providing sport for elven hunters and adventurers. The middle parts of the forest lie in lowlands, where streams, lakes, and marshy areas break up the endless leagues of trees.

The only true city in Elvenholme is Ildra Borala, a wondrous city built in and around a grove of immense trees in the heart of Elvenholme which the Elves have sculpted to their purposes with the art of *thelananerasadalir* (page 37). Elsewhere the Elves live in small homes, villages, or wandering bands, at peace with the land and themselves.

THE HIGH FRONTIER

The maps and descriptions of the realms of Ambrethel often seem to indicate hard-and-fast borders, usually based on some geographic feature like a river, mountain range, or forest that makes a convenient demarcation point or impedes travel. However, given the level of communications and technology in the world, borders aren't always so cut and dried. They may be fought over by two realms that can't agree on which kingdom controls which regions, or the subject of ancient grudges and quarrels.

Borderlands are often less settled, wilder places than the interiors of realms, but that may depend on the geography. If a well-traveled river forms a border, both kingdoms are likely to have cities along the banks, possibly making the border the *most* civilized part of the land rather than the least. But in many places bandits, marauding greenskins, monsters, and other perils are a fact of borderlands life.

RANTHERITENALO

10	STR	12	DEX
11	CON	8	BODY
13	INT	10	EGO
12	PRE	12	COM
3	PD	3	ED
3	SPD	4	REC
22	END	19	STUN

Abilities: +1 Sight Group PER, Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group), Life Support (Longevity: up to 1,600 years), Running +2" (8" total), Lightsleep, Climbing 12-, High Society 12-, AK: Elvenholme 11-, KS: Elven Artists 11-, PS: *Thelananeradasalir* 16-, SS: Botany 11-, SS: Dendrology 14-, WF: Blades, Bows

Disadvantages: DNPCs (wife, children) 11- (Normal)

Notes: Considered perhaps the finest living *thelananeradasalir*-*waryn* ("treesmith") currently living in Elvenholme, Rantheritenalo has spent centuries of his life shaping trees into precise, aesthetically pleasing shapes. For him to agree to work on the trees in or around an Elf's home is a singular honor (not to mention a highly valuable service); the gifts he receives from his wealthy patrons have made him quite well-off himself.

The Cleft Of Sunaishavelaru

The greatest of the rivers of Elvenholme is the Sunaishatremaldiar, or the Allern as Men call it. In the south-central region of the forest, there is a place where the Sunaishatremaldiar forms a waterfall that has cut a deep cleft. The Elves call this the Cleft of Sunaishavelaru, meaning "Sunaishatremaldiar's Rainbow" because of the rainbows created by the waterfall's spray. Many Elves live there, or near there, because of its great natural beauty; some even claim the waters have mystic properties making them ideal for brewing potions and the like.

Calariastarianath's Grove

In the northeastern part of Elvenholme there is a grove where the renowned elven wizard Calariastarianath makes his home. There he receives seekers of knowledge who wish to become his apprentices. He only accepts students already somewhat skilled in the Arts Arcane, and so sets several challenges before those who petition him. Some challenges are common to all, others unique to the person who must perform them. Those who succeed at all their challenges may become Calariastarianath's apprentices and learn his deep lore.

SOCIETY

As of 5000 SE, the Elvenking, ruler of all Elvenholme, is Tirionsathymar, an Elf skilled in both the arts of war and the Art of magic. He has ruled since the death of his father in Vanerishadra's War, and though he came to the throne at what many Elves considered a disturbingly young age, he has ruled well and with wisdom. But the Elvenlords have other causes for consternation today: since his wife Mareeladurasaturi died of a wasting disease in 4857 SE, Tirionsathymar has taken no other consort... and he has no children. Were he to die childless, any one of several lesser nobles of House Urindaroheसरin might have claim to the throne, and who knows what any of them might do to enforce his "royal prerogative"?

In some parts of Elvenholme, the tide of elven isolationism is rising. Seeing the growing turmoil in the outside world, many Elves think their people should remain within the forest, guarding the borders vigilantly against intruders but otherwise having as little to do with other folk as possible. The Elvenking does not share this view, but some of his nobles do, and as Kal-Turak's shadow extends further and darker over the world, no doubt the debate will intensify.

For more about general elven culture and society, see page 35.

The Mhendarian Palatinate

Government: Hereditary "monarchy"
Ruler: Lord Palatine Markerric Mhendarius
Capital: Cyradon
Population: Men (71%), Dwarves (11%), Elves (14%), Other (4%)
Language(s): Ilurian, Khellian
Coinage: Penny; Wheel; Dolar
Resources: Grain, fruit, mining, fishing, herding
Religion: High Church
Military: Light cavalry 20%, heavy cavalry 20%, light infantry 20%, heavy infantry 25%, navy 8%, magical/other 7%
Arms/Symbol: A silver castle (represented as a wall connecting two towers) on green

Heirs to a centuries-long tradition of wardenship and just rule, the Lords Palatine of House Mhendarius are renowned throughout the Westerlands, and even the world, for their honor and valor.

HISTORY

In the aftermath of the Drakine Wars, the once-mighty Ilurian Empire effectively collapsed. Emperor Stavros attempted to hold it together, but his efforts failed in the face of the greed and ambition of his many vassals.

Among his vassals were a few who strove to help him, and one of those was Horaz Mhendarius, a powerful duke who ruled over lands in the western part of the Empire. Refusing to acknowledge the death of the empire, he declared himself to be but a "lord palatine," holding his lands as a sort of regent for the emperor who would one day return. In the thousands of years since that time, no emperor has ever returned, but by ancient tradition the head of House Mhendarius is known as the Lord Palatine, and his lands as the Mhendarian Palatinate.

From the first days of the Palatinate, the Lords Palatine were effectively kings, though they took not the title; they even wear a stylized crown not far different from the kinds worn by kings. But as men of honor and dignity, they hold on to their ancient charge, awaiting the day when the empire will arise from the ashes, and the emperor will reward their long, proud service.

3643 SE: The Conquest Of Khelebria

For the early centuries of its existence, Mhendaria's neighbor to the east was not Thurgandia, as it is today, but the kingdom of Khelebria (also known as the Kelmark). Once the domain of an Ilurian count, Khelebria had quickly become a free realm when the empire collapsed. A land of strong druidic tendencies, where a circle of Druids crowned every king at the ancient holy site Kellingseat, Khelebria was happy to separate itself from the more mainstream kingdoms surrounding it.

Unfortunately, the Khelebrian kings were more interested in their own personal well-being than that of their people. They ruled with an iron fist, to ensure that tax money flowed into their coffers and no one rebelled, but they cared little what problems

their people caused elsewhere. As time passed, more and more Khelebrians became bandits and thieves, raiding into the Palatinate, Fellburg, and even Elvenholme at times.

Several times Mhendarian knights fought back against these reavers, often crossing the Corwine to do so, leading to angry protests and increased tensions between the two kingdoms. Slowly but surely, matters escalated. One day in 3643 SE, a large group of bandits, supposedly from Khelebria, raided and set fire to the city of Forgald. Unwilling to tolerate any more such invasions, Lord Palatine Varick marshaled his knights and invaded Khelebria. Khelebria's poorly-maintained army was no match for Varick's large force of heavy infantry and cavalry. Within but a season, the rulers of Khelebria had died or fled, and the borders of the Palatinate extended all the way to the Allern River.

Khelebria has occasionally been a source of trouble for the Palatinate since then, though the efficient rule of Cyradon has stamped out the worst problems swiftly and cleanly. Among the Mhendarians the Khelebrians still enjoy a reputation as bandits and thieves; for their part, the Khelebrians claim the Palatinate burned Forgald itself as a pretext for invasion.

THE MHENDARIAN PALATINATE IN 5000 SE

Bordered by stable realms on three sides and the Serpentine Sea on the other, the Mhendarian Palatinate generally has little to fear in the way of enemies, save Orcs and Trolls who come down at times from the Greyward Mountains, and occasional tension with Vestria over control of Warrick's Pass. If any threats concern the Lord Palatine, they're internal — unrest in Khelebria, troubles within the royal family, dissension in the ranks of the nobility.

THE LAND

Geographically, the Mhendarian Palatinate is much like Vestria. The land begins high in the Greyward Mountains, gradually sloping down through the sparsely-settled Alfingen Highlands to the coastal plains along the Serpentine Sea. Three strong rivers — the Alahadrion, Corwine, and Allern — flow through it from the mountains, making it difficult to cross the country from east to west without visiting large cities that have bridges. The land is well-suited for farming and herding (and fishing in the rivers as well), and the many small patches of forest make for excellent hunting.

Cyradon

The Lords Palatine maintain their seat at Cyradon, on the shores of beautiful Lake Lusarra. Compared to many other Westerlander cities, Cyradon seems open, clean, and sturdy — the Lords Palatine have always been renowned builders, and are quick to tear down old or ugly buildings and replace them with something better (and for this reason often attract skilled dwarven craftsmen to the city).

Cyradon is a walled city, though it hasn't been attacked in so long that people have been living outside the walls for centuries. The "royal" palace is on a hill set back from the lake, but has deep wells

to provide it with an essentially unlimited supply of water. From the hill the city spreads out down to the shore; the closer to the hill one gets, the more it costs to live there.

Tretha

The second-largest city in Mhendaria, Tretha sits near the mouth of the Corwine River on an excellent natural harbor. It's one of the busiest port cities in the Westerlands, and a favorite of many merchants. The Duchess Lusía Meralda, who rules this fief until her son Tovar comes of age and can succeed his late father, has encouraged trade by keeping tariffs and money-changing fees low.

Mages from all over the Westerlands come to Tretha to study at the Academy Velthune, a school of magic founded by the wizard of the same name nearly two thousand years ago. Academy students in distinctive gold robes are a common sight throughout the city; their ivory-robed professors are rarer, but accorded even more respect.

In recent years, Tretha and the surrounding lands have suffered increasing attacks from tribes of Ran-tari living in the nearby Cormouth Swamp. In years past the Ran-tari were peaceful and kept to themselves, but something has stirred them up, and Duchess Lusía's troops do not dare to enter the swamp after several attempts to attack the toad-men only led to slaughter. Dark rumors swirling through the city claim a malign frog-god has spurred the Ran-tari on to their depredations.

SOCIETY

Lord Palatine Markerric, an old but vigorous man, rules Mhendaria. A traditionalist, he hews to the customs and beliefs of his forefathers and hopes for the eventual return of the empire on whose behalf he holds the throne. But his two sons have other ideas. Gavric, the crown prince, talks openly of assuming the title of "king." His far more popular younger brother Hedrigon, while more concerned with matters military and deeds of knightly prowess, also seems inclined that way, though out of practicality rather than arrogance.

The Mhendarian nobility presents no more settled a picture. Noble houses such as Osterrek, Halwyn, Rennigar, and Meralda have long competed for power, wealth, and prestige, and at times these conflicts have turned violent, with groups of warriors taking to the fields to skirmish or assassins plying daggers in the night. Some of them, particularly Duke Toradoc Rennigar of Athring, seem willing to employ just about any tactic if they feel they can get away with it. A few nobles, including Count Halwyn, openly favor Hedrigon over his insolent older brother, raising the possibility of a succession conflict in the future.

For the most part, the people of the Palatinate know nothing of these squabbles, or ignore them as best they may. A devout and hard-working folk, they're known for building large temples, and like the Thurgandians for their legendary ability to consume enormous quantities of ale. The farms, orchards, and mines of Mhendaria breed many strong fighters and worthy knights.

LOGAR FYNEGLASS

10	STR	15	DEX
13	CON	10	BODY
18	INT	15	EGO
15	PRE	10	COM
5	PD	5	ED
3	SPD	5	REC
26	END	22	STUN

Abilities: 50 points' worth of Alchemy spells, 30 points' worth of Enchantment spells, 20 points' worth of Wizardry spells, Alchemy 24-, Enchantment 18-, PS: Glassblowing 12-, PS: Glass Sculpting 12-, Stealth 12-, Survival (Temperate) 8-, Trading 12-, WF: Blades, Staff, Wizardry 14-, Base (alchemy lab and shop), Money (Well Off)

Disadvantages: Rivalry (Professional, with other commercial alchemists)

Notes: A resident of Cyradon since retiring from the adventuring life over 20 years ago, Logar, known to many as "Fyneglass" for the quality of the glasswares he makes, is a commercial alchemist. He manufactures potions, salves, and some other items on commission for paying customers. He also keeps some popular items (such as healing elixirs) in stock on a more or less permanent basis. He's also willing to make glass items or cast spells for a fee.

Vestria

Government: Hereditary monarchy
Ruler: King Almund VIII
Capital: Odellia
Population: Men (83%), Dwarves (6%), Elves (4%), Other (7%)
Language(s): Vestrian
Coinage: Penny; Noble; Royal
Resources: Fish, lumber, grain, herding, mining
Religion: High Church
Military: Light cavalry 18%, heavy cavalry 16%, light infantry 28%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 12%, magical/other 6%
Arms/Symbol: A golden dragon rampant on blue

One of the largest and most powerful of the Westerlands realms, Vestria is the westernmost nation of Arduna.

HISTORY

The land now ruled by the Sword-Kings of Vestria was once part of two great realms, Amardan in the south and Storkak in the north. In the sixth and seventh centuries of the First Epoch, the depredations of Orcs and the foolishness of petty and weak-willed kings left Amardan weakened and vulnerable. A crop-blight gave King Tedor of Iluria the chance to move into the region and take over almost without resistance, though Colgrave, Toreth, and Skeld in effect remained free lands.

Following the collapse of Iluria during the Drakine Wars, the Vestrian lands splintered into several minor kingdoms and duchies. After centuries of fragile peace and occasional skirmishes and border wars, in 1943 FE Felric, Grand Duke of Odellia, conquered the lands near his. He established the realm of Vestria, and he and his heirs became known as the Sword-Kings because of how he put the royal family of Colgrave to death (see pages 12-13). It took twenty years longer to conquer Skeld and Toreth, but eventually Felric's throne was secure — though he dared not slay the Skelda and Torethi royalty as he had in Colgrave, lest their people never accept his rule.

Until the rise of the Lord of the Graven Spear, the rule of the Lophranc kings was generally a peaceful one, marred only by raiding Orcs and Goblins and the need to march north and put down Skelda or Torethi rebels every few years. The coming of the Spearlord's armies led to years of war, and even the strong Vestrian army was unable to withstand the forces of Varghl Hôntash. King Garrold, accompanied by his family and chief retainers and advisors, fled into the Greyward Mountains, where they took refuge in secret halls created by the Dwarves of Gendersbad.

By the time the Lord of the Graven Spear was overthrown and the Second Epoch began, King Garrold had died, and his son Gairam was king. He found his land shattered and ruined by the depredations of the Spearlord, and many of his surviving vassals fractious and powerhungry. It took him nearly a decade to restore most of his lands, and it wasn't until long after the Troll Wars, when his

grandsons' grandsons were kings after him, that Toreth and Skeld were once more brought to heel.

3812-3834 SE: The Imres Regency

In 3812 SE, King Alestan II died in a fall from his horse, leaving his only son, the year-old infant Hubard, as ruler. Queen Elicia established a regency council, with herself as its leader. Her control of the council was quickly usurped by one of its more powerful members, the greedy and ambitious Duke Gervinus of Farlothian. Through deft political maneuverings, and a few well-timed "accidents," he eliminated the Queen's strongest supporters and replaced them with his own people.

For nearly two decades, Gervinus was, in all but name, King of Vestria, and his seat at Imres the capital. He confined Hubard to various royal residences while he was still a child, and when he reached his majority in 3829 SE, Gervinus refused to crown him. The rest of the Regency Council, long since tired of Gervinus's high-handed ways and unwilling to go along with an outright usurpation, spirited Hubard away and raised the country against Imres. The Duke responded by sending an envoy in secret to Skeld and Toreth, promising them their freedom if they would but fight on his behalf.

Five years of war followed, with neither side able to gain a decisive advantage. Hubard and his forces had the weight of numbers and popular opinion, but Gervinus had the help of hard-bitten fighting-men from the north and several powerful wizards (including, for a time, the renowned gnomish sorceress Systrosa Nightweaver). But time was on the young king's side, and month by month he wore away at Gervinus's army. Finally, in Quickstorm 3834 SE, his forces trapped Gervinus and his men against the western shore of Lake Alathus. The battle that followed was bloody and swift, with Hubard's knights making mincemeat of the more lightly-armed northern levies while the king himself fought Gervinus in single combat and beheaded him. With the Skelda and Torethi forces weakened by years of true war, Hubard the Bold would go on to become one of the strongest and longest-reigning kings in Vestria's history, one who bequeathed a legacy of peace and security to his sons and their people for many years to come.

4773-75 SE: The Wolf-Winters

A little over two centuries ago, Vestria experienced a period of strange weather. The summers were unusually cool, and the winters bitterly cold. Wolves, hungry and fierce, left their homes in the mountains and forests to attack herds, and even villages; more than a few hapless folk met their ends under the teeth of a deadly wolf-pack. Prince (later king) Drestel earned his praise-name "Wolfhunter" for the many days he spent in the field with his men pursuing the packs and whittling their numbers down with well-placed arrows. After 4775 SE, the snows passed as quickly as they had come, and the wolves retreated back to their normal lands.

VESTRIA IN 5000 SE

Vestria is a powerful realm at peace with most of its neighbors, but some of King Almund's advisors fear that with the rise of Kal-Turak, the times of tranquility are coming to an end. And the portents seem to indicate that their fears are justified.

First, the ambitions of the Skelda and the Torethi have once again begun to grow. Chafing, as always, under the rule of the Oakheart Throne, they have attacked royal messengers and even soldiers. Scarlon Donverness, Duke of Skelda but called king by the highland folk, seems willing to tempt King Almund's displeasure at every turn, whether by delaying tax payments or being slow to bend the knee when visiting the south. The King is considering sending a viceroy and large detachment of soldiers to keep an eye on his northernmost duchy. Things in Toreth are little better, though the Torethi lack a strong leader and seem content simply to ally themselves with Donverness.

Second, the dark folk of the Greyward Mountains — Orcs, Ogres, Goblins, Trolls, and more — have become increasingly active and daring in recent years. They've raided throughout Colgrave, and as far as Greyspan and Ashburn, attacking larger groups and settlements than normal. Rumor has reached King Almund's ears of a wise and powerful chieftain named Skarill, said by some to be a Troll and others a giant of some sort, who leads the greenskins... but if so, no one has ever seen him.

Third, ancient tensions with Khirkovy over borders and land-rights have never been resolved, and the matter may soon come to a head. The Khirkovy princes have always claimed Skeld and Toreth, and sometimes all Vestrian lands north of the Silverrock River, by dint of right dating all the way back to the time of Storvak. The Battle of Baltaros supposedly settled this matter once and for all, but neither realm seems unwilling to obtain more land and peoples at the expense of the other. Tassar Borwyg is a powerful man who brooks little defiance of his will, and the time may come when he seizes with force the lands he regards as his by right.

THE LAND

Vestria is a green and fertile land, well-suited for the growing of crops and the herding of cattle, sheep, and pigs. Despite the presence of Orcs and Orc-kin in and near the mountains, and the strange faerie-folk of the Enchanted Forest of Danaflor, Vestria is generally a safe and peaceful place to live; many towns and villages lack walls. The climate remains pleasant most of the year, though winters can turn bitterly cold and snow remains on the ground most of the time.

Odellia

The capital and largest city of Vestria is Odellia, or "Odly-Town" to many of the common folk. Located on the shore of the Northern Ocean at the mouth of the Greyspark River, its tall walls encircle two castles. The younger, larger, and stronger of the two is Vesterhall, where the King and his family live; it's located on a hill at the center of the city that was raised by magic. Its vast and elegant halls contain

such wonders as the Oakheart Throne, seat of the Sword-Kings, which was made centuries ago with wood taken from the castle gates of the old Amardan capital. The other is the Old Keep, down nearer the river, which is the residence of the Grand Seneschal who runs the city on a daily basis (see sidebar).

Daravel

Considered by many the prettiest city in Vestria, Daravel "reclines along the shores of Lake Alathus like a woman going to sleep," in the words of the bard Peren. Built among and on top of three large hills and several hillocks, it's a city sometimes difficult to get around in. Its people are mainly fishermen and craftsmen; they trade with local farmers and herders, and can gain access to the sea (and thus other markets) by sailing down the Alathus River in shallow-draft barges.

Duke Jabel Duharion rules over Daravel, as his family has for centuries. He's a staunch ally of King Almund, quick to offer advice or support; he favors a strong response to marauding Orcs and the "traitorous rebels" of Skelda and Torethi.

Skeld, Toreth, And Colgrave

Ruled, at various times in their history, by Storvak and Vestria, the people of Skeld, Toreth, and Colgrave have never tolerated their outlander kings quietly or well. But for all their rebelliousness, they've rarely enjoyed any periods of true independence. Today as at most times in the past, most of the freedom they have results from the fact that they're so far from the centers of power and thus difficult to reach.

Skeld, the most difficult and angry of the three, is a mountainous region far to the north of Vestria. It's a wild land of short peaks, tall hills, deep valleys, and dark forests. Free-spirited and solitary, the Skelda dislike having anyone else interfere in their business. For countless centuries they have called the lords of House Donverness king, even when other rulers invaded and forced the king to take the title of duke instead. Since getting a large army up into the highlands is logistically almost impossible, the fires of Skelda revolt will probably never be stamped out. The Vestrian kings have tried many other methods, including marrying daughters of House Donverness and appointing viceroys to Garioch, but few Skelda willingly submit to Vestrian rule.

Toreth, on the coast of the Sea of Ice, is only slightly less troublesome to Vesterhall than Skeld, mainly because it's a lowland area comparatively easily reached over land or by sea. But the king of Vestria dares not move a large army into Toreth, for it borders on Khirkovy, and the tassars would surely take any such move as a prelude to invasion of his realm.

Colgrave, in the shadow of the northern Greywards, is the most peaceful of the three lands. Its royal house and nobles were all put to the sword centuries ago, and it has slowly but surely come to accept the Vestrian kings... albeit grudgingly. Though Count Garick Tairtain has sworn solemn oaths of fealty to King Almund and intends to keep them unless provoked, it wouldn't take much for many of his people to urge him to do so.

GRAND SENESCHAL OSWYN

8 STR	8 DEX
11 CON	8 BODY
13 INT	13 EGO
14 PRE	10 COM
2 PD	2 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
22 END	20 STUN

Abilities: Acting 12-, Conversation 13-, Eavesdropping 8-, High Society 14-, KS: Vestrian Nobility 14-, Persuasion 13-, Riding 11-, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Fringe Benefit: Grand Seneschal (roughly equivalent to a count, but with only a city guard instead of a true army)

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Will Go Out Of His Way To Avoid Offending The King Or Any High Noble, Unluck 1d6

Notes: A noble from a Vestrian family of impeccable standing, Oswyn was appointed to the post of Grand Seneschal — a job filled by the King from the ranks of nobles' younger sons, not a hereditary position — just a few years ago, when Grand Seneschal Lyell died. It took him a long time to settle into the position, and even today he remains a little unsure of himself given the job's diverse responsibilities. He doesn't want to offend anyone, particularly not King Almund or any powerful nobles, so he goes out of his way to keep feathers from getting ruffled... which sometimes makes him less effective at his job than he should be.

TAAL LIOLF

12	STR	15	DEX
16	CON	10	BODY
15	INT	20	EGO
18	PRE	10	COM
6	PD	5	ED
4	SPD	5	REC
32	END	24	STUN

Abilities: 40 points' worth of Druidry spells, 40 points' worth of Divine Magic spells, Animal Handler (Birds, Canines, Felines, Raptors, Ursines) 14-, Faith 23-, AK: Northern Vestria 11-, KS: Herbalism And Healing-Lore 11-, KS: High Church Religious Doctrine 11-, KS: Orcs 8-, KS: Westerlands Flora And Fauna 14-, KS: The Sixteen Stones 14-, Languages: High Vestrian, Ilurian, Westerlands Skhai (all basic conversation; Vestrian is Native), Literacy, Oratory 13-, PS: High Church Priest 11-, Stealth 12-, Survival (Temperate) 12-, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Fringe Benefit: Religious Rank (Taal, Druid), Fringe Benefit: Right To Marry, Turn Undead

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Devotion To The Gods And Their Purposes

Notes: Taal Liolf is a priest who belongs to the order of the Druids. For several years he's helped perform the ceremonies at the Sixteen Stones, and he's become fascinated by them and determined to solve their mystery. After some years of studying them, he's become convinced that they have something to do with Orcs. He's done as much as he can with what he can read in books; now he needs to learn more about Orcs first-hand to gain the in-depth knowledge required to solve the puzzle.

The Valley Of The Sixteen Stones

In northern Vestria, on the southern edge of Skeld, lies a valley ringed by tree-covered hills. Standing in that valley is a circle of sixteen enormous monoliths, some of them carved with strange runes or symbols. Although Druids perform ceremonies there and consider it a sacred site, contrary to most peoples' beliefs they did not create it, nor know who did. It remains a mystery intriguing to many wizards and scholars.

SOCIETY

As of 5000 SE, Almud VIII, scion of House Lophranc, is king of Vestria. A short but imposing-looking man of middle years, he's fought many battles and has the scars to prove it. As he enters his twilight years, his goal is to keep his kingdom strong and prosperous for his sons... but with all the signs of unrest abroad in the land, he fears he may not be able to do so.

Crown Prince Emond, the oldest of four children, will take the throne upon his father's death. A young man full of *joie de vivre* but well aware of the burdens his position entails, he's a favorite of the people and the nobility. He remains single, though his parents and many family friends have repeatedly urged him to wed and beget heirs. His younger brother Prince Mondas is already married, though as yet childless; Emond's twin sisters, Ailith and Goldiva, are only now reaching marriageable age, and King Almud hopes to wed them to foreign princes to he can build stronger ties to other kingdoms.

King Almud's subjects are mostly of the race of Men — sturdy Westerlander crofters, laborers, and yeomen, quick with a greeting or jest. A few Dwarves and Elves acknowledge his lordship, as do the Halflings of the Redleaf Downs, but many Vestrians who don't dwell in cities go their whole lives without having any significant contact with other races.

THE CENTRAL WESTERLANDS

Aarn

Government: Free city ruled by a hereditary monarchy subject to the approval of the nobility

Ruler: King Angandirron

Capital: N/A

Population: Men (69%), Dwarves (9%), Halflings (7%), Drakine (6%), Gnomes (4%), Elves (3%), Other (2%)

Language(s): Aarnese

Coinage: Farthing; Penny; Noble

Resources: Trade, craftwork

Religion: Numerous

Military: Light cavalry 10%, heavy cavalry 8%, light infantry 42%, heavy infantry 15%, navy 15%, magical/other 10%

Arms/Symbol: Halved; right, a sheaf of golden wheat on green, left a scroll and coin on brown

The largest and wealthiest city in Ambrethel, Aarn controls much of the trade on the Sea of Storms.

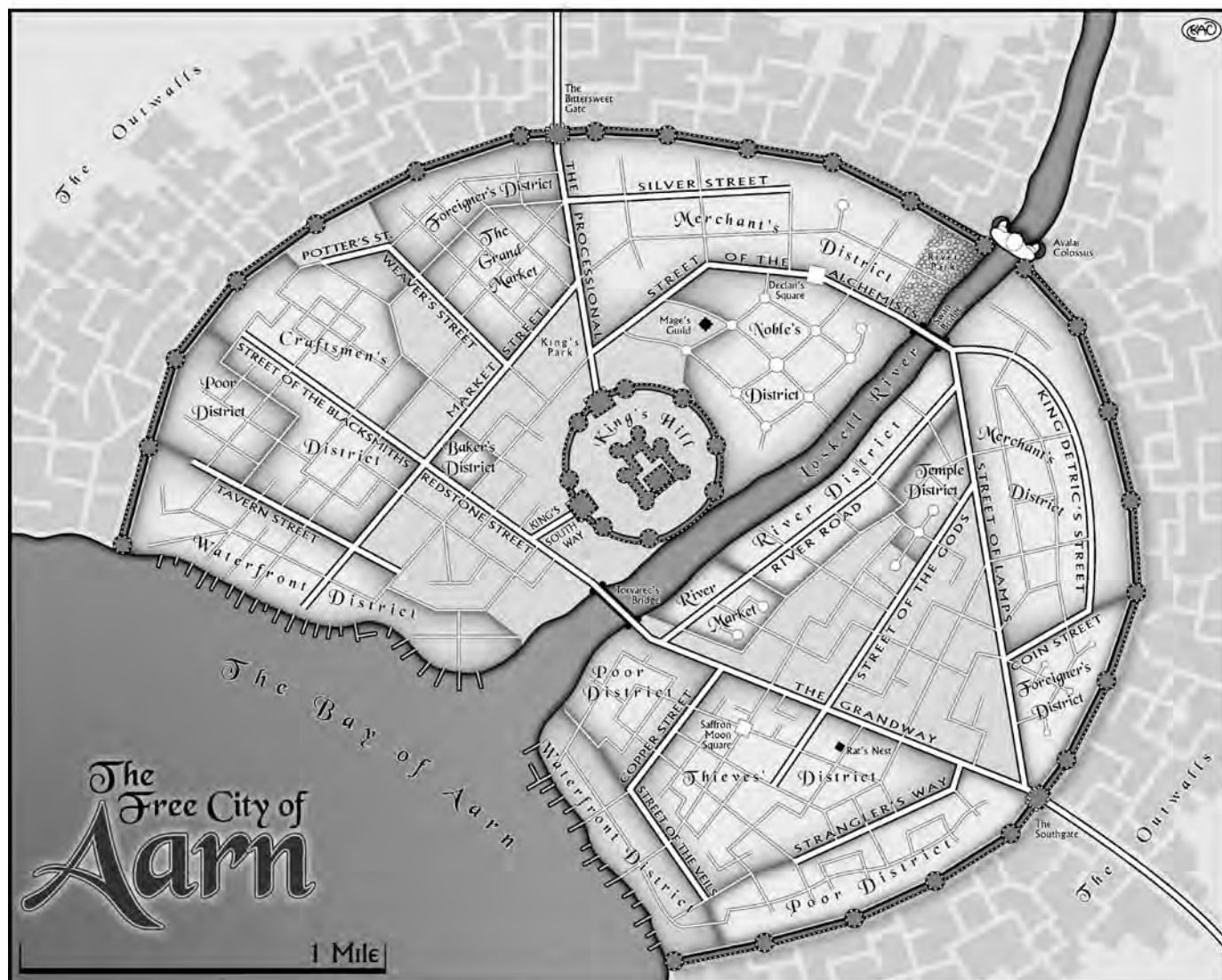
HISTORY

No story tells how Aarn began, or who founded it; the earliest mentions of it appear in the chronicles of the Ilurian Empire. At that time it was a trading city, but not so large or powerful a one as Iluria itself. Only after the Drakine Wars, when Iluria was no more, was Aarn able to absorb much of the trade it once controlled, and during the first millennia of the Second Epoch the "City of Smokes" grew to become the greatest city of the world.

Aarn truly came into its own in 3511 SE, when the King Gesslain of Verlichten, the realm that had long controlled Aarn, sold it a Charter of Free City. Now able to govern themselves exclusively, the Aarnese created the form of government they still use today (see below). Only during Agoston's Interregnum of 4133-38 SE, when a renegade Szarvasian adventurer, Agoston the Usurper, took over the city and put many nobles to death, has the Aarnese government ever faltered.

4712 SE: The Stormlord's Curse

Almost three hundred years ago, a storm of great and terrifying power boiled up out of the Sea of Storms and struck Aarn like a thunderbolt, destroying many buildings and killing thousands of people. While the priests on the Street of Temples prayed night and day to Hornbrek to lift the storm, the city's wizards struggled to contain the damage. Eventually the Stormlord relented, and the clouds parted. With the help of the Mages' Guild, Aarn rebuilt itself, but many towers and homes were lost forever, and now lie in rubble beneath the streets of the city. Even today, scars from the storm can be seen here and there throughout the city.



AARN IN 5000 SE

Aarn remains its belovably chaotic, treacherous, greedy, politically byzantine self in 5000 SE. Angandirron rules from King's Hill, but of late his support among the nobility has become shaky due to several taxes he recently imposed for the repair of the city's walls and bridges. It may be that his young son Kalmar won't have a chance to succeed to the throne; some powerful noble, such as Lord Radne, Lord Tarketa, Lady Civara, or Lord Draydon, may start a coup and seize the throne.

Conflict between the city's Thieves' Guilds has taken a turn for the worse in the past few months. While the Brotherhood of Shadow (which controls a territory that includes parts of the River District, Merchant's District, and Noble's District) remains the strongest under the leadership of the mysterious Lord Ebon (see page 181), the Fist (controlling the eastern Thieves' District and some areas north of the Grandway), the Aarnguild (the western Thieves' District to the river), the Wharfmen (the southern Thieves' District and western port and Poor District areas) and several others are all struggling to expand their territories and cripple their rivals. Why this is happening, no one outside the guilds seems to know... or perhaps they're simply afraid to say.

THE LAND

Aarn sits at the mouth of the Loskell River, where it flows into the Sea of Storms. If need be it can ship goods back up the Loskell to the Ordring, and thence to Lake Beralka and even on to the Sea of Mhorec, but more of its trade comes from the coastal regions of Ambrethel. On any given day, ships from two dozen different ports of call occupy its wharves, and portside taverns throng with strangely-garbed individuals speaking tongues rarely heard elsewhere in the Westerlands.

To enter Aarn, a visitor must pass through one of three gates: the Bittersweet Gate to the north (so called because it's said that coming and going from Aarn is a thing both sweet and bitter to do); the Southgate that leads to the Bandit Lands and Tornathia; or the River Gate. Travelers can only pass through the latter by the river, which means sailing beneath the gigantic legs of Avalor, the colossus who stands watch over the city. It was built city in 4011 SE to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Aarn's independence.

Aarn's Districts

Like many other major cities in Ambrethel, Aarn is divided into many different districts, each known for a particular type of building or inhabit-

INNS AND TAVERNS OF AARN

Aarn is a city of so many inns and taverns that no one's ever even tried to count them all. Some of the best-known of them include:

The Hound And Ape: Not far off Coin Street in the eastern Foreigner's District stands a sturdy-looking building with a sign showing a war-dog fighting a large ape. It marks the Hound and Ape, a tavern (with a few rooms for rent) patronized by several generations of adventurers. Built in the aftermath of the 4712 SE storm by the Bellstone family, it remains in their possession today.

The Patient Manticore: This tavern, whose sign shows a manticore being ridden by a drunken noble, is located on the northwestern edge of the Grand Market. It's a favorite among many adventurers and traveling merchants, who appreciate the good ale and rowdy company. Gambling is a pastime of many patrons, and anyone looking for a game of chance in Aarn can find one here. Aldret, the owner, is rumored to be one of the wealthiest men in Aarn.

The Purple Candle: Known for its owner's predilection for lighting the interior with purple-colored candles, this tavern on the Street of the Alchemists is a favorite of students from the Mages' Guild. Many nights half-drunken wizards-to-be compete to see who can create the best illusion or other mystical "trick."

The Rat's Nest: A Thieves' District drink-hole owned by R'tanth the Rat (page

ant. Any areas not marked on the map as belonging to a particular district usually contain "average" housing and shops, neither poor nor wealthy.

King's Hill: The royal palace and its environs (including some gardens famed for their beauty and serenity) occupy a hill overlooking the river; they're protected by their own separate wall. A special force of guards renowned for its loyalty and ferocity, the King's Blades, patrol the walls and the grounds. The Processional, broadest and grandest street in Aarn, leads from the Bittersweet Gate to the gates of King's Hill.

Noble's District: The powerful and wealthy nobles of Aarn live here, in a neighborhood of clean, well-paved streets frequently patrolled by the City Guard to keep undesireables out. The mansions and palaces of the nobility dominate most streets. The shops here sell only the finest wares, and what few taverns and inns exist are the most expensive and luxurious in the city.

Merchant's District: The city's merchants control this large area which bridges the river along the northern-northeastern part of the walls. Many of the houses are large and spacious, indicative of the wealth of their owners, though only the most foolish merchants tempt the wrath of the nobility by making their dwellings anything close to as ornate and rich as those of the city's rulers. This district also contains many shops selling goods from all over the world.

The Grand Market: Considered the largest market in the Westerlands, if not the world, the Grand Market is street after street of booths, stalls, and other semi-permanent structures selling virtually anything one can imagine. Some families have occupied the same place in the Market for generations, carefully setting up their stall each day to sell whatever it is they make; other places trade "owners" nearly every month. The internal politics and relations among various sellers and buyers in the Market rival those of the city's nobility in their complexity... and sometimes violence. Knife-fights between sellers competing for customers or space are not unknown, though most days the only thing disturbing the peace of the Market are the shouts of people trying to attract customers.

Craftsmen's District: Aarn's enormous population of smiths, woodworkers, tanners, weavers, and other craftsmen mostly live in the Craftsmen's District. The general rule: the less desirable or more odiferous a trade tends to be, the closer it's located to the waterfront.

River District and River Market: The River District, with its accompanying Market, is a neighborhood of transitions. It's where newcomers to the city with wealth buy their first residences, and where natives trying to work their way into higher society reside. Many people yearn to live in the River District, but not forever; it's merely one step along the Aarnese social ladder. It's mostly clean and safe, though not as much so as the Noble or Merchant Districts.

Temple District: Aarn's many temples, churches, and shrines, including the renowned Rose Cathedral of the High Faith, occupy this part of the city. Here one can find chapels devoted to gods and religions worshipped nowhere else in the Westerlands. Priests of different faiths often debate one another in the District's streets and taverns, sometimes vociferously, much to the amusement of passers-by.

Foreigners' Districts: By Aarnese law, visitors to the city who plan to stay for more than a week must reside in one of these districts (located next to each gate) unless they can stay with a resident of the city who'll vouch for them. Thus, one can find most (though by no means all) of the city's inns and taverns here, and sometimes it seems like every street rings with the songs of half-drunken revelers all night.

Thieves' District: The most dangerous part of Aarn is the Thieves' District, west of the river and south of the Grandway. Only the poorest and most desperate folk live or work here; it's the domain of the cutpurses, burglars, assassins, footpads, forgers, and procurers who prey upon the good folk of the city. Only a fool ventures into the Thieves' District, particularly after dark... and only the lucky or powerful survive such a trip. The City Guard doesn't dare to show its face here except in large numbers.

To many, the heart of the Thieves' District is Saffron Moon Square, where ne'er-do-wells gather of nights to trade gossip, drink in square-side taverns, and ply their illicit trades. The square takes its name from the yellow-paned lamps that light it. Local superstition says that breaking one of the lamps brings great misfortune, so no one dares even touch them except to refill them with oil.

Poor Districts: In these areas live the poor folk of Aarn who can afford no better. The City Guard rarely patrols these neighborhoods, considering them beneath its notice; the buildings are old and crumbling, and many remain at least half-ruined after the storm of 4712 SE. The shops here are tiny, dark, and have little for sale.

Waterfront Districts: The areas along Aarn's waterfront are the domain of the sailors and other folk who work the docks... and not a few thieves, courtesans, and other denizens of the night. These rough-and-tumble areas also feature many taverns, but the people who drink there rarely look kindly on outsiders.

The Outwalls: While Aarn proper only includes the lands within the city walls, a city so large attracts many people who cannot or will not enter into those walls. Instead they live outside, lacking the protection of the City Guard and risking destruction from attackers, fire, or other threats that aren't nearly so prevalent in the city itself. Most of the people who live here are hopeless wretches, not even fit for the Poor Districts inside, but sometimes an enterprising merchant sets up a business too large or controversial for "inside," or a street priest founds an impromptu temple.

SOCIETY

Aarn is a Free City, entitled by ancient Charter to rule itself and conduct its own affairs with other realms. Its ruler holds the title of king, but by tradition and political reality the king's power often depends on that of the nobles who favor him. If a king loses the support of the nobles, or of the people, the nobility usually deposes him for someone else. As long as the king rules well, he can usually hand the crown down to his son (or whomever else he chooses), but most Aarnese dynasties last no more than a century or two.

Angandirron, known in some circles as “Gold-enhand” for his ability to increase trade and in others as “Stormbrow” for his temper, currently rules Aarn. He enjoys the support of most of the nobles and merchants, though the new taxes he recently imposed have shaken that support somewhat. His queen, Théa, has given him five children: his eldest son, Kalmar, an 18-year-old who hopes to take the throne in his turn; Kalmar's near-twin Balgar, a well-known rouser among the city's taverns; the Princess Milada, age 16, apple of her father's eye and widely considered one of the prettiest women in Aarn; and two young daughters, ages five and six, named Riva and Argella.

Daily life in Aarn is full of hustle and bustle, noise and crowds. It's also a dirty, stinking place at times; its nickname, the “City of Smokes,” comes from the plethora of cooking-fires, candles, and other flames that leave buildings and people alike looking sort of smudged and grey until the rains come to wash them clean... for a while. And it rains often in Aarn, thanks to the city's location on the aptly-named Sea of Storms.

The City Guard

In Aarn, a group of soldiers known simply as the City Guard patrols the streets and keeps the citizens safe... or so the Captain of the Guard, Corrmann Hawknose, claims. In truth the Guard mainly patrols the wealthier parts of town and the Foreigner's Districts, leaving the Poor and Thieves' Districts to themselves. The attention the Guard pays to someone usually varies directly in proportion to how wealthy and/or important it deems that person to be.

The Aarnese widely consider the City Guard to be corrupt, and it's true that most Guardsmen will take a few coins to look the other way when someone commits a trivial offense (or a *lot* of coins to overlook a major one). But some Guardsmen do their jobs diligently and can't be bribed at all.

A typical City Guard wears scale armor and carries a sword, shield, and spear; one out of every three guards has a crossbow and 20 quarrels instead of a spear. Guard officers replace scale with chain, and do not carry a spear unless they know they're going into combat. All Guards wear a blue tabard displaying the city's arms. You can use the City Guard Template (*Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, page 120), with appropriate changes, for most Guardsmen.

THE BANDIT LANDS

The lands near Aarn belong to it, and are worked by vassals beholden to its nobles and king; these lands supply the city with much of its food. But beyond them, south and east of Aarn, lies a region claimed and controlled by no ruler. It's known as the Bandit Lands since outlaws and reavers of many stripes infest it, hoping to steal poorly-guarded prizes from the merchant caravans that travel from Tornathia to Aarn. Periodically the King of Aarn recruits soldiers and Guardsmen and tries to wipe the bandits out, but no matter how good a job the warriors do, somehow the wolf's-heads always seem to come back soon enough.

The Whispering Waste

Northeast of Aarn, where the Tarnwater skirts the edge of the Nagyrian Mountains, lies a desolate region where few dare go. In 926 FE, during the Drakine Wars, the necromancers of the Drakine used a spell to lay waste the land to prevent Emperor Dekran from destroying their forces. From that day to this, Men have called it the Whispering Waste. Some say the name comes from the chill winds that seem to blow over the land; others attribute it to the maddening whispers of the countless ghosts who dwell here.

The Whispering Waste often attracts necromancers due to the many dead who lie restlessly within it. But in 4833 SE, Sa'akiv the Red Necromancer raised there a tower made entirely of the bones of the dead and claimed the Waste for himself. Any who would take ghosts or other undead from the Waste, or do aught else there, must seek his permission... and woe to anyone who disturbs his researches for a foolish or trivial request. Lining the broad stone steps leading to the doors of the Tower of Bone are columns on which Sa'akiv's undead servitors mount the heads and bodies of those who have angered or trifled with him.

Continued from last page

181). While it's a dangerous place where fights often break out and newcomers are rarely welcomed, it's regarded by many of the city's thieves as a “neutral place” where they can meet to discuss business without fear.

The Swanhome Inn:

Located not far from River Park in the western Merchant District, the Swanhome has a well-deserved reputation for elegance and style. The owner, an Elf named Danirulothasatirrel (or Daniru to his friends), has run the inn for over three centuries.

The Vine And Cup:

Located in the River District, with a fine view of the water, this inn attracts patrons unable to afford the more expensive inns of the Merchant's District. It's not cheap — prices here are about 50% above average for Aarnese inns — but the food is good and the rooms comfortable and secure. Lumboldt Goodale, the proprietor, works himself and his staff hard to ensure that each guest has a satisfying meal or stay.



Keldravia

Government: Theocratic hereditary monarchy
Ruler: King Volmar Ruadon
Capital: Antyratori
Population: Men (77%), Drakine (8%), Dwarves (4%), Elves (4%), Gnomes (4%), Halflings (1%), Other (2%)
Language(s): Keldravian
Coinage: Star; Star; Star
Resources: Fishing, grain, mining, herding
Religion: High Church (Keldravian Heresy)
Military: Light cavalry 25%, heavy cavalry 17%, light infantry 30%, heavy infantry 15%, navy 10%, magical/other 6%
Arms/Symbol: Pean, a red chevron cotised

HISTORY

The land of Keldravia was once a part of Car-shalt. After King Horgel's death at the hands of Thronek the Necromancer, it became a region of bandits and petty kings where few people dared to travel. But as trade with Mhorecia increased via the River Shaanda, some of the rulers became more powerful than others, and fought among themselves to establish dominion over the entire land. Before any one of them could defeat his rivals, the Lord of the Graven Spear arose, eclipsing their ambitions with his own quest for power; his forces slew several of them and kept the region unsettled and chaotic during his reign.

After the Spearlord's death, fighting and struggles for power continued, until at last in 3041 SE Baron Arbel Sheridar slew his chief rivals from afar

with magic and proclaimed the realm of Keldravia. To solidify his power, he began the building of a great capital at Antyratori (a project completed only by his great-grandson) and created a large army.

From the first, the lords of Keldravia were ambitious and proud. Less than 200 years later, in 3222 SE, they attacked Umbr, surprising it with lightning-fast raids and powerful cavalry formations, and took from it the Ymordan Hills and surrounding territories. They hoped to take Mezendria and Mircasëa as well, but Umbr fended off several attempts to do so throughout the Second Epoch. One of these wars, in 4069 SE, cost the life of King Uredon and both of his heirs.

With the House of Sheridar at an end, a civil war erupted, with several powerful nobles — all relatives of Sheridar — contending for the throne. After six years of battle, ambushade, and assassination, the House of Ruadon emerged the victor, and has ruled Keldravia ever since.

During the last millennium, Keldravia's borders have expanded and then contracted several times. In the early 4400s, it took advantage of the weakness of the Mezendrian kings to in effect annex that land, but later lost it to the machinations of Umbr. Similarly, from 4612-25, Valicia was essentially part of Keldravia because the queen, a Keldravian princess, used magic to secretly manipulate her husband into handing power over to her father. When the Valicians discovered what was going on, a brief war, and the beheading of the queen, corrected the situation.

KELDRAVIA IN 5000 SE

Today, under the powerful and aggressive King Volmar, it's thought Keldravia is once again looking to conquer more land, with Mezendria and Mircasëa being the obvious targets... though Volmar seems afraid of the power of Mircasëan magic and the possibility of intervention by Umbr. Valicia he seems disinclined to invade as well, since the Yellow King is strong and could repel an attack, or at least make Keldravia pay too dearly for the affront. However, some of his nobles (or, more accurately in some cases, their younger sons who stand no chance to inherit) are pressuring him to acquire more lands, so he may have to take action despite his fears.

THE LAND

Keldravia is a hilly land between the Snowthorn Mountains and Lake Beralka. The terrain makes agriculture difficult in places, but the herding of cattle, sheep, and goats remains possible, and the bounty of Beralka or a forest feeds many a poor Keldravian.

Antyratori

The capital, on the shores of the sea, is Antyratori. At its center lies the royal palace Hindenoll, and from the palace six major streets fan out like the spokes of a wheel until they reach the city's thick walls. To augment the city's defenses, the castle has its own wall, and another, smaller one exists about halfway between it and the outer wall. In times of trouble, all the walls are heavily manned by squads of soldiers, each squad accompanied by a mage.

Irontooth

The city of Irontooth contains one of the enduring mysteries of Keldravia (and indeed, all of Ambrethel). When Men first came to this land, they found there a large tower, seemingly made of unrusting iron, with but one entrance — an open archway. Those who went inside were never seen or heard from again, and necromancers could not even raise their ghosts.

In the centuries since, a thriving city has grown up around the enigmatic tower, and adventurers aplenty have dared to pass its door. Few have returned alive; those who do often come back bearing great riches and enchanted items unlike others seen anywhere in the world, but with a fog in their minds that prevents them from remembering most of what they saw or did (and against which no spell of Sorcery has proven effective). No doubt he who solves the riddle of Irontooth will become wealthy and powerful in great measure.

Myrwick Strand

Located on one part of the northeastern shore of Lake Beralka is Myrwick Strand, one of the largest habitations of Halflings in the Westerlands. Although nominally an independent realm, Myrwick Strand is controlled by Keldravia. Their ruler holds the title of count, and the Halflings send an annual tribute to Hindenoll in exchange for the king's "protection and goodwill." Most of the tribute consists of Halfling-crafted cloth and other goods, but part is in the form of gold, and in some years the Halflings have difficulty obtaining enough gold to fill the tribute-coffers.

Amberleaf

The ruins of Amberleaf, a prosperous village destroyed by the dragon Intravivus in 2786 FE, sometimes attract adventurers who believe they contain a hidden treasure of some sort. In recent years, a group of hardy Seshurma has occupied the neighboring swamp, and seems to claim the ruins as its territory.

SOCIETY

Other Westerlanders consider Keldravia a strange, even dangerous, land, largely because of its religion. The Keldravians follow the High Church like their neighbors, but with a doctrine altered by what priests call the *Keldravian Heresy*, or in some cases the Warnoch Heresy after the early king who created it. To the Keldravians (including Keldravian priests), their king is a semi-divine figure — the blood of Asvalak, god of war, runs in his veins. The king is also the high priest of the Keldravian church, which considers Asvalak a Blue God rather than a Scarlet. Since only those descended from Asvalak can rule, rebellions and revolts rarely occur; the people would never accept an usurper who lacked the divine bloodline. While other folk rightly refer to this belief as a heresy, Keldravian priests receive spells from the gods like any other, and the Skyfather has not laid the Godsbane on Keldravia, leaving theologians and scholars confused.

As of 5000 SE, the King of Keldravia, Son of the Battle-Lord, is Volmar Ruadon, sometimes

LAKE BERALKA

The second-largest inland sea in Ambrethel (after the Sea of Mhorec), Lake Beralka is vital to trade throughout northwest Arduna. Because it connects to the Sea of Mhorec via the River Shaanda, which is navigable for its entire length, it provides a (relatively) quick, easy, and safe way to transport goods across half the world. People living along the rivers that feed Beralka ship goods to cities on its shores (such as Antyratori, Dar Enroqe, Velkathy-Tashan, or Chiref), where merchants ship back goods in return and send the first cargo on to other destinations in Mhorecia. This aquatic road has kept the contact between the Westerlands and Mhorecia strong for centuries, helping to blunt the cultural influence of Vashkhor in Mhorecia and strengthening realms such as the Sirrenic Empire and Besruhan.

But more than merchant ships ply the waters of Lake Beralka. The volume of trade naturally attracts pirates, who in turn bring the warships of Szarvasia, Keldravia, Basidrun, and other realms to deal with them. While Beralka contains no large islands, it has plenty of small ones not far from its shores, and many coves and inlets as well, and they all provide potential hiding places or havens for corsairs.

TETHURLEN

15 STR 18 DEX
 15 CON 12 BODY
 18 INT 12 EGO
 15 PRE 12 COM
 6 PD 6 ED
 4 SPD 6 REC
 30 END 30 STUN

Abilities: Climbing 13-, Contortionist 13-, Fast Draw (Common Melee Weapons) 13-, AK: Keldravia 11-, CK: Antyratori 11-, KS: Keldravian Nobility 11-, KS: Keldravian Politics 11-, Lockpicking 13-, PS: Brew Poison 8-, Security Systems 13-, Sleight Of Hand 13-, Stealth 12-, Streetwise 14-, Two-Weapon Fighting (HTH), WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Off Hand, Knifefighter (Deadly Blow: HKA +1d6 with Daggers)

Enchanted Items: Ring Of Invisibility (Silent variant; FH page 283)

Disadvantages: Hunted (revenge-minded relatives of various victims), Psychological Limitation: Casual Killer, Rivalry (Professional, with several other assassins)

Notes: Tethurlen is a Keldravian assassin. He normally works for various Keldravian nobles and merchants who want to eliminate their rivals permanently. He typically fights with a dagger in each hand (and gains +1 DCV for doing so); if he has to attack at range, he uses a light crossbow. He stole a powerful Ring of Invisibility from a victim some years ago and has come to rely on it; his Stealth Skill is atrophying as a result (hence the lower than normal Skill Roll for it).

known as Bloodhand because he once beat an impertinent courtier to death with his bare hands in front of the entire court. A man of huge appetites and a great lust for power, he has fathered nearly a dozen bastards, including five sons who might one day battle each other for the throne. The true heir, his son by his wife Vayra, is Aredon, a boy of twelve winters who seems likely to become as strong and temperamental as his father. King Volmar also has a daughter, the Princess Tarina, accounted far and wide a great beauty. She has reached marriageable age, but so far Volmar has turned aside all of the dozens of suitors who have come seeking her hand.

The Battleson Knights

Like his predecessors, King Volmar maintains a large army and navy, giving him one of the strongest military forces in the Westerlands for a realm of Keldravia's size. Chief among them are the Battleson Knights, blood-brothers of the king himself who supposedly derive great strength and skill from the drops of Asvalak's blood thus given to them. They wield distinctively-shaped battle axes, and garb themselves in plate-and-chain styled with the heads of the Thousand-Headed Hydra whom their patron god slew.

To create a Battleson Knight character, buy the *Knight Package Deal* (*Fantasy Hero*, page 69), but add +2 STR and one Combat Skill Level with All Combat (total of +10 Character Points). These abilities represent the effects of the Slaughter-Lord's blood in the knight's veins. However, their shared blood may also make all the knights mutually susceptible to certain rare magics used on any one of them (or in some cases, just on the king); this doesn't occur frequently enough to qualify as a Disadvantage, but the knights are aware of it, so the GM should be, too.

All Battleson Knights take the Psychological Limitation *Loyal To The Keldravian King* (Common, Total; 20 points), meaning the king whose blood-brother they are. If the king dies, this loyalty usually carries over to his son.

Khirkovy

Government: Hereditary monarchy
Ruler: Tassar Borwyg "the Wolf" Tyrasti
Capital: Karzoi
Population: Men
Language(s): Khirvian
Coinage: Oak; Oak; Oak
Resources: Fishing, lumber, shipbuilding, furs, herding
Religion: High Church
Military: Light cavalry 22%, heavy cavalry 17%, light infantry 28%, heavy infantry 13%, navy 15%, magical/other 5%
Arms/Symbol: A bordure quarterly, gold and black, surrounding a field of red charged with a mountain cat *passant guardant*

Stretching from the Battle-Stone in the west to the beginning of the Gorthundan Steppes in the east, Khirkovy is a cold and often unforgiving land, one home to a hardy people with their own unusual language and customs.

HISTORY

Khirkovy arose as an independent realm, built from the remnants of old Storvak, in 1782 FE when Prince Dumos Brazov defeated several of his rivals and made strong his position so he could compel the priests and remaining princes to crown him *tassar*, a Khirvian word meaning roughly "high king." Tassar Dumos and his sons ruled Khirkovy for a little over a thousand years, until the Trolls of Tharnrek conquered much of Khirkovy. In their conquest they slew both of Tassar Danyor's sons, and when the Tassar himself died of wounds suffered during a trollish attack on Karzoi in 2814 FE, the House of Brazov died with him.

Khirkovy had no tassars again until after the Troll Wars, when Men reclaimed the Northland for themselves. One of the strongest of the Khirkovy princes, Yaresh Roslav of Polozni, who'd spearheaded many of the battles against Tharnrek, was made tassars after his chief rival, the upstart "Prince" Tenka Veleki of Karzoi (who claimed distant relation to the Brazovs), died unexpectedly when he choked on food.

Unfortunately, the House of Roslav did not rule Khirkovy for nearly as long as House Brazov. At the Battle of Baltaros in 3261 SE, Vestrian knights trapped Tassar Gavrel and his son on a hillside, and although a battle-mage managed to teleport both of them away, he did so only after they'd both taken fatal wounds. After the battle, the influential Prince of Orel, Boghan Tyrasti, forced a marriage with Gavrel's only daughter, Dosalia, and persuaded the other princes (by one means or another) to make him tassars.

And so the House of Tyrasti came to rule Khirkovy. In the nearly two thousand years since then, the Tyrastis have held on to the throne through a combination of personal charisma, military power, the mystic might of the Circle of Kosha-Serdsa (a group of spellcasters who serve the Tyrestis as court wizards), and the occasional act of

underhanded treachery against their enemies. They were briefly deposed in 4689-4702 SE when the Gorthunda chieftain Tzagaan overran the country, killing many nobles and merchants and setting one of his captains, Nelhajn, to rule it while he went on to attack Umbr and Vestria, and Tassar Faddan nearly fell victim to a mysterious assassin in 4939 SE while still childless, but despite occasional misfortune the family endures... and Khirkovy with it.

KHIRKOVY IN 5000 SE

Of late, turmoil has beset Khirkovy. Gorthunda under the leadership of a mighty warrior named Odenggam have been raiding more frequently and violently than normal, once almost sacking the city of Chashka. The princes and people have called on the tassar to defend them, but so far Borwyg has been able to do little because of the speed with which the Odenggam's hordes strike (though his court wizards did once track down and destroy one of the tribes before it could cross back over the River Tinitisa). Though the princes still support the tassar, if he continues to seem so weak and ineffectual, the unrest may increase.

Coupled with the Gorthunda raids have been several years of bad fishing. Many Khirkovy-folk rely on the bounty of the sea to feed themselves through the long, hard winters, and of late the catches have become increasingly sparse. If the situation does not improve soon, many people will starve.

THE LAND

Khirkovy is a land of plains, gently rolling hills, and deep coniferous forests teeming with game. It's infamous for its long and bitter winters. Cold winds sweep down off the Steppes and the Sea of Ice, bringing snow and sleet to blanket the ground for nearly eight months out of the year. Sleds and sleighs are more common than carts and coaches, and the clothing the Khirkovy-folk wear is heavier than that of other Westerlanders (and often lined with fur or sheepskin as well).

The weather makes for a short growing season, during which peasants work long, hard hours to bring a crop of grain and vegetables out of the hard ground. More prefer to devote their efforts to herding, which is easier and potentially more profitable (but also riskier, in a land where Gorthunda, Troll, and Orc raids occur so frequently). During the winters, the Khirkovy-folk stay indoors as much as possible, often spending their time on craftworks to earn a few extra oaks. Given their artistic skills and time, more than a few Khirkovy peasants live in houses so well-decorated inside that they'd be the homes of petty nobles elsewhere.

Karzoi

Khirkovy's capital sits on the shores of the Sea of Ice at the mouth of the River Vandrol. The tassars have gone to great effort and expense to make Karzoi a place that impresses visitors. The royal palace, Rurivassi, is enormous and beautiful, with each tassar seemingly intent on adding a tower or hall to bear his name down through the ages. Like other Khirkovy buildings, to outsiders' eyes it looks ornate, even baroque, with high, narrow arches, tiny

windows, many hearths, and decorations and bright colors everywhere. Even the temples of the High Church follow this aesthetic, with unique five-sided towers painted blue.

Narkosk

If Karzoi has any competition among Khirkovy cities, it's Narkosk. The wealthy princes of House Lunets, one of the most powerful noble families in the land, have long competed with the tassar for influence and prestige. They are great patrons of the arts, and it shows in all the murals, statues, tapestries, and mosaics throughout their city. By law, any bard who comes to Narkosk and stays an entire winter entertaining the people receives, from the hands of the prince himself, a suit of fine clothes and a pouch of gold oaks.

Volzhev

Located in the middle of the plains of Khirkovy, Volzhev is known throughout the Westerlands for its horse-markets. The ranchers and herders have crossed the large Westerlands steeds with sturdy horses captured from the Gorthunda to create a breed renowned for its strength and stamina. (Give a Volzhev horse +1 STR and +1 CON; they cost 25-50% more than normal horses.)

SOCIETY

The people of Khirkovy are unlike any others in the Westerlands. Their speak their own language, Khirvian, whose guttural words and oddly-constructed sentences make it sound harsh to others' ears (though a few bards have insisted, and not without merit, that it has its own rhythms and harmonies if one learns it well). Trapped between marauding horse-nomads, unpredictable Trolls, and the kingdom of Vestria (which they perceive as aggressive and rapacious due to years of conflict over Skeld and Toreth), they are suspicious, quick to anger, and ready to fight at a moment's notice. Every village has its militia that comes running to defend it against Orcs, Gorthunda, or whatever other danger approaches.

But for all that, the Khirkovy folk can be a companionable and noble people once they get to know and trust outsiders. Living in such a cold, harsh region breeds a certain willingness to work together and offer hospitality, and the Khirkovy folk are renowned for how well they treat their friends.

King And Kin

No one exemplifies this attitude better than Tassar Borwyg, known as "the Wolf" for his grey hair and fierce desire to protect his people against their enemies. The latest in a long line of Tyrasti tassars, he's seen as a temperamental brute by the folk of many other lands — but while it's true he can be quite violent at times, he genuinely loves his people and his kingdom. It's said he's so strong he can bend a silver coin in half with a single hand. In battle he most often uses a war hammer; his favorite, made for him by the Dwarves of Blinndighaime, he calls Sitenka ("Victory").

Tassar Borwyg has seven sons: Bedros, heir to the throne, also called the Wolf because of his

THE BLACK FOREST

The Black Forest forms most of the eastern border of Khirkovy. While the tassar claims the Forest as part of his realm, in truth neither king nor prince hold any sway beneath the dark-barked pines that give the Forest its name. Even those who live near it fear to walk its narrow paths, for it's home to Orcs, Goblins, and many other monsters — including the dragon Balakarven Blacksmoke, who once ravaged Narkosk and obtained much treasure there. The Khirkovy folk say Balakarven lairs in some caves beneath a hill in the midst of swampy tarn in the center of the Forest.

Despite the dangers posed by the Black Forest, many peasants cannot resist entering it from time to time. It teems with game — deer, boar, many types of birds — as well as with valuable herbs, not to mention trees for building or burning. But only a fool goes in by himself; most people won't enter the Black Forest in groups smaller than three.

SORVELD

10	STR	15	DEX
15	CON	13	BODY
20	INT	20	EGO
20	PRE	10	COM
5	PD	4	ED
4	SPD	5	REC
30	END	26	STUN

Abilities: 80 points' worth of Conjunction spells, 30 points' worth of Wizardry spells, 20 points' worth of Thaumaturgy spells, Conjunction 28-, Conversation 13-, Healing 13-, KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 13-, KS: Conjunction 13-, KS: Demons 13-, KS: Flora And Fauna Of Mezendria 14-, Languages: Khirvian, Kuldrar (both basic conversation; Umbrian is Native), Literacy, Persuasion 13-, Stealth 12-, Thaumaturgy 16-, Wizardry 18-, Magesight

Enchanted Items: Wizard's Staff (Endurance Reserve [100 END, 20 REC]), Ring Of Swift Travel (Teleportation 60", 3 Charges)

Disadvantages: Age: 40+ (real age 271), Psychological Limitation: Curmudgeon (if fails EGO Roll, -1 on all Interaction Skills with a particular person, or -2 with children, women, and persons of other races)

Notes: A Mezendrian conjuror, Sorveld lives by himself in a snug cottage in the woods along the Dragonsmoke River. He specializes in summoning animals, and can also assume the shapes of animals if need be. He prefers the company of beasts to that of Men; his irascible personality and unwillingness to tolerate folly make him difficult to get along with at times.

resemblance to his father; Alexar the Stone; Hroth the Bear; Eirich the Wise; Mikral the Faithful; Borsin the Fair; and Mitros the Mouse. Each has his own special talents and skills, and uses them to aid his brothers, his father, and their father's subjects. The Khirkovy-folk tell many tales of their bold royal princes, whom they esteem greatly and whose exploits and adventures never fail to accomplish something great for the realm. Borwyg also has three daughters, but they mean little to him. Sometimes he can barely remember their names, referring to them instead by diminutives such as "my little flower." As suitors begin to seek their hands, his memory will likely improve.

Khirkovy has a feudal structure that's a little different from that of other Westerlands realms, though it's basically the same in most particulars. After the fall of Storvak, various nobles took power to themselves, each claiming the title *nyasar*, or "prince." When the Brazovs founded the realm, they forced or obtained the consent of the princes, thus legitimizing their claims and power. This created a realm without dukes or earls. Instead, the highest peers of the realm are known as Princes, and below them are other nobles with titles strange to Westlander ears (see page 201).

Shipbuilding

Among the peoples of Ambrethel, the Khirkovy-folk are acclaimed the best shipbuilders and mariners. While many other people build and sail ships, in Khirkovy the art of the shipwright has reached its highest pinnacle. It's not uncommon to find one of the sturdy Khirkovy ships on the waters of the Khelvarian Ocean or the Gulf of Vornakkia... or to find Khirkovy-folk among her crew. Some unscrupulous Khirkovy sailors use their skills to become coastal raiders and reavers, but most are honest folk looking to make their gold by trade, not blade.

THE SNOWTHORN MOUNTAINS

The tallest mountain range in Ambrethel after the Ayn Alach, the Snowthorn Mountains form a barrier between Khirkovy on the north, and Keldravia and many other realms on the south. It can be crossed only at the Western Pass (which leads from the Keldravian city of Dalmaric into Tharnrek) and the Valician Pass, which connects Valicia to the lands of the Gorthunda. The Western Pass remains usable year-round (though it's snow-covered and bitterly cold in the winter), but the Valician Pass closes soon after the first snows, not to re-open until the spring thaw.

The Snowthorns includes two large dwarven realms, Deepingdelve (Zorak-Zar) in the west and Blinndighaime in the east, as well as several smaller realms or holdings. It's also home to the Trusca barbarians in the west, and to many Orcs, Goblins, Ogres, and Trolls. In addition to those peoples, many monsters, including several dragons, lair amid the range's sharp and towering peaks.

Mezendria

Government: Hereditary monarchy
Ruler: King Rheldane Damireson
Capital: Voitaigne
Population: Men (74%), Dwarves (12%), Elves (3%), Orcs (2%), Trolls (2%), Goblins (1%), Other (6%)
Language(s): Umbrian
Coinage: Denier; Denier; Denier
Resources: Mining, herding, fruit
Religion: High Church
Military: Light cavalry 17%, heavy cavalry 11%, light infantry 38%, heavy infantry 24%, navy 0%, magical/other 10%
Arms/Symbol: A golden griffin statant on red, surrounded by a golden tressure with golden suns at each corner

A pleasant northern realm where Orcs and Trolls often mingle with Men, Mezendria may soon find itself threatened by Keldravia... or Kal-Turak.

HISTORY

Mezendria is a fairly young kingdom compared to many of its neighbors. It was an independent duchy after the fall of Carshalt, but was absorbed into the young kingdom of Dalamgar in 1389 FE. When House Aliere rose to power in Umbr and began expanding the size and power of that kingdom, a war in 2506-10 FE with some kings and nobles of Dalamgar resulted in the conquest of the Duchy of Mezendria by Umbr. It remained an Umbrian duchy until 4267 SE, when Gestren Sendres agreed to make it a kingdom under its own rule in exchange for Mezendria's help in winning him the throne in Dyvvar.

Duke Damire suddenly found himself *King* Damire, and his vassals were elevated in title as well. His strength as ruler was soon tested by a marauding army of Trusca under the leadership of a charismatic leader, Ungreth Scar-Arm. After two seasons of bitter fighting, Damire finally put Ungreth's head on a pike and drove the Trusca back to their mountain homes, thus proving to the other Westerlands kings that he was not to be trifled with. To underscore the point, he hired skilled war-masters to train two of his sons, and a powerful wizard to instruct the other — a tradition that holds in Mezendria to this day.

The Troll Wars of the early Second Epoch hit Mezendria hard, since its location had made it an ideal trading partner for Tharnrek. But after the war Mezendria was the only kingdom willing to trade with the Trolls at first, allowing it to establish a strong market for trollish goods that has persisted to this day.

Thanks to a series of weak and ineffectual kings in the early 4400s, Mezendria essentially became a part of Keldravia, in fact if not on paper. Unwilling to lose a buffer between Umbr and Keldravia, King Lucarion of Umbr manipulated events behind the scenes to arrange a marriage between the Mezendrian heir and Zebeta, a smart, headstrong Szarvasian princess. Zebeta's children were raised to be as strong and proud as she, and

when her eldest son Darwayne took the throne, he was determined to re-assert Mezendrian sovereignty. With the help of Onalla, his sister and court wizard, he created the Knights of the Griffin to augment his forces. In 4475 SE, at the Battle of the Ymordan Hills, the Mezendrian army, spearheaded by the Knights, smashed a larger Keldravian army, re-establishing Mezendria's control over its own affairs. Although Keldravia has occasionally cast its eye toward Mezendria since then, the Land of the Griffins has remained free ever since.

MEZENDRIA IN 5000 SE

Mezendria has been at peace for many years, but that state of affairs may come to an end soon. Based on his own observations and the reports of his spies, King Rheldane fears the ambitions of King Volmar, who seems intent on expanding Keldravia's reach beyond the Whitburn and Eseth Rivers. Rheldane's begun increasing the size and strength of his army, and has augmented the defenses around the city of Athford, which would undoubtedly be Keldravia's first target during an invasion. All these expenses have meant new taxes, which have left the nobles and merchants discontented.

THE LAND

Mezendria is a hilly region abutting the western end of the Snowthorn Mountains. The land nearer the river borders — the Dragonsmoke, the Eseth, and the Whitburn — is lower and flatter, but there's comparatively little of it.

Voitaigne

The capital and largest of Mezendria's few true cities is Voitaigne, on the Dragonsmoke river across from Dyvnar. Once a sleepy fishing village, it retains some of those same qualities today; visitors often consider it boring, and if possible stay across the river in the much livelier Dyvnar instead. King Rheldane would like to take steps to make his capital more cosmopolitan, but at present other expenses and projects command his attention.

Athford

Normally as quiet as Voitaigne, Athford is a hustling, bustling place these days because of the King's immense project to improve the city's defenses. Hundreds of workers, augmented by some Trolls (and even giants) hired from Tharnrek and Dwarves from Deepingdelve, are making the city's walls taller, thicker, and sturdier, and otherwise enhancing Athford's ability to function during a war or siege. Deeper wells have been dug, some

secondary walls are under construction, and the bridges over the Eseth River are now much better defended than ever before.

SOCIETY

King Rheldane of the royal house of Damire-son, rules Mezendria. He's currently playing a delicate balancing game as he tries to make his realm ready for a possible war with Keldravia while attempting to placate troublesome nobles. His queen, Varina of Khirkovy, does not share his fears of invasion, and often counsels him to see the nobles' point of view.

Rheldane and Varina have four living children: their eldest son and crown prince Marilon (age 16) and his twin sister Aireliyn; a second son Ademar (age 13); and a daughter Carlina (age 10). Following family tradition, the children receive special training to better enable them to serve the realm when they come of age. Marilon's tutors include experts in all aspects of war; he hopes to become a Knight of the Griffin someday. Aireliyn likewise receives some battle-training, but also special tutoring in languages (she speaks five reasonably well, so far) and other lands. The children's aunt, the spinster Princess Ingaret, Mezendria's current court wizard, is training Ademar to take her place one day. He's shown an unusual proclivity for Thaumaturgy and Theurgy, arcanæ she knows but little, so she soon plans to bring in other tutors to aid her. Carlina is yet too young for any special training, but when the time comes her parents will choose an appropriate discipline for her.

The Mezendrian people are mainly herders of goats and sheep, and small-plot farmers; the hilly, even mountainous, land makes it difficult to establish large farms. Apples are a favorite crop of many Mezendrians; many taverns throughout the land serve hard cider as much as they do ale.

Unlike most Westerlands realms, Mezendria has a relatively high number of Trolls, Orcs, and other "darkskins" in its population. Its nearness to the mountains, and Tharnrek in particular, has made it politic for the Mezendrians to find peaceful ways to interact with these "monsters" instead of constantly fighting them. Depredations or crimes committed by the "mountain folk" (as Mezendrians call them) are met by the full force of the King's law, but those who can behave themselves are usually welcome in Mezendrian cities and towns without any difficulty. The city of Ilraine, in particular, has many Orcs and Trolls among its people.

THE KNIGHTS OF THE GRIFFIN

Mezendria's best-known soldiers are the Knights of the Griffin, who ride those flying leonine beasts into battle. Armed with lances, swords, and axes, they can swoop down upon an enemy force (or a flying threat, such as a dragon or wizard) and inflict tremendous damage before flying away.

To create a Knight of the Griffin, buy the Knight Package Deal (*Fantasy Hero*, page 69) and TF: Griffins. If a PC wants to take his riding griffin away from Mezendria, he should buy it as a Follower. Because the Knights are so well-known and acclaimed, many of them have a die or two of the *Reputation* Perk as well.

JHERAID

20	STR	20	DEX
18	CON	15	BODY
15	INT	15	EGO
20	PRE	12	COM
7	PD	7	ED
4	SPD	8	REC
36	END	34	STUN

Abilities: +3 HTH, +3 HTH Only Versus Dragons, Conversation 13-, Healing 8-, High Society 13-, KS: Dragons 15-, Languages: Draconic, Northern Drakine (both fluent conversation; Umbrian is Native), Literacy, Martial Arts (15 points' worth of Weapons Combat), Riding 13-, Stealth 14-, Tactic 12-, Tracking 12-, Trading 13-, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Nets, Contacts (20 points' worth), Money (Wealthy), Reputation (+3/+3d6 as a dragon-slayer), Combat Luck, Dragonslayer (HKA and RKA +1d6 versus dragons)

Enchanted Items: Enchanted longsword (HKA 2d6, +2 Increased STUN Multiplier, +2 OCV), 10 Arrows of Accuracy, Dragonskin Armor

Disadvantages: Hunted (by a dragon he failed to slay), Psychological Limitation: Greedy

Notes: After surviving for nearly a decade as a general adventurer, Jheraid began specializing in hunting and killing dragons. He's got several kills to his credit, and few in the Westerlands know as much about stalking and slaying wyrms as he does. The hoards he's recovered have made him quite wealthy.

Mircasëa

Government: Hereditary monarchy
Ruler: King Dalstan Senimar
Capital: Dar Enroqe
Population: Men (88%), Elves (4%), Dwarves (4%), Other (4%)
Language(s): Umbrian (see text)
Coinage: Denier; Denier; Denier
Resources: Fishing, grain, herding, mining
Religion: High Church
Military: Light cavalry 24%, heavy cavalry 14%, light infantry 25%, heavy infantry 16%, navy 12%, magical/other 9%
Arms/Symbol: Per fess dancetty, red above black, with two crossed golden spears in the black

HISTORY

The Keldravians and Umbrians sometimes tell a tale of Mircasëa. They say that when Men came to that part of the world and settled on the western shore of Lake Beralka, they found Men already living there — strange-looking Men, with “skin the color of mud” and yellowish eyes “like those of wolves.” But if so, they were driven hence or destroyed, for although the Mircasëans are slightly darker-skinned than most Westerlanders (similar in some ways to Tornathians), no trace remains of the “Mud-Men” who came before them.

When Gestren Sendres took the throne of Umbr with help, in part, from Duke Pharides Senimar of Mircasëa, the duchy became a kingdom. But Duke Pharides's eldest son and heir, Jolar, was slain in the fighting. Hearing of this, his second son, the adventurer Trisgar, returned home after many years abroad. He brought with him, it is said, two items of great power: a Demon-Ring able to summon infernal servants; and a talisman that protects whoever wears it. With these devices to aid him, Trisgar became in his time a wise and mighty ruler. He used his demons to create the city of Dar Enroqe for his capital, to build his palace Telmadrion, and to forge the fiery marble throne upon which the kings of Mircasëa sit. With the help of these “Mircasëan Wonders,” House Senimar has ruled Mircasëa and kept it prosperous and strong for centuries. Acquisitive nobles from Keldravia and Szarvasia have not dared to test the power of the Seven Demons.

MIRCASËA IN 5000 SE

Mircasëa remains as much at peace these days as it ever has, with its enigmatic people going about their business of farming, herding, trading, and fishing. With the shadow of evil from the North looming ever larger over the land, King Dalstan wonders if even his Ring and Talisman will be enough to protect his kingdom in the years to come. Recognizing that King Volmar of Keldravia is a greedy opportunist not to be trusted, Dalstan wonders if he can strengthen his realm's ties to Szarvasia, perhaps by arranging the marriage of his niece Ardith to the Szarvasian crown prince.

THE LAND

Mircasëa is mostly a low-lying land between

three bodies of water — the Whitburn and Ôs Rivers and Lake Beralka — though it rises and becomes hilly as it approaches the Thurisian Mountains. Mircasëans who live in the southern hills mainly herd, hunt, and work small farms; lowland Mircasëans work the waters through fishing or trade, or have farms and ranches.

Dar Enroqe

Occupying the shores of Lake Beralka at the mouth of the Whitburn River, Dar Enroqe is a wealthy center of trade. Beneath its odd-shaped, copper-shingled roofs merchants gather in trade-goods from all over the north and west and exchange them for cloth, crafts, and gems from Mhorecia. The lakeside humidity makes it a miserable place to live in the summer (and creates a thriving business for wizards able to cast cooling-spells), but keep it warmer than much of the surrounding land in wintertime.

The Mircasëan royal palace, Telmadrion, rises tall and proud above all other buildings in the city on a rocky hill away from the shore. The beauty and slenderness of its towers prove it was built by demons, as the legends say; otherwise it could not stand.

Dar Vendrazhian

Built on the grassy plains where the Dragon-smoke meets the Whitburn, Dar Vendrazhian is a meeting-place for merchants, adventurers, and other travelers from all over the Carshaltan Lands. Along its narrow, twisting streets and beneath the eaves of its many taverns and inns one often hears strange tongues and strange accents as people discuss every topic under the sun. Bards and storytellers are popular here, and often earn fat purses of coin if they can impress a noble or merchant. Every year during Highsun, the Dukes of Torlim, who rule here, sponsor a great bardic competition that attracts singers and players from all over the Westerlands.

Like Mircasëa as a whole, Dar Vendrazhian also enjoys a reputation as the home of unusual wizardry. The Amberstar Guild has many skilled and knowledgeable members, but the spells they teach often have an odd appearance compared to similar spells used elsewhere, or perhaps require different material components.

SOCIETY

Dalstan of the House of Senimar rules Mircasëa, as his family has since it became a kingdom. He's a widower; his wife Rosela died in childbirth nearly a decade ago, and he has refused to remarry despite the importunings of his councillors and many inquiries from other realms. Their only child, Dorric, is a young boy as fit and healthy as any parent could ask for, but he has a penchant for risk-taking that worries his father. If Dorric dies without issue, the throne passes to a distant relative, the eldest male of House Valdelard, which rules the city of Helvoca.

The Mircasëans speak Umbrian, but with an odd pronunciation and many strange words added. Outsiders may have difficulty understanding their turns of phrase; at times it seems they're speaking cryptically, saying things just beyond the listener's level of comprehension.

Szarvasia

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Verenc Boldisar

Capital: Velkathy-Tashan

Population: Men (82%), Dwarves (6%), Elves (5%), Drakine (3%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Szarvasian

Coinage: Zhisen; Vasam; Aruhaz

Resources: Grain, fishing, mining, herding

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 24%, heavy cavalry 16%, light infantry 27%, heavy infantry 17%, navy 8%, magical/other 8%

Arms/Symbol: Tawny, with flanches of purple, charged with a double-headed black eagle middle chief

Located at the center of the Westerlands, Szarvasia is a wealthy and powerful realm known for its unusual language, customs, and food.

HISTORY

Szarvasia is home to a people who speak a distinctive language and have distinctive architectural and artistic forms. In the earliest days, its northern regions, along the shores of Lake Beralka and around the Vaas Presova, belonged to the mighty kingdom of Carshalt, while its southern reaches, along the upper Ordring River, were part of Iluria.

After the shattering of Carshalt, the northern parts of Szarvasia became a land where many dukes, bandit-kings, and petty princes controlled small domains and fought with one another for land, cattle, or the simple love of fighting. By late in the first millennium, one of these rulers, King Dorzhan of Ezakiraly, a realm on the south shore of Beralka, had achieved some pre-eminence.

Then the Drakine Wars occurred, smashing the Ilurian Empire and wreaking havoc throughout much of the Westerlands. Ezakiraly was mostly spared from the Drakine devastation, while its neighbors were not. No fool he, King Dorzhan, and later his son, took advantage of the situation by conquering most of what is now known as Szarvasia. They continued to call their realm Ezakiraly; it was only after their line died out in 3254 SE and was replaced by the Boldisar kings that it was renamed *Szarvasia*, the Land of the Horn, from the terrifying war-horn Felbog ("Fear-Bellow") the Boldisars used in battle.

Szarvasia went to war against the Drakine Kingdoms to its east in 3519-3530 SE due to territorial disputes over lands along the Ordring (see page 19). The war wreaked great destruction and havoc on both sides, and accomplished nothing but to weaken both sides. Fortunately for Szarvasia, none of its neighbors had the desire and means to conquer it, though there was concern for a time that the Keldavian navy might spearhead an invasion from over the sea.

It took Szarvasia nearly two centuries to recover from the war. At that time, fearing that another war might eventually occur, King Rezor took steps to strengthen his border. First he sent his armies into

Nagyria, long a free land of herders and hunters, and conquered it so the Drakine could not take it and thus gain a foothold on the western bank of the Ordring. Second, he ordained the creation of two great fortresses, Oros Geherla and Oros Dosovo, to guard crucial fords along the Ordring and hold off invading Drakine armies until the main army could arrive. Both fortresses remain in good repair and ever-alert against invasion today.

Szarvasia reached its modern-day borders in 4522 SE, when Agotha the Warrior Queen led her armies into the western land of Izmiria. Finding little resistance from the mountain folk of that land, she made it part of her kingdom... though the Izmiri have never taken well to the rule of the Golden Throne.

SZARVASIA IN 5000 SE

A land of great wealth and baroque splendor, Szarvasia is one of the most prosperous kingdoms in the Westerlands, and one at peace as well. It trades with both west and east by the Beralka road, and its armies protect it from Drakine and other threats. Only the ever-present unrest among the Nagyri and Izmiri present any cause for concern.

THE LAND

Szarvasia occupies the lowlands and plains south of Lake Beralka and west and north of the Ordring River. Mountains on the west and south-east elevate the land in those regions somewhat, but most of Szarvasia is rolling hills and fields broken by stretches of forest, small streams and lakes, and the occasional outcropping of rock.

Velkathy-Tashan

The kings of Szarvasia maintain their seat, the Golden Throne, at Velkathy-Tashan, a large trading city on Lake Beralka. The Golden Court, as their hall is known, is one of the most splendid and glamorous of all Ambrethel; it gets its name from the fact that every inch of the walls and ceiling of the throne room is covered with gold leaf. The courtiers who work there similarly bedizen themselves with the most expensive clothing and jewelry they can afford.

The city itself is not quite so fine, though many travelers speak highly of its inns and *vilamez*, the honey-flavored ale they serve. Other than trade, its main business is fishing, and between the stench of the docks and the smells coming from the shops of tanners, smiths, and other craftsmen, parts of Velkathy-Tashan can be quite malodorous.

Banska-Morav

After being burned by the Drakine during the Szarvasia-Drakine War fifteen hundred years ago, this city was rebuilt over the course of several centuries. It occupies a group of islands amidst the somewhat swampy ground of the Ordring delta, and the inhabitants learn to paddle small boats around almost as soon as they learn to walk. An invading army would have difficulty moving through the city, but by the same token it can't build a defensive wall like most Ardunan cities have. A few islands have walls facing west and south (the direction from which Drakine invaders would likely approach), but that's all.

BARON VENCEL

15 STR	14 DEX
14 CON	10 BODY
15 INT	12 EGO
20 PRE	14 COM
5 PD	3 ED
3 SPD	6 REC
28 END	30 STUN

Abilities: +1 HTH, Conversation 13-, Deduction 14-, High Society 14-, KS: Szarvasian History 11-, KS: Szarvasian Nobility 15-, KS: Szarvasian Politics 14-, Persuasion 13-, Riding 12-, Seduction 13-, Stealth 12-, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Contacts (30 points' worth among the nobility of Szarvasia and the Carshaltan Lands), Followers (various loyal servants and aides), Fringe Benefit: Lordship: Baron, Money (Well Off), Base (castle and fief)

Enchanted Items: Ring Of The Eagle's Eye (+8 versus Range for Sight and Hearing Groups)

Disadvantages: Hunted (watched by various nobles), Psychological Limitation: Looks Out Only For Himself, Rivalry (Professional, with some other nobles)

Notes: Vencel, the fifteenth Baron Dahkany of his line, is a Szarvasian noble and courtier. He cuts a fine figure with his handsome looks and richly-tailored clothing, and seems little more than another vapid noble. But he's got a clever mind and a willingness to use it. He's always looking for advantage or gain for himself, and willingly manipulates people or things to obtain any benefit he can.

Izmiria

Izmiria is the hilly, mountainous western-most region of Szarvasia. The Izmiris are a people related to the Szarvasians, and speak a language much like Szarvasian, but they're shorter and slightly darker-featured; some Szarvasians scornfully claim Izmiris have Orc-blood in them.

Izmiria has been a part of Szarvasia for only five hundred years, and the Izmiri — who have long memories — still resent the conquest. They've never openly revolted, for they're too few and too scattered to have any chance of succeeding, but they rebel in little ways all their own: they don't pay taxes; they harass royal officials; they poach on the King's lands almost at will. "Stubborn as an Izmiri," the Szarvasians say.

Nagyria

The region occupied by the Nagyrian Mountains, at the bend of the Ordning River, is known as Nagyria, and the people who live there as the Nagyri. They're loyal, if somewhat reluctant, subjects of the Golden Throne after over a thousand years of occupation of their land by the Szarvasian army. They're known as master spearmen, and can extend the throw of their javelin-like weapons by attaching a special cord made of sheep sinew to the shaft. Many young Nagyri men leave their mountain homes behind, join the Szarvasian army, and thus become a part of greater Szarvasian society.

SOCIETY

King Verenc Boldisar, the *Kiralu Tron-Arany* — the Lord of the Golden Throne — is the ruler of all Szarvasia, and his Queen Lariska rules by his side. Because of an injury Lariska suffered in a fall, the couple has only one child, Crown Prince Tammias, now nearly twenty. Much to his parents' consternation, Prince Tammias is still single; he seems unable to settle his eye on any one of the dozens of eligible young noblewomen presented to him at court each year. He seems content to wait for a woman he can love, rather than marrying for simple political expediency.

Szarvasia has a large army, one of the largest in the Westerlands. Bolstering its main forces are several special units comprised of the most skilled fighting men available. In addition to the *Lovagi Kiralu* — the Royal Knights, who protect Velkathy-Tashan (see page 189) — there are the *Lovagi Komorzas*, the Knights of the Black Eagle, commanded by the king himself, and the *Gonoszni*, the "Goblinfaces," a group of renegade warriors given one last chance to serve their king. The Golden Throne also commands a large navy to protect Szarvasian shipping interests on Lake Beralka and fend off any threat posed by Keldravia's warships.

Despite their odd-sounding language, and their strange worship services (which involve a plethora of small blue candles and painted glass icons depicting esaiels and gods in addition to the usual High Church trappings), the people of Szarvasia are usually open and friendly. Travelers find their food delicious but full of unusual spices; two of the most common dishes are *leveszes* (a spicy soup made using rabbit-meat and a root found only in the Vaas Presova) and *golnakans* (salted eels, a common meal in Banska-Morav).

Tharnrek

Government: Elected monarchy

Ruler: Troll-King Vardag

Capital: N/A (see text)

Population: Trolls (95%), Other (5%)

Language(s): Kuldrar

Coinage: Piece; Piece; Piece

Resources: Mining, craftworks

Religion: Trollish

Military: Light cavalry 0%, heavy cavalry 0%, light infantry 0%, heavy infantry 82%, navy 0%, magical/other 18%

Arms/Symbol: A trollish war hammer on red

Named from the Kuldrar words for "cave citadel," Tharnrek is the only kingdom of Trolls in the world. Though often at odds with its neighbors, or least regarded by them with suspicion and mistrust, it has survived and thrived for millennia.

HISTORY

No one knows from where the Trolls come. Their own legends speak of how the gods formed them from stone and breathed life into them. Men know only that when they arrived in the Westerlands, Trolls were already there. The two peoples often fought for land or riches, but the Trolls were too strong, and their wizards too mighty, for Men to destroy them altogether or drive them away.

For most of the First Epoch and the early Second Epoch, Tharnrek did not live peacefully with its neighbors. When Thronek the Necromancer ruled much of the Westerlands, the Trolls were his vassals. In the year 2800 FE, under Troll-King Stimbak the Trolls conquered central Khirkovy, even threatening Karzoi itself on several occasions. They allied with the Lord of the Graven Spear, who gave them many gifts and much gold. After the Spearlord's defeat, the Trolls retained the lands they'd conquered... but in the Troll Wars of 2918-21 SE, the Khirkovy princes, with aid from other Men and Dwarves, pushed the Trolls back into the mountains.

After that, the Trolls remained isolated within their mountain halls for nearly a millennia, trading with Men and Dwarves only when they had to. In 3847 SE, the Troll-King Gelljod re-opened Tharnrek to the world, declaring the Trolls' intent to live in peace with other realms. Fine troll-crafts — carved wooden objects, well-wrought ornaments of gold and silver, and more — soon began to flow out of the mountains, and wealth into the Trolls' halls in exchange.

Not all of Gelljod's descendants shared his peaceful intentions. In 4367 SE, Tharnrek and the Dwarves of Deepingdelve went to war over the Dwarves' claims the Trolls stole from them, with the Dwarves claiming a pyrrhic victory after the Battle of the Frigid Peaks; and in 4818 SE, Troll-King Forbai sacked the city of Ossani and led his armies against those of Khirkov for a time. But in most years and under most Troll-Kings, Tharnrek has been but one realm amongst many in the Westerlands, its people trading and traveling in much the same way as Men, Drakine, or other races.

THARNREK IN 5000 SE

For the first time in nearly two centuries, Tharnrek has become particularly unstable and dangerous to nearby realms. The Troll-King, Vardag, is an old Troll, perceived as weak by many of his subjects. His son Bronsar, while not guaranteed to inherit the throne (see below), is a powerful and popular figure in Tharnrek, and it's possible he could become the next Troll-King. Aggressive and hungry for power, Bronsar speaks often of the days of glory when Trolls ruled over Men and were feared throughout the Westerlands.

But not all Trolls follow Bronsar's beliefs. More than a few, led by an elder named Haagrel and a troll-wizard known only as Stone, have no desire for conquest or battle; they simply want to go on trading with other kingdoms. If Bronsar were chosen king, and went to war against Khirkovy or some other realm, many of the so-called "Peaceful Trolls" might refuse to follow his banner, or even fight against him.

THE LAND

Although Tharnrek is generally taken to include all the lands between the Suralka Hills and the Snowthorn Mountains, most Trolls live in the mountains themselves. Their homes are great halls delved beneath the peaks, much like the realms of Dwarves, or enormous castles and houses built of stone. There are no "cities" as Men and Drakine think of them, but rather public halls and meeting-places used by all Trolls.

SOCIETY

Because the Trolls have no cities or the like, they govern themselves in an unusual way. In most situations, it's every Troll for himself, with powerful Trolls eking out a few valleys or mountains where they're regarded as the "king" or "elder" whom

others follow. Once every five years, or when called together by their priests, all prominent Trolls come together in the Hall of Ten Fires, an enormous meeting-chamber in the very center of the realm. There they meet and take counsel, and together they choose a king to lead Tharnrek. These meetings are often contentious, with shouting, fighting, and even the use of magic, but one way or another a single Troll establishes his dominance and the others choose him as their king. The new Troll-King may then establish his "capital" wherever he will, usually at his home caves or a prominent trading-post.

Among themselves, the Trolls observe elaborate laws of hospitality; a Troll traveling through Tharnrek need not worry about the lack of inns and taverns, for almost any troll-family will take him in for the night and feed him as best it may (and a wealthy or "noble" Troll might even shower him with gifts, if in a generous mood). But not all Trolls extend this courtesy to other races. Some believe any peaceful traveler deserves shelter and succor if he needs it, but dark-hearted Trolls are more likely to use hospitality as a guise to lure unwary visitors inside, then kill them and put their flesh in the stew-pot.

Since their realm has little arable land, the Trolls earn their gold in other ways. Many mine in the mountains for precious metals and gems, simultaneously seeking wealth and enlarging the size of their dwellings. Others are craftsmen, able to shape stone, wood, or metals with as much cleverness and skill as any Dwarf or Gnome. Many Westerlander warriors place great stock in troll-weapons, which are stronger and hold an edge better than most others (some of them believe troll-smiths are wizards, able to speak special spells over their work to enhance the weapons' quality).

HAVNAR

40	STR	15	DEX
25	CON	25	BODY
18	INT	10	EGO
25	PRE	10	COM
15	PD	12	ED
3	SPD	15	REC
50	END	60	STUN

Abilities: Armor (3 PD/3 ED), HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR), Running +3", Nightvision, +2 PER with all Sense Groups, Reach +1", 80 points' worth of Enchantment spells, 25 points' worth of Wizardry spells, Armorsmithing 16-, Enchantment 25-, Healing 13-, KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 14-, KS: Enchantment 16-, KS: Famous Enchanted Items 13-, Literacy, Persuasion 13-, PS: Blacksmith 14-, Stealth 12-, Wizardry 16-, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Weaponsmith (all categories) 15-, Money (Wealthy)

Enchanted Items:

Hammer of Forebearance (HKA 3d6), Ring of Fireshielding (Force Field [12 ED, Only Versus Fire])

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Artiste (he doesn't care for money or fame, just for Art)

Notes: Among troll-smiths, who already enjoy an excellent reputation for the quality of their work, Havnar stands out. The weapons and armor he forges are some of the best available anywhere, and he can use his wizardly skills to craft enchanted weapons and items as well. Having become wealthy long ago, he rarely works for money; he only creates weapons and armor for people he admires, or who bring him something he wants.

LOERIG

10	STR	10	DEX
13	CON	10	BODY
15	INT	10	EGO
15	PRE	12	COM
3	PD	2	ED
2	SPD	5	REC
26	END	22	STUN

Abilities: Bribery 12-, Conversation 12-, High Society 12-, CK: Bellinberg 11-, KS: Markets And Commodities 12-, Language: Trade-Talk (fluent conversation; Ilurian is Native), Literacy, Oratory 13-, Persuasion 13-, PS: Merchant 14-, Trading 14-, Contacts (30 points' worth, throughout Thurgandia and the Westerlands), Money (Well Off)

Enchanted Items: None

Disadvantages: DNPCs (wife and children), Psychological Limitation: Negotiates Everything, Rivalry (Professional, with certain other merchants)

Notes: A native of Bellinberg, Loerig has been a merchant his whole life. He owns a small warehouse on the Thurgandian docks, and from there he buys, sells, invests in trading expeditions, and makes deals. Unlike many merchants, he's less interested in the money than in the "hunt" — he loves negotiating, deal-making, and dickering. It's the intellectual and social challenge that really appeals to him... though he won't turn the money down.

Thurgandia

Government: Hereditary monarchy
Ruler: King Aurick Brandhame
Capital: Bellinberg
Population: Men (85%), Dwarves (5%), Elves (2%), Gnomes (2%), Drakine (1%), Other (5%)
Language(s): Ilurian
Coinage: Penny; Wheel; Dolar
Resources: Grain, herding, hunting, fishing, mining
Religion: High Church
Military: Light cavalry 22%, heavy cavalry 17%, light infantry 27%, heavy infantry 14%, navy 12%, magical/other 8%
Arms/Symbol: Gold, with a blue chevron and charged with three blue dragons rampant

Thurgandia is a large and powerful realm occupying the lands that were once the heart of the Ilurian Empire.

HISTORY

The land now known as Thurgandia was once part of Iluria. After the empire collapsed in the wake of the Drakine Wars, three kingdoms arose in this area: Verlichten in the east, near the ruins of the city of Iluria itself; Thurgandia in the central region, between the mountains and the sea; and Fellburg to the west, along the Allern River.

The three existed in a loose sort of peace for a few centuries, but in 2883 SE, the ambitious Verlichten kings made war upon Thurgandia, seeking to conquer the fertile lands on the west bank of the Bernina River. Several years of conflict followed, but the Thurgandian knights eventually repulsed the enemy and drove him back across the river.

Sensing weakness, in 2892 SE the Grand Duke of Fellburg attacked Thurgandia from the west, seizing much of western Thurgandia before the king's army halted the Grand Duke's advance west of Kasselden. More than a decade of campaigning was needed to force the Fellburgians back to their own borders, in part because of the need to maintain an army on Thurgandia's eastern border against Verlichten. At times the Vorstenbrock kings had to employ mercenaries, adventurers, or wizards to bolster their armies.

This tenuous state of affairs existed for over five hundred years, with the three realms maneuvering for position militarily and diplomatically (attacks by Orcs and Trolls from the Thurisian Mountains only made the situation worse). Neither Verlichten nor Fellburg was able to conquer Thurgandia by itself (and they would not work together, each rightly seeing the other as an obstacle to its own ultimate ambitions), and Thurgandia was unable to muster the strength to deal either enemy a resounding defeat. To complicate matters, the last of the Vorstenbrock kings died in battle in 3377 SE. House Brandhame claimed the throne despite attempts by both Verlichten and Fellburg to interfere with the succession.

Events changed in Thurgandia's favor in the early 3500s. Depleted by years of war, some bad

harvests, and several unexpected defeats, Verlichten found itself desperately in need of money and soldiers. To raise the gold he needed, King Gesslain sold a Charter of Free City to Aarn, at that time already the largest city in the world. Now lacking the annual taxes from the city, in 3511 SE Gesslain pinned all his hopes on a massive thrust with his enormous mercenary army right into the heart of Thurgandia. But his hopes failed him when he met the enemy at Nordevar, and the Thurgandian knights, with aid from fear-spells cast by Thurgandian battle-wizards, drove Gesslain and his mercenaries over the cliffs to die screaming in the rocky seas. The Thurgandians advanced, soon sacking Verlichtenheim and slaying most of the royal family and knights. Verlichten became naught but a fiefdom of Thurgandia, ruled by a man reduced in status from prince to baron.

With the problem on its eastern border solved for the nonce, Thurgandia was free to focus more of its efforts and army on Fellburg. In 3587 SE, King Wolfgang smashed the remaining Fellburgian army, and forced the Grand Duke to bend the knee and swear fealty in his very throne chamber at Gothar Grenn.

Since that time, Thurgandia has been a much more peaceful (and larger) realm, though the folk of both Verlichten and Fellburg do not always accept the dictates of Bellinberg easily, and have sometimes revolted when inspired by a charismatic leader. Years of Thurgandian kings marrying princesses and noblewomen from both regions in an effort to strengthen the legitimacy of their rule have done little to improve the situation. Increased trade, and the money it has brought, have accomplished far more.

THURGANDIA IN 5000 SE

Thurgandia remains a strong, generally peaceful kingdom as of 5000 SE. Being shielded from the evils of Kal-Turak by distance (for now...), and from any turmoil or difficulties to the north by the Thurisian Mountains, has allowed it to develop extensive trading ties with Tornathia, northern and central Mitharia, and other lands by ship. Only its relative lack of good ports (see below) has kept it from becoming an even greater trading power.

The ever-present threat of discontent in Fellburg and Verlichten weighs heavily on the minds of King Aurick and Crown Prince Wolfgang. While Fellburg has remained relatively quiet for the past decade or so, the popular Baron Arendell of Verlichten seems unlikely to sit passively in Verlichtenheim and let another man rule "his" land. Rumors have even begun to spread that he has sought, and received, the help of fell wizards, and perhaps darker beings as well — and who knows what he might have promised them in exchange for their aid?

THE LAND

Thurgandia is a plateau, forested and hilly, between the Thurisian Mountains (and, to the east, the upper Ordring River, where it's too rocky and rapid-fled to be navigable) and the Sea of Storms. Many places along its coastline are cliffs, or at least

so rocky that large ships cannot make port; only Waldersein, Kasselden, and Bellinberg have useful deep-water harbors (Iluria does as well, but no captain would be fool enough to sail close to those ghost-haunted ruins). At Grimsklift, not far from Kasselden, someone long ago carved a series of gigantic, weird, distorted faces right into the coastal cliffside, though the reason or meaning behind them remains a mystery.

Bellinberg

The capital of Thurgandia, also called Thurganburg by some, is a city of strong walls, tall towers, and broad, cobbled streets. Despite Thurgandia's years of warfare, Bellinberg has never been sacked, and has been besieged only a few times. It possesses the best harbor in the realm, and thus has a more worldly, cosmopolitan feel than most Thurgandian cities... though its distinctively-peaked roofs and the smell of Thurgandian herb-bread wafting from the bakeries make it impossible to mistake it for any other city in the world.

Bellinberg proper, the castle of the Thurgandian kings, dominates the city that long ago grew up around it and took its name. Made of imposingly large stone blocks supposedly set in place by giants tricked into doing the job by Rossvar, the first king of the realm, it has a well-deserved reputation for the quality of its feasting and ale; King Aurick, a man who appreciates good food, sets a fine board.

Fellburg

Known to some as High Fellburg, this region is an even higher, rougher plateau than Thurgandia proper, though it does slope down some as it approaches Elvenholme and the Allern River. Ancient tradition made the western edge of the Thurisians its southern boundary, but today most men mark its border at the Stone Tree.

Once an independent grand duchy, Fellburg has been a duchy beholden to Thurgandia for nearly 1,500 years. For the most part its people have come to accept this, and simply go about their daily lives as farmers, hunters, and shepherds. Occasionally some spark of grievance flares into talk of revolt, but it's been over two centuries since Bellinberg had to send an army to pacify the region. A few partisans talk at times of making common cause with Khelebria, but that would simply place the renegade realms square between the hammer of the Mhendarian Palatinate and the anvil of Thurgandia, making success unlikely, unless the rebels were to have powerful magic or some other great weapon to aid them.

The House of Mandelhar, the dukes of Fellburg, no longer seem much concerned with regaining their ancient throne; they're content to rule from Gothar Grenn and collect tax revenues to fill their coffers. The current liege-lord, Duke Lambrett, is an artist and scholar more than a war-leader, and often hires adventuring groups to bring him long-lost books or paintings; his only child, a young daughter named Vanda, is of more fiery spirit.

Verlichten

A much larger thorn in Thurgandia's side is Verlichten, a hilly realm on the kingdom's eastern marches. Neither the Verlichteners, nor their leaders of House Arbreit, have ever forgotten that they once lived in a proud and mighty kingdom; fifteen hundred years of humbling, including four major revolts ruthlessly quashed by the Thurgandian kings, sometimes seem not to have even dimmed their desire to restore Verlichten to greatness. And no one shares this desire more than the current Baron, Arendell, a young man of only thirty-two winters who's proven himself adept at both war and diplomacy. But whether he will have the chance to fulfill his ambitions remains to be seen; his forces are weak, while those of Thurgandia are strong.

Verlichten's hills and forests make farming difficult. Most Verlichteners support themselves through hunting, trapping, fishing the Ordning and Loskell Rivers, and craftworks. Verlichtener pottery, made from a distinctively-hued hill-clay, is popular throughout the Westerlands.

The Ruins Of Iluria

On Thurgandia's eastern coast lie the ruins of great Iluria, the capital city from which the empire of the First Epoch took its name. It was destroyed during the Drakine Wars, and from that time to this no one has dared rebuild it. The ghosts of Men and Drakine fight battles throughout its streets on the nights of the full moon, and monsters even more dire lair there. Many adventurers have explored its ruins, though their notes about what they found and saw are often sketchy, or rendered incorrect by the passage of time.

The Ettinstone

The Loskell River breaks from the Ordning at an enormous pillar of rock that splits near the top, thus earning itself the name "the Ettinstone." Below this point the Ordning widens and deepens, becoming navigable to many vessels. While no city has grown up around the Ettinstone, it's a frequent meeting-point for merchants and other travelers in the region.

Ardenland

Thurgandia rules two large islands off its coast, known together as Ardenland. Men and other folk have lived there for millennia, usually making a living through craftworks and trade. The Ardenfolk tend to be quiet and keep to themselves; they don't welcome strangers, and their towns and villages rarely have inns.

The Stone Tree

One of the most holy Druidical sites in all the world, the Stone Tree is a living, growing tree, of size and appearance something like a great oak, made of stone. The trunk and branches are a grey, granite-like stone. The leaves are known as leafstone, for they're green in spring and summer, but deepen to a red, yellow, or gold in autumn before falling. Many Druids, and those who follow Druidical teachings, take one of these leaves as a special talisman of protection and luck; jewelers throughout the world also make use of them. A special circle of Druids tends to and looks after the Tree.

NERELG

15	STR	15	DEX
18	CON	13	BODY
13	INT	10	EGO
18	PRE	8	COM
6	PD	5	ED
4	SPD	7	REC
36	END	30	STUN

Abilities: Climbing 12-, Concealment 12-, Fast Draw (Common Melee Weapons) 12-, Mimicry 12-, Riding 12-, Stealth 12-, Streetwise 13-, Survival (Temperate) 13-, Tracking 12-, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

Enchanted Items: None

Disadvantages: Hunted (local lord), Psychological Limitation: Ruthless, Rivalry (Professional, with two other bandits for leadership of their band), Social Limitation: Outlaw

Notes: Sentenced to outlawry long ago for a series of robberies he committed all over Fellburg, Nerelg took to the wilds and joined a group of bandits. In the years since, he's become a skilled wolf's-head, able to survive and thrive in the wild while waiting for the chance to steal and loot.

Recently, the leader of the group of bandits Nerelg works with died. He and two other bandits are all competing for leadership of the group.

Nerelg typically fights with a battle axe or long-sword; he wears studded leather armor and uses a medium shield. He also carries a bow and 20 arrows.

The Thurisian Mountains

This long east-west mountain range forms Thurgandia's northern border. It has no passes, forcing those who would cross it to use magic (or perhaps seek the help of the Dwarves of Algarhaime or Norross, who are said to know secret ways through the peaks). Orcs, Goblins, and creatures more foul still often make their lairs here; some adventurers treat the Thurisians as a "hunting ground," and rumor says several powerful wizards have made their homes there through the epochs.

SOCIETY

The folk of Thurgandia are a sturdy peasant breed, broad-shouldered and given to a certain portliness at times. They make their living as farmers, herders of cattle and sheep, hunters, and like occupations. Those who live near the mountains, or in the hills of Verlichten, may work as miners. Despite Thurgandia's long coastline, it has relatively few fishermen due to the dangerous nature of its coasts.

Aurick son of Trettan rules Thurgandia today, as he has for over 30 years. Although a fairly young and vigorous man in his prime, he is beginning to show his age, and it may be that this "weakness" is one of the things encouraging Baron Arendell's impertinence. Fortunately for the people of Thurgandia, Aurick's eldest son, the Crown Prince Wolfgang, is a strong man, popular with his subjects (see page 313). And should Wolfgang fall, his younger brother Helbard and sisters Marlissa and Adela can take his place.

As Crown Prince, Wolfgang leads the Knights of the Hound, Thurgandia's finest order of warriors. The Knights wear wolfhound-shaped helms, and many (including Wolfgang himself) fight with warhounds at their side.

Umbr

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Laudrec Sendres

Capital: Dynnar

Population: Men (82%), Elves (8%), Gnomes (3%), Halflings (3%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Umbrian

Coinage: Piece; Noble; Royal

Resources: Grain, herding, lumber, cloth, wine

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 25%, heavy cavalry 19%, light infantry 31%, heavy infantry 15%, navy 2%, magical/other 8%

Arms/Symbol: Halved; left, checks gold and black; right a grey gauntlet on red

One of the largest and most powerful Westerland kingdoms, Umbr may be one of the Ravager's first targets.

HISTORY

The lands now known as Umbr were once a part of the great kingdom of Carshalt. After King Hrorgel the Golden fell to the evil power of the necromancer Thronek, a succession of petty kings and dukes created their own realms throughout the Carshaltan Lands. As the years passed, some prospered, while others did not; borders and fiefdoms shifted with great frequency.

In the 2400s and 2500s, one of those petty kingdoms was Umbr, which occupied the south bank of the central run of the Dragonsmoke River. Selvaine Aliere, the king of Umbr from 2443-2470 FE, was a man of ambition and pride. Determined to expand the size and power of his realm, he did so partly through deft political maneuvering, partly with a few minor wars. More importantly, he passed his desires on to his sons, who slowly but surely pushed the borders of Umbr outward, conquering Jevrain and Derathon to the west, and several principalities and duchies to the west. By 2584, Umbr was a large and prosperous realm stretching from the Greyward Mountains to the shores of Lake Beralka.

The House of Aliere ruled Umbr for the next 1,700 years, surviving periodic raids by the Gor-thunda, the Trusca, and various tribes of Orcs, Ogres, and Trolls, a war with Keldravia in 3222 SE that cost Umbr its territories east of the Whitburn River, and a secret takeover of the royal family by the quixotic sorcerer Algashar in 3477-3481 SE. But the Aliere dynasty at long last came to an end in 4267 SE. The king died with only a sickly boy as his heir, and within a year the boy was dead as well. The powerful nobles of the Regency Council began to fight one another for the throne, leaving naught but destroyed villages and ravaged wheatfields in the wake of their bloody battles.

After a season of warfare, one of the nobles, Duke Gestren Sendres, won the victory by making an alliance with the powerful lords of the fiefdoms of Mezendria and Mircasëa. He promised to end their vassalage and grant them their lands outright as kings themselves. Both preferring to accept half a loaf rather than chance taking the whole, they

brought their armies to reinforce his. King Gestren married a distant cousin of the Alieres to help legitimize his rule. Since then the House of Sendres have been kings in Umbr, and if their realm be smaller than that ruled by the Alieres, it is still every bit as prosperous.

UMBR IN 5000 SE

Umbr is a rich and pleasant realm, filled with arable land well-tilled by the peasantry and for the most part well-managed by its lords. Since it's exposed to attacks by the Trolls of Tharnrek, deep-striking Gorthunda raids, and the ambitions of both the Khirkovy princes and the King of Keldravia, it maintains one of the largest Westerlands armies.

Several years ago, King Laudrec granted leave to a large group of Gnomes to take up residence in the hilly Mnoos Forest, where they claimed their ancestors had once dwelt, provided they paid annual taxes and tribute. They did so for two years, but then the payments ceased, and all efforts to resolve the situation have met with little more than clever words and delaying tactics on the part of the Gnomes. The king fears he may soon have to roust them out of the forest with soldiers, and does not look forward to the prospect.

THE LAND

Most of Umbr is a lowland between the Greywards, the Thurisians, and the Snowthorns. Its territory is hilly, and often forested, as it nears those ranges, but otherwise is rolling hills and green plains well-suited to agriculture and herding.

While several small rivers run through Umbr, the largest one it has access to is the mighty Dragonsmoke, so called because of the way the fog rises off it on chill mornings. It cuts a deep channel as it roars down from the Greyward Mountains, and is navigable as far as Londregos. It feeds into the Whitburn, and thence into Lake Beralka, from where they flow into Mhorecia via the Shaanda. This gives the craftsmen, merchants, and nobles of Umbr the ability to trade with over half of Arduna, and they do so, bringing back many wondrous goods in exchange for their wine, cloth, and crafted items.

Dyvnar

The capital of Umbr sits on the Dragonsmoke River, across from Voitaigne but separated from it by such a broad stretch of river that only ferries, not bridges, connect the two. In the 3100s, after a fire destroyed much of the city as it existed at that time despite the frantic efforts of two water-wizards to stop the conflagration, King Serril ordained a grand rebuilding. The result was a city more orderly than most in Ambrethel. It consists of a grid of public squares (designed, in part, to represent the black-and-gold checks of the Aliere coat of arms), each connected to the others by a broad road. Dorrel Droguine, the royal palace, occupies the center of the city and is surrounded by its own wall (in addition to the larger wall around Dyvnar as a whole).

Londregos

As the northernmost and westernmost navigable point on the Dragonsmoke, and thus the northernmost and westernmost point from which cargo can easily be sent east by water, Londregos is an important center of trade. Goods from all over the northwest — Khirkovy, Vestria, Elvenholme, Tharnrek, and more — make their way to the warehouses and wharves of Londregos. With so much wealth flowing through the city, it's not surprising that it has a thriving underworld as well, with several thieves' guilds (one of which, the Silver Guild, is led by the infamous thief Ylrage; see page 182).

The Crown March

Centuries ago, the kingdom of Derathon occupied the westernmost part of modern Umbr, the lands between the Allern and the mountains. When the Aliere kings conquered it, they renamed it the Crown March to emphasize that it now belonged to the crown of Umbr. Though the Marchers (as the folk who live there are called) have likely prospered beyond what they would have if Derathon had remained an independent kingdom, some of them distrust the "lowlanders" (as they refer to other Umbrians). They see them as soft, unused to the hard mountain life of the March. While no one, least of all the Marquis Avaine who holds the March in fief from Dyvnar, speaks of revolt, it might take little to fan the flames of mild discontent into those of rebellion.

SOCIETY

Laudrec of House Sendres is now in the twelfth year of his reign over Umbr, and seems fit and ready to rule for at least twelve more. An exuberant, loud-voiced man who enjoys life immensely and expects everyone around him to as well, he's fond of hunting, falconry, and being a patron of the arts (though his taste in artists is mercurial; few can expect to receive his patronage for long). He and his wife, Queen Silana, have four children: their eldest, a daughter Josline, is a Jisellite priestess in Ytheis; 20-year-old Crown Prince Beregart is heir to the throne; Silvres, age 17 and soon to be made a knight, is known for being as headstrong as his father; and the Princess Vantyn, just turned 16, is now of marriageable age, so her parents have begun considering who might be an appropriate match.

The Umbrian court is known for its splendor and taste. Fashions adopted in Dyvnar quickly filter throughout the Westerlands, creating work for tailors, seamstresses, and jewelers.

The Umbrians are a fine folk, mostly farmers, herders, craftsmen, and artists. They're renowned for the beautiful clothing they make, and also for their fine wines. Nobles throughout the Westerlands (and beyond) debate the superiority of Umbrian or Tornathian wine, with those of the Umbrian faction proclaiming the virtues of the Umbrian grapes, made crisp and tart by the cooler Umbrian weather. Of the Umbrian wines, those from the Jevrain region are generally considered the best, and fetch the highest prices.

GETTAN, COURT WIZARD OF UMBR

8	STR	14	DEX
13	CON	10	BODY
20	INT	18	EGO
20	PRE	10	COM
5	PD	6	ED
4	SPD	6	REC
26	END	25	STUN

Abilities: 100 points' worth of spells, Wizard's Staff (Endurance Reserve, 130 END/30 REC; OAF [Personal Focus]), +4 with all Magic Skills, Conjuration 20-, Conversation 13-, Earth Magic 20-, Fire Magic 22-, High Society 13-, Persuasion 13-, Stealth 12-, Thaumaturgy 20-, Wizardry 24-, Scholar and 20 points' worth of KSs (including KS: The Wizard's World 14-), Traveler and 15 points' worth of AKs/CKs/CuKs, Contacts (30 points' worth throughout Umbr), Fringe Benefit: Umbrian Court Wizard, Magesight.

Disadvantages: Hunted: by various Umbrian courtiers 8- (Watched); Psychological Limitation: Loves The Princess Vantyn

Notes: In his youth an adventurer who traveled over much of Arduna, Gettan eventually returned to his native Umbr to settle into a more peaceful life of contemplation and study. His family was of the lower nobility, and as a result his learning and abilities came to the attention of the royal family. After he helped the king several times, he was appointed Court Wizard upon the death of his predecessor. He's held that position now for over 10 years, and enjoys the perks and privileges it brings immensely (including all the feasts he gets to attend; he's becoming a bit portly).

THE EASTERN WESTERLANDS

The Drakeine Realms

Language(s): Northern Drakeine
Coinage: Keleg; Gehret; Tähterel
Religion: Drakeine

In the center of Arduna, on the very eastern edge of the Westerlands, are four kingdoms ruled by the Drakeine: Basidrun; Vendrigal; Khorrin; and Seldrion. The remnants of the great Drakeine kingdoms that ruled much of Arduna before the Drakeine Wars of the mid-First Epoch, they lack the power and grandeur they once possessed, but have

never become so weak or poor that the kingdoms of Men that surround them could conquer and absorb them once and for all.

Although the Drakeine Realms are four separate kingdoms and sometimes disagree with each other, the fact that they are of one race and share a common language and culture in the midst of the many kingdoms of Men that surround them usually unites them. Most folk refer to “the Drakeine Realms” almost as if they were one realm and the four kingdoms counties within it. For example, all the Drakeine Realms feature the same architectural style in their buildings: wide, comparatively short towers; thick walls (often decorated with murals in the distinctive Northern Drakeine style); a prevalence of rectangular structures and arrangements over square. The six-domed temples of the Drakeine religion are in evidence in all major cities and many

other places as well, instead of the columned temples and cathedrals of the High Church. No knowledgeable visitor could mistake these for the realms of Dwarves or Men, even if the streets were empty.

BASIDRUN

Government: Hereditary oligarchy

Ruler: The Syndics of Chiref

Capital: Chiref

Population: Drakeine (92%), Men (6%), Other (2%)

Resources: Fishing, herding, craftwork

Military: Light cavalry 18%, heavy cavalry 15%, light infantry 28%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 14%, magical/other 5%

Arms/Symbol: A drakine hand dexter opened out, on gold

The northernmost of the Drakeine Realms, Basidrun occupies an enviable location on Lake Beralka and the Shaanda River — the well-named Drakeine Coast. Many Men believe that hordes of Drakeine pirates reside in the coves and islets along the Coast, but no one has ever proved that Drakeine pirates, or pirates from the Coast, are more common than other types of lake-pirates.

Basidrun was once the home of some of the greatest Drakeine warriors, but with the passing of centuries it has become a place of commerce, not battle. Long ago the Syndics of Chiref, a group of twelve powerful merchants residing in the capital city, deposed the last king and established themselves as a ruling oligarchy. Positions among the Syndics are hereditary, so long as each Syndic's



fortune remains intact; too many reversals in business can cause a Syndic to lose his place to another Drakine appointed by the other eleven.

Basidrun has fought Valicia several times over control of the swamps where the Shaanda flows from Lake Beralka, since both realms recognize the strategic and commercial importance of that site (similarly, they fight for “control” of portions of the Valician Hills as well, though Basidrun has had no more luck asserting its authority over the hill-folk than has Valicia). To bolster their claim, the Syndics have paid groups of Drakine to settle and live in the swamp. Several times they’ve tried to drain the swamp by magic so they could build a city, but the tribes of Ran-tari who live in there have thwarted their efforts with powerful counter-magics. The Syndics are now considering ways to wipe out the Ran-tari altogether.

Chonath

In the Valician Hills south of the Shaanda lie one of the great Drakine ruined cities, Chonath. Before the Drakine Wars, the Drakine possessed magics great enough to support a true city among the hills, and many who dwelt in Chonath were powerful wizards. Only monsters and Goblins dwell there now, but sometimes adventurers journey there to explore the ruins in search of the fabled treasures lying within... and some of them even make it back out alive with gold to show for their efforts. Yet remaining to be found is the Dragon-God Staff (as Men call it), said to be able to summon and command dragons, which was never recovered by the Men who sacked the city at the end of the Wars.

VENDRIGAL

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Helgonnar

Capital: Yvaria

Population: Drakine (87%), Men (5%), Dwarves (3%), Other (5%)

Resources: Farming, mining, herding, craftwork

Military: Light cavalry 17%, heavy cavalry 13%, light infantry 32%, heavy infantry 18%, navy 4%, magical/other 16%

Arms/Symbol: Halved, red dragon’s-scale right, barry three bands gold and three black left

Largest and most powerful of the Drakine Realms, Vendrigal has dreams of uniting the other three under its one rule and making the Drakine once more a power in Arduna. In pursuit of its goals it has quarrelled and fought not only with its Drakine neighbors, but several times with Szarvasia, and has even made threatening moves toward Aarn on occasion. Since the arrival of Sa’akiv and the creation of the Tower of Bone, the Throne of Fire and Honor has done nothing more regarding Aarn, but no one doubts that its ambitions remain.

For the past five hundred years, the Geshreth *sahisha* (page 31) has ruled Vendrigal after displacing the former rulers, the Chelgen *sahisha*. King Helgonnar has held the throne for nearly two decades, surviving three assassination attempts during that time (thanks in part to the aid of his powerful court

wizard, Shisairen). His wife died giving birth to their second son, but it remains to be seen whether the bookish elder son, Wenzhaur, will in his time abdicate the throne in favor of Scalladun, who shares their father’s more martial temperament.

One reason Vendrigal presents a threat to larger, more powerful realms is the large number of battle-wizards in the ranks of its armies. The Geshreth kings have long advocated the use of wizardly powers in war, and have devoted much funds and effort to this goal. A king who would fight Vendrigal had best come prepared with potent counter-magics.

KHORRIN

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Azgulan the Usurper

Capital: Askir

Population: Drakine (91%), Dwarves (3%), Men (2%), Other (4%)

Resources: Mining, farming, herding, craftwork, fishing

Military: Light cavalry 20%, heavy cavalry 15%, light infantry 39%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 1%, magical/other 5%

Arms/Symbol: A gold Drakine star on blue

Once the heart of the Drakine lands, the land of Khorrin is now but the southernmost, and in many ways weakest, of the Drakine Realms. Much of its territory is wild and unsettled, and the valley that once gave it easy access to Tornathia and the sea is a desolate land of spectres and apparitions. Rather than trading with the cities of Men to the south, which requires crossing the dangerous highlands and the swift-running Whitsuth River, most Khorrine send their goods north to Vendrigal, earning a lesser price but exposing themselves to far less risk.

Azgulan, known as the Usurper even though he inherited the throne, rules Khorrin. Eighty years ago his grandfather stole the throne by slaughtering all members of the Brelgenek *sahisha* that had ruled the kingdom for nearly a thousand years, and his descendants have borne the title “Usurper” just as he did. Few in Khorrin like the king, and only the support of the nobles (on whom he lavishes money and gifts) keeps him in power. He and his wife are yet childless, so there may be none to inherit the throne after him... but that almost certainly means civil war among the nobility when he dies.

The Haunted Lands

What is now Khorrin was once part of the great Drakine realm of Korlothia, which had its capital at Korloth. Since the days of the Drakine Wars, when Men sacked Korloth and butchered every Drakine they could find, the Korlothia Valley between the arms of the Drakine Mountains has been known as the Haunted Lands because of all the ghosts and spectres (and things more foul still) which dwell there. The ruins of Korloth contain much treasure, and often draw adventurers despite the dangers, but no one else besides necromancers dares to enter the Haunted Lands if he has any other alternative.

VALTRIOS

10	STR	18	DEX
15	CON	10	BODY
18	INT	12	EGO
20	PRE	14	COM
4	PD	4	ED
4	SPD	5	REC
30	END	25	STUN

Abilities: Climbing 13-, Conversation 13-, Gambling (Card Games, Dice Games) 13-, High Society 13-, KS: Ambrethelan History 11-, KS: Legends And Lore 13-, KS: Tales And Stories 13-, Languages: Besruhani, Ilurian, Northern Drakine, Trade-Talk, Vestrian (all fluent conversation; Tornathian is Native), Literacy, Oratory 13-, Persuasion 13-, PS: Play Woodwind Instruments 15-, PS: Play Stringed Instruments 15-, PS: Singing 13-, Seduction 13-, Stealth 13-, Street-wise 13-, Trading 13-, Two-Weapon Fighting (HTH), WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Off Hand

Enchanted Items: Enchanted Daggers (2) (HKA 1 1/2d6, +1 OCV)

Disadvantages: Hunted (by a powerful noble he's insulted in song), Psychological Limitation: Curiosity, Psychological Limitation: Sucker For A Pretty Face

Notes: Valtrios is a bard with a weakness for beautiful women and an irresistible urge to stick his nose into other peoples' business. He prefers to talk his way out of trouble whenever he can, but if push comes to shove he can fight his way out instead. He has a matched set of enchanted daggers, and knows how to fight with one in each hand. If he expects trouble, he'll wear leather armor.

SELDRIION

Government: Hereditary monarchy
Ruler: King Vartis
Capital: Tirnos
Population: Drakine (82%), Men (10%), Dwarves (3%)
Resources: Fishing, craftwork, mining, farming
Military: Light cavalry 24%, heavy cavalry 14%, light infantry 27%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 10%, magical/other 5%
Arms/Symbol: A demi-drakine with a spear in each hand on white

Although technically in Mhorecia and not the Westerlands, Seldrion is considered one of the Drakine Realms. It maintains close contact with the others through trade on the Shaanda and other means, and would side with them in a war against Men if necessary.

Like Basidrun, with whom it conducts much commerce, Seldrion has become an important trading center. From the wharves of Tirnos, Drakine craftworks and other goods spread throughout Mhorecia, and beyond. Between the two of them, Basidrun and Seldrion control much of the Shaanda trade, a state of affairs that worries merchants from some other races.

Although Tirnos is the capital and wealthiest city in Seldrion, Dairvaylish on the Shaanda eclipses it in many ways. The home of the famed University, it attracts scholars and artists from all over Ambrethel, Drakine and non-Drakine alike. It's one of the few places where Drakine mingle freely with other races, seemingly without animosity or suspicion on either side.

The Tornathian League

Language(s): Tornathian
Coinage: Damarch; Damarch; Damarch
Religion: High Church (Tornathian)

Tornathia — the land south of the Tarnwater and west of the Drakine and Ironheart Mountains, roughly speaking — is a low-lying region of plains broken up by many rivers (great and small), small lakes, and swampy regions that make travel difficult. As a result it evolved not into a single kingdom, but rather a series of city-states, each in control of the lands nearest its walls and not much more.

As described on page 16, after the Lord of the Graven Spear was slain, a struggle for power consumed the peoples of the city-states. Out of this struggle emerged the realm of Naath Korian, an oligarchy ruled by "dukes" (really merchant-princes who'd funded the conquest of the region) from each city-state. Naath Korian stood until 3849 SE, when a trade war between several of the dukes turned into a war of steel and blood. Within two years, the dukes, weakened by their constant fighting, were easy prey for the folk of the cities, who rose up and slew them. Having restored themselves to freedom and legitimate rule, the city-states formed the Tornathian League, a political, military, and economic alliance intended to allow each of them a proper measure of freedom, safety, and prosperity.

Because they pool their resources and efforts, the city-states of the Tornathian League have much greater trading prowess than any of them would individually. They transport their goods to the coastal city-states, where merchant-captains carry them by ship all over the world. They also trade a great deal among themselves; for example, grain from Navrostel is often exchanged for wine from Celbaria or Sarreshar, or precious stones from Hanoreth.

The citizens of all the Tornathian city-states speak Tornathian, an evocative language favored by many bards and poets due to the beauty of its rhythms and words. Although a few words (not to mention slang) vary from city-state to city-state, one Tornathian can easily understand another even if they come from different cities. Also linking the city-states is their common religion, a form of the High Church with slightly different rituals and iconography (but not so different as to be regarded as heresy). Most Tornathians have slightly darker skin than the average Westerlander (because of the hot sun in their land, they say), and tend to have dark, curly hair.

CELBARIA**Government:** Hereditary monarchy**Ruler:** Queen Eldoris**Population:** Men (96%), Other (4%)**Resources:** Farming, herding, wine, craftwork, farming**Military:** Light cavalry 23%, heavy cavalry 20%, light infantry 30%, heavy infantry 21%, navy 0%, magical/other 6%**Arms/Symbol:** Two purple chevrons on silver

One of the two “Plains Cities” of the League (together with Navrostel), Celbaria is ruled by a hereditary monarchy. Unlike many other realms, the king chooses which of his children will take the throne after him (it doesn’t automatically pass to the eldest), and women can inherit the throne. The current ruler is Queen Eldoris, and all signs to date are that she’ll choose her 17-year-old daughter, Tiphain, to succeed her. Many nobles both within and without Tornathia have persistently courted Tiphain, but she doesn’t seem to favor any of them.

Celbaria has more arable land near it than most of the Tornathian city-states, and does a thriving trade in grain and sheep with its fellow League members. As one of the three “Wine Cities” of Tornathia, Celbaria has a well-deserved reputation for the quality of its grapes; Celbarian vintners rightly assert that their wines are the best in the land.

HANORETH**Government:** Theocracy**Ruler:** Great Ecclesiarch Dorandar**Population:** Men (89%), Dwarves (4%), Elves (3%), Gnomes (1%), Other (3%)**Resources:** Herding, mining, craftwork, farming**Military:** Light cavalry 20%, heavy cavalry 18%, light infantry 36%, heavy infantry 18%, navy 0%, magical/other 8%**Arms/Symbol:** A blue fretty on tawny

Located at the mouth of the valley known as the Haunted Lands, Hanoreth is the Tornathian city-state nearest the Ironheart and Drakine Mountains, and thus dominates the League’s trade in gems, ore, and finely-worked stone. It has developed strong trade alliances with the Dwarves of Zarkoreng and Hordarsa; the Great Ecclesiarch often hosts those realms’ kings at great banquets in the Hall of Feasts in the Temple of Seorson, and is feted by the Dwarves in turn in their mountainous kingdoms.

Hanoreth is a theocracy ruled by the priests and functionaries of the High Church within the city. The ruling ecclesiarch, known as the Great Ecclesiarch, acknowledges the authority of the Bonifac, but otherwise functions largely as a king.

He’s chosen by the city’s high religious officials for life; when he dies they meet to choose his successor from among their number (or, on rare occasions, from outside). Blasphemy, failure to attend worship services, and heresy are considered crimes in Hanoreth and harshly punished.

Wizard’s Vale

In the southern Ironhearts, not far from the mouth of the Red River, is a small valley of strange aspect and unusual nature. A great star-stone struck the earth here centuries ago, attracting spellcasters from all over Arduna who soon discovered that the waters and herbs of the valley were most potent and useful for magical workings. Now known as Wizard’s Vale, the valley, despite its isolation, sees a steady stream of visitors in search of its fabled resources, and even has a handful of permanent residents (including several powerful wizards and alchemists). The permanent residents have formed a sort of council to prevent themselves or outsiders from over-exploiting the Vale, much to the anger of some merchants.

NAVROSTEL**Government:** Hereditary monarchy**Ruler:** King Athanos**Population:** Men (92%), Elves (4%), Halflings (3%), Other (1%)**Resources:** Herding, horses, farming, craftwork**Military:** Light cavalry 25%, heavy cavalry 22%, light infantry 24%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 0%, magical/other 9%**Arms/Symbol:** A golden lion rampant on purple

Known among the rest of the League as the “gateway to Aarn,” Navrostel is the northernmost of the Tornathian city-states, and thus the first stop made by Aarnese caravans (or the last stop of Tornathian caravans on their way to Aarn). It’s also the second of the Plains Cities, and well-known for the swiftness and strength of the horses its people breed.

Navrostel is ruled by a king, who according to the law passes his throne on to his eldest son. However, in truth the city-state’s powerful nobles have to approve the crown prince taking the throne; if they do not, he’s deposed and a new king created from the nobility. As a result, the throne changes hands frequently, and maneuvering for power and influence is a constant game among the nobles. Even the citizens take part, rallying behind favored nobles, since they know that if their “candidate” wins, he’ll reward his faction with money, food, and jobs. In times of uncertainty and turmoil, visitors to the city may find themselves asked who they “support” almost as soon as they step through the gates.

SARKUND

Government: Hereditary monarchy
Ruler: King Gelasius
Population: Men (89%), Elves (6%), Gnomes (3%), Other (2%)
Resources: Herding, fishing, farming, craftwork
Military: Light cavalry 19%, heavy cavalry 12%, light infantry 29%, heavy infantry 25%, navy 11%, magical/other 4%
Arms/Symbol: Hand pouring wine from a golden goblet, all on white

Located at the mouth of the Berat River, not far from the edges of the vast Ulimar Jungle, Sarkund is the easternmost of the Tornathian city-states, and thus the one at which Khorian and Vornakkian ships are most likely to first dock. The waterfronts of Sarkund resound with the exotic cries of sailors from dozens of home ports, and its markets display an enormously varied assortment of goods (even trained monkeys and other Ulimaran animals). Sarkund is particularly known for the skill of its glassblowers; to say that a vase or goblet is of Sarkund make is to note its quality and beauty. The most valuable pieces display a color called Sarkund rose, a pinkish-purplish shade produced nowhere else.

King Gelasius, known as the Fat for obvious reasons, has ruled Sarkund for nearly two decades now. He's enormously popular with the people because of all the feasts and entertainments he throws for them, though many of the nobles dislike seeing their tax moneys wasted on such extravagances. Genial and fun-loving, Gelasius enjoys the company of bards, and of sorcerers willing to entertain him with their illusions, and often pays well for their company... though he quickly tires of most amusements and moves on to new ones.

SARRESHAR

Government: Hereditary monarchy
Ruler: Prince Rhodas
Population: Men (92%), Elves (4%), Halflings (3%), Other (1%)
Resources: Farming, wine, fishing, craftwork
Military: Light cavalry 22%, heavy cavalry 19%, light infantry 21%, heavy infantry 17%, navy 14%, magical/other 7%
Arms/Symbol: Three bunches of grapes and a green chevron on gold

Located at the mouth of the Posedros River, Sarreshar is blessed with an abundance of food — grain, grapes, pears, and more grown in the fertile fields on either side of the river, fish and much else from the Khelvarian Ocean. Even the poorest Sarresharans eat well compared to the poor in many other cities, and “as well-fed as a Sarresharan merchant” is a common way of describing someone fat.

Sarreshar is a hereditary monarchy, but the current ruler holds the title of prince, not king. Prince Rhodas assumed the throne as a sort of regent three years ago when his parents, King Kirril and Queen Neola, mysteriously disappeared from the palace. He believes they're dead, but most of the

nobles, priests, and other influential people in the city don't agree.

As one of Tornathia's “Wine Cities,” Sarreshar competes with Celbaria and Tatha Gorel (especially the latter) for the wine trade. Sarresharan vintners rightly assert that their wines are the best in the land.

TATHA GOREL

Government: Dracocracy
Ruler: Scauromdrax the Magnificent
Population: Men (86%), Drakine (6%), Elves (4%), Halflings (3%), Other (1%)
Resources: Farming, herding, wine, fishing, craftwork
Military: Light cavalry 19%, heavy cavalry 13%, light infantry 26%, heavy infantry 21%, navy 12%, magical/other 9%
Arms/Symbol: Per fess, a blue dragon couchant on silver in chief, an anchor on white in base

Built at the mouth of a fine natural bay, Tatha Gorel is the westernmost city-state of Tornathia. It conducts much trade by sea with Aarn, Kumasia, and places even further afield.

Tatha Gorel has one of the most unusual forms of government in the Westerlands — it's ruled by a dragon! Nearly three centuries ago, the king of Tatha Gorel lay dying without issue, and he trusted neither the good intentions nor the abilities of any of the nobles who might stand to inherit his throne. He sent word to the good dragon Scauromdrax, beseeching him to take the kingship and rule justly in place of a line of Men. Intrigued and honored, Scauromdrax, known as “the Magnificent,” accepted. A brief civil war ensued in which the dragon had to kill several nobles who sought to slay it and capture the throne, but eventually commoner and lord alike came to accept their strange new king (and some folk, particularly Drakine, came to live in Tatha Gorel specifically because of him). In the intervening years, Scauromdrax has proven to be a worthy choice and a just king; sometimes rulers from other realms even seek his advice on matters of state.

Tatha Gorel is one of the Tornathian “Wine Cities,” renowned for the strength and quality of its vintages. Gorellan vintners rightly assert that their wines are the best in the land.

TORNATH**Government:** Plutocracy**Ruler:** The Captains' Council**Population:** Men (97%), Other (3%)**Resources:** Farming, herding, fishing, craftwork**Military:** Light cavalry 18%, heavy cavalry 13%, light infantry 24%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 18%, magical/other 7%**Arms/Symbol:** Three ships on light blue

At the mouth of the Torhan River lies Tornath, a city-state known for its tall, distinctively-prowed ships and its far-flung trading networks. It competes with Sarkund for the eastern trade, and its deft merchant-captains often win through with valuable cargoes before the Sarkundans have them... though some people claim the Tornathites resort to piracy or other devious tactics at times.

Those same merchant-captains rule the city-state. The Captains' Council consists of the wealthiest traders in the city, each of whom wields votes and influence based on how much wealth he possesses. Membership in the Council is informal; any ship-captain or owner can try to attend the meetings, but if the others don't recognize the newcomer as having sufficient status to come among them, he's unceremoniously thrown out on his ear.

The politics of the Council are tricky. By law, a member cannot leave a proxy or designate his votes in advance; he must be present to have his say and cast his ballot on any matter before the Council. As such, every member has to balance the need to attend Council meetings with the need to undertake trade voyages to gain more wealth (and thus more votes). Councillors who try to play both ends against the middle will soon find themselves losing stature and prestige, for only a merchant-captain who does his own work has any true honor in Tornath.

MOUNT MELGAR

The Hangclaw Mountains form the northwestern border of Tornathia, and chief among those towering peaks is Mount Melgar, accounted by some the tallest mountain in all the world. Many a time Dwarves from the Ironhearts or Thurisians have tried to establish a kingdom there, but always they have failed, with no Dwarf left alive to tell the tale. No one can explain what goes on in the caverns beneath Mount Melgar, but few Dwarves even dream about building a realm there anymore.

Valicia**Government:** Hereditary monarchy**Ruler:** Zaargorath Khrom, the Yellow King**Capital:** Valicia City**Population:** Men (85%), Dwarves (4%), Gnomes (4%), Drakine (4%), Other (3%)**Language(s):** Valician**Coinage:** Throne; Throne; Throne**Resources:** Mining, herding, fishing, farming**Religion:** High Church**Military:** Light cavalry 18%, heavy cavalry 12%, light infantry 35%, heavy infantry 15%, navy 9%, magical/other 11%**Arms/Symbol:** Per saltire yellow and black, charged with a grey chain middle chief

The ancient and mysterious land of Valicia, though small and in many ways isolated, contains dark power. In an age when the shadow of Kal-Turak has begun to cover the land, some in the West wonder if the folk of Valicia will fight against him... or join him as allies.

HISTORY

In the early days of the First Epoch, Valicia was a wild and unsettled land, inhabited only by Drakine. During the Drakine Wars, Men from the Valician Hills who spoke a language more akin to that of the Mhorecian lands than the West attacked and slew them. Valicia became a barbarous place, filled with tribes beholden to no king or great chieftain.

When the Lord of the Graven Spear came into his power, he claimed Valicia as his own and sent a powerful lieutenant, Skorlagar Khrom, to rule over it in his name. Khrom conquered the tribes, slaughtering hundreds of warriors before the rest bowed to his commands. So strong was Skorlagar, and his sons after him, that even when the Spearlord fell and Sargelieth Zîr sank beneath the waves they held on to power in Valicia. And from that day to this, Black father to Yellow son, Yellow father to Black son, the Lords of Khrom have ruled the people of Valicia.

In the eyes of most scholars, the later history of Valicia is relatively quiet and peaceful, marred only by a few wars with Keldravia, the Drakine realms to the south, or various tribes of the Valician Hills. But the Valicians see matters otherwise. No noble dares move directly against the kings of Khrom, since an ancient prophecy proclaims that he who casts down Khrom will not live long to enjoy the fruits of his victory, but the counts of Valicia are more than willing to fight with one another for influence and power within the realm. To the Valicians, their history is a rich, if chaotic, tapestry of political manipulation, assassination, and petty warfare, all conducted under the eyes, and perhaps with the approval, of the powerful Khrom kings.

VALICIA IN 5000 SE

Valicia has waxed in power in recent centuries. The Yellow Kings have learned powerful new magics from some unknown source, and the

MATTAS TAMBERSON

10 STR 12 DEX
12 CON 10 BODY
13 INT 8 EGO
15 PRE 8 COM
3 PD 2 ED
2 SPD 4 REC
24 END 21 STUN

Abilities: Concealment 12-, Gambling (Card Games) 8-, High Society 8-, CK: Ishtac, KS: Local Gossip 14-, PS: Baker 12-, PS: Brewer 12-, PS: Cooking 12-, PS: Innkeeper 12-, Trading 13-, Contacts (25 points' worth, throughout Ishtac), Money (Well Off), Base (the Tippy Unicorn Inn)

Enchanted Items: None

Disadvantages: Age: 40+, DNPCs (family), Psychological Limitation: Henpecked

Notes: The owner and proprietor of the Tippy Unicorn Inn in the town of Ishtac along the River Shaanda, Mattas Tamberson caters mainly to traders and other travelers using the river. He also gets plenty of locals coming in to drink and gamble, but they don't tip nearly as well. On the other hand, they're less likely to pester his two daughters, who work the common room as serving girls. Fortunately, his eagle-eyed, shrewish wife keeps close watch on what happens throughout the inn, and is quick to whap a hand or a noggin with her heavy wooden stirring-spoon if she needs to. Mattas does his best to keep out of his wife's line of sight.

coffers of the House of Khrom have grown full to bursting with wealth garnered through trade with the Gorthunda and other Beralkan realms, not to mention the discovery of a rich new emerald mine in the Snowthorns. Some people fear that King Zaargorath may already be casting covetous eyes at Keldravia, Thalara-Saar, or the Drakine Realms.

Valicia claims as its territory all of the Valician Hills, including the towns and cities along the Shaanda River, such as Ishtac. But the rough and rocky terrain of the Hills makes it impossible to take an army in there, so the hill-folk resist all of Valicia's attempts to control them... and the cities of the Shaanda are too clever, stubborn, and proud to bend the knee to anyone, even if the Valician kings were willing to risk disrupting trade along the river by trying to conquer them. Periodically King Zaargorath launches a scheme of some sort to try to subvert one of the river towns without the need for armed force, but so far none of his plans has succeeded.

THE LAND

Wedge in between the Valician Hills, the Snowthorn Mountains, and Lake Beralka, Valicia is mostly a rough, hilly land not well-suited for farming but containing more than its share of mines and like resources. Its position on the shores of Lake Beralka allows it to trade freely with many other realms, though Valicians do not seem to care to mingle with other peoples any more than they have to.

Valicia has only two major cities. The largest is Valicia City, the capital, on the shores of the lake. It has strong walls and tall towers, all built from grey granite quarried in the Snowthorns and ferried to the city by various lesser rivers. Magical siege engines, built long ago by several of the Yellow Kings, protect it from attackers by firing balls of green mageflame, and it's rumored that the city's many statues (all carved in the distinctive Valician style) can, if necessary, animate to fight on its behalf. The other, near the Valician Pass that leads into the Gorthundan lands, is Tirion. The folk of Tirion maintain a thriving trade with the Gorthunda, offering them such favorable terms that the nomadic warriors have rarely raided into Valicia.

Along The Shaanda

The Shaanda River is a vital trade conduit because it flows from Lake Beralka to the Sea of Mhorec, and thus links most of the Westerlands to Mhorecia. It's too narrow and shallow to allow large trade-ships to pass, but flat-hulled "Shaanda barges" built specifically for its waters travel downstream or upstream everywhere along its length.

Because the Valician Hills are too wild, rocky, and inhospitable to allow for farming or large inhabitations, no single city dominates the trade

along the Shaanda. Instead, several smaller cities and large towns dot its length. The largest of these is Ishtac, sometimes called the City of the Moon for the oddly crescent-shaped domes of its towers; others include Blackrond, Garwyn, and Telisarn.

SOCIETY

The kingship of the Valicia is a strange thing. Throughout its history, Valicia has had two types of kings, Black and Yellow. Black Kings are large, strong, fierce, hulking warriors with bushy black hair and beards; they wield the greatsword Korûmthaarl ("Winnower of Heads"), a weapon of most evil reputation. The Yellow Kings, on the other hand, are shorter, more slender, clean-shaven, and blonde; their skill as warriors comes not from strength, but from swiftness and agility. They use a short mace, Uulzar, and short axe, Gulthoom, both said to be enchanted. To make matters worse, the Yellow Kings (and their apprentices) are accomplished wizards, with access to ancient magics unknown anywhere else. It is said that to meet a Yellow King in battle is to know fear.

Legends tell that, due to an ancient curse, a Valician king will have only sons with hair differently-colored than his, so that no King will ever be able to truly understand his sons, or Princes their father. The current King, Zaargorath Khrom, is a Yellow King, and a man greatly feared by many. More than one person who has offended King Zaargorath has lived out the short remainder of his life staked on a high pole outside the tall grey walls of Toromthiis, the royal palace. From this comes the saying, "to die Khrom's death," meaning to perish in a slow, painful fashion. His oldest son, Arzabold the Black Prince, will succeed him; Arzabold is said to delight in torture and other wicked practices.

The noble hierarchy in Valicia is relatively simple compared to that of other realms. Most nobles hold the title of count (or countess), while lesser-ranked nobles are baronets or knights. Some of the most powerful or noteworthy include: Count Vorgathrond of Myrgoll, known as the "Iron Serpent" for his harsh and implacable cruelty; Count Skoremdaarl of Black Rock House (located east of Black Moss Forest); and Count Glorvaan Yiirondair, called the Fireson for his red hair and quick wit, and said to be a great favorite of King Zaargorath because he, too, practices the arts of both sword and spell.

For the peasants and free folk of Valicia, life tends to be grey and humorless. King Zaargorath and his nobles rule with an iron fist, taxing the people mercilessly and suppressing anything that might weaken the rulers' power. Valicia discourages outsiders from coming to visit, and the king's elaborate network of spies and informers watches them every minute they're in the land.

MHORECIA



Mhorecia takes its name from the Sea of Mhorec, greatest of the inland seas of Ambrethel. Virtually every kingdom in Mhorecia borders the Sea, and even those who do not work her waters as fisherman or sailors know it affects their lives every day. It makes trade, not only among the Mhorecian realms but with the Westerlands via the River Shaanda, much easier than it would otherwise be, creating both a thriving merchant classes and opportunities for piracy.

Three large realms — the Sirrenic Empire, Besruhan, and Velkara — dominate the culture and politics of Mhorecia, but not completely. The Empire finds its imperial ambitions thwarted by the need to oppose Vashkhor's expansion into the region, while Velkara and Besruhan often squabble with one another over territory or some perceived slight. Amidst these giants lie scattered eight other kingdoms, smaller and weaker... but not necessarily powerless.

NORTHERN MHORECIA

Ingushel

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Lyndanar

Capital: Ashkhenda

Population: Men (94%), Gnomes (3%), Other (3%)

Language(s): Sirrenic

Coinage: Piece; Piece; Piece

Resources: Herding, fishing, farming

Religion: Hargeshite

Military: Light cavalry 22%, heavy cavalry 16%, light infantry 30%, heavy infantry 18%, navy 10%, magical/other 4%

Arms/Symbol: A bull's head caboshed

The only other Hargeshite realm in Mhorecia besides Hrastarin, Ingushel is a quiet kingdom considered a backwater by many... and a puppet of Marasa by others.



HISTORY

For most of the past five thousand years, the bucolic land of Ingushel has belonged to some greater kingdom, rather than standing as a realm itself. Until 1876 FE, it was part of Bretha, but in that year Bretha lost it to Brindazia after a battle that took place not far from modern-day Arrbridge. Brindazia in turn lost it to Nathair briefly from 2135 to 2178 FE, but regained it thereafter. When King Alachar of Monselica defeated Brindazia and sacked Tor Vilos, Ingushel became the southernmost province of the newly-formed Sirrenic Empire.

Ingushel remained a part of the Sirrenic Empire until the early Second Epoch. The Hargeshite faith promulgated in Vashkhor fell on deaf ears in Sirrenic lands... save for Ingushel, where the new doctrine appealed to Ingushelans long tired of Sirrenic taxes and conscription laws. In 3386 SE, a group of Hargeshite priests, aided by a cabal of like-minded wizards, sparked a revolt. The normally peaceful Ingushelans rose up, slaughtering Sirrenic functionaries and soldiers by the thousands... and then turned on Sirrenic women and children as well. The Empire, occupied with conflicts against Thalera-Saar and the Gorthunda, and unwilling to risk war with Vashkhor over so trivial a province, chose to let Ingushel go.

INGUSHEL IN 5000 SE

Since the revolt against Tor Vilos, Ingushel has been a free realm... at least in name. From its earliest days it's been a strong ally of Vashkhor — so strong that many people consider it little more than a province of the Hargeshite Empire. In effect this gives Vashkhor a true foothold in Mhorecia, which causes grave concern in the Sirrenic Empire and Velkara. Despite their Hargeshite beliefs, some Ingushelans have become as unhappy with this state of affairs as their ancestors were with the rule of the Sirrenic Empire. While no revolt has yet even been contemplated, it would take very little to fan their smoldering resentment into a true fire of rebellion. But whether a small band of rebels, even one including several powerful nobles, could stand against not only the king in Ashkhenda but his friend the Hierakte is a good question.

THE LAND

Ingushel is a quiet land of fields and forests, rising to hills only in the southeast around Mount Keluurazond. Compared to the other Mhorecian realms, it has a poor coastline, with rocky beaches and only one good port at Ashkhenda. As a result, it depends more on herding and farming and less on trade and fishing than many other Mhorecian realms.

Ashkhenda

The capital of Ingushel is a relatively small city protected by tall, thick, strong walls. Majestic stone statues of bulls, the symbol of the realm, line the broad street that runs from the eastern gates all the way to the waterfront; two even larger bronze bull statues guard the gates of Toresar, the royal palace. A series of enchanted fountains, a gift to House Bhaztregon from the wizard Vazander, draws water from the Sea, cleans it, and sprays it into the air in fanciful shapes or beautiful arcs.

Mount Keluurazond

In the southeastern part of the realm, not far from where the Delfarayn splits off from the Aramthys, a single gigantic mountain rises from the ground. Legends say Mount Keluurazond was created by the Mountain-Walker himself as the site of a great palace he planned to build. When the Skyfather forbade that, Korthund gave the mountain to a devout band of Gnomes instead. The Gnomes live and work in the mountain, mining gemstones which they sell loose or as part of jewelry they craft. Although the Gnomes are not Hargeshites, King Lyndanar maintains a strong friendship and trade relations with them, something the Hierakte frowns on.

SOCIETY

King Lyndanar of House Bhaztregon, the tenth royal house of the realm, rules over Ingushel in 5000 SE. A devout Hargeshite, he attends worship services three times a day in the royal family's personal chapel in Toresar. He has a wife, Queen Chiselda, but their marriage was one of political convenience. He's shown almost no interest in her since she gave birth to his heir and only child, Crown Prince Norrin, who's now 13 years old.

Because of Ingushel's alliance with Vashkhor, subjects of the Hargeshite Empire enter and travel in Ingushel with a great degree of freedom, often accompanied by unusually large contingents of Vashkhoran soldiers. This disturbs many nobles, not to mention shopkeepers and peasants (who often find the Vashkhoran troops aggressive and rude), but King Lyndanar does not object because his good friend the Hierakte tells him it's all completely harmless.

Since Ingushel raises so many cattle, the rhythm of life in the kingdom depends largely on the yearly cycle of birthing, raising, and selling cows and bulls. After the final cattle-sales of the season, the people celebrate with a great festival early in the month of Harvesting. The highlight of the festival is a competition between daring young men (and sometimes women) to ride the meanest, strongest, wildest bulls the community can find. The most skilled and successful rider usually finds himself showered with accolades, gifts, and favors... but inevitably a few competitors die, or leave the riding-field crippled for life.

The Sirrenic Empire

Government: Hereditary empire

Ruler: Emperor Dravin XI

Capital: Tor Vilos

Population: Men (92%), Dwarves (4%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Sirrenic

Coinage: Soldai; Urbai; Cathbai

Resources: Farming, fishing, herding, mining, craftwork

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 20%, heavy cavalry 14%, light infantry 27%, heavy infantry 23%, navy 8%, magical/other 8%

Arms/Symbol: A blood eagle displayed on silver

A large and powerful realm on the northeast side of the Sea of Mhorec, the Sirrenic Empire is the only true obstacle to Vashkhor's westward ambitions... though it has its own plans to expand eastward.

HISTORY

As described in Chapter One, the early history of what would become the Sirrenic Empire is a long and bloody tale of many small kingdoms and city-states. Realms such as Bretha, Berruna, Talorné, Nathair, Brindazia, Nishera, Monselica, and Kaylind fought, competed for trade routes and resources, and occasionally allied to fight some common foe (such as the Drakine, whom they defeated at the Battle of Two Rivers, and whose Mhorecian realms they destroyed at the end of the Drakine Wars).

The Empire itself arose in 2465 FE, when King Alachar of Monselica conquered Brindazia at the Battle of the Mistwoods and declared himself an emperor. He and his heirs conquered several other kingdoms in the area over the next six centuries, and many of those which remained free voluntarily joined the Empire in the 3100s to escape the threat of being conquered by Vashkhor. But with the Hargeshite Empire drawing so much of the Lapis Throne's attention, the western regions of the Empire were neglected. The Sirrenic influence there faded in 3154 SE when the mysterious warrior Vulthar Zond captured the lands where he founded the kingdom of Thalera-Saar. Less than 80 years later, in 3230 SE, Thalera-Saar conquered Talorné, defeating the Sirrenic legions with the help of strange magics. The Empire re-took Talorné in 3413 SE, and thereafter built several forts along the Evling River to stem the tide of Thaleran aggression.

The Vashkhoran Wars

For most of the past thousand years, the history of the Sirrenic Empire has been a mix of conflicts with Vashkhor and internal quarrels among powerful nobles. Whenever the latter became too much of a threat to the emperor — such as the Berrunan Revolt of 4225 SE, the Priests' War of 4389 SE (when followers of the Hargeshite faith attempted to convert the rest of the Empire by the sword), an interregnum in which Duke Basantian of Khelth held the Emperor Roghious a virtual prisoner in the imperial palace for nearly ten years, or

Prince Marekon's 4578 SE conspiracy to help the Gorthunda overrun the Empire so he could seize the throne — he has usually unified the nobles and the people behind him by (justifiably) emphasizing the Vashkhoran threat, and how the hierakte will take advantage of any weakness (real or perceived) on the Empire's part.

The Sirrenic and Hargeshite empires fought two major wars during this time. The First Vashkhoran War of 4456-4462 SE occurred after Vashkhoran people came west of the Great Pass and founded the city of Axairion in 4404 SE — an obvious attempt by Marasa to gain a foothold in the Mhorecian lands. During the war the Sirrenic forces sacked and razed Axairion and entered Vashkhor itself to besiege Sarta and Cahsu Malesh. Eventually Vashkhoran forces pushed the Sirrenic Legions back through the Great Pass.

The situation reversed itself during the Second Vashkhoran War of 4781-4783 SE, when the aggressive Hierakte Bakuris VII saw the old and sickly Emperor Somannus as weak and his nobles as divided and fractious. The Vashkhoran army struck by surprise, getting as far as Parvan and the Attarakht Falls before the Sirrenic forces rallied to stop them. A series of poor strategic decisions by the Vashkhorans led to several Sirrenic victories and the loss of captured territory, but at the Battle of Bretha Plain the numerically superior Vashkhoran forces held fast. The two empires declared a truce, with the battlefield marking the new border between them. The Sirrenic emperors still feel the sting of this defeat, and would dearly love to recapture the lands they lost along the southern Skyclaws.

THE SIRRENIC EMPIRE IN 5000 SE

With all of northwestern Mhorecia firmly under its control, the Sirrenic Empire is one of the largest and most powerful realms of Arduana. While many of the Sirrenic emperors have wanted to expand their borders even further, Vashkhor presents too great an obstacle to that ambition in the south, and the Gorthunda are too tough a nut to crack in the west (particularly with the looming threat of Turakia not much further north). Thalera-Saar might make a tempting target in the right circumstances. Dravin XI is not as aggressive as many of his forebears — Kal-Turak's shadow weighs heavily on his mind — but wouldn't hesitate to seize an opportunity for conquest should one come his way. He'd particularly like to strike at Vashkhor in some way, if he could do so without much risk (or secretly, without provoking a war).

In the northern regions of the Empire, the threat posed by Kal-Turak and his allies has become the chief concern. Raids by the Ulghroi, and the Gorthunda as well, have increased significantly in recent decades thanks to the Ravager's influence, leaving the Sirrenic soldiers hard-pressed to protect all the villages and towns along the Evling. Of equal concern is the dragon Skarm, whom Kal-Turak might find a way to use as a weapon against the Lapis Throne.

VALAGARN'S WATCH

On top of the northernmost peak of the Sirrenic Mountains stands a tall and lonely tower. Over a thousand years ago, in 3874 SE, the Emperor Valagarn built it, then abdicated the throne in favor of his eldest son and went to live there with only a few servants to see to his needs. He spent his days gazing northward from the tower's highest window, and died but a few years later.

For what did Valagarn watch? Some legends say he built the tower to guard the Empire against the Gorthunda, knowing that if he could see the hordes coming as soon as possible, he could rouse the Sirrenic Legions to fight and destroy them. But others claim he watched only for the Empress Kirastine, a paladin who led a force of Sirrenic troops north to fight the horse-nomads west of the Evling but never returned.

Whatever the truth of the tower, both legends agree: if one who is in great and grave need ascends to the top of Valagarn's Tower (daring, in the process, to pass the ghost of Valagarn himself, and perhaps Kirastine's as well) and looks from the parapet, he shall see what he needs to see, if it be anywhere in the Empire or nearby lands.

THE LAND

Although the Sirrenic Empire has some hilly and mountainous regions as it approaches the Sky-claws, most of it is a gentle plain sloping down to the shores of the Sea of Mhorec. It's a fertile land, full of farms and ranches ranging from small ones worked by their owners to the vast holdings of the nobility (who have indentured servants and slaves to keep things running). The weather, pleasantly warm in the spring and summer, quickly turns cold in the fall; winters tend to be bitter and snowy, especially north of Anlar Tel.

Tor Vilos

The capital of the Sirrenic Empire is glittering Tor Vilos, a city where, according to the Tyrandine poet Kenric, "the bricks of even the meanest buildings are formed of marble." The Sirrenic emperors have spared no expense to make their city a wonder of the world. Statues, murals, mosaics, and fountains seem to be everywhere, and an elaborate sewer system plus a special corps of imperial slaves keep the streets clean.

Towering over all other buildings in the city, both in terms of height and size, is Zaruldinah, the imperial palace. A visitor allowed onto the imperial grounds by the Eagle Guard passes through luxuriant gardens and beautiful guest quarters before reaching the palace itself, with its facade of carved stone. Inside the palace he finds such wonders as the Lapis Throne, seat of the Sirrenic emperors; the Tapestries of Firenos, from which the figures can come alive and act out illusionary dramas for the viewers' pleasure; and the Hall of Emperors, where each and every ruler of the Empire has a statue.

Anlar Tel

The first capital of the Sirrenic Empire is a large, rambling city at the junction of the Phayros and Dessira rivers. It bridges the Dessira in three places and the Phayros in one, but just as many people cross by ferry or rowboat.

Since the Emperor moved the capital to Tor Vilos in the 3100s, Anlar Tel has been ruled by the Grand Dukes of House Sorrab, sometimes known as the Fox Dukes for their cleverness and wit. Duke Varshand, a handsome and popular noble, is a staunch supporter and close friend of Emperor Dravin. He favors an aggressive stance toward Vashkhor, and stands ever-ready to lend the aid of his famed magical sword Kriztovar to any campaign against the Hargeshite Empire.

Berruna And Talorné

These two cities, named for the kingdoms which once ruled the regions they dominate, are the source of some discontent. While both lands have belonged to the Empire for centuries, neither has accepted imperial rule peacefully. Berruna actually revolted in 4225 SE under the leadership of a charismatic lesser noble named Mahrdad, but its proximity to Tor Vilos meant the Empire could quickly mobilize forces to bring the rebels to heel. Talorné lies further from the centers of power, but must also cope with the threat of Thaleran-Saar... and few Talornans would rather be Thaleran subjects than Sirrenic.

Othrek

Othrek is the largest of the Mountain Cities of the Empire, which include Tandervost, Rhelsha, and Tor Athtar. Unlike many Sirrenic cities, it has an extensive trade with Vashkhor — mainly the city of Ymralli on the other side of the Nathair Pass. This commerce has greatly enriched Duke Antreg, who argues long and loud at court that the Lapis Throne would do better to trade peacefully with the Vashkhorans instead of fight them.

The Desolation Of Skarm

Nearly four hundred years ago, the dragon Skarm, his green and golden scales glittering in the torchlight, descended on the city of Eliakar, destroying it utterly with flame and talon. Neither the spears nor spells of the defenders availed them, and in the end those who did not flee for their lives died, their bodies lying broken and battered on the flagstones. When he was done with the city, Skarm turned his attention to the towns and villages nearby, putting them to the dragon's-fire as well. Then he gathered up all their treasures and made his lair in a group of vast caverns at the northern tip of the Skyclaw Mountains. There he remains to this day, and few dare to even enter the Desolation of Skarm, much less approach his lair. Several bands of adventurers, some of them quite powerful, have quested to slay him, but few have even returned to tell the tale of their defeat. The Empire has a standing offer of ten thousand cathbai as a reward for whoever brings the Emperor the head of Skarm.

SOCIETY

Dravin XI of House Jenredal sits on the Lapis Throne as of 5000 SE, and most would consider him a wise and benevolent ruler — though not one to brook even the slightest disrespect. He asks much of those who serve him, be they nobles, soldiers, or slaves, but he generously rewards those who serve him well. His lavish feasts in honor of his commanders, and the expensive gifts he bestows (often on a whim), are the stuff of legend.

Dravin and his empress, Elanira, have six children: Alvar, the eldest son and heir to the throne; three younger sons; and two daughters, one of whom, Valona, is of marriagable age (several suitors have asked for her hand already). A special deputation of soldiers from the incorruptible Eagle Guard watches over the imperial family at all times to protect it from any threat.

As Emperor, Dravin XI commands the Sirrenic Legions, the empire's large, well-trained army. Each Legion has two thousand soldiers commanded by a general, further subdivided into units of 200 and 20 soldiers. A Grand General commands the entire army in the Emperor's name. Each Legion has a distinctive nickname in addition to its formal designation; most observers agree that the Twelfth Legion, the Baneriders, is the best in the army.

But the Empire's strength does not depend just on fighting prowess. A large group of spies and informers, both within and without the Empire, report to Dravin through several spymasters. In addition to gathering information, Sirrenic spies work to uncover spies from other lands (particularly Vashkhor) and make whatever use of them they can.

Tavrosel

Government: Free city governed by a triumvirate (see text)

Ruler: The Triumvirate (see text)

Capital: N/A

Population: Men (78%), Gnomes (7%), Dwarves (5%), Elves (4%), Drakine (2%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Sirrenic

Coinage: Piece; Piece; Piece

Resources: Fishing, craftwork

Religion: Various

Military: Light cavalry 14%, heavy cavalry 10%, light infantry 32%, heavy infantry 22%, navy 14%, magical/other 8%

Arms/Symbol: A *lyoth*-twined tower

The largest city on the Sea of Mhorec, Tavrosel is a major trading power as well as a place where the cultures of West and East mingle more freely than anywhere else.

HISTORY

Early in the First Epoch, Tavrosel was a small kingdom on the shores of Mhorec. Concerned with trade more than conquest, it had only a small army, and in 784 FE fell to the more aggressive kingdom of Nishera. The Nisherans treated the Tavroselans cruelly, often enslaving them (and harshly taxing those who were not slaves).

In 2346 FE, the Tavroselans revolted, slaughtering or casting out their Nisheran oppressors and declaring Tavrosel a free city. Several decades of intermittent warfare followed, but the Tavroselans used every copper piece they had to hire mercenaries to fight off the Nisheran army until the king sued for peace and recognized Tavrosel's freedom. Ever since then, fighting men have held a place of honor in the city, and many mercenary and adventuring companies come to Tavrosel to look for work in the Mercenaries' Market.

Despite being near many large, sometimes acquisitive realms, Tavrosel has maintained its status as a free city for several reasons. First, it has a large, well-equipped City Guard trained to repel sieges as well as keep the peace. Second, the city also hires many spellcasters and other powerful individuals to bolster the strength of its forces. Third, the city's canny diplomats spend long hours convincing potential aggressors that (a) Tavrosel's value as a free port outweighs its potential value as a controlled territory, and (b) that the other realms in the region would react unfavorably to any effort to conquer the city (which is likely true).

TAVROSEL IN 5000 SE

For the most part, it's business as usual in Tavrosel in 5000 SE. The Lords', Guildsmen's, and Townsfolk's factions bicker, quarrel, and scheme as much as ever, but Tavroselans expect that; prolonged cooperation between any two factions would elicit suspicion. The topics most on the minds and tongues of Tavroselans these days tend to be: which of her many suitors will the eminently desirable Lady Talayne choose (and when); and, why has the Mel-

gorian Circle (a group of powerful mages) been so mysteriously quiet and secretive in recent years?

THE LAND

Located at the mouth of the Delfarayn River, Tavrosel is an enormous city, second in size only to Aarn. It long ago outgrew its walls; today, locations "inside the wall" are considered more expensive, higher-class, and secure, while "outside the wall" connotes cheapness, squalor, and danger (though many buildings and neighborhoods outside the wall don't fit that description at all).

During most of its early history, Tavrosel was, like many other cities of Ambrethel, divided into "districts" or "quarters" — Merchant's Quarter, Sea Quarter, and so on. Over the last 1,500 years those distinctions and delineations have blurred to the point of meaninglessness. Some people still refer to places like the Golden Way (the nobles' quarter) or South Wharftown (the "thieves' quarter"), but most just use street names or north-south-east-west directions. Due to the confusing layout of the city's streets, most visitors hire a guide to help them; most guides charge just a few copper coins, but possibly more for a trek all the way across the city or the like.

SOCIETY

Over the centuries the people of Tavrosel have experimented with many forms of government, ranging from hereditary monarchy to mob rule. At present, a group of three people, known simply as the Triumvirate, rules Tavrosel. Every five years the city holds an election to choose the three triumvirs: the Lords' Man; the Guildsmen's Man; and the Townsfolk's Man (though woman can serve as well). Only nobles may vote for the Lords' Man, and only guildsmen, merchants, shopkeepers, and traders for the Guildsmen's Man; everyone else votes for the Townsfolk's Man. The triumvirs are supposed to work together to govern the city, dividing the responsibilities of rulership among themselves. Naturally, it works more efficiently on paper than in practice; the three triumvirs often don't get along well and do a poor job of cooperating. But somehow the system and the city keep going, mostly because of the large bureaucracy (led by the Heralds, who judge eligibility to vote for the Lords' and Guildsmen's Men).

Tavrosel is a melange of cultures and religions, with people from all over Ambrethel mingling to conduct trade or take care of other business. The High Church has the most adherents, followed closely by the Hargeshite faith; the rest are a mish-mash of gods of all shapes, sizes, and varieties. The trade-goods available, media of exchange used, food eaten, languages spoken, and spells cast all reflect a similar diversity.

The symbol of Tavrosel is a tower twined with a vine of *lyotha*, a beautiful flower that grows only in and around the city. The *lyoth* comes in many varieties and colors, the most popular being a bluish-purple and a sort of peach shade; a *lyoth*-grower who breeds a new and exciting color may become fabulously wealthy overnight as noble and commoner alike flock to buy his blooms.

Thalera-Saar

Government: Hereditary monarchy
Ruler: Ulyu Thaar, the Palehanded King
Capital: Malrevor
Population: Men (93%), Dwarves (3%), Other (4%)
Language(s): Thaleran
Coinage: Piece; Piece; Piece
Resources: Herding, farming, mining, fishing
Religion: High Church
Military: Light cavalry 19%, heavy cavalry 12%, light infantry 35%, heavy infantry 23%, navy 0%, magical/other 11%
Arms/Symbol: A Valician hill-wolf

Perched in the northwestern corner of Mhorecia like some grim and mysterious bird of prey, the realm of Thalera-Saar may pose a terrible threat to the peace of the region... or may be a powerful weapon the peoples of Arduna can wield against the Ravager, when the time comes.

HISTORY

Compared to many other Mhorecian kingdoms, Thalera-Saar is a young realm. During the First Epoch, it was a wild land, ruled by barbaric tribes or men from the Valician Hills, and often overrun by the Gorthunda. In the early 2700s, the Sirrenic Empire expanded westward, sweeping into the region and defeating the tribesmen and Tyrandine nobles who ruled there.

But Sirrenic rule was not to last long. In 3154 SE, a dark-browed wizard named Vulthar Zond, thought by many to be a renegade Ulronai, used his spells and enchanted weapons to rally the conquered tribes and lead them in battle against the Sirrenic Legions. With fire and iron he drove the conquerors out, then made himself the unquestioned ruler of the land. As if to prove his strength, in 3230 SE he led his armies into Talorné, using strange magics to thwart and defeat the forces of the Empire.

Vulthar Zond ruled Thalera-Saar for nearly 200 more years, his life extended through magic, but fell in battle against the Sirrenic Legions when the Lapis Throne took back Talorné in 3413. But the Sirrenic army could not cross the Evling River and harry the heart of its enemy's land. Vulthar Zond's son inherited his throne, establishing a dynasty that's lasted until the present day.

The kings of Thalera-Saar have made several other attempts to expand their realm, but never with much success. From 3763 SE to 3775 SE, King Utraic V'aareb conquered and ruled northern Tyrandium and the Drachenloch Hills, but discontent among his nobles at home, coupled with the increasing strength of the Tyrandine army, eventually caused him to withdraw. Efforts in 4457 SE and 4888 SE to re-conquer Talorné both failed. What plans of conquest King Ulyu Thaar may have remain to be seen.

4225 SE: The Thaleran Wall

Throughout its existence, Thalera-Saar has suffered from raids by the Gorthunda and Ulg-hroi. All

efforts to stop the invaders with military force failed in the face of their greater mobility and numbers. In 4225 SE, King Murgeth Jhenar, tired of losing men, subjects, and gold to the "sallow-skinned barbarians," conceived of a great wall to block their path. With the help of conjured demons and earth elementals, Murgeth's people built the Thaleran Wall, a vast bulwark stretching across the entire northern frontier of the realm. With two great forts, Tirevoth and Tirevarim, at either end, and many smaller forts and towers along its length, the Thaleran Wall has kept Thalera-Saar safe from nomadic raids ever since. The ghosts of all the men who died building it haunt its length, making parts of it no safer for Thalerans than Gorthunda.

4717 SE: Korrm, The Sword Of Fangs

One of the reasons Vulthar Zond could conquer Thalera-Saar, and that his descendants could hold it, was the enchanted weapons, armor, and other items he created. Armed with such potent objects, the Thaleran kings have led their comparatively small army to unexpected victories, and found ways to wrest minor triumphs from greater defeats.

But even this power was not enough for King Vhorlac Thaar, known as "the Artificer" for his skill at crafting enchanted items. Determined to make a blade so powerful no one could stand against it in battle, in 4717 SE he melted down the trove of Vulthar Zond and commenced a great work. For three months, working only at night with the help of elemental demons and things still more foul, he labored to forge the magical blade he could see in his mind's eye. When he emerged from his forging-place deep beneath the royal palace of Ylvarec with Korrm, the Sword of Fangs, in his hand, the people shrank from the dark magic they sensed in the blade. While Vhorlac Thaar never had the chance to wield the blade in battle, having exhausted himself nigh unto death in the crafting of the thing, his sons and grandsons have found it to be as powerful and irresistible as he wanted it to be.

THALERA-SAAR IN 5000 SE

The current king of Thalera-Saar, Ulyu Thaar, has worn the crown only for the past half-dozen years since the death of his father. As yet he has proceeded cautiously, taking no bold steps and issuing no new laws of import, but his courtiers can see in his eyes the fires of ambition. It's said he spends long hours at night in his rooms in the tallest tower of Ylvarec, poring over maps of Tyrandium, the Sirrenic Empire, and Valicia, pondering where and when best to strike. Some claim he also consorts there with demons, or that he communes secretly with Kal-Turak, offering Thaleran aid for the Ravager's plans in exchange for greater power after Kal-Turak triumphs.

Unlike most Thaleran kings, Ulyu Thaar put few of his half-brothers to death after ascending to the throne. He slew a few, and made some enter the Tattooed Legion, but the rest he let be for some reason... despite tradition and his courtiers' advice. What, if anything, he intends to do with them remains unknown, but while they live they represent potential challengers for his throne.

THE LAND

Save where it touches the Valician Hills, Thaler-Saar is a northern plain, green and warm in the summertime, but windswept and frigid in winter. Pine forests such as the Valthos dot the land, providing good hunting for Thaleran peasants, and fish fill its many small lakes and streams.

Malrevor

Malrevor, the Dark-Arched City, is the capital of the Thaleran kings. Much of it was built long ago with dark grey granite quarried from the Valician Hills, giving the city the dim coloration that earned it its nickname. In the center of the city stands Ylvarec, the royal palace, which at times seems to shine almost like a beacon due to the light-hued stone used to construct it (stone provided, some say, by demons). A strange-looking structure of slender towers connected by sky-bridges, decorative archways, and coppery-green roofs, it seems to offer little in the way of defense in the event of an attack.

Vhoreng

Located at the confluence of the Evling and Esharna Rivers, Vhoreng is Thaler-Saar's main trading city, since it's closer to the Sea of Mhorec than any other. Although it's not as good as a coastal city, from Mhorec it's but a short journey by ship up the Evling. Many merchants dislike to visit Vhoreng, finding it a cold and oppressive place with little welcome for strangers. Were it not for their desire to trade for the rich pelts and other goods Thaleran shopkeepers have to offer, many would avoid Vhoreng altogether.

SOCIETY

Ulyu Thaar, known throughout Arduna as "the Palehanded King" for his unusually-pale sword-hand, rules Thaler-Saar in 5000 SE. An adventurer in his youth, King Ulyu supposedly owns several enchanted items in addition to Korrm. For some reason, he carries and uses Korrm far more than any of his ancestors did, as if it were some sort of talisman or good luck charm. (For more about Ulyu Thaar, see page 300.)

The Thaleran king never takes a wife. Instead, in the Women's Hall of Ylvarec, he keeps a harem of Thaleran women who catch his fancy, and sometimes ladies from other lands as well. When the time comes to determine who shall succeed to the throne, all of his male children of suitable age compete with one another to earn their father's attention and approval. Often these competitions

THE TATTOOED
LEGION OF VORASQ

To create a member of the Tattooed Legion, use the Heavy Warrior Package Deal from pages 64-65 of *Fantasy Hero*, then add to it the following:

Mystic Tattoos: Aid STR and CON 3d6, any two Characteristic simultaneously (+½); Incantations (must speak arcane word to activate tattoos; -¼), Costs Endurance (-½), 1 Charge (-2) (+12 points)

+1 with HTH Combat (+5 points)

Tactics (INT Roll; +3 points)

Distinctive Features: strange full-body tattoos (Noticed And Recognizable, Concealable With Effort; -10 points)

Psychological Limitation: Utterly Loyal To The Thaleran King (Common, Total; -20 points)

Some warriors — those who prove themselves capable and smart, or who perform great services for the throne — have additional tattoo powers (Aid DEX and Enhanced Senses being the most common).

turn bloody from duels and assassinations — and in any event, once a newly-crowned king takes the throne, he usually has all of his half-brothers (and their children) killed to remove any challengers. As mentioned above, Ulyu Thaar has not done this for some reason.

Thaler-Saar lacks a true noble class such as most other realms have. It has men and women who hold noble titles and lands, but the king is the unquestioned ruler of all the land and commander of the army, and they hold their lands at his sufferance. Periodically the nobles have attempted to shift the balance of power in the kingdom, but the only result has been a large group of headless noble bodies in the courtyard of Ylvarec.

One of the sources of the king's power is his army, which he commands directly; all officers, and many lesser soldiers as well, must swear magically-binding oaths of loyalty to him. Greatest among the Thaleran soldiers are the members of the Tattooed Legion of Vorasq, who cover their bodies with strange-looking tattoos.

The Thaleran kings rule their realm with an iron fist, using the army to ensure that the people remain peaceful. They tolerate the High Church, though they restrict the number of temples the priests can build and their activities within the realm.

COMRAN

10	STR	20	DEX
15	CON	10	BODY
16	INT	11	EGO
15	PRE	10	COM
5	PD	5	ED
4	SPD	6	REC
30	END	25	STUN

Abilities: Acrobatics 13-, Breakfall 13-, Bribery 12-, Climbing 13-, Concealment 12-, Fast Draw (Common Melee Weapons) 13-, Forgery (Money) 8-, CK: Malrevor 11-, Lock-picking 13-, Security Systems 12-, Sleight Of Hand 13-, Stealth 13-, Streetwise 14-, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

Enchanted Items:

Enchanted leather armor (has no more weight, and makes no more noise, than cloth), Wizard's Bag

Disadvantages: Hunted (city guard), Hunted (thieves' guild), Psychological Limitation: Greedy, Social Limitation: Outlaw

Notes: Comran is a thief who lives in the city of Malrevor. He's steadfastly refused to join the city's thieves' guild, which means he has to watch out not only for the city guard, but for rival thieves who want to kill him for "invading" their "territory." Fortunately, he's skilled and smart enough to stay ahead of all of his enemies... for now.

DELANA

20	STR	20	DEX
18	CON	14	BODY
14	INT	14	EGO
20	PRE	16	COM
7	PD	5	ED
4	SPD	8	REC
36	END	40	STUN

Abilities: +4 HTH, Climbing 13-, High Society 13-, Martial Arts (15 points' worth of Swordfighting maneuvers), Persuasion 13-, Riding 13-, Stealth 13-, Tracking 8-, Trading 8-, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Fringe Benefit: Lordship: Princess Of Tyrandium, Money (Wealthy)

Enchanted Items: Enchanted longsword (HKA 2d6+1, +3 OCV), Armor of the Lion's Strength, enchanted shield (provides +4 DCV)

Disadvantages: Hunted (Watched by various Tyrandine nobles), Hunted (Druathek the Maleficent), Psychological Limitation: Heroic And Kind

Notes: The younger sister of Queen Destasia of Tyrandium, Delana never cared much for protocol or propriety. Blades, horses, and adventure interested her more. Scorning the arranged marriage her parents prepared for her, she ran away from home and became an adventurer. She's since earned a reputation as a brave, noble-hearted, and skilled warrior. Her relationship with her royal sister remains touchy, but Destasia's children love her dearly and eagerly look forward to her visits.

Tyrandium

Government: Matriarchal hereditary monarchy
Ruler: Queen Destasia IV
Capital: Skiros
Population: Men (83%), Gnomes (7%), Halflings (3%), Elves (2%), Other (5%)
Language(s): Valician
Coinage: Piece; Piece; Piece
Resources: Fishing, farming, herding
Religion: High Church (see text)
Military: Light cavalry 18%, heavy cavalry 14%, light infantry 29%, heavy infantry 23%, navy 10%, magical/other 6%
Arms/Symbol: A redbird inside a red orle, all on dusky gold

Between the Shaanda and Esharna Rivers lies the kingdom of Tyrandium, domain of the Kesani queens, an ancient land of golden splendor. Trapped between two ambitious neighbors, Tyrandium must tread carefully if it's to thwart potential enemies while keeping its own ambitions alive.

HISTORY

In the early First Epoch, the land of Tyrandium was known as Akandar. Although its people were mostly Men, Drakine ruled the land from their coastal city of Skiros, where the dragon Tharganel Zeth advised and aided them. During the Drakine Wars, a great hero arose among the people, a warrior-woman named Anarra Kesani. With the help of a flying-spell, she attacked Tharganel Zeth as he left his lair one day. She slew him, and as he crashed to the ground his enormous body crushed the hall where the Drakine rulers met in council. Throughout the land Men arose, slaughtering their Drakine rulers. Taking a local princeling as husband, Anarra declared herself queen of the new realm of Tyrandium, and built Dragonskull Palace on the very spot where Tharganel Zeth fell to earth.

The early centuries of Tyrandium's existence were not peaceful ones. Drakine from Seldrion to the south attacked frequently in an effort to conquer it or seize territory, and more than one lord scoffed at the idea of being ruled by a queen. But by the 1600s, the Kesani queens were firmly established in their rule, and had brought all recalcitrant lords to heel. Tyrandium was mostly at peace for the next thousand years, but in the mid-2000s it suffered when a weak-willed, sickly queen allowed too much power to pass into the hands of the nobles. Internal bickering and even civil war soon dominated Tyrandine politics, with each noble trying to seize whatever power he could for himself. By the time events reversed themselves and the monarchy was firmly in power once more, the land now called Thaleran-Saar had been snatched away by the Sirrenic Empire.

3763-3775 SE: The Thaleran War

Tyrandium lost more territory a thousand years later to King Utraic V'aareb of Thaleran-Saar. Eager for land and plunder, he invaded Tyrandium, coming within sight of the walls of Skiros

before the Tyrandine army stopped his advance. For almost a decade he held northern Tyrandium, cruelly exploiting the people there and enslaving many of the Gnomes of the Drachenloch Hills. But eventually Queen Basipha built up the strength of her army until she could force him out of her realm. Thereafter she built the city of Harkayis as a bulwark against further Thaleran aggression.

TYRANDIUM IN 5000 SE

Tyrandium's position on the northwest-ern coast of the Sea of Mhorec just north of the Shaanda River, coupled with deft governance by the queens of House Kesani, have made it a prosperous and contented realm. While the people can never entirely forget the potential threat posed by Thaleran-Saar and Besruhan, they have faith that the queen and her nobles can protect the realm from any attacker.

Tyrandium and Besruhan are currently involved in what some folk call a "war of spies." Both view Seldrion as ripe for conquest and a valuable prize, but neither wants the other to have it. So they maneuver and counter-maneuver, each attempting to trick the other into a disadvantageous move or trying to learn secrets it can exploit for strategic gain. But even assuming one can cripple the other enough for an invasion to succeed, they both wonder how the other Drakine Realms might respond....

THE LAND

Tyrandium is mostly low-lying coastal plain, though it becomes rougher and hillier nearer the Valician Hills. Small swamps, mixed deciduous and coniferous forests, and similar features crop up throughout the land, offering the people opportunities for hunting and fishing to supplement their diet of grains, vegetables, and herd animal meat.

Skiros

The capital of Tyrandium was once a Drakine city, and it shows here and there in the style of a building or an archway, but over the past several millennia Tyrandine art and architecture have replaced most traces of Drakine rule. Rectangular Drakine structures and meeting-places have given way to the more square-shaped arrangements favored by Men, and the streets have slowly but surely become narrower and darker.

Dragonskull Palace, the ancestral seat of the Kesani queens, overlooks the city from atop a flat-topped hill a little ways back from the waterfront. Visitors to the castle — including the common folk, who by law may bring their disputes in front of the queen herself every Fireday — must pass through the sturdy main gate that leads through the Zethorian Wall that surrounds it. Carvings and gargoyles in the shape of dragons adorn the wall, often as part of scenes depicting Queen Anarra defeating Tharganel Zeth. The Smaragdine Guard, resplendent in their surcoats of deep, rich green, stand watch on the walls and ensure that no one who enters the Palace can threaten the royal family.

The Drachenloch Hills

In northern Tyrandium there rises a cluster of forested hills known as the Drachenloch. For thousands of years they've been home to a large population of Gnomes who have sworn fealty and alliance with Tyrandium. The leader of the Gnomes holds the rank of Grand Duke in Tyrandine society, though for the most part the Gnomes keep to themselves. Many merchants have developed a thriving trade with the Gnomes, who dislike ships; the traders sail up to the Gnomes' wharves, where they exchange cloth, grain, and much else in exchange for the Gnomes' craftworks (including cleverly-carved wooden objects and furniture, jewelry, and leather goods) and finely-brewed liquor.

Dairanac

After Skiros, the largest Drakine city in Tyrandium during the First Epoch was Dairanac, located on the Mhorec coast about halfway between Skiros and the Shaanda River. During the uprising, Men besieged and sacked Dairanac, then put it to the torch. Today it's a ruin thousands of years old, its crumbling stone avenues and buildings haunted by Unburned, Drakine ghosts, and many other monsters. Experienced adventurers claim the place has been so picked over it's not worth exploring, yet groups of new adventurers sometimes come out of the city with rich treasures... and sometimes bearing the bodies of fallen comrades.

SOCIETY

House Kesani, of ancient and noble lineage, rules Tyrandium, but in an unusual way: the rule passes not to the eldest son, as in most realms, but to the eldest daughter. The queen has final authority, not her husband (who carries the title of Prince). The current queen, Destasia, is the fourth of that name; she's ruled for twelve years since the death of her mother, Sirra. She has four children (two daughters, two sons), and expects her oldest girl, Daimiania, to succeed her in time.

The Kesani queens have long been known as good mothers, and most have large families. As a result, the Tyrandine extended royal family is often enormous, with numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins in addition to the queen's immediate family. The queens make good use of this resource, putting Kesani relatives in important positions in the bureaucracy, the queen's own military forces, embassies abroad, and the like.

In the Tyrandine High Church, the queen is considered a spiritual leader and an important figure in her subjects' spiritual lives. Along with her family, she attends religious services in the Akan-drine Temple at least once a day. Although she's not a priestess, she participates in (or even leads) worship ceremonies on certain days of the year. The people take it as a sign of great misfortune when something prevents the queen from fulfilling her religious duties.

SOUTHERN MHORECIA

Arutha

Government: Oligarchic magocracy

Ruler: High Wizard Tamlonel

Capital: Trisadion, the "City of Sorcerers"

Population: Men (68%), Elves (14%), Dwarves (8%), Gnomes (4%), Other (6%)

Language(s): Velkaran, Sirrenic

Coinage: Sparrow; Hawk; Falcon

Resources: Herding, mining, wizardry, fishing

Religion: High Church (particularly Varidon)

Military: Light cavalry 19%, heavy cavalry 16%, light infantry 25%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 2%, magical/other 18%

Arms/Symbol: A cartouche of blue dragon's scales with a gold bordure, charged with a white ouroboros

A land ruled by mages, Arutha survives among the larger kingdoms surrounding it through mystic power, wit, and diplomatic guile.

HISTORY

Arutha is a fairly young realm, founded in 4382 SE by a group of wizards that included Ghemrunil of Besruhan (later called the Lawgiver) and Zalmorren the Falconer. Eager for power and wealth, and tired of following the dictates of kings and lords, they decided to claim a land for their own and rule it. They chose a region called Arutha near the Tabriz Mountains. Nominally beholden to Velkara, Arutha was also claimed by Hrastarin and greedily eyed by Vashkhor — all three realms wanted it for its rich iron mines.

Scorn and derision greeted the wizards' claim of lordship over Arutha. Velkara assembled an army and marched to reclaim its territory. After two initial clashes pitting their mystic powers and servants against Velkaran blades, the Aruthan wizards used clever diplomatic maneuvering to get Vashkhor to bring pressure to bear to force Velkara to leave the field (though not to acknowledge the legitimacy of the mages' claims). But the Aruthans' promised concessions and favors to Marasa never materialized. But revolt in the south and ongoing conflicts with the Sirrenic Empire prevented Vashkhor from pressing the matter... as the wizards had expected.

In the centuries since, Arutha has played a careful balancing game, pitting Velkara, the Sirrenic Empire, Vashkhor, and Hrastarin against one another to preserve its own independence. At one time or another it has allied with each of them, though never for long and rarely in any way that required significant sacrifice on its part. Its combination of diplomatic cleverness and mystic power seems able to ensure its continued existence for the foreseeable future.

ARUTHA IN 5000 SE

Arutha is a land at peace internally. The peoples ruled by the Masters' Council don't care who taxes them, as long as they're left alone as much as possible, and the wizards seem well-inclined to



spend most of their time pursuing interests other than governance. Only the occasional impromptu Duel Arcane, in full defiance of the law, tends to mar life in the Land of the Wizards.

Arutha's international position is somewhat more precarious. Thanks to its well-developed mines and other resources, not to mention its strategic position, many realms desire it. Velkara, the Sirrenic Empire, Vashkhor, and Hrastarin would all love to take possession of it, whether by conquest or means less violent. But the mages' clever diplomacy, combined with the power of themselves and their small army — nearly a fifth of which consists of spellcasters, mystic creatures and creations, and other arcane assets — has so far proven capable of keeping aggressors at bay.

THE LAND

Arutha is a hilly, rocky land, ill-suited to farming; most of the people herd goats and sheep, work the mines, or fish the Aramthys and Dorasus rivers. What wealth it has mostly comes from the mines, which contain rich deposits of several ores, particularly iron and copper.

Trisadion

Known as "the City of Sorcerers" for all the wizards who live there, and "the City of the Waterfall" because it's built next to (and amidst) the vast Tarlane Falls, Trisadion was built in the space of nine days with the help of demons and earth ele-

mentals summoned by the founding wizards. Most of the city occupies the west bank of the Aramthys River, but several buildings (including the towers of powerful wizards) occupy small, rocky islands in the river near the Falls, providing spectacular views for the residents. Flooding often occurs in years when heavy snows fall in the Tabriz Mountains, but the Masters' Council can usually abate them with the help of water elementals.

Akanthe's Mouth

One of the main sources of Arutha's power, and a reason the founding wizards chose this land to claim, is Akanthe's Mouth, a deep (perhaps bottomless), dark cleft in the hills that form the realm's northern border. From this cleft emerge mysterious, odd-smelling vapors known as the Breath of Meára. Most people who breathe them in feel nothing but faintness and nausea, but in a few women — priestesses who reside in a special temple there — the vapors often bring on prophetic trances. After inhaling the Breath, the priestesses respond to questions from supplicants, though their answers are often less clear than the questioner would like. The Aruthan wizards, skilled in Divination and augury, have had much greater success than most at discerning the true meaning of the prophetesses' words, and they use what they learn to guide their realm and ensure their own fortunes.

SOCIETY

Arutha is a magocracy — a society ruled by wizards. The most powerful and skilled wizards of the land come together to form the Masters' Council, which rules the realm with the help of a Board of Counsellors composed of other leading citizens chosen by popular vote. The Masters' Council has no set size; its members can choose to allow another wizard to join their number in recognition of his accomplishments and power. If they deny a wizard's request to join, the only recourse for the rejected mage is to fight his way onto the Council. If he can defeat an existing member in Duel Arcane, he wins that member's seat, since he's clearly proven himself that wizard's superior. As a result, longstanding rivals may fight one another repeatedly for the same position on the Council, trading places as the luck of battle and the waxing and waning of their spellcraft allow.

The leader of the Council, chosen by a vote of the members, holds the title of High Wizard; he's "first among equals" and the closest thing Arutha has to a king and commander. Tamlonel Bookshield, an elemental mage of great renown, is High Wizard in 5000 SE. Other prominent members include Mavril Elveneyes, the alchemist Tendero, Alagarn of the Emeralds, and the orcish mage Fhetheg.

The Aruthan wizards long ago realized that quarrels among themselves could only lead to disaster for the realm, so they took steps to stop disputes from endangering innocent folk. By Arutha's strictest law, mages who cannot settle their differences any way other than Duel Arcane may only conduct a Duel on specified days at the Arena Kolambexos in Trisadion. The Duelling mages must state the conditions of the Duel before fighting, that all who witness it may fairly judge the contest. Mages who Duel in violation of the law suffer harsh penalties, ranging from ruinous confiscations of gold and enchanted items to execution.

Although Arutha is known for its many wizards, most Aruthans are normal folk with no spellcasting talent. But it's not uncommon to find a merchant who knows a spell or two to keep his goods clean and attractive, or a fisherman who can call fish to his hook with a sing-song invocation.

Besruhan

Government: Hereditary oligarchy

Ruler: The Imperial Senate

Capital: Arvalis

Population: Men (82%), Drakine (5%), Elves (4%), Dwarves (3%), Gnomes (3%), Other (3%)

Language(s): Besruhani

Coinage: Denarius; Denarius; Denarius

Resources: Farming, fishing, herding

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 21%, heavy cavalry 15%, light infantry 30%, heavy infantry 17%, navy 11%, magical/other 6%

Arms/Symbol: Three silver flying fish on blue

Occupying the lands from the southwestern coast of the Sea of Mhorec to the Khelvorian Ocean, Besruhan is a large and powerful realm eager to expand but lacking any opportunity to do so easily. Whether it will choose peace and the status quo, or war and the chance for conquest, is a question its neighbors are eager to learn the answer to.

HISTORY

In the early First Epoch, several Drakine realms, such as Serthorin, Tascon, and Ilioth, occupied the lands now known as Besruhan. Their defeat by Men at the Battle of Two Rivers in 388 FE weakened them somewhat, and not even the increased trading ties that developed with the Sirrenic realms over the next half-millennium were enough to save them from the wrath and greed of Men when the Drakine Wars left them weaker still. Sirrenic armies ran amok throughout southern Mhorecia, slaughtering thousands of Drakine and carving out many new kingdoms. Periodic backlashes since then have reduced the Drakine population of Besruhan to a tiny fraction of what it once was.

But as yet Besruhan still did not exist. The Spearlord conquered Mhorecia and swept aside the Sirrenic realms in favor of his own rule. When he fell in defeat at the end of the First Epoch, the region plunged into chaos as nobles and warlords struggled among themselves for power. A patchwork of kingdoms arose from the wreckage; the one located between the Sea, the Kefal River, and the Drakine Mountains was called Besruhan after its rulers, the leaders of the Besru people.

The Empire Arises

Through trade, Besruhan filled its coffers and built a large army. Then it embarked on its first campaign of conquest, invading Rheshian in 3123-37 SE. The Besruhani king, who now controlled all the southwestern coast of the Sea of Mhorec, took the title Emperor. In the 3400s, his descendants took advantage of plague-wrought weakness among the kingdoms of the southern plains to conquer the lands around the cities now known as Evasli and Locaria, and to commence the building of a new city at Two Rivers.

It took the Besruhani emperors three centuries to consolidate their gains and prepare for their next war. Hoping to take control of all of the south-

ern coast of Mhorec, in 3642 SE they crossed the river and invaded Hrastarin. Two years of bloody fighting brought Besruhan victory — but Velkara, unwilling to allow its western neighbor to so greatly expand its lands and power, attacked. The weakened Besruhani army was no match for the fresh Velkaran forces, and in 3644 SE the Velkarans drove them back across the Larnaca River and claimed Hrastarin for Tor Pashtar.

The Conquests Of Cheldar And Neldacar

Besruhan licked its wounds and turned its attentions south instead of east. In 3812 SE its armies marched into the mountainous land of Cheldar. The Chelda, a stubborn, hard-bitten people, proved harder to conquer than their numbers and tribal culture suggested; it took nearly a decade before Empress Senra could declare victory and begin the building of the city of Barabadim.

For several centuries, the Besruhani emperors seemed content, but it was only a matter of time before one of them decided greater power and glory must be his. With Velkara standing proud and strong to the east, and Tyrandium opposing any effort to move northward, only the peninsular land of Neldacar to the south remained ripe for Emperor Tetharian to conquer. In 4295 SE, the armies of Besruhan moved south, captured and fortified Thiridon, and then began working their way south through Neldacar. The hilly terrain, not to mention fierce resistance from the Neldacaran army, slowed their progress. It took four years of unsteady progress before they reached Crymyth, and two more years to invest and conquer the Neldacaran capital. After Crymyth fell, Neldacaran resistance diminished, and Besruhan's forces took only another year to bring the rest of the peninsula under the empire's control.

4571 SE: The Senators' Revolt

Besruhan's imperial ambitions came to an end — or so it claims — in 4571 SE, when Emperor Trecothian, widely known as Trecothian the Mad for his odd behavior, declared his intention to conquer Besruhan's ancient rival, Velkara. His poorly-prepared army crossed the Lornaca and attacked Ardesen, only to find out itself badly outmatched. The numerically smaller but better-trained and -equipped Velkaran army withstood the assault, struck back, and smashed Besruhan's forces, which retreated back across the river. The Velkaran army followed, sacking Two Rivers and carrying off many of its treasures in recompense for Besruhan's foolhardy attack.

And that was the last straw for the Imperial Senate, which had long been little more than a group of advisors for the Besruhani emperors. Disgusted by Trecothian's freakish behavior and inept rule, they overthrew him. After parading him in chains through the streets to the Hall of Senators and beheading him on its steps, they declared that henceforth they, and not an emperor, would rule Besruhan. With the army weakened and in disarray, no one could effectively oppose them. Within just a few years the Senate's hold on power was complete, and it has retained power to this day.

BESRUHAN IN 5000 SE

Besruhan is large and prosperous in 5000 SE. Years of peace have filled its coffers and allowed it to make Arvalis, Locaria, and Two Rivers some of the most beautiful cities in Arduna. While its internal politics remain as byzantine and dangerous as ever, for the average Besruhani, life is good.

After over 400 years of peaceful co-existence with the other realms of Mhorecia, Besruhan may once again be casting glances beyond its own borders. In the Imperial Senate, a vocal faction favoring expansion and conquest, led by Senator Garetzon Jhegani, has arisen. It argues Besruhan should "fulfill its glorious destiny" by encompassing all of Mhorecia. As yet most Senators consider this nonsense, but the generals of the army (one of the few groups in Besruhan outside the Senate with significant political power) seem intrigued.

THE LAND

Besruhan is a land of plains, meadows, light forests, and rolling hills. It's well-suited for farming as well as fishing and herding, so its people usually eat well. The weather tends to be mild, especially in the north, though it becomes rainier and more humid as one approaches the Ulimar Jungle.

Arvalis

The ancient capital of Besruhan was once little more than a sleepy fishing village. It grew into a bustling trading city, and in time became the seat of a large empire. But few traces of the original city remain, since a terrible earthquake destroyed it in 3538 SE. The wizard Storggrim rebuilt it, inspired by a grand vision supposedly sent to him by the gods. It now has a tall and sturdy wall with four gates, one for each of the elements: the Water Gate facing the Sea; the Earth Gate facing south; the Air Gate facing west; and the Fire Gate facing the east.

Since the Senators' Revolt, in which a mob burned the Imperial Palace to the ground, the greatest buildings of Arvalis are the Hall of Senators on Imperial Square (where the Senate meets and bureaucrats keep the empire running) and Valissoran, one of the largest and grandest temples of the High Church. But many other majestic or beautiful buildings exist throughout the city, whose streets ring not just with the cries of tradesmen and merchants but the debates of scholars, priests, artists, and philosophers.

Cheldar

Although the kingdom of Cheldar long ago controlled the land as far east as the Amanos Rover, Cheldar proper is a high plateau encircled by the two arms of the Ironheart Mountains. Difficult to enter or travel through, it's the home of the Chelda, a people with duskier skin and narrower eyes than the Besruhani. Once members of a tribal people, many Chelda still prefer to live in small, isolated communities among the hills and mountains. But the Besruhani-built city of Barabadim settled and civilized much of the region. While many Chelda still long for freedom and strike back against the Besruhani whenever they feel they can get away with it, the actual chance they could start a successful revolt is slim.

Neldacar

But Neldacar is a different story. It has never rested easy under the yoke of Arvalis, and not a month goes by that some Besruhani merchant or soldier isn't found knifed or strangled to death with the word "freedom" written on him with his own blood in the strange Neldacarian script. The most ardent rebels live in the hills where Besruhani soldiers cannot easily find them. Cymryth also seethes with intrigue, but the large number of Besruhani soldiers there, ordered to ensure the peace so the city can fulfill its role as a trading post with access to the ocean, keeps things quiet... most of the time.

Rheshian

Rheshian, too, yearns for the chance to chart its own course. Although its people speak Besruhani (albeit with an odd accent), they do not consider themselves of that folk. Every child hears at his mother's knee tales of the glories of Rheshian, when Jhasyra was a proud, silver-domed capital and not a half-neglected, second-rate trading-city. Besruhan keeps the region quiet by giving its nobles lucrative trading concessions so they support the rule of Arvalis, but the people remain discontented.

High in the Rheshian Hills, overlooking from a distance the pass that leads through the Hills to the Larnaca River, stands a thousand year-old monastery. Built around a tall, distinctively-roofed tower, the Urdasa Monastery is one of the great centers of learning and piety in Mhorecia. Its monks, who support themselves through farming and herding sheep, must spend their lives memorizing every word of the *Benethar Sacur* and other holy texts. The monastery's library includes many priceless copies of these books and scrolls, some beautifully illuminated by the master artisans of history. The monks wear distinctive wool robes, and sometimes sell their fine woolen goods in the markets at Jhasyra and Two Rivers.

The Elrune Islands

Properly known as the Meshayna Elrunalishadespilai, the Elrune Islands (as Men call them) are home to a kingdom of Elves. Although their Elvenking has sworn oaths of fealty to the Imperial Senate, Besruhan allows the Elves to govern themselves if they provide an annual tribute to Arvalis.

The Elves of Elrune are a peaceful folk, mainly artists, hunters, and spellcasters. While not hostile to outsiders, they prefer not to have visitors. Rumors say they possess several powerful enchanted weapons with which to defend their home if necessary.

The Ulimar Jungle

The largest jungle in Arduna, and second only to the Kumasi in all of Ambrethel, the Ulimar is a

thickly-forested, rainy region where even few Elves care to dwell. Although some tribes of barbaric Drakine live within the Jungle's confines, for the most part the Ulimar is home only to wild creatures. Some of its best-known denizens include the Ulimar red-tufted monkey (a favorite pet in some parts of Tornathia and Mhorecia, famed for its cleverness and easy disposition), a large and ferocious species of tiger, and the talisman python, probably the largest non-monstrous serpent in Ambrethel (its name comes from the diamond-shaped patterns on its skin, which resemble the holy talismans carried by High Church priests).

SOCIETY

Once a true empire, Besruhan is now governed by an oligarchy — the Imperial Senate. Positions in the Senate are hereditary, passing from each Senator to his eldest son (or, if he has no son, his eldest daughter). However, a Senator can give away or sell his seat to someone, if he so chooses, and records exist of more than a few seats changing hands as the result of lost wagers. If a Senator has no heirs, on his death the rest of the Senators choose a noble from his homeland to ascend to the seat.

As with any large oligarchy, Besruhan is riven with factionalism, political dickering, and intrigue. Senators constantly attempt to build coalitions of their fellows to support laws and actions they desire, or try to disrupt the coalitions of their rivals. Occasionally assassination or other violent tactics become a part of the political process, and every Besruhani knows each Senator has a large corps of spies that provides him with vital information. As of 5000 SE, some of the most prominent Senatorial factions include: the Theocrats (who believe the Senate should share power with the High Church); the Imperialists (who wish to see Besruhan expand its lands through conquest); the Militarists (who want to provide more support and funding to the army, mainly to keep conquered territories like Neldacar in line); the Crymythans (who want to remove the army from Neldacar, and perhaps Cheldar as well); and the Populists (who believe the citizens should elect their Senators). But dozens of other factions, many focused on the more selfish goals of a few Senators working in concert, exist.

While the inhabitants of cities like Arvalis and Two Rivers tend to pay a lot of attention to the shifting of factions, outside the cities the average Besruhani cares little about such matters (unless, perhaps, he has a son in the army). He's more concerned with raising crops (or animals, or children, or all three), the weather, and possibly the activities of monsters or brigands in the vicinity than he is with who wields the most influence in the Senate.

THE SINGING
WARRIORS

Due to its sometimes-precarious position in the midst of aggressive neighbors, Hrastarin has a large, well-trained army for its size. Among its many skilled soldiers, the fighting men known as the Singing Warriors stand out. An order of elite fighters, something like the knights of the Westerlands without a code of chivalry, the Singing Warriors get their name from their practice of singing loud, eerily-pitched songs as they march into battle. More than one opposing army has broken and fled when confronted with the songs and blades of the Singing Warriors.

HRASTARININ
METALWORK

Hrastarin has developed a reputation for the skill of many of its craftsmen, but smiths and metalworkers in particular. Hrastarinin blades and armor, usually made of iron obtained from Arutha, are known as sturdy, sharp, and able to hold an edge for a long time. Many warriors prefer them because, while they're not as good as Cacimarian weapons, they don't cost nearly as much, either.

Hrastarin

Government: Hereditary monarchy
Ruler: King Selgan
Capital: Lagdon
Population: Men (87%), Elves (4%), Halflings (3%), Drakine (2%), Other (4%)
Language(s): Velkaran
Coinage: Nomisma; Nomisma; Nomisma
Resources: Fishing, farming, craftwork
Religion: Hargeshite
Military: Light cavalry 20%, heavy cavalry 13%, light infantry 25%, heavy infantry 21%, navy 14%, magical/other 7%
Arms/Symbol: Two red lions combatant on green

A small kingdom on the southeastern shore of the Sea of Mhorec, Hrastarin struggles to maintain its freedom in the midst of powerful, acquisitive neighbors like Velkara, the Sirrenic Empire, and Vashkhor.

HISTORY

Once part of the Drakine kingdom of Denova, Hrastarin became a free kingdom under the Mahengrin kings in the aftermath of the Drakine Wars. Throughout the First Epoch, it was a small, sleepy realm, devoted mostly to trade, but during the Second Epoch it has spent much of its history conquered by or fighting off various invaders. In 2960 SE Bretha conquered it, but the king escaped the invading armies and engineered a return to power and defeat of the enemy a little over two decades later.

In 3642-3644 SE, Besruhan invaded and conquered Hrastarin... but then Velkara drove the Besruhani army out and took Hrastarin for itself, killing the last of the Mahengrin kings. Hrastarin remained a territory of Velkara until 3819 SE, when Imbroce — a Hrastarinin conscript who'd ascended the ranks of the Velkaran army — led a revolt that drove the Velkarans out. The Hrastarinin made him their new king, the first of the Imbrocin dynasty.

Perhaps the worst threat in Hrastarin's history came in 4407 SE, shortly after Vashkhor built Axairion as part of its expansion west of the Tabriz Mountains. The Hargeshite Empire crossed the Aramthys River, sacked the city of Borosh, and marched west, overwhelming the smaller Hrastarinin army by sheer force of numbers. Unwilling to lose his realm, King Shonur devised a clever stratagem: he converted to the Hargeshite faith, and had his people do so as well. Unwilling to wage war against a fellow believer, the Hierakte ended the invasion... though more than one hierakte since has questioned the sincerity of the conversion, and thus the validity of the decision to leave Hrastarin its freedom. For that matter, many of the Hrastarinin did not accept the change either, and to this day follow the tenets of the High Church in secret.

HRASTARIN IN 5000 SE

Hrastarin is at peace as of 5000 SE. Its position on the Sea of Mhorec has made it rich through trade, but its location amid several larger realms, all potentially hungry for land and wealth, gives King Selgan some cause for concern. Like several of his recent predecessors, he's spent much gold to augment the ranks of his army and improve his soldiers' training, but even that may not be enough in the face of the forces of Vashkhor or the Sirrenic Empire.

THE LAND

Hrastarin is a flat realm of broad grasslands and fields, rising to become truly hilly only along its southeastern border. It's good land for farming and raising horses, sheep, and goats; the folk who live there are sturdy and kind, with few needs and a simple approach to life.

Lagdon

The capital city, located on Mhorec's shores, is Lagdon, known simply as "lake town" in the far-off days when it was just a fishing village. Today it's a busy trading port, though eclipsed somewhat by Tavrosel to the north. The merchants and traders of Lagdon scheme constantly to find ways to outdo their Tavroselan competitors; a few have such an abiding hatred for the free city that they'd take any opportunity to weaken or harm it.

Castle Vazander

Located on a high bluff overlooking the Dorasus River, Castle Vazander is home to the powerful wizard of the same name. He moved to Hrastarin nearly two centuries ago after the king's youngest son, an adventurer, saved his life. He regards himself as in debt to House Imbrocin, and until such time as he can save the realm from disaster as the prince once saved his life, he will remain here. Those who would approach his castle unbidden had best beware, for phantoms created both by Necromancy and Sorcery protect Vazander from harm.

SOCIETY

Selgan Imbrocin, known as "the Pious" for his religious devotion, rules Hrastarin. He and his wife, Queen Dalara, have two children: the Crown Prince Vardelsun; and the young princess, Sharla. The king and queen seem unlikely to have any more children, and to King Selgan's consternation, his son seems to have a vocation for the priesthood instead of kingship. On the one hand, this pleases the pious king immensely — but on the other hand, he realizes it would mean the end of House Imbrocin. If no Imbrocin heir exists (or is willing to take the throne), the head of the noble House Anghard takes the throne... and the Anghard dukes have been a thorn in Imbrocin's side for many, many years.

Nurenthia

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: Queen Hasintha

Capital: Castle Torvarast

Population: Men (85%), Drakine (4%), Dwarves (4%), Seshurma (3%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Nurenthian

Coinage: Obol; Obol; Obol

Resources: Fishing, mining, herding

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 19%, heavy cavalry 13%, light infantry 38%, heavy infantry 27%, navy 0%, magical/other 3%

Arms/Symbol: The *jiruma*-flower

Considered an independent realm by its people, and a province of Velkara by the Velkarans, Nurthenia finds itself in the uncomfortable position of having to fight a much larger realm intent on possessing it.

HISTORY

Nurenthia is a quiet mountain kingdom that in the early First Epoch was a Drakine land. After the Drakine Wars, Men came in from the north and displaced most of the remaining Drakine. For nearly two millennia, the land was left in peace, since it was so far from the Sea of Mhorec and had so little of value that no one desired it.

That changed in the late 3600s, when Velkaran nobles began looking greedily at the lands to the south of their realm. In 3711 SE, Velkara invaded Nurenthia, then attempted to legitimize its claim by forcing the princess of Nurenthia to marry the Velkaran crown prince. But the stubborn Nurenthians never truly acknowledged the overlordship of Tor Pashtar. Over the past 1,300 years, Nurenthia has thrown off Velkara's rule several times, only to eventually fall back beneath the yoke when a more aggressive king came to the Velkaran throne.

NURENTHIA IN 5000 SE

As of 5000 SE, Nurenthia is once again a free land, ruled by a queen of its long-suffering House Dal-Sharran. But that may not last for long. Velkara continues to press its claims to the land, and the possibility of another invasion is a very real one. Queen Hasintha desperately seeks some sort of weapon or aid with which to fend off the Velkaran legions, but as yet has found nothing.

THE LAND

As kingdoms go, there's not much to recommend Nurenthia. Wedged in between the Tabriz Mountains to the east, and the Akrissa Swamps to the west, it's a land where most people support themselves through fishing in the rivers and streams, herding some goats or sheep, or perhaps a little hardscrabble farming. It has a few mines, but none are particularly large or productive; the dwarven kingdom of Gabanaldazar controls the best mining in the region.

The capital of Nurenthia is Castle Torvarest, the ancestral seat of the royal House of Dal-Sharran, around which a small city long ago grew. It's located on the Riahca River where the rapids begin to smooth out so that the use of small boats becomes possible, but before the river enters the Swamps and navigation becomes difficult.

The Akrissa Swamps

The Swamps themselves are large, capable of supporting many folk. In addition to the Thehmthari, a Nurenthian people who fish and hunt in them, several tribes of Seshurma inhabit the Swamps. The Lizard-Folk have sworn allegiance to the local baron, and are considered loyal subjects of the crown. Unlike the Thehmthari, who restrict themselves to game no bigger than deer, the Seshurma pursue and battle the gigantic turtles who live in the deepest parts of the Swamps. Not only are turtle meat and eggs a delicacy (and thus valuable for trading), but the Lizard-Folk can make boats and armor of the shells.

SOCIETY

Hasintha, daughter of House Dal-Sharran, rules Nurenthia by herself since the death of her husband, who drowned when he fell out of a boat during a drunken revel. A strong-willed and clever woman, she has not re-married despite the urging of her nobles (who believe Velkara may see this as a weakness). The fact that she has no children only makes the situation more perilous, since Nurenthian law concerning the succession is unclear, and some Velkaran nobles may have valid claims based upon old marriages with Nurenthian royalty.

Sedrosa

Government: Hereditary monarchy (see text)

Ruler: King Aisondre

Capital: Selgar

Population: Men (85%), Dwarves (4%), Halflings (3%), Gnomes (3%), Elves (2%), Other (3%)

Language(s): Sedrosan

Coinage: Obol; Obol; Obol

Resources: Fishing, farming, mining

Religion: Hargeshite

Military: Light cavalry 18%, heavy cavalry 14%, light infantry 30%, heavy infantry 22%, navy 10%, magical/other 6%

Arms/Symbol: A leaping dolphin

Occupying a small territory between the southern end of the Tabriz Mountains and the sea, since the time of the Hargeshite Devastation Sedrosa has been cut off from most contact with the outside world, save by ship.

HISTORY

Sedrosa lies between the Darkrush River — a deep, swift-flowing river too dangerous for most travelers to cross — and the Hargeshite Devastation. Prior to 3439 SE, it was part of the kingdom of Caldiran. After the Devastation destroyed most of that realm Sedrosa found itself cut off, since travelers were no more able to cross the wastelands than they were the river. From that point on, the only way for most people to reach Sedrosa was by ship. Naturally, the Sedrosans are known as skilled mariners and shipbuilders.

From 3920 SE to 4041 SE, Vashkhor ruled Sedrosa. But it proved too difficult and profitless for Marasa to administer, so eventually the Vashkhorans departed, leaving Sedrosa with only the Hargeshite faith to mark their former presence. With no royal family to take control of the land, the Sedrosan nobles met at Selgar. After much wrangling, they chose one of their number, Cadremis of House Lammadon, to rule as king... subject to their approval. Except for the period 4814-47 SE, when the Nobles' Council refused to approve any member of House Lammadon as king, the Lammadons have ruled Sedrosa ever since.

SEDROSA IN 5000 SE

For the most part, Sedrosa is its normal, placid self in 5000 SE, but some disturbing tensions lurk just beneath the surface. Ever since an incident ten years ago in which a band of adventurers led by a wizard and a High Church priest tried to kill King

Aisondre because they thought he was actually a demon, both spellcasters and followers of the High Faith have not been well-received in the land. In one case, an apprentice mage was lynched by a mob in Dravina when they thought he'd tried to use a spell to cheat a merchant in the market. It wouldn't take much to cause more such incidents.

Another source of discontent arises from the wealthier merchants and fishermen. They've complained for years that, unlike the nobles, they have no say in approving of the king or his actions, even though some of them have more money and influence than many a noble. So far king and nobles alike brush aside this concern, but the day may come when circumstances force them to take it more seriously.

THE LAND

Except for the hill-country near the Tabriz Mountains, Sedrosa is a flat coastal plain, with broad beaches and several good harbors. The people mostly farm and tend fruit-orchards, or work as fishermen; some Sedrosans eat the spicy-tasting flesh of the *mûhra*-fish as part of nearly every meal of their lives.

Selgar, the capital, is a small and not particularly noteworthy trading town, though the *mûhra*-fish stew served at inns and taverns has a fine reputation among sailors. The royal palace, Amrenóan, scarcely seems larger or finer than some of the trading-guild halls, and it's not unknown for King Aisondre to mix and mingle with his people while wearing common garb, or even to put in a hard day's work on his own fishing-boat.

SOCIETY

Sedrosa has a hereditary monarchy that's slightly different than most in Ambrethel. The Nobles' Council, a body composed of representatives from the chief noble houses of the land, must approve not only the elevation of a king-apparent to the throne, but most major actions undertaken by the king. Ordinarily the Council agrees with and supports the king's actions, but sometimes bitter disputes break out between the two.

The current king, Aisondre Lammadon, is still a fairly young man, vigorous and handsome, and very popular with his people. The people also love his beautiful queen Olisra, especially since she delivered an heir, Porantus, two years ago. If the Nobles' Council disapproved of some action of the king's, it's possible he could raise the people against them, but to all appearances he's a forthright and honorable man who'd never do such a thing.

Temirec

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Ilario

Capital: Khomaria

Population: Men (88%), Seshurma (3%), Dwarves (2%), Elves (2%), Other (5%)

Language(s): Temirese

Coinage: Ducat; Ducat; Ducat

Resources: Fishing, craftwork, farming, herding

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 18%, heavy cavalry 13%, light infantry 33%, heavy infantry 17%, navy 12%, magical/other 7%

Arms/Symbol: A *hresha* (an ocelot-like cat) statant

A land bound by strict rules of honor enforced by a complex code of duelling, Temirec finds itself in the uncomfortable position of having a virtuous king but corrupt court.

HISTORY

Temirec first enters the annals of history during the time of the Lord of the Graven Spear, when several chronicles mention the Men of the “south-kingdom” who wield slim-bladed swords with great skill. A Temirese lord is said to have slain one of the Spearlord’s demons singlehandedly; the demon’s head, stuffed and mounted, remains on display in the royal palace to this day.

Most of Temirec’s history after that consists of one of two things. The first is records of internal fighting and conspiracies among the various noble houses of the land; the Temirese change royal houses with (to other lands) shocking regularity due to the prevalence of dueling, assassination, and political machinations. “Like the kingship of Temirec,” others say when describing a situation that changes quickly or frequently.

The second is invasions of the kingdom by Velkara, or the Temirese driving their conquerors out. Often eager for new land and resources, Velkara has conquered Temirec four times — in 3355 SE, 3817 SE, 4268 SE, and most recently in 4734 SE — only to lose it a few years later when the Temirese mustered the willpower to put aside their differences and focus on the common foe. Even today Velkara claims Temirec as part of its territory.

TEMIREC IN 5000 SE

The Temirec of 5000 SE is a kingdom in an unusual position. The new king, Ilario, is a young man of high ideals and a noble nature. He believes wholeheartedly not just in honor, but in ruling justly and well, and he wonders (aloud, sometimes) if the Temirese predisposition to dueling and conspiracies is what’s kept the kingdom relatively small and weak for so long. On the other hand, his councillors and advisors, many almost openly corrupt, seem content with the status quo and maneuver to block his attempts at reform whenever they can. But at the same time, they’re also trying to attract his attention, for he’s yet unmarried, and he who becomes King Ilario’s father-in-law will undoubtedly wield great influence....

Temirese politics remains the morass of blackmail, assassination, gossip-mongering, cross, double-cross, smear tactics, conspiracy, and bribery that it’s always been. Not a night goes by that doesn’t see some hotheaded young noble injured or killed in a duel on the streets of Khomaria or Caravago, or find some scheming lord and a lady not his wife in bed, hatching a plot amidst their dalliance.

THE LAND

Temirec is mostly a flat coastal plain subject to relatively mild winters but often uncomfortably hot, humid summers. Most of the people farm or herd, or work the sea; the chief crops include grain, grapes, olives, and the tart-tasting, sunset-pink *lethi*-fruit.

Khomaria

Khomaria, the capital of Temirec, sits at the mouth of the Riahca River on the southern bank (so that the river provides a natural defensive barrier against Velkara). Given their history of being invaded, the Temirese have built the city with defense in mind. It has not one but two tall, thick walls, plus a third wall surrounding the royal palace, Cancatta. The narrow streets twist and turn, making it difficult for an invading army to march through quickly, but also making it easy for visitors to get lost.

Nevarro Jungle

This cloud forest along the upper reaches of the Darkrush River in the mountains is home to a group of Elves who have allied with King Ilario. In exchange for the right to live in the jungle unhindered, they have sworn oaths of support in the event of an invasion by Velkara or any other realm. The Elves’ leader, Latorindrahethtarin, admires and approves of the king’s idealism, and may even find it in his heart to fan the flames of attraction that seem to exist between Ilario and his oldest daughter, Alanasharaila... though how the Temirese would react to an elven queen must be considered.

SOCIETY

Ilario of House Monsety rules Temirec, as his family has done for the past 44 years (a relatively long “dynasty” by Temirese standards). A man of but 21 winters, he has not yet taken a wife, and seems in no hurry to do so. Some of his courtiers urge him to marry, bringing forward their daughters as the best match for him; others prevaricate, knowing their own chances for the throne are better if there’s no heir and Ilario happens to meet with an “accident.”

While King Ilario has, at best, indifferent support amongst his nobles, many of whom consider him a soft-hearted fool and foppish scholar, the large standing Temirese army admires him greatly. The generals recognize his strength of will (and, despite the nobles’ scorn, know him to be a skilled warrior with a blade), and believe his noble intentions will translate into decisive action when the time is right... or when Velkaran aggression requires him to act. They created a special elite group of soldiers, the Crown’s Men, to protect him at all

TEMIRESE DUELIST

To create a Temirese duelist character, use the Light Warrior Package Deal from pages 65-66 of *Fantasy Hero*, but add the Psychological Limitation *Temirese Honor* (Common, Strong; 15 points). Both the options listed for the Package Deal are appropriate, but not mandatory.

For Temirese sword-fighting, use Fencing (either the basic version from page 266 of the *HERO System 5th Edition* rulebook, or the more advanced version from page 24 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist*.)

THE CROWN’S MEN

To create a character who belongs (or used to belong) to the Crown’s Men, use the Heavy Warrior Package Deal from pages 64-65 of *Fantasy Hero*, but increase the DEX to +7 and the Combat Skill Levels to 15 points’ worth (+15 Character Points total).

THE BLUE OGRES

To create a character who belongs (or used to belong) to the Blue Ogres, use the Heavy Warrior Package Deal from pages 64-65 of *Fantasy Hero*, and take the following as Package Deal Skills: AK: Temirec-Velkara Border 11-, KS: The Velkaran Military 11-, and Stealth.

times. Even the Blue Ogres, a large unit that patrols the northern border and specializes in fighting Velkarans, takes second place to the Crown's Men.

Temirese Honor

Among other peoples, the Temirese (or, more accurately, the Temirese nobles) are best known for their elaborate code of honor, and the duels that so often follow breaches of that code. The full parameters of the code are vast and complex, and generally not discernible by one who has not grown up in Temirese society. To put it briefly, the code requires a precise style of conduct between members of the upper classes, based on perceived differences in rank and ability, and anyone who fails to follow the code, whether accidentally or deliberately, gives insult and risks being called out in a duel.

The duels, fought with rapiers, have their own elaborate procedures. The parties must agree on a time and place, and choose seconds; their seconds then arrange other details, such as the conventions governing the duel. Some of the issues considered in setting conventions include: can the parties wear armor (and if so, what types); can the parties use shields; can the parties wield more than one weapon at once; can the parties use poison on their blades. (A second also fights if his party does not, or cannot, fight the duel.) The winner of the duel is considered to have been "in the right," even if it's obvious he gave insult; as a result, highly-skilled duelists often don't worry about "provoking" other people into duels, and sometimes act outrageously.

Although women rarely duel, preferring to have their men fight for them (a suitor's fighting skill is an important consideration when deciding whom a woman should wed), women may fight their own duels if they desire. Several of Temirec's most famous duelists, including Retana Volicarno (who's said never to have lost a single duel), are women.

Temirese Clothing

The Temirese, who are known for their skills as clothmakers, weavers, tailors, and tapestry-makers, wear a distinctive style of clothing. For men, the typical fashion is a light-colored shirt (white or tan) underneath a long doublet that falls to just above the knee, plus pants. Women wear long dresses, often with voluminous skirts, with elaborately-knotted bodices. Wealthier Temirese often decorate their clothing extravagantly with embroidery, inlaid gems and pearls, and the like.

Velkara

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Tasakius

Capital: Tor Pashtar

Population: Men (86%), Dwarves (3%), Elves (3%), Gnomes (2%), Drakine (1%), Other (5%)

Language(s): Velkaran

Coinage: Piece; Piece; Piece

Resources: Farming, herding, craftwork

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 21%, heavy cavalry 16%, light infantry 28%, heavy infantry 23%, navy 4%, magical/other 8%

Arms/Symbol: A blue gauntlet, clenched in a fist, on white

The largest Mhorecian realm without any territory on the Sea itself, Velkara is also one of the most aggressive kingdoms in the region.

HISTORY

The land that would one day be known as Velkara was part of several Drakine kingdoms in the early First Epoch, including Tauset, Denova, and Lorok. Men began to make inroads into the region after the Battle of Two Rivers, but it wasn't until the Drakine Wars that most of the reptile-men were slain or driven from the land for good.

It didn't take long for several kingdoms of Men, such as Velkara, Ralanga, and Carathaim, to arise after the Drakine Wars. Gradually Velkara, with its position on the lower reaches of the Larnaca River, became wealthy and powerful through trade... and wealth and power brought its rulers only the desire for more. Over the rest of the First Epoch, they slowly but surely took over the kingdoms east of Velkara — sometimes through conquest, sometimes through trickery or treachery.

For a time, the Velkaran kings were content, but by the 3600s, their (and their nobles') desire for more territory could no longer be contained. When Besruhan invaded Hrastarin in 3642 SE, the Velkarans bided their time until Besruhan was weak, and then in 3644 SE drove the Besruhani army out of Hrastarin and claimed that realm for itself, holding it until Imbroce's revolt of 3819 SE. 3711 SE saw the first of what would become many invasions of Nurenthia by Velkaran soldiers. Even today, Velkara asserts its rights over Nurenthia, and over Temirec as well, which it's invaded four times.

But the presence of so many other great powers nearby has long stymied Velkara's imperial ambitions. It's fought several wars with Besruhan, mainly minor border skirmishes of little consequence (though the 4571 SE sacking of Two Rivers remains a source of pride for Velkarans, and the inspiration for muttered vows of revenge by Besruhani, to this day). It's tried to expand eastward, for instance by asserting its claims over the land of Arutha, but here Vashkhor presents an obstacle.

VELKARA IN 5000 SE

After two centuries of relative quietude, Velkara once again seems restless. The proud and ambitious King Tasakius often seems to be in search of bold exploits and adventures with which to make his name and enrich his treasury, and he may cast covetous eyes at Nurenthia and Temirec as so many of his ancestors have. His nobles seem to share his desires, and among the court a veiled but very real battle has already begun to determine who among them will lead Tasakius's armies of conquest. This internal dissent may cripple the king's forces.

Besruhan, which seems to have similar ambitions, causes concern as it always has. Every year brings a squabble over territory or some other slight, real or perceived. While tensions between the two remain low, it would take little for them to flare, possibly resulting in war.

THE LAND

Velkara is a mostly low-lying temperate land, with an interior of grasslands, plains, and small forests (and one large, deep one, the Baragon). Its people are farmers and herders whose younger sons and daughters often put muscles developed through long hours of field labor to use in the armies of their noblemen.

Tor Pashtar

The largest and grandest city in Velkara is Tor Pashtar, seat of the Velkaran kings at the mouth of the Larnaca River. Any trading-ship passing from the ocean to the Sea of Mhorec must stop here, which brings the city great profit. The mansions of merchants made rich through such trade line Bergana's Street, each trying to outdo the others with lavish displays of wealth.

By ancient tradition, the inns and taverns of Tor Pashtar must serve one free drink of ale or beer to any patron who requests it in the king's name. The free drinks come in cups not much larger than a thimble, but it's not unknown for some folk to go from one tavern to another, consuming one tiny drink at each until full (or too drunk to walk). In exchange, only establishments granted a charter by the king may serve strong drink, thus giving the owners a way to make up for the price of the free drinks.

Ralkaas And Lake Carathaim

Ralkaas, on Lake Carathaim, is the second-largest city of Velkara. It was once the seat of the kings of Carathaim, the realm for which the lake is now named, but Velkara conquered that land and put its royal family to the sword. Much of the commerce of eastern Velkara flows through the city, then travels down the Marsin River to Sarkamis and thence onward by ship to Tor Pashtar or other cities.

Ralkaas also trades with the Lake-Folk, a race of Men who breathe water and live within Lake Carathaim. Legend says that long ago, the Lake-Folk lived on the shore, but one day a great wizard visited them and was deeply offended by their lack of hospitality. To punish them, he transformed them so they could only breathe water. Today they sometimes serve Velkara as underwater scouts and spies, and occasionally war with Sharthak raiders.

SOCIETY

Tasakius, the latest scion of the millennia-old House Melletarus, rules Velkara with the help of his two grown sons, Crown Prince Enthion and Prince Nazaros. Fit and vigorous despite being nearly 60 years old, Tasakius hopes to accomplish some great deed before he dies to expand his realm and leave Enthion a great legacy. Tasakius also has two daughters, Nonara and Sygalia, both also grown and married to Velkaran nobles. The royal family is a large one, making it virtually impossible for its enemies — including some rival noble families who've coveted the crown for centuries — to remove all heirs to the throne easily.

Working for King Tasakius are several powerful members of families who've served the Velkaran throne for nearly as long as House Melletarus has held it. There's Staurac, the court wizard, an accomplished spellcaster who specializes in Wizardry, Druidry, Elemental Magic, and Thaumaturgy; he has three wives and over a dozen children. Menglor, the king's Commander-General, leads the Velkaran armies in battle and personally sees to the war-training of the Melletarus children. Taal Brindesar, a crusading priest of some renown in his youth, has retired to the more comfortable life of seeing to the royal family's spiritual needs... but remains ever ready to use the powers of his faith to preserve and protect King Tasakius and his kin.

Velkara uses the standard Mhorecian calendar, but over the years the kings have added many extra holidays and festivals to honor their ancestors, important victories in battle, and esaiels greatly esteemed by the Velkaran people. During much of the year, it's hard to go a week without there being some cause for celebration.

THE BARAGON FOREST

The largest forest in Velkara, the Baragon has a mixed reputation among the Velkarans. On the one hand, peasants and nobles living near it see it as a source of food and resources. They chop wood there, hunt birds and small animals (and, in the case of nobles and poachers, larger game), herd swine in to eat acorns and roots, and gather nuts and berries. Without it, they might not survive.

On the other hand, the forest is not without its dangers. Compared to many woodlands of the same size, it has relatively few monsters; nobles and adventurers have thinned their numbers well over the years. But quite a few live there still, including a large tribe of gargoyles who reside in a ruined wizard's tower deep in the forest.

Local peasants also fear a coven of witches that makes its home inside Baragon. For years the coven has extorted food and money from the common folk, threatening to blight crops (or worse) if not paid off. When nobles or adventurers come after them, the witches use their spells and woodcraft to hide from them. It's gotten to the point where many peasants won't even talk to adventurers who ask about the witches; they know nothing's going to come of it.

KHORIA



Khoria is that land said to have been settled, long ago, by Khor and his sons. It lies between two great chains of mountains — the Ayn Alach to the east, and the Tabriz Mountains and Skyclaws to the west. From north to south, the Hargeshite Empire of Vashkhor dominates it.

Vashkhor

Government: Hereditary empire

Ruler: Hierakte Sairhan

Capital: Marasa

Population: Men (92%), Dwarves (2%), Gnomes (1%), Other (5%)

Language(s): Khorian (North, Central, and South versions)

Coinage: Hamdar; Hamrid; Hamashar

Resources: Farming, herding, fishing, mining, craftwork

Religion: Hargeshite

Military: Light cavalry 20%, heavy cavalry 16%, light infantry 30%, heavy infantry 19%, navy 6%, magical/other 9%

Arms/Symbol: The fork-tailed Twin Birds of the Hargeshite faith forming a circle (with the birds' bodies at the top, beaks touching) around the Vashkhoran sun

The largest realm in all the world, the Hargeshite Empire of Vashkhor occupies nearly all of Khoria — and what it does not rule from Marasa, it controls through influence and intimidation. In the minds of many, the greatest threat to the peace of Mhorecia and the Westerlands is not Kal-Turak and his foul followers — it's the Vashkhorans and their Hargeshite doctrine.

HISTORY

Men made their way into the Land Between the Mountains (as poets call Khoria) early in the First Epoch. Free from the threat of Drakine domination and attack, they founded realms of their own. The hero Rhios, of whom every Vashkhoran child learns, founded Vashkhor in the region around Lake Askoli; other kingdoms, including Caldiran, Kozahn, Ledris, Shaldrin, Malekun, and Eldali, arose elsewhere throughout Khoria. Sometimes these realms lived side by side in peace; at other times they fought.



Vashkhor's destiny came upon it in 2993 SE, when the priest Hargesh experienced his Revelation and brought the Hargeshite faith to Khorla. The Holy Truth of Hargesh caught fire in the hearts of the Vashkhorans as it did nowhere else, and Marasa soon became the strongest supporter of the new doctrine. Some other realms resisted the Hargeshite creed, at time with swords and bloodshed, while some accepted it, but Vashkhor embraced it wholeheartedly. With a convert's zeal, it built temples and sent priests into other lands to sway unbelievers. Soon the priesthood had achieved greater prominence and power in Vashkhoran society than ever before — in fact, the king depended on their support to maintain his rule.

Devastation And Empire

In 3439 SE, to save Vashkhor from attack by Caldiran, King Emre allowed his priests and wizards to unleash the Hargeshite Devastation, destroying both Caldiran and Shaldrin. Horrified by what he had done, Emre committed suicide... but his son Nurzat had no such scruples. He declared the Devastation a part of Vashkhor, and retitled himself Emperor.

Over the next thousand years, Vashkhor embarked on a campaign of conquest and empire unparalleled in all the world. In 3477 SE, its armies conquered Malekun, in 3812 SE they took Ledris, in 3920 SE they conquered Sedrosa (though they abandoned it in 4041 SE), in 4138 SE they invaded Kozahn, and in 4392 SE they took Eldali. With the conquest of Eldali, the Hargeshite Empire contained most of the lands it holds in 5000 SE, though occasional revolts (such as in the south in the early-to-middle 4300s and the north in 4889 SE) have disturbed the Empire's peace from time to time.

Not all of Vashkhor's military campaigns have succeeded. Its efforts to conquer or absorb Arutha over the past 500 years have ever failed, and its repeated clashes with its hated enemy, the Sirrenic Empire, have not always gone in its favor. The First Sirrenic War (4456-4462 SE), following the founding of Axairion west of the Great Pass in 4404 SE, saw the Sirrenic Legions enter the Hierakte's land to sack several cities and besiege others. The Second Sirrenic War (4781-4783 SE) ended better for Marasa; the Battle of Bretha Plain set the border between the two empires, giving Vashkhor a true foothold west of the Tabriz Mountains.

VASHKHOR IN 5000 SE

In 5000 SE, Vashkhor remains proud, powerful, and devoted to the Hargeshite doctrine. Hierakte Sairhan is the strongest and wealthiest ruler in all of Ambrethel, and his ambition matches his power. Vashkhor has long desired to expand to the west and bring the Hargeshite faith to Mhorecia... and, eventually, the Westerlands. Axairion, and alliance with Ingushel, may at long last give the Hargeshite Empire the foothold it needs to send its vast army sweeping into new lands to push all before them and raise the birds-and-sun of House Aznavid over all the world. But if the West proves too tough a nut to crack, or it falls more easily than expected, perhaps Vornakkia will feel the brunt of Vashkhor's ambition instead.

THE LAND

Vashkhor is an enormous realm covering a wide variety of lands and climes. North of Marasa, it's much like the Westerlands in many respects — forested, snowy and often bitterly cold in the winter, teeming with thick-pelted animals not unlike those of Umbr or Vestria. Folk there wear thicker robes, often lined with fur. But south of Marasa, the land is mostly grasslands or desert, often swelteringly hot in spring and summer, and less able to support large cities; there the clothing is lighter, and a man may go all the year wearing little more than a loin-cloth. The crops and herd-animals raised in these regions differ, and even the language changes subtly as one travels (though it never becomes unintelligible — a Vashkhoran from Denzali can easily understand most of what one from Ymrli says).

Marasa

Marasa (and to a lesser extent, Avonnu) is the meeting-place where south and north come together. In its markets one can find meat obtained by northern hunters, grapes and olives from southern orchards, wheat from the Malekun Plains, carved coral jewelry from the coast, and antiquities scavenged from the ruins within the Devastation. Camels and horses stand side-by-side at the hitching-posts in front of Marasan taverns.

As the capital of the world's greatest empire, Marasa is a city of grandiloquent splendor. Each hierakte seems to try to outdo all of his predecessors in some way, whether by building a new tower or wing onto the royal palace Aznavaydin, creating some great structure in the city (such as the Tarsalan Arena, where the people gather for festivals, or to watch games and gladiatorial combats), expanding and strengthening the walls, or the like. Hierakte and noble alike strive to outdo their rivals by acting as patrons of the arts, so murals, mosaics, statues, and paintings decorate much of the city.

While Marasa has two enormous bazaars filled to bursting with merchants and customers, it sometimes seems like every street becomes its own little bazaar each day. A person can't walk down the street without hearing the voices of a dozen shopkeepers or street vendors shouting at him to buy something, or being importuned by beggars of every age.

Denzali

Vashkhor's second-largest city sits at the mouth of the mighty Coroglu River, just north and east of where the river fans out into a vast delta of swamps and riverlets. Once the capital of Shaldrin, it has since been thoroughly absorbed, politically and culturally, into Vashkhor. It's a city of fishermen who work the swamps and sea, hunters to prowl the delta shooting birds and small mammals, and above all traders. Denzali is Vashkhor's gateway to much of the rest of the world, taking in goods from Vornakkia, and Mitharia, and even Thûn, and sending out in return Vashkhoran products that come down the Coroglu to its wharves.

Compared to many Vashkhoran cities, Denzali is relatively cosmopolitan. Foreigners are much more common, and the Harmali *thukari* who rule

OTHER EBISTANS

While Ebistan Derende is the largest and wealthiest of Vashkhor's isolated temples — temples located in wilderness areas, where the priests can study free of the distractions of society — it's by no means the only one. Some of the others include:

Ebistan Ghohal: High in the Ayn Alach, accessible only by the Stair Unending, perched on a cliff overlooking a thousand-foot drop, Ebistan Ghohal attracts only the most pious priests, those interested in completely withdrawing from contact with their fellow men. They take vows of silence, and live in what others would consider extreme discomfort... but sometimes they develop strange, holy powers because of their devoted way of life.

Ebistan Tarthu: The only isolated temple willing to train priestesses, Ebistan Tarthu is one of the Empire's most important outposts in the northeastern frontier. A small town has grown up around it, much to the consternation of some of the priests. Many of the missionary priests who go abroad to convert the unfaithful study here.

Ebistan Tchura: Located on Vashkhor's coast, this temple is known for its exploration of the mystic side of the Hargeshite priesthood. Priests studying there have found many new ways to invoke the power of the gods to protect the faithful.

there seem willing to tolerate the observance of other religions, provided it's not done in any way that would attract notice or attention. But the Hierakte's spies lurk everywhere, keeping an eye on all these strangers who might have more than trading on their minds.

Khithira

On the northern edge of the Malekun Plains, before the Manticore Hills rise to cut them off, stands Khithira, greatest of the northern cities of Vashkhor. More southerly Vashkhoran cities tend to spread out, with broad, low-lying buildings punctuated only by a few towers here and there. But Khithira clusters along a range of four hills, confining itself within a stout wall (a relic of the days when Malekun fought Vashkhor) and building upward, much like some cities of the Westerlands or northern Mitharia (but still with distinctively Vashkhoran architecture).

Most of the trade of northern Vashkhor comes first to Khithira, including the rich pelts of animals slain by hunters in the dark-forested Manticore Hills (where not only manticores, but griffins and even dragons, lurk). Khithiran merchants send the goods on, usually to Marasa by way of Keligaru. But they have a poor reputation for honesty; it's said that a person who sells to a Khithiran had best cut the coins he receives in two to make sure they're true.

Axairion

The youngest of Vashkhor's major cities, Axairion is a garrison town, pure and simple. Built to give Vashkhor a solid foothold in Mhorecia, it has some of the thickest walls of any of the empire's cities, a highly defensible inner keep, and a large contingent of soldiers. But at the same time, it's also a gateway for much trade through the Great Pass, so the merchants who live and work there constantly press for fewer restrictions and taxes.

The Hargeshite Devastation

Most of southern Vashkhor is an enormous desert and wasteland, pocked here and there with clefts and canyons — the result of the Hargeshite Devastation 1,500 years ago. In the Plains of Glass, the heart of old Caldiran, the fires of Devastation were so strong that explorers sometimes find chunks of crude, heat-fused glass. Here and there ruins sometimes poke their heads up above the shifting sands, waiting for some daring nomad or bold adventurer to delve into their depths to find centuries-lost treasures... or perhaps death! Demmeth and Adairay, the two greatest ruins, still attract adventurers nearly every year, and as yet there seems no sign of their surviving wealth having been exhausted.

Few animals, and fewer people, can live comfortably in the Hargeshite Devastation. The hardy, antelope-like *dirik* and its chief predator, the *shetash* hunting-cat, are the largest creatures there, though smaller mammals and many snakes (and other reptiles) are more common. All these and more provide food and other resources for the *Dahganir*, the Vashkhoran desert nomads. Traveling the wastelands by camel in small tribes,

DAHGANIR PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
1	<i>Desert Adaptation:</i> Life Support (Diminished Eating: need only eat and drink once per day)
2	Survival (Deserts) (INT roll)
1	TF: Camels

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 4

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
5	Social Limitation: Scorned By Other Vashkhorans (-1 on Interaction Skill rolls) (Occasionally, Minor)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 5

Options

Cost	Ability
+10	<i>Dahganir Warrior:</i> Change TF to Riding and +1 with All Combat

the Dahganir follow the Hargeshite faith but otherwise keep to themselves, barely acknowledging the sovereignty of the hierakte. They fight amongst themselves frequently for control of waterholes and oases, and when pressed are fierce, skilled warriors with their scimitars, short bows, and wickedly-barbed javelins.

Ebistan Derende

Of all the "isolated temples" (*ebistani*) of the Hargeshite Empire, none is so great or glorious as Ebistan Derende, in the highlands near the headwaters of the River Coroglu. Its facade of golden-hued marble and sanctuary domes covered with pure gold leaf give it its name, which means "Golden Temple." Within its walls, hundreds of priests and acolytes pray, study, and work for the greater glory of the gods. Their library is the largest in Vashkhor, with many priceless sacred texts (including Hargesh's original statement of his doctrine). Many of the priests work to make copies of these books for distribution to other temples and the faithful.

Shaa-Robat Cothkun presides over Ebistan Derende. A former adventurer and powerful in his piety, Cothkun watches his underlings with an eagle eye to ensure they perform their duties quickly and well. He leads a life of great asceticism, indulging himself only in his love for the finest wines.

To preserve Ebistan Derende and its treasures from attackers, monsters, and other threats, House Aznavid long ago created the *Slani ta Derendar*, the Lions of the Gold. Wearing priest-blessed golden plate armor and wielding consecrated axes, they stand ready to repel any danger that threatens the temple. Between them, and the priests themselves (more than a few of whom also study arcane magics), no attacker has ever successfully harmed Ebistan Derende or one of its priests.

SLAN TA DERENDAR PACKAGE DEAL

The abilities and Disadvantages of this Package Deal are in addition to those of the Heavy Fighter Package Deal (*Fantasy Hero*, pages 64-65).

Abilities

Cost	Ability
4	+2 OCV with Axes
2	Fringe Benefit: Membership (<i>Slani ta Derendar</i>)
3	<i>Sentinel's Senses</i> : +1 PER with all Sense Groups

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: 9

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
20	Psychological Limitation: Pious Hargeshite Worshipper (Common, Total)
25	Psychological Limitation: Will Do Anything, Including Sacrificing His Life, To Protect Ebistan Derende And Its Priests (Very Common, Total)

Total Value Of Additional Disadvantages: 45

Melurashondar's Retreat

As discussed on page 223, some Hargeshites look askance at other races, since Dwarves, Elves, and the like rarely follow the True Faith. In 3872 SE, a group of these fanatics turned on a band of Elves that wandered the north of Vashkhor, slaying several of them. The survivors, led by a warrior named Melurashondar, fled to a nearby forest, where they established defenses and fought off all who would harm them. Their descendants live there to this day, resisting all attempts fair and foul to get them to leave their home. Their skill with bow and arrow is said to be like unto that of the Stormlord himself.

The Ventati Highlands

The Ventati, a fierce, barbaric people described on page 186, live in this plateau between the arms of the Tabriz Mountains. Not of the Khorian peoples, they have fought the folk of Vashkhor for millennia, sometimes raiding into their lands, sometimes suffering the blows of invading armies in return. But no hierakte, no matter how fanatical, has ever struck a deadly blow against them; somehow they always survive Vashkhor's attacks.

In 4570 SE, the Hierakte Torzel, determined to stop the Ventati from raiding his lands and slaughtering his people, built a great fortress, Cahsu Malesh, at the mouth of the valley leading into the highlands. There he sent many soldiers whose only job was to hold back the Ventati hordes — and at that they have mostly succeeded. Since then, Ventati raids have become far less of a problem... but a Ventati who can sneak past Malesh, raid a Vashkhoran town or village, and return with plunder earns great status among his people.

SOCIETY

Hierakte ("holy emperor") Sairhan, scion of the Aznavids, Beloved of the Gods, the Light of All Vashkhor, rules the Hargeshite Empire as its unquestioned lord. With the Hierasa Hasiba at his feet, he commands the army, receives the adoration of Hargeshite priests, and dispenses favors and punishment to those who deserve them.

Sairhan and Hasiba have seven children: Bedirhan, the eldest son and heir to the throne; three more sons (Tagmac, Sabatin, and Ercann); and three daughters (Noora, Zulaiya, and Aselya). Most are already grown, and some married; Zulaiya is the only unwed daughter of marriagable age, and that situation should change soon. The Hierakte has in mind a possible match with Crown Prince Norrin of Ingushel, but whether that will come to pass remains to be seen.

The Hierakte also has about a dozen children by his several mistresses, who effectively constitute a small harem in one wing of Aznavaydin. None of them are in line for the throne, but in time they may serve their father well in the priesthood, the army, or other occupations.

Soldiers And Spies

Chief among the Hierakte's most trusted and valued advisors is his master of spies. Known only as the Lord of Spiders, he commands a vast web of spies, informers, and traitors throughout not only Vashkhor but Mhorecia, and even in some places further afield. It's said in Vashkhor that even birds carry messages to him, and that nothing of consequence evades his gaze for long.

Second only to the Spider-Lord is Durakan, High General of the Hierakte's armies. Unlike most Westerlands and Mhorecian realms, where the ruler depends on his feudal vassals to provide him with fighting men, in Vashkhor the hierakte raises and supports his own army, and the nobles must tithe to him of their wealth to support it. That means Sairhan needs a general fit to command the largest military force in the world, and Durakan fills the job perfectly. A 30-year veteran, he possesses not only great fighting skill, but a keen intellect and a tactically adept mind. A bluntly honest man, he does not fear to tell the Hierakte the truth, even when it's unpleasant.

Soldiers of Vashkhor typically wear scale armor (or chainmail for the officers), and carry scimitars, spears, and shields. Archers carry distinctively-shaped longbows, and light cavalrymen have composite short bows.

One important fact that some of Vashkhor's potential targets for conquest have noted is that few hieraktes will attack another Hargeshite realm. By converting, a king and his subjects may be able to spare themselves Vashkhoran attack... but in the end, this may effectively mean submitting to Vashkhoran rule anyway.

Priests And Politics

While the Hierakte possesses great power and many resources, without the support of the priesthood he might not be able to rule. The Vashkhoran people are very devout, and a simple command

from even the lowest-ranking priest can prompt them to action — violent action, if necessary. The Hierakte's position as a semi-divine figure protects him from clerical excess, but if the priesthood turned against him, it's unlikely he could retain his throne in the face of the peoples' scorn and wrath.

Unfortunately for the Hierakte, winning the support of the priests isn't always a simple matter, for the priesthood does not speak with one voice. While it's true that all Hargeshite priests answer to the *Lataro* (and to a lesser extent to the Hierakte himself), and that they all worship the same Blue Gods, the Hargeshite church is riven with factions to a much greater degree than the High Church. While all priests worship all gods, over the centuries the Hargeshite priests have developed a tradition of choosing one (sometimes two) gods to specially worship. Thus, a Vashkhoran priest might describe himself as an Arradist (a special devotee of Hacari Arrad, whom the Westerlanders call Almandré), a Hiresunite (follower of Hospin), or an Osyan (devoted worshipper of the sun god). Many smaller ebistans and temples, scattered here and there throughout the land, devote themselves almost wholly to the worship of but one god. Each faction of priests has its own preferences and practices, and the various factions often struggle within the church for influence and dominance. A triumph for one sect — the discovery of a new spell, a scholarly achievement, an appointment to a special post — is a defeat or humiliation for the others. Thus, the Hierakte has to take care which factions he seems to favor and which he scorns, lest he anger too many of them at once and potentially tip the balance against him.

Daily Life In Vashkhor

Many of the customs and traditions of the Vashkhoran people vary from place to place. What the southerners along the coast do, or how they practice their trades, differs from the way the people of Talsha Mavir do the same thing. But certain constants remain.

First and foremost among these is the Hargeshite doctrine. Throughout Vashkhor, the Hargeshite faith is the only religion allowed; all others are illegal, with native followers punished by death. Most Vashkhorans are genuinely devout Hargeshites who offer prayers to the gods and the Hierakte. Every day at dawn, noon, and dusk, the temples fill with worshippers, leaving the streets empty and quiet.

Second, foreigners and races other than Men are uncommon in Vashkhor. The Hierakte restricts most foreign trade to certain cities, and for a foreigner to leave those places requires official permission and the issuance of written passes. Any obviously non-Vashkhoran person traveling through the land will find himself stopped and questioned again and again by officials, soldiers, and city guards.

Third, Vashkhoran laws are strict and harshly enforced. Travel without a written permit from a local lord or official is illegal; so is the ownership of most types of weapons, the unauthorized casting of spells, and the like. The penalties for most violations of the law range from corporal punishment, to maiming, to beheading.

Ashurna

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Eikar

Capital: Dragar Volkrang

Population: Men (91%), Dwarves (4%), Elves (2%), Gnomes (1%), Other (2%)

Language(s): North Khorian

Coinage: Hamdar; Hamrid; Hamashar

Resources: Mining, herding, craftwork

Religion: Hargeshite

Military: Light cavalry 17%, heavy cavalry 13%, light infantry 38%, heavy infantry 26%, navy 0%, magical/other 6%

Arms/Symbol: The Twisted Pine (a distinctly-shaped pine tree growing in the courtyard of the royal palace)

Long considered little more than a frontier province of Vashkhor, the kingdom of Ashurna has begun to question some of Marasa's policies, and may soon prove a thorn in the Hierakte's side.

HISTORY

Ashurna was first settled by Men in the 3200s, when explorers from Vashkhor carried the Hargeshite doctrine north of the Baskalay River. They soon encountered — and fought — the Peltaru, heathen barbarians living in the highlands of the Ergun-Ulan Mountains. The settlers chose a war-hero, Bergor, as their king, thus creating the House Bergorian from which all Ashurnan rulers have come.

For most of its existence, Ashurna has been so close an ally of Vashkhor as to be, in effect, simply the northernmost province of the Hargeshite Empire. It traded almost exclusively with Vashkhor and Khepras, and supported the hierakte's policies in all things. However, in the past few centuries, many Ashurnans have become discontented. They no longer think Marasa cares about what happens to them — the Vashkhorans only want to exploit Ashurnan land and labor for lumber, furs, and other goods. In some quarters, open talk of rebellion has occurred, with some folk claiming Ashurna should simply ignore Marasa, and others urging alliance with Kal-Turak to protect the kingdom from what's sure to be swift, decisive retaliation by Vashkhor. Recent events in Khepras have quelled this talk somewhat, but as Kal-Turak's power grows it's sure to start again.

ASHURNA IN 5000 SE

Short of the discontent mentioned above, life in Ashurna proceeds much as it always has, with short springs and summers seguing into long, harsh winters. Only the threat of Peltaru attack, or perhaps raids by Orcs or monsters from the Wilderlands, disturbs the tranquility. But if those who speak of revolt and independence have their way, it won't be long before life in Ashurna takes a very different turn.

THE LAND

Located far to the north, just south of the Wilderland, Ashurna is a cold and unforgiving place. The winters are long and cruel; during them, the men-folk often stay inside, working on the delicate wood-carvings which are just about Ashurna's only resource aside from natural ones. Many a Vashkhoran or Vornakkian noble, and even some in lands beyond, boasts of having a bed, chair, or mantelpiece carved by Ashurnan artisans.

Dragar Volktrang

The capital of Ashurna is a small, grey city with minimal walls and few paved streets. For over half the year, people get around mainly by sleigh or sledge, and only the dim glow of hearth-fires through windows or around doors breaks the bleakness of the streets. The king's palace stands side-by-side with a large Vashkhoran temple at the center of the city; few other buildings in Dragar Volktrang are large or noteworthy.

Peltaruland

The home of the barbaric Peltaru (page 185), Peltaruland is rocky, cold, and harsh; it breeds a people of similar temperament and strength. Time and again the Ashurnans have tried to exterminate them, to no avail; Peltaru raiding-parties come down from the mountains every year, as they always have.

SOCIETY

King Eikar, a man in his early 40s, rules Ashurna. He finds all this talk of breaking away from Vashkhor disturbing, especially in light of the attack on Ellassa, and would be happiest to see the "rebels" leave his land forever. His only son, Crown Prince Rugar, doesn't share his feelings. He favors the idea of Ashurnan independence (not openly — he's an idealist, not a fool — but his beliefs are the poorest-kept secret in Dragar Volktrang).

Khepras

Government: Anarchy

Ruler: Varies

Capital: See text

Population: Men (88%), Orcs (10%), Other (2%)

Language(s): North Khorian

Coinage: Hamdar; Hamrid; Hamashar

Resources: Farming, herding, fishing

Religion: Varied (see text)

Military: N/A (see text)

Arms/Symbol: Three crows on red

Once a realm controlled by Vashkhor, Khepras has become an anarchic land following an attempt to break free from Marasa ten years ago.

HISTORY

Like Ashurna, Khepras was first settled by Men from Vashkhor in the 3200s who longed to carry the glory of the Hargeshite word into new lands. For most of its existence, Khepras has simply traded with Vashkhor, functioning as little more than a colony. But about a century ago, some Khep-

rans began to raise their voices against this state of affairs. Khepras was a large and prosperous realm, they argued — why should it toady to Marasa? From Khepran ports, ships could go anywhere in the world and trade with anyone they wished!

Gradually, commoner, merchant, and noble alike began to believe this way. In 4991 SE, King Valvarus could no longer ignore the situation — and truth to tell, he liked the idea of ruling his own land, rather than following the Hierakte's dictates in all things. He declared Khepras a free realm, beholden to none, that would chart its own course from now on.

The Hierakte's response was swift and definite. When he got word of this "rebellion," as he termed it, he sent his armies north. After they crossed the Baskalay River, they headed straight for the king's seat at Ellassa, destroying everything — every village, every town, every roadside inn — in their path. When they reached the capital, they did not bother to call for parley, but lay siege to it at once. In less than two weeks the walls were rubble and Vashkhoran soldiers rampaged among the people. When no one in Ellassa remained alive, the generals turned their soldiers loose on the countryside, letting them loot and pillage as they would. And when he felt the lesson had been learned, the Hierakte called his soldiers back.

KHEPRAS IN 5000 SE

Today Khepras is a land of wolves and bandits. With no king and few nobles left alive, only the strong can rule. Many "chiefdoms" or "kingdoms" have sprung up, each claiming sovereignty over the land — but in truth, every "king" rules only as much land as he can see. What was once a prosperous, if sleepy, realm has become a land of fire and fear where outlaws and Orcs raid at will, and no one stands up to protect the people or lead them.

THE LAND

Khepras is a northerly land, similar in climate and ecology to Khirkovy in its northern half, but somewhat more pleasant and warm in its southern, coastal, regions. While some cities still exist, such as Gova Deshvan or Dorno Karmai (each claiming to be "the capital" now that Ellassa lies in ruins), many of the smaller towns and villages are still trying to rebuild after being attacked by Vashkhoran soldiers.

SOCIETY

Khepras is a land beset by anarchy. It has no ruler — Vashkhor put King Valvarus, all of his family, and most of his nobles to death. It has no army, for most of its soldiers fell in battle against the Hierakte's troops, and those who survived became warlords or entered the service of petty nobles seeking greater power. Merchants and others who would travel across the land take their lives in their hands when they do so; only the most well-guarded groups of travelers can make it to their destination unhindered. In short, it's a land in need of a powerful guiding hand — perhaps Kal-Turak's, perhaps that of another.

VORNAKKIA



Vornakkia stretches from the Leros and Baskalay Rivers in the north all the way to Cape Farewell at the tip of the Vornakkian Peninsula. While most folk of Ambrethel think of the city-states of the Peninsula when they hear the word “Vornakkia,” Shar, Sorinsarsoun, and Vûran all belong to this region as well. (See page 9 for the early history of the region.)

Located on the far eastern side of the world, the lands of Vornakkia are generally isolated from the rest of Ambrethel — most people can reach them only by ship, and the waters around the Peninsula are known for their treacherous currents and deadly reefs (not to mention murderous tribes of Sharthak raiders). Thanks to this isolation, unusual cultures and traditions evolved there, making the Vornakkians seem strange, even dangerous at times. Some mariners believe that a ship sailing west from Vestria could reach Vornakkia in time, but as yet no one who's attempted the journey has succeeded.

NORTHERN VORNAKKIA

The lands of northern Vornakkia, particularly Shar and Sorinsarsoun, tend to be temperate. Only when one reaches Vûran does the temperature start to warm, and jungle replace forest.

Shar

Government: Hereditary oligarchy

Ruler: The Council of Shadows

Capital: Kelaha Baturu

Population: Men (88%), Dwarves (3%), Elves (2%), Ghouls (2%), Goblins (2%), Other (3%)

Language(s): Sharian

Coinage: Wheel; Wheel; Wheel

Resources: Fishing, farming, mining

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 20%, heavy cavalry 14%, light infantry 25%, heavy infantry 21%, navy 9%, magical/other 10%

Arms/Symbol: Seven purple masks on gold

Shar. The very name conjures up dark, exotic images in the minds of other Ambrethelans — images of Masked Lords ruling an unquestioning people, of a land where every other person is a sorcerer, of cities where Goblins and Ghouls mingle freely with Men. All this, and more, is ancient and mysterious Shar, a haunted land of sorcerers and strange portents.

HISTORY

As described on page 9, the mighty heroes Belioth and Vornak first led people into the lands now called Vornakkia. Daxor son of Vornak took the throne of the north-realm after his father, naming it Shar, a word in the Sharian tongue with a meaning akin to “refuge.”

In 1588 FE, a haruspex cut open a goat to find that its entrails, though healthy, were blackened and gave off a foul stench. He screamed, “the King will die!”, and then perished from terror. And it soon came to pass that a fever struck down King Axurin, and he died within a week. None of his sons, or nobles, or wives had the support to take the throne, and so by solemn compact the seven most powerful of them formed a council to rule Shar. Because their actions violated Sharian law, when they met they wore masks and robes to conceal their identities. Though the passing centuries have long since removed any stain of usurpation or wrongdoing from them and those who followed them, their heirs on the Council Of Shadows, also known as



the Masked Lords, maintain the tradition of wearing masks to this day.

The Goblin Wars

Despite Vornak's triumph over the Goblins of the Goblin Marches, he never completely destroyed their strength. Over the years, the Sharians and the Black Goblin tribes have fought many times, with major wars in 2238-2240 FE, 2834-37 FE, 3528-3531 SE, 4061-4063 SE, and most recently in 4956-4959 SE. In between skirmishes, raids, and lesser wars have occurred far more frequently, until many Sharians have become experts in fighting Goblin-folk. The more civilized tribes of the Marches, who trade with the Sharians instead of fighting them, deplore these wars, for they only make commerce more difficult; sometimes they ally with the Sharians against their brethren.

The Compact Of Ghouls

In 3943 SE, a terrible plague struck Shar. People died by the thousands, and so swiftly did the disease strike that not even the spells of the priests could stem the tide. At times, the streets of the cities were clogged with corpses, and the army was so weakened that Goblin-tribes ran amok throughout the land.

The Masked Lords rightly feared that so many unburied bodies would only cause the plague to worsen or linger, or lead to an infestation of the undead. Unwilling to risk the existence of the realm, with the help of the witch Badonrai they called to a pack of Ghouls, and formed with them an eerie Compact: the Ghouls would carry away and consume the bodies of the plague-dead, and in return the folk of Shar would not harry or slay them, but treat them as they would any other people with whom they traded. The Ghouls agreed, and through their own mysterious pathways they sent word to their brethren. Many Ghouls came to Shar, and the people were saved both from plague and undead.

From that day to this, the folk of Shar have accounted the Ghouls as friends, and Ghouls live in the shadows throughout Shar, coming out at night to remove the dead, or perhaps to trade with stout-hearted merchants. To harm a Ghoul is no different, at law, than to harm a Man, and a Ghoul who harms the living is punished by his fellow Ghouls as if he had harmed one of them. Thanks to the Ghouls, both undead and Necromancy are rare in Shar.

SHAR IN 5000 SE

Shar finds itself at peace in 5000 SE, but it's a precarious peace. To its north lies the colossus of Vashkhor, and the Masked Lords fear it would take little to cause the Hargeshite fanatics to descend upon their land to convert the heathen with fire and steel. To its south is Vûran, and while the Sharians are no strangers to Sorcery themselves, the Seven Sorcerers seem oddly powerful in ways no Sharian fully understands. For now, the Council of Shadows watches and waits, remaining ever-alert and marshaling its forces as best it may, but it prays that no conflict shall come.

THE LAND

Although the land turns rough and hilly near the Ayn Alach, for the most part Shar is a low-lying land dominated by coastal plains, with more than a little marshy land along the coast itself. There are only three large cities — Kelaha Baturu, Kelaha Anambas, and Hasilar — with the rest of the people living in small towns or villages, usually along the coast.

Kelaha Baturu

The capital of Shar and seat of the Council of Shadows is Kelaha Baturu at the mouth of the Baskalay River. The largest city in the land, it's where most Sharian traders live, since from there they can sail up and down the coast or up the Baskalay as far as Tovori (or even Talsa Mavir in smaller, flatter-bottomed boats). Recent troubles in Khepras have led to more piracy in the region, making it harder for traders to earn a living; many now sail with a warship or two as guards.

The Masked Lords meet daily in the Daxorilon, the largest building in the city. Special spells of warding, coupled by the Lords' own protective magics, prevent anyone from using magic to penetrate the Council's secrets or interfere with or trace the teleportation spells the Lords use to come and go from the building.

The Goblin Marches

Of all the wild lands of Shar, none is so wild as the Goblin Marches, a range of hills along the southern reaches of the Sharian Ayn Alach. Long the domain of countless Goblin tribes, it's a rough and rugged land, containing many wild beasts and monsters. Even the Good Goblins do not welcome Men into their lands, and the greenskins may capture or slay any who venture into the Marches unasked.

The folk of Shar group the Goblins of the Marches (and, indeed, all of Shar) into two groups: the Good Goblins, who trade peaceably with other folk and are welcome in Sharian cities; and the Black Goblins, who hate other races and fight against them whenever they may. Often the two types of Goblins war with each other throughout the Marches, and Black tribes turn on each other as well with little provocation. The accompanying sidebar lists a few of the tribes of each type.

The Ayn Alach

The tallest and mightiest mountain range of Ambrethel is the Ayn Alach, whose name means "most high" in the ancient tongue of the earliest Vornakkians. Crossable at only three passes — the Sharian, a hard, narrow pass which leads from central Vashkhor to Hasilar; the Sindi, from the Plains of Glass to just north of the feared Plateau of Vultures; and the Vûranese, also from the Plains of Glass but leading into Vûran — it creates a significant barrier to the ambitions of Vashkhor.

Few civilized folk dare to venture into the Ayn Alach at all, for they are the domain of Orcs, Goblins, dragons, and monsters of many sorts; at times these denizens descend from their mountains to attack or raid the people of the lowlands. In all the

TRIBES OF THE GOBLIN MARCHES

Good Goblins

Dark Spear
Star-Face
Stone Fist
Two Pillars
White Bear

Black Goblins

Fire-Rune
Horse-Skull
Red Arrow
Shadow Bat
Weeping Moon

SHARIAN GOBLIN-FIGHTERS

Some Sharian warriors have become especially skilled at fighting Goblins. Known simply as *Goblin-Fighters*, they possess the knowledge and abilities necessary to triumph against such dangerous, wicked foes as Goblins and their kin.

To create a Goblin-Fighter, add the following abilities to any Warrior Package Deal:

Goblinslayer: Deadly Blow (HKA +1d6 against Goblins) (7 points)

Goblin Lore: KS: Goblins 11- (2 points)

Knows Goblinish Tricks: +1 DCV, Only Versus Goblins (-1) (2 points)

Total cost of Goblin-Fighter abilities: 11 points.

range only two dwarven kingdoms (Tarkoll in the north, Gûnru in the south) exist, and they keep to themselves at most times.

SOCIETY

Seven mysterious rulers — the Council of Shadows, also called the Masked Lords — preside over Shar. No one, save the Lords' closest confidants, knows who they are, though the Sharians frequently indulge in the sport of speculating about who wears which mask. Potent magics and many other, simpler, precautions protect the Lords' identities and other secrets, as described above.

How the Lords name their successors likewise remains a mystery. It's thought each Lord chooses who he wishes to succeed him, usually one of his children, but new Lords may be chosen by the entire Council, by lot, or through some other method.

Sharians are a strange folk, talkative and friendly enough among themselves, but taciturn to strangers. Since many of them dabble in Sorcery (see below), they often seem threatening or enigmatic to outsiders, and they like it that way.

What's even more strange, in the eyes of many, is how the Sharians mingle freely with both Goblins and Ghouls. Groups of Good Goblins enter Sharian cities and towns freely to trade, bringing furs, quarried stone, and wooden objects they make during the winters. And lurking in the shadows are the Ghouls, who keep their Compact with the Sharians. Though they rarely venture outside in daytime, at night groups of two or three of them wander the streets, collecting bodies and disposing of them in their own ghoulish way.

Sharian Sorcery

Spellcraft, particularly Sorcery, holds a place of honor in Shar. Several times spellcasters have saved Shar from disaster, or rendered much-needed aid to the Council of Shadows, and the Sharians remember this. Sorcery is much more honored here than elsewhere in Ambrethel, though even the Sharians fear and respect its power, and the rise of the Seven Sorcerers of Vûran has worsened this attitude a little. Some Sharians dabble in Sorcery, learning a minor spell or two with which to amuse their friends or enhance their work.

Sorinsarsoun

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Gelûron

Capital: Moleng

Population: Men (93%), Dwarves (2%), Elves (2%), Other (3%)

Language(s): Sharian

Coinage: Star; Moon; Sun

Resources: Farming, fishing, craftwork, ironwood

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 18%, heavy cavalry 15%, light infantry 28%, heavy infantry 22%, navy 12%, magical/other 5%

Arms/Symbol: An ironwood leaf

A small kingdom of farmers, fishers, and craftsmen, Sorinsarsoun may soon see its long and peaceful existence come to an end at the hands of either the Hierakte of Vashkhor or the Seven Sorcerers of Vûran.

HISTORY

Sorinsarsoun ("beyond the Sarsoun," in Old Vornakkian) was once part of Shar — its southern third, in effect. But the people who lived there felt ignored and slighted by the Council of Shadows in far-off Keleha Baturu. In 3662 SE, a popular noble named Tholaren Delthem led an uprising in which peasants and tradesmen overwhelmed Sharian soldiers with ferocity and force of numbers. Before the Masked Lords could respond, Lord Tholaren sent a swift ship carrying himself and several skilled ambassadors to them to negotiate freedom in exchange for tribute. The Council agreed, and Sorinsarsoun became a kingdom under Tholaren's rule. Having long since concluded its obligation to pay the tribute, Sorinsarsoun is today a free realm at peace with the world.

SORINSARSOUN IN 5000 SE

Sadly, Sorinsarsoun's days of peace may be numbered. To the south, the Seven Sorcerers of Vûran seem intent on expanding their realm, and better to attack the craftsmen north of the Korsong River than the well-armed soldiers of Zhor Caci-mar. Vashkhor, too, has ambitions to extend its borders — and since the Sharian Pass is ill-suited to an army and the Vûranese is guarded by magic, if the Hierakte decides to come east he will probably do so by means of the Sindi Pass. Neither King Gelûron nor his nobles have any true military experience, so they remain at a loss for what to do.

THE LAND

Geographically, Sorinsarsoun is much like Shar — mostly temperate, with land sloping swiftly down from the Ayn Alach to coastal plains and marshes good for farming. Only in the Screaming Hills, where the shrieks of ghosts of Goblins slain by Vornak can still sometimes be heard, does the land rise, and few Men dare to go there. Save for Moleng, it has no good ports, but many fishing villages line the coast.

Moleng

Sorinsarsoun's capital is a small, mean place compared to the seats of many kings, but it's the largest city in the land (not a difficult thing, when it's one of only three). The smell of fish and the sea fills it, and what few travelers visit its inns and taverns complain the beer has something of a fishy taste as well. But only here can one find the exquisite ironwood goods of Sorinsarsoun, so despite the fish-tasting beer, traders come from all over the world.

Sind

In southwest Sorinsarsoun, just north of the Korsong River, rises a tall, steep-sided plateau. This is Sind, also known as the Plateau of Vultures, the home of the feared Vulture-Men. These cruel flying bandits swoop down upon herdsmen, trade caravans, and anyone else they can find, killing as they will and taking whatever they can fly away with. Several times the kings of Shar and Sorinsarsoun have tried to conquer them, but reaching the top of the Plateau without the ability to fly is nearly impossible.

For the Vulture-Men, use the *Vulchine* character sheet on page 114 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, but have their wings extend out, beyond their hands, for about two feet.

SOCIETY

King Gelûron, scion of House Delthem, rules Sorinsarsoun. A calm and contemplative man, he grew up expecting to be an artist, but found himself on the throne when his father and older brother were slain fighting Goblin raiders. He has little love for the duties and burdens of office, though he's glad to avail himself of the privileges it offers — particularly the opportunity to act as a patron of the arts, or to bring famous artists and bards to court to entertain him. He has three children, all daughters so far; if he has no son, his eldest, Narina, will inherit the throne.

Sorinsarsoun's greatest resource is the Ironwood Forest, which contains a variety of ironwood tree found nowhere else in Ambrethel. Stronger than other types of ironwood, it can with effort be carved into wooden objects of a beautiful rich, brown coloration. Staffs, furniture, and doors made of Sorinsarsoun ironwood are desired the world over, and the woodcarvers of the land are accounted some of the best in the world. Their guild strictly controls who may enter the trade, and what a woodcarver may charge; some consider it the most powerful organization in Sorinsarsoun, with more political sway than either the nobles or the temple. The King's Law strictly protects the Ironwood Forest; no one may hunt in it, or fell its trees, without a charter from the king, and to do so is punishable by death. Fortunately the ironwood trees grow fast, and woodchoppers take care to plant many seedlings as they work.

Vûran

Government: Magocratic oligarchy

Ruler: The Seven Sorcerers

Capital: N/A

Population: Men (88%), Seshurma (4%), Elves (2%), Other (6%)

Language(s): Sharian

Coinage: Piece; Piece; Piece

Resources: Fishing, farming

Religion: See text

Military: Light cavalry 14%, heavy cavalry 12%, light infantry 27%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 9%, magical/other 18%

Arms/Symbol: Seven crimson towers

Once a proud if poor kingdom, Vûran is now ruled by the Seven Sorcerers, a group of cruel wizards who may have plans in store for the rest of Vornakkia.

HISTORY

Until less than a century ago, Vûran was a kingdom, ruled by (as of that time) House Zhûnar. In 4926 SE, without warning or parley, the Seven Sorcerers descended upon the land, using their awesome powers of magic and armies of enchanted followers to slaughter the king and all his family, and drive the army before them. They destroyed the capital, Vhoth-Tarin, and all the other cities in the land. Then each of them built for himself a great tower, and claimed all the land around it as his domain.

VÛRAN IN 5000 SE

Save to put down rebellions and enforce their will, the Seven Sorcerers have done little since taking over Vûran. They seem to care little for the welfare of their subjects, and pay only as much attention to them as they must to ensure they have a steady supply of laborers. To other realms, they seem to be biding their time, as if waiting for some sign before they continue their conquests. Sorinsarsoun and Shar, in particular, fear that the Seven may turn their attentions northward before much longer.

THE LAND

Vûran is a semi-tropical land, dominated by the Chekuru Jungle to the west (and to a lesser extent the Ayn Alach), and sloping down to hot coastal grasslands. Its people live in small villages, mostly clustered around the towers of the Seven; there are no cities or large towns, and outsiders are at best discouraged and at worst slain.

The Chekuru Jungle

The Seven Sorcerers claim the vast Chekuru Jungle as their own — but none of them live there or have tried to establish cities there, so the claim is an empty one. It is home to many tribes of Seshurma (who often war among themselves, and who are said to worship strange gods), as well as some groups of Elves; a race of mer-folk live in a few of the deeper rivers and lakes of the interior.

Few Men dare to enter the trackless Chekuru,

WETHANDWA

15	STR	18	DEX
16	CON	12	BODY
18	INT	12	EGO
20	PRE	10	COM
6	PD	5	ED
4	SPD	6	REC
32	END	28	STUN

Abilities: Common Mer-Folk abilities (breathe underwater, Nightvision, Infrared Perception, and so on), Swimming +6" (8" total), +2 with All Combat, Concealment 13-, High Society 13-, AK: Chekuru Jungle Waters 15-, KS: Chekuru Jungle Denizens 11-, KS: Mer-Folk Law 14-, Martial Arts (12 points' worth of Weapons Combat maneuvers), Persuasion 13-, Stealth 13-, Survival (Underwater) 13-, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Nets, Fringe Benefit: Lordship: ruler of a large tribe of Mer-Folk

Enchanted Items:

Enchanted Spear (HKA 2d6, Penetrating)

Disadvantages: Hunted (Watched by nobles who want to take his throne), Psychological Limitation: Protective Of His People

Notes: Wethandwa leads one of the tribes of Mer-Folk who live in the deepest lakes and largest rivers of the Chekuru Jungle. His tribe is one of the strongest, but it has its rivals, and sometimes must contend with other peoples as well. Although naturally wary, he's a good judge of character and will help those he deems worthy, provided doing so won't endanger his people.

a merciless place of sweltering heat. The chief dangers it holds include the fire-fever, the sting-vine, and the fierce jungle leopard. Rangers who have spent some time there have learned a few tricks — a smoky fire at night helps to stave off fire-fever and scare away the leopards, for instance — but the diseases, venomous animals, predators, hostile Seshurma, pools of quicksand, and other perils the jungle holds bring most explorers to a swift and unpleasant end.

SOCIETY

The Seven Sorcerers, masters of Sorcery and other strange magics, dominate life in Vûran. They are:

Kapros: A conjuror and devil-worshipper as well as a sorcerer, Kapros has two ram's-horns growing out of his forehead — a gift, some say, from an arch-devil as a symbol of Kapros's great power. His appearance terrifies many normal folk; when he walks the streets of the towns and villages in his domain, the people turn their faces aside in fear. As the Sorcerer living nearest the Chekuru Jungle, Kapros sometimes explores it, but so far has found nothing of great interest.

Nedana: The only sorceress among the Seven, Nedana is said to have learned much of her magic from an incubus she keeps imprisoned in a crystal ball in her workroom. Possessed of a violent temper, she's known to have whipped slaves to death simply for forgetting to chill her wine properly.

Scorumar the Dark: Gloomy and taciturn, Scorumar is the least "colorful" of the Seven, but also their most skilled researcher and scholar. It's said his library possesses tomes and librams found nowhere else in Ambrethel. He treats his people better than the other Sorcerers do, but mainly because he pays no real attention to them at all.

Shazaleth Redmane: Named for his red hair and beard, this sorcerer — said by some to be a renegade Szarvasian — is also a master of the art of Thaumaturgy. He delights in using his spells to

inflict horrific changes on others, and sometimes breeds strange monsters by combining two or more animals into a single form. A pack of deadly toad-wolves guards the grounds of his tower from intruders.

Stalgreave the Silent: Stalgreave traded his voice for magical power, learning versions of spells that require no incantations. When he must communicate with others, he uses illusion-spells to form words of fire in the air. He sometimes casts an illusion that disturbingly makes it appear that he has no mouth at all.

Taashrun: A Half-Orc from Vorash, Taashrun specializes in spells that attack the mind directly, and has developed several powerful variant versions of spells like Vashira's Pall Of Dread and Torment Of The Mind. He has bespelled many of his subjects, turning them into spies and assassins against their will.

Zhashoon: In addition to his skills as a sorcerer, Zhashoon commands powerful elemental magics, most relating to either Fire or Ice. He has two magical rings, one of which can project a powerful fire-bolt and one a similar ice-bolt.

Periodically the Seven Sorcerers meet at each tower in turn, and then make pronouncements; those edicts are law for all the land, and he who breaks them soon finds himself taken prisoner by the Seven's gargoyle troops and put to death. In the lands around his own tower, each Sorcerer makes other laws of his own, and enforces them as he sees fit. Most of the Sorcerers have enchanted troops — gargoyles, golems, ensorcelled Men, conjured beasts, and more — working for them, in addition to many slaves and soldiers.

The Vûranese nominally follow the High Church. When the Seven Sorcerers took over, they forbade all ceremonies and closed the temples, insisting the people worship only them. In secret many folk remain members of the High Church, and priests minister to them in temples hidden in basements and wilderness areas.

SOUTHERN VORNAKKIA

Southern Vornakkia — the Peninsula, in other words — is a land of city-states, each with its own strange customs, gods, and people.

Devyldra

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: Harin Rekhan

Capital: N/A

Population: Men (92%), Leomachi (2%), Elves (2%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Devyldran

Coinage: Shaksa; Parini; Nandi

Resources: Farming, craftwork, herding

Religion: Ulinoor

Military: Light cavalry 17%, heavy cavalry 11%, light infantry 38%, heavy infantry 18%, navy 10%, magical/other 6%

Arms/Symbol: A black lion

One of the largest of the Vornakkian city-states, Devyldra may soon dominate the region, if Harin Rekhan has his way.

HISTORY

Devyldra arose in the early Second Epoch from a hunting camp used by one of the nomadic bands that hunted the antelope and lions of the Devyldran Plain. There they were sometimes joined by hunters from Zhor Cacimar, Talarshand, or other city-states. In time, what was a seasonal camp became a permanent village... and in time, a town.

By that point, the simple “every tribe looks after its own folk” system of “government” wasn’t enough to keep the peace. After a series of sometimes-bloody conflicts between various groups in 3247–49 SE, the Sdana tribe emerged as the most powerful and made its leader *harin*, or “king.”

But the crown never rested easily on Sdana heads. Over the centuries, as Devyldra grew from a town, into a city, then into a proud city-state anchored by a mighty walled city, the kingship shifted from one family to another as nobles, merchants, craftsmen, adventurers, and others strove for power. Compared to many other Vornakkian city-states, Devyldra is a fractious, unstable place where the powerful are as likely to die at the hands of an assassin as peacefully in their beds... but where, before they die, they may become fabulously wealthy through trade or crime.

4030–4035 SE: Conquest Of The Devyldran Plain

While Devyldra has held a strong influence over the peoples of the Devyldran Plain for most of its existence, since they had to come to the city to trade, it did not rule them until the early 4000s. At that time, Harin Kiritan, a man obsessed with power and prestige, decided to extend his domain, and he sent his armies against the peoples of the plain, Man and Leomachi alike. Five years of chasing nomadic tribes followed, but the larger, better-equipped Devyldran forces found their foes one by

one and defeated them. Today the folk of the plain readily acknowledge the harin as their overlord.

4652–54 SE: War With Halathaloorm

In 4652 SE, a trade war with the merchants of Halathaloorm turned bloody when a hot-headed Oormali trader shoved a Devyldran harbormaster off his ship, then had his men pepper the floundering harbormaster with arrows. Soon ships of well-armed soldiers were sailing up and down the South Chekuru River attacking each other, and for a brief period in 4653 SE the Devyldran army besieged Halathaloorm itself. But some clever negotiations between Hroir Mentaru of Halathaloorm and Harin Ashwin, the payment of a hefty “tribute” to Devyldra, and the death by slow torture of the trader who started the whole thing finally brought the war to an end, and trade between the two city-states resumed its normal pace.

DEVYLDRA IN 5000 SE

Devyldra is its usual self in 5000 SE — a loud, busy, noisome place of traders, craftsmen, priests, and nobles all competing for wealth and power. Sitting high above all of them is Harin Rekhan, a proud man who’s lately shown signs of ambition. He has said things to his councillors which make them think he’s considering moves against Bihlara (to bring it firmly within Devyldra’s control), then perhaps Halathaloorm or Kurum-Sathiri to follow. Since Devyldra lacks the military strength to fight a prolonged war, the harin’s advisors worry about how he might conduct such a campaign.

THE LAND

Devyldra is a large and chaotic city whose roots as a hunting-camp are evident. It has many broad streets, but few run for long without turning at odd angles or ending when they intersect some other road. Tall, proud buildings of stone stand next to wattle-and-daub shacks or structures made of wood, though as a rule the further one gets from the waterfront the nicer the streets and buildings get. Since the climate is mild, many people live and sleep in the street, which sometimes makes it difficult to travel through the city after dark.

Devyldra is sometimes known as “the City of Black Bricks,” since the dark, rich clay near it makes for brown-black bricks. The soil is also quite fertile, allowing farmers to grow large, healthy crops.

The Devyldran Plain

As a city-state, Devyldra controls more than just the land inside its city walls. First, the harins claim all the Devyldran Plain. The plains are best-known to most Ambrethelans as home to the dark-furred “black lion” which is Devyldra’s symbol. Larger and fiercer than ordinary lions, black lions have been known to take on well-armed, heavily-armored warriors and defeat them; not even plate armor can stand up to their long, sharp fangs.

The Plains are also home to several clans of Leomachi, including the Sun-Spear tribe and the Windrunner tribe. The Leomachi support themselves largely by trading cattle to the Devyldrans, but also hunt the antelope and other creatures of

the plains. The tribal leaders acknowledge the rule of the harin, though sometimes with poor grace.

The Vylhura Islands

Devylдра also exercises sovereignty over the Vylhura Islands, a small archipelago south of the city. Most Vylhurans are peasants who keep fruit orchards or herd goats and swine, but a few groups of wizards have built towers or keeps there to take advantage of the isolation. Several times Devyldran thieves have tried to burgle the home of a Vylhuran mage to steal powerful enchanted items or grimoires, only to come to horrific ends.

Bihlara

Through influence and bribery Devylдра effectively rules the city of Bihlara to the north. Founded nearly a millennia ago at the mouth of a small river, Bihlara began as little more than a fishing village, but grew after miners found rich veins of copper and semi-precious stone (malachite, azurite, lapis lazuli, and more) in the nearby mountains. Bihluran lapidaries and masons are renowned for the quality and beauty of their work.

The king of Bihlara, Thandoro, cares little for the burdens of rule. He's more than happy to let the harin of Devylдра control his city, provided he receives enough gold from him to indulge his passions for women, horse-racing, and wine. Those who earn King Thandoro's good graces get to live lives of sybaritic luxury as part of his retinue of sycophantic followers if they want to; those who earn his disfavor may find themselves clapped into chains and thrown into the slave-pens for sale in the next day's market.

SOCIETY

The *harin*, or "king," of Devylдра in 5000 SE is Rekhan, whose family seized the throne a little over eighty years ago. Rekhan has many enemies, including distant relatives of the former ruling family (whose members Rekhan's grandfather put to death when he [the grandfather] took power). He protects himself with a group of highly-trained bodyguards, including two empty-handed warriors brought all the way from distant Thon-Sa. To counter his enemies politically, he has lavished gifts, money, and positions on other families, who are now his staunch allies.

Harin Rekhan and his wife, the Harina Tirtha, have five children, but only one son, Salmalin, the heir to the throne. Salmalin is nearly of age to marry, and Rekhan has begun to look for a suitable wife for him — but the rebellious Salmalin declares he will marry only for love.

The Army

Harin Rekhan himself commands the Devyldran army, which also serves as the city guard. Most soldiers wear scale or chain armors, treated with a special alchemical "browning" so that they don't rust too quickly in the humid Vornakkian weather. In battle they carry shields and wield the *ashurana*, or "lion's-jaw sword," a weapon inspired by the jawbone of the feared black lion of the Devyldran Plain. Forged of a single piece of iron, an *ashurana*

has a serrated cutting edge, a dull back edge that can be used as a club, and a short point for stabbing or thrusting; the wielder wraps the handle in leather strips so that it rests comfortably in his grasp. (See page 204 for an illustration.) Most soldiers also carry spears or short bows as well.

Devyldran Religion

As described on page 213, the Devyldrans worship Ulinoor, the cat-goddess. They do not forbid other forms of worship in their city, so the neighborhoods where visitors live often have small chapels to the gods of the High Church, the Hargeshite faith, or other Vornakkian religions.

Eltirian

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Hergolmion

Capital: N/A

Population: Men (93%), Other (7%)

Language(s): Eltiriani

Coinage: Penny; Talent; Rilk

Resources: Craftwork, mining, farming

Religion: The Gods Who Watch Over Eltirian

Military: Light cavalry 18%, heavy cavalry 11%, light infantry 40%, heavy infantry 21%, navy 0%, magical/other 12%

Arms/Symbol: A purple heptagon

Founded by escaped slaves, Eltirian has grown to become one of the largest and proudest cities of Ambrethel. Although its enemy Talarshand and rival Kurum-Sathiri both pose threats, the Eltiriani remain confident their king and gods will protect them.

HISTORY

Eltirian was founded in 2112 FE by Anselon the Bold, a slave who, with a band of other slaves, escaped from the pits of Talarshand and fled that city. With soldiers hot on their heels, they ran northward, eventually coming to the place where Eltirian is today. There the god Aberac spoke to Anselon, telling him he would protect him from the Talarshandi soldiers if Anselon would build him a great city of seven gates. Anselon agreed, and Aberac sent a storm that destroyed the pursuing soldiers.

Talarshand did not give up so easily. In 2119 FE it sent an army against Eltirian, but the Eltiriani defeated it with clever stratagems. The two cities have warred several more times — in 2618 FE, 3448 SE, 3879 SE, 4536 SE, and 4964 SE — but neither has ever conquered the other, or even inflicted serious damage. Some folk claim the Gods Who Watch Over Eltirian and S'taa'sha, the Talarshandi reptile-god, war with each other, and so force their followers in Ambrethel to do the same.

3449-3462 SE: The Time Of Twelve Kings

Following the third war between Talarshand and Eltirian, in which the Talarshandi for the first time breached the walls of Eltirian and slew many of Eltirian's nobles, King Tahônac succumbed to a battle-wound and died. His son succeeded him, but

lacked the strength or charisma to hold the throne; he was soon overthrown by an ambitious noble.

Over the next twelve years, Eltirian had ten other kings, each from a different noble family, and each unable to keep the crown for very long; several were assassinated by rivals, others deposed and exiled (or executed). Finally in 3462 SE, Delrion of House Thôtarb took the kingship and held it against all his enemies, establishing a new dynasty that was to last many years. But the Time of Twelve Kings gives several of Eltirian's noble families loose claims to the throne, creating an element of instability in the city's politics.

4110 SE: The Sorcerer's War

Early in the fifth millennium, a conflict arose between the wizards of Eltirian and the rest of the city. A group of spellcasters, led by a woman of great power named Tathairis, believed they, not the weak and corrupt king, should rule the city — after all, were they not wise and learned? When the wizards' attempt to engineer a coup failed, the people rose up against the Guild of Sorcerers. The mob tore several spellcasters to bloody shreds, and it became apparent the Guild was preparing a deadly magical assault against its attackers and other enemies.

Rather than have war and chaos engulf his city, the "weak and corrupt" King Ghanisra came forward and, without bodyguard or warding-spell, walked to the Guild's hall. Impressed by his bravery, the wizards admitted him onto the Guildhall's grounds and spoke with him. Over a night and a day, the king negotiated a truce, the price for which was the Second Perpetual Law (see below). On the word of the king, the mob dispersed, and life in Eltirian returned to normal.

ELTIRIAN IN 5000 SE

Eltirian often seems a timeless place, where only the names of kings and traders change. The people worship the Gods, as they always have; the nobles bicker and scheme, as they always have; merchants compete with one another, as they always have; the Guild of the Third Moon steals whatever it can, as it always has.

And as usual, dangers within and without threaten Eltirian's peace. The aggressive words of the priests of Talarshand lead many Eltiriani to fear that another war may be in the offing; more than a few nobles and merchants have begun to build up their personal guards. Longtime rival Kurum-Sathiri, with whom Eltirian trades through the Golden Pass, has begun looking for a way to take over the *virgala* trade; some in Eltirian even believe the Sithians are trying to find a way through the mountains so they need not deal with Eltiriani traders at all.

The balance of power within the city shifted recently because of the unexpected death of Lord Dhenach, one of the wealthiest and most influential nobles in the city, and his entire family at the hands of unknown assassins. The assassins also stole many of Dhenach's treasures, leaving his once-beautiful home looking ravaged and mean. No one knows who had Dhenach killed, but other nobles (such as

Lord Bethrion, Lady Salyeth, Lord Andrushac, and Lord Kanatha) are scrambling to acquire as many of Dhenach's people, and as much of his power, for themselves as they can.

THE LAND

One of the largest and grandest cities in the world, Eltirian was built by Anselon the Bold and his heirs based on visions received from the Gods. It has a large central area, the Citadel, where Vatanuthar Venai, the castle of the Eltiriani kings, stands. From the Citadel seven great roads, one for each of the Gods, once ran, one to each of the city's seven gates, but today other streets have broken up and blocked three of the seven roads.

Although Eltirian is a great center of trade, it has one major weakness as a trading city: its lack of a port or navigable river. Those who wish to do business in Eltirian must journey there by land (or by magic), which causes difficulties. Only the fact that Eltirian has several commodities available nowhere else — the fabulous and beautiful *virgala*-stone, pried from the Ghenu-Shatha Mountains above the city by clans of miners who've pursued that trade for thousands of years; smooth, fine Eltiriani silk; the elt-hound, considered by some the best breed of guard-dog available — draws traders to it from all over the world.

The Living Statues

Many who trade in Eltirian take their goods by caravan to the coast on the Vornakkian Gulf, where they can load their ships at several towns and villages. On the way they often pass the Living Statues, a group of gigantic statues shaped roughly like Men. At times, but never when anyone is watching, the statues move around and change shape, and if one touches them, they are warm like living flesh rather than cold like stone. No one knows who built them, or why, or what their purpose may be, and so most folk give them a wide berth.

SOCIETY

Eltirian is a bustling, thriving, cosmopolitan city where one can find visitors from all over the world. While most of the permanent residents are Men, just about every other race of Ambrethel visits there from time to time, so a person walking the streets sees many strange faces and forms of garb, and hears a dozen different languages.

Hergolmion of House Elspinar rules Eltirian; his family has held the throne for nearly 300 years now. A firm but fair man, he's well-regarded by the people, but scorned by some of the nobility with whom he's crossed swords from time to time. He and his wife, Queen Jadaris, have four children; the eldest son, also named Hergolmion, will inherit the throne in time... assuming he survives the court intrigues, assassination attempts, and other dangers that follow a prince of Eltirian as he grows up.

The Army

Eltirian has an army made up of two parts. The core is the City Guard, a group of skilled, well-trained soldiers; they wear leather armor when on patrol (and chainmail in battle) and carry halberd-

VALJHARAC

8	STR	18	DEX
13	CON	10	BODY
23	INT	18	EGO
23	PRE	8	COM
6	PD	6	ED
3	SPD	7	REC
26	END	22	STUN

Abilities: 90 points' worth of Necromancy spells, 20 points' worth of Sorcery spells, 20 points' worth of Witchcraft spells, 20 points' worth of Wizardry spells, Embalming 14-, Healing 14-, CK: Eltirian 11-, KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 14-, KS: Necromancy 14-, KS: The Undead 14-, Sorcery 18-, Stealth 13-, Witchcraft 20-, Wizardry 18-

Enchanted Items:

Nercromancer's Staff (Endurance Reserve [130 END, 25 REC])

Disadvantages: Enraged (if insulted, taunted, or belittled, go 11-, recover 11-), Psychological Limitation: Wants To Be Feared And Respected

Notes: All his life, Valjharac has been picked on and insulted for being so small and scrawny. That he was smarter than everyone else didn't help matters. He attracted the attention of a necromancer, and was apprenticed to him. He threw himself into his studies, and his since become a powerful necromancer. No longer will he tolerate people laughing at him; now he commands the very powers of life and death!

Valjharac wears the typical garb of an Eltirian necromancer: a black robe; a black skullcap; a short cloak the color of dried blood.

like polearms, the distinctively-hilted Eltiriani longsword, shields (if desired), and horns that sound a specific note for times when they need to call for help.

The bulk of the fighting force consists of the Eltiriani people themselves, who form a sort of militia. Every male 12 years old or older is required to know how to use at least one weapon, and households with three or more men are required to have at least one of the men know how to use a bow or sling. When a siege occurs, the women and children fill vital roles as messengers, suppliers of goods, and so forth. The city has several deep wells, and it stockpiles food against attacks, and thus has never fallen to siege before.

The Laws Of Eltirian

Eltirian binds itself with many unusual laws, the greatest of which are the three *Perpetual Laws* graven in stone over each of the city gates. No one, not even the king himself, may break these laws.

The First Perpetual law is:

“Any man who enters into Eltirian shall be a free man, owing no debt of slavery, serfdom, or indenture to any other man while within the City walls.”

Because Eltirian was founded by slaves, its people have no desire to see any man bound to work against his will. Any slave who enters the city automatically becomes free. Many slaves who escape from other Vornakkian cities flee here, often bringing special knowledge the city fathers can make good use of.

The Second Perpetual Law is:

“The Guild of Sorcerers shall own its lands and the buildings thereon in perpetuity, never paying taxes on them, and never shall either Eltirian or the Guild attack the other by force of arms or force of magic.”

King Ghanisra instituted this law in 4110 SE to prevent a war between the city and the Guild. In exchange, the Guild has agreed to aid the city

against any and all attackers, and often provides assistance with other matters as well.

The Third Perpetual Law is:

“No guard or official of the City, save only the King, shall enter within one hundred paces of Devil’s-Neck Square.”

Devil’s-Neck Square is in the very heart of the Thieves’ District. This law was blackmailed out of King Hazerac II in 4690 SE by the master thief Endarion, who discovered certain things about Hazerac that the king did not wish his nobles to know about. As a result, the City Guard cannot pursue thieves who flee into the ramshackle neighborhoods around the Square, creating a den of iniquity and crime unmatched in Ambrethel.

The Guild Of Sorcerers

The Eltiriani mages’ guild is known as the Guild of Sorcerers, though it allows any practitioner of the Arts Arcane into its ranks and offers sorcerers no greater place or power. The practice of the Arts is alive and well in Eltirian, and not just among the guild-mages; spellcasters of all sorts live throughout the city, studying or selling their services. Eltiriani mages are well-known as inventors and innovators, and often possess unique spells of their own creation.

Other Matters

The people of Eltirian follow the Gods Who Watch Over Eltirian, seven mysterious deities who protect the city from harm. See page 213 for more information.

The people of Eltirian speak their own tongue, Eltiriani, which is similar in some ways to other Vornakkian tongues (particularly Talarshandi), but different in many others (such as its strange glyphic script). Names in Eltiriani all use certain suffixes: for men, those suffixes are -ac(h), -(r)a, and -ion; for women, those suffixes are -is and -yeth/-ieth).

Halathaloorm

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: Hroir Veltras

Capital: N/A

Population: Men (90%), Seshurma (4%), Elves (3%), Other (3%)

Language(s): Oormali

Coinage: Star; Moon; Sun

Resources: Fishing, spice, craftwork, farming

Religion: Oormali (see text)

Military: Light cavalry 21%, heavy cavalry 15%, light infantry 28%, heavy infantry 18%, navy 12%, magical/other 6%

Arms/Symbol: A *jaruma*-fish

Known as the City of a Thousand Gods for its unusual religious life, and the City of a Thousand Fountains for all the waterways and decoration it has, Halathaloorm is a city unlike any other in the world.

HISTORY

In 2646 FE, when the Fire-King took over Zhor Cacimar, many people fled the City of the Azure Gates rather than submit to his rule. Some of them sailed or walked south down the river, passing through the Greenmaw with great difficulty, and crossed Lake Sahaliir. After they left the lake, they found a place where the river narrowed and became shallow, making it easy to cross. Here they settled and founded a city, which became Halathaloorm.

Life in old Halathaloorm was not easy; the people survived mainly by fishing and hunting, but eventually began to raise crops — especially after the Fire-Lord was slain and they could get the supplies they needed from Zhor Cacimar. In time, trade with the Cacimarians, and later the Devyl-drans, allowed Halathaloorm to grow and prosper.

3811 SE: Ortarses the Great

Two things turned Halathaloorm from a sleepy river city to a major trading power. The first was the rise to power of Ortarses, the greatest *hroir* (“king”) in the city’s history, in 3811 SE. A wizard as well as a ruler, Ortarses used his powers to make his city a grander and more glorious place. He raised islands from amid the river so his slaves could build bridges, or nobles could erect towers and castles away from the rest of the city. He transformed buildings of wood into buildings of stone, cobbled the streets of the city so neither commoner nor noble would have to walk in the mud, and created fountains and statues. He died young, his powers spent and his body exhausted, but left his city a far better place than it was before.

4067 SE: Thakra-Root

In 4067 SE, a starving Oormali named Lahia, desperate for something to eat, dug up a strange-looking weed, the *thakra*, that grows on the southern bank of Lake Sahaliir. To her amazement, she discovered that not only was it edible, it was delicious. She told others about it, and soon many people were eating it — though they quickly

learned it was even better when dried, ground into powder, and used as a spice. Soon Lahia had become a wealthy spice merchant, and many other folk were earning money by gathering *thakra* and selling it in the city. As word of the delicious spice spread, traders began coming from all over the world to buy it (and some even tried to buy *thakra* plants, but the king outlawed the sale of them). Today *thakra*-root spice is one of Halathaloorm’s most important products.

HALATHALOORM IN 5000 SE

Halathaloorm is in the midst of several difficulties. First, though Hroir Veltras still holds the throne, he is considered vulnerable, having squandered much wealth and influence early in his reign trying to emulate Ortarses the Great with extensive building projects and the creation of monuments. Several powerful nobles, including the harsh-tempered Lord Bhaskar, have begun maneuvering to seize the throne.

Second, attempts by outlanders to steal *thakra* plants have increased recently. The king’s spies and soldiers have stopped all these attempts, but some in the city fear it’s only a matter of time before one of the *thakra* farms fall victim to thievery... or a greedy farmer sells a plant for a fabulous sum.

THE LAND

Located on the South Chekuru River just south of Lake Sahaliir, Halathaloorm is a city of bridges, broad riverside neighborhoods, canals, and fountain-filled plazas. It spills over into several islands in the river, though these are mostly the homes of wealthy nobles and merchants. It long ago outgrew its walls, making it difficult to defend against attacks.

The largest and grandest building in Halathaloorm is the Ortarsarion, the royal palace built by Ortarses the Great himself. Inspired by the shape of one of Ortarses’s beloved fountains, it has a tall, broad central tower in the midst of a broad, low-lying building with several smaller towers around its edge. Some visitors think it ugly, but the Oormali seem to like it just fine — and no one who’s been treated to the elaborate and generous hospitality of the Oormali kings has ever complained.

Lake Sahaliir

Just north of Halathaloorm is Lake Sahaliir, the largest body of fresh water in the Vornakkian Peninsula. It teems with fish, particularly the delicious *jaruma* which is the city’s symbol, and many Oormali support themselves by trolling its waters with nets. As the city’s population slowly spreads northwards, homes are springing up along the lakeshore — for now, the country estates of wealthy merchants and nobles, but eventually others.

SOCIETY

The ruler of Halathaloorm, in effect no different than a king, is called the *hroir*; currently Veltras of House Shothar is *hroir*. Early in his reign he tried to follow in the footsteps of the great Ortarses, but while he did build a few buildings and erect several monuments, mostly he spent his political power

and money for nothing. Today he hopes to live out his ambitions through his son, Tindarus, who has shown a gift for the Arts Arcane; Veltras is pushing him to pursue them, though he seems disinclined to do so.

The Thousand Gods

Halathaloom is called the City of a Thousand Gods, for within its walls all gods are worshipped: those of the High Church, those of the Hargeshite faith, those of other Vornakkian realms, and many more. See page 214 for more information.

Kurum-Sathiri

Government: Magocratic monarchy

Ruler: Ar-King Zoromtar

Capital: N/A

Population: Men (91%), Elves (3%), Gnomes (2%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Sithian

Coinage: Talent; Talent; Talent

Resources: Farming, craftwork, herding, mining

Religion: Sithian

Military: Light cavalry 18%, heavy cavalry 14%, light infantry 27%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 0%, magical/other 21%

Arms/Symbol: A black tower surrounded by flame

A city ruled by mages, Kurum-Sathiri is also an important center of trade engaged in a war with Eltirian for the coins of outlander traders.

HISTORY

As the descendants of Vornak and his followers gradually made their way down the peninsula, they encountered a few tribes of Men. One of the largest of these was the Kuru, who lived in the plains and jungles south of the Ghenu-Shatha Mountains. A short folk with skins burned dark by the hot sun, the Kuru were not strong enough to resist the Vornakkians, who soon displaced or enslaved the tribesmen and settled the land themselves.

For centuries, the lands now controlled by Kurum-Sathiri were not a realm at all, but simply a collection of small towns and villages sharing the same language and customs. But in 2579 FE, the Kuru slaves rebelled, turning on their masters with great ferocity. The Vornakkians fled to Kurum-Sathiri, the most defensible of their towns, and put up a valiant resistance. Over the next two years they held off the Kuru, and then defeated them utterly with the help of several spellcasters. The surviving Kuru fled south to the Hliatha Jungle; captives became slaves once more. Fearing another attack, the Vornakkians chose not to return to their homes, but remained at Kurum-Sathiri and built a stout wall around it; the spellcasters who led the victory became their rulers.

Since then, Kurum-Sathiri has become a true city, with thousands of inhabitants; it's had to build new walls several times, giving it the appearance from above of a series of irregular concentric polygons that follow the lay of the land. It con-

trols much land south of the mountains, but only the bravest of its people dare go near the Hliatha Jungle, where the Kuru still dwell and thirst for vengeance.

KURUM-SATHIRI IN 5000 SE

In 5000 SE, Kurum-Sathiri finds itself trapped between several rivals and potential enemies. To the north lies Eltirian, a city with which it conducts much trade, but also competes with. Many Sithians (people of Kurum-Sathiri) would like nothing better than to see some great disaster befall Eltirian, since then all the traders who go there would come to Kurum-Sathiri instead.

East and west of Kurum-Sathiri lie Talarshand and Devyldra, respectively. Both realms seem eager to expand their territories, and Ar-King Zoromtar fears that his city may be one of their targets. He's done his best to bolster the city's defenses (both mundane and magical), but he fears that even if he defeats one of the city's enemies, doing so will leave Kurum-Sathiri vulnerable to attack by the other.

THE LAND

Kurum-Sathiri is built on and around a series of hills, the tallest of which, at the city's center, supports the Black Towers (see below). Four different walls surround it concentrically, with the innermost being the first wall built by the earliest inhabitants, and the last the one erected by Kiralak the Protector in 4783 SE. The closer to the center a Sithian lives, the more prosperous or powerful he tends to be.

Other than the Black Towers, perhaps the most noteworthy feature of Kurum-Sathiri is the Sithian Lorehouse, an academy for spellcasters that's considered among the best in the world. Included among its many books and scrolls are the Tablets of Zaranthu, several large, flat blocks of stone incised with runes no one can read, and whose appearance most people find disturbing (even sickening if viewed for too long). Calikorian of Valicia gave them to the school shortly before his death in 4618 SE. Thieves have tried to steal the Tablets several times, only to be foiled by the Lorehouse's magical and mundane guards and wards.

The Hliatha Jungle

South of Kurum-Sathiri, along the coast of the Khelvarian Ocean, stands the Hliatha Jungle. As mentioned above, the city claims the jungle as part of its territory, but the Sithian rarely venture into it. Beneath its branches live the Kuru, who nurse an intense, bitter hatred of the Sithians for enslaving them. Sithian slavers still try to capture Kuru men and women, for they're strong and agile, and so fetch high prices — but a slaver captured by the Kuru dies slowly over a fire deep in the jungle.

The Kuru organize themselves into tribes, each named after a totem animal, such as Parrot, Tiger, Eagle, Golden Serpent, and Razor-Fish. The chieftains of the tribes choose one of their number as the Great Chief of all the tribes, and his word is law among the Kuru.

SOCIETY

Like Arutha, Kurum-Sathiri is a magocracy — a society ruled by spellcasters. However, unlike in Arutha, in the city spellcasting prowess is largely linked to social status and wealth: the more accomplished a wizard is, the higher his “rank” in society, and the more money he tends to make (from “gifts” given by those who wish to earn his favor, fees paid to him for spellcasting or use of his library, and so forth). No one who cannot cast spells can hope to become politically powerful within Kurum-Sathiri.

The Ar-King, the greatest of all wizards of the city, lives in the Tower of Black Faces in the middle of the city. The Tower seems to be carved from glittering obsidian, and in its surface a careful observer can sometimes see faces with various expressions on them. The Council of Mages, the nine most powerful wizards in the city other than the king, serve as his advisors; because they meet in the Tower every day, and live in smaller black towers nearby, the ten of them are collectively referred to as the “Black Faces” by many Sithians. “To ascend to the Black Towers” is the desire of virtually every spellcaster in the city; the common folk use the phrase to refer to the attainment of any long-sought goal.

The Ar-King earns his position, and the Councillors theirs, through Duel Arcane (though a mage can simply give his seat to another, if he so chooses). Unlike Arutha, which restricts when and how mages can fight these Duels, in Kurum-Sathiri a Duel can occur at just about any time, possibly even without the chance for the two combatants to agree on the conventions used. The Sithians have learned to get out of the way whenever two wizards look askance at one another.

The current Ar-King is Zoromtar, a mage well-versed in Wizardry, Theurgy, various Elemental Magics, Conjuration, and Divination. He’s sufficiently powerful that it seems unlikely any of the Council of Mages will challenge him for the throne anytime soon; among other things, his Divination is so strong it’s thought he could see a rival coming, and prepare for his attacks, long before the rival himself had fully formulated a plan!

Despite its reputation as a home of wizards and wonders, Kurum-Sathiri, like any other large city, lives mostly on trade. It mainly trades with Eltirian and Devyldra, but many traders from other lands walk through its gates as well. They come in search not only of the potions and enchanted items crafted by the city’s many spellcasters, but *hra’sayai*, a heady yellowish liquor found nowhere else. Made, in part, from the nectar of the *saya* flower that grows only in this region, *hra’sayai* is a luxury desired by nobles the world over.

The people of Kurum-Sathiri worship but one god, whom they call Mahin. Their priests claim that all other gods are either demons, or “forms” of Mahin. See page 214 for more information.

Talarshand

Government: Oligarchic theocracy

Ruler: The Elect of S’taa’sha

Capital: N/A

Population: Men (86%), Seshurma (6%), Drakine (4%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Talarshandi

Coinage: Lizard; Serpent; Crocodile

Resources: Farming, craftwork, fishing

Religion: S’taa’sha

Military: Light cavalry 21%, heavy cavalry 16%, light infantry 31%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 6%, magical/other 6%

Arms/Symbol: A green and yellow banner

The westernmost of the Vornakkian city-states, Talarshand is a den of merchants struggling for wealth and prestige, fanatic priests, deadly assassins, and slavers. Few outsiders like to visit it, but many traders cannot resist its rich markets.

HISTORY

The earliest records of Talarshand claim Vornak himself traveled the length of the Peninsula to found the city, but few scholars credit this as anything but a legend. Instead, it seems likely that Talarshand arose in the 1100s as the Vornakkian peoples slowly made their way south and west. Beyond the Golden Pass, they encountered many small tribes of Men and Orcs, whom they slew or enslaved. They built their first town on a large island in the middle of the Tala River, the better to defend themselves from tribesmen and monsters. In time that town grew into a city as the Talarshandi sailed down the Tala to trade with the outside world, and traders came to visit them. Soon they destroyed or captured the enemy tribes, and by the early Second Epoch the city had expanded to both banks of the river. The fertile land allowed farmers to grow large crops to feed the growing population.

2112 FE: The Slaves’ Revolt

From the city’s earliest days, the Talarshandi used slaves to build their towers, prepare their meals, and do other menial labor, and at times the population of slaves exceeded the population of masters. Only a large city guard and harsh laws kept the slaves in line. But even that failed in 2112 FE, when the brutal public whipping and execution of a slave caused the other slaves to rise up and attempt to overthrow their masters. For over half a year fighting raged in the streets of the city as soldier butchered slave, and slaves using captured or makeshift weapons burst in on hapless Talarshandi and slaughtered them. One group, led by the slave Anselon, fled north and founded the city of Eltirian, but the Talarshandi, concerned mostly with quelling the rebellion at home, sent only a token detachment of soldiers to capture them (and those soldiers failed, as described above).

Eventually, with the help of magic, the Talarshandi located and captured the leaders of the Slaves’ Revolt. A swift public execution of them

ZARUMAN

10	STR	14	DEX
13	CON	13	BODY
15	INT	10	EGO
18	PRE	8	COM
3	PD	3	ED
2	SPD	5	REC
26	END	25	STUN

Abilities: Bribery 13-, Conversation 13-, Forgery (Money) 8-, Gambling (Dice Games) 8-, High Society 13-, AK: Vornakkia 11-, CK: Talarshand 14-, KS: Slaves And Slave-Trading 14-, Languages: Cacimarian, Devyldran, Sharian, Sithian (all basic conversation; Talarshandi is Native), Literacy, Lockpicking 8-, Navigation (Marine) 8-, PS: Sailing 8-, PS: Slaver 11-, PS: Trader 11-, Sleight Of Hand 8-, Stealth 12-, Streetwise 13-, Trading 13-, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Contacts (30 points’ worth, throughout Vornakkia), Money (Wealthy)

Enchanted Items: None

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Devout S’taa’sha Worshipper, Psychological Limitation: Ruthlessly Greedy

Notes: One of the most successful slavers in Talarshand, Zaruman has made a fortune in the slave trade. His *s’vra* is high, and he keeps it that way by throwing elaborate, expensive parties nearly every month. He attributes all that he has in life to the Great Scaly One, who has blessed him with good fortune because of his piety.

and hundreds of other rebels followed, breaking the back of the rebellion. By 2113 FE, the city had largely returned to normal — but with an even closer eye on the slaves.

The Eltirian Wars

By 2119 FE, the ruling priests felt confident enough in their control of the city to send an army to destroy Eltirian and enslave its people once more. But despite having a large numerical advantage, the Talarshandi army failed due to the cleverness of the Eltiriani.

Over the centuries, Talarshand has attacked Eltirian five more times, the latest being a mere 36 years ago. Never has it conquered the city, though twice it has breached Eltirian's walls. Some among the priesthood claim the retaking of the "escaped slaves" is a divine quest commanded by S'taa'sha.

4758 SE: Shalathcar The Reformer

About 250 years ago, turmoil rocked the normally monolithic Talarshandi priesthood. A young priest named Shalathcar discovered that many of his superiors, including the members of the Elect, could no longer cast spells! They had become corrupt and greedy, and so the Great Scaly One had denied them their holy powers.

A devout and pious man, Shalathcar could not keep secret what he had learned. He trumpeted the story all over the city, and before long there was fighting in the streets as the Elect and other fallen priests tried to hold onto power by using the army to slay their foes. But with the power of S'taa'sha to aid them, Shalathcar and his allies stormed the Great Temple and sacrificed the Elect and their followers to the Great Scaly One, thus restoring the priesthood to purity. And even today, whenever anyone suspects a priest of venality, the mere mention of the name "Shalathcar" to him is often enough to prompt a confession; the priests claim the Reformer's ghost haunts the temples and schools, slaying any who abuse their powers or neglect S'taa'sha's worship.

TALARSHAND IN 5000 SE

S'taa'sha has blessed his holy city, for wealth and power aplenty have flowed into Talarshand in recent years. Sellers and buyers fill the Slaves' Market from dawn to dusk, ships from all over the world sail up the Tala to dock at the city's wharves, and the priesthood leads Talarshand unerringly toward greatness with its wisdom and divine powers. The Talarshandi are feeling their strength, and wish to exercise it. Some have called for another crusade to destroy Eltirian. Others favor an attack on Kurum-Sathiri instead, arguing that it's less well-defended and provides a better gateway to the lands beyond.

As always, though, others within the city hold different opinions — they consider plans of conquest foolish, or want the priesthood to focus on other things. And as usual, differences are settled as much through political maneuvering, assassination, and blackmail as through public debate. Talarshand remains a city where the uninitiated should fear to tread, and where even a skilled noble can find his

life suddenly cut short by a Silver Branch dagger.

THE LAND

Talarshand includes three sections: Shand-Heart, the large island in the middle of the Tala River where the city began, and where its wealthiest and most powerful people live today; the North Bank; and the South Bank. Most people would consider the North Bank more "prestigious" than the South; moving from South, to North, to the Heart is part of climbing the social ladder.

The center of the Heart is an artificial hill, and atop it, towering over every other building in Talarshand, is the Great Temple: a tall, four-sided zig-gurat, with a broad staircase running up the front. On the top is an enormous statue of the Great Scaly One, S'taa'sha, his arms outstretched to encompass all the world. At the god's feet lies an altar on which the priests make human sacrifices to him; runnels carry the blood down the sides of the altar, down the sides of the staircase, and to the ground below.

The Slaves' Market

The Slaves' Market of Talarshand is the largest slave-market in Ambrethel, surpassing even those of Vashkhor, Thûn, and southern Mitharia. Located on Shand-Heart not far from the Great Temple and Thalgaryan Arena (both of which often buy slaves no one else will, for use as sacrifices or gladiatorial fodder), it attracts slavers and buyers from most of the world.

The Slaves' Market has three parts. First is the slave-pens, where slavers keep slaves pending sale the next day; how *well* they're kept depends on how large a bribe the slaver pays to the Master of the Pens. Next is the Block, where sellers haul slaves up in chains so buyers can bid in them. The buyers themselves stand in the Field, the open area in front of the block; they exchange coin with the slavers at the foot of the stairs leading up to the Block.

Imlag And Hruumiel

Talarshand already controls two other, smaller, cities, one of which it built, and one it conquered. The latter is Imlag, on the southern coast, a city of fishermen. Traders rarely visit there because the Harfang Reefs make navigation in those seas treacherous. The former is Hruumiel, a city of the deep river valley at the mouth of the Tala; it's the first stop for foreign traders coming to or leaving Talarshand. The Hruumielese have formed an alliance with a nearby kingdom of mer-folk to protect them and their shipping from Sharthak raiders; in exchange they give the mer-folk much gold, and many other goods besides that cannot be made underwater.

SOCIETY

Talarshand is ruled by a group of six priests known as the Elect of S'taa'sha. The leader of the group, called the First Elect, serves as king and commander when someone must, but usually the Elect act as one due to the divine guidance of S'taa'sha. As of 5000 SE the First Elect is Mel'hagga, an aged priest of unquestioned piety and strong spells.

Zhor Cacimar

Gold And S'vra

Two things dominate Talarshandi society: money (and the desire for it); and *s'vra*.

While known among many folk as a city of cruel priests, Talarshand is really a city of merchants. Buying, selling, and the making of money dominate the thoughts of most Talarshandi, and they see nothing as telling of success so much as wealth.

One of the reasons the Talarshandi so highly value wealth is that great wealth brings *s'vra*, a term with connotations of "status" and "prestige." A person's *s'vra* indicates his standing in Talarshandi society; the greater his *s'vra*, the more people envy him, toady to him, and seek his aid and advice. One can obtain *s'vra* in many ways, including honorable military service or performing other services for the city, but the quickest way is through lavish displays of wealth. Rich Talarshandi often throw elaborate feasts, fetes, and entertainments for their fellows, the better to augment their *s'vra*. For this reason, skilled chefs, minstrels, and entertainers have high value in Talarshand, whether as hirelings or slaves.

Outsiders, such as visiting adventurers, have no *s'vra* at all, and so have little chance of acquiring the attention of wealthy and influential persons. But nothing speaks louder than money, so a group of visitors who begin spending in the Talarshandi style will soon find themselves accepted into Talarshand society... if they can keep up.

Talarshandi Fashion

Because green and gold are the colors of the Great Scaly One, Talarshandi dress in them almost exclusively. The costlier and more elaborate the clothing, the better, since such displays of wealth bring *s'vra*. Talarshandi men of style typically long single-piece robes, often tied at the waist with an elaborate sash; they also favor lots of gold jewelry (earrings, bracers, rings, and such). Women wear two-piece outfits consisting of a long skirt and a sort of billowy blouse, and even more jewelry than the men. Both genders wear their hair long, and usually loose; merchants bind theirs up with elaborate turbans as a sign of status.

Of course, lesser folk, without wealth or *s'vra*, may not dress so elaborately. Those who have to work in the heat usually wear much shorter clothes, and both male and female slaves usually aren't allowed to wear anything but a loincloth.

Government: Syndicracy

Ruler: The Guild Council

Capital: N/A

Population: Men (88%), Dwarves (5%), Gnomes (2%), Seshurma (1%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Cacimarian

Coinage: Hammer; Hammer; Hammer

Resources: Craftwork, farming, mining

Religion: Cacimarian

Military: Light cavalry 21%, heavy cavalry 13%, light infantry 33%, heavy infantry 24%, navy 1%, magical/other 8%

Arms/Symbol: A silver-blue sword, point down

Zhor Cacimar, the City of the Azure Gates, is the northernmost city-state of the Vornakkian Peninsula, and one of the largest and most prosperous to boot. Famed for its "blue steel," it draws traders and warriors from all over Ambrethel.

HISTORY

Zhor Cacimar was founded in the 600s by descendants of the followers of Vornak who first explored the Peninsula. Their forefathers tired of the expedition and quit it when they found a fine area to live and hunt in, and eventually their children's children built a city.

For many years, Zhor Cacimar wasn't a particularly notable city; it grew as the population of the Peninsula grew, but attracted no special attention or trade (though a petty tyrant, a fire-mage calling himself the Fire-King, tried to establish an empire by conquering the city and ruling it from 2646-2672 FE). That changed in the 2700s, when miners exploring the nearby mountains discovered veins of unusually pure iron ore. Through careful experimentation, Cacimarian smiths found ways to use that ore to create a type of steel of great hardness and resilience — and with that, Zhor Cacimar's fortunes were made. Blades and armor made of Cacimarian "blue steel" were so much better than normal war-gear that warriors the world over were soon clamoring for Cacimarian weapons. Almost overnight, the sleepy inland city became a major trade center with its own port city, Ulugysha.

3783 SE: The Fall Of The King

For many years the Nezhargi kings of Zhor Cacimar grew fat and wealthy on tax revenues from Cacimarian trade. In time, the guilds, particularly the Guild of Smiths on whom so much of the city's renown depended, came to resent this; they felt the king took from them, but provided nothing in return.

In 3783 SE, after a young apprentice in his cups spoke too long and too loudly during the Harvest Festival and was thrown in the king's dungeon for "sedition," the guilds rose up against the royal house. Wielding weapons forged by the smiths, or simply their own tools turned to violent ends, the guildsmen smashed their way into the jail and freed the young apprentice, killing all the guards in the process. Then they rampaged across the city, kill-

SARGYL'S MAZE

On the western coast of the Vornakkian Peninsula lies an archipelago of tiny, rocky islands. The islands themselves almost seem gnarled, with many small, deep coves and rocky peninsulae. Folk call these islands Sargyl's Maze, after a legendary pirate who supposedly hid there.

Whether Sargyl ever existed or not, it is true that the Maze makes an ideal hideout for pirate ships, slaver-ships being pursued by people determined to rescue the slaves they carry, and other such vessels. With so many islands so close together, not only are there many hiding places, but the sailing itself is treacherous for anyone who doesn't know these waters well. And if a ship is found and has to flee, the Sha-meethra are close by on the Vornakkian coast....

Ships sailing in Sargyl's Maze have a -2 penalty to all Combat Sailing rolls. If a ship fails a roll badly (by 4 or more), this may mean that it's run aground, or has hit an obstacle (such as a sandbar, reef, or sunken ship). If the character piloting the ship has AK: Sargyl's Maze on at least an 11-, this penalty is negated.

THE TWELVE ARTS OF THIEVING

According to the lore of the Moonstar Guild, there are Twelve Arts of Thieving, and a good thief should be master of them all:

Appraising stolen goods
Cheating at gambling
Climbing walls
Concealing one's self
Cutting purses
Disarming (or setting) traps
Disguising one's self
Forgery and coin-clipping
Moving with stealth
Picking locks
Picking pockets
Striking from surprise

ing every soldier and royal official they could find... and after a night of butchery, they returned once more to the royal palace. The king and his family were dragged screaming from their beds, whipped bloody, and forced to leave the city, never to return on pain of death. In the place of the king, the guildmasters set themselves, as the Guild Council (see below).

To replace the city gates smashed by rampaging guildsmen and looters, the Guild of Smiths built new gates of solid Cacimarian steel, and it is from these that the city earned its nickname.

4934 SE: The Dragonriders Of Ka'Rûk

On a cold morning in Firstthaw 4934 SE, a band of cruel attackers fell upon Zhor Cacimar without warning. The Dragonriders of Ka'Rûk they called themselves, for they rode black-skinned dragons, and in their hands they carried maces that glowed with shadow as a candle glows with light. Alerted at the last minute by the oneiromancer Shawmark, the Cacimarian Guard gave way before the first attack, when the Dragonriders unleashed fire and darkness on the unsuspecting city.

But the Guard soon rallied, sending a hail of steel-tipped arrows at the attackers that felled one of the dragons, whose rider broke his own neck when he hit the cobbles of the Street of the Gulls. With the help of a noble band of adventurers called the Bloodiron Blades, the Guard drove off the Dragonriders after two hours of fierce fighting; the attackers left four of their number, and their mounts, on the ground behind them, but the bodies of attacker and dragon alike rotted with great speed. From that day to this, no one has determined who the Dragonriders were, where they came from, or what they wanted.

ZHOR CACIMAR IN 5000 SE

Little, if anything, threatens Zhor Cacimar as of 5000 SE. The shadow from the North is far away, and traders come to the City of the Azure Gates every day with gold to spend on Cacimarian steel and many other goods. Although leery of another attack by the likes of the Dragonriders, the Guild Council sees a bright future ahead for its city.

THE LAND

Zhor Cacimar stands on the western bank of the South Chekuru River, though the folk who live on the other side of the river opposite the city are effectively Cacimarians as well. The Council Hall, formerly the royal palace, stands on high ground overlooking the river and the rest of the city.

Broadly speaking, Zhor Cacimar divides into five neighborhoods: the Craftsmen's District (the largest of the five); the Shadow District (the poor side of town, where many thieves reside); the Silver District (home to many merchants, shops, and the market); the Golden District (home to nobles and the wealthiest of the wealthy); and the Dwarves' District (where most outlanders and visitors stay).

The Greenmaw

South of Zhor Cacimar, just north of Lake Sahaliir, lies a great swamp known as the Green-

maw. Home to fierce crocodiles, large pools of quicksand, malevolent treemen, tribes of hostile Seshurma, ever-shifting sandbars and submerged trees, and venomous serpents beyond count, it's a dangerous place to enter, whether on foot or on ship. But because it stands between Zhor Cacimar and the cities to the south, it's an obstacle Cacimarian merchants must overcome. Some of them have learned the ways of the Greenmaw and become *Goldwalkers*, trader-rangers as at home in the swamps as they are in the marketplace.

Ulugysha

Since Zhor Cacimar is not a coastal city, it needs a way to get its goods to seagoing vessels. To this end it built Ulugysha, a small city at the very end of the Gulf of Vornakkia. Traders from other lands often dock their ships there, then journey by horse or carriage to Zhor Cacimar itself. The Cacimarian Guard patrols the road extensively, but bandits have been known to attack hapless travelers.

SOCIETY

Zhor Cacimar is a syndicracy — a city-state governed by commercial leaders. In this case, those leaders belong to the Guild Council, a body composed of the heads of the most important trade guilds in the city. Each guild belonging to the Council sends a representative to it for a term of three years; thereafter it can maintain the appointment or send a new member. A member who does his job well may serve for decades; one who does not look out for the best interests of his own guild may find his tenure cut short by a fatal "accident" so his guild can replace him ahead of schedule. As of 5000 SE, the Council has twenty-five members. It may, by unanimous vote, add a member, but it rarely does so.

Cacimarian Steel

Zhor Cacimar's greatest resource is its steel, also known as "blue steel" because of its distinctive silver-blue color. The secret of making Cacimarian steel resides with the Guild of Smiths, and seems to involve the extremely pure iron ore mined from the nearby mountains. Many a smith, trader, or Dwarf has tried to steal the secret, but all any of them has gotten for his pains is a place for his head on the chopping-block mounted in front of the Hall of Adjudicators.

Thanks to the steel, Zhor Cacimar has one of the best-equipped armies in Ambrethel — the Cacimarian Guard. Every member of the Guard wears chainmail made of blue steel, and carries weapons forged from it as well.

The Moonstar Guild

But even as well-equipped as it is, the Cacimarian Guard still has trouble coming to grips with one of Zhor Cacimar's most powerful but least-liked guilds — the Moonstar Guild, a brotherhood of thieves. Renowned for their mastery of the Twelve Arts of Thieving, the rogues of Moonstar try to steal anything of value that catches their eye... and they usually get what they go after. But by solemn, unspoken tradition, they have never tried to thief the secret of Cacimarian steel.



An island realm of strange, pallid-skinned Men who worship gods repugnant to all other folk, Thûn is a place of dread and mystery to the rest of Ambrethel.

Government: Theocratic monarchy

Ruler: Thînaah Aghorya

Capital: Tharthash Vor

Population: Men (97%), Other (3%)

Language(s): Thûnese

Coinage: Shelgh; Yrith; Sra'nagh

Resources: Fishing, farming, mining, craftwork

Religion: Thûnese

Military: Light cavalry 14%, heavy cavalry 8%, light infantry 22%, heavy infantry 14%, navy 27%, magical/other 15%

Arms/Symbol: A black flame

HISTORY

The calendar-books of the *k'ngraa* (the sorcerer-priests) of Thûn tell a tale of a history far more ancient than that of any other race of Men. The Thûnese lore says their gods created them first from fire and stone, as the greatest of Men destined to rule over all the world, and then made lesser Men from clay to serve as their slaves and sacrifices.

Thûnese and Westerlands records agree that the people of Thûn and Arduna first met in 1102 FE, when a black-hulled Thûnese ship made its way into the port of Aarn with a hold full of goods to trade. The strange gems and jewelry, and evocative-looking carved objects of wood and stone, caught the fancy of local merchants, and the

Thûnese sailed away with a hold full of chests of good gold coin. Legends claim a pirate ship pursued the Thûnese and tried to take their gold... but that the pirate ship was later found adrift, every man aboard her dead without a wound but a look of sheer terror on his face.

For most of recorded history, the Thûnese have kept to themselves, trading with others only fitfully, and permitting traders from other realms to visit their island only with the greatest reluctance. They have appeared the most often at the slave-markets of Talarshand and Kumasia, where they unquestioningly pay the asked price for the best slaves and then sail away with them.

3683 SE: Brescar's Fleet

Most mariners steer well clear of Thûn and the treacherous currents that surround it. One who did not was the trader Brescar, who lived in the 3600s and made several journeys to Jakuul and other cities of the Black Isle to trade. Awed by the wealth he saw in Tharthash Vor, he determined to conquer the island and make himself its king. He spent all of his money to hire a fleet manned by every corsair, reaver, and dockside scum he could hire, then sailed for Thûn.

Brescar's Fleet approached by stealth at night, landing at Ushtu Anat. But the raiders were startled, then terrified, to find the city utterly deserted — not so much as a dog roamed the streets, and every tower and home was abandoned. Then a weird ululation rose from the ships back at the docks, and the would-be conquerors rushed back to them. To



THOGAYLL

15 STR	15 DEX
15 CON	15 BODY
15 INT	20 EGO
20 PRE	10 COM
6 PD	6 ED
4 SPD	8 REC
30 END	31 STUN

Abilities: 75 points' worth of Thûnese divine magic, 75 points' worth of arcane magics, Climbing 12-, Conjuration 22-, Faith 24-, AK: Thûn 11-, AK: Thûnese Holy Sites 14-, AK: The Westerlands 8-, KS: Thûnese Religious Doctrine 14-, Language: Trade-Talk (basic conversation; Thûnese is Native), Literacy, Necromancy 18-, Oratory 13-, PS: Thûnese Priest 11-, Sorcery 22-, Stealth 12-, Wizardry 24-, WF: Common Missile Weapons, Common Melee Weapons, Fringe Benefit: Religious Rank: *Gshûl K'ngra*, Fringe Benefit: Right To Marry, Turn Undead

Enchanted Items: Holy talisman (Endurance Reserve [150 END, 30 REC])

Disadvantages: Hunted (Watched by various enemies within the priesthood), Psychological Limitation: Devotion To The Thûnese Gods And Their Purposes, Rivalry (Professional, with some other priests)

Notes: Thogayll is a crusading Thûnese priest who has even journeyed to the Westerlands on missions for his superiors. He's regarded as a "rising star" whose devotion to the gods and their causes, and whose willingness to do whatever he has to to complete a task, will carry him far.

their horror they found a group of strange "worm-men" destroying their ships... and then the attackers turned on the men! It's said most of the sailors were slaughtered there, but Brescar himself was taken to Tarklesh, where the sorcerer-priests performed the Sacrifice of Slow Feeding upon him. Only a handful of the men escaped by swimming or stealing small boats to tell the tale back in Aresca Town, and since that day no one has dared try to invade Thûn.

THÛN IN 5000 SE

Thûn is as it ever was — dark, isolated, and mysterious. The Black Isle attracts few visitors, mostly traders greedy or desperate enough to come to the accursed island to trade. *Th'naah* Aghorya, it is said, has never spoken with an outlander, and *Thûgong Vai* Valishog sees other Men and races as fit only for the gods' food.

Stories told in Arduna and Mitharia say that of late, the sacrificial altars and fires of the sorcerer-priests have been busier than ever. Some fear Kal-Turak has forged an alliance with the Men of Thûn, promising his aid to free their dark gods in exchange for the power of their strange magics. If so, it is a dire threat indeed, for the Thûnese can strike at realms and cities yet far removed from the Ravager's reach.

THE LAND

Thûn is a long tropical island in the Khelvarian Ocean between the Vornakkian Peninsula and Kumasia; it's much closer to the latter, and it's with Kumasian traders that the Thûnese have the most contact. Although the winds and rain off the sea keep the coastal regions reasonably cool, the interior is hot and humid. A fierce sun burns in the Thûnese sky, and the people wear long, light-colored clothes to keep it off their pale skins.

Tharthash Vor

The greatest of all Thûnese cities and the seat of the Flame-Browed Kings, Tharthash Vor sits at the center of Thûn, its strangely-shaped towers rising high above the Thûnese plain. A stout wall surrounds it, made of stone blocks so thick they could only have been moved by magic; the Thûnese claim the gods themselves built the wall for them.

Irosh-naa, the House of the King, occupies the very center of Tharthash Vor. Part palace, part temple, it inspires feelings of loyalty and power among the Thûnese, but dread in the eyes of outlanders — the great pillar of black flame that rises from the topmost tower of Irosh-naa seems somehow blasphemous in their eyes, and the squat shape of the building suggests to them the bulk of a toad or lizard.

The House Everlasting

In a land of many temples, the greatest of them all is the House Everlasting, *R'veg Ag'b* in the Thûnese tongue. An enormous five-sided step pyramid-like structure, it sits at the edge of a great cleft in the Peaks of Threng. The sorcerer-priests say that their greatest god, S'thlaggha, lies within that cleft, and to feed him they throw sacrifices into its depths every month.

The Island Of Tall Maidens

By Thûnese law, traders can only come to certain cities, and most must visit Jakuul before going anywhere else. As a ship approaches the harbor at Jakuul, it must pass two low-lying islands, spits of rock on which no one lives and nothing grows. Mounted on those islands, on cliffs clearly visible from the sea, the sorcerer-priests have built many tall, eerily-shaped latticeworks of wooden beams. To those structures they nail the scourged and broken bodies of criminals and spies, particularly those of traders who broke the laws of Thûn, that they might die in agony and serve as a warning to those who come after them.

Mount Athoombvahoreg And Shogash Hrem

Not far from Tharthash Vor, on the very western edge of the Dawnhold Mountains, stands a vast extinct volcano, Mt. Athoombvahoreg. A hard trail winds up the side of the mountain, but only the specially-consecrated feet of sorcerer-priests may tread it, for beneath the very mountain lies another of the Thûnese gods, Yûlggwtha. Any peasant, much less outlander, who sets foot upon Mt. Athoombvahoreg is chained and taken to the temples to become a sacrifice. But it is rumored that caves within the mountain hold a vast wealth of purple-black gems called *yubha*, and that some Thûnese secretly mine them and sell them, for they have mystic properties and spellcasters value them highly.

But not all volcanoes in Thûn have died. East of Tharthash Vor in the Peaks of Threng is Shogash Hrem, from whose top roiling smokes emerge to foul the air. Sometimes the smokes cease, and the mountain belches forth fire and lava in explosions seen as far away as the House Everlasting. Although Shogash Hrem holds within its depths no god, at several times through the Great Cycle of the Thûnese calendar the sorcerer-priests carry anointed slaves to the rim of the volcano and throw them in as special sacrifices to all the gods.

Tarklesh

The eastern part of Thûn is known as Tarklesh, and that name also applies to a temple on the Balak-Ar River, second largest of all in the land. At Tarklesh also stands a school for the training of sorcerer-priests, and a town full of folk who see to the needs of temple and school. The temple marks the place where the Twin Gods were cast down, and into, the earth, and where with the help of the sorcerer-priests they will one day emerge to freedom.

Thûrûth Vai S'uth-klo, one of the most revered and feared sorcerer-priests in Thûn, presides over this temple. In addition to his vast priestly powers, he's said to be a master of the arcana of Sorcery, Thaumaturgy, and Witchcraft. Merciless and cruel, he has acolytes whipped for the slightest errors in their learning or tasks.

Yin-Thöag

Occupying a peninsula on the northwestern side of Thûn, Yin-Thöag is a proud, darkling city with taller towers and steeper domes than those found in most other Thûnese cities. The laws of

Thûn allow some traders to visit it. They signal their intention by flying special flags provided to them by the lord of the city; a ship without such a flag that approaches Yin-Thöag will soon find itself fired upon by enchanted ballistae mounted on the city's sea-walls. Legends say the waters all around Yin-Thöag are littered with wrecked and shattered trading vessels filled with a wealth of goods... but that Shothu-H'gyth claims all such treasure for herself, and punishes any who seek it.

While not as holy as the House Everlasting or Tarklesh, the main temple of Yin-Thöag, the Dannash Clhar, is one of the largest in Thûn. Since its inner sanctum can hold so many priests, they perform there some special worship ceremonies too grandiose for most other temples. Dark gold decorates many of the surfaces of the inner sanctum, and it's said the holy vessels and altars used there are worth a king's ransom.

The Vharn Torac Archipelago

The Thûnese control this small group of islands south of their land, perhaps the southernmost place inhabited by the Men of Ambrethel. Beyond them lies the Uncharted Seas, where few mariners dare to sail. The people of the archipelago live a simple existence as farmers and fishers; many are sorcerer-priests striving to increase their understanding of the gods through an ascetic lifestyle.

Zogarlaa

As the westernmost city of Thûn, Zogarlaa receives much of the trade from Kumasias and Mitharia. This has made it wealthy and powerful, and its ruler *Tha'han* Tlar'nûth one of the mightiest men in the land. It's said he holds secret feasts for the sorcerer-priests of his city five times a year, feeding them the cooked flesh of sacrificed captives and lavishing strange gifts upon them.

SOCIETY

Thûn is an exotic land with customs unique in Ambrethel. Its people speak their own language, a tongue written with a strange script that's at once sinuous and spiky. They eat spicy-tasting vegetables and grains that grow only on their island, and the flesh of the *zugar*-bull that the Mitharians deem useful only as a plow animal. They treat one another with a strange and delicate civility,

but think nothing of exploiting and abusing their slaves unto the point of death. They care little for outlanders or other races (save only the Seshurma, of which several degenerate tribes live in swamps throughout the Black Isle); many won't even speak to such people.

The *Th'naah*, or "king," of Thûn is Aghorya, a dark-eyed man of many cruel appetites. Like other *th'naaha*, he did not inherit the throne, but was chosen for it by the sorcerer-priests who are the true power in the land. He has trained as a sorcerer-priest so he can preside at certain religious ceremonies. Outlanders call him the Flame-Browed King, for his crown has been worked with a motif of leaping fires.

More powerful still than Aghorya is Valishog, the *Thûgong Vai* or highest of high priests. Even more than Aghorya, his word is law, and when he speaks sorcerer-priests throughout the land scurry to obey his commands. He resides at the temple in Yin-Thöag.

Because the sorcerer-priests hold such power in Thûn, they can shape the law to suit themselves. By their word, the worship (or even mention) of other gods is illegal, as is the practice of the arcana of Theurgy; both are punishable by death.

Aresca

No realm claims this largish island, located between the Vornakkian Peninsula and Thûn. For centuries it has been a haven for pirates and other evil folk. The first sailors who landed there, blown off-course by a great gale, found it inhabited by a tribe of natives who called themselves the Renopans and worshipped a fire-god. Soon the newcomers — armed with weapons of steel instead of wood and bone — attacked the Renopans, slaughtering them all. Now the island belongs only to the corsairs who live in its two ports, Aresca Town and Daggerport. No authority holds there; it's every man for himself, with the strong enforcing their will as far as they can and the weak doing as they're told. Sometimes a fleet from one of the great maritime powers comes to Aresca and tries to clean it out, but sooner or later the fleet must leave, and then the reavers return.

KUMASIA



As its name indicates, Kumasia is the land bordering the vast Kumasi Jungle. Cut off from the rest of Mitharia by the Jungle, the Thraysara Mountains, and the Great Grey Swamp, this subcontinent has developed its own strange cultures and customs.

Keshman

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Markandor

Capital: Uur

Population: Men (84%), Orcs (4%), Dwarves (3%), Elves (3%), Seshurma (2%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Kesha

Coinage: Trîna; Thrîma; Geshtar

Resources: Farming, fishing, herding, craftwork

Religion: High Church (Kumasiian)

Military: Light cavalry 21%, heavy cavalry 16%, light infantry 28%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 12%, magical/other 3%

Arms/Symbol: A *daho* (a one-masted Kesha ship)

A crossroads where the people of southern Mitharia meet the folk of Arduna, Keshman is a land of strange sights and friendly folk. But unrest has gripped the land as a group of nobles seeking greater power for themselves speaks out against the king.

HISTORY

Keshman is a melting pot where several peoples have come together to form a unique and intriguing culture. The earliest settlers in this region came from several different places: Westerlanders who'd crossed into northern Mitharia and gradually worked their way down the coast on foot and in small ships, Tornathians and Mhorecians who sailed across the sea in search of new lands and markets, and Indusharan mariners on voyages of exploration and trade.

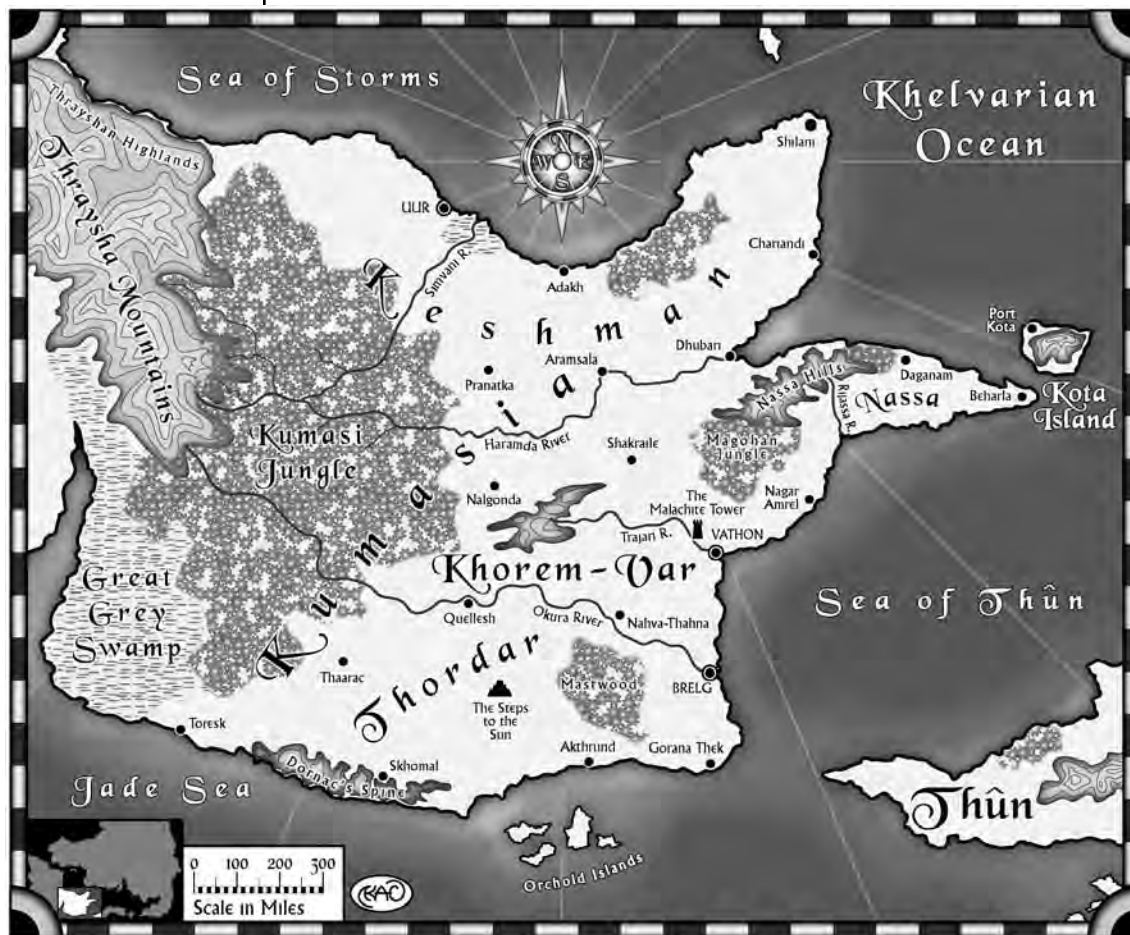
The name "Keshman" was first used in history-records of the 1200s, when a barbarian tribe called the Keshatar came into power. Emerging from the northern jungles, they conquered the other peoples of the region, eventually controlling all the lands north of the Okura River. Over the years the Keshatar

became civilized, soft, and corrupt, and in 1752 FE a tribe of *sotal*-riding warriors, the Nataka, overthrew and replaced them, until the only trace that remained of them was their name upon the land.

The Nataka interbred with the other peoples of the land, eventually creating a strong Kesha race skilled at more than just riding and fighting. The people of the coast developed elaborate textiles and art, while those of the interior became known as builders and smiths.

2813 FE: Saradar The Builder

From the lands along the Haramda River came the first ruler of Keshman strong enough to take the title of king



— Saradar, known as “the Builder.” At first just one of many powerful tribal chieftains, early in life he conquered two other tribes, and by the time he was in his mid-thirties had extended his authority over most of the subcontinent. Although his realm was more of a hegemony than a kingdom, he declared himself King of Keshman.

Realizing the future of his land lay in trade with other lands, Saradar commenced the building of a great capital on the northern coast, not far from the mouth of the Simvani River. His great project almost faltered and died when the wars and tyranny of the Lord of the Graven Spear dried up the trade from Arduna. But through deft political maneuvering and the strengthening of ties to southern Mitharia, he kept himself in power long enough to weather the bad times. Building on the foundation he created, his sons ruled Keshman for over 1,500 years.

4423-4427 SE: The Breaking Of Keshman

Until 4423 SE, the realm of Keshman encompassed all the lands north of the Okura River, and for the most part it controlled the wild lands south of the river as well. But in that year, the nobles of the central lands, angered by the king's focus on northern trade and his inability to stop raids from the jungle, revolted and created the kingdom of Korem-Var (see below).

KESHMAN IN 5000 SE

In recent years, the strident cries of angry nobles have shattered the peace of Keshman. A group of the most powerful among the nobility, including the rulers of Aramsala and Chariandi, claim King Markandor is weak and corrupt. To the puzzlement of the other nobles, the King has done nothing to stop this traitorous talk, save to increase the size of his personal bodyguard and the strength of the defensive magics his court wizards cast upon him.

THE LAND

Although it's the northernmost part of Kumasia, Keshman is only slightly cooler and more comfortable than the rest of the subcontinent. Winds sweeping in off the Sea of Storms frequently bring rain, but it's usually not long before the clouds part and the hot Kumasian sun blazes down again.

Uur

The city Saradar built still stands today, despite being struck by earthquakes, violent storms, and fires over the years. But rebuilding after these disasters has turned Saradar's well-planned city of broad, straight boulevards and open, airy squares into a

more chaotic, crowded place where sometimes even the natives get lost among the twisting streets and ramshackle houses of the poor. It's said the ruins of many buildings lie beneath Uur's streets.

The king's palace, Halimantan, dominates the city's skyline with its broad domes and white walls. But it also isolates the king and his family from the people, who aren't allowed inside the royal compound. The cityfolk have more fear of the *Thagu*, a thieves' guild-like organization that seems more in control of Uur than the city's guardsmen, than they do of the king himself.

Shilani

The northernmost city of Keshman, Shilani is but a short journey from Tornathia by ship. It trades extensively with the cities of the Tornathian League, and has adopted many Tornathian words into its language. The noble who rules the region, Lord Amthar, is loyal to the king, and has repeatedly encouraged him to take action against the seditious lords. He intensely dislikes his neighbor, Lord Errun of Chariandi, and some people fear he might be tempted to take action against him even though King Markandor will not.

SOCIETY

Markandor of House Hachinda rules Keshman, though some wonder for how long, since he seems unconcerned about the rebelliousness displayed by some of his nobles. A tall, handsome man approaching middle age, he's something of a scholar, spending long hours in his library when his courtiers and servants would prefer he devote time to matters of state. Witty and insightful, he does not suffer fools gladly and has little gift for diplomacy.

His son Vadin, eldest of ten children, has his father's intelligence and wits, but a greater gift for dealing with people. All signs are that Vadin will one day make a fine king, perhaps the finest seen in Keshman for centuries... if he can survive to wear the crown.

The restless attitudes of a few nobles aside, the Kesha people are known for their friendliness and generosity. A traveler in even the wildest parts of Keshman can count on a bed and meal for the night if anyone lives nearby, and the taverns and inns of the cities are renowned for their quality and hospitality. The unusual, often spicy, Kesha cuisine may take some getting used to on the part of Westerlander palates, but once acquired the taste often becomes a favorite. Many visitors also enjoy *khelaf*, a dark, aromatic drink brewed from certain plant leaves that's served hot to take off the chill on winter days.

THE SOTAL

The *sotal* of Kumasia and southern Mitharia is a riding beast closely related to the horse, and resembling it in most respects. However, males have two short, sharp horns protruding from the top of their heads which they use to defend their herds of females from predators and fight off rival males. Sotala tend to have solid-colored or striped bodies; patterns of spots or patches of color are rare.

To create a *sotal*, use a Riding Horse (or other horse) and add small horns for the males (HKA ½d6).

GHOPIDA-SPELL

Here's an example of a *ghopida*-spell such as Korem-Var nobles use to "taste" the life-force of captives.

Transfer 3d6 (target's CON to character's STUN), Delayed Return Rate (points fade/return at the rate of 5 per 5 Minutes; +½), Usable As Attack (spellcaster controls spell and pays END for it, but subject noble receives the benefits; stopped by any amount of Mental Defense or Power Defense; +1) (112 Active Points); OAF (wizard's staff or similar object, chosen by the caster when he buys the spell; -1), Extra Time (1 Turn; -¼), Gestures (throughout; -½), Incantations (throughout; -½), Requires A Wizardry Roll (-½). Total cost: 23 points (final cost to caster: 8 points).

Korem-Var

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: Lhanka Saddon

Capital: Vathon

Population: Men (90%), Orcs (2%), Elves (1%), Ses-hurma (1%), Other (6%)

Language(s): Kesha

Coinage: Trîna; Thrîma; Geshtar

Resources: Farming, craftwork, fishing, herding

Religion: High Church (Kumasian)

Military: Light cavalry 20%, heavy cavalry 17%, light infantry 31%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 7%, magical/other 5%

Arms/Symbol: Three golden serpents in a knotwork, usually on purple

A darkling land of strange men and stranger women, where the King's silversmiths craft the most exquisite jewelry and his torturers the most exquisite agonies, Korem-Var seems both exotic and dangerous to the people of other lands.

HISTORY

Until the mid-fifth millennia, the land of Korem-Var was part of the kingdom of Keshman. Its name comes from the Korema, a people of farmers and herders who live along the Trajari River.

In 4423 SE, after years of being ignored by Kesha kings more interested in coastal matters and trade with other lands than the interior of their own realm, the nobles whose fiefs lay between the Haramda and Okura Rivers banded together in revolt. The army of the king and his allies, though much larger, was not as familiar with the terrain and its dangers as the rebels' army was, and many soldiers fell victim to diseases or other perils the native lords' troops easily avoided. It took four years of fighting, but the rebellious nobles finally defeated Keshman and drove its forces from their land.

Then, almost before the victors had time to savor their triumph, one of them — Lord Udathani of Vathon — turned on his allies, slaying them and their generals by assassination and magic. Almost overnight, Udathani made himself king. His allies' sons were allowed to keep their lands in exchange for binding oaths of fealty. Since that time, the Udatha kings have held the throne of Korem-Var, and none have dared challenge their iron-fisted rule.

KOREM-VAR IN 5000 SE

Modern Korem-Var is a land of dissipated nobles and harsh laws, where the king's vast network of spies, the *Kresata*, keeps the people in line by sending anyone suspected of a crime against Vathon to the Malachite Tower. But while most nobles remain content to pursue their own idle pleasures at the expense of their people, it's thought a few yearn for a more honorable life and ruler. Chief among these, people say, is Lord Shiroshan of Nagar Amrel, and everyone knows the *Kresata* watches him very, very carefully.

THE LAND

Bordered by two rivers, the Sea of Thûn, and a jungle, Korem-Var is a tropical land where nothing

gets done quickly and no one goes outside in the midday sun if he can avoid it. Most cities, such as Vathon and Dhubari, are built either along rivers or coasts to take advantage of cooling breezes.

The Malachite Tower

The nobles of Korem-Var are renowned for their skill as torturers — and their willingness to use torture as a punishment for even the most trivial crimes. A few miles upriver from Vathon stands the Malachite Tower, the home of the royal torturers and the most feared place in the land. The torturers of the Malachite Towers are masters of their craft, able to break even the most stubborn man in time, or to inflict intense pain with little more than a touch. Those whom the king's soldiers throw into the dungeons of the Tower are rarely seen alive again... and those who survive emerge horribly broken, and rarely live long after their release.

Nalgonda

The people of this inland city are known for a strange religious practice. Many years ago, a venomous serpent bit a thief who was stealing sacred relics from the temple. Taking this as a sign from the gods, the Nalgondans began to venerate snakes, treating them as honored guests rather than vermin. Today Nalgonda is overrun with snakes, and by law no one is allowed to kill or harm one, for fear the gods will shun the city.

Nassa

Nassa is the northeastern peninsula of Korem-Var, a region inhabited by the Nas, a proud and stubborn people who have never fully accepted the rule of either Keshman or Korem-Var. They grudgingly acknowledge the king in far-off Vathon, but they do their best to harass and delay his servants (particularly tax collectors). They have rebelled several times in the past, without success; it wouldn't take much to spark another revolt.

SOCIETY

The *lhanka*, or "king," of Korem-Var is Saddon, a thin and anemic-looking man with a cruel gleam in his eye. His authority is absolute, and he brooks no disagreement or disobedience. Those who offend him soon find themselves imprisoned in the Malachite Tower, but he always keeps one of the Malachite Hands at his side for times when he wants to see the victim punished immediately.

Most of Lhanka Saddon's nobles are much like him — hungry for power, and willing to abuse it for their own personal pleasure. Their court wizards long ago perfected a class of spells called *ghopida*-spells, through which they can draw on the life energies of a captive or peasant to make the noble feel joy and ecstasy. Some nobles are practically addicted to the *ghopida*-spells, spending all day under their sway when they should be governing.

Given the harshness and oppressiveness of the king's laws, most outlanders would avoid Korem-Var but for the skill of its silversmiths. The jewelers of Korem-Var create exquisite objects, ones people all over the world desire. That, and the smiths' need for raw silver, attracts traders like flowers attract bees.

Thordar

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Gelnag

Capital: Brelg

Population: Orcs (92%), Men (2%), Drakine (2%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Thordaran, Kesha

Coinage: Piece; Piece; Piece

Resources: Farming, herding, shipbuilding

Religion: High Church (Orcish)

Military: Light cavalry 12%, heavy cavalry 8%, light infantry 41%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 15%, magical/other 4%

Arms/Symbol: An orcish fist erased

Home to the Civilized Orcs who sail all over the world, Thordar is a realm unlike any other in Ambrethel.

HISTORY

For most of recorded history, the land now known as Thordar was a wilderness inhabited by barbaric tribes of Men, wild animals, and monsters. Filled with diseases, venomous serpents, and blood-thirsty barbarians, it was of little interest to the Kesha kings, although they claimed it in name.

In the early 3200s, an Orc named Lurmosh was born in the southern Thraysa Mountains. As intelligent as he was strong, when he was newly come to adulthood he left his people to travel the world, becoming an adventurer and explorer. He saw and learned many things.

At long last tiring of the adventuring life, he returned to his home in 3260 SE, only to find it a much smaller, meaner place than he remembered. His people lived in squalid conditions, and often fought with the Orcs of the Kumasi Jungle for what few scraps of wealth or power were to be had. Lurmosh realized his people could be so much more, and he resolved to raise them up from nothingness to heights of greatness.

Through clever negotiation, force of will, and deft use of magic, Lurmosh brought the leaders of the several warring tribes, mountain and jungle, together. He told them of his vision for a better future. While some agreed with what he said and supported his aims — at least to a point — many did not. In the end, all he did was cause another war, this time one in which he led his followers against the unbelievers.

After two years of bitter fighting, Lurmosh triumphed in 3262 SE. Once again he called the Orcs together, but this time it was *all* the people, not just their leaders. Swayed by his impassioned speech, the Orcs of both jungle and mountain raised their voices as one when he asked if they would follow him to better lands and lives. And so they did, out of both mountain and jungle and into the plains of the land Lurmosh named Thordar (from the Skhai words for “promised haven”).

The early years were not easy. Not only did the Orcs have to learn to live in new ways in a new land, Lurmosh had to lead his armies against those of Keshman, who sought to drive the Orcs from

their home. At the Battle of the Okura in 3264 SE, his Orcs shattered the Kesha lines and drove the Men from the field, ensuring the survival of the orcish realm.

Lurmosh ruled Thordar as its king until he died, and then his descendants took over, shepherding his realm as best they knew how. Under their rule the Orcs learned to act like other civilized races — to farm, to herd cattle and goats, to build towers and ships, and to trade peacefully instead of raiding and pillaging. Today they are known as the Civilized Orcs to distinguish them from their brutish kin.

THORDAR IN 5000 SE

Thordar is a peaceful and secure realm in 5000 SE. With no threatening realms nearby (save perhaps Orumbar, whose ambitions worry King Gelnag a little), its people can live their lives without fear.

THE LAND

Thordar is a lowland plain, pleasantly warm in the winter and scorchingly hot in the summer. It sometimes experiences severe summer droughts, but usually the weather is wet enough that farmers can grow crops almost year-round.

Brelg

Brelg, the capital of the realm, was once a simple fishing village at the mouth of the Okura River. Possessing an excellent natural harbor, it grew as Thordaran trade grew, and today it has dozens of ships from nearly as many lands moored to its docks every week. Most of the Brelgans are fishermen, or work along the docks building ships or pursuing similar trades. Even at the royal palace, on a hill well away from both river and sea, the smell of fish lingers in the air.

Quellesh

One of the youngest cities in Thordar, Quellesh is perhaps the most uniquely orcish as well. Other Thordaran cities were built on the site of towns and cities of Men that arose before the coming of the Orcs, and they still show the signs of it in many ways. In 4632 SE, a gifted Orc artist and engineer named Rômag decided he wanted to build an entirely orcish city. With the help of several worthy merchants who financed the project, and two groups of adventurers who helped him find the right location and clear it of monsters, Rômag began the construction of Quellesh. He died long before it was finished, but in time his vision of a city built by Orcs, for Orcs, was realized. Today many sculptors and builders make the long journey up the Okura to see what Rômag wrought, taking away influences that sometimes affect their own work.

The Steps To The Sun

The Orcs of Thordar follow the orcish version of the High Church, much like Orcs elsewhere, though they see the gods as less brutal and harsh than their barbaric kin do. While they worship all the gods, many of them have a special reverence for Awnn, the sun-god. In his honor, they long ago built an enormous temple at a place where it's said

he once came down to earth to take a beautiful orcish woman as his wife. An enormous four-sided step pyramid, its dozens of levels straining upward as if to touch the Sunlord himself, the Steps to the Sun is considered the greatest center of orcish religion in the world. Next to the pyramid is a grand chapel for the worship of all the gods save Awnn, to whom the Orcs dedicate the pyramid.

The Kumasi Jungle

The vast Kumasi Jungle, which along with the Thraysa Mountains cuts the Kumasian subcontinent off from the rest of Mitharia, is a dangerous and forbidding place. Hunters rarely go more than a day's walk into it, for fearsome beasts and monsters live in the deeper reaches ... as do tribes of jungle Orcs, Goblins, Ogres, and Seshurma who eat the flesh of Men.

Rumors among the Kesha claim some hunters have gotten lost in the jungle and found mysterious ruins among the gigantic trees and creeping vines. Some stories describe the ruins as a castle, some as a temple, and some as unlike anything else. Several groups of adventurers have searched for the fabled ruins (and the treasure they undoubtedly hold), but all they've gotten for their troubles is *phelasa*, a potentially deadly coughing-disease native to Kumasia. Rogues selling what they claim are ancient maps to or of the jungle ruins infest every Kumasian town.

The Great Grey Swamp

Not part of Thordar *per se*, but in effect part of its western border, the Great Grey Swamp is the largest swamp in all of Ambrethel. Filling the low-lying land between the Kumasi Jungle, the Thraysa Mountains, and the Jade Sea, it's approximately 750 miles long from its northernmost point to its southern edge.

The Great Grey teems with wildlife of every size, shape, and variety. The largest predators include the Kumasian alligator, the giant grey frog (which sometimes grows large enough to swallow a full-grown Man whole), the speckled panther, and the swamp hydra (which is slightly larger, and much more aggressive, than other hydrae). But sometimes smaller creatures pose an even greater threat. Many insects living in the Great Grey carry diseases ranging from the mildly uncomfortable to the almost certainly fatal; the goldenfang serpent,

which rarely grows larger than a Man's forearm, carries a poison so virulent that a single bite can kill a Troll within minutes.

Almost no Men or Orcs live within the Swamp, though Thordaran rangers sometimes explore its reaches, and alchemists and Druids in search of special herbs and plants may dare to travel along its murky waters. But both Ran-tari and Seshurma find the Great Grey much to their liking, and live here in strong numbers. The Ran-tari, though suspicious of outsiders, aren't necessarily hostile to them, and a stranger who proves himself a friend can even earn their trust. Several Ran-tari tribes trade with Thordaran merchants, meeting them at certain locations along the coast on specific days of the year. The Seshurma, on the other hand, hate both the frog-men and everyone else. While they never seem to fight among themselves the way Lizard-Folk in other places sometimes do, they're quick to take up arms against anyone else.

SOCIETY

Thordaran society is a thing passing strange to most people: a land of Orcs who act like Men, who are fit to mingle with the folk of other lands without having suspicious glances cast their way. Thanks to the Thordarans, many people who considered Orcs little more than beasts have had cause to rethink their opinions.

The Thordarans venture all over the world as traders and sailors. They build many ships, not just for themselves but others, though they're not as well-regarded as the Khirkovy shipwrights.

The rulership of Thordar belongs to the descendants of Lurmosh; the eldest child, son or daughter, inherits the throne upon the death of the current ruler. King Gelnag had the misfortune to have fraternal twins as his first children, and since Thordaran law says nothing about which one must be considered "the eldest," he will have to choose his heir himself... a decision he's not looking forward to.

Thordaran nobility likewise descends from the orcish chieftains and captains who helped Lurmosh create the realm. It has three ranks: *kargu*, roughly equivalent to a knight in responsibility (but not necessarily in fighting style); *skhorl*, similar to a count; and *kheret*, more or less the same as a duke.

MITHARIA



The southwestern continent of Ambrethel, known as Mitharia, contains an unusual mix of cultures and realms. In the north, above Lake Kalkana, most of the realms resemble those of the Westerlands, since they were settled during the First Epoch by Men who emigrated south across the Serpentine Sea. In the south are many strange realms, including the only surviving Drakine empire in the world and the exotic *haraji* (kingdoms) of Indushara.

SOUTH MITHARIA

The Empire of Orumbar and the Indusharan realms, which were old when the Men of Arduna found them, dominate the southern reaches of Mitharia.

Halore

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: Haraj Kaneshku

Capital: Kalat-Karram

Population: Men (92%), Dwarves (3%), Seshurma (1%), Pakasa (1%), Other (3%)

Language(s): Haloran

Coinage: Ta; Rûk; Ilasa

Resources: Farming, mining, herding, fishing

Religion: High Church (Indusharan)

Military: Light cavalry 22%, heavy cavalry 13%, light infantry 27%, heavy infantry 24%, navy 6%, magical/other 8%

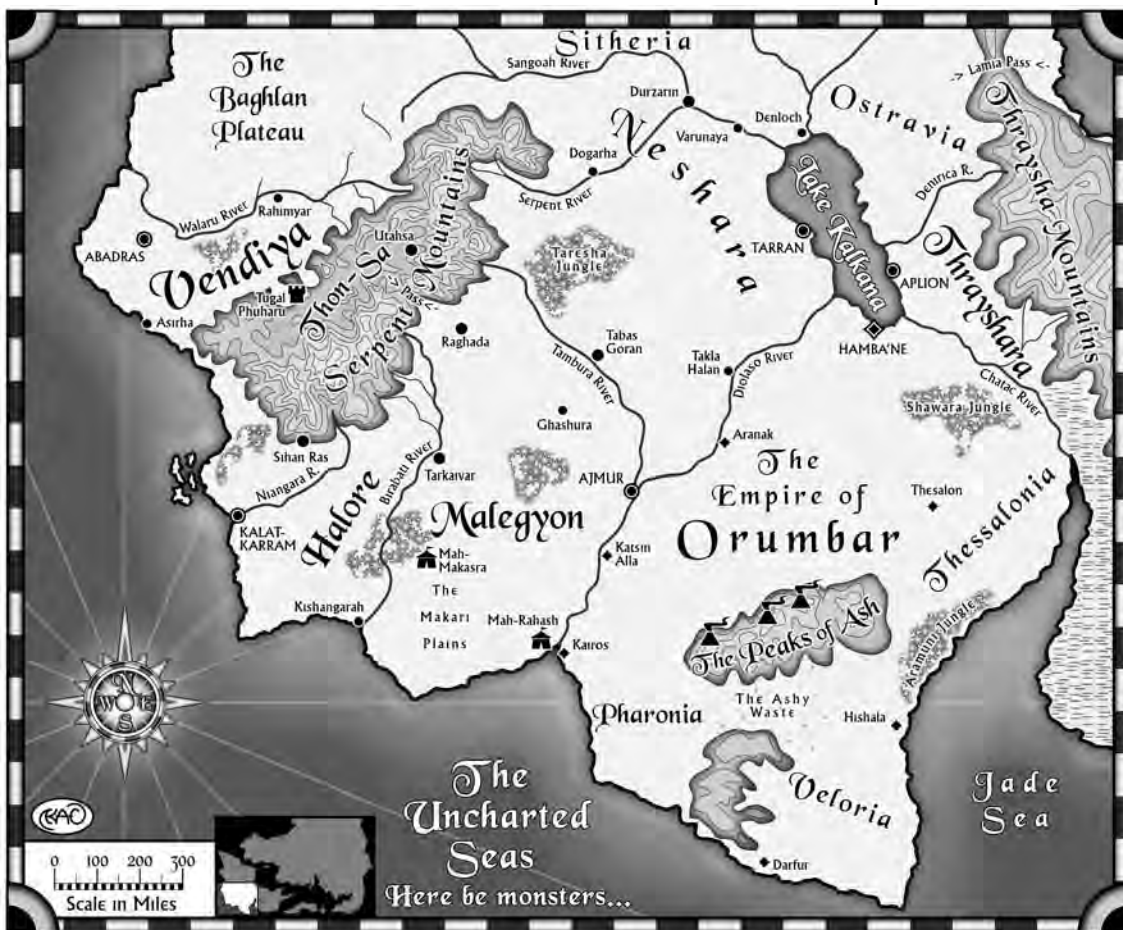
Arms/Symbol: Six pujana flowers arranged in a reverse pyramid

The central realm of Indushara, Halore is an oft-mountainous kingdom that once ruled the entire region... and may again, someday.

HISTORY

From the earliest days, the land of Halore was the southernmost part of the kingdom of Vendiya. That changed in 2208 FE, when six *badahi* (nobles roughly equal to Westerlander dukes in terms of power and authority) banded together and declared Halore a separate, sovereign kingdom. Three years of war with Vendiya followed, but the six *badahi* had taken the best part of Vendiya's strength with them, and so the lords of Abadras were unable to prevail against them.

After their victory, the six had to choose one among them to be *haraj*, or "king." By acclaim they made falcon-eyed Sahan, their leader in war, their king, and the other five became the lords of the realm. For nearly a thousand years the Sahani kings ruled Halore peacefully. But then one of them, Samaresh, used magic to conquer the rest of Indushara and make himself *Ha-Haraj* so he could protect the land from the threat of Orumbar (see page 17). For over 200 years he and his heirs were the Diamond Lords of Indushara, until their trickery was revealed and the three kingdoms restored.



4872 SE: The Coming Of The Serpent-Men

The peace of Halore was shattered in the summer of 4872 SE. Without warning, groups of strange Serpent-Men burst forth from the ground to attack towns, villages, and travelers. A few larger groups, led by scarlet-scaled nagas, even raided Sihan Ras and other cities. Some people, including adventurers who claimed to have encountered them before, said the Serpent-Men came from the Sunless Realms; others thought them a plague sent by Gurisha or some evil wizard.

The haraj and his nobles fought the Serpent-Men as best they could, though it was difficult to come to grips with a foe both powerful and mobile. At the end of the summer, the attacks slowed, and within another year and a half they ceased altogether. Today the only mementos of the raids are a few suits of Serpent-Man armor displayed in the trophy-room of the royal palace... but some folk fear the Serpent-Men may one day renew their attack.

HALORE IN 5000 SE

Halore today is a quiet realm, its people and lords alike concerned more about the spring storms and raising good crops than conquest or war. But Haraj Kaneshku, a proud and headstrong man, looks east to Orumbar — a mighty empire seemingly in the mood to enlarge its borders — and wonders if the time has not come for another Diamond Lord to rule all of Indushara.

THE LAND

The most mountainous land of Indushara, Halore lies between the southern end of the Serpent Mountains and the Jade Sea. The land slopes swiftly down from the highlands, creating many broad, deep riverine valleys that often become marshy or swampy in places. There the peasants raise rice and similar crops; on drier land they grow wheat and herd cattle and goats.

Kalat-Karram

Halore is a land of villages and towns more than cities, but of its few cities, Kalat-Karram, the capital, stands out. Located at the mouth of the Niangara River, it was one of the crowns of all Indushara during the years of the Diamond Lords, and they lavished much wealth and attention upon it. Many of its broad streets are paved with flagstones so cleverly set that even today no grass grows up between them, and later *haraja* have maintained the bright colors painted on its domes and towers. The interiors of the most important buildings, such as the great temple Deva Vidasha, are decorated with semi-precious stone, gold leaf, and beautiful statuary. To protect all this wealth and splendor, Kalat-Karram has two walls, an outer and an inner, each patrolled ceaselessly by the *Krana Ghatta*, the Heron Guard.

SOCIETY

The symbol of Halore is the six *pujana* flowers, representing the royal house (the single flower at the base) and the five noble houses of the *badahi* (the five whom the haraj supports). Haraj Kaneshku, the Zenith Sun, the Pillar of Halore, is the single *pujana*. Although only in his mid-20s, he has mastered seven languages, can play three musical instruments, composes fine poetry, and has sired ten children with his six wives. But his intelligence and accomplishments have made him prideful and stubborn, and sometimes his councillors and nobles have difficulty turning him away from foolishly ambitious projects.

Like the other two Indusharan realms, the Halorans follow the Indusharan interpretation of the High Church, which a few Ardunans regard as blasphemous or scandalous. Among other things, their faith allows a man to have up to six wives, depending on his *shattri* (see accompanying text box) and ability to support them. A woman of independent means may, likewise, have up to six husbands if she chooses.

SHATTRI

The people of the Indusharan realms traditionally group themselves into many *shattri*, meaning “class” or “caste” (the term is both singular and plural). The *shattri* into which a person is born determines his career, his position in society, his standing in courts of law, and whom he can wed. Moving from one caste to another is virtually unheard of; only the *haraj* himself can elevate someone to a higher caste, or reduce him to a lower.

Some of the major *shattri* include:

Shattri	Members
Shuvana	Royals
Shimalam	Nobles
Arkaja	Wizards
Baharam	Priests, scholars
Kishala	Warriors
Suthama	Artisans and craftsmen of skill
Vishaya	Merchants and tradesmen
Garayna	Farmers
Hukama	Fishermen
Dusaram	Unskilled laborers

Slaves have no *shattri*; they stand outside the system, and thus lack many legal rights, but also gain a measure of freedom that most Indusharans do not have (for example, they can come and go nearly anywhere without being questioned about it or looked at askance). Visitors to Indushara likewise lack *shattri*, and thus have difficulty penetrating the inner reaches of society — but they’re treated politely, as guests should be, in spite of this.

Malegyon

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: Haraj Dervas

Capital: Ajmur

Population: Men (78%), Leomachi (11%), Pakasa (5%), Drakine (2%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Malegy

Coinage: Ta; Rûk; İlasa

Resources: Herding, farming, craftwork

Religion: High Church (Indusharan)

Military: Light cavalry 18%, heavy cavalry (including Leomachi) 21%, light infantry 30%, heavy infantry 21%, navy 4%, magical/other 6%

Arms/Symbol: An upraised tiger's paw erased, surrounded by a garland of *halama* leaves

The easternmost and largest of the Indusharan realms, Malegyon shares a border with the Empire of Orumbar, and will be the first to feel its strength if the Emperor embarks upon a campaign of conquest.

HISTORY

Throughout the First Epoch and well into the Second, the history of Malegyon is a chronicle of struggles between tribes of Men in the north, their eventual conquest by (or "alliance" with) the Malagar tribe, and their several fruitless wars with the Leomachi and Pakasa of the Makari Plains. During this time, Malegyon proper occupied only the lands north of the Plains; the Leomachi ruled themselves.

In 3110 SE, Samaresh of Halore used Sorcery to make the *haraj* of Malegyon surrender to him for fear that only a Diamond Lord could protect Indushara from Orumbar. For over two centuries Malegyon ceased to exist as a separate realm, though it did gain a grand new city, Ajmur.

In 3352 SE the adventuring sorcerer Algashar freed the Malegy kings from Halore's spell. Enraged, the people of Malegyon prepared to attack Halore, but war was averted when the Haloran *haraj* paid Malegyon a fabulous ransom of gold, silver, gems, and enchanted items.

3360 SE: The Conquest Of The Plains

After setting his kingdom back in order, Haraj Jahnu gave some thought to what he could do with the Haloran ransom, and what came to his mind was his peoples' ancient struggle with the folk of the Makari Plains. The word went out, and mercenaries from all over Mitharia came pouring in to swell the ranks of the Malegy army.

In 3360 SE, Jahnu led his army south toward the Plains, but before they could even set foot in the golden grasslands, an embassy from the Leomachi and Pakasa met them. Alerted to the danger by their magics, the Plains-Folk knew they stood no chance to fend off the Malegy forces, and even if they could the war would ravage the Plains and decimate their herds of cattle. To make the best of bad situation, they offered to swear allegiance to the *haraj* and hold the Plains on his behalf.

A wise and thoughtful man, Haraj Jahnu had

no desire to shed blood needlessly. Impressed by the nobility and honor of the Plains-Folk, he accepted their offer, and two months later their chiefs swore oaths of fealty to him. Ever since the Makari Plains have belonged to Malegyon, and the Plains-Folk have served it loyally and well.

4798-4814 SE: The Rakshasa Plague

In 4798 SE, a terrible plague struck Ajmur and Ghashura. Children, the elderly, and other weak folk died in droves, and many stronger people starved to death when they became too weak from illness to work. Despite the tireless efforts of the priests and the *haraj*, it seemed nothing could stop the epidemic.

Then a strangely-garbed wanderer who called himself Vasukay appeared on the streets of Ajmur. Claiming to be a priest of a mysterious sect, he said he could cure victims of the plague — and proved it by cleansing an entire district in Ajmur of disease. The grateful people showered him with gifts, and soon sick people from throughout Malegyon were paying him and his followers fabulous sums to heal them. Before long, the *haraj* and the priesthood found their authority supplanted by Vasukay's. The people listened to him more than to their rulers and priests, and whenever the *haraj* sent soldiers to arrest him, they were unable to find him. But soon the *haraj* had to stop threatening the itinerant healer, lest he risk an uprising and blood in the streets.

For more than a dozen years, Vasukay and his followers — including many whom he initiated into his "sect" — became the virtual rulers of Malegyon. Wealth and power flowed to them, and those who dared to speak out against them found themselves shunned (if not attacked or cursed). Finally, in 4814 SE, an unnamed company of adventurers led by a Thraysharan wizard named Shadrevar uncovered the truth: Vasukay and his chief followers were all rakshasa! These fiends, possessed of even greater powers than normal for their kind, had first caused the plague, then cured it as a way of obtaining influence and riches. The adventurers slew Vasukay and several of his lieutenants, but a few escaped, taking with them a large hoard of treasure the rakshasas had accumulated. As far as anyone knows, they've never been heard from again.

MALEGYON IN 5000 SE

Life in Malegyon is peaceful and ordinary today, but stormclouds may be gathering on the horizon. To the east, the Empire of Orumbar stirs once more, and Haraj Dervas fears the Emperor's eye may soon turn this way. He has begun building up his armies so he can protect his people not only from Orumbar's ambitions, but from any attempt by the *haraj* of Halore to make himself the new Diamond Lord of Indushara.

THE LAND

While Malegyon becomes mountainous in the far north, for the most part its lands consist of plains near the coast, and forested grasslands between the plains and the foothills. Three major

THE DAHLA-ARKAJA

In Indushara, there exists a special type of wizard called a *dahla-arkaja*. Practitioners primarily of Thaumaturgy, though sometimes with a bit of Alchemy, Divination, or Sorcery thrown in for good measure, the *dahla-arkaja* (“ascetic wizards”) derive their mystic power by drawing on the “arcane energies” of their bodies, which they enhance through ascetic practices and certain physical exercises (such as meditation). A *dahla-arkaja* eats little, says less, subjects his body to the frigid cold and the blazing sun without complaint, and sleeps on rock or hard, packed earth.

To create a *dahla-arkaja* character, buy a typical Wizard Package Deal, with a concentration on Thaumaturgy. The character must also buy the following: +3 CON, Contortionist, PS: Meditation (INT-Based), and Resistance (3 points’ worth) (total cost of these abilities: 15 points).

rivers — the Birabati, Tambura, and Diolaso — form its borders; all three are deep and broad enough to prevent fording or easy bridging along most of their length, giving the *haraji* some measure of protection from potential invaders.

Ajmur

Built by Diamond Lord Samaresh both as the capital of Indushara and as a bulwark against Orumbar, Ajmur is one of the most defensible cities in Mitharia, if not all Ambrethel. Located on a high bluff overlooking the Diolaso and Tambura Rivers, it can only be approached from one side, and a series of five thick, concentric walls makes the going difficult for potential invaders. Special spells strengthen the ground beneath the city so an attacker cannot destroy it simply by collapsing the bluff with magic. The defense-spells also make the cliffside extremely slippery (-8 to Climbing rolls).

The Makari Plains

These wide, rolling grasslands, filled in most places with tall, waving, golden-hued grasses, are the home of many tribes of Leomachi and Pakasa, all of which live mostly by herding cattle. Each tribe has its own territory, defined by years of occupancy and oral treaties carefully negotiated by tribal chieftains and wizards... but that’s not to say that cattle-raids and skirmishes for land don’t occur from time to time.

The only two truly permanent settlements on the Plains are Mah-Makasra in the northwest, and Mah-Rahash near the mouth of the Diolaso. These are trading-towns where Men, Leomachi, and Pakasa mingle freely, exchanging the goods Men produce for the cattle and craftworks of the Plains-Folk. It is at these towns that the Plains-Folk muster their forces when the *haraj* calls upon them to fight on his behalf.

Raghada

Located high in the foothills of the Serpent Mountains, Raghada sits at the southeastern end of the only pass through the peaks. It leads to Thon-Sa, with whom the Raghadans trade extensively. If a trader desires Thona silk or artwork (which the wealthy of Ambrethel covet), he usually has to journey to Raghada to get it.

SOCIETY

Dervas, the latest scion of the Malagarashi lords, is *haraj*, or “king,” of Malegyon. Like dozens of his ancestors before him, he wields the blade Samantaka (“Destroyer of Peace”), an enchanted tulwar received as part of the ransom from the Halorans in 3352 SE. By his first wife Apsara he has three children, including his eldest son Tirish who will inherit the throne in time; he recently married two more wives, but has no children by them yet.

In light of the threat posed by Orumbar, Haraj Dervas has increased the size and strength of his army in recent years. Many new soldiers have swelled the ranks, and the smiths of Malegyon have worked day and night to supply them with armor and weapons. Mahouts have captured more elephants and trained them for war than ever before,

and even the Tiger-Riders (a troop of elite soldiers who ride giant tigers into battle) have seen their numbers rise. Haraj Dervas has also made sure his soldiers train with Leomachi and Pakasa, so that all the units of his army fight effectively together.

Neshara

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Arsalan

Capital: Tarran

Population: Men (87%), Drakine (6%), Elves (3%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Nesharan

Coinage: Piece; Piece; Piece

Resources: Farming, fishing, herding, craftwork

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 23%, heavy cavalry 17%, light infantry 27%, heavy infantry 18%, navy 8%, magical/other 7%

Arms/Symbol: A red *sotal* rampant

A land where the Westerlander culture of northern Mitharia meets the cultures of both Indushara and Orumbar, Neshara is a kingdom whose differences, long its strengths, may finally spell its doom.

HISTORY

Earliest Neshara was the home of many tribes whose culture was similar to that of Indushara in some ways, and who spoke a different language than the folk living west of the Tambura River. But by the mid-to-late First Epoch, Westerlanders had worked their way down through north and central Mitharia to reach the lands across the Sangoah River. Centuries of conflict followed, as the newcomers fought the natives. At the Battle of Masorha in 2965 SE, the northmen under Veddar finally dealt the natives such a blow that they (the northmen) controlled the land. Since then, the two peoples have lived together for so long, mingling both tradition and blood, that one people containing the best of its predecessors has emerged.

3717-3720 SE: The Sitherian War

Neshara’s next great conflict was with Sitheria. For centuries the kings of Sitheria had grown in power and wealth, and now they looked greedily on the lush lands south of the Sangoah, which they hoped to give to the younger sons of many of their nobles. Equipped with the best steel Sitherian money could buy, and bolstered by Ardunan mercenaries, the Sitherian army crossed the river in 3717 SE and began laying waste to Nisheran towns and cities. Taken by surprise, Durzarin fell to the Sitherians quickly, and then Varunaya. The Sitherians then marched on Tarran.

Turned aside by a fierce Nesharan attack near Bahren Gorge, the Sitherians headed west into the Nesharan heartland, but here found fewer towns and villages to attack. Soon the length of their supply line began causing them trouble, as Nesharan raiders harried their caravans at every opportunity. Smelling defeat in the wind, General

Bergarm marched his army north, hoping to consolidate his earlier gains and continue the campaign the next year.

Over the next two years the Sitherians made little headway against the now-prepared Nesharans, and the year after that began losing ground to them. At the Battle of the Serpent River in 3720 SE, adroit cavalry tactics helped the Nesharans smash the invading army. Sitherian soldiers fled north, crossing the Sangoah however they could. To prevent an invasion of his own land, King Korrand of Sitheria paid the Nesharans a reparation of a dozen wagons loaded to the brim with chests of gold.

4850-4852 SE: Fires Along The Diolaso

A hundred and fifty years ago, Lord Onacar of Takla Haran, a skilled wizard and war-captain, perceived King Halgoran as weak and vulnerable. Banding together several like-minded nobles under his banner, he declared himself the new king and marched on Tarran to enforce his claim by killing Halgoran.

Two years of bloody civil war followed, with most nobles joining one faction or the other, but some trying to seize more power for themselves. Onacar even sought the aid of Orumbar, which sent several hundred Drakine warriors to him, but in the end the King proved stronger than the lord of Takla Haran had thought. His magic broken by Halgoran's court wizards, and his armies shattered by the swords of Men loyal to the King, Onacar surrendered. Soldiers dragged him before the throne in chains. King Halgoran lopped off the traitor's head and the heads of his sons. He gave Onacar's fief and only daughter to a loyal lesser noble he elevated to repay the man's valor in battle.

NESHARA IN 5000 SE

On the surface, Neshara seems calm, but beneath that veneer lies a troubled land. First, several recent droughts in the central and northern regions have left many people hungry, and even King Arsalan's court wizards and the priests of Hornbrek seem unable to bring the rains.

Second, the rifts caused by the civil war of the mid-4800s have never fully healed. While most of the nobles and wealthy merchants still support the king, some, particularly in the south, mutter against him — and a few have even said openly that Neshara should join the Empire of Orumbar, obtaining concessions it never will if the Drakine take the realm by force. To counteract this, some otherwise loyal northern nobles have suggested that a strong alliance with Sitheria, or even joining that realm, would be advisable. King Arsalan must try to placate the factions loyal to him while winning back the hearts and minds of the more contentious lords.

THE LAND

Running from the western shores of Lake Kalkana to the Tambura River, Neshara is a hot, often dusty land of plains and savannahs, though it becomes cooler and wetter as it approaches the mountains. Most folk live on the lakeshore or along the rivers; much of the interior is wilderness, home to monsters and roving herds of *sotalo*. Some adventurers claim to have found ancient, ruined cities there, half-buried by the grasses, but most Nesharans consider these stories nonsense.

Tarran

The largest city of Neshara is Tarran, on Lake Kalkana. Ships sail from Tarran across the lake to Hamba'ne, Denloch, and Nar Hradec, trading fine Nesharan leather, lumber, and cattle for the goods of other lands. The stout, strong walls, rebuilt after the destruction wrought upon them during the civil war, stand ready for anything the Drakine or other attackers might throw at them.

The court of the king is a place of intrigue, gossip, and maneuvering. Nobles from various factions try to persuade others to their side, all the while trying to convince King Arsalan of their loyalty... and of course, if they can benefit personally from all this deal-making, they don't mind. Queen Minha watches court politics closely, using the insight she gains from her observations to advise her husband.

The Taresha Jungle

The largest forested area in Neshara is in the north, where a range of tall hills often blocks the rainclouds. The tall and mighty trees of the Taresha, particularly the *yedarha* with its rich brown wood, make valuable lumber; woodcutters transport them to Tabas Goran, and caravans or ships then carry them on to their final destination.

SOCIETY

King Arsalan of House Elahar rules Neshara — though with all the difficulties and threats besetting his realm, he's not sure how long that may continue to be the case. Once a contented and confident man, he's become given to brooding and fits of despair. His wife Minha tries to improve his spirits and help as best she can, but what Arsalan really needs is something to give him hope.

Right now, the only thing Arsalan places any real trust in is his army, and of course much of that depends on nobles fulfilling their feudal obligations. Of the soldiers directly serving him, the king most favors the *Jahla Retal*. These knight-like warriors wear heavy chainmail, ride the largest *sotalo* available, and wield barbed lances, battle axes, and swords. To be made a member of the *Jahla Retal* is a singular honor extended to only the bravest warriors.

Orumbar

Government: Hereditary empire
Ruler: *Neren Sokindar* Torgathan III
Capital: Hamba'ne
Population: Drakine (69%), Men (24%), Pakasa (2%), Other (5%)
Language(s): Orumbaran (Southern Drakine), Pharonian, Velorian
Coinage: Kelgeh; Ga'ret; Tehtar
Resources: Farming, herding, fishing
Religion: Drakine
Military: Light cavalry 18%, heavy cavalry 15%, light infantry 29%, heavy infantry 22%, navy 8%, magical/other 8%
Arms/Symbol: Two Drakine hands clasping one another

The last realm in the world where Drakine still have true power, the Empire of Orumbar stands poised on the brink of what may be a new wave of expansion that will see it rise to even greater heights.

HISTORY

The Drakine first settled Orumbar early in the First Epoch, when trading ships from the north were blown far off course by a terrible storm. Exploring the new lands they found, they sailed up the Chatac River to Lake Kalkana, where they founded a city they called Hamba'ne. They sent word back home, and many adventurous Drakine in search of lands of their own came to join them.

The early years of Orumbar were difficult ones. The native tribes of Men (from whose language came the name of the land) attacked the Drakine frequently. In time the Drakine grew numerous and powerful enough to fend off their foes, or destroy them, and soon Orumbar's lands expanded beyond the lakeshore all the way south to the edge of the Shawara Jungle.

By the early Second Epoch, while the Ardunan realms of the Drakine had lost a great war and were fading away, Orumbar remained strong and prosperous. As described on page 16, from 2936 to 3050 SE, under King Asukala and his sons it grew from a kingdom to a true empire, conquering first Thessalonia and later Pharonia and Veloria, all realms of Men. The Drakine also drove the Pakasa of the lower Diolaso River west, into the Makari Plains.

The newly-formed empire did not rest easy for many years to come. In 3111 SE, the Men of Pharonia revolted, holding off the Drakine armies sent to bring them to heel until 3114 SE. Thessalonia and Veloria also rebelled at times, but before long the *neren sokindar's* armies crushed the rebels and re-established Hamba'ne's authority. By 3631 SE the fires of freedom had dimmed in all the outlying regions of the Empire; thereafter only rare, short-lived rebellions ever broke out, all easily stopped by the local nobles.

ORUMBAR IN 5000 SE

For millennia Orumbar has been the "sleeping giant" of Mitharia, its leaders content to waste its energies on internal squabbles and political maneuvering, but the giant may at long last be awakening. Torgathan, third *Neren Sokindar* ("emperor," or more literally "highest of kings") to bear that name, has ambitions of conquest. Obsessed with the history of his ancestors, he longs for accomplishments to rival those of Asukala. He looks north to Neshara, a land riven by political feuding, where some of the nobles would willingly swear allegiance to him. He looks northwest to Thraysara, a kingdom so weak he could conquer it with only a fraction of his army. He looks east to Kumasia, seeing lands made soft by long isolation, where the great dragon-prowed ships of his navy could land armies that would easily sweep all before them. He looks west across the Diolaso to Indushara, a rich land his people have long coveted. To many Mitharians, the question is when and where Torgathan III will strike, not if.

THE LAND

Most of Orumbar is a hot, dry plain, broken here and there by ranges of small hills, or forests that have grown up around some natural source of water. As in Neshara, most of the people live on the seacoast, the lake, or the border rivers; towns of the interior always cluster around a small lake or other source of water.

Hamba'ne

Taking its name from a combination of the Drakine and native words for "new home," Hamba'ne is the oldest and largest city in Orumbar. In recent years it has seen much shipbuilding activity along its wharves, allegedly because of increased trading... but many folk living around Lake Kalkana see a navy of conquest, not a trading fleet, taking shape.

The centerpiece of Hamba'ne is Shargonic Tenar, the royal palace of the Orumbaran emperors. Built, and continuously expanded, by the most skilled artisans in the land, and filled with the riches of an empire, it's one of the most impressive buildings in Mitharia (if not the world). In the throne room, bloodstained banners marking Orumbar's military victories cover the walls, and the *Neren Sokindar* looks down on his courtiers from a dais nearly two stories tall.

Pharonia

Once a kingdom of Men, with a substantial body of Pakasa subjects as well, Pharonia has belonged to the Empire for nearly two thousand years. Its folk are mostly fishermen who live in small villages and towns along the coast; only at Kairos, at the mouth of the Diolaso River, have they built a true city. Away from the coast, Pharonia is hot and dry, very nearly a desert. A few small rivers trickle through it, each lined with farms.

Kairos itself is a surprisingly cosmopolitan city for such a backwater place. Pharonian Men, Indusharan Men, Pakasa, and Drakine mingle together freely, braving the hot sun to trade in the Topharet Market. A six-domed temple to the Drakine gods, built where once the Men of Pharonia had their own temples, overlooks the marketplace.

Veloria

Cut off from the rest of Orumbar by the Peaks of Ash and the Ashy Waste, Veloria enjoys more freedom from the scrutiny of Hamba'ne than any other part of the Empire. While the two major cities, Hishala and Darfur, both have large garrisons of Drakine troops, many of the Men who live here can go most of their lives without ever seeing one of their Drakine masters. As long as the Velorians send their annual tribute of riches and slaves to the capital, and follow the orders the Drakine give, the *Neren Sokindar* rarely concerns himself with events there.

Lake Kalkana

The largest body of fresh water in Mitharia, Lake Kalkana is deep and cold, with long beaches that often make for poor harborage. Still, it allows the northern and southern realms to trade with ease, and thus serves much the same function in Mitharia as Beralka and Mhorec do for Arduna.

Legend has it that the waters of Lake Kalkana are so chilly because long ago, the god Vabanak threw the Stone of Winters into its depths so the *sorrag* could not get it. Periodically bands of adventurers search the waters of the lake for the fabled Stone, but none has yet found it.

The Peaks Of Ash And The Ashy Waste

In the center of Orumbar lies a small, sharp-peaked mountain range dominated by an enormous volcano. It erupts in small and fitful ways nearly every year, with a major eruption every few decades. Thanks to the prevailing winds, the ash and rock from these eruptions tend to travel south and a little west, creating the Ashy Waste where almost nothing can survive. The Velorians claim that strange “ash monsters” stalk the waste... but since, according to the tale, a slain monster disintegrates into ordinary ash, they can't prove it.

SOCIETY

The Drakine dominate Orumbaran society and enjoy full legal rights within the Empire. Men, Pakasa, and other races are second-class citizens. They cannot own more than a small amount of land, and by law cannot worship any gods at all — the Drakine will not allow them to sully the Drakine gods with their foully-worded prayers, nor let them revere any other gods. Orumbar treats non-Drakine visitors from other lands little better, but if they stay in the cities, transact their business quickly, and cause no trouble, the Empire's soldiers mostly leave them alone.

Neren Sokindar Torgathan III rules this land. A stern and forbidding Drakine who brooks not the slightest disrespect, he's the terror of the royal palace. Even his wife, Nanetha, and his six children fear him — all save his oldest son, Torgathan IV, who seems to have inherited his father's temperament.

Within the Empire, a *sanagar* (roughly the same as a duke) rules each city or region. Orumbaran law forbids any lesser noble to have a personal army larger than that of the *Neren Sokindar*, which ensures the emperor can put down rebellious nobles without difficulty but places a great strain on the imperial purse to fund and support enough soldiers.

Thon-Sa

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: *Kaham* Giratse

Capital: Utahsa

Population: Men (93%), Dwarves (4%), Other (3%)

Language(s): Thona

Coinage: Talbu; Talbu; Talbu

Resources: Mining, craftwork, farming

Religion: Thona

Military: Light cavalry 17%, heavy cavalry 9%, light infantry 43%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 0%, magical/other 11%

Arms/Symbol: A Thona archway in gold and brown

A mountain land of tall peaks, broad valleys, and countless small lakes and streams, Thon-Sa is a mystery to most Ambrethelans — a kingdom high among the clouds that rarely concerns itself with the doings of the lower regions.

HISTORY

The history of this small, mountainous realm is little known outside Thon-Sa itself, as if the clouds that so often flow down from the peaks covered its past as well as its lands. The few scholars who have read the chronicle-scrolls in the Thona temples report nothing of great significance, save only numerous failed Venidyan attempts to conquer Thon-Sa. While the fierce, skilled Thona warriors seem to have little trouble fending off outlander armies, after the attack in 4102 SE the Thona built the great fortress of Tugal Phuharu to stop or slow future invasions.

THON-SA IN 5000 SE

As timeless as the mountains surrounding it, Thon-Sa exists as it always has. The people grow rice and grain in the valleys, while the priests send prayers by the thousands to the Celestial Kings (see page 216). *Kaham* (“king”) Garitse, an old man with four grown sons, has no designs upon other realms; he simply wishes for a peaceful continuity of *jaharma* (“the proper way of things”).

THE LAND

Thon-Sa is a mountainous land where people live in the valleys between and among towering, snow-covered peaks. Most of them farm in the vales, supplementing their diet by hunting in nearby forests or fishing in cold mountain streams. Most people live with their extended families on isolated farmsteads; villages are rare, and larger habitations rarer still. Only one true city, Utahsa, where the *kaham* has his court, exists.

Tugal Phuharu

Located at the southern end of Thon-Sa, the only route by which an invading army can enter the land, Tugal Phuharu is an enormous stone fortress built to keep the Vendiyans out. Manned by thousands of warriors, it's considered virtually impregnable; Thona wizards have even laid countermeasures upon it to protect against arcane assaults.

SOCIETY

Thon-Sa is a closed land. As indicated by the arch that is its symbol, its people consider it the “gateway to heaven,” a high and holy place where lesser mortals cannot come. Most of them want little, if anything, to do with foreigners, though the merchants of Utahsa do trade with the people of Raghada to obtain things the Thona cannot make for themselves.

In faraway lands, the Thona are perhaps best known for the skill and speed of their warriors. While they can wield sword or bow as well as any fighting man, these warriors also practice *Tran-Dhùk*, a style of unarmed combat (see page 199). Few Ambrethelans are not impressed when they see a Thona warrior defeat and disarm a knight using just his bare hands, or one Thona warrior take on an entire squad of enemies and emerge unscathed.

Thrayshara

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Irrus

Capital: Aplion

Population: Men (88%), Dwarves (6%), Gnomes (1%), Seshurma (1%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Thraysharan

Coinage: Piece; Moon; Sun

Resources: Fishing, mining, farming

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 20%, heavy cavalry 16%, light infantry 31%, heavy infantry 24%, navy 5%, magical/other 4%

Arms/Symbol: A flying falcon carrying a crown in its beak.

A small, and these days weak, kingdom on the southeast shore of Lake Kalkana, Thrayshara may soon, at long last, become part of Orumbar.

HISTORY

Thrayshara was founded by explorers from Tornathia who sailed over to Mitharia in the middle of the First Epoch. After traveling through the Lamia Pass, some of them stayed in the land now called Ostravia, while others turned south. After crossing the Denirica River, they found a warm, green land between the mountains and the water, and settled there. Their descendants later crossed the Chatac River and settled the land of Thessalonia, which the Drakine eventually conquered.

Thrayshara has long existed in the shadow of Orumbar, with whom it conducts much trade. Twice, in 3347 SE and 4448 SE, Orumbar has tried to conquer Thrayshara, only to be turned back both times by a combination of military cleverness and

the powerful magic of Kristor the Immortal, the wizard-king who ruled Thrayshara for nearly 1,500 years until his death in 4601 SE. But Kristor is gone, and his magic with him, and now that Orumbar seems eager to acquire more territory, Thrayshara may be its first conquest.

THRAYSHARA IN 5000 SE

Thrayshara is a land in peril. King Irrus, once a smart and vigorous man, has become despondent and listless since the death of all four of his children in a boating accident on Lake Kalkana two years ago. With no chance of a royal son to inherit the throne (Irrus's wife having died in childbirth), the heir to the throne is a distantly-related noble from southern Thrayshara, whom few of the court know well. To many, it seems as if King Irrus is simply waiting for the Orumbarans to invade, that he may die nobly in battle.

THE LAND

Thrayshara is a tiny, green land wedged in between Lake Kalkana and the southern Thraysha Mountains. From the flat and fertile coastal region it swiftly rises into hills, and thence into the mountains themselves, where only a few people (mostly miners) live.

Most Thraysharans live in villages or small towns. Aplion, the capital, is the only city. By Ambrethelan standards it's a small one that smells of the muds of the nearby tidal flats where the poor often gather shellfish to eat. Only a few of the streets near the royal palace, Metteson, are cobbled; the rest are simple dirt that quickly turns to high-impassable mud during the spring and summer rains.

SOCIETY

The Thraysharans are a simple folk, without pretension or airs; even their nobles dress in a simple style and wear little adornment. Most people fish the waters of Kalkana, raise grain or fruit, or herd swine, sheep, and goats. Thraysharan lamb is a popular dish in many lands, but it requires a mix of spices available only in Thrayshara itself.

With King Irrus barely willing to spend time with his courtiers, much of the power in the land has shifted to Lord Helekon, the heir apparent, and his wife the Lady Ysaida. Still regarded as newcomers to the court despite having been there a year, Helekon and Ysaida have attracted a variety of the curious, the sycophantic, and the manipulative to the frequent feasts they throw at their shoreside villa, which has become the center of Aplion's social life. No one can quite tell what to make of the crown prince — sometimes he seems oddly wise, at others naive or foolish — and most of the nobles have adopted a “wait and see” attitude toward him.

Vendiya

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: Harasha Upala

Capital: Abadras

Population: Men (92%), Dwarves (3%), Elves (1%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Vendiyan

Coinage: Ta; Rûk; Ilasa

Resources: Fishing, farming, herding, mining

Religion: High Church (Indusharan)

Military: Light cavalry 22%, heavy cavalry 13%, light infantry 28%, heavy infantry 19%, navy 10%, magical/other 8%

Arms/Symbol: A golden conch shell

Oldest of the Indusharan realms, Vendiya is a strange and exotic land of warrior-priests, many-headed nature spirits, nimble-fingered stranglers, and a young queen determined to hold on to her throne.

HISTORY

Vendiya's history begins in the mists of time, unknown even to the Vendiyaans themselves. When Ardanans finally reached this part of Ambrethel in the mid-First Epoch, they found in Vendiya (a kingdom then including the present land of Halore) a land of traditions and faiths already old, where the Chamragarh *haraja* had ruled for as long as anyone could remember.

Encounters with folk from other lands did little to affect Vendiya until 2208 FE, when six southern nobles, inspired by a band of true-hearted adventurers, declared Halore a sovereign *haraji*. The Vendiyan *haraj* marched against them, but they were among the strongest of his nobles, and without them he lacked the strength to defeat an enemy such as they. With poor grace he withdrew north of the mountains once more, but ever since the folk of Vendiya have often had little love for the Halorans.

3880-3887 SE: The Haraji Of The Stranglers

In most lands, each city has its own Thieves' Guild, concerned at best with what goes on in that city alone. Not so Vendiya, where long ago the thieves from all the land banded together. The Stranglers follow the leadership of a thief known only by the title of Master of Stranglers. When one Master dies, other Stranglers who wish his position must fight among themselves to obtain it.

In 3880 SE, the Master of Stranglers was a man of exceeding ambition and greed... but also exceeding talent. Through cleverness and well-placed bribes, he learned many secrets, including some Haraj Shalyun himself wanted no one to know. Under pain of having his darkest secrets revealed to all the world, Shalyun obeyed the Master's dictates, in effect turning the rulership of the kingdom over to the thieves. For eight years the people suffered and the Stranglers ran wild, doing whatever they wished. But when the king fell ill in 3887 SE, the royal physician heard him mumbling the truth in his sleep and alerted some friends of his who were adventurers, and other friends in the army. Together adventurers

and army alike brought an end to the Haraji of the Stranglers, and threw the Master to his death from the tallest tower in Abadras.

4996 SE: Ascension Of The Queen

In 4996 SE, a new, young *haraj*, Kaddar, came to the throne, and quickly married what was to be his first wife, Upala. But not long after they were wed, he fell victim to a virulent illness, and died from it despite the efforts of priests and physicians to save his life.

Before the heir to the throne, a cousin of the *haraj*'s, could take the throne, *Harasha* Upala revealed that she was pregnant. She was made regent for her future child, should it be a son. When it became apparent that she was *not* pregnant, she struck swiftly, slaying nobles and courtiers unfriendly to her (including her husband's cousin) and insisting she would hold the throne herself as a Chamragarh by marriage.

VENDIYA IN 5000 SE

Harasha Upala is a woman walking a narrow and dangerous path, and if she falls from it she may cause great harm to Vendiya. She holds the throne through force of personality, force of will, clever political maneuvering, and even a little bit of bribery, but she has no real claim to it under Vendiyan law. If she mis-steps and the nobles turn against her, it will surely mean her death... and civil war, since the lack of a Chamragarh heir means any noble strong enough to claim and hold the throne becomes the next *haraj*. If necessary, Upala may marry a powerful noble to cement her position, or seek some source of aid beyond her borders, for she has no intention of surrendering her throne. And the truth is, she rules fairly and well.

THE LAND

Once one descends from the Serpent Mountains and their foothills, Vendiya quickly becomes a low-lying, forested land, broken here and there by shallow lakes and marshy areas. Most people live in small towns called *shabat*, each built around a temple, but three of the towns — Abadras the capital, Rahimyar on the Walaru River, and Asirha on the coast — long ago grew into true cities.

The Tangala Islands

Located off the shore of northernmost Halore, the Tangala Islands are a rich source of spices and medicinal herbs. Both Vendiya and Halore claim the islands, and have fought several inconclusive naval battles over them. With the ownership of the islands unresolved, subjects of both realms go there to gather plants, sometimes coming to blows in disputes over the rights to particularly rich areas.

SOCIETY

Vendiyan society today is a snake-pit of political intrigue. Some nobles and their followers want to find a way to depose the *harasha* and take her place; others support her because they think there's something in it for them; others wait and see, ready to take any opportunity that falls their way. The peasants of the countryside hear little or nothing of

CALLING FORTH THE WORLD-SPIRITS

As mentioned on page 138, in Vendiya priest and commoner alike believe in nature spirits. They propitiate the spirits in various ways depending on the type of spirit, the time of year, what the person doing the propitiating wants, and so forth. Some Vendiyan priests even have a divine magic spell with which they can call forth a nature spirit:

Summon one Nature Spirit built on up to 500 Character Points (see Monsters, Minions, And Marauders, pages 100-102), Expanded Class (nature spirits; +¼) (125 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Summoned Being Must Inhabit Locale (-½), Arrives Under Own Power (-½). Total cost: 28 points (final cost to caster: 9 points).

Of course, this spell doesn't guarantee the spirit will be kindly disposed toward the caster, or will do what he asks. The priest has to negotiate with the spirit to get what he wants; usually this involves "gifts" of food or valuables.

this, but in the cities talk about who has allied with or betrayed whom this week fills the streets.

Vendiyian Religion

The Vendiyans follow the High Faith in the Indusharan style, but have added to it in certain unique ways. As deep thinkers and philosophers of repute, they have debated matters of divinity and faith for millennia. Many *kavri*, or “sects,” have arisen, each supporting some specific interpretation of a minor doctrinal point. Most priests belong to at least one sect; some espouse the beliefs of several.

But the Vendiyans are also a hot-headed folk, and it's not unknown for priests to come to blows over these trivial differences of orthodoxy. Long ago they developed special, secret ways of fighting, with fist or sword, from disciplines they learned from Thona priests. Thus evolved the *kshaivan*, or “warrior-priests” of Vendiya. They wear priestly robes, but they carry swords and other weapons. If two priests of opposing sects meet, they may very well come to blows. Swirling melees involving dozens of priests and lay followers sometimes take place in the streets of Abadras.

(To create a *kshaivan* character, take the Priest Package Deal on page 177, then also buy an additional 4 points' worth of WFs and at least 10 points' worth of maneuvers from the *Haidara* Martial Art on page 197. However, *kshaivana* rarely leave Vendiya, so they may make poor adventurers.)

As if that weren't enough to raise the ire of some Ardunan priests, the Vendiyans have a strong belief in nature spirits, which they propitiate with small offerings of food. As depicted in art, Vendiyian nature spirits are usually tiny beings, no more than a foot or two high, often with multiple heads, arms, and/or legs. Some are kindly disposed toward those who treat them with respect, and may provide valuable advice or even a clever gift (when they choose to show themselves at all); others are indifferent to Men, or even malicious.

CENTRAL MITHARIA

In the central region of Mitharia, northern (Westerlander) culture mixes and mingles with southern cultures.

The Baghlan Plateau

Government: Tribal

Ruler: Numerous tribal chieftains

Capital: None

Population: Men (95%), Orcs (2%), Other (3%)

Language(s): Baghlani

Coinage: None (barter)

Resources: Craftwork

Religion: Baghlani

Military: No organized military; the Baghlani method of warfare involves light cavalry almost entirely

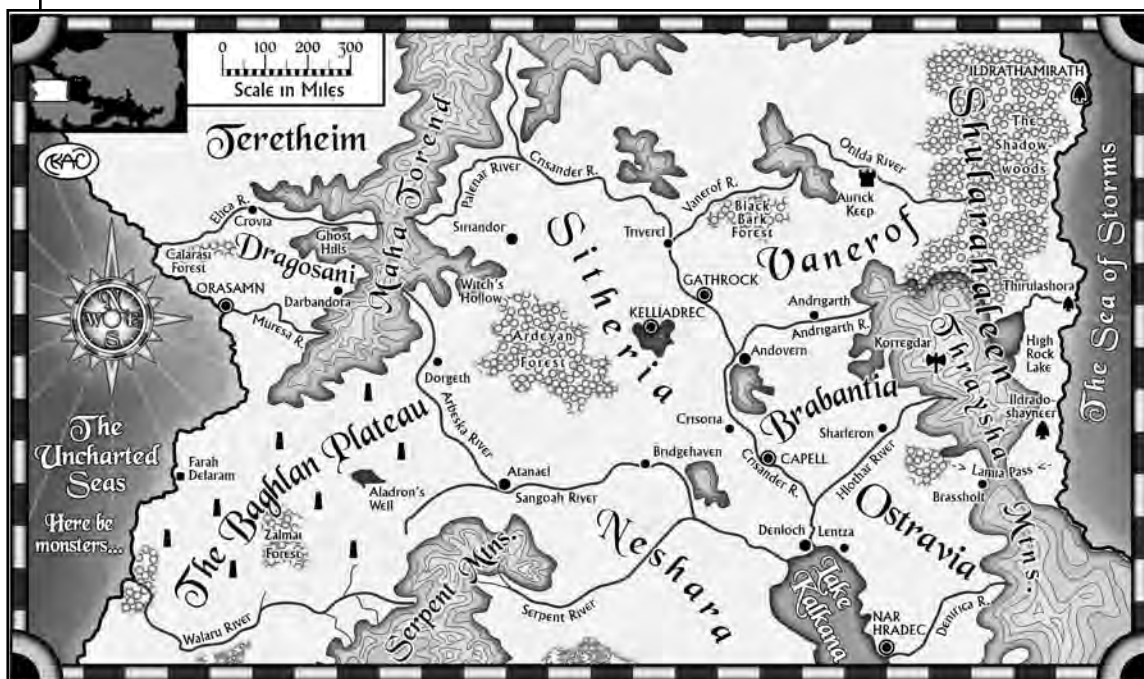
Arms/Symbol: None

A land of warring tribes, sacred monoliths, and skilled horsemen, the Baghlan Plateau is, at best, an unfriendly place for strangers to visit.

HISTORY

The Baghlani have no written form of their language, so they lack historical records. The writings of other peoples mention them from as early as the 500s. The oral histories of various tribes describe a saga dating back many thousands of years, but most scholars regard it as largely mythical.

The chronicle of the Baghlan Plateau is one of constant tribal warfare. Dozens of tribes, some with lifespans of millennia but others much younger, contend for control of parts of the Plateau, primarily the mysterious sacred monoliths that stand here and there throughout the land. Each of the monoliths is forty to 100 feet tall (and proportionately large in diameter) and made of some strange, dark



grey stone that never seems to weather or fade. No one knows who created them, or what the strange designs and glyphs carved on them signify, but the Baghlani regard them as sacred. Were an outlander even to touch one, much less to profane it somehow, the tribes would put aside their differences in a heartbeat to pursue him, capture him, and leave him to die on the Plateau with all limbs broken and his eyelids cut off.

THE BAGHLAN PLATEAU IN 5000 SE

As of 5000 SE, ten major tribes — Bahmani, Balikh, Hunza, Rudrar, Rûshan, Saqar, Tagab, Takhta, Talqan, and Yazdar — and many more minor tribes occupy the Plateau, skirmishing with one another constantly for control of the sacred monoliths and other territory. Over time one tribe loses too many fighting men and falls from prominence (or gets absorbed by another tribe), while a lesser tribe might enjoy great success in battle and suddenly find itself controlling a monolith.

THE LAND

The Baghlan Plateau is an arid region with few large forests or areas of rich plant growth. Sources of water, such as small lakes and streams, are highly valued. Longstanding Baghlani tradition states that no tribe can attack another within 500 feet of a known source of water, but some tribes observe that tradition as much in the breach as in the observance.

The largest body of water on the Plateau is Aladron's Well, a broad but shallow lake in the east-central region. Legends say that some who drink from Aladron's Well receive visions of the future which are rarely pleasant, but usually accurate.

The only permanent settlement on the Plateau is Farah Delaram, a town on the coast where the Baghlani meet with traders who want to exchange goods (particularly better weapons and armor than the Baghlani themselves can make) for the *besindi* spice the tribeswomen make from certain regional plants. Some also come to trade at the Vendiyani city of Rahimyar.

SOCIETY

The Baghlani are a nomadic culture. They practically live on horseback at times, and rarely make camp in the same place for more than a single moon. For food they herd goats and sheep, hunt, and gather fruits and nuts. At most times of the year the tribes avoid one another, or fight. But for one week before and one week after the vernal equinox, all tribes meet near the Zalmi Forest for the Days of Peace. During this period no tribe may fight with another tribe for any reason; the time is given over to prayer, debating "legal" claims one tribe has against another, arranging marriages, trading, and games.

Few outlanders visit the Baghlan Plateau, and those who do rarely find a friendly reception. The Baghlani regard outsiders with suspicion and distrust; most groups of warriors will simply slay an outlander on sight and divide his goods among themselves.

For more about the Baghlani, see pages 184 and 216.

Brabantia

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Rhedden

Capital: Capell

Population: Men (82%), Dwarves (8%), Elves (3%), Gnomes (3%), Halflings (1%), Other (3%)

Language(s): Brabantian

Coinage: Bezant; Bezant; Bezant

Resources: Farming, herding, mining

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 22%, heavy cavalry 17%, light infantry 29%, heavy infantry 22%, navy 0%, magical/other 10%

Arms/Symbol: A brown bear standing erect, usually on gold

A small kingdom wedged between the more powerful realms of Ostravia and Vanerof, Brabantia now maintains its freedom through an alliance with the Dwarves of Korregdar.

HISTORY

Brabantia was first settled by Men from Tornathia, who sailed to Mitharia in the middle of the First Epoch. After traversing the Lamia Pass, some stayed in the land now called Ostravia, and some went south. A third group, led by a man named Anveng, went north. After crossing the Hlothar River, they found a green and fertile land where they built themselves a city on the shores of Lake Kalkana.

Much of Brabantia's early history is a chronicle of occupation by either Vanerof or Ostravia. The former, an aggressive and militarily powerful realm, often fought with the latter, a wealthy trading power, and Brabantia was the ground over which they fought. Vanerof first conquered Brabantia in 2563 FE and held it until losing it to Ostravia in 2920 SE, who lost it back in 3351 SE. Under the leadership of King Herne, known as Herne the Liberator, Brabantia defeated the Vanerof army and won its freedom in 3493 SE.

Vanerof once again conquered Brabantia in 4216 SE. The Brabantians remained subjects of Gathrock, their king reduced in status to a grand duke, until 4527 SE, when the folk of Andover discovered rich veins of silver in the hills along the Crisander River. It so happened that the Dwarves of Korregdar had seen their own silver mines play out just a few years before, and their craftsmen were hurting for want of good silver. Sensing an opportunity, the "grand duke" made a pact with the Dwarves, and in 4529 SE heavily-armed dwarven warriors helped the Brabantians win their freedom once more. They remain free today, their king a king once more.

BRABANTIA IN 5000 SE

Brabantia's alliance with Korregdar has made it a safe and prosperous place. The trade between the two realms has attracted skilled craftsmen of many races to the cities of Brabantia, and the Dwarves prefer to buy Brabantian silver and concentrate on making things from it than to mine

their own. Internal conflict within Vanerof keeps it from threatening King Rhedden's realm; only the occasional attack by bandits, mountain Orcs, or monsters mars the peace.

THE LAND

Bounded by three rivers and a mountain range, Brabantia is a low highland of thick pine forests, pleasant summers, and winters that often turn bitterly cold. The people farm, herd cattle and pigs, work the mines, and hunt game in the fields and woods; the meat of the majestic redhorn deer is a particular favorite.

Capell

The capital of the Anvengian kings is a small but well-built city on the Crisander River. Under the rule of Vanerof it was not allowed to have a wall, but in 4535 SE the Dwarves of Korregdar built for it a large, stout wall that still looks almost new today, nearly 500 years later. The handiwork of the Dwarves can also be seen in the many buildings wealthy nobles and merchants have hired them to construct... but anyone can see that the royal palace, Voskirk, was built by Men, as was the Grand Cathedral.

The symbol of Capell is a loaf of bread shaped roughly like an eye. The bakers of Capell are famed for this bread, which they delicately season with certain herbs to give it a distinctive taste.

SOCIETY

King Rhedden, a stern yet kind-hearted man of many talents, sits on the throne of Brabantia; both his people and his nobles love him, and he anticipates many more years of peaceful and prosperous rule. He and his wife, Queen Solayne, have four children: Crown Prince Jelec, age 15; Princess Melisara, age 14; Prince Taravis, age 11; and Princess Karailie, age 6. Jelec, a strong young man skilled with a blade, will soon become a knight of the Order of the Bear, a prestigious group of fighting men to which his father also belongs.

Thanks to their long alliance with Korregdar, the Brabantians get along well with races other than Men, especially Dwarves and Gnomes. A Dwarf who visits any inn or tavern in Brabantia can certainly expect fine treatment, and possibly even rounds of drinks bought for him by patrons who make money trading with Korregdar.

Dragosani

Government: Monarchy

Ruler: Sargath, the Vampire Lord

Capital: Orasamn

Population: Men (93%), Dwarves (3%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Dragosa

Coinage: Mark; Mark; Mark

Resources: Herding, fishing, farming, mining

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 20%, heavy cavalry 16%, light infantry 31%, heavy infantry 21%, navy 8%, magical/other 4%

Arms/Symbol: A green wyvern, chained to a tree

Once a quiet, backwater realm of herders, fishermen, and hunters, Dragosani is now a realm gripped by fear, its royal family slain by the vampire who holds the throne.

HISTORY

Thousands of years ago, some early Baghlani tribes fleeing the constant warfare of their homeland forded the Muresa River and settled in the land they came to call Dragosani (from the Baghlani words for "green land," since the grassy hills and lush forests there were new and wondrous to them). They soon gave up their nomadic ways and built towns that grew into cities, and their language diverged from that of their forefathers.

1858 FE: Tarsellan The Pious

By the middle First Epoch, Men from the Westerlands made their way across Mitharia and came into Dragosani. Some settled there and married Dragosani women; others fought with the Dragosa, and were defeated.

One of the Men who visited Dragosani was not an adventurer or a would-be conqueror, but a priest. Tarsellan of Vestria had come to Mitharia to convert its peoples to the High Faith, and in Dragosani he found his life's calling. Up until that time, the Dragosa followed an animistic faith similar to that of the Baghlan Plateau, but Tarsellan opened their eyes to the holy truth of the High Church. After King Berac converted, his nobles and people quickly followed, until today spirit-worship survives only in tiny ways in the most isolated villages.

4902 SE: The Coming Of The Vampire Lord

For thousands of years the Dragosa ruled themselves, one royal house occasionally replacing another due to lack of an heir, accidental deaths, or warfare between nobles. All that ended one terrible Whitefall night in 4902 SE when Sargath, called the Vampire Lord, came to Orasamn. After drifting into the royal palace in the shape of a mist, he slew King Toman and all his family, bringing House Casona to a bitter end. Moving swiftly, he placed the palace guards and then the courtiers and nobles under his thrall. The Dragosa awakened the next morning to find themselves ruled by a vampire.

Some of the nobles rallied to destroy the usurper, but it was all for naught. Sargath was too strong to defeat easily, and every noble who encountered him soon fell under his spell... or ended his life

with the Vampire Lord's fangs buried in his neck. Soon Sargath held the land in an iron grasp, and the people have lived in fear of him ever since.

DRAGOSANI IN 5000 SE

On the surface, Dragosani seems like a normal, peaceful kingdom... at first. But soon a visitor (of which there are few, now) senses there's something wrong, something hidden just beneath the surface that everyone greatly fears. That "something" is, of course, Sargath, who has used his powers to turn many soldiers and guards into lesser vampires controlled by him, and mesmerized other people to serve as his unwitting spies. A darkness and gloom lies over the land that not even the sunniest day can dispel.

Even if Sargath were somehow slain or driven off, no one knows who would rule the land, since House Casona died off nearly a hundred years ago. It's likely that several powerful nobles would go to war for the throne.

THE LAND

Dragosani is a mountainous, hilly realm, though the hills gradually taper off as one approaches the coast. Dark, thick forests fill much of the land, broken here and there by cold, swift-running streams flowing down from the mountains or small lakes. Few Dragosa live by themselves, particularly now that Sargath rules the land and little is done to check monsters and Orcs. They come together in villages and small towns, usually built near or around a lake and often walled with a wooden palisade.

Orasamn

Before Sargath, Orasamn was a small but busy city, visited by traders nearly every month, and always full of Dragosa willing to trade with each other or take a glass of bitter-tasting *asina* liquor together. The Temple of Tarsellan stood bright and proud at one end of the King's Way, and the royal palace Vilséa tall and strong at the other. Now Vilséa is a place of gloom and shadow, where gargoyles roost on the roof and sometimes swoop down to snatch an unwary man, and the doors of the Temple are chained shut, its priests all dead or fled. The people drink *asina* still, but for forgetfulness not pleasure.

SOCIETY

Modern Dragosa society is wholly shaped by the presence of Sargath, the Vampire Lord. A wizard who became a vampire, possessing powers so great he can walk abroad in daylight without harm, he has the strength and will to control an entire kingdom through a combination of fear and sorcerous might. Trolls, gargoyles, and lesser vampires guard him from those foolish enough to try to slay him... but anyone powerful enough to get past his guards must still contend with the Vampire Lord himself.

Once a trusting and open folk, the Dragosa have become sad and taciturn. They don't like talking to strangers for fear Sargath will hear of it and think they plot against him. Many of the inns and taverns have closed, and those few traders who do visit do not leave the streets of Orasamn.

Ostravia

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Yergen

Capital: Nar Hradec

Population: Men (95%), Dwarves (2%), Other (3%)

Language(s): Ostravian

Coinage: Mark; Mark; Mark

Resources: Farming, fishing, craftwork

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 22%, heavy cavalry 17%, light infantry 26%, heavy infantry 21%, navy 9%, magical/other 5%

Arms/Symbol: Three running foxes

A quiet kingdom of traders and craftsmen that controls the valuable Lamia Pass, Ostravia remains open to all who come in peace, but wary of some of its neighbors.

HISTORY

In the middle First Epoch, explorers and traders from Tornathia sailed across the Sea of Storms to Mitharia. They saw along the coast a tall, forbidding mountain range, and steered north until they came to a gap. There they landed their ships, and encountered some hostile Elves. They fended off the Elves' attack, but not before fire-arrows had burned their ships to the waterline. Lacking any way to return home, they journeyed west.

After crossing through what they called Lamia Pass (for the many terrifying monsters they encountered), they came to a temperate land on the shores of a great inland sea. While some of them, fearing the monsters from the Pass, chose to continue north or south, others stayed there and built a town, Nar Hradec, on the sea's shore.

The settlers chose Banrod, a Thurgandian and one of the leaders of the expedition, to be their king. Banrod named his realm "Ostravia," derived from the term "new southern kingdom" in Ilurian. Under the rule of Banrod and his sons, the Ostravians spread throughout the land, building other cities and developing trade routes with other kingdoms around Lake Kalkana.

In the late First Epoch and early Second, Ostravia went to war several times with the kingdom of Vanerof to the north, the two of them trading the land of Brabantia back and forth as a conquest, and occasionally raiding each other's cities to boot. But by the 3400s, Ostravia had lost its taste for conquest, and settled down to become a kingdom of traders, craftsmen, and farmers.

4758 SE: The Monster War

In 4758 SE, the fears of many Ostravians came to pass when a horde of monsters — Ogres, Orcs riding giant wolves, Trolls, griffins, manticores, and more — led by a band of fire giants descended on Brassholt. Turned aside by the city's walls, they drove deeper into Ostravia, destroying villages and towns and slaughtering anyone they came across. Before King Garlach could march to meet them, they'd slain hundreds of people.

Garlach brought the monsters to bay at Hal-

SHANERATIRULA

15	STR	18	DEX
15	CON	10	BODY
13	INT	10	EGO
15	PRE	12	COM
6	PD	5	ED
5	SPD	8	REC
30	END	30	STUN

Abilities: +4 OCV with Bows, +6 versus Range Modifier for Bows, +1 Sight Group PER, Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group), Life Support (Longevity: up to 1,600 years), Running +2" (8" total), Lightsleep, Climbing 13-, Healing 12-, AK: Shularahaleen 11-, Shadowing 12-, Stealth 16-, Tactics 12-, Tracking 13-, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Expert Archer (RKA +1d6, Only With Bows), Rapid Archery, Trackless Stride

Enchanted Items: Longbow of Far Shooting, Cloak of Flying

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Hates Races Other Than Elves, Psychological Limitation: Proud Of Her Archery Skills

Notes: Shaneratirula is among the best archers in Shularahaleen, for she's extraordinarily driven to improve her skills. But it's not a desire to protect the Shadowwoods or defeat her enemies that compels her, it's pride in her abilities. She can't stand the thought of anyone out-shooting her, so she works constantly to keep her skills in peak condition.

Shaneratirula is also among the most xenophobic of Elves. She despises other races as crude and foolish. If someone from another race were to out-shoot her, her wrath would be terrible to behold.

berthale, a small town in central Ostravia, and battle was begun. The monsters had the greater strength man-to-man, but the Ostravians outnumbered them and used cleverer tactics. With arrows raining down upon them, Ostravian wizards blasting them with spells, and lance-wielding knights tearing into their ranks, the monsters broke and fled when their captain, the fire giant Grenjar Darkbeard, fell to King Garlach's sword. The Ostravian soldiers harried them all the way back to the mountains, and slew so many of the monsters that Lamia Pass knew peace for many years thereafter.

OSTRAVIA IN 5000 SE

No conflicts mar the peace of Ostravia in 5000 SE. Protected by Lake Kalkana and the mostly peaceful realms all around it, Ostravia has little need for a large army; it's been years since the Ostravian nobles have had to respond to the king's call for knights and fighting men. But with Orumbar stirring not far to the south, King Yergen has increased the strength of his standing army, built more ships, and repaired and strengthened the walls of Nar Hradec.

THE LAND

Ostravia is a land of many terrains. Mountainous to the northeast, and coastal plain to the southeast, its central regions are temperate hills and grasslands, their forests filled with game and their streams and lakes with fish.

Nar Hradec

Growing from a simple lakeside town to a proud walled capital, Nar Hradec is a sprawling city built according to no particular plan. Only the area of the city along the lake, where the original settlers carefully laid out several streets, appears at all orderly; the rest of the place is a chaotic mish-mash where strangers (and even some natives!) often get lost. The easiest way to find a particular building is to determine its location in relation to the royal palace, Stendall, which stands high on a hill and is easily seen from anywhere in the city.

Brassholt

In many ways Brassholt, not Nar Hradec, is the most important city in Ostravia. Located at the western end of the Lamia Pass, it's the first stop for

traders coming in from the Sea of Storms, and the last for traders heading to the towns along the coast where they land their ships. Brassholt thus serves as the gateway to Arduna not only for Ostravia, but for many nearby realms.

Duke Ludnaw, one of the wealthiest nobles in Ostravia, rules Brassholt and the surrounding lands. A well-educated (some would say over-educated) man, he's ever-eager for news of the rest of the world, and frequently has traders and travelers to his table to tell him their tales.

The Thraysha Mountains And The Lamia Pass

The northeastern border of Ostravia is the Thraysha Mountains, a long range that makes much of the eastern Mitharian coast largely uninhabitable. Only one pass, the Lamia, breaks through its tall peaks. Though it's well-traveled, the Lamia Pass remains a dangerous place, infested by many monsters — not just Trolls and Ogres, but lamiae, leucrottas, and other foul beasts. Those who travel through the Pass usually go in large, well-guarded caravans for safety's sake.

SOCIETY

Yergen of House Banroden rules Ostravia today with the help of his wife, Queen Serilda, and their three grown children and numerous adult cousins. Cautious and clever, he rarely acts precipitously, preferring to study a situation carefully before doing anything. He becomes testy and frustrated if things move too quickly for him or he feels he's lost control of a situation.

Throughout Ambrethel, the folk of Ostravia are known for two things. The first is their fine beer and ale, which has a crisp, smooth taste because of the *greza* buds brewers mix in while brewing it. Some traders buy barrels of Ostravian ale and ship it all over the world, selling it for outrageous prices to nobles who won't drink any other type of ale. The second is their love of gambling. It's said Ostravians will bet on nearly anything, and that's true, but they particularly enjoy card and dice games. They play several complicated ones found nowhere else in the world, and they welcome and respect any outlanders who can learn to play them with style and skill.

Shularahaleen

Government: Hereditary monarchy
Ruler: Elvenking Lanerishugalitrasir
Capital: Ildrathamirath
Population: Elves (100%)
Language(s): Shalionderentine
Coinage: None (barter)
Resources: Hunting, craftwork
Religion: High Church (Elven)
Military: Light cavalry 8%, heavy cavalry 3%, light infantry 68%, heavy infantry 4%, navy 2%, magical/other 15%
Arms/Symbol: An elven bow, drawn, with arrow

A forested land inhabited by Elves, Shularahaleen is a realm that closes itself off, allowing no one to enter.

HISTORY

Long, long ago, when Men first entered the lands around Elvenholme, the Elves were of two minds. Some recognized the inevitable rise of the kingdoms of Men, and wanted to welcome them and become cordial neighbors, if not allies. Others resented Men, and said the Elves should drive them from the land and keep it from themselves. When the first faction won the hearts and minds of the people, the Elves who wanted nothing to do with Men left Elvenholme and traveled south to the sea, where they built ships and sailed to Mitharia to create a new home for themselves in the Shadowwoods, far indeed from any Men.

In time, Men came to the borders of the Shadowwoods — and the Elves of Shularahaleen turned them back, often with arrows and spears. Nor did they become friendlier as Men established realms all around them. They have refused to let any strangers into their land, and rarely even trade, preferring their life of isolation to the comradeship of other folk.

SHULARAHALEEN IN 5000 SE

Shularahaleen remains as isolated as ever. The Elves want little to do with anyone else, and almost always turn away visitors as soon as they find them (they're a little more tolerant of other Elves, but not much; they particularly hate Half-Elves).

THE LAND

Most of Shularahaleen is forest — the Shadowwoods, a dark and tangled forest only an Elf could truly enjoy. The capital, Ildrathomirath, is located on the coast not far from the edge of the forest, and the Elves have built two other, smaller, cities as well. All are in the Elven style, with small, precisely-crafted buildings and tall, slender towers.

SOCIETY

Little is known of Shularahaleen by other peoples and realms; it wants nothing to do with outsiders, and extends the same courtesy to other lands by sending no embassies and asking no favors (though every few years a trading expedition may briefly visit Aarn or some other city). Elvenking Lanerishugalitrasir has ruled for over 300 years, and the signs are he'll sit the throne for centuries to come.

Sitheria

Government: Hereditary monarchy
Ruler: King Hadrelin IV
Capital: Kelliadrec
Population: Men (89%), Elves (4%), Halflings (2%), Other (5%)
Language(s): Sitherian
Coinage: Piece; Piece; Piece
Resources: Farming, herding, craftwork
Religion: High Church
Military: Light cavalry 21%, heavy cavalry 18%, light infantry 32%, heavy infantry 21%, navy 1%, magical/other 7%
Arms/Symbol: Three silver-finches

Long the most powerful realm of central Mitharia, the kingdom of Sitheria has been weakened by the depredations of a powerful band of adventurers and their mercenary army.

HISTORY

When Men first came to central Mitharia, they established many small kingdoms and principalities. One of these was Sitheria, a realm on the upper Crisander River, near where the Vanerof joins it.

Over the centuries, Sitheria has gradually expanded, sometimes by well-timed political marriages or the like, but most often through conquest. In 2560 FE, it grew north and west, conquering the kingdom of Telvadar along the Palenar River after its prince gravely insulted the Sitherian king. In 2929 SE, it crossed the Crisander River and overran the lands now known as Khrisulia and Eldrasan, though it lost the former in 4037 SE and the latter in 3714 SE. Thereafter it looked southward, conquering Haloreth in 3245 SE, acquiring Orholt in 3297 SE when the king died without direct heir, and conquering Ryclif in 3561 SE. At that point it had nearly reached its present borders.

Later attempts to expand the realm were less successful. A war with Neshara in 3717-3720 SE resulted only in a diminution of the Sitherian army and the payment of a large ransom to the Nesharans, and an effort to conquer the Baghlan Plateau in 3803-3810 SE was utterly fruitless. The Rendel kings' dreams of true empire were not to be.

4946-4963 SE: Zhargaron's Fist

In the 4940s, the Sitherian throne found itself in the unexpected position of having to fend off an attack instead of leading one. A group of powerhungry nobles from the north, led by Duke Rochar of Telvadar, attempted to take the throne and the realm. By 4946 SE, the loyalist forces had lost several battles and the enemy was marching toward Kelliadrec.

Lacking any other solution, King Waldarham hired mercenaries: Zhargaron's Fist, a powerful company of adventurers famed for their slaying of the dragon Sorbanec, and their small army of mercenary troops. The Fist's power and wits turned the tide of the war, and by 4949 SE Sitheria had defeated the rebels and executed their leaders.

But that was not the end of Sitheria's troubles. Rather than take their well-earned pay and leave,

Zhargaron's Fist seized the opportunity presented them and conquered the weakened kingdom. The Half-Orc warrior Zhargaron became king, and his comrades all received titles of nobility and great riches. Those who opposed the new regime were put to death or bullied into submission; Crown Prince Dorénick barely escaped with his life.

For over ten years, Zhargaron and his fellows ruled Sitheria, abusing the people at will and looting the treasury. But then Dorénick returned at the head of a mercenary army of his own, and the adventurers, grown fat and soft, could not withstand him. Three of them (including Zhargaron himself) were slain, the rest escaped, and House Rendel regained the throne.

SITHERIA IN 5000 SE

The rule of Zhargaron has left Sitheria impoverished and weak. The usurper stole the greatest treasures of the kingdom, killed many of its best and brightest people, and decimated the army. King Hadrelin IV is faced with the same unpleasant task his father had: trying to rebuild his realm with little money and even fewer ways to obtain it, since many of his more powerful nobles seem unwilling to pay their taxes. He must also defend the realm against those who might try to take advantage of its weakness.

THE LAND

Although somewhat hilly to the northwest as it abuts the Maha Torend, Sitheria is mostly temperate woodlands and fields. Most regions get good rainfall throughout the year, though the southern reaches are a little dryer and hotter; nearly all the Sitherian lands are fertile and productive. A large forest, the Ardeyan, fills the center of the kingdom, providing food and work for many peasants and a home for several small bands of Elves.

Kelliadrec

Known as "the City of the Crystal Spires" for the nine crystal towers built by Queen Astara in the 4400s, Kelliadrec is the seat of the Rendel kings and the largest city in the land (though not the busiest — that honor goes to Denloch on Lake Kalkana, a frenetic port city). Built on a peninsula reaching into a large lake, it benefits from the natural protection of the water on three sides, and a thick wall on the fourth.

In addition to its many other attractions — the royal palace Gethlendar, the famed White Cat Inn, the Sitherian Arch — Kelliadrec is home to the Collegium Heimzaur, one of best schools of wizardry in Mitharia. The fussy and precise faculty won't

admit just anyone; prospective students have to pass a series of difficult tests. But those who gain admission also gain a first-rate arcane education.

Witch's Hollow

In the hills of northwest Sitheria there's a deep, narrow valley, dark and shadowy even at noon-time and able to inspire fear in the bravest warrior at night. The Sitherians call it Witch's Hollow, for many covens gather there throughout the year to work their magics. It's said some evil force within the Hollow augments the power of Witchcraft, or that a demon lives there whom a witch can call up and feed blood in exchange for aid with spellcasting. Several times priests and paladins have tried to cleanse the place, but none has ever found the key to succeeding, and most have died on their quest.

SOCIETY

The Sitherians are a simple folk, proud of their heritage and strong in their own quiet way. In the towns and cities they tend to accept strangers, and greet them as they deserve; it's said the folk of Atanael, in particular, know how to make a visitor feel welcome. The peasants of the countryside are a little harder to get to know, especially in the wilder northwest.

Hadrelin, the fourth of that name, rules Sitheria. He devotes most of his time to trying to increase the royal revenue, the better to rebuild his kingdom after the ravages of Zhargaron's Fist. He prods, cajoles, manipulates, and even blackmails his nobles to get them to live up to their feudal obligations to pay their taxes, but often with limited success. He has six children, including his eldest son and heir, Hadrelin V, and two daughters of marriageable age (one 16, one 14). So far, he's been most successful at squeezing money out of his vassals by dangling in front of them the possibility of marrying one of the princesses... but he's also carefully kept from making any firm promises regarding the hands of his daughters.

Much to the delight of subject and visitor alike, Sitheria celebrates several festivals that aren't known in other lands. Silver-Finch Day, to honor the king and the royal family, takes place on the first day of summer; people come from all over the land to bring to the king gifts they have made for him. Zhargaron's Fall, celebrated on the Appledore day when Dorénick beheaded the evil adventurer, commemorates the return to power of the Rendel kings. And the Day of the Bear, when nobles throughout the land go on ritual bear-hunts and the common folk attend feasts, takes place during Harvesting.

Vanerof

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Arned

Capital: Gathrock

Population: Men (91%), Dwarves (3%), Gnomes (2%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Helta

Coinage: Piece; Piece; Piece

Resources: Farming, herding, craftwork

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 20%, heavy cavalry 15%, light infantry 35%, heavy infantry 25%, navy 0%, magical/other 5%

Arms/Symbol: A purple bend cotised on tawny, with an eagle displayed sinister chief

Once the ruler of much of northeast Mitharia, the kingdom of Vanerof now stands paralyzed by internal conflict, a potential victim of conquest for the realm... or person... powerful enough to seize control.

HISTORY

When Men from Arduna came to Mitharia in the First Epoch, one of the first places their ships landed was the coast of the lands now known as Rosskeld and Heltica. They soon spread throughout those lands, and beyond the Otilda River into Vanerof as well. From there some wished to go further, into Brabantia, but other Men had already claimed that land.

Until 2143 FE, Vanerof was a part of the kingdom of Heltica, but in that year King Skairben, in need of money to support his wicked excesses, sold Vanerof to Duke Ulhamric Kielmar, who held lands along the Crisander River. King Ulhamric quickly brought his newly-beholden nobles to heel, imposing harsh taxes to raise the money to turn the city of Gathrock into a true royal capital.

At first, the nobles were never truly happy with Ulhamric or his heirs, but later wars of conquest changed the nobility's mind. Vanerof's first victim was Heltica itself, which it invaded in 2483 FE. Eighty years later Vanerof gobbled up Brabantia as well, followed soon thereafter by Rosskeld. Eldrasan fell to Vanerof's armies in 2611 FE. For several centuries Vanerof remained at peace, but it lost Brabantia to Ostravia in 2920 SE, and Eldrasan to the Sitherians in 2929 SE. An enraged King Helbrand wanted to invade Sitheria itself, but cooler heads among his councillors convinced him that after the disastrous loss at the Battle of Cedisa Woods, his armies lacked the strength for such a task.

Vanerof remained at peace for a time, though it once again took Brabantia in 3351 SE and held it until Brabantia won its freedom in 3493 SE. When Eldrasan broke from Sitheria in 3714 SE, it had Vanerof's aid, but Eldrasan soon discovered it was too weak to remain free, and that it had essentially exchanged one master for another.

With the wealth of conquered lands pouring into their coffers, the nobles of Vanerof proper became rich and powerful. The reconquest of Brabantia in 4216 SE brought in more than enough additional revenue to offset the loss of Eldrasan in

4189 SE. But an unsuccessful war against Brabantia and Korregdar in 4529 SE left Gathrock weakened, and Heltica and Rosskeld mustered their strength and escaped from Vanerof's rule in 4532 SE.

VANEROF IN 5000 SE

Since the 4500s, Vanerof has become increasingly fractious and unstable. Deprived of the income from conquered realms, the nobility seems more and more dissatisfied with the king's rule. Leading nobles such as the Duke of Aurick and Duke of Andrigarth have openly defied the king's orders, and more than a few skirmishes have occurred between their forces and those of the king. It remains to be seen whether King Arned keeps his throne, one of the dukes takes it from him... or someone else, as yet unlooked-for, enters the fray and achieves victory.

THE LAND

Vanerof is much like Brabantia, but far less hilly. Often snowy and bitterly cold in wintertime, it remains pleasant most of the rest of the year, though it sometimes experiences stormy spring weather that delays the start of the campaigning season.

Gathrock

Vanerof's gateway to the rest of Mitharia thanks to its position on the Crisander River, Gathrock has been heavily fortified by the aggressive Kielmar kings. Not one but two walls protect it from invaders, and the king's castle deep inside the inner wall has a wall of its own as well. Most of the cityfolk fish the river or trade with outlanders from Sitheria, Brabantia, or the realms along Lake Kalkana.

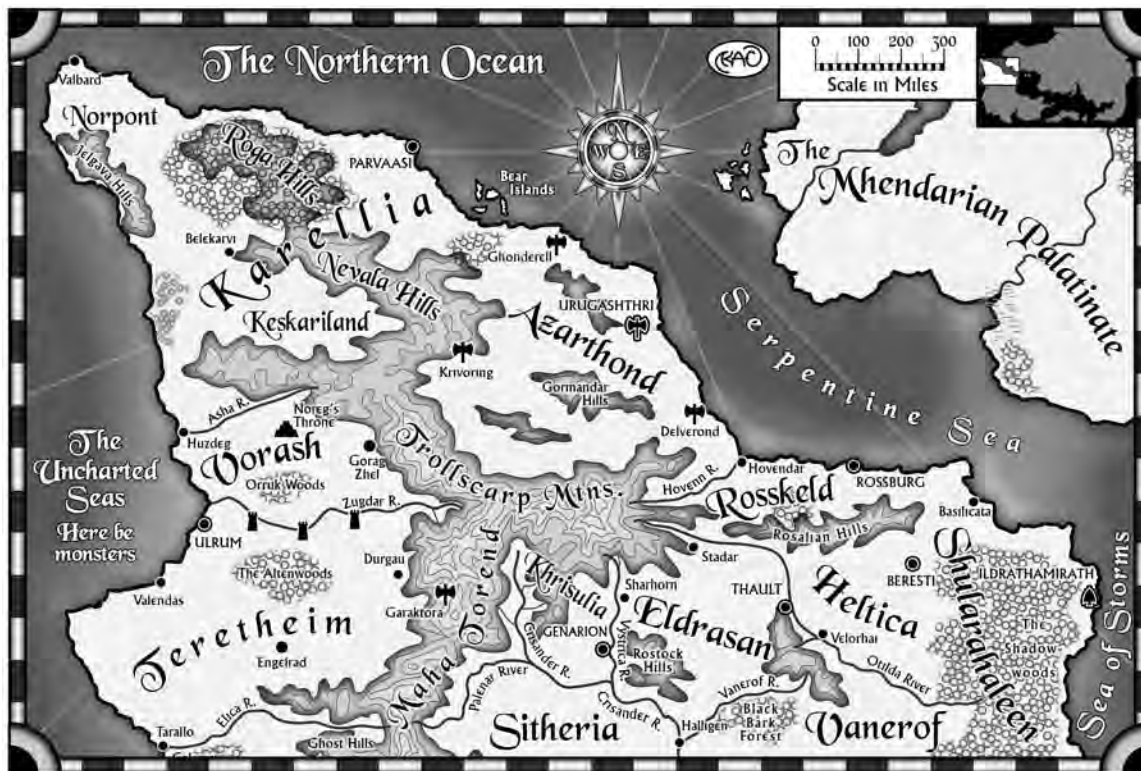
Aurick Keep

Aurick Keep is the ancestral seat of House Aurick, a ducal family whose members have been a thorn in Gathrock's side for centuries. Duke Menhard makes no secret of his contempt for the king, and wouldn't hesitate to have him killed if he could. The Keep itself is one of the most defensible locations in all of northeastern Mitharia, built on a small mountain where reaching it with siege engines or large numbers of soldiers is virtually impossible.

SOCIETY

Vanerof is a deeply divided society. Nearly half the nobles support King Arned, but their support may falter as the fighting with the renegade dukes drags out year after year. His and Queen Olenda's lack of any sons to take the throne if Arned dies only makes them more nervous. Of the remaining nobles, about half support Duke Menhard of Aurick, and half Duke Stenvar of Andrigarth; the remainder hold themselves neutral or try to find a way to turn the tables to favor themselves. The result is a stalemate that only tears the country apart, year after year, as one Vanerofan fights another.

Right now, all three combatants are equally weak, having exhausted their forces with recent fighting. If a charismatic or powerful leader emerged, he might be able to take over the realm. The actions of Zhargoran's Fist in Sitheria remain fresh on everyone's mind, and the king and both dukes all secretly fear the intervention of powerful adventurers.



NORTHERN MITHARIA

The northern reaches of Mitharia resemble the Westerlands in climate and culture. Both have the same architectural, artistic, and clothing styles, both follow the same form of the High Church and use the same calendar, and many of the languages are related.

Azarthond

Government: Hereditary monarchy
Ruler: King Narbek
Capital: Urugashthri
Population: Dwarves (92%), Men (3%), Gnomes (3%), Other (2%)
Language(s): Ghoralzod (Mitharian)
Coinage: Piece; Piece; Piece
Resources: Mining, craftwork, fishing, herding, farming
Religion: High Church (Dwarven)
Military: Light cavalry 5%, heavy cavalry 5%, light infantry 14%, heavy infantry 56%, navy 12%, magical/other 8%
Arms/Symbol: Two crossed dwarven axes

Unlike other dwarven realms (see pages 33-34), Azarthon is a kingdom resembling those of Men, where folk live aboveground and build true cities. But the proud Dwarves of Azarthon maintain their own traditions and customs despite being surrounded by the lands of Men.

HISTORY

Long before the Men of Arduna came south across the sea to Mitharia, Dwarves were living there in the northern mountains. At that time Azarthon was a dwarven realm like any other: a

collection of halls and chambers carved out of the solid rock of the mountains by dwarven muscle and dwarven magic, creating an underground realm lit by enchanted lamps — a realm all too often fighting for its life against Orcs, Trolls, and other fell creatures.

As Men began, slowly but steadily, to settle the lands north of the Trollscarp Mountains, one of the Azarthon Dwarves, a warrior named Beken, asked why the Dwarves had to leave the sunlit lands in the hands of Men, keeping only the hard mountains for themselves. He argued that Dwarves should create kingdoms like those of Men, and thus increase the wealth and power they possessed.

Beken's words won over the hearts of the Dwarves. Taking up their axes and their tools, they left their ancient halls behind forever, not even marking the halls' location on any maps. They declared the land their own and enforced that claim with steel, driving away or slaying Men and Elves who would not bow the knee to the dwarven king. When they reached the sea, they built a great city and called it Urugashthri, using their skills to quarry, transport, and set in place enormous but perfectly-shaped blocks of stone to make its walls and towers impregnable.

In the millennia since then, no one has threatened the rule of the Dwarves of Azarthon, for they are too strong in war, and too skilled in magic, for nearby realms to oppose them. Though ancient problems sometimes followed them — such as the Trolls and Giants of the Trollscarps, who attacked Azarthon in 2607 FE, and 3557 SE, and again in 4928 SE, only to be repulsed by the dwarven army each time after long and bitter fighting — they have triumphed over all adversity to become a powerful and prosperous kingdom.

AZARTHOND IN 5000 SE

The rising shadow in the North deeply concerns the Dwarves of Azarthond. Though Turakia seems far away, its armies kept apart from Azarthond by all of Arduna and the Sea, the Dwarves take long view of things. They can foresee the day when Kal-Turak may conquer the Westerlands, and then he can come to Mitharia with little difficulty — and even now, the Ravager's reach is long. Azarthond has a great store of weapons and armor, all crafted with dwarven skill, and King Narbek fears that Kal-Turak may somehow try to take them to supply his ever-growing horde of soldiers.

THE LAND

Azarthond is a rough land bounded by mountains and hills — just the sort of place one would expect Dwarves to create an aboveground kingdom. But in the lush valleys between the forested hills, the Dwarves have farms and ranches.

Urugashtthri

The largest of the Azarthondan citadels, Urugashtthri is a busy port city where traders from all over the world come to buy find dwarven wares. Like the kingdom's other cities, it's scaled mostly for Dwarves, making Men, Elves, and Orcs uncomfortable but putting Gnomes and Half-lings at ease. However, several inns and taverns throughout the city cater specifically to Tall Folk, and the halls of the royal palace Mabrinador are tall enough for any Man.

The Gormandar Hills

Many Dwarves who feel the ancestral urge to live underground make their homes amid the forested hills of Gormandar. Their houses, dug partway into the stony hillsides, offer the best of traditional dwarven and Azarthondan styles... and the gemstones they find while digging their homesteads bring them much wealth.

The Trollscarp Mountains

This tall and forbidding range of mountains forms Azarthond's southern border. The Dwarves still maintain a few mines there, but these are troll-haunted peaks, and Dwarves who go there do so at risk of their lives. Trolls, Giants, Orcs, and other monsters of the mountains often raid the lowlands. The king offers a generous reward for every troll-head brought to him, and some adventurers and bounty hunters make good money this way.

SOCIETY

Narbek, known as "the Bold" for his decisive actions and fearlessness in the face of the enemy, rules Azarthond from the Dwarventhrone in Urugashtthri. He's beginning to get on in years, and is no longer as spry or strong as once he was, but he has a large family to help him. This includes Crown Prince Arzeg, who's becoming increasingly impatient to take the throne.

Below the king is a simple system of nobles, each beholden to the ones above him in a more or less traditional feudal arrangement. The highest-

ranking nobles are the *vathzhar*, roughly the same as a duke in a kingdom of Men. As his chief vassals a *vathzhar* has *gurungaldar*, or "rock-lords"; their power resembles that of a baron. At the lowest level are the *tharakar*, meaning "axe-brothers," who in many ways are like knights (though they don't ride horses or fight with lances).

Unlike most kingdoms, where peasants who work the land in some way form the bulk of society, in Azarthond the common folk divide themselves almost equally between craftsmen and farmers. As a result, Azarthond often does not raise enough food to feed itself, and must trade for the grain it needs. Fortunately, dwarven craftwork is so highly desired they have no trouble obtaining all the food they can eat, and other things besides.

Eldrasan

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Gothard

Capital: Thault

Population: Men (89%), Dwarves (4%), Gnomes (7%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Eldrasani

Coinage: Florin; Florin; Florin

Resources: Farming, herding, mining

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 19%, heavy cavalry 13%, light infantry 34%, heavy infantry 26%, navy 0%, magical/other 8%

Arms/Symbol: A calopus rampant

A land ruled by other realms for most of its existence, Eldrasan is now free to chart its own course... but where will it go, with a untried bastard king on the throne?

HISTORY

The early Eldrasani were immigrants from the Westerlands of Arduna who crossed the Serpentine Sea and traveled inland until they came to a place suitable for creating a new home. Unfortunately, while they found the freedom they sought, their descendants eventually lost it — in 2611 FE, the armies of Vanerof crossed the Otilda River and conquered Eldrasan. It remained a possession of the Vanerof throne until 2929 SE, when the Sitherians took it.

Eldrasan was a duchy of Sitheria until the early 3700s, when spies later learned to be subjects of Vanerof began stirring up a desire for freedom. In 3714 SE, with secret help from Gathrock, the Eldrasani rose up and cast out their Sitherian masters... only to discover that without support from Vanerof, they could not maintain their newly-won freedom. In effect, Eldrasan once again belonged to the Vanerof throne.

4189 SE: Ansgar The Khrisulian

In 4037 SE, the land of Khrisulia freed itself from Sitheria with the help of a powerful wizard named Ansgar, who became king of the realm. One of King Ansgar's concerns was the possibility that Vanerof might try to conquer his kingdom. In the

THE DRAGONFLAME SWORD

This wondrous blade is a longsword of most exquisite make. Its furniture is plated with gold and adorned with rubies and garnets. Etched into the blade itself is a dragon rising from its hoard, breathing flame. When the wielder draws it in anger or fear, ghostly flames flicker up and down the length of the blade, increasing the sword's ability to cut through armor.

HKA 2d6+1, Armor Piercing (+½), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (79 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), STR Minimum (13; -½). Total cost: 17 points.

THE BRAZIER OF THE REVEALING FLAMES

Resembling an ordinary brazier, albeit one finely made, this item is molded to show scenes of the gods on their thrones in the Meru Mountains. It can reveal to the user scenes from thousands of miles away when he burns pine-wood in it.

Clairsentience (Sight Group), 32,000x Range (4,800,000", or about 6,000 miles), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (142 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), Extra Time (1 Turn to activate; -¾), Independent (-2). Total cost: 27 points.

late 4100s, when it seemed that Gathrock's diplomats were taking a more aggressive tone with other realms, Ansgar decided he wanted a buffer between Khrisulia and Vanerof — Eldrasan. Using his magics, he journeyed to Thault, where he inspired the Eldrasani to rebel against Vanerof. With his help, the revolt succeeded, and Eldrasan once again became a free realm.

The fears of some Eldrasani that Ansgar would take the throne were unfounded; he didn't want it. Instead, he let the Eldrasani nobles pick their king — Krelis Vargestri — and then gave him five powerful enchanted items with which to protect his throne from future aggressors: the Dragonflame Sword; a suit of Ansgar's Armor (see page 260); the Brazier of the Revealing Flames; a brace of four Crystalline Birds (page 267); and a flying chariot pulled by two tame wyverns.

4999 SE: The Bastard King

House Vargestri ruled Eldrasan in peace until 4999 SE, when King Zemmon choked on a bone at a feast and died without issue or heir designate. It seemed war might engulf the land, as noble fought noble for the throne and the Hoard of Eldrasan... but then a royal chambermaid came forward and claimed that her son, Vassilus, was Zemmon's child. Magical tests proved this to be true, and with great reluctance the nobility placed the crown on the head of an untried and unknown young man.

ELDRASAN IN 5000 SE

Eldrasan continues to teeter on the edge of possible civil war. All of the nobles compete for influence over King Vassilus, who prior to his elevation worked as a royal stablehand and horse trainer. It may be that Vassilus will rise to the challenge and soon display the native wit and good judgment of his forefathers... or he may crumble under the pressure and succumb to the blandishments of some wily noble who will become the real power behind the throne.

THE LAND

Eldrasan is a green and temperate land, well-suited for habitation by Men. Its soil is rich and fertile, and the weather not quite as extreme as in more mountainous realms like Khrisulia or Brabantia. Most of its people raise crops or herd cattle and other animals, though some of its ranges of hills have excellent mines.

Thault

The capital of Eldrasan is a city on the Otilda River. Built mostly with greyish stone quarried in the hills to the south, it seems grim and depressing at first glance, but the initial impression quickly gives way. The people are friendly (as city folk go), the taverns warm and welcoming, and the main streets broad enough to take advantage of the sunlight.

Visitors to Thault aren't common, though the Mahauldrian Bridge allows easy crossing of the rushing, rapid-filled Otilda. The few traders who frequent the city swear by the Soaring Pegasus Inn, where it's said the food and hospitality rival those of the royal palace.

Rostock Hills

This range of hills, in the southwestern part of Eldrasan where the Vystrica River meets the mighty Crisander, is home to a large "kingdom" of Gnomes, with not a few Dwarves and Halflings to boot. The Gnomes choose their own king, who swears fealty to the king of Eldrasan and is considered equivalent to a duke. Some Gnomes would prefer to break away from Thault and form their own realm, but most enjoy the benefits of trading freely with the Eldrasani.

SOCIETY

The normally-placid Eldrasani society has been rocked by the recent death of King Zemmon, the possible end of House Vargestri, and the rise of Vassilus the Bastard, also called Vassilus the Horseman (or Stableboy, depending on one's opinion of him). Vassilus has done little to indicate what sort of king he might be; he seems willing to listen to every noble who wants to advise him before making any significant decisions. One thing he has concentrated on of late is the search for a queen, since he feels pressure from some of the nobility to ensure the continuity of the royal house, but as yet he has not found the right woman.

While the nobility seems divided (to put it mildly) in its approach to the new king, he at least enjoys the unquestioning support of the Mahauldrian Knights, an order of fighting men devoted to the service of king and church within Eldrasan. The Commander-General of the order, a female knight named Saskia Thorn, cares not who the king's mother was or whether he was trained to take the throne — he is the rightful king, so the Knights must protect him from those who might harm or exploit him. She and several other knights are seeing to his war-training personally.

Heltica

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Camlath

Capital: Beresti

Population: Men (93%), Gnomes (1%), Halflings (1%), Other (5%)

Language(s): Helta

Coinage: Piece; Noble; Royal

Resources: Farming, fishing, mining

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 18%, heavy cavalry 15%, light infantry 30%, heavy infantry 23%, navy 10%, magical/other 4%

Arms/Symbol: Erminois, with a broad bordure of blue

A realm that attained its freedom less than five centuries ago, Heltica has become embroiled in a religious conflict that may leave it vulnerable to conquest.

HISTORY

Heltica was first settled by explorers from the Westerlands, who reached the region in the mid-First Epoch. They established a society of farming towns and villages, with each region ruled by a king; at times, the kings would come together and choose a high king to make laws for all the land.

That simple way of life came to an end in 2483 FE, when Vanerof invaded and conquered the land; the patchwork Heltican kingdoms were no match for the powerful Vanerof army. For two thousand years, Heltica was a fiefdom of Vanerof, ruled by Vanerof dukes and responsible to the king in Gathrock. Vanerof took advantage of Heltica's access to the sea to expand its trading network, but little of the money that trade brought in remained in Heltica.

In the 4500s, after Vanerof lost a war, and a large part of its fighting men, to Brabantia and Korregdar, the Helticans at long last saw a chance to break free. Rising up as one, they slew the Vanerof nobles and soldiers who had ruled them for so long, and placed a king on the long-vacant throne in Brabesti. Since that day, a Heltican king and Heltican nobles have ruled the Heltican people.

HELTICA IN 5000 SE

In recent years, Heltica has found itself in the midst of a religious conflict. As in many other realms, the younger sons of nobility often enter the priesthood, since they have no hope of inheriting lands. That means church politics and mundane politics sometimes mingle together in strange ways. In 4993 SE, a fiery-tempered priest named Larren launched a movement to reform the Heltican High Church, claiming that many of its priests were corrupt — and, more importantly, were misinterpreting the dictates of the *Benethar Sacur*. Arguments over Taal Larren's accusations and proposals soon rocked the priesthood, and as priests took sides one by one, those arguments spread to the people, commoner and noble alike.

Although Bonifact Santarin has condemned Taal Larren's doctrinal arguments as wrong (some priests even claim they're heretical), the reformist Helticans have paid little heed. Caught up in the fury of the dispute, they refuse to abandon their beliefs. Fist-fights have frequently broken out between adherents of the two positions, and some skirmishes involving the fighting men of opposed nobles have occurred. King Camlath has staunchly refused to express an opinion, but his silence may do as much to tear the realm apart as taking a side. Given the current level of divisiveness, it might be possible for a noble, or even a group of powerful adventurers, to conquer part of the country, or for another realm to invade and meet little resistance.

THE LAND

Warmed by the currents of the Serpentine Sea, Heltica has a more pleasant climate than nearby realms such as Vanerof and Eldrasan. The snows that fall in winter are less deep, and breezes sweeping in from the sea bring cooling rains in the summertime. Those rains keep the land green and growing; well-tilled plots surround every village, town, and manor house.

Heltica has the unenviable position of sharing a border with Shularahaleen (specifically, with the Shadowwoods). The Elves have shot more than one Heltican who snuck into the forest to chop wood or hunt, and many Helticans hate Elves bitterly. If the realm can ever resolve its current religious conflict, the possibility of war with Shularahaleen is a real one.

Basilicata

Although smaller than the capital city Beresti, Basilicata is in many ways more important, for it's Heltica's chief port and source of revenue. Merchant-captains load and unload cargo there every day during the trading season, exchanging goods from far-off lands for Heltican wool, gemstones mined in the Rosalian Hills, and the harps and mandolins crafted by the famed lutanists of Velorhai. Stout walls protect Basilicata from attacks by sea-reavers.

SOCIETY

The Helticans are ordinarily a peaceful folk who till the land, raise cattle and swine, and work at other crafts. But the recent religious schism has caused problems throughout the land, as village turns on village and family on family in the name of holy truth. King Camlath and Queen Vika have done what they can to ease the troubles, but royal proclamations often have little force in the face of religious fervor. It doesn't help matters that the king's second-oldest son, Prince Tarcin, openly favors the Larrenists. Some people have begun to wonder aloud how long it will be before the Gods-ban falls on the kingdom.

Karellia

Government: Hereditary monarchy
Ruler: King Kavvel
Capital: Parvaasa
Population: Men (92%), Dwarves (2%), Elves (2%), Other (4%)
Language(s): Karellian
Coinage: Piece; Piece; Piece
Resources: Fishing, farming, furs, mining, craftwork
Religion: High Church (Karellian)
Military: Light cavalry 20%, heavy cavalry 14%, light infantry 26%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 14%, magical/other 6%
Arms/Symbol: Two stags counter salient, one with gold horns and one with silver, on green

Thrusting further west into the Northern Ocean than any other land of Ambrethel, Karellia is a harsh, cold land whose people have a history of warring not only with their neighbors, but amongst themselves.

HISTORY

Men first came to the land of Karellia around the year 2000 FE, when explorers from the West-erlands found the more hospitable lands further south already inhabited by Dwarves and Men. But Karellia itself was home only to Orcs and monsters, foes the explorers were willing to fight.

Over the rest of the First Epoch, the Karellians settled throughout their land, gradually exploring the wilderness and building towns and cities at the most convenient locations. Typically, a Karellian who wished to explore an unclaimed part of the land and had the support of a large group of people would journey to Parvaasa to obtain a charter from the king. If he found a new territory he and his people were willing to settle it, the charter made him their liege-lord, with a title appropriate to his station; many younger sons of nobles found lands for themselves this way. The fighting against the Orcs and their kin was long and bitter, but with blades and spells the Karellians drove back the enemy. Only the Keskari, the fierce, woodcrafty barbarians of the Nevala Hills, withstood the Karellian forces. By the dawn of the Second Epoch, Karellia occupied the entire northern peninsula as far south as the Zugdar River in the west, and the impassable hills and forests that separate it from Azarthond in the east.

Internal Struggles

Having been settled by Men of strong mind and independent spirit, Karellia has always had problems with internal conflict and struggle. It sometimes seems that every century, some nobleman arises somewhere in the land who doesn't care for the dictates of the king and has to be brought to heel by the royal army, or a minor rebellion breaks out in some part of the realm.

3477 SE: Orzeg's War

Until the late 3400s, Karellia included the land between the Asha and Zugdar Rivers. It was a frontier region, sparsely settled compared to

the rest of the realm, but still it owed fealty to the Karellian throne. But in 3477 SE, a half-Orc, half-Ogre war chieftain of the Maha Torend, Orzeg, established his dominance and rule over the other Orc-chieftains of that region. Under his command, the greenskins poured forth from their mountainous home and descended on the Karellian settlers, butchering them and taking all they owned. Orzeg declared himself the king of a new realm, Vorash.

Ordinarily, the Karellians would have fought back and retaken the land. But Orzeg was no headstrong fool; he chose his moment well. That year King Tomari had even greater problems to contend with: in Norpont, Duke Brunlo was defying orders and calling himself a king; to the south, it seemed likely that Karellia would come to blows with Azarthond over the right to mine parts of the Nevala Hills; and elsewhere in the Hills, the Keskari were once again restless and quarrelsome. With those threats so close to Parvaasa, Tomari dared not send his soldiers to the southwest to fight Orcs, and so Orzeg kept what he had taken.

4893 SE: Goblin-Blades Along The Rogas

In recent centuries, the monsters and fell races of the Roga Hills have become increasingly dangerous, sometimes raiding the lowlands. The worst of these incidents took place just over a century ago, when a large tribe of Goblins began attacking towns and villages south of Parvaasa. After several victories, they had a better store of arms and armor, and chose to move on the capital itself. In a small range of hills a league from the city walls, the king's army, including the knights of the Order of the Wyvern, ambushed the Goblins, cutting great swaths through their ranks and leaving the grass black with Goblin blood. But the Goblins' chieftain, Norkhar, rallied them and regrouped, moving back into woods and thickets where the Wyverns could not ride. The Karellians withdrew to the city walls, hoping to draw the Goblins out. Norkhar wanted to retreat to the Rogas, but several of his lieutenants and rivals accused him of cowardice, so he attacked — and was destroyed. Not a single Goblin returned to his home in the hills.

KARELLIA IN 5000 SE

Karellia's long history of internal quarrels continues. Both Duke Torno of Norpont and Count Helgen of Alavus have refused to honor their feudal obligations, claiming the king has not protected their lands (from various sea-reavers, Goblin and Orc tribes, and Keskari) as he is bound to. If King Kavvel does not move against them soon, others may follow their lead... but if he deals with them too harshly, the nobles may revolt in anger. The king has to walk a dangerous line, and even a seemingly minor problem could have far-reaching consequences.

THE LAND

Thrusting out into the Northern Ocean, Karellia is a cold land with short springs and summers and long autumns and winters. The growing season is short, so the Karellians supplement what grain and fruit they can raise with nuts, berries, and roots

gathered in the forests; they make a particularly delicious and satisfying soup from the root of the *harja*-bush. Karellian buildings have distinctively high-pitched roofs slated with the rusty-colored Karellian shale to keep off the snow.

Parvaasa

Located on the eastern coast in a fine natural harbor that offers a lot of shelter from storms that blow down from the Northern Ocean, Parvaasa is a large, spread-out trading city of broad streets, many town squares, and mostly low-lying buildings. The largest structures in the city are Sarvuka, the royal palace (six stories tall), and the main temple of the Karellian High Church (three stories tall).

Many of Parvaasa's streets are not paved. In the winter they're frozen solid and covered with ice and snow; nobles and wealthy folk use sleighs to get around the city. In the spring these streets turn to mud, and in the summer they're often dry and dusty.

Because they spend so much of the year indoors, the Parvaasans (like Karellians in general) appreciate a good tavern where they can drink their bitter-tasting *kantalli*-ale and sit around a warm fire to talk with their friends. The best-known taverns there include the Burning Brand (a favorite among adventurers since its owner, Velhem, was once an adventurer himself) and the Redbird.

Roga Hills

This wild region of steep, forested hills effectively cuts Karellia in two. Although it's passable to a determined traveler, there are no roads, making it next to impossible to move trade-goods or an army through here... and of course the Goblins and fell beasts who call the Hills their home endanger all who enter the region. Getting from Parvaasa to the western side of Karellia requires a journey through the northern part of the Nevala Hills (where Kes-kari may threaten the traveler) or a long journey by ship around Norpont and down the western coast.

Valbard

The westernmost city in the known world, Valbard is a cold and isolated place, lashed by bitter winds coming off of the Northern Ocean for much of the year. The Valbardans are a stern and strong-willed people, caring little for foolishness or carousing. Compared to Parvaasa there are almost no

taverns, and most of the ones that do exist huddle along the waterfront on a few streets where foreigners seem to outnumber Karellians.

The Valbardans are led by a man — Torno, Duke of Norpont — who's as humorless as a golem. He seems to care nothing for the pleasures that occupy the minds of other men; all he wants is power, money, and the unquestioning obedience of his subjects. But as harsh as he sometimes seems, even King Kavvel can't say he doesn't treat his people fairly, with an evenhanded justice often tempered by a degree of mercy most folk wouldn't expect from him.

SOCIETY

King Kavvel of the House of Mikkello rules Karellia, though he sometimes feels as if his authority doesn't extend much beyond the confines of Parvaasa. He and Queen Ivona have three children — infant triplet sons upon whom they both dote. The king has assigned each babe a young, strong, quick-witted guardsman to guard and serve them throughout their childhoods, if not beyond.

The Karellians follow the High Faith, but with a few differences compared to other lands. They consider several gods — including Nelaros, Solët, Gulinfaxa (goddess of deer), and Lûrvadi (god of fish and fishing) — as major gods, not minor ones as they're thought of elsewhere. Nelaros they of course group with the Blue (along with Gulinfaxa and Lûrvadi); Solët they consider Scarlet, but often pray to him to reduce the snowfall, and for a quick melting of the ice in the springtime. No Bonifact has declared this a heresy, but some priests from other lands see it as such.

Since the long winters keep the Karellians inside for so much of the year, they've developed a fine tradition of craftwork. Among the things they're best known for in other lands are the cloaks and garments they make. Lined with the thick, soft, luxurious fur of the *pethavi* (a fox-like creature), they keep the wearer warm in all but the coldest weather. Karellian men have also developed a reputation as skilled woodcarvers and carpenters; a Karellian marriage-bed, with its large, elaborately-carved headboard, graces the bedchamber of many a noble throughout the world.

LAIRALA

10 STR	10 DEX
8 CON	8 BODY
8 INT	8 EGO
12 PRE	12 COM
2 PD	3 ED
2 SPD	4 REC
16 END	17 STUN

Abilities: +1 OCV with Slap, KS: Local Gossip 11-, PS: Serving Wench 11-, Stealth 13-, Street-wise 8-, Contacts (5 points' worth, throughout Parvaasa)

Enchanted Items: None

Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Falls In Love Too Easily

Notes: Lairala is one of the serving wenches at the Redbird, a popular tavern in Parvaasa. Although she's good at the job, she doesn't like it much — she gets yelled at too much, and the patrons are too grabby (though she's gotten good at slapping faces, which has made the regulars leave her alone more than they used to). She's prone to fantasizing about a better life, and is quick to develop crushes on handsome men (particularly ones she thinks might "take me away from all this").

Khrisulia

Government: Monarchy

Ruler: Ansgar the Twice-Lived

Capital: Genarion

Population: Men (79%), Halflings (8%), Dwarves (6%), Gnomes (4%), Other (3%)

Language(s): Khrisulian

Coinage: Florin; Florin; Florin

Resources: Herding, mining, craftwork, fishing

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 12%, heavy cavalry 8%, light infantry 41%, heavy infantry 22%, navy 0%, magical/other 17%

Arms/Symbol: Per pale and barry red and white, charged with a semy of billets gold on black

A small, mountainous realm ruled by an undead wizard, Khrisulia may soon threaten the peace of the entire region due to a madness now afflicting the king.

HISTORY

Khrisulia was first settled in the mid-First Epoch by hardy Westerlanders who traveled deep into the hills and mountains and fought Orcs and Goblins to claim the land. These hard-headed, tough-muscled Men remained free, ruled only by local nobles, until 2929 SE, when Sitheria invaded and conquered the land. Many Khrisulians fled deeper into the hills to escape their harsh new rulers; a few even joined or took control of tribes of Orcs rather than submit to Sitheria.

Despite the stubbornness of the Khrisulians, Sitheria held the kingdom for over a thousand years. But in the early 4000s, a boy named Ansgar was born near Genarion. Precocious and clever, he soon displayed a talent for the Art, and was apprenticed to an old hill-wizard. After he learned all he could from him, Ansgar moved on to study with other wizards, eventually leaving Khrisulia altogether. But the plight of his people, who were not well-treated by their Sitherian lords, ever weighed on his mind.

After a career as an adventurer, during which he showed great skill and power as a spellcaster and acquired several enchanted items, Ansgar returned to Khrisulia in 4037 SE. Inspiring the people through his outspokenness and magics, he led a revolt in which the Sitherians were slain or driven back over the Crisander. By the acclaim of all Khrisulia, Ansgar was chosen to rule the land.

Rule them fairly and well Ansgar did for nearly 500 years, but in 4502 SE his arcanelly-enhanced lifespan finally came to an end. After they laid him in his tomb, the Khrisulians began to argue over who should be king, for Ansgar had steadfastly refused to name a successor. Civil war between

several powerful nobles seemed imminent... and then Ansgar returned! Now a lich, he reclaimed his throne and continued to rule the land. Though some Khrisulians, particularly many priests, have questioned his motives, for the past five centuries he has continued the same policies and laws he used in life.

KHRISULIA IN 5000 SE

In recent years, questions about Ansgar the Twice-Lived's intentions have become even more common. The king often acts strangely — sometimes staring off into nothingness for hours at a time, sometimes making statements other realms might regard as threatening, sometimes lashing out at his underlings for no good reason, then apologizing later. The Khrisulians fear he has gone mad, as liches so often do... and if that's the case, what will happen to them?

THE LAND

A rough and hilly wedge of land between the Trollscarps and the Maha Torend, Khrisulia appeals only to self-supporting, independent-minded folk who don't mind living in wild areas. It has only one true city (Genarion, the capital, a small, rough-and-tumble sort of place); most Khrisulians live in villages or small towns, or on homesteads deep in the hills where large extended families fend for themselves. Many of these homesteads cluster along the upper reaches of the Crisander, where fishing for mountain trout and salmon is easy.

SOCIETY

Thanks to the fact that it's had the same king for nearly a thousand years, Khrisulia is a realm of well-settled laws and customs. Everyone knows how things work; there isn't a shift in laws or policies every few years when a new king takes the throne. This frustrates some nobles, but it appeals to the people, who don't care much for change. Many Khrisulians just want to be left alone, and King Ansgar lets them be as long as they obey his laws.

Most folk consider Khrisulians to be superstitious. They have a lot of odd customs and traditions designed to ward off evil and ill fortune, such as never starting a journey or stepping into a building with one's left foot. Hill-witches do a thriving business in curses, counter-curses, and good luck talismans.

Races other than Men are relatively common in Khrisulia. In addition to the Dwarves and Gnomes one would expect in such a mountainous land, there is a large population of Halflings — Mountain Halflings, they call themselves, for they prefer the hilly regions and alpine valleys that their kind normally shuns.

Rosskeld

Government: Hereditary monarchy

Ruler: King Aksarn

Capital: Roszburg

Population: Men (92%), Elves (2%), Halflings (2%), Dwarves (1%), Other (3%)

Language(s): Helta

Coinage: Piece; Noble; Royal

Resources: Fishing, farming, herding, mining

Religion: High Church

Military: Light cavalry 18%, heavy cavalry 14%, light infantry 30%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 12%, magical/other 6%

Arms/Symbol: White, with a blue fess charged with three red shells

A quiet, simple land of fishermen, miners, and traders, Rosskeld neither threatens nor is threatened by any other realm.

HISTORY

When Ardunans sailed across the sea in the First Epoch, one of the places they landed was the coast of the realms now called Rosskeld and Heltica. While many of the explorers journeyed far inland looking for lands they found suitable, some of them liked the coastal region and stayed there.

Rosskeld soon became a realm of fishermen and traders ruled by country nobles and a king. But its peaceful existence came to an end in 2560 FE, when Vanerof overran the land, killing the royal family and transforming Rosskeld into several counties beholden to Gathrock. For almost two thousand years, the Rosskeldians toiled on behalf of Vanerof, which used their ports to become a trading power. But in 4532 SE, after Vanerof had weakened itself fighting Brabantia, Rosskeld and Heltica both rose up and freed themselves.

For a time, Rosskeld was in effect a part of Heltica, and the Rosskeldians acknowledged the king in Beresti as their liege-lord. But by the early 4600s, they yearned to rule themselves. Recognizing this, in 4611 SE King Lormar of Heltica gave his beloved new son-in-law, Menhrod, all of Rosskeld as his kingdom.

Other than a brief war in 4850 SE with the Dwarves of Azarthond over the right to mine the

hills in the western part of the kingdom, Rosskeld has remained a peaceful realm ever since. Menhrod's sons, the Rethmund kings, have ruled it with firmness and fairness, caring more for their peoples' prosperity than their own prestige or wealth.

ROSSKELD IN 5000 SE

Compared to most other realms of Ambrethel, Rosskeld is a calm and simple place. Its army and navy are both small, and its king and nobles can often be found working in the fields and orchards along with their subjects. The Rosskeldians pay more attention to the condition of their crops, their sheep, and their pigs than they do to petty disputes among their nobles.

THE LAND

Rosskeld is a coastal kingdom with the low-lying Rosalian Hills as its eastern and southern border. Most of it is temperate grasslands and hills, broken here and there by stands of forest or small lakes. The rich, ochre-colored soil is perfect for growing many types of crops, including the famed Rosskeldian apples (from which comes the equally-famed Rosskeldian cider). Roszburg is the only large city, though Hovendar at the mouth of the Hovenn River has been growing swiftly since gold was discovered along the upper reaches of the river about ten years ago.

SOCIETY

Except for the cities (and, perhaps, the mining villages in the Rosalians and on the Hovenn), Rosskeld is a bucolic place where events tend to move at a slow pace. King Aksarn knows his people well, and leaves them be to tend their land as much as he can. As a new king (he's only been on the throne three years, since the unexpected death of his father), he's more concerned with finding a suitable queen than anything else. But so far none of the many eligible maidens paraded before him by his nobles and other kings have caught his admiration and interest.

The Rosskeldians follow the High Church. Many of them reserve a special reverence for Almandré and Lithira, but the priests don't seem to mind this.

THE MAHA TOREND

Named “the Houses of Thunder” in Teretha because of the storms that so often seem to roll down from their peaks, this tall mountain range has no easy passes anywhere along its length. Determined travelers can struggle through in the spring and summer a little south of the dwarven kingdom of Garaktora (assuming their willing to pay the Dwarves’ toll, or try a less safe side route and risk the possibility of encountering dwarven bandits or Orc raiders). But once the snows fall, the only way to cross the Maha Toren is by magic. Many of the Teretha kings have longed for a way to create a pass through the mountains, since that would open their realm up to trade with Sitheria and other realms of central Mitharia.

Teretheim

Government: Elected monarchy
Ruler: High King Arhardt
Capital: Ulrum
Population: Men (86%), Dwarves (6%), Gnomes (3%), Elves (2%), Other (3%)
Language(s): Teretha
Coinage: Mark; Mark; Mark
Resources: Farming, fishing, herding, mining
Religion: High Church
Military: Light cavalry 20%, heavy cavalry 15%, light infantry 29%, heavy infantry 20%, navy 12%, magical/other 4%
Arms/Symbol: A wolf with a crown in its mouth

A proud realm of ancient traditions, Teretheim now finds itself trapped between the Orcs of the north and the horrors of Sargath the Vampire Lord to the south.

HISTORY

Legends told in Teretheim recount that when “the Men of the North” (Ardunans) first sailed the Teretheim coast, they found the land settled by a people not barbarians, but not quite civilized either. Ruled over by several petty kings who each controlled part of the land, they often fought with one another...

...but when the Ardunans tried to take the land for their own, the Teretha (as they were known) put aside their differences to fight the invaders together. They could fight among themselves all they wished, but no one would conquer them and tell them what to do! But none of the Teretha kings was strong enough to oppose the Ardunans, who soon ruled much of the land.

So it was for most of the First Epoch, but in 2712 FE the surviving Teretha kings — most now king in name only, since all they ruled over were bandit camps in the hills and forests — came together in solemn conclave. Recognizing their predicament, they chose one from among them — Volkar — to be their High King and lead them in battle against the Ardunans. Volkar had lived in secret among the Ardunans, learning well their ways and skills, and now he brought that knowledge to bear. Within a few short years the Teretha had taken back much of their land, but at great price in blood and pain.

Unwilling to see the fighting continue, Volkar challenged the king of the Ardunans, Torvin, to single combat. The two met in battle near Engelrad, each cheered on by legions of his soldiers. But after a long day of fighting, the issue was no nearer resolution; both had fought well and with strength, and both taken and given wounds. Neither had clearly triumphed, and so it seemed that their two armies might have to fall on one another. But then, as the afternoon light was changing to gold, a wolf came ambling out of the nearby forest. No archer shot it, for in its mouth it carried a crown. Without a sound or a sideways glance, the wolf walked through the armies and into the lists, and laid the crown at Volkar’s feet.

Unable to deny the power of this omen, Torvin surrendered to Volkar, pledging that he and his people would become loyal subjects of the realm Volkar called Teretheim. Volkar accepted his pledge, and with that peace reigned in the land.

The Orcs Of The North

Ever since Orzeg the Conqueror took the land of Vorash away from Karellia, Teretheim has been threatened by the Vorashan hordes. Bands of Ogres, Orcs, and Goblins often find ways across the shallow Zugdar River to raid the villages and towns of Men; as a result, many folk have moved south, leaving the northern part of Teretheim a wilderness. The Teretha have smashed Orc-armies on many occasions (most notably in 3614 SE, 4111 SE, and 4870 SE), but Orcs breed swiftly, and it doesn’t take more than a few decades before orcish aggressiveness once more replaces the memories of defeat. To help counter this threat, the Teretha kings have built several small keeps along the Zugdar River. Each is fortified to withstand a long siege by Orcs, and has a special crystal ball so it can communicate with the other keeps and the royal palace.

4568 SE: The Garaktoran War

Nor are Orcs the only race with whom the Teretha have fought. In 4568 SE, a dispute over the taxes and tariffs of the city of Durgau flared into war with the Dwarves of Garaktora. Marching forth from their underground realm, the Dwarves invested Durgau, hoping to destroy its walls and loot the place before help could arrive. Unfortunately for them, the Durgauans had received word of the Dwarves’ approach from a Druid, and had immediately sent messages requesting aid. High King Heldrig mustered his forces and headed for Durgau, which held out for several weeks until his arrival.

After a brief but bloody skirmish between the Dwarves and the king’s soldiers, Heldrig met with the dwarven king, Reghed, to parley. After several days of often hot-tempered discussion, they reached an accord — the High King agreed to establish a law restricting the duties on dwarven goods, in exchange for certain favorable trade terms between his realm and Garaktora. Satisfied with the outcome of the conflict, both armies retired from the field, and peace was restored... though more than a few Durgauans remain suspicious of Dwarves to this day.

TERETHEIM IN 5000 SE

Teretheim has become a land on the defensive. With the Orcs and Ogres of Vorash more restive and combative than ever, and the kingdom to the south in the grip of a powerful vampire, High King Arhardt worries that an attack may come any day — possibly from two directions at once! At his order, engineers have strengthened the walls of Ulrum and taken other steps to prepare the city to repel attackers. He’s also expanded the “network” of crystal balls throughout the realm, so that he can quickly communicate not just with the keeps along the Zugdar, but other cities and towns — even the Elves of the Altenwoods, long an ally of the realm, have one.

THE LAND

Teretheim is a realm of northern grasslands, hills, and forests, rising to the peaks of the Maha Torend in the east. It's chilly much of the year, and bitterly cold in wintertime. The growing season is short, but Teretha farmers have bred a sturdy form of wheat that grows and ripens quickly.

Ulrum

Located on the coast not far south of the mouth of the Zugdar, Ulrum is a small, well-built city centered around Hrendescar, the royal palace (and the city's second line of defense, since it has its own wall). Thanks to High King Arhardt's orders, Ulrum is now a heavily fortified city. Masons have repaired, strengthened, and thickened the walls to better withstand besiegers' attacks. New engines, including some powerful catapults, line the walls, and the soldiers of the Ulrum Guard are well-supplied with arrows and bolts. The engineers have even dug some new wells to provide the city with more fresh water.

The Altenwoods

This large, mixed forest in the center of Teretheim contains a small kingdom of Elves. The Elves consider themselves a separate realm; their Elvenking, Galariathondarel, has ruled them for nearly a thousand years. But they also acknowledge the overlordship and friendship of the High King in Ulrum, and would gladly help him in time of need if he asked. They allow Men living nearby to hunt in their forest and cut wood, as long as their "guests" do not become greedy or destructive.

SOCIETY

Teretheim has an unusual political structure. Most of the people are ruled by "kings," hereditary rulers roughly equivalent in rank to a duke or similarly powerful noble. The kings have nobles — counts, barons, and knights — serving them as vassals. The kings in turn owe fealty to the High King, who rules the entire realm. The high kingship is not hereditary. When a high king dies, the kings meet in solemn convocation at Hrendescar to choose his successor by majority vote. Usually they elect one of their own, but sometimes they look outside their ranks to a popular army general, well-known adventurer, or the like. During these times, the political maneuvering and machinations can become extreme; blackmail and assassination are not unknown.

The current ruler is High King Arhardt, who's worn the crown for nearly fifteen years. He would like to see his eldest son, Danegar, succeed him, and he knows that to do that, he has to impress the kings with his son's qualifications to rule. He's given Danegar many responsibilities designed to show his fitness for the throne when the time comes, and Danegar has performed his duties with skill and dash.

Vorash

Government: Tribal quasi-anarchy

Ruler: Tribal rulers and strongmen

Capital: None

Population: Orcs (57%), Goblins (17%), Ogres (12%), Trolls (10%), Other (4%)

Language(s): Skhai, Uzdek, Vugrash (all Mitharian), Kuldrar

Coinage: Multiple coinages

Resources: Herding, fishing, mining

Religion: High Faith (Orcish)

Military: Light cavalry 14%, heavy cavalry 8%, light infantry 44%, heavy infantry 28%, navy 2%, magical/other 4%

Arms/Symbol: None, or various tribal symbols

A land of Orcs, Goblins, and Ogres, Vorash is not so much a kingdom as a wild-realm that poses a threat to all its neighbors.

HISTORY

Until 3477 SE, the land now known as Vorash was part of Karellia. But in that year, a half-Orc, half-Ogre war chieftain named Orzeg united the greenskins of the northern Maha Torend under his leadership and descended on the land, slaughtering the Karellians and claiming all the lands between the Asha and Zugdar Rivers for himself. Unable to retaliate due to other difficulties (see page 150), Karellia had to let the territory go.

Orzeg held the quarrelsome Orcs and Goblins together until his death in 3490 SE, forcing them to, among other things, grow crops and build the city of Gorag Zhel. But when he died, stabbed in the heart by a jealous she-Orc, it didn't take long for his subjects to revert to kind. Soon Orc was fighting Orc throughout the realm, with various tribes or groups establishing their dominance over different regions through blood and intimidation. If threatened by some outside force — such as the Karellians or Keskari — the tribes could usually find a way to put aside their differences and work together, but not always... and inevitably, any such alliances fell apart almost as soon as the threat that spawned them ended.

When not fighting among themselves, the Vorashans have usually raided or fought with other peoples. They've often strike south into Dragosani or north into Karellia. Many of them enjoy skirting the Trollscarps (or finding secret ways through them) to attack the Dwarves of Azarthond, for whom they have a deep and abiding hatred.

From time to time, a leader arises who tries to unite the Vorashan tribes under one rule as Orzeg did. The most successful of these was Noreg, an Orc who came to power over his own tribe in 4634 SE and began a campaign of conquest that brought nearly three-fourths of Vorash under his control. For over five years he and his carefully-chosen lieutenants led attacks on other realms and peoples, bringing back rich plunder thanks to their clever tactics. But just as it seemed Noreg was about to weld the Vorashans into a true kingdom, he died in 4641 SE from the effects of a week-long feast/

ANDUTHAR

18	STR	15	DEX
17	CON	12	BODY
15	INT	10	EGO
18	PRE	10	COM
8	PD	6	ED
3	SPD	7	REC
34	END	30	STUN

Abilities: +2 HTH, Climbing 12-, Healing 12-, KS: Orcs 11-, Martial Arts (10 points' worth of Swordfighting maneuvers), Riding 12-, Stealth 13-, Tactics 12-, WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Fringe Benefit: Membership (military rank, third in command of fortress)

Enchanted Items: None

Disadvantages: Hunted (Watched by superior officers), Psychological Limitation: Must Protect Teretheim From Vorash

Notes: Anduthar is third in command of Braygar's Rock, one of the Teretha border forts intended to prevent incursions by raiders from Vorash. He takes his duties very seriously; he has a wife and two small children, and he doesn't want them to get hurt. His men consider him a bit too much of a stickler for detail, but they don't hate him.

Anduthar wears chainmail and carries a medium shield. His weapon of choice is a longsword, though he can wield others if necessary.

drinking bout/orgy... and his “realm” fell apart even more quickly than it had come together. His tribe erected a vast pile of stone, Noreg’s Throne, in his honor; it’s said the old Orc-king’s ghost haunts the place.

VORASH IN 5000 SE

Vorash remains much the same as ever — untamed, chaotic, the home of Orcs, Goblins, and other beings who would as soon kill and eat a stranger as talk to him. But all that may be about to change, if the shamans of the tribes read the signs aright. Many have seen omens — odd conjunctions of the stars, strange twistings of the intestines of sacrificed beasts, complex patterns in the fallen bones — that suggest a great coming-together, a uniting of the tribes under some leader of unmatched power. Who that might be, they cannot say, but more than one Orc-chieftain wonders if this might not be his chance — even his calling — to try to seize power over all Vorash.

THE LAND

Vorash is much like Teretheim or Karellia: a northern temperate land, often extremely cold in the wintertime. But throughout the land the signs of orkish occupation exist: forests hacked down to stumps for firewood; trenches dug into the earth for various reasons; small battlefields where one tribe skirmished with another, then left the bodies for the ravens. It’s a dismal place of little beauty, with frequent clouds and rainy weather.

Gorag Zhel

One of the most unusual cities in Ambrethel, Gorag Zhel was hewn out of the very rock of the Trollscarp Mountains by trollish wizards and masons. Small compared to most cities, it’s extremely defensible, since its walls are immensely thick and every building inside it is made out of stone. The Trolls who live there are renowned for their skill as stoneworkers, and people from other lands sometimes make the dangerous trek to Gorag Zhel to hire them.

The Orruk Woods

The largest forested area in Vorash, the Orruk Woods sits almost in the very center of the land. Several tribes claim parts of it, or live in its outer regions. But even Trolls fear to enter the deep interior of Orruk, where dragons and other fearsome monsters dwell. Many Orcs talk longingly of all the treasure that lies waiting to be found in Orruk... if only one has the strength and skill to kill what guards it.

SOCIETY

Vorash has little society to speak of. Various tribes of Orcs, Goblins, Ogres, and Trolls live throughout the land, each controlling its own claimed territory and living by its own customs and traditions. The tribes fight with each other more than they cooperate, though the folk of the cities have learned to live among each other more or less in peace. Some of the most prominent tribes include:

Noregdar: Noreg’s sons, and their descendants, have held together a tribe of his followers through a combination of wit, guile, and strength. Living in the area around Noreg’s Throne, they see to it that no one desecrates their ancestor’s grave... and they scheme to take the power that once was his.

Orzegdar: Supposedly descended from Orzeg himself, this tribe of Ogres, half-Orc half-Ogres (sometimes called “Orcres”), and even a few half-Ogre half-Trolls holds lands along the Asha River and raids into Karellia when the mood takes it. The leader of the tribe — who wins his position by slaying both the current leader and any tribesmen who challenge him for the throne — wears a ceremonial helmet made from the skull of a dragon slain by one of Orzeg’s sons. The current wearer of the dragon’s skull is Narrg, a powerful Ogre who fights with a battle axe in each hand.

Tlargetk: A tribe mainly composed of Orcs and Goblins; it controls lands on the north side of the Orruk Woods (and claims part of the Woods itself). A council of powerful warriors and shamans leads the tribe, though conflicts within the council often mean the quality of the leadership is, at best, inconsistent.

Vellset: A tribe of Trolls, with a few Ogres and Ettins mixed in, Vellset lives near and in the Trollscarps. The wealth brought by its mines (most worked by dwarven and gnomish slaves) have made it one of the most powerful and influential tribes in the realm.

Vorash sees few visitors — particularly in the interior, where the Orc-folk consider outlanders just another game animal. The rare trader that comes to Vorash docks at Huzdeg, and stays there... with a large group of warriors as his bodyguard, if possible.

THE FAR NORTH



In the north of Ambrethel, beyond the Snowthorns and the upper reaches of the Skyclaw Mountains, lie wild and untamed lands claimed by no king... and beyond them, the dread realm of Turakia.

The Gorthundan Steppes

Between the Snowthorn Mountains, Kal-Turak's Wall, and the Evling River lies a vast, flat sea of grass: the Gorthundan Steppes. Inhabited by the nomadic Gorthunda (page 184), who sometimes ride south to raid the Westerlands or Mhorecia, the Steppes contain only two "towns" as other Men would use the term. One is Waymeet, at the northern end of the Valician Pass; the other is Greatwater, on the coast of the Sea of Ice. Both serve the same purposes: first, they give the Gorthunda a place to trade their goods (furs, craftwork, and the like) with other races to obtain things they cannot make themselves; second, they provide a home for Gorthunda too old or crippled to ride with their tribe any longer.

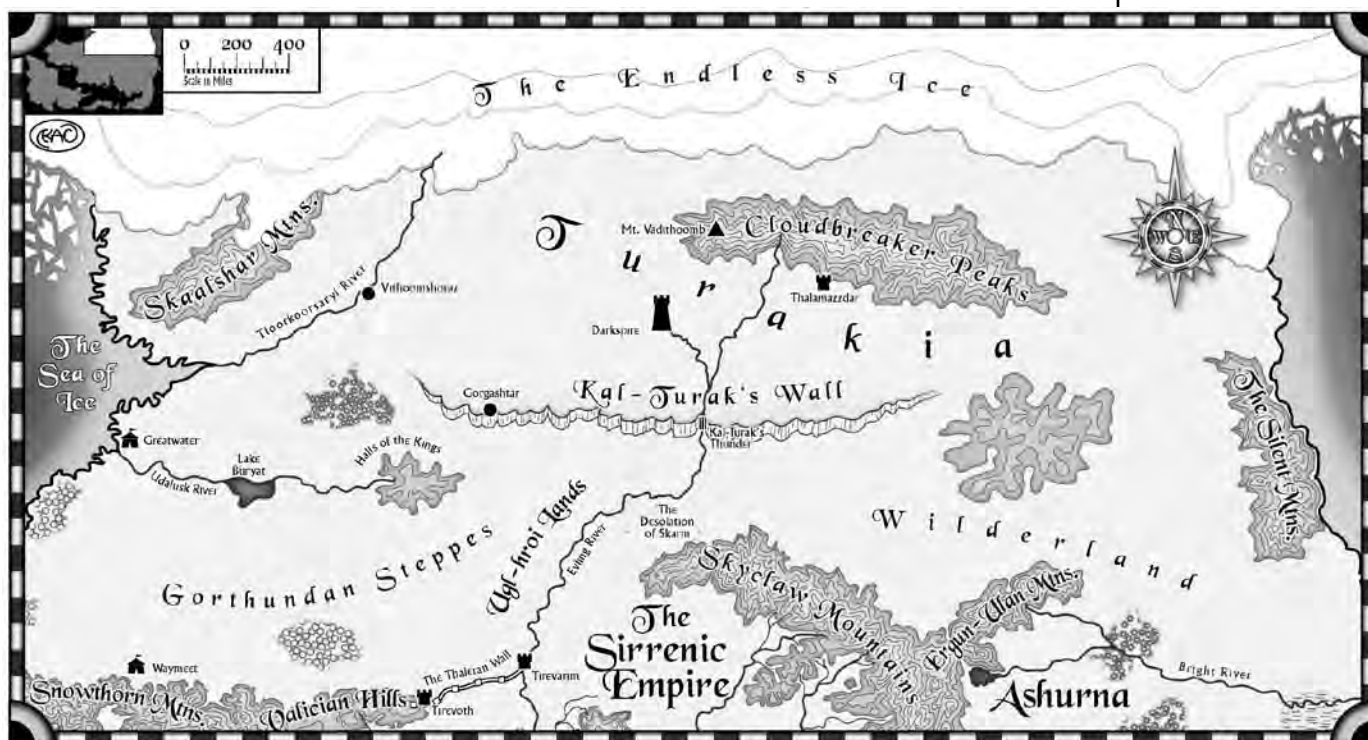
The eastern part of the Steppes, along the Evling River, is the home not of the Gorthunda but the feared Ulg-hroi (page 186). These folk are even less friendly and more cruel than the Gorthunda can be; it's said they've allied themselves with Kal-Turak.

Udalusk River And Lake Buryat

While many small streams and rivers criss-cross the Steppes, sometimes forming small ponds or lakes, the region has only one notable body of water: the Udalusk River, which nearly cuts the Steppes in two. Fordable in only a few places, the Udalusk runs swift and deep from a range of hills in the central Steppe. About halfway along its length it expands into Lake Buryat, along which many Gorthunda tribes camp for a few weeks each year to fish; after that it continues its journey to the sea, now wider and proceeding more slowly.

The Halls Of The Kings

Typically the Gorthunda do not bury their dead — they burn them with fires made of dried grasses and dung, or simply leave them to rot where they lay. But great chiefs and shamans, whom the Gorthunda honor above all others, receive different treatment. Those they bury in tomb-mounds, each lavishly decorated with tomb-paintings and other art and filled with a king's ransom of burial goods. These tombs are located in the Halls of the Kings, a secret valley in the hills of the central Steppe. Only the bravest, most deserving Gorthunda learn where the Halls are located, lest the Ulg-hroi or other enemies discover their location and desecrate the tombs. It's said that a special guard of undying warriors also protects the Halls.



Wilderland

East of the Steppes, across the Evling and north of the mountains, lies Wilderland — an untamed region, filled with monsters, Orcs, and many other threats. Few Men live there (if any), and no king has yet claimed these lands as his own.

Turakia

Government: Absolute monarchy

Ruler: Kal-Turak the Ravager

Capital: Darkspire

Population: Men (28%), Orcs (37%), Goblins (15%), Ogres (10%), Other (10%)

Language(s): Skhai, Vugrash, Uzdek (all Westernlands), Trade-Tongue

Coinage: Multiple coinages

Resources: Herding, mining

Religion: Kal-Turak

Military: Light cavalry 14%, heavy cavalry 10%, light infantry 34%, heavy infantry 22%, navy 5%, magical/other 15%

Arms/Symbol: The Blood Wolf (a scarlet wolf's head on black), or the Black Lantern on red

Claimed by Kal-Turak nearly a century ago, Turakia casts a long shadow over the rest of the world... a shadow that may very well lead to a much darker night.

HISTORY

Prior to the arrival of Kal-Turak, the land now known as Turakia had no name, save perhaps "the Northlands." A cold and unforgiving region even at the height of summer, it was home mostly to a few animals adapted to the frigid temperatures: large, white-furred bears; packs of wolves whose fur is grey in summer but white in winter; thick-fleeced fowl; rodents with claws sharp and hard enough to dig burrows in the ground. A few tribes of Erqigdlit, Orcs, and Men roamed there, but in no great numbers. After Kal-Turak's birth, a darkness fell upon the region, attracting many foul creatures and Orcs, but driving away other folk.

As described on page 20, in 4915 SE Kal-Turak used his mighty magics to break the land, raising the northern part to separate it from the steppes to the south. Thus he created Kal-Turak's Wall, a cliff a thousand feet high and two thousand miles long. All lands north of the cliff he claimed as his own, and there he built Darkspire, his great tower.

After the building of Darkspire, evil things from all the world over flocked north to follow the banner of the Blood Wolf. Orcs, Men with darkness in their hearts, Goblins, Ogres, and things more terrible still came to Turakia however they could, eager for the blood and spoils Kal-Turak's presence promised them. To accommodate so many followers, Kal-Turak built two great cities, Gorgashtar and Vithoomshoraz.

TURAKIA IN 5000 SE

All the world waits to see what Kal-Turak will do next. He seems to be gathering his strength, waiting for just the right moment to strike, but no one can say for sure. The lands nearest his — the Sirrenic Empire and northern Mhorecia, Khirkovy, northern Khorio — watch warily and build up their armies as best they may.

THE LAND

Turakia is a cold and unforgiving land just south of the Endless Ice. Its winters are filled with snow and ice, and its springs and summers are short indeed. It has almost no growing season to speak of, and in any event the likes of Orcs and evil Men aren't inclined to farming; instead, they live by herding, hunting, and the food Kal-Turak and his lieutenants create with magic.

Darkspire

In the center of Turakia, at the mouth of a river tributary to the Evling, stands the tall and forbidding tower of Darkspire. Its very appearance — every stone, every arch, every carved gargoyle and spike — bespeaks of the evil that built it and resides there. From its deepest dungeons where only the Ravager himself may go, to its peak from which he gazes south covetously, it's filled with undead and evil servants of every description. Colossi and ogre-zombies guard it ceaselessly; giant, demonic birds circle its upper reaches, ready to shriek a warning at the first sign of danger.

Kal-Turak's Wall

Over 650 leagues long and one-sixteenth of a league high, this vast cliff protects Kal-Turak's realm from invasion. A person approaching from the top — from the north, in other words — can walk right up to the edge in most places and peer over the side. It's virtually unclimbable; only at the foot of Gorgashtar are there true stairs and paths that give access to the top, where the land tends to be flat and featureless. Even at Kal-Turak's Thunder, where the Evling crashes over the cliffs to form the largest waterfall in the world, only those who can fly can easily bypass the Wall.

Gorgashtar And Vithoomshoraz

These two cities, dark and terrible, were built by Kal-Turak to house his ever-growing armies and legions of followers. Each has quickly outgrown the massive walls he erected; ramshackle villages and camps have sprung up all around them. Both are violent, dangerous places where fights break out frequently and people think of murder as nothing unusual. Kal-Turak's lieutenants won't tolerate major disruptions or unrest, but otherwise don't care if one Orc knifes another for some reason.

Kal-Turak has given command of each city to one of his most trusted underlings. Varakes the Lich, an undead spellcaster who possesses several powerful enchanted items, rules Gorgashtar in the Ravager's name. His bodyguard of magically-augmented, armored skeletons keeps him safe...

as if anyone in the city were brave enough to look at him directly, much less attack him. It's said that those who defy him take three wanings and waxings of the Moon to die in his torture-rooms. His counterpart in Vithoomshoraz is Zarlang Thul, a mighty Half-Orc warrior known for his immense strength and resistance to pain. Stories whispered in the streets and camps of his city claim he can behead a Troll with a single sweep of his greatsword Marbod, and that he regards dagger-thrusts the way other folk do pin-pricks.

Thalamazzdar

As large as Darkspire is, even it lacks the room to house all the prisoners Kal-Turak will have when he rules the world. For them he has built the prison-keep of Thalamazzdar. As yet its halls echo emptily, for only a few folk reside there to give its torturers work to do... but the time will come when throngs of wretched prisoners fill its cells and dungeons.

The warden of Thalamazzdar is Varl, a cruel and evil storm giant said to have the blood of Asvalak himself in his veins. Taller and stronger than most of his kind, he enjoys breaking Men and Dwarves into bloody gobbets of flesh with his bare hands, then roasting the flesh for his food. In battle he wields no weapon, relying solely on his vast magical powers ("the lightning-bolt is my sword," he once said). His pride and vanity are as large as his body; he acknowledges no one save Kal-Turak as his better.

The Skalshaar Mountains

Reaching so far north part of it is covered by the Endless Ice, the Skalshaar Mountain range includes some of the tallest, sharpest peaks in the world. Home to clans of Snow Trolls and Frost Giants who amuse themselves by hurling enormous chunks of ice at targets (or each other), it's a dangerous place. It's said Kal-Turak has begun using the icy Skalshaar valleys to breed a race of dragons whose breath is frosty cold instead of fiery hot.

The Cloudbreaker Peaks

Scarcely south of the Skalshaars lie the Cloudbreaker Peaks, a vaster but shorter range of mountains. As Gorgashtar and Vithoomshoraz overflow, Kal-Turak has begun housing some of his armies here, in the extensive cave networks honeycombing the Cloudbreakers — but he has given them strict instructions not to descend into the Sunless Realms, and to stop any incursions from the Sunless Realms into his lands.

Greatest of all the mountains in the Cloudbreakers is Mount Vadithoomb, whose peak one can easily see from Darkspire. Within the dark and fiery chambers of Mount Vadithoomb, a group of smiths and enchanter led by some powerful fire giants craft mighty weapons for the Ravager's armies.

The Endless Ice

North of Turakia lies a land covered by snow and ice throughout the year. Few animals live here, and no Men, though it is said that some Erqigdlit tribes brave the bitter cold and survive by hunting. Wizards who study Ice Magic often journey here for a short time; they claim that being on the Endless Ice enhances the power of their spells (and the ease with which they cast them). A few even craft talismans from the deepest, hardest ice they can find, using their magic to keep the ice from melting.

SOCIETY

Turakia has no real society to speak of — Kal-Turak is king and god, and all obey his orders without question or hesitation. Beyond that, it's the law of the jungle: the strong prevail, while the weak serve or suffer.

Still, the land is not as lawless as that description tends to suggest, for Kal-Turak has much work for his followers to do. On the cold plains, commanders drill soldiers, forcing on them discipline in defiance of their evil natures. In halls and war-rooms throughout the land, captains plan how best to attack the cities of Ambrethel and crush all resistance. And in the high places of Darkspire, Kal-Turak broods and schemes....

THE SUNLESS REALMS



Below the surface of Ambrethel, below even the delved kingdoms of the Dwarves, lies a vast network of caves and caverns, halls and chambers. Known as the Sunless Realms, this is a land where adventurers sometimes dare to tread in search of great riches, magic, and power.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

Few maps of the Sunless Realms exist, and many of those are inaccurate and incomplete because cave-ins, the diggings of monsters and underground races, water, and other factors can change (or remove) a cave or cavern practically overnight. Still, the general description of the underground lands remains accurate over time.

The Four Levels

To most adventurers and Sunless folk, the underground lands consist of roughly four levels or layers. The first are the caves, caverns, and dungeons that lie just beneath the surface of Ambrethel. These are the Sunless lands most often explored by adventurers; some go their entire careers without delving deeper. (Technically this level includes the halls of the Dwarves, but they often prefer not to think of it that way.)

The second layer extends beneath that for a few hundred feet at most. This is the domain of the Dark Dwarves, the Mycetons (fungus-folk), some sentient undead, and of many monsters who prefer to dwell beneath the surface most of the time.

The third layer reaches from the bottom of the second layer to a depth of about a mile. This layer is heavily populated by races and beings that never (or rarely) go near the surface, such as some Dark Elves, some underground Uthosa (fish-folk), the Serpent-Men, and a few beings who come from the planes of Earth. Surface-dwellers rarely penetrate any deeper into the Sunless Realms than this.

The fourth layer includes everything below the third. This is where some of the most horrifying and powerful of the Sunless folk dwell, along with many strange monsters and beings. The Migdalar have their empires here, as do some groups of Dark Elves.

Major Cavern Complexes

According to adventurers who have much experience journeying in the Sunless Realms, the primary groupings of caverns — the “continents” of the underground world, if you will — exist beneath the following places:

- the central Westerlands
- the Valician Hills
- Besruhan
- Thûn, Aresca, and the western end of the Vornakkian Peninsula
- central Mitharia, extending in places down to Indushara
- Kal-Turak's Wall

Minor “islands” of caverns, sometimes cut off from the rest of the Sunless Realms altogether, exist beneath Vashkhor, northern Vornakkia, Kumasia, and northern Mitharia.

THE SUNLESS FOLK

Many different humanoid races (not to mention other monsters of many sorts) dwell in the Sunless Realms. They compete, ally, and war amongst themselves, just like surface folk do — and sometimes even with the surface folk, if those races live in the first or second layers of the underground. In many parts of the Sunless Realms, water, food, and other resources are hard to come by, so competition for them may be fierce.

Surface races (Orcs and Goblins, mostly), the Dark Dwarves, and the Mycetons dominate the upper two layers of the Sunless Realms. The Dark Dwarves often attack other peoples to steal their caverns or wealth, sometimes joining with Orcs and their kin to do so. To protect themselves, the less-numerous Mycetons may ally with underground Uthosa or Ran-tari, providing food in exchange for military support.

In the deeper layers, the main powers are the Dark Elves, the Serpent-Men, and the Migdalar. The Dark Elves maintain several different kingdoms or realms, and sometimes fight among themselves as much as with other races. Even within some dark elven kingdoms, strife and political infighting are the natural state of affairs. The Serpent-Men are more united, with one ruler they all obey, but are also numerically inferior to the other two; even their strange magics, and occasional cults of worshippers on the surface, can't always even the odds. The Migdalar, the deepest-dwelling race known to Men, ally with no one; confident in their own power, they fight their enemies ceaselessly to gain slaves and treasure.

THE PLANES BEYOND



Although the average inhabitant of Ambrethel remains completely unaware of the fact, many wizards and adventurers know that Ambrethel's plane of existence is by no means the only reality. In fact, Ambrethel's home dimension is but one of uncounted trillions of dimensions, ranging from ones virtually indistinguishable from Ambrethel's to planes so bizarre and strange that they share not a single physical or mystical law with Ambrethel. (For more information on these other planes of existence, see *The Mystic World*.)

The Four Worlds

The arrangement and geometries of the planes are so convoluted — so simultaneously logical and illogical, contradictory and complementary, probable and impossible — that no attempt to map or diagram them (at least by any of the peoples of Ambrethel) is ever likely to succeed. However, a few scholars of the subject, all powerful mystics, have developed a framework for describing the planes that seems to resonate with the minds of the people of Ambrethel. Using a strange language unlike any known in the Turakian Age, these scholars arrange the planes into four categories — the Four Worlds — each “higher” than the last.

At the lowest level is *Assiah*, the Material World. Assiatic planes include Ambrethel, the uncounted number of alternate Ambrethels characters can visit or learn about, and other such planes. In these realms, natural laws control reality; though magic may exist, it does not run Assiatic dimensions or act as one of their true fundamental forces.

Above *Assiah* is *Yetzirah*, the Formative or Astral World. Yetziratic dimensions *do* run by magic; here, symbol, will, and thought can exert as much power as the laws of physics (if not more). A special plane, the Astral Plane, links all the Yetziratic realms, which include: the Land Of Legends (or “Faerie”), wherein faeries, spirits, monsters, and some gods dwell; the Elemental Planes of Air, Earth, Fire, and Water, domains of the elementals and their kin; the Netherworld, home of Mordak and his demons; Elysium, or “Heaven,” where the Blue Gods dwell in the Meru Mountains; and Babylon, the City Of Man, a neverending metropolis of wonder and Art.

Above *Yetzirah* is *Briah*, the Creative or Mental World. A barrier called the Veil of the Temple divides the highest Astral realms from *Briah*; only the most wise and powerful mystics can pass through it to the planes beyond. Brialic realms are totally spiritual — they embody concepts, states of mind, and the like; they are not made of matter as Men understand the term. Powerful cosmic entities, including the four Prime Avatars of Order, Chaos, Art, and Nature, live in many of these planes.

The highest of the Four Worlds is *Atziluth*, the Archetypal World. It lies across the Abyss, a barrier even stronger and deadlier than the Veil. Its planes contain infinite power, the archetypes of all forms and concepts, and much more that most sentient beings have difficulty fully conceiving of.

The Qliphothic World

According to some mystics, lying “behind” or “to the side” of the Four Worlds is a fifth, the *Qliphothic World*, a realm of ancient and horrifying dimensions whose energies have decayed into forms inimical to normal life and existence. The... *beings*... who reside in the Qliphothic dimensions are largely unknowable, and always dangerous, to Men. Even Mordak and his followers oppose and fear them.

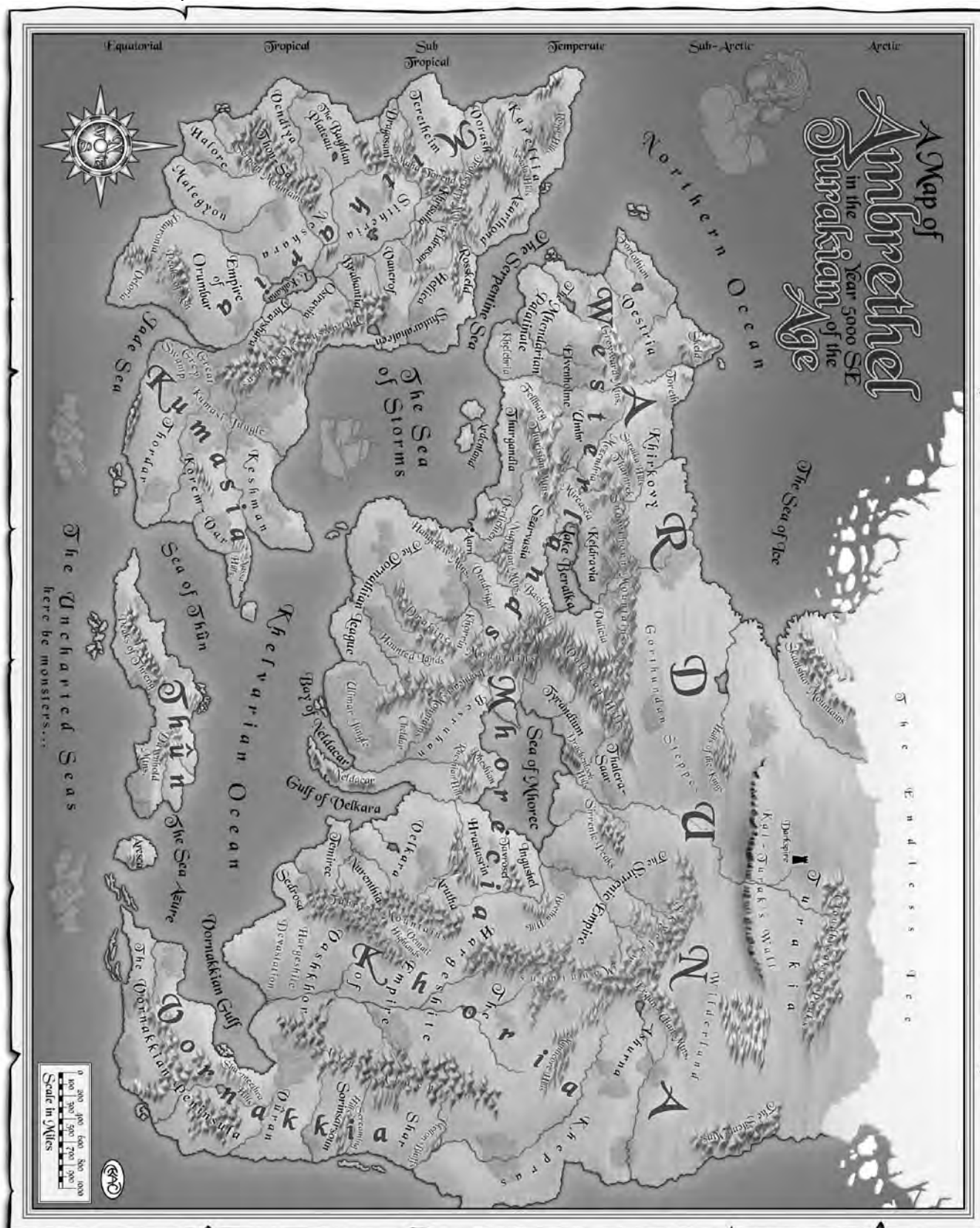
Planar Travel, Planar Peril

Few beings (other than gods) travel the planes with any regularity. Wizards can do it with powerful spells (see sidebar) or enchanted items, but this is dangerous and thus not undertaken lightly. In addition to the threat posed by plane-traveling monsters and other beings (Netherworld demons, Qliphothic horrors, inimical gods, and other beings who can slay the traveler's planar self, and thus his body), sometimes “astral storms” and other phenomena sever the link between a traveler and his native plane, making it virtually impossible for him to find his way home. Even if the traveler reaches his destination plane unharmed, he may find it a dangerous place in and of itself. Some planes are, unlike Ambrethel, ruled by a single god, wizard, or other being of great power... and sometimes great malice.

STELRANE'S SUNDERING OF THE VEIL

The most common planar travel spell used by Ambrethelan mages as of the year 5000 SE is this one, a refinement by the wizard Stelrane of several earlier spells. As with any power involving Extra-Dimensional Movement, the GM should monitor the use of “the Sundering” (as it's most often known) carefully; it's intended to make some types of adventures more feasible and fun, not to let PCs run roughshod over the campaign.

Extra-Dimensional Movement (any location in any dimension) (40 Active Points); OAF (wizard's staff or similar object, chosen by the caster when he buys the spell; -1), Extra Time (5 Minutes; -2), Gestures (throughout; -½), Incantations (throughout; -½), Requires A Wizardry Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1). Total cost: 7 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).



chapter four:



**BENEATH THE LOOMING SHADOW
LIFE IN 5000 SE**

ADVENTURERS & ADVENTURING



In a well-developed Fantasy world, be it Ambrethel or one of your own creation, the player characters are the most important people in the game — but they're not the *only* people.

There's a whole world of men, women, children, Dwarves, dragons, Trolls, and more out there, and most of them have needs, wants, or duties that could bring them into contact with the PCs if the GM so desires. Thus, it's important to know a little about what the world is like, what the "average person" (if there is such a thing) would know (and how he reacts to various situations), so the GM can give the world a proper verisimilitude. Otherwise it may seem like only the things the PCs can actually see at any given time really exist.

First and foremost, both players and GMs should consider how people react to adventurers. Adventurers are a fact of life throughout Ambrethel; they affect the world in many ways, both for good and for ill. Although they come from all walks of life and all regions of the world, and tend to travel a lot, adventurers are not, *per se*, common in Ambrethel. The average person probably sees or meets an adventurer only once or twice in his life, at most (though some people, like innkeepers in large cities, may encounter them frequently).

Most people are a little wary of adventurers, even afraid (though exceptions exist; few right-thinking folk fear paladins or priests). Adventurers are not only strangers, but strangers who tend to be powerful and unpredictable. They often bring trouble with them, or stir up trouble that might otherwise lie quiet. While they can do much good for a community — healing the sick, protecting it from attackers, rooting out and destroying evil cults — they can also kill people (often with impunity) and wreak other forms of havoc. One mis-cast fireball and the entire village may go up in flames! That's why everyday folk often look askance at adventurers, and even take pains to avoid them. While adventurers may find a warm welcome in cities and inns eager for their coin, or in places where some of their fellows once saved the land, in many other villages and towns they may get a cold reception.

As a general rule of thumb, adventurers tend to be less accepted in more settled, civilized, or controlled areas — parts of the Westerlands and northern Mitharia, parts of southern Mhorecia, the Sirrenic Empire — than in less settled or "wilder" areas, or regions where conflict and monster attacks

occur frequently (some parts of Vornakkia or central Mitharia, for instance). Since the "quieter" parts of the world have less need for adventurers (because they experience fewer wars and monster attacks), they're more likely to think about the trouble and destruction powerful adventurers can cause; more tumultuous areas may quickly see the need for some adventurers' help.

In some places, adventurers are outlawed. This applies primarily in Vashkhor, where the empire strictly regulates travel from one place to another, along with the ownership of weapons and the casting of spells. To practice their "trade" in the Hargeshite Empire, adventurers need written permits from the appropriate officials or nobles; without them, they're subject to arrest and confiscation of their goods.

ADVENTURING COMPANIES

While many groups of adventurers are "freelancers" who wander where they will, tracking down leads to long-lost treasure hoards and other opportunities for profit and excitement, not all take such a cavalier approach to their "jobs." Some bands of adventurers, known as "companies," actively seek out the patronage and support of nobles and kings, becoming in effect small, powerful, elite groups of mercenaries. As a way of proclaiming their skills and services, these groups tend to adopt a name and a symbol (perhaps even a coat of arms, if appropriate). The histories in Chapters One and Three mention several such companies; some others active in 5000 SE include: the Company of Vesterheart (a group who all come from the same small village in Vestria); Telbar's Brotherhood (a group of mixed origin who work out of Tavrosel); the New Firelords (a group led by several Fire Mages); Drudaryon's Legion (see *Fantasy Hero*, page 380), the Company of the Silver Hound (whose symbol is a silver hunting dog), and the Company of the Harp and Cup (led by the adventuring bard Dalaine Skytongue).

Assuming adventuring companies conduct themselves with the professionalism their name implies, kings and nobles tend to prefer them to simple bands of adventurers. They perceive the latter as less reliable, more dangerous, often disrespectful, and less likely to get the job done. Every king and noble who hires adventurers has heard stories of adventuring groups who take a patron's mission and money and then steal the item they were hired to recover, or who fail to finish the job and simply disappear.

THE CALENDAR



According to the precise calculations of the astrologers, the year in the world of Ambrethel contains 365.25 days — but different peoples and cultures choose to mark the passing of those days in very different ways.

THE WESTERLANDS CALENDAR

The Westerlands, most of Mhorecia, and northern Mitharia all use the same calendar, devised early in the First Epoch by Runcifer the Arch-Wizard. It has twelve months, each containing 30 days. Every 72 days, or roughly every two and a half months, occurs a High Holy Day mandated by the High Church. These days belong to no month, but instead are given over to religious ceremonies, festivals, feasts, and other celebrations. Every four years, a sixth High Holy Day occurs together with the last normal festival-day at the end of the year — the *Wyretha*, a day of riotous celebration and excess. Some say Ziandwyrrh added the extra quarter of a day to the year just so he could see this manifestation of Chaos every four years.

Each month contains five six-day weeks. From first to last in a week, the days are called Sunday, Moonday, Skyday, Fireday, Starday, and Freeday (the last of these is the “weekend,” when most work ceases).

See the Calendar Table for the month-names used by the Westerlanders and other races.

THE VASHKHORAN CALENDAR

The Hargeshite calendar, used in Vashkhor, Ashurna, Khepras, Shar, Sorinsarsoun, Ingushel, and Hrastarin, depends on the journeys of Selayma through the nighttime sky, and so has 13 months. Due to the irregularities of such a system in comparison with the Westerlands calendar, over decades a given day in the Hargeshite calendar cycles through the course of the Westerlands year. Peoples who use it determine their birthdays by the signs of the zodiac (see below), rather than the specific day of the year.

THE VORNACKIAN CALENDAR

The peoples of the Vornakkian Peninsula and Vûran use an unusual solar calendar created in Eltirian by the priests of the Seven Gods, who for obvious reasons hold the number seven sacred. It features twelve months, each with 30 days and named for its sign in the Vornakkian zodiac. For three years, seven days are added at the end of the year; these constitute a holy period during which almost no work is done and people feast and celebrate. In the fourth year, known as a Year of Sadness, the seven days are not added, and no festival occurs at year's end.

Every month in the Vornakkian calendar has five weeks of six days, each named after a particular animal and associated with good or bad luck: Rat (neutral); Spider (evil omens); Dog (good omens); Cat (neutral); Snake (evil omens); and Hawk (good omens; “warriors are born on the Hawk's day”). Talarshand switches the import of Dog and Snake, making the former a day of misfortune and the latter one of good omens.

THE THÛNESE CALENDAR

The sorcerer-priests of Thûn track the movements of sun, moon, and stars with meticulous care, and keep track of time with two elaborately interlocking calendars. The first is a fairly standard solar calendar, with twelve 30-day months and five days added at the end of every year (or six every fourth year). The second is a religious calendar with five months of 73 days each, each day having its own tutelary spirit and mystic/divine significance. Thus, the two calendars show the same two days every 60 years, marking what the Thûnese call a *Thûgogra*, or “Great Cycle.”

Thûnese temples all contain large, well-equipped observatories with accompanying “calendar rooms.” In these rooms the sorcerer-priests carefully write and maintain the “calendar books,” large codices in which they note the name of the year (both its “given” name, unique to it, and its calendrical name based upon the day showing in the religious calendar on the first day of the solar year). These chronologies date back for thousands of years, creating a historical record of unmatched precision... but one that refers almost entirely to events on Thûn.

THE KUMASIAN CALENDAR

The Kumasian calendar derives from the movements of the sun, but instead of twelve months of 30 days, it has six months of 60 days. The last five days of the year are considered unlucky; people put out their hearth-fires, do no work, and try not to even leave their houses, lest ill luck befall them. Babies born during the five unlucky days are considered cursed, and often exposed in the wilds to die. Each Kumasian week has ten days — seven days of work, followed by three of rest, though many poorer folk cannot often observe the rest-days.

THE INDUSHARAN CALENDAR

The Indusharan sun-calendar has twelve months of 30 days, like most other Ambrethelan calendars — but with no days added. Instead, every fourth year the Indusharans add a thirteenth month of 21 days. This is a holy month, during

CALENDARS OF AMBRETHEL

This table lists the names of the months, by season, for some of the Ambrethelian calendars.

Season	Westerlands	Vashkhoran*	Vornakkian	Drakine	Dwarven	Elven
Winter	Winterfirst	Aralik	Dragon-Month	Vrôsin	Virzeth	Simarabanathi
	Whitefall	Ochak	Vulture-Month		Kondess	Aniraloresthi
	Tightbelt	Thûbac	Noble-Month	Zhareg	Thridmen	Virarathulasha
Spring	Firstthaw	Nisahan	Lion-Month	Arvanat	Forventh	Matsularinali
	Greenpeek	Ebilmec	Table-Month	Ehpana	Firventh	Brilathashel
	Everbloom	Hazrahn	Goose-Month		Sirmoz	Ailomashorelu
Summer	Quickstorm	Temzu	Hydra-Month	Sirpana	Servanth	Shunothatranil
	Highsun	Athusta	Sentinel-Month	Kolvot	Ethrenth	Shuluranatheta
	Wellborn	Eilell	Maiden-Month	Ruzhan	Nimmeth	Ostalaroshenta
Autumn	Harvesting	Arelmec	Dancer-Month		Tennzeth	Setaraluneri
	Appledore	Kâshem	Eagle-Month	Listaran	Levvereth	Toshanajirasha
	Crispleaf	Ekkim	Horse-Month	Tuden	Ellvesh	Nembaratrendala
13th lunar month		Elgell				

*: Due to the irregularities of the Vashkhoran lunar calendar, the months listed frequently do not precisely match the corresponding months listed in other calendars.

which the faithful are supposed to fast, eating only bread and drinking only moderate amounts of wine, to abstain from marital relations, and to read the holy books (or attend readings of them).

THE DRAKINE CALENDAR

According to Drakine lore, Strala-Seh herself gave the Drakine their calendar, which has nine months of 40 days each (divided into five eight-day weeks). Each year begins with five Days of Remembrance, in which the Drakine priests read from the sacred texts and historical records of their people.

THE DWARVEN CALENDAR

The Dwarves have a solar calendar, though they often use elaborate hourglasses or even magical devices to help them keep track of the passage of the sun because of all the time they spend underground. Their calendar has twelve months, seven with 30 days and five with 31. Several attempts to replace the Westerlander system with this relatively simpler calendar have failed due to the objections of the priesthood.

THE ELVEN CALENDAR

The Elves' solar calendar is like that of the Westerlands in many respects, given that it has twelve 30-day months and adds five days throughout the year. But the elves add one day at each equinox and solstice, and one at the end of the year.

THE ORCISH CALENDAR

Most Orcs of Ambrethel use a lunar calendar containing 13 months. They have no systematic way of adding or removing days to keep the calendar accurate; instead, their shamans calculate what needs to be done each year, and act accordingly. The Orcs of Thordar use the Kumasian calendar instead.

THE ZODIAC

The astrologers of all cultures in Ambrethel see in the nighttime sky certain constellations associated with each month of the year, and each of some mystic significance. Among other things, it's thought that a person born under a particular sign of the zodiac takes on the traits associated with that sign. The accompanying table lists the zodiacs of some of the major cultures, using the Westerlands months for reference. Although the names assigned to the signs sometimes differ, the attributes associated with each sign remain the same from culture to culture.

HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS

Sprinkled throughout all of the calendars described above are various holidays, festivals, feast-days, and other occasions when work stops and people celebrate something. During these times most people expect their local lords and rulers, and perhaps the local temples and guilds as well, to spend lavishly and give generously to make the holiday an enjoyable one. Depending on the place and the nature of the festival, this could involve anything from holding large feasts (or giving away food), to the guildmasters riding through the streets and throwing copper coins into the crowd, to the king paying all tavern-keepers in the city to give away all the free beer his subjects can drink.

The number, types, and nature of holidays depend on culture, religion, and location; the festivals held each year in Eltirian may differ wildly from those in Umbr or Halore. But generally speaking, the following holidays tend to occur in most places:

Esaile Days: In places where the High Faith predominates, the Church dedicates certain days to specific *esailles*. On those days, the people attend special worship services devoted to that esaille, and

ZODIACS OF AMBRETHEL

Month	Westerlands	Vashkhor	Vornakkia	Drakine	Dwarves	Elves	Traits
Winterfirst	Serpent	Serpent	Dragon	Weasel	Serpent	Serpent	Lazy, irresponsible, hedonistic
Whitefall	Gargoyle	Thief	Vulture	N/A	Red Dragon	Owl	Sly, cunning, deceitful
Tightbelt	Paladin	Priest	Noble	Warrior	King	Hunter	Kind, just, loyal
Firstthaw	Manticore	Bear	Lion	Panther	Wolf	Wolf	Cruel, brutal, ruthless, predacious
Greenpeek	Shield	King	Feasting-Table	Turtle	Axe	Shield	Brave, stalwart, valiant, bold
Everbloom	Swan	Ship	Goose	N/A	Whale	Swan	Calm, serene, untroubled, graceful
Quickstorm	Dragon	Dragon	Hydra	Manticore	White Dragon	Dragon	Fierce, temperamental, stubborn
Highsun	Wanderer	Philosopher	Sentinel	Merchant	Merchant	Mariner	Curious, likes to travel, wise
Wellborn	Sylph	Elf	Maiden	Fish	Cat	Dove	Flighty, impractical, uncaring
Harvesting	Jester	Laughing Child	Dancer	N/A	Necklace	Minstrel	Happy-go-lucky, fickle, humorous
Appledore	Raven	Eagle	Eagle	Bat	Raven	Eagle	Mysterious, secretive, quiet
Crispleaf	Horse	Horse	Horse	Horse	Anvil	Unicorn	Dependable, responsible, serious
Elgell		Altar					Pious, merciful, perceptive

pray to him for his special aid. If the esaile is the patron of a particular profession or group, those people usually hold a feast, street festival, or other celebration later in the day.

God Days: Similarly, most major gods have a day devoted to them. On these days, the local temple(s) usually offer some sort of special food (often a particular type of cake or pastry) to anyone who asks for it, but sometimes true feasts take place.

Harvest Festival: Virtually every land and culture has a festival in the early autumn to celebrate the end of harvest and help the people prepare to face the coming winter. Lasting up to a week, Harvest Festival usually involves many extravagant feasts, beer-drinking competitions (and various other sports), and general merriment.

Midsummer's Day and Midwinter's Day: These festivals occur on (or near) the summer and winter solstices. They have relatively little religious significance (though Midwinter's Day may involve ceremonies in honor of the sun-god); they're just an excuse to stop work and have fun.

Ruler's birthday: Often both the local ruler and the king will declare a general holiday on their birthdays. The birth of a child to a ruler may occasion a one-time celebration lasting up to a week (particularly if the child is a boy).



FAMILY LIFE



Most adventurers don't think too much about families and family obligations; their lifestyle usually precludes such things. But for most people, family matters are of paramount importance.

BURIAL CUSTOMS

Different peoples and cultures around the world deal with death in different ways. Often this depends upon a person's religion or social status, of course, but in most cases it's easy to generalize by race or region.

Drakine: The Drakine burn corpses to ash on specially-constructed pyres, then scatter the ashes to the wind. A Drakine body not consigned to the fire may return to unlife as an Unburned (page 318).

Dwarves: The Dwarves bury their dead in stone sarcophagi placed in burial chambers or niches dug out of solid rock. They usually put grave-goods in the

sarcophagus as well, including finely-crafted items made by the deceased himself. The wealthier or higher-status the dead Dwarf, the more elaborately decorated his sarcophagus and tomb tend to be.

Due to the wealth which they're so often filled, dwarven tombs often become the targets of tomb-robbers and unscrupulous adventurers. To protect their dead, Dwarves place traps in and around the tomb... and it's not unknown for the ghosts of dead Dwarves to manifest to protect their tombs!

Elves: When an Elf dies, his family or companions usually bury him in an unmarked grave in the forest. The Elves have few ceremonies regarding death; they don't speak eulogies or visit gravesites. They regard death as simply the next stage of an Elf's existence, a crossroads reached during a great spiritual journey.

Indushara: Indusharans deal with their dead in several ways. A prominent or wealthy person (typically a man, but sometimes a dearly-beloved wife) may be interred in an elaborate mausoleum or tomb. But most corpses are either burned, or exposed to the elements so that vultures consume the flesh (the bones are then buried).

Khorian: The Hargeshite faith dictates that bodies be buried. Nobles and wealthy folk are interred in special tombs or mausoleums, often family crypts where the bodies of many of their ancestors also reside. The common folk are placed in a dug hole and then covered over with dirt; sometimes the family erects a small marker to commemorate the deceased. Vast necropoli, perhaps containing the bones of millennia of people, exist near most major Khorian cities.

Kumasian: Kumasian burial customs are similar to those of Indushara, but they never burn their dead.

Mhorecia: The northern Mhorecian peoples tend to follow Westerlander burial traditions (see below). In southern Mhorecia, particularly Besruhan and Velkara, the custom is to bind the body tightly in a fetal position with special cords. The bound body, along with grave goods appropriate to its station and profession, is placed in a large pottery burial urn, which the dead person's family buries in the ground (or possibly a tomb of some sort). The southern Mhorecians believe these measures minimize or eliminate the risk of a person coming back to unlife or being subjected to Necromancy.

Mitharia: Northern Mitharia is as the Westerlands (see below); Orumbar follows the Drakine custom; and Indushara has its own traditions (see above).



Thûn: In Thûn, all corpses are given to the sorcerer-priests for disposal. What the priests do with them, no one knows.

Vornakkia: Most Vornakkians bury their dead. The bodies of the wealthy are elaborately decorated with *crômym* (“death-paints,” used to write special symbols on the body, or decorate parts of it with special colors), dressed in their finest robes, and interred in crypts or tombs with many grave-goods. Traps and guardians are often installed to protect the deceased from tomb-robbers. The bodies of ordinary folk are dressed in special ochre-colored burial robes and placed in simple graves with whatever goods their families can spare.

However, some parts of Vornakkia follow other customs. In Shar, the dead are given to ghouls (see page 107). Devyldra and Kurum-Sathiri replace the death-paints with elaborate mummification procedures performed by specially-trained priests.

The Westerlands: In the Westerlands (including northern Mitharia and northern Mhorecia), people bury their dead. Nobles and the wealthy often have elaborate tombs protected with traps to deter graverobbers, while the common folk have simple dug graves. Some cities, such as Londregos and Velkathy-Tashan, have extensive networks of crypts and burial-niches beneath the streets.

Barbarian tribes: Most barbarian tribes bury or expose their dead. The Gorthunda burn most dead on pyres of dried grass and dung if they can; only the greatest chieftains and war-leaders are interred at the Halls of the Kings. The Peltaru place their dead under cairns of stones wearing only their boots or sandals. The Keskari bury their dead, marking the grave with carved wooden grave-poles one to three feet high; the more prominent the deceased, the more elaborate the pole.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Marriage customs and family responsibilities vary from region to region and culture to culture. However, in most places, four truths hold. First, commoners and lower-class folk can marry for love (or other personal reasons), whereas nobles (and to some extent the wealthy as well) usually enter into arranged marriages for political, social, or economic reasons. It's not uncommon for a king to give one of his daughters in marriage to a prince of another realm with whom he hopes to forge a political alliance or trading agreement; and a wealthy merchant who wants to improve his social standing may work long and hard to find just the right match for his children.

Second, marriage usually requires family approval (assuming the bride and groom both have family, of course). The concept of marrying against one's family's will, or “running away to get married,” is virtually unheard of, and may lead to the newlyweds being shunned (at least for a time). It's expected that if a bride's or groom's family disapproves of a match, no wedding will take place.

Third, the more prominent the couple (or their families), the more elaborate the marriage ceremony. Wealthy or upper-class folk usually have ceremonies held in temples, with high-ranking priests presiding and many trappings. The marriage may even lead to a celebration in which the families pay for all the locals to eat and drink in honor of the new couple. On the other hand, among the commoners and peasantry, a simple exchange of vows in front of the village priest, or folk customs such as jumping over a broom together or drinking from the “wedding cup,” may suffice.

Fourth, in most lands and cultures, “marriageable” age tends to be 14 to 16 years for women and 16 to 20 for men, but of course a wide variety of circumstances can change this. For example, a noblewoman or princess may be betrothed to her future husband while they're both still infants, and a protective or indulgent father may give into a young girl's wish to put her marriage off until she's older. In many cases, a family may simply prefer to wait; not every girl has to be married by the time she turns 16.

Beyond those generalizations, customs vary significantly. In the Westerlands and northern Mitharia, neither party pays a bride-price, but it's traditional for the bride and groom to exchange gifts. With wealthy or noble couples, those gifts can become quite extravagant (up to and including entire duchies or kingdoms, in some instances). In Mhorecia and northern Vornakkia, the husband's family is expected to pay the bride's family a bride-price commensurate with her social standing, beauty, and other qualities; in Khorla, Kumasias, Indushara, and some Vornakkian city-states, the bride's family pays the husband's family a bride-price based on the husband's prominence.

The Drakine have elaborate marriage customs. Marriages tend to be arranged (even among the lower classes), with special courtship rituals lasting several months before the ceremony takes place. The couple may not consummate their marriage until the husband (not his family) provides the bride's family with a gift specified during courtship.

Dwarven marriages often seem to be trading compacts as much as anything else. Both families, as well as the bride and groom, exchange gifts many times throughout the courtship and ceremony; it's often expected that the Dwarf giving a gift will have made it with his own hands. Parents arrange most marriages, usually with an eye toward establishing or cementing an alliance of some sort between the two families.

The Elves have no formal marriage ceremony. Two Elves who wish to solemnize their union simply visit a priest, who speaks a three-word blessing. Gifts of jewelry often pass between the bride and groom. Orcs, Goblins, and their ilk likewise have no formal marriage customs (save in Thoradar, where the Orcs follow Kumasian practices).

CHILDREN

In all lands and among all cultures, it's expected that women will raise and educate the children they have. Among nobles and the wealthy,



women may have the help of legions of servants and instructors, but ultimately the responsibility for child-rearing falls to the wife; most men have little to do with their children.

The average Ambrethelan has little or no formal education and is not literate; he learns what he can from his family (mainly his mother) as he grows. But the children of wealthy or noble families receive extensive education, learning subjects ranging from history and philosophy to mathematics and rhetoric. More than a few aged adventurers have found careers as teachers.

WOMEN IN SOCIETY

In most parts of the world, women tend to be regarded as second-class citizens. They usually have legal rights of some sort, but often less than those of men, and their social prominence and influence is almost always less. Kingdoms ruled by queens (such as Tyrandium) may be an exception to this rule.

In the Westerlands, northern Mitharia, parts of Vornakkia (Eltirian, Shar, Zhor Cacimar), and among the Drakine and Dwarves, women enjoy most legal protections, and can pursue most professions as opportunity allows. They can own property, run businesses, and in some cases initiate divorce proceedings. The laws in Kumasia, most of central Mitharia, some parts of Vornakkia (Devyltra, Kurum-Sathiri, Halathaloom, Sorinsarsoun), and most of Mhorecia are the same, except regarding divorce (which only men can invoke). However, in Tyrandium and the Sirrenic Empire, and among the Elves, women have the same status as men in all legal respects.

In Khorla, Thùn, Indushara, Vûran, and Talarshand, women are essentially regarded as property. Daughters belong to their fathers until marriage, and thereafter to their husbands. A woman generally cannot own anything other than personal property (including jewelry, a potential loophole through which some women control great wealth), and has virtually no legal rights. A woman cannot travel without the accompaniment of a man (usually a relative); female travelers from other lands must have a man (not necessarily a native man) vouch for them and accompany them at all times. Women cannot pursue most professions, and in particular cannot become warriors or soldiers. Women who defy the laws or customs usually find themselves scorned and shunned (at best), whipped, or even stoned to death.

Of course, in many cases the laws relax somewhat for women of power — priestesses, the daughters of nobility, wizardesses, and the like. Even in Vashkhor, such women enjoy a little leeway... but not much. Female adventurers from other lands who journey to Khorla, Indushara, Vûran, or Talarshand may find the culture harsh and oppressive. Similarly, the laws tend to be less strictly observed in large cities with extensive populations of outlanders or significant foreign contact.

In campaigns that take place exclusively or primarily in Khorla, Thùn, Indushara, Vûran, or Talarshand, female characters should take the Social Limitation *Woman* (Very Frequently, Minor; 15 points).

SOCIAL LIFE



Beyond the bounds of family, most people have to live within a society that, through customs or laws, dictates how they relate to and interact with other people.

GOVERNMENT

The style of government and types of laws vary from kingdom to kingdom, as discussed in Chapter Three, but as with the nature of marriage, some generalizations apply.

Most realms of Ambrethel, particularly those of the Westerlands, Mhorecia, and northern and central Mitharia, use some form of the feudal system (see *Fantasy Hero*, pages 320-21). This establishes a clear hierarchy in society... at least on paper. In some realms, the nobles have more power or influence than the king; in others, the king is an absolute ruler who all too frequently ignores his feudal obligations to his vassals. Chapter Three notes some of the differences from realm to realm, and page 201 has a table of noble titles used in Ambrethel.

But not all lands rely on feudalism. Absolute monarchy, oligarchies, theocracies, and magocracies, to name a few, all exist in Ambrethel; the realms of Vornakkia, city-states of the Tornathian League, and parts of Mitharia in particular are known for their unusual forms of rule.

LAWS

In most kingdoms, the laws are fairly straightforward. Acts of violence and theft — murder, robbery, forgery, and the like — are forbidden, with penalties ranging from fines, to corporal punishment, to death. Most serious crimes merit execution, though the courts may have some leeway.

In rural areas, the local noble typically has the power to enforce the law, and hears petitions from subjects who wish to accuse others of crimes, violations of contracts, and the like. This same system may hold true in smaller, less populated kingdoms, where the king hears all serious cases himself and dispenses judgment. In the cities, and throughout some realms, a court system may exist with appointed judges who make rulings in the ruler's name. Many such court systems are notoriously corrupt; a person's ability to obtain "justice" usually depends on the depth of his pockets or his personal influence.

Some realms — particularly Vashkhor, the Sirennic Empire, Thûn, Korem-Var, Vûran, most Vornakkian city-states, and Sitheria — are known for their more restrictive laws. In Vashkhor, an extensive system of laws regulates almost every-

thing; for example, most people need written passes to travel from one city to another. In Vûran, each of the Seven Sorcerers establishes and harshly enforces his own laws, some of which defy comprehension (Scorumar, for example, only allows people to use candles made of certain colors of wax). The other realms aren't quite that strict, but compared to the Westerlands or southern Mhorecia, adventurers may feel stifled and constantly under the surveillance of guards.

In (quasi-)theocratic realms, such as Vashkhor and Talarshand, the law forbids "heresy." This usually includes the worship of other gods or the practice of other faiths, failure to follow the dictates of the prevailing faith, and casting Theurgy spells or divine magic spells from other religions.

MAGIC IN SOCIETY

Ambrethel is a world of magic. Powerful wizards and gods-gifted priests live in every land, monsters stalk the forests and fly through the skies, and sometimes the very earth itself has arcane properties! That being said, magic is *not* so common that everyone (or even a significant percentage of people) can cast spells, or that wizards live on every street. Everyone has heard of magic and knows it exists. Most people encounter magic at least a few times in their lives, and some deal with it every day. But the average person rarely (if ever) has a spell cast on him, and in many cases tends to look on magic as something that's as unpredictable and dangerous as it is helpful (much like the adventurers who so often wield it). Magic does tend to be more common in some places — in cities, close to temples or wizards' towers, near locations of great mystic power, in the houses and domains of nobles — than others.

Many powerful spellcasters live in Ambrethel, but they don't go around casting spells whenever and wherever they like. Someone who hurts himself or gets sick can't just visit the local priest, get cured quickly and easily, and go about his business. A person who has to travel from one city to another won't have much luck if he asks a wizard to cast a teleportation spell on him (not unless he's prepared to pay a high fee for the service). A hungry beggar can't simply ask a spellcaster to conjure up a loaf of bread for him; even if he finds a spellcaster who can create bread, it's unlikely the caster would do so simply out of the goodness of his heart.

The reasons for this are many. First, magic powers aren't uniform throughout the spellcasting population; not every priest has healing magic,

MAGIC AND THE TURAKIAN AMBIENCE

There's a fourth reason why magic spells aren't routinely used to solve every little problem in Ambrethel — it would ruin the “feel” of the setting. The Turakian Age is a High Fantasy setting, of that there's no doubt, but not so High that everyone can cast spells, or has access to spells. Magic is not intended to take the place of technology in all ways, places, and times. Sometimes it does, but usually it doesn't: farmers get their crops to market with wagons and horses instead of flight spells; soldiers wield ordinary weapons and armor instead of battle-magic; people who get sick use traditional medicine and folk remedies, not healing potions. That maintains the appropriate feel for Ambrethel, one most gamers can identify with and enjoy.

or the power to create food. Common folk tend to think any wizard can do anything magical, but that's very much not the case.

Second, as some wizards are fond of saying, “power is power.” Having the knowledge and ability to cast spells confers power and influence on a person, and if he uses that power so frequently or casually that others come to *expect* him to use it on their behalf, he diminishes or loses it. By carefully choosing when and how to use his powers, a spellcaster can maximize the personal benefits of having them. Even many priests, who have a certain obligation to serve their congregations, won't cast a spell just because someone asks it of them.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, spellcasters don't want other people to become dependent on them. Whether their perspective on this issue is selfish or altruistic, they recognize that it won't help anyone to make people dependent on magical powers. If people rely only on priests for healing and curing magics and forget how to prepare herbal remedies and set bones, what happens when there's no priest available to heal them? If traders become dependent on teleportation or levitation spells, disaster could result if those magics stop working for some reason. If an army uses so many battle-wizards that its commander stops training the soldiers, the army may lose a crucial battle if the wizards can't fight for some reason. Rather than have people become dependent on them, which would be a tremendous personal burden in addition to a catastrophe waiting to happen, they refrain from using spells when a “mundane” solution is acceptable or preferable.

There are, of course, exceptions. Many paladins (and like-minded priests) feel obligated to use their powers to help anyone in need, and Laerinite priests often spend countless hours offering healing-spells to anyone who desires one. Kings may call on spellcasters to use their powers to stem famine or plague, quell monster invasions, and the like. Wizards for hire will cast just about any spell a customer asks for, if he can pay the price. Overall, the world is a far better place because spellcasters can use magic to help people — but it could all too quickly become a far worse place if they don't exercise discretion.

MILITARY LIFE

Every realm in Ambrethel maintains some kind of military. As indicated in the summaries in Chapter Three, you can divide militaries into:

- light cavalry (lightly-armored and armed horsemen, including horse archers and most horse nomads)
- heavy cavalry (heavily-armored and armed horsemen, including knights)
- light infantry (lightly armored and armed foot-soldiers, including archers, some spearmen, and, in times of war, peasant levies)
- heavy infantry (heavily-armored and armed foot-soldiers, including, *e.g.*, unmounted knights and most Dwarves)
- navy (ships and sailors)
- magical and “other” units (battle-wizards, war golems, flying cavalry, war elephants, enchanted siege engines, battle-trained monsters, and the like)

The largest group in most militaries is light infantry, since they're the quickest and easiest to recruit, train, and equip. Nomadic cultures (such as the Gorthunda) emphasize light cavalry (which gives them great mobility); magocracies may emphasize magical units, which tends to provide a lot of raw power, but often at the expense of numbers or tactical flexibility.

SIZE OF ARMIES

Each summary in Chapter Three distributes a realm's military among these categories by percentages. But it does not give raw numbers of troops, since that may unnecessarily hinder the GM's plans for a particular scenario or situation. Generally speaking, in most parts of Ambrethel an army of 20,000 soldiers would be considered “large,” while one of only a thousand would be thought “small” — though of course the final judgment may depend on the type of soldiers involved, since a thousand knights or a thousand war trolls are usually worth more than a thousand light footsoldiers. Ten thousand soldiers (of mixed types) would be about an “average” size army for an “average” kingdom.

TYPES OF MILITARIES

The nature of Ambrethelan militaries — how they're recruited, trained, supported, and used — varies from realm to realm. In kingdoms with a feudal systems, such as most realms of the Westerlands and northern Mitharia, most nobles must provide a certain number of men at arms (of specified type) when called upon to do so by their liege lord. The king himself maintains a “standing army” of permanent soldiery, but this body is rarely large enough to fight a war; its duties including guarding the king and his family, and fighting against recalcitrant or rebellious nobles. Most kings would prefer to have larger standing armies, but lack the revenue; standing armies cost a lot to maintain.

In realms without a feudal system, the nature of the army varies. In “absolutist” realms such as Vashkhor or the Sirrenic Empire, the ruler often maintains the entire army himself, taxing the nobles and people as needed to acquire the necessary funds. If money is short (as it so often is!), the ruler may have to manipulate his sources of revenue to obtain more money, while simultaneously delaying payment to the soldiers as long as possible without sparking a revolt. In oligarchies, a feudal-type system may apply, with each oligarch responsible for providing part of the army.

Realms at war, or in need of soldiers for some other reason, have two other sources for them. The first is mercenaries. In a world often wracked by battle and invasion, companies of professional soldiers may be the perfect (albeit expensive!) short-term solution for a kingdom... though mercenaries are not always trustworthy. (See page 189 for more information.) The second is peasant levies — a general calling-up and arming of all males of a certain age (typically 15 and older). Peasant soldiers are usually poorly armed, and have little (if any) armor; they’re simply “cannon fodder,” intended to do what harm they can and soak up attacks that would otherwise fell more valuable warriors. To make the peasant levies more effective, many kings institute laws requiring all males above a certain age to own a weapon and practice with it weekly.

In regions considered dangerous — where monster or bandit attacks may occur — the villagers and townsmen often form into *militias* (either as dictated by law, or as they deem necessary for their own defense). Each militiaman (again, most males over 14) must own and maintain a weapon and train on a weekly or monthly basis with other militiamen. Of course, rulers who don’t trust their subjects, fear rebellion, or want to maintain tighter control over the populace don’t allow militias, commoner ownership of or training with weapons, or anything else of the sort.

SLAVERY

Slavery exists throughout much of Ambrethel. Prisoners captured in war, persons sold into slavery to pay debts, and hapless victims kidnapped by slavers and sold in markets halfway around the world all spend their lives toiling for someone else without pay or reward.

Slavery is legal throughout most of Mhorecia, including the Sirrenic Empire, but slaves enjoy certain legal protections. They have the right to buy their freedom for a price specified by law, and may marry and own property. The law generally forbids severe abuse of slaves (such as lengthy whippings). The same applies in the Drakine Realms, Orumbar, Neshara, and Sitheria. Indushara is similar, but does not extend quite so many legal rights to slaves.

Slavery is legal in Thûn, Khorla, and most of Vornakkia, and for the most part slaves enjoy no rights whatsoever; they’re considered property, pure and simple, to be treated as the owner sees fit. Eltirian is an exception; not only does it outlaw



slavery, but the First Perpetual Law grants freedom to any slave brought within the city’s walls.

It is illegal to buy or sell slaves in the Westerlands and northern Mhorecia. A person who brings in a slave from another place may keep it, but having slaves is frowned upon by most Westerlanders.

Because slaves are considered property, if a slave suffers injury or death, the person who hurt or killed him must recompense the owner. The compensation is usually a fraction of the price paid for the slave, based on how much of the slave’s value has been impaired.

SLAVE MARKETS

Where the law allows slavery, markets for buying and selling slaves usually exist. The largest and busiest of these are in Marasa and Talarshand, but many others supply the demand for slaves.

Slaves typically come from three sources. The most common are people who have sold themselves

TURAKIAN CURRENCY TABLE

Realm Or Land	Copper	Silver	Gold	Realm Or Land	Copper	Silver	Gold
Aarn	Farthing	Penny	Noble	Sedrosa	Obol	Obol	Obol
Arutha	Sparrow	Hawk	Falcon	Seldrion	Keleg	Gehret	Tahterel
Ashurna	Hamdar	Hamrid	Hamashar	Shar	Wheel	Wheel	Wheel
Azarthond	Piece	Piece	Piece	Sirrenic Empire	Soldai	Urbai	Cathbai
Baghlan Plateau	B	B	B	Sitheria	Piece	Piece	Piece
Barbarian tribes	B	B	B	Sorinsarsoun	Star	Moon	Sun
Basidrun	Keleg	Gehret	Tahterel	Szarvasia	Zhisen	Vasam	Aruhaz
Besruhan	Denarius	Denarius	Denarius	Talarshand	Lizard	Serpent	Crocodile
Brabantia	Bezant	Bezant	Bezant	Tavrosel	Piece	Piece	Piece
Devyltra	Shaksa	Parini	Nandi	Temirec	Ducat	Ducat	Ducat
Dragosani	Mark	Mark	Mark	Teretheim	Mark	Mark	Mark
Dwarven kingdoms	Piece	Piece	Piece	Thalera-Saar	Piece	Piece	Piece
Eldrasan	Florin	Florin	Florin	Thamnrek	Piece	Piece	Piece
Eltirian	Penny	Talent	Rilk	Thon-Sa	Talbu	Talbu	Talbu
Elven kingdoms	B	B	B	Thordar	Piece	Piece	Piece
Halathaloom	Star	Moon	Sun	Thrayshara	Piece	Moon	Sun
Halore	Ta	Rük	Ilasa	Thün	Shelgh	Yrith	Sra'nagh
Heltica	Piece	Noble	Royal	Thurgandia	Penny	Wheel	Dolar
Hrastarin	Nomisma	Nomisma	Nomisma	Tornathian League	Damarch	Damarch	Damarch
Ingushel	Piece	Piece	Piece	Turakia	MC	MC	MC
Karellia	Piece	Piece	Piece	Tyrantium	Piece	Piece	Piece
Keldravia	Star	Star	Star	Umbr	Piece	Noble	Royal
Keshman	Trina	Thrima	Geshtar	Valicia	Throne	Throne	Throne
Khepras	Hamdar	Hamrid	Hamashar	Vanerof	Piece	Piece	Piece
Khirkovy	Oak	Oak	Oak	Vashkhor	Hamdar	Hamrid	Hamashar
Khorrin	Keleg	Gehret	Tahterel	Velkara	Piece	Piece	Piece
Khrisulia	Florin	Florin	Florin	Vendiya	Ta	Rük	Ilasa
Korem-Var	Trina	Thrima	Geshtar	Vendrigal	Keleg	Gehret	Tahterel
Kurum-Sathiri	Talent	Talent	Talent	Vestria	Penny	Noble	Royal
Malegyon	Ta	Rük	Ilasa	Vorash	MC	MC	MC
Mezendria	Denier	Denier	Denier	Vüran	Piece	Piece	Piece
Mhendarian Palatinate	Penny	Wheel	Dolar	Wilderland	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mircasëa	Denier	Denier	Denier	Zhor Cacimar	Hammer	Hammer	Hammer
Neshara	Piece	Piece	Piece				
Nurenthia	Obol	Obol	Obol				
Orumbar	Kelgeh	Ga'ret	Tehtar				
Ostravia	Mark	Mark	Mark				
Rosskeld	Piece	Noble	Royal				

B: Barter economy

MC: Multiple coinages (no coins are minted; people use whatever they have on hand from other realms, adjusting for comparative value as necessary)

CURRENCY

The accompanying table lists the names of the currency — copper, silver, and gold coins — used in Ambrethel. For the sake of convenience and easy game play, it's assumed that any one coin of a given type is equal in value to all other coins of that type.

Many realms require visitors to use the realm's own coin to make purchases. In this case, visitors must avail themselves of the services of a moneychanger. Most moneychangers charge a fee of about ten percent (10%) of the money they change.

Unless indicated otherwise, the value of coins and the average costs of key goods are as indicated on page 143 of *Fantasy Hero*.

into slavery to pay off a debt (or children sold into slavery by their parents for the same reason). Many slave-buyers prefer such slaves, regarding them as less troublesome and easier to train. Second, prisoners taken in war — be they fighting men or innocents captured by invaders — often end up as slaves. Third, some slavers have no compunction about kidnapping innocent people and transporting them to far-away slave markets to sell before their friends and relatives can find them. Slave-taking tends to be most common in southern Mhorecia and Vornakkia, but occurs in many other places.

See the Equipment List, page 203, for average prices for slaves.

TECHNOLOGY

For the most part, the realms of Ambrethel use medieval-era technology. They ride horses, transport goods over land in carts drawn by draft animals, live in houses made of clay brick, stone, and/or wood with slate or wooden shingles, can make and forge both iron and steel, and grow, raise, or hunt most of their own food. At night, they light their way with torches, lanterns, and candles.

As so often happens, the technological “cutting edge” involves military technology — weapons and armor. Ambrethelans can (and often do) make plate armor, though chainmail and scale armors are much more common among professional warriors. Siege engines up to and including trebuchets can be

created by those with the resources to do so.

Generally speaking, magic does not alter the level of, or overcome the need for, technology, but it does have some effect. For example, a few smiths learn minor Fire and Earth magics to make their work easier, and a war-wizard might use a Thaumaturgy spell to assemble and operate a catapult. A trader eager to get his goods to market before the competition might hire a wizard to teleport him to his destination. A generous wizard might cast spells of perpetual light on all the streetcorners in a small area, providing illumination without the need for fire.

TRADE

Trade is the lifeblood of many a city and realm throughout Ambrethel. The flow of goods — mainly

“luxury” goods or unique items such as craftwork, special liquors, spices, gems and jewelry, artwork, and the like — fills coffers and provides people with things they need (or just want).

Some of the most important trading powers in the world include Aarn, Keshman, Tavrosel, the Tornathian League, Heltica, and the city-states of the Vornakkian Peninsula, but every city and town has its market, and every realm its centers of trade. The most important trade routes or networks include: the Beralka-Shaanda-Mhorec waterway that links the Westerlands and Mhorecia; Lake Kalkana and the rivers feeding into it; the Khelvarian Ocean (many traders make a “round” of the main coastal cities over the course of a trading season); and the Sea of Storms (Ardunan cities on the Sea often trade with their Mitharian counterparts).

The main “trading season” in most places runs from late Firstthaw or early Greenpeek until about mid-Harvesting, but it all depends on the weather. Heavy spring rains may delay traders’ ability to start their year; early snows may end it prematurely. The summer, when the roads are dry and firm, is the height of the season. In the wintertime, only the most desperate or foolhardy traders, or those with some sort of magical assistance, continue to travel... but the arrival in a winter-locked town of a trader with goods to sell can be cause for celebration (and much spending!) by the townsfolk.

chapter five:



WIZARD, WARRIOR, PRIEST, THIEF
TURAKIAN AGE
CHARACTER CREATION

TURAKIAN CHARACTERS



Creating a character for a game set in Ambrethel is basically a four-step process.

First, you have to find out from the GM how many Character Points you can build characters on — how many Base Points you get, plus the maximum number of points you can obtain by taking Disadvantages. Most Turakian campaigns feature starting characters built on a maximum of 150 Character Points — 75 Base Points, plus up to 75 points from Disadvantages. (The GM can read about other options on page 276.)

Second, choose a race for your character. Many characters will be Men (*i.e.*, human), but the world of Ambrethel contains many races that are appropriate for PCs: Dwarves, Drakine, Elves, Orcs, and more. You can read about them, and find the Package Deals for each of them, in Chapter Two. A character who chooses a race other than Men must buy the appropriate Racial Package Deal. If appropriate, and if permitted by the GM, you could also buy one of the Cultural, Environmental, or Ancestry Package Deals from pages 45-53 of *Fantasy Hero* to further customize your character.

Second, choose a profession for your character. Unless the GM permits otherwise, you should buy one of the Professional Package Deals in *Fantasy Hero* or this book to represent the Skills and other abilities your character knows because of his profession.

Third, spend the rest of your Character Points. Your Racial and Professional Package Deals probably won't cost all of your points, so you can use the remainder to improve your character's existing abilities, buy new abilities, and otherwise make him distinctive and interesting. This includes selecting Disadvantages for the character.

Four, round out the character by selecting equipment for him, writing down some notes about his background and personality, and so forth. Now, you're all set to adventure in the world of Ambrethel!

CAMPAIGN GROUND RULES

Campaigns set in Ambrethel should use Normal Characteristic Maxima. However, to prevent confusion, the costs of Package Deal Characteristics in Chapter Two do not reflect this; if necessary, characters may need to spend a few more points on a particular Characteristic to bring it up to the appropriate level.

Turakian campaigns do not use Knockback, only Knockdown. Therefore, the Racial Package Deals in Chapter Two do not include any Knockback Resistance. If a character does suffer Knockback from a spell or the like, the GM should grant larger characters (Trolls, Leomachi, and the like) however much Knockback Resistance seems appropriate for their size and form.



PROFESSIONAL PACKAGE DEALS



This section contains a variety of Professional Package Deals and related character creation tools for Turakian Age campaigns. For the most part, you can use the Professional Package Deals from pages 54-78 of *Fantasy Hero* as-is; if they don't require any change, those Package Deals aren't reprinted here. These Package Deals are either unique to the world of Ambrethel, or involve making some change to a Package Deal from *Fantasy Hero* so that it better fits this particular setting.

PRIEST PACKAGE DEALS

The Package Deals and information in this section are for priest characters. See also Chapter Six, which covers the subject of Ambrethelan religions in general.

Priest Package Deal

This is the basic Package Deal for a priest in Ambrethel, be he a Westerlands churchman, a fanatical Hargeshite priest, or a cleric to one of the Seven Gods of Eltirian. As detailed below, some priests belong to special orders or organizations that modify this Package Deal.

This Package Deal assumes a priest who's capable of adventuring and similar activities. For a more sheltered or peaceful priest, use the *Contemplative Priest Package Deal* from *Fantasy Hero*.

Priestly Orders And Specializations

Here are some examples of ways to specialize and individualize the Priest Package Deals to represent priests who offer special devotion to certain gods, join special religious orders, and the like. The names and terms used are from the Westerlands, but for the most part you can assume that other regions and religions have corresponding organizations.

The "Package Deals" in this section are not independent. A character can only buy one after buying the Priest Package Deal.

THE DRUIDS

Druids are High Church priests who offer their special devotion and worship to Almandré, god of nature, and to a lesser extent other gods of natural phenomena (Bandaro, Eurinda, Korthund, Sirella, and so forth). Over their normal vestments

PRIEST PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
12	Turn Undead (see <i>Fantasy Hero</i> , page 107-08)
30	30 points' worth of spells and magical powers
10	+5 EGO
5	Faith (EGO +1)
2	KS: Religious Doctrine 11-
2	KS: of main enemy or the like 11-
1	Literacy
3	Oratory
2	PS: Priest Of [Religion] 11-
2	WF: Common Melee Weapons
3	Fringe Benefit: Religious Rank
1	Fringe Benefit: Right To Marry
6	6 points' worth of Skills and Perks from the following list: Combat Skill Levels, Conversation, Deduction, Healing, High Society, Interrogation, Persuasion, Riding, Stealth, Tactics, Weapon Familiarity, Fringe Benefit: Military Rank, any Background Skill

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 79

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
25	Psychological Limitation: Devotion To The Gods And Their Purposes (Very Common, Total)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 25

Suggested Equipment

Weapons: Sword, mace, battle axe, spear, and/or lance, or any weapon sacred to/used by the character's god

Armor: Medium to heavy armors, such as chainmail

Gear: Holy talisman, copy of the *Benethar Sacur* and/or other sacred text(s), horse

Clothing: Field clothes, everyday robes, ritual vestments

of blue they wear surcoats of a color appropriate to the season: light green in springtime; forest green in summer; orange, yellow, and red in autumn; and white in winter. Their holy talismans have a green border.

In exchange for offering special adoration to Almandré, and performing secret rites and rituals on his holy days, a Druid gains certain powers of nature. He develops an instinctive bond with animals, and Almandré himself often gives the Druid an animal companion. Through special study, he learns how to survive in the wilds, and of the animals and plants that dwell there, and their uses.

In addition to standard divine magic spells, Druids may buy Druidry spells (see *The Fantasy*

OTHER PRIEST PACKAGE DEALS

In addition to the Priest Package Deals described here, characters can also buy these Package Deals from *Fantasy Hero*:

Contemplative Priest (pages 55-56)
Shaman (page 59)

PRIESTS OF RENOWN

As of 5000 SE, some of the most renowned or intriguing priests in Ambrethel include:

Taal Lanoth: A monk at Gwinden Abbey, Taal Lanoth has achieved much fame for the beauty of his illuminated manuscripts. Able to produce completed books at an astonishing rate for someone who doesn't use magic, T. Lanoth has earned much money for the abbey through the sale of his beautiful books.

Robat Mehrdad: As clever and crafty as he is pious, R. Mehrdad is a high-ranking priest serving at the great temple of Ebistan Derende... except that he doesn't seem to spend much time there. A crusading cleric of the first water, he spends weeks and months in Vashkhor and abroad, seeking out monsters, striking them down, and bringing their treasure back for the greater glory of the Hargeshite church. He has also spent a considerable amount of time

Continued on next page

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in the West, studying the ways of the High Church and proselytizing.

Taal Segova: T. Segova, the daughter of a noble family of Szarvasia, has achieved great fame for finding, exposing, and destroying an insidious Vabanakian cult in Aarn. Unwilling to rest on her laurels, she plans to continue her adventuring career with her comrades, the Company of the Silver Star.

DRUID PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
6	Animal Handler (6 points' worth)
5	KS: Flora And Fauna Of [choose environment or region] (INT +2)
2	KS: Herbalism And Healing-Lore 11-
2	Survival (choose environment) (INT Roll)
2	Fringe Benefit: Membership: the Druids

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +17

Options	
Cost	Ability
15	Animal Friend: Add one Follower of 75 Base Points (an appropriate animal of the druid's choice)
-15	Psychological Limitation: Will Not Harm Wild Animals Or Natural Areas (Common, Strong)

Hero Grimoire, pages 38-62) by substituting a Faith roll for the Druidry roll those spells normally require.

Druidism is mostly an order of the Westerlands and northern Mitharia. Sometimes adventurers encounter Druids in the jungles of the south or similar places, but that's unusual.

THE FISTS OF THE SKYFATHER

Known in some villages as "witch-hunters," priests who are Fists of the Skyfather have special powers that help them find, dispel, and destroy evil

FIST OF THE SKYFATHER PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
+6	6 additional points' worth of divine magic (spells must be offensive in nature, such as those on pages 249-53 of The Fantasy Hero Grimoire)
+4	+20 PRE for Turn Undead
10	Holy Sight: Detect Evil Magics (INT Roll) (no Sense Group), Discriminatory
4	The Skyfather's Protection: Power Defense (5 points); Only Protects Against Limited Type Of Attack (Necromancy, Witchcraft, Black Magic, and other evil magics and related powers; -¼)
2	Fringe Benefit: Membership: the Fist of the Skyfather

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +26

Options	
Cost	Ability
-5	Distinctive Features: red spot on holy talisman (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)
-15	Psychological Limitation: Hatred/Suspicious Of Arcane Spellcasters (Common, Strong)
-15	Psychological Limitation: Will Not Harm Wild Animals Or Natural Areas (Common, Strong)

magics and spellcasters — primarily Necromancy (and the undead), Witchcraft, and Black Magic. They seek out foul sorceries and those who cast them, often with a fanatic's zeal, and bring the full strength of their holy powers to bear against them.

As a symbol of their special calling, the Fists have a spot of red at the center of their holy talismans — an inlaid ruby or garnet if a Fist can afford that, a bit of enamel or paint if not.

THE HOLY ORDER OF THE WATCHFUL FATHERS

Comprised mainly of older priests, almost all of them male, the Watchful Fathers is a group devoted to preventing doctrinal corruption, loss of faith, and the rise of heretical beliefs. Often working closely with the Anvilites, the Watchful Fathers earn their name by keeping a close eye on temples throughout the Westerlands, alert for any sign of deviation from the one true faith. When they find corruption, the Watchful Fathers don't hesitate to expose it by reporting it to every high-ranking priest they can. On a few occasions, overzealous Fathers have taken matters into their own hands when their superiors "refused to do anything about this abomination" — a course of action that rarely ends well.

The Watchful Fathers have no particular special abilities; they're defined by their outlook and their holy works, not their powers.

WATCHFUL FATHER PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
2	Fringe Benefit: Membership: the Holy Order of the Watchful Fathers

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +2

THE JISELLITES

Formally known as the Daughters of the Earthwife, the priestesses of this order are more commonly called the Jisellites after the name of their founder, Jiselle of Ytheis. They vow to help the poor and downtrodden wherever they may,

JISELLITE PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
2	Fringe Benefit: Membership: the Jisellites

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +2

Disadvantages	
Value	Disadvantage
-15	Psychological Limitation: Must Help The Poor And Downtrodden (Common, Strong)

Total Value Of Additional Disadvantages: -15

however they may. They often establish havens in the great cities, where they provide food to any who need it, and schooling to those who want it.

THE LAERINITES

Members of the Order of Es. Laerin, the Laerinites strive to follow in the footsteps of their founder, Laerin of Mezendria, who lived in the early Second Epoch and was esailed by Bonifact Valdrik. Laerinites especially revere Hospin, god of healing, and in exchange the god grants them special healing powers. In exchange, they must vow never to deny healing to a anyone who asks it of them, if it is in their power to give it.

To symbolize their membership in the Order, Laerinites have a white saltire cross on their holy talismans. They often incorporate the white saltire cross into their vestments as well.

LAERINITE PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
10	<i>The Touch Of The Divine Healer</i> : Simplified Healing 3d6 (30 Active Points); Others Only (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), 4 Charges (-1)
2	Fringe Benefit: Membership: the Laerinites

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +12

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Features: white saltire cross of the Order (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)
20	Psychological Limitation: Must Provide Healing To Those Who Request It (Common, Total)

Total Value Of Additional Disadvantages: 25

THE OPHELITE BROTHERHOOD

Also called the Sunlords, the members of this order are priests with a strong devotion to Ophel, god of the sun. Ophel's power fills them, making them powerful warriors for the causes of Light and Truth. They're renowned as monster-hunters and adventurers, but have done just as much good, if not more, fighting on behalf of kings with righteous causes.

Ophelite priests wield special *sun-axes* in battle. These are bardiche-like weapons with distinctive blades (see page 204). They often wear heavy armor; if not for their holy talisman — which is golden rather than the usual blue, and always worn prominently ("in Ophel's holy light") — it would be easy to mistake them for warriors.

Unsurprisingly, the Ophelites have strong ties to the Sisterhood of Saléa. Members of the two groups often adventure together, and marriage between an Ophelite priest and a Saléan sister is not unknown.

OPHELITE BROTHERHOOD PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
+20	<i>Ophel's Gift</i> : 20 points' worth of additional divine magic (must be spent on Ophel-specific spells, such as Radiant Bolt on page 252)
2	Fringe Benefit: Membership: the Ophelite Brotherhood

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +22

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Features: golden holy talisman (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)

Total Value Of Additional Disadvantages: 5

THE SERVANTS OF THE MOST HIGH (THE ANVILITES)

This organization's formal name — the Servants of the Most High — does little to hint at its true purpose. To the world it shows a face of beneficent piety, focusing on teaching and missionary work in the lands beyond northwestern Arduna (mainly southern Mitharia and Vornakkia). Its priests build many new temples, start many new congregations, and carry the words of the *Benethar Sacur* into the dark and lonely places of Ambrethel.

But all these good works merely mask the Servants' true reason for existing: to destroy the "heretical Hargeshite foulness and all who follow it." Founded in 3656 SE by the priest Andross with the backing of several devout nobles from Szarvasia and other realms, the organization takes its common name from one of his pronouncements: that the Servants would "be the anvil upon which the hammer of the True Word will smash all who deny that Word."

In addition to their priestly powers, Anvilite priests learn many abilities of spying and sneaking, which they use to infiltrate Vashkhor and other Hargeshite realms to foment religious unrest (and even insurrection). The Master of the Anvilites, Alarch Larenath, sits in the order's castle near Dabasa receiving reports from all around the world and conducting a shadow war with the Lord of Spiders. But he knows the gods are on his side, and he has no doubt one day the True Word will reveal to the Hargeshite apostates their folly.

The Anvilites carry no outward symbol of their membership in the order, lest they reveal themselves to their enemies, but they can confirm their identity with a small magical working known only to them (this does not cost points; it's done with the *Faith Skill*). In their strongholds they use a black anvil underneath a golden hammer as their symbol.

Naturally, some elements of the Hargeshite priesthood feel the same about the "unbelievers" of the West. They long ago formed a similar organization, called the *Hadarashim*, to ensure that their faith wins out over that of the Westerlands.

THE SHADOW-PRIESTS OF KHEM

Special religious orders are not restricted to the Blue Gods! Gods both Scarlet and Grey have their own cults and special groups of worshippers. One such is the Shadow-Priests of Khem.

Khem, so it is said, was long ago an island off the coast of Mhorecia, but the gods caused it to sink beneath the waves because of the great evils committed by the people who lived there. But before it sank, the evil priest Elion founded there the Shadow-Priests, a cult devoted to the worship of Mordak as the god of darkness. The cult survived the sinking of the island somehow, and has remained in the world, lurking, waiting for any chance to work its wickedness or promote the worship of the Black God.

The Shadow-Priest Package Deal includes 12 Character Points with which members can buy spells of the arcana of Shadow Magic (*The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*, pages 111-16) as divine magic, substituting Faith for Shadow Magic as the required Skill and making other changes as necessary and appropriate.

ANVILITE PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
3	Acting (PRE Roll)
3	Disguise (INT Roll)
3	Forgery (INT Roll)
3	Mimicry (INT Roll)
3	Stealth (DEX Roll)
3	Streetwise (PRE Roll)
2	Fringe Benefit: Membership: the Anvilites
Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +20	

THE THUNDER-ARCHERS

The Thunder-Archers is a group of priests who feel a special devotion to Hornbrek, god of storms, archery, and war. While they can't fire thunderbolts from their bows the way the Stormlord can, they practice archery in emulation of him, becoming some of the most expert bowmen in the world. Nobles throughout the Westerlands hire the Thunder-Archers to train their sons to shoot... and to fight on their behalf.

THUNDER-ARCHER PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
+20	<i>Hornbrek's Gift</i> : 20 points' worth of additional divine magic (must be spent on Hornbrek-specific spells, such as Hornbrek's Thunder-Arrow on page 252)
6	+3 OCV with one type of bow (character's choice when he purchases Package Deal)
8	+4 versus Range with Bows
2	WF: Common Missile Weapons
Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +36	
Options	
Cost	Ability
7	<i>Expert Archer</i> : Deadly Blow (RKA +1d6 with Bows)

THE VALAKAR

Respected and feared throughout the Westerlands and Mhorecia, the Valakar are a group of battle-priests who especially revere Asvalak, god of war. Also known as the Warrior-Priests of Asvalak, they train in the arts of war and go to battle on their god's behalf... or sometimes just for the sheer joy of combat, since fighting is, to them, an act of worship.

Like Asvalak himself, the Valakar carry axes — battle axes or great axes, depending on individual preference. Many carry hand axes for throwing as well, while others prefer bows, crossbows, or javelins as ranged weapons.

Most people distrust Valakar priests, since they're temperamental, easily offended, and prone to settling differences with violence. But no one denies that they're welcome allies on the battlefield.

VALAKAR PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
3	+3 STR
8	+1 with All Combat
4	+2 OCV with Axes
10	Buy Martial Maneuvers for the character's weapon of choice
2	WF: Common Missile Weapons
2	Fringe Benefit: Membership: the Valkar
Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +29	
Disadvantages	
Value	Disadvantage
10	Psychological Limitation: Love Of Fighting And Battle (Common, Moderate)
Total Value Of Additional Disadvantages: 10	
Options	
Cost	Ability
16	<i>Asvalak's Touch</i> : Berserk Fury (see <i>Fantasy Hero</i> , page 104)
7	<i>Asvalak's Blessing</i> : Deadly Blow (RKA +1d6 with Axes)

ROGUE PACKAGE DEALS

The Rogue Package Deals on pages 60-64 of *Fantasy Hero* are all appropriate for Turakian Age campaigns. Here are ways to customize some of them for Ambrethel.

Guild Thieves

One of the most common types of rogue in the Turakian Age setting is the thief — the burglars, cutpurses, pickpockets, and filchers who infest the cities of Ambrethel. In small cities, it tends to be every thief for himself, with two or more thieves sometimes forming a small gang to pull off a big job or muscle out the competition temporarily.

In the larger cities — Aarn, Tavrosel, Odellia, Parvaasa, Dyvnar, Marasa, and the various Tornathian and Vornakkian city-states, among others — things often work differently. In search of greater profits, influence, and power, thieves come together to form a *Thieves' Guild*. In exchange for a share (usually 10%, but sometimes 15-20%) of the earnings from every theft or scam a thief commits, the Guild offers its members many useful benefits.

First and foremost among these is protection. The Guild establishes (or tries to establish) a monopoly over criminal activity in the city (or some part of the city). Any thief who wants to practice his "trade" there has to belong to the Guild. Otherwise, the Guild sends "enforcers" to "discourage" him (possibly fatally)... or, at the very least, requires a non-member to cough up half (or more) of his earnings from crime.

Beyond that, a Guild can often use its wealth and secret influence to protect its members from the City Guard and other authorities. Through carefully-placed bribes, and perhaps a little blackmail, the Guild corrupts city officials so its members can commit their crimes in peace. The City Guard still pursues thieves, and arrests one caught committing a crime red-handed, but when possible it ignores trivial crimes as part of its deal with the Guild. Additionally, these informal "allies" often devote most of their efforts to catching non-Guild thieves.

Second, most Guilds offer their members a variety of services. A Guild acts as a "clearinghouse" for jobs, ensuring that rich targets are assigned to the thieves most capable of attacking them... and that Guild members don't steal too much or too often (which could cause a backlash among the citizenry that the City Guard can't ignore). When a thief returns to the Guild with stolen goods, the Guild can fence (or otherwise dispose of) them for maximum profit. Some of the larger Guilds have vast "trade networks" for stolen goods, allowing them to transport their ill-gotten booty to other cities quickly and efficiently. And if a thief needs something to get a job done — maps, special tools, the services of some mercenaries (or adventurers!) to ensure things go smoothly — the Guild can provide them (usually for a small fee, or a slightly larger cut of the earnings).

Some large cities even have *multiple* Thieves' Guilds. In that case, each Guild typically has its own "territory," and maneuvers against (or fights with) the others to increase the size of that territory. The "shadow politics" in such a city can be just as complex, exciting, and dangerous as the politics of any king's court.

Most Guilds have a *Guild Hall* somewhere within the city or territory they control. Depending on the Guild's size, wealth, and influence, a Guild Hall can range from an old warehouse where the members congregate occasionally to a secret palace well-guarded by sentinels, traps, and magic.

Thieves' Guilds often tend to be oddly egalitarian places. Guild leaders and members care primarily about a thief's skills and competence, so someone who otherwise has little or no place in society — a Goblin or Half-Orc, for example — could become a respected, high-ranking Guild member, if he has the talent.

In most campaigns, rogue characters won't be Guild thieves; PC rogues tend to travel too much, and be too kind-hearted, to make membership in a Thieves' Guild practical. But if a PC does want to belong to a Guild, he should buy the accompanying Package Deal. The Perk assumes the character is a relatively low-ranking Guild member; the player can, with the GM's permission, increase the value of the Perk to create a more powerful thief.

GUILD THIEF PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
+2	<i>Guild Contacts</i> : +1 to Streetwise
+2	<i>Guild Training</i> : +1 to any one Rogue Package Deal Skill
2	<i>Guild Member</i> : Fringe Benefit: Membership: Guild Thief (Senior Apprentice)

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +6

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
20	Hunted: City Guard or rival Guild (player's choice) 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture/Kill)

Total Value Of Additional Disadvantages: 20

Options

Cost	Ability
5	<i>Guild Mentor</i> : Contact: high-ranking Guild member 11- (very useful Skills/resources, significant Contacts of his own)
var	<i>Higher-Ranking Guild Member</i> : Increase value of Membership Fringe Benefit

RENOWNED THIEVES' GUILDS

Some of the best-known and most powerful Thieves' Guilds in Ambrethel include:

The Brotherhood Of Shadow: Of the several Guilds in Aarn, most people consider the Brotherhood of Shadow the most powerful. Led by a skilled thief known only as Lord Ebon, the Shadow-Brothers

ROGUES OF RENOWN

As of 5000 SE, some of the most renowned or intriguing rogues in Ambrethel include:

Oltorni the Lizard: Perhaps the most skilled burglar in Tavrosel, Oltorni earned his nickname due to his phenomenal ability to scale sheer walls. He has a nasty streak of overconfidence, though, and assumes his wits and skill can carry him through any difficulties... an attitude some of his comrades think will one day be the death of him.

R'tanth the Rat: So called because his face has a disturbingly rat-like appearance, R'tanth walks warily and well-armed — he carries a profusion of daggers on his belt, bracers, boots, up his sleeves, and just about anywhere else he can hide one. He wields them with skill, and throws them with great speed and accuracy. In addition to thieving, he owns a tavern in Aarn called the Rat's Nest (page 58).

Red-Edge: Of all the Silver Branch assassins of Talarshand, Red-Edge's name inspires the greatest fear. The merest whisper that he's taken a job has been enough to convince powerful nobles and wealthy merchants to stop whatever they were doing to earn his employer's enmity. And he does not come cheap; rumor has it the fees he commands would be a king's ransom in the Westerlands... but he never fails to get the job done.

Whistleword: A bard of great skill and reputation, Whistleword spent

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much of his early life accompanying the famed Sir Vanduzin, the Knight of Whimsy, on his various adventures and escapades. They parted company shortly before Sir Vanduzin entered the Enchanted Forest of Danaflor and never returned. Whistleword, who still loves to accompany adventurers, is said to be composing an epic song about Sir Vanduzin's life.

Yragi of the Seven Daggers: Master Thief of the Silver Guild, one of the thieves' guilds of Londregos, Yragi takes his nickname from the seven daggers, said to be enchanted, which he always carries. Renowned for his patience and ability to size up a job until it becomes perfectly "ripe," he's brought the Silver Guild more riches than it's ever seen before.

seem to control a territory that includes parts of the River District, Merchant's District, and Noble's District... which means it takes some rich prizes from time to time.

The Mask: So-called because its leaders and members wear masks (the more elaborate, the higher the thief's rank) within the confines of the Guild Hall, the Mask controls crime in part of Tavrosel. As of 5000 SE, it's losing ground to other Guilds in the city, since internal conflicts between several members of the Mask's ruling council have weakened it.

The Night Falcons: In Tatha Gorel, all who wish to make a living through thievery must belong to the Night Falcons, on penalty of death. Many a "freelancer" who thought he could evade the Falcons has been found, hanging by a noose and with his hands cut off, in the morning light. The Five, the thieves who rule the Falcons with iron harshness, include members with wizardly powers and other skills in addition to their talent as thieves.

The Silent Ones: In Marasa, the capital of Vashkhor, the Captain of the Guard boasts that no thieves can survive in his city for long. A more accurate statement would be that none can survive for long unless they belong to the Silent Ones, a powerful Thieves' Guild that avoids the Guard through stealth, subterfuge, and bribery. Renowned among thieves for its generous terms — it requires only a 5% tithe of earnings — the Silent Ones has withstood five attempts to supplant it in the past century and a half.

MOUNTEBANK

As described on page 60 of *Fantasy Hero*, mountebanks are rogues who rely on wits, guile, and charm to accomplish their criminal ends. In Ambrethel, they usually rely on magic as well, learning spellcasting (almost always Sorcery) and become arcane tricksters of great cleverness.

MOUNTEBANK PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
13	Sorcery Skill (INT Roll +5)
20	20 points' worth of Sorcery spells (see <i>The Fantasy Hero Grimoire</i> , pages 167-77)

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +33

Options	
Cost	Ability
+6	<i>Deft Trickster:</i> +2 with Gambling, Sleight Of Hand, and Stealth
+6	<i>Master Of Disguise:</i> +2 with Acting, Disguise, and Mimicry

TOMB-ROBBER

As mentioned on page 168, some rogues specialize in breaking into and robbing tombs (often in partnership with necromancers). You can create such a rogue by buying this Package Deal in addition to the standard Rogue Package Deal. Tomb-robbers often go on to illustrious careers as adventurers, since the skills they develop breaking into crypts and tombs often serve them well when dungeon-delving.

TOMB-ROBBER PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
3	Concealment
2	KS: Burial Customs 11-
2	KS: The Undead 11-
3	Lockpicking
3	Security Systems

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +13

Assassins

Assassination is an ancient, and sometimes honored, profession in Ambrethel. Nobles often prefer to settle their differences with their rivals through poison or a stealthy knife in the back instead of diplomacy, and more than one battle has tipped in favor of the underdog when an assassin slew the enemy general the night before warriors took the field.

In most places, assassins work independently, performing their missions with (at most) one or two hand-picked, carefully-trained assistants. But in a few large cities, assassins join together in small guilds so they can establish dominance in (or total control over) the marketplace and pool their resources. (To create a guild assassin, buy the Guild Thief Package Deal with appropriate changes.)

Some of the most infamous groups of assassins in Ambrethel as of 5000 SE include:

The Assassin-Priests of Shadowhall: Based in Shadowhall, a secret temple somewhere in Dar Enroqe (capital of Mircasëa), the Assassin-Priests are just that: priests who are also assassins. Offering their special reverence to Ingrais, goddess of assassins, they use the power of their divine magic, combined with their training in the arts of killing, to dispose of their victims. They work for hire, or sometimes in obedience to the mysterious dictates of the Lady of the Unavoidable Blade.

To create an assassin-priest character, a player must buy *both* the Priest Package Deal above and the Assassin Package Deal from *Fantasy Hero*. To them he adds a 2-point Fringe Benefit (Membership in the Assassin-Priests).

The Scorpion Lords of Tarklesh: This group of Thûnese assassins gets its name from the fact that

it often uses poison and/or venomous animals to commit its killings. Tarklesh is infamous for its many venomous animals — assassin bugs, blood scorpions, the black teardrop spider, the emerald darter snake, and more — and between them and venomous animals from many other parts of the world, a Scorpion Lord controls a veritable menagerie of death. Some say the *Th'naah* (king) of Thûn himself secretly leads the Scorpion Lords.

SCORPION LORD PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
0	Must take PS: Brew Poison as an Assassin Package Deal Skill
8	Animal Handler (Venomous Vermin) (PRE Roll +3)
2	Life Support (Immunity: Ambrethelan Zootoxins)

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +10

Options

Cost	Ability
var	More Immunities

The Silver Branch of Talarshand: Considered by many the most deadly assassins in the world, the members of the Silver Branch (so called because of their distinctive multi-pronged poisoned daggers) are masters of many weapons and other techniques of death. In addition to their daggers, their killing-tools include *unore* (fingernails painted with a poison that hardens the nails so they can cut flesh, then dissolves into the bloodstream) and the *cimro* (a fine chain garrote, made of Cacimarian steel, easily disguised as jewelry or a tool). They wear a chainmail of fine mesh, much lighter and quieter than normal chain (this costs two times as much as regular chainmail, provides DEF 4, and only imposes the same penalties [if any] as cuir-boulli).

SILVER BRANCH ASSASSIN PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
0	Must take PS: Brew Poison as an Assassin Package Deal Skill
2	WF: Silver Branch Dagger, Garrote
24	<i>Unore</i> : RKA 1d6, NND (defense is appropriate Life Support [Immunity]; +1), Does BODY (+1), Trigger (touching victim's bare skin with intent to poison him; +¼) (49 Active Points); IAF Fragile (poison dissolves if exposed to water; -¾), 10 Charges (-¼)
10	<i>Silver Branch Accuracy</i> : Deadly Blow (+1d6 KA with all Ranged weapons)

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +36

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
0	Distinctive Features: <i>Unore</i> (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable; Not Distinctive In Talarshand)

Total Value Of Additional Disadvantages: 0

The Red Daggers: A skilled group of assassins based in Aarn. Less a guild and more like a band of highly-specialized mercenaries, the Red Daggers boast they can kill any victim, no matter how well-protected; some of them have developed a reputation for being able to kill powerful mages and priests.

Bards

Bards and storytellers are honored throughout Ambrethel; they not only entertain, they carry news from place to place and help to teach children about history. In most situations, a bard — even a poorly-skilled one — can easily obtain shelter and food in exchange for playing and singing. (In some cases, he may be able to earn a few coins this way as well.) To represent this, add to the Bard Package Deal (*Fantasy Hero*, pages 62-63) a Fringe Benefit, *Bard*. This costs 1 Character Point.

WARRIORS OF RENOWN

As of 5000 SE, some of the most renowned or intriguing warriors in Ambrethel include:

Sir Gazimar: A knight of the Mhendarian Palatinate who several years ago journeyed East on a quest to slay the dragon Zaazondrûn of the Silent Mountains. He has never returned, but neither has Zaazondrûn been seen in the northern Khorian lands he so often used to ravage; many people believe they slew each other in battle.

Selberd Giantslayer: A Dwarf of Azarthond, Selberd has developed a reputation for slaying giants, as his praise-name indicates. It's said all the giant-folk of the Trollscarp and the Maha Torend fear him, and that the very sight of his shining axe Trollbiter makes them howl with terror. Possessed of a dark and morbid sense of humor, he wears a belt made of leather crafted from the hide of the first giant he ever slew.

Thalaria Tovingrison: A descendant of Tovingr the Bright, famed paladin of the First Epoch, Thalaria seems determined to earn a name for herself as glorious as that of her forefather. Together with her comrades she has achieved such notable deeds as destroying a marauding band of giants in Keldravia, descending into the depths of the Sea Azure to beard the Shar-thak in their very cities, and slaying the evil wizard Varakes (though not permanently, to her regret). She belongs to the Golden Basilisk order of paladins.

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WARRIOR PACKAGE DEALS

The Warrior Package Deals on pages 64-73 of *Fantasy Hero* are all appropriate for Turakian Age campaigns (except for Martial Artist; see sidebar). Here are ways to customize some of them for Ambrethel.

Barbarians

Several different tribes of barbarian peoples inhabit parts of Ambrethel (and of course, the Barbarian Package Deal on page 67 of *Fantasy Hero* could easily apply to many Orcs and the like). Here are descriptions of the major tribes; the Ambrethel Barbarians table lists the changes or additions you should make to the Barbarian Package Deal for each.

The Baghlani

The peoples of the Baghlan Plateau of west-central Mitharia, collectively known as the Baghlani, are a welter of different tribes. They share a more-or-less common culture, one element of which is struggles between various tribes to control the mysterious sacred monoliths that dot the Plateau (see pages 138-39). The Baghlani are excellent riders and horse-breeders, nearly the equal of the Gorthunda in some cases. They fight from horseback with bows, spears, and tulwar-like swords.

The Gorthunda

The most numerous and mightiest of the barbarian peoples of Ambrethel, the Gorthunda are a nomadic folk who live on the Gorthundan Steppes. Compared to Westerlanders and Mhorecians, they're fairly short, broad-shouldered, and slightly sallow-skinned; they have dark hair (usually grown long by both genders and tied back) and eyes.

The Gorthunda live partly by herding sheep, and partly by hunting the vast herds of *pawari* (an elk-like animal) that roam the steppelands. At times a great chieftain assembles a confederation of tribes and raids the Westerlands or northern Mhorecia. Most years they're content to trade with other folk at Greatwater or Waymeet, their only two permanent camps.

The Gorthunda are considered the greatest horsemen in the world. Virtually from birth, they spend their days in the saddle, until walking almost feels unnatural. Riding their sturdy, shaggy-haired



horses, the Gorthunda can cross the steppes with astonishing speed — one of the reasons for the success of their raiding-parties. They fight from the saddle with short composite bows, the *yahgahn* (a distinctive single-edged scimitar-like sword with an inward-curving tip), and spears.

Throughout the more civilized parts of western and central Arduna, the Gorthunda are widely considered rapacious and deadly. They descend from the Steppes like lightning, pillaging and raiding wherever they choose, then retreat when confronted with enemy forces too great for them

GORTHUNDAN WOLF-LORD PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
8	<i>The Wolf-Bond:</i> Animal Handler (Canines) (PRE Roll +3)
30	<i>Wolf-Lord's Pack:</i> Followers (eight wolves)
5	<i>Wolf's Eyes:</i> Nightvision
6	<i>Wolf's Senses:</i> +2 PER with all Sense Groups but Sight Group
4	<i>Wolf-Speed:</i> Running +2"

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +53

Options

Cost	Ability
var	<i>Larger Pack:</i> More Followers

AMBRETHEL BARBARIANS

Name	Homeland	Changes To Barbarian Package Deal
Baghlan	Baghlan Plateau	Add Riding (DEX Roll); for Survival choose Temperate/Subtropical (+3 Character Points)
Gorthunda	Gorthundan Steppes	Add Riding (DEX Roll +2); for Survival choose Arctic/Subarctic (+7 Character Points)
Hlastroi	Snowthorn Mountains	For Survival choose Temperate/Subtropical (+0 Character Points)
Keskari	Nevala Hills	Add +1 OCV with Bows; choose Stealth as a Package Deal Skill; for Survival choose Temperate/Subtropical (+2 Character Points)
Peltaru	Peltaruland	Choose Climbing as a Package Deal Skill; for Survival choose Mountains (+0 Character Points)
Trusca	Snowthorn Mountains	For Survival choose Mountains (+0 Character Points)
Ulg-hroi	Eastern Gorthundan Steppes	Add Riding (DEX Roll); for Survival choose Arctic/Subarctic (+3 Character Points)
Ventati	Ventati Highlands	Add Climbing (DEX Roll); for Survival choose Mountains (+3 Character Points)

to handle. Unbeknownst to many people, the Gorthunda have a rich culture, complete with an extensive oral literature and lavish tomb-paintings. They esteem bards and like folk highly, often taking them prisoner rather than slaughtering them.

Gorthundan Wolf-Lords: As strange and violent as the Gorthunda sometimes seem, stranger and more dangerous still are the Gorthundan wolf-lords. The Gorthundan Steppes are known for a species of wolf, the steppe wolf, that's larger and stronger than typical wolves (+2 STR, +1 CON, +1 BODY). A few Gorthunda, taller, thinner, and paler than normal for their people, develop an instinctive bond with these wolves. Known as wolf-lords (or, more rarely, -ladies), they attract a pack of wolves as their companions and can run as fast as they can. Their hair and eyes turn wolf-grey. Even among the Gorthunda, wolf-lords are feared and respected for their fighting prowess and eerie powers.

The Hlastroi

The Hlastroi live in the lower slopes and hills of the southern central Snowthorn Mountains, and in the Keldravian Greatwoods. A few bands of them hunt further west, sometimes coming into conflict with the Trusca.

Once considered almost animalistic by the Keldravians and Valicians, the Hlastroi have in recent centuries increased their contact with "civilized" peoples. They often come to cities like Irontooth to trade furs and other goods for the products of civilization. Hlastroi families sometimes spend the winter working as servants for lowland families, only to return to their familiar hills when the weather warms. Some Hlastroi elders lament the "corruption" all this contact brings, but it seems unlikely to stop.

The Hlastroi are slightly shorter than Westerlanders, but have similar skin and dark hair. They wear garments stitched from leather they tan themselves (sometimes supplemented, these days, by cloth traded for in towns), and when fighting wear leather armors and use short swords, daggers, clubs, staffs, slings, and bows. Those who choose the life of an adventurer make fine warriors, rogues, and rangers.

The Keskari

The Keskari live in the Nevala Hills of Karel-lia, and in the broad valley the Hills surround. They were once much more numerous, and lived throughout much of southern Karellia, but over time the Karellians have fought them and pushed them back until all they have left are the hills. But they know the hills so well that not even the mightiest army could dislodge them, short of slaughter.

The Keskari keep to themselves. They have no desire to meet or trade with any other peoples, and are as likely to kill a stranger as talk to him. Many of them are expert archers, firing arrows made of ash from powerful longbows. They're also known for their woodcraft; the Karellians claim a Keskari can sneak up behind a man in the wood and slit his throat without his hearing a thing.

Most Keskari live in extended families, with the entire family occupying different parts of one large wooden house and hunting and farming in the lands around it. As the family expands, it builds onto the house, such that many Keskari dwellings are both large and bizarre-looking to the eyes of Westerlanders used to greater symmetry. Carvings of the family's god (page 216) adorn the house). In a few places several families have build their houses close together, creating what amount to tiny villages. Sometimes a Keskari, in search of more solitude or land, leaves his family and takes his wife and children to build a new house somewhere else.

The Keskari have pale skin like Westerlanders, and brown or blonde hair. The men keep their hair short, but almost always grow beards; the women wear theirs long, leaving it unbound until marriage and then tying it up in elaborate coils that symbolize status and prestige. They wear clothes sewn from furs or leathers, or garb taken from slain Karellians if they can get it.

The Peltaru

Far to the north, hard upon Wilderland and under the eaves of the Ergun-Ulan Mountains, is Peltaruland, home of the Peltaru. A cold and unforgiving land nominally ruled by Ashurna, it breeds a hard people who live by hunting, fishing, and herding a hardy type of goat. Some Peltaru families also farm in the summer, but lacking any draft animals

Continued from last page

Vilkun Hawkblade: A Mhorecian ranger, Vilkun has traveled the length and breadth of central Arduna, even into the lands of the Ulg-hroi and the depths of the Ulimar Jungle. Some bards claim he has undertaken secret missions into Vashkhor for the Sirrenic Empire as well, though he brags of no such deeds. His praise-name comes from the matched longsword and dagger he carries, which have hawk-headed pommels.

GORTHUNDAN HORSES

Gorthundan horses are distinctive for their shaggy coats, strong appearances, and sometimes fierce tempers. The Gorthunda rarely trade or sell them, but sometimes gift one to a non-Gorthunda as a sign of great favor or respect.

Gorthundan horses are equivalent to Medium Warhorses (*The HERO System Bestiary*, page 170), but with Running 12".

can only cultivate as much ground as they can clear on their own.

Since they have no horses or experience of riding, the Peltaru walk everywhere. The peoples of northeastern Arduna often talk of “walking as far as a Peltaru,” meaning a long, long way. Living in mountainous country as they do, the Peltaru are also skilled climbers.

Among the Peltaru, both men and women fight, and sometimes older children, too — which is one reason the Ashurnans have never truly conquered or ruled them. Axes and spears are favored weapons; armor (other than hides) is rare, though wooden shields are common.

The Trusca

Occupying the western end of the Snowthorn Mountains, the Trusca are considered a cruel and unforgiving people by Westerlanders. They raid lowlands settlements, attack trading caravans coming through the Western Pass, and commit rapine, murder, and burning with abandon. Some folk claim the Trusca have interbred with Orcs and Goblins for years, and that one of their most powerful chieftains is a half-orc.

The Trusca are a people of many different tribes, each named after its totem or guardian spirit — the Burning Moon, the Strong Pine, the Soaring Eagle, the Crooked Rock, the Black Bear, and so on. Once every three years all the tribes come together for a great meeting and feast, the Garmave. There the Council of Shamans recites the laws, chieftains make (or break) alliances, marriages are arranged, and much trading is done.

The Ulg-hroi

In the far western part of the Gorthundan Steppes, along the banks of the mighty Evling River and often within sight of Kal-Turak's Wall, live the tribes of the Ulg-hroi. Ancient enemies of the Gorthunda, they are so wicked and destructive they make the Gorthunda and Trusca look friendly. They worship Mordak in his aspect as Lord of the Devils, and their shamans possess powerful devil-summoning and -controlling magics. They can place a devil inside someone, so that the possessed person becomes much stronger and harder to hurt, or they can invoke a devil in physical form to fight on their behalf. The Ulg-hroi themselves are not numerous, but with the power of their shamans to aid them they can stand up to the Gorthunda or any other foe.

The Ulg-hroi dress in furs and crude leather garb, and sometimes clothing taken from the victims of raids. They wear jewelry they make of bone, or finer things they've stolen. When they bother to wash, it can be seen that their skin has a sort of ruddy tone, darker than a Westerlander's but not so dark as a Khorian's. Their hair is usually blonde or brown, sometimes red; black hair they regard as a sign of favor from Mordak.

ULG-HROI SPELLS

ULG-HROI DEVIL POSSESSION

Effect:	Aid STR, DEX, CON, and PD 3d6
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Casting Time:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Touch
Magic Roll Penalty:	-9
END Cost:	9

Description: With this spell, an Ulg-hroi shaman conjures a devil in incorporeal form and has it possess someone, making that person stronger, faster, and harder to hurt.

Game Information: Aid STR, DEX, CON, and PD 3d6, any four Characteristics at once (+1), Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Hour; +1) (90 Active Points); OAF Expendable (fetish made of bone and woven chimeli-grass, Very Difficult to obtain; -1½), Costs Endurance (-½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires An Ulg-hroi Shamanism Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 20 points (final cost to caster: 7 points).

ULG-HROI DEVIL INVOCATION

Effect:	Summon one demon built on 600 Character Points or less
Target/Area Affected:	One demon
Casting Time:	1 Turn
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	No Range
Magic Roll Penalty:	-9
END Cost:	18

Description: Ulg-hroi shamans can also summon devils to Ambrethel to fight for them or perform other tasks.

Game Information: Summon one demon built on 600 Character Points or less, Expanded Class (demons; +½) (180 Active Points); OAF Expendable (fetish made of bone and woven chimeli-grass, Very Difficult to obtain; -1½), Concentration (0 DCV throughout; -1), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Gestures (throughout; -½), Incantations (throughout; -½), Requires An Ulg-hroi Shamanism Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 30 points (final cost to caster: 10 points).

The Ventati

In south-central Vashkhor, one arm of the Tabriz Mountains reaches out north and east, creating a highland region. Since the beginning of recorded history, a large tribe of barbarians, the Ventati, have lived there.

Among themselves the Ventati are honorable, kind, and proud, but they consider all other peoples as beneath them. They bear a dark and burning hatred for the Vashkhorans and all followers of the

Hargeshite creed due to the years of oppression they have suffered at the hands of the Hargeshite Empire. Usually they kill Vashkhorans on sight, but may capture them alive to torture them for information before slaying them by disembowelment.

The Ventati live in extended family groups in small villages with huts made of wattle-and-daub or, occasionally, stone. Poorer Ventati may live in caves. They survive partly by cultivating crops, partly by hunting, and partly by fishing in the rich streams that tumble down from the heights of the Tabriz. Their culture includes an elaborate art of tattooing and rock-painting — whenever a Ventati accomplishes something for his tribe, his shaman gives him another tattoo. Most tattoos depict the individual's own totem-animal in some aspect, but others may draw on the prevailing zodiac sign, for the Ventati shamans have an elaborate astrology.

When the Ventati fight — which is often, both among themselves and against the Vashkhorans — they wear scale, leather, and hide armors (or captured metal armors, if they can). They use both spears and swords as weapons, having long ago learned how to re-forged the metal of captured Vashkhoran weapons into something more to their own taste. Their most distinctive weapon is the *barisi*, a straight-bladed, single-edged weapon similar in shape and form to a kindjal; it's often called the "Ventati dagger" even though it's closer in length to a short sword than a true dagger.

GLADIATOR PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	+3 STR
12	+4 DEX
10	+5 CON
12	Combat/Penalty Skill Levels (12 points' worth)
2	KS: Gladiators And Gladiatorial Competition 11-
10	10 points' worth of Martial Maneuvers from Weapons Combat (<i>The Ultimate Martial Artist</i> , pages 59-60) or other appropriate weapon-based fighting style
3	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Nets

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 52

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
None	

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

Optional Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
-10	Hunted: by arena or slavemaster from whom he escaped 8- (Mo Pow, Limited Geographical Area, Capture)

Suggested Equipment

Weapons: Short sword, spear, trident, net
Armor: Light to medium armors (such as leather or chainmail), shield
Gear: Flint and tinder, hatchet, bedroll and tent, fishing line
Clothing: Adventuring clothes

Gladiators

Several realms and cultures — Vashkhor, Thûn, Vûran, Talarshand, some other Vornakkian city-states — stage gladiatorial fights for the entertainment of noble and commoner alike. Most gladiators are cheaply-bought slaves who receive little training and die within just a few bouts (at most), but a few succeed and thrive due to natural talent or prior training. Some of these become famous, even revered by the crowds, and earn the money to buy their freedom; others find a way to escape. Gladiators who have left the arena behind often become adventurers, since they're well-accustomed to putting their lives on the line for money.

Knights

In Ambrethel, knighthood is solely an institution of the Westerlands and northern Mitharia. Other lands and cultures have their own heavy cavalry and elite warriors, of course, but only in the Westerlands and northern Mitharia do true knights — followers of the code of chivalry, masters of sword and lance, courtly warriors — exist. The Sirenian Empire has attempted to establish orders of knighthood on several occasions, but they always falter and fail within a few generations at most.

Except in rare cases, knights are Men, and men — neither women nor members of other races normally become knights. But it's not unheard of for women or other peoples to be knighted for some brave or noble deed; two of the greatest knights of the early Second Epoch, Sir Thegar and Lady Olena, were a Dwarf and a woman, respectively.

Most knights are "independent" — they don't belong to any particular group or brotherhood. Their king or liege-lord knighted them, and they serve him as he needs. However, in most kingdoms there exist "orders" of knights considered worthy of great honor or respect. Some orders evolve from a need to recognize noble deeds and great events; others are select groups of fighting men chosen by kings as their personal guards, or the like; a few arise to support some cause.

In game terms, to create a knight who belongs to an order, the character must buy a *Membership* Fringe Benefit; this costs 1 Character Point. As of 5000 SE, some of the best-known orders of knighthood include:

Knights Of The Fiery Star

Founded by King Valeraine of Umbr in 4812 SE when an oracle told him that the fiery star then visible in the night sky foretold "a time of great evil to come, when only the strength of just men will hold back the darkness," the Knights of the Fiery Star are charged with protecting the realm of Umbr and her people against all evils and threats. Many of them spend time in errantry, patrolling the wilder regions of the kingdom against Orcs, monsters, and other dangers.

The arms of this order are a fiery star on black.

MARTIAL ARTISTS

The text notes that the Warrior Package Deals from *Fantasy Hero* are appropriate for the Turakian Age setting, but there's one exception: the Martial Artist Package Deal on page 69. Generally speaking, characters should not take that Package Deal, for Ambrethel features little in the way of formal traditions of unarmed combat. Only characters from Thon-Sa, and from some places in Indu-shara, would learn barehanded martial arts fighting techniques. On the other hand, armed Martial Arts styles aren't uncommon (see page 197 of this book), so in some cases the GM might allow characters to take the Martial Artist Package Deal to represent someone with advanced weapons training.



Knights Of The Hart

Most elevated of the knightly orders of Mircasëa, the Knights of the Hart protect the king and his family from all threats. Most of the members come from noble families, but a few earned their place of prominence through brave deeds. It's not unheard of for a Knight of the Hart to marry into the royal family.

The arms of this order are a leaping black hart on tawny.

Noble Knights Of Val-Darran

One of the largest and strongest of the Arduanan orders of knighthood, the Noble Knights serve the Mhendarian Palatinate. Their leader, the Lord Marshal, is considered the best warrior in the land, and the King's Champion. The order has a castle of its own on Lake Lusarra, not far from Cyradon, though at least ten of its members remain at the royal palace nearly all the time.

The arms of this order are simple: gold, per fess enarched red.

Order Of The Annulet

Vestria has several orders of knighthood. The Order of the Annulet, one of the most prestigious, is awarded by the king for valor in battle. Most members of the order are combat-scarred veteran warriors, tough and skilled. They wear special copper arm-bands on the left arm, and have a similar decoration attached to the left rerebrace of their armor.

The arms of this order are a copper annulet on black; members typically include this as a canton on their own coats of arms.

Order Of The Black Eagle

Named for the dark-feathered eagles of the Roga Hills, this order serves the king of Karellia. The crown prince of the realm commands the order, and all noble sons aspire to an invitation to join, but only the best of the best receive one.

The arms of this order are a black eagle displayed, with wings inverted, on white.

Order Of The Estoile

Not all orders of knighthood owe their allegiance to a king. Some, including this one, are arms of the High Church. The knights of the Estoile protect temples and priests, go on holy crusades, and spread the word of the faith throughout Arduana. Some are not knights, they're paladins.

The arms of this order are a four-pointed silver estoile (a type of star) on red.

Order Of The King's Board

Another of the Vestrian orders, this brotherhood of knights takes its name from its privilege of eating at the king's table during feasts. The knights of the Board are among the most trusted of the king's servants, often given missions of extreme importance (such as delivering sensitive despatches to other kings and nobles).

The arms of this order are a crossed knife and key, typically on blue.

Order Of The Portcullis

Legend tells that once, when the Gorthunda crossed the River Tinita to raid into the civilized lands, they tried to sack the city of Chashka, which had strong walls but a weak gate. Determined not to let the city fall, a group of knights ordered the soldiers inside to lower the portcullis... while they

remained outside to guard it. For a night and a day those noble warriors fought the enemy, using the sharpness of their swords and the strength of their bodies to keep the Gorthunda horde from crossing the bridge and smashing the portcullis — long enough for reinforcements to arrive and drive the barbarian horsemen away. To commemorate this deed, the tassar founded the Order of the Portcullis.

The arms of this order are a black portcullis on gold, with a bordure of blue.

Royal Knights Of Szarvasia

So named because they're directly chosen by the King of Szarvasia, the Royal Knights protect the city of Velkathy-Tashan and all who live within it. They meet monthly in the Hall of Swords for a feast given them by the king.

The arms of this order are purple, a chevron gold, a lion statant middle base.

Mercenaries

Warfare is an unfortunate fact of life throughout Ambrethel. Not a year goes by that doesn't see petty lords attacking other petty lords over some dispute, Gorthunda or other barbarians raiding civilized lands, two realms clashing over a border or trading rights, or a king in need of troops to protect his land against Orc or monster attacks. Since maintaining large standing armies is expensive and cumbersome, a thriving community of mercenaries has arisen in many parts of Ambrethel.

Hardbitten and practical, mercenaries typically fight for one reason only: money. Most of them don't care one bit about causes or sides, only about who's paying them (and how much). The best of them remain true to the contracts they make no matter how difficult the fight becomes, but more than a few willingly change allegiance if the enemy offers more money or the risk of death is too great.

While many mercenaries hire themselves out as individuals, sometimes a number of them band together to increase their value to potential employers (and thus the price they can demand). Throughout the history of Ambrethel, a few mercenary companies have achieved fame (or notoriety) for their exploits. As of 5000 SE, some of the best-known include:

Aldron's Men: Led by Aldron Orcsplitter, a warrior renowned for his clever tactics and ferocious fighting style, this band of doughty mercenaries has fought mainly in the eastern Westerlands, western Mhorecia, and Tornathia. They've earned a reputation for being able to win even when outnumbered,

MERCENARY PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
2	KS: Heraldry 11-
3	Tactics

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +5

Optional Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
-15	Psychological Limitation: Code Of The Mercenary (Common, Strong)

and for rallying armies on the verge of breaking with their flashy tactics.

The Fire-Eaters: This large band of experienced mercenaries specializes in fighting the Gorthunda. Every fighting season finds them in the employ of some noble of Khirkovy or Keldravia, pitting their heavy armor and weapons against the speed and skill of the Gorthunda. Many of them are talented horsemen and archers.

Characters who are, or once were, members of the Fire-Eaters must add KS: The Gorthunda 11- (2 Character Points) to their Package Deal.

The Garaktoran Hammers: A band of dwarven warriors specializing in siege warfare, the Garaktoran Hammers have traveled all over the world helping their employers take or defend castles. They spend most of their time in northern Mitharia, but have no objection to a trip across the Serpentine Sea if an employer's willing to pay their high rates.

Characters who are, or once were, members of the Garaktoran Hammers must add WF: Siege Engines (2 Character Points) to their Package Deal.

Hippogriff Company: Unlike most mercenary bands, which include only warriors of various stripes, Hippogriff Company is a hodgepodge that makes up for its relative lack of fighting strength with tactical flexibility. Led by Garhl Four-Fingers, a Gnome earth-wizard and ranger, the Hippogriffs have a well-deserved reputation for being able to achieve victory under the most unlikely of circumstances... and in the most unlikely ways.

The Ulronai Brotherhood: A group of ten Ulronai warriors, two of whom are warrior-mages (see below), the Brotherhood specializes in high-risk, "impossible" military missions. Most of them are as much rangers as warriors, allowing the entire group to remain in the field for weeks or months at a time.

Paladins

As described on pages 70-71 of *Fantasy Hero*, paladins are holy warriors who serve the gods and gain special powers from them. The paladin powers most common in Ambrethel are described below, as are several paladins' organizations.

PALADIN POWERS

Here are descriptions of the paladin powers mentioned above. Most of them function similarly, in some respects, to divine magic spells — the paladin must make a Faith roll to use them — and have their cost divided by 3 just like a spell. Abilities that function without a Faith roll aren't spell-like and therefore don't benefit from the divisor.

AZURE COURAGE

Effect: Power Defense (20 points), Usable Simultaneously (up to 7 more people within 4" of paladin)
Target/Area Affected: Up to 8 people
Time To Activate: Half Phase
Duration: Constant
Range: No Range
Faith Roll Penalty: N/A
END Cost: 0

Description: The paladin's faith and holy powers allow him to stem the tide of evil by diminishing the effects of fear caused by evil beings or dark magics. So strong is his faith that this protection even extends to comrades within 4" of him.

Game Information: *Power Defense (20 points) (20 Active Points); Only To Protect Against Fear-Based Presence Drains And Like Attacks (-2) (total cost: 7 points) plus Usable Simultaneously (up to eight people at once; +¾) for Power Defense (20 Active Points); Persons Affected Must Remain Within 4" Of Character Or Power Stops Working For Them (-½) (total cost: 13 points). Total cost: 20 points.*

DESTROYER OF THE UNLIVING

Effect: Turn Undead
Target/Area Affected: Special
Time To Activate: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Duration: Instant
Range: Special
Faith Roll Penalty: N/A
END Cost: 0

Description: The paladin has the power to turn or destroy undead beings just like a priest (see pages 107-08 of *Fantasy Hero* for more information).

Game Information: *Turn Undead. Total cost: 12 points.*

DISPERSE DARK MAGICS

Effect: Dispel Magic 15d6, Only Versus Evil Magics
Target/Area Affected: One character
Time To Activate: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Duration: Instant
Range: 50"
Faith Roll Penalty: -6
END Cost: 6

Description: The paladin's holy powers allow him to disrupt and destroy evil magics. The GM determines what constitutes "evil magic"; many uses of Necromancy and Witchcraft qualify (and even some Sorcery), as does any use of Black Magic, a demonic power, or an undead power.

Game Information: *Dispel Magic 15d6, any one Magic spell or power one at a time (+¼) (56 Active Points); Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Only Versus Evil Magics (-1), Limited Range (50"; -¼), Requires A Faith Roll (-½). Total cost: 17 points (final cost to paladin: 6 points).*

HANDS OF THE HEALER

Effect: Simplified Healing 4d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Time To Activate: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Faith Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 12

Description: By laying his hands on an injured person's wounds, the paladin can channel the power of Hospin to heal the wound. Due to the strain this places upon him, he can only do it a few times a day.

Game Information: *Simplified Healing 4d6 (40 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV; -½), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Increased Endurance Cost (x3 END; -1), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), 8 Charges (-½). Total cost: 9 points (final cost to paladin: 3 points).*

HARROWING THE BLACK GOD'S LEGIONS

Effect: Deadly Blow (demons and other infernal beings)
Target/Area Affected: One infernal being
Time To Activate: N/A
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Faith Roll Penalty: N/A
END Cost: 1

Description: Usually referred to simply as *Harrowing*, this power gives a paladin the ability to slay demons, devils, and other infernal beings more easily.

Game Information: *Deadly Blow (+1d6 Killing Attack versus demons and other infernal beings). Total cost: 4 points.*

OPHEL'S HOLY LIGHT

Effect:	Sight Group Images, Only To Create Light
Target/Area Affected:	4" Radius
Time To Activate:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Duration:	Constant
Range:	No Range
Faith Roll Penalty:	-3
END Cost:	3

Description: The paladin can cause his hands or body to glow with the bright light of the Golden Lord, that he may shine the radiance of the Blue Gods into dark places.

Game Information: *Sight Group Images*, +4 to PER Rolls, *Increased Size* (4" radius; +½) (33 Active Points); *No Range* (-½), *Only To Create Light* (-1), *Requires A Faith Roll* (-½). *Total cost: 11 points (final cost to paladin: 4 points).*

SANCTIFICATION

Effect:	Change Environment (sanctify area)
Target/Area Affected:	16" Radius
Time To Activate:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Duration:	Constant
Range:	No Range
Faith Roll Penalty:	-2
END Cost:	4

Description: By concentrating on the holy powers and divine presence of the Blue Gods, a paladin can create a field of sacred energy around himself (it moves with him as he moves). While this brings feelings of tranquility and security to all devout worshippers, in battle it allows for the casting of spells that can only be cast in sacred areas, and triggers the Susceptibility to holy places possessed by many demons and undead.

Game Information: *Change Environment* 16" radius (sanctify area) (25 Active Points); *Increased Endurance Cost* (x2 END; -½), *No Range* (-½), *Requires A Faith Roll* (-½). *Total cost: 10 points (final cost to paladin: 3 points).*

SCARLET'S BANE

Effect:	Deadly Blow (evil beings)
Target/Area Affected:	One evil being
Time To Activate:	N/A
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Touch
Faith Roll Penalty:	N/A
END Cost:	1

Description: The Blue Gods have gifted the paladin with a holy fire that burns deeply any evil being he strikes in battle. For purposes of this ability, "Evil" includes all demons and undead creatures, any priest or knowing worshipper of any Scarlet God, some wizards who specialize in arcana generally regarded as wicked (such as Necromancy or Witchcraft, and definitely Black Magic), and any obviously Evil being or persons who knowingly serve

them (such as Kal-Turak and his servants). The GM decides whether or not a being qualifies as "Evil."

Game Information: *Deadly Blow* (+1d6 Killing Attack versus evil beings). *Total cost: 7 points.*

SHIELD OF THE FAITHFUL

Effect:	+3 DCV, Only Versus Evil Beings
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Time To Activate:	Half Phase
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
Faith Roll Penalty:	-1
END Cost:	1

Description: The paladin possesses a holy aura that protects him from the attacks of Evil beings. See *Scarlet's Bane* for a discussion of what constitutes "Evil."

Game Information: +3 DCV (15 Active Points), *Costs Endurance* (-½), *Only Versus Evil Beings* (-½), *Requires A Faith Roll* (-½). *Total cost: 6 points (final cost to paladin: 2 points).*

SKYFATHER'S EYES

Effect:	Detect Evil, Discriminatory, Ranged
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Time To Activate:	Half Phase
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
Faith Roll Penalty:	-2
END Cost:	2

Description: The paladin can perceive the presence of evil — not only overt evil such as demons or black magic, but the truly evil intentions of thinking beings. The GM determines what qualifies as "evil" and thus what the paladin can perceive.

After a paladin gains this power, his eyes usually turn a deep blue. In the most devout or powerful paladin the eyes sometimes have tiny silver glints as well, like stars in the night sky.

Game Information: *Detect Evil* (INT Roll) (no Sense Group), *Discriminatory*, *Ranged* (20 Active Points); *Costs Endurance* (-½), *Requires A Faith Roll* (-½). *Total cost: 10 points (final cost to paladin: 3 points).*

STEADFASTNESS

Effect:	Mental Defense (10 points plus EGO/5)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Time To Activate:	Half Phase
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
Faith Roll Penalty:	-1
END Cost:	1

Description: The paladin's holy powers and strong, devout will protect him against Sorcery, the possession powers of demons, the seductiveness of succubi, and similar dangers.

Game Information: *Mental Defense (10 points plus EGO/5) (10 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½). Total cost: 5 points (final cost to paladin: 2 points).*

ORDERS OF PALADINHOOD

Like knights, paladins tend to follow their holy calling on their own (or perhaps as part of a band of noble adventurers), but sometimes form orders or brotherhoods to help them perform their holy mission.

Unlike priests’ orders, paladin orders are sometimes willing to overlook doctrinal differences. Most paladins care less about precise theological interpretations or church politics than they do about destroying evil and protecting the innocent. The Hellreavers, for example, includes paladins who follow the High Church, the Hargeshite creed, and the Indusharan faith.

In game terms, to create a paladin who belongs to an order, the character must buy a *Membership Fringe Benefit*. This costs 1 Character Point.

As of 5000 SE, some of the best-known paladins’ orders of Ambrethel include the following. The accompanying Paladin Order Powers table lists the powers most commonly associated with each order, though players may choose others if they prefer.

The Favored Of Kilbern

Considered the most exalted of the the Westerlands orders of paladinhood, the Favored of Kilbern are appointed to their order by the Bonifact himself based on the direct command of the Skyfather. They fight evil in all its forms, and are particularly charged with protecting temples, priests, holy sites, and sacred relics. Their holy talismans have a gold border.

The Golden Basilisks

The largest of the orders of paladinhood, the Golden Basilisks were founded in 4031 SE by the paladin Darazian Silverfist after he successfully completed a great quest to find and bring to the High Church a basilisk turned into a statue of solid gold by the Skyfather to save a poor vil-

lage from its depredations. Members of the order wear a small golden basilisk amulet, and many work the golden basilisk motif into their clothing, armor, or coats of arms.

The Hellreavers

The paladins of this order are among the strongest, toughest, and most determined of their kind, for they have devoted their lives to seeking out and destroying demons, devils, and other spawn and servants of the Black God. At times, with the help of wizards who share their high ideals, they breach the barriers between planes to assault the Underworld itself and slay infernal beings in their very strongholds. Needless to say, few Hellreavers die old and in their beds.

The Knights Of The Azure Banner

Known for their azure-colored surcoats and pennants, the Knights of the Azure Banner are an order founded in the Mhendarian Palatinate by Adestron, a paladin noted for his skill and success as a dragon-slayer, in 4513 SE. Although more of its members come from the Westerlands than anywhere else, it recruits deserving paladins from all over the world. It has no formal ranks or chain of command, but all of the Knights gather in Cyradon every five years to elect a Captain who is considered the order’s commander.

The Order Of Es. Kiruin

Founded to revere and emulate Es. Kiruin, one of the first and greatest of paladins, the Order is large and powerful, with a strict military hierarchy. The lowest-ranking members of the Order (most of them) are *soldiers of the Blue* (or just “soldiers” for short). The second rank, those who command groups of soldiers in battle, are *paladin-knights*. Commanding paladin-knights is a *Paladin-Captain*, and the overall leader of the Order is the *Paladin-Commander*. (For each rank above soldier, increase the cost of the paladin’s *Membership Fringe Benefit* by 1 Character Point.) As of 5000 SE, the Paladin-Commander of the Order is Khylowen of Farlothian, considered one of the most honorable and noble men in the Westerlands.

PALADIN ORDER POWERS

Order	Standard Powers
Favored of Kilbern	Azure Courage, Disperse Dark Magics, Hands Of The Healer, Sanctification, Scarlet’s Bane, Shield Of The Faithful, Skyfather’s Eyes. Total cost: 44 points
Golden Basilisks	Destroyer Of The Unliving, Hands Of The Healer, Ophel’s Holy Light, Shield Of The Faithful, Skyfather’s Eyes, Steadfastness. Total cost: 26 points.
Hellreavers	Azure Courage (self only), Disperse Dark Magics, Harrowing The Black God’s Legions, Ophel’s Holy Light, Sanctification, Shield Of The Faithful, Skyfather’s Eyes, Steadfastness. Total cost: 34 points
Knights of the Azure Banner	Destroyer Of The Unliving, Hands Of The Healer, Ophel’s Holy Light, Scarlet’s Bane, Shield Of The Faithful, Skyfather’s Eyes, Steadfastness. Total cost: 33 points.
Order of Es. Kiruin	Azure Courage, Destroyer Of The Unliving, Disperse Dark Magics, Hands Of The Healer, Ophel’s Holy Light, Shield Of The Faithful. Total cost: 47 points.
Sisterhood of Saléa	Destroyer Of The Unliving, Hands Of The Healer, Ophel’s Holy Light, Scarlet’s Bane, Skyfather’s Eyes. Total cost: 29 points.
Stormriders	Destroyer Of The Unliving, Disperse Dark Magics, Scarlet’s Bane, Shield Of The Faithful, Skyfather’s Eyes. Total cost: 30 points.

The Sisterhood Of Saléa

This group of paladins devoted especially to the worship of the Silver Lady only accepts women as members. Sisters of Saléa fight with special silver longwords given them by the Mother-Marshall of the order (currently the renowned fighting woman Ilurena Redsilver), and they wear chainmail polished to a silver sheen. For a sister to lose her silver sword is considered a great disgrace, but the entire Sisterhood stops at nothing to recover the sword and destroy the evil that defiled it. When a sister dies, her sword is melted down to make chainmail for other sisters.

The Sisterhood taught its members a special style of swordfighting known as *Tashala Kenar* (see page 199). A Saléan Sister character must buy at least 10 points' worth of maneuvers from this style in addition to the Paladin Package Deal.

The Sisterhood enjoys the special patronage of the royal house of Umbr, and has a castle of its own in Londregos.

The Stormriders

Paladins with a special affinity for Hornbrek, god of storms and war, the Stormriders wear tunics, cloaks, and surcoats of stormcloud grey. They're skilled riders, among the best of paladinhood (they must choose Riding as a Package Deal Skill). Like the god they revere, they're skilled archers; a Stormrider is rarely seen without his bow and arrows. They're known for their stern and inflexible outlook.

Rangers

Wherever they may come from, Ambrethelan rangers usually take the Ranger Package Deal on page 72 of *Fantasy Hero*. But one type of ranger has its own Package Deal: the *Drusaidi Shanir*.

The Drusaidi Shanir are scout-assassins who serve kings and nobles; the name is a shortening of a Shalionderentine phrase meaning roughly "deadly stalkers." They patrol the wilderness areas of a kingdom in search of monster incursions or enemy invasions, repelling them if they can and reporting on them otherwise. In times of war, they spy on enemy troop movements, picking off soldiers and commanders whenever they can. Many a captain would rather face an entire troop of enemy soldiers than a single determined Drusaidi Shanir.

DRUSAIDI SHANIR PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	+3 STR
15	+5 DEX
10	+5 CON
10	Combat/Penalty Skill Levels (10 points' worth)
3	Climbing
2	AK: home region, or patrolled/protected region 11-
2	KS: Flora And Fauna 11-
2	Navigation (Land)
7	Stealth +2
6	Survival (6 points' worth)
3	Tracking
4	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons
6	6 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Acrobatics, Breakfall, Combat Skill Levels, Fast Draw, Healing, Navigation, Penalty Skill Levels, Persuasion, Rapid Attack, Riding, Tactics, Trading, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Familiarity, Weaponsmith, any Background Skill
7	<i>Expert Archer</i> : Deadly Blow (RKA +1d6 with Bows [or other Ranged weapon of character's choice])

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 80

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
None	

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

Optional Abilities

Cost	Ability
4	<i>Great Accuracy</i> : +2 OCV with Bows
+1	<i>Self-Sufficient Scout</i> : Add WF: Staffs and change Expert Archer so that it works with Slings
4	<i>Well-Traveled Scout</i> : Add two more AKs at 11- each
7	<i>Woodland Commando</i> : +4 to Concealment; Self Only (-½), Only In Woodland Environments (-1) and +4 to Stealth; Only In Woodland Environments (-1) (character may substitute any one other environment for woodlands, if preferred)

Suggested Equipment

Weapons: Sword, axe, spear, staff, dagger, bow, sling

Armor: Light to medium armors, such as leather or chainmail

Gear: Flint and tinder, hatchet, bedroll and tent, fishing line

Clothing: Outdoor clothes (for various seasons)

WIZARDS OF RENOWN

As of 5000 SE, some of the most famous or intriguing wizards in Ambrethel include:

D'ansif the Beautiful:

A Khorian wizardess renowned as much for her beauty and her poetry as her spellcrafting. D'ansif enjoys great prestige throughout Vashkhor and Vornakkia, and even in the West. She espouses no political or religious causes, seeking merely to serve the causes of Good and truth.

Druathek the Maleficent:

An elemental mage, necromancer, and sorcerer of some power, Druathek is a cruel, cold-hearted man who cares nothing for the suffering of others... in fact, he even enjoys it. In addition to his broad complement of powerful spells, during his adventuring career he's said to have acquired several powerful enchanted items. His current whereabouts are unknown; it's thought by the Golden Basilisk paladins (with whom he's clashed on several occasions) that he's living in hiding somewhere in southern Mhorecia.

Kovakian of Chaos: A powerful wizard, sorcerer, and enchanter of unpredictable disposition, Kovakian is widely considered to be a servant of Kal-Turak, though there's little to prove this other than his general tendency to support Evil causes and deeds. A tall and imposing man of Shar, he wears black robes of distinctive cut and carries a staff topped with a large crystal of ever-changing color.

WIZARD PACKAGE DEALS

Ambrethelan wizards use the Package Deals on pages 73-76 of *Fantasy Hero*, but substitute the appropriate *Magic Skill* (such as Conjuration, Enchantment, or Theurgy) for the generic one listed there. They may, of course, buy more than one *Magic Skill* if they want, since each arcana requires its own Skill.

Mages' Guilds

Thieves aren't the only adventurers who can form guilds. In Ambrethel, mages often come together into covens, study-circles, houses, or guilds to pool their knowledge and talents, teach each other new spells, buy and maintain a large library of arcane tomes, and so forth.

Mages' guilds are typically based in large cities, though sometimes a group of reclusive spellcasters cloister themselves far away from other men to pursue their arcane studies in peace. Membership usually requires the payment of a one-time fee or annual dues (sometimes monetary, sometimes in the form of spells cast or magic items given to the guild), and may require the applicant to have a certain level of mastery, practice a certain type of magic, or perform specified services for the guild.

Some guilds impose strictures or other requirements on their members besides dues. The most common of these is secrecy; mages' organizations that practice magic widely regarded as "evil" (such as Necromancy, Witchcraft, or the Conjuration of demons) may not wish to reveal their existence. Other possible strictures include unquestioning obedience of a leader or leaders, spending a certain amount of time doing research for the guild (or performing other tasks, such as teaching apprentices), or maintaining a certain lifestyle.

Guild membership brings many benefits in

exchange for all these potential burdens. To begin with, there's the pleasure of comradeship with like-minded people of similar skill. But beyond that, a group of mages functioning as a group can accomplish things a "sole practitioner" might not be able to. They can pool their funds to assemble a large library for the members' use, or buy spellcasting components in bulk and resell them to the members cheaply. They can protect themselves from the suspicious, greedy, or powerhungry. They can assist one another with study and research. By establishing a positive reputation for the quality of its services, the guild can command higher-than-normal fees for spellcasting work and the like. Many wizards consider their guild membership one of their most important assets.

Members of mages' guilds must buy a 2-point *Membership Fringe Benefit* to represent that.

MAGES' GUILDS OF RENOWN

As of 5000 SE, here are some of the most intriguing, interesting, or powerful mages' organizations in Ambrethel.

The Black Guild

For many years, rumors have persisted of a group of necromancers, possibly somewhere in Tornathia or southern Mhorecia, who have established a secret school to train others in their Art. The school moves frequently, to preserve its secrecy (and thus the freedom to teach Necromancy, which many rulers outlaw), but never seems to lack for students. Whispered tavern tales say the Black Guild has been involved in child-stealing, attempts to overthrow several of the Tornathian city-states in favor of a magocracy controlled by it, and various other crimes. A few adventurers claim to have met, and clashed, with the Black Guild, but they can provide little proof.

The Coven Of D'yos

Somewhere deep in the Valician Hills, where few dare to roam, lurks a coven of powerful witches. Named for their leader, the half-Mhorecian half-Gorthunda woman D'yos, they cast hexes to shield themselves from the monsters and Orcs that haunt the Hills, and use powerful scrying-spells to spy on doings all over Ambrethel. Occasionally they emerge from their wilderness home to become involved in a quest or some other activity, but their overall agenda remains mysterious... perhaps even to themselves.

The Dorethani Wizards

Located on the small, rocky island of Dorethan in the Sea of Mhorec, not far from the Free City of Tavrosel, is a large, odd-looking building with many towers. This is the home of the Dorethani Wizards, a group of mystic scholars. Unlike many mages' guilds, they rarely take on new members; they seem to prefer their isolation, and make it as hard as possible for an applicant to gain access to them and then pass the tests of knowledge and acquisition they set him.

Occasionally the Dorethani Wizards leave their island fastness in search of some long-lost

GUILD MAGE PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	<i>Guild's Esoteric Wisdom:</i> +1 to all Magic Skills
2	<i>Guild Training:</i> +1 to any one Wizard Package Deal Skill
2	<i>Guild Member:</i> Fringe Benefit: Membership: Guild Mage (Senior Apprentice)

Total Cost Of Additional Abilities: +7

Optional Abilities

Cost	Ability
5	<i>Guild Mentor:</i> Contact: high-ranking Guild member 11- (very useful Skills/resources, significant Contacts of his own)
var	<i>Higher-Ranking Guild Member:</i> Increase value of <i>Membership Fringe Benefit</i>
-5	<i>Rivalry:</i> Professional, with another Guild mage
-20	<i>Hunted:</i> Rival Guild 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture/Kill)

enchanted item or scrap of mystic lore. They may hire adventurers to help them in these quests, since even their magics aren't necessarily proof against all the dangers and obstacles they may face.

The House Of The Third Eye

In the city of Sihan Ras, high in the foothills of the Serpent Mountains, sits the House of the Third Eye. Home to the most powerful mages' guild of Indushara, it attracts students from all over Mitharia, and more than a few from Arduna as well. It teaches many strange mystic disciplines; several of its teachers specialize in the Thaumaturgic arts of enhancing and altering the caster's own body.

The Mages' Guild of Aarn

Widely considered the largest mages' guild in Ambrethel, the Mages' Guild of Aarn is home to thousands of apprentices and hundreds of masters. Located not far from the Street of the Alchemists, right next to both the Noble's District and the Merchant's District, it has a high wall to prevent the curious from seeing within. Only those who satisfy the Gatekeeper that they have true reason to walk the grounds of the Guildhall can gain entrance.

Within the Guild's towers and buildings, apprentice and master alike find more mystic lore than any mind can encompass. The Guild has one of the largest, if not *the* largest, libraries in the world, and many other tomes, mystic appurtenances, and strange curios as well. The wards set about its treasures, both physical and mystical, are strong indeed; no one has ever boasted of successfully robbing the Aarnish Guild.

Ulronai Warrior-Mages

One of the most intriguing practitioners of the Arts Arcane during the Turakian Age is the Ulronai warrior-mage. Part fighting man, part wizard, the warrior-mage (or *Talárion-Corum*, in the Ulronai tongue) uses a special arcana of spells to enhance his ability to fight. A rare few learn other arcana as well, but most remain content to practice only the magic of their forefathers.

For more information about Ulronai warrior-magic, see page 240.

ULRONAI WARRIOR-MAGE PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
20	20 points' worth of Ulronai Warrior-Magic spells, and/or related abilities
3	+3 STR
6	+2 DEX
6	+3 CON
10	Combat/Penalty Skill Levels (10 points' worth)
9	Ulronai Warrior-Magic (INT +3)
8	KSs (8 points' worth)
4	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons
9	9 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Acrobatics, Analyze, Breakfall, Climbing, Combat Skill Levels, Defense Maneuver, Fast Draw, Healing, Oratory, Penalty Skill Levels, Persuasion, Rapid Attack, Riding, Stealth, Tactics, Tracking, Trading, Weapon Familiarity, Weaponsmith, any Background Skill

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 75

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
40	See <i>The Ulronai Curse</i> , page 30

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 40

Optional Abilities

Cost	Ability
10	Martial Arts (10 points' worth of <i>Ulronai-Chitheru</i> maneuvers [see page 200])

Continued from last page

Nanumar Halfelven: A famed adventuring wizard from Elvenholme, Nanumar is not the most powerful wizard in Ambrethel, but he makes up for it with his creativity, a broad selection of lower-powered spells, and a judicious complement of enchanted items. The latter include Nanumar's Boots, which allow him to run swiftly, move silently, and even walk upon the air for a short time.

GAME ELEMENTS



For the most part, the Fantasy-specific rules for Characteristics, Skills, and other game elements described in *Fantasy Hero* apply to Turakian Age campaigns (with whatever changes or additions the GM deems appropriate, of course!). Here are some additional details.

SKILLS

Here's some Ambrethel-specific information about various Skills.

BUREAUCRATICS

Bureaucratics is most appropriate for characters from Vashkhor, some Vornakkian city-states, Kumasia, or Indushara. All of those societies tend to have elaborate bureaucracies, and extensive legal systems to boot, so people often need to know how to work their way through layers of officials to get what they want. However, it's perfectly acceptable for characters from other cultures or realms.



GAMBLING

Gambling is a popular pastime throughout Ambrethel, particularly in cities like Aarn, Nar Hradec, and Eltirian. The number of games played verges on the uncountable; some of the most popular, played in one form or another just about everywhere in the world, include:

Hokta (Dice Games): This game requires a small wooden board and a pair of eight-sided dice; hardened gamblers favor bone dice carved in Besruhan, where the game supposedly originated. Players roll two dice, trying to score doubles. Each double rolled allows the player to move a token on the wooden gaming board (the higher the doubles, the further his token moves) or to take certain other actions. The first player to make it to the end of the board wins.

Nestrel (Card Games): Played with the standard 50-card, five-suit Ambrethelan deck, nestrel requires an even number of players (minimum of four) who play in pairs. Each pair tries to "capture" cards played by other pairs by bracketing them with two cards of equal value, but whose value is higher than the card to be captured. The first pair to acquire all the cards wins. The game tends to start slowly, but quickly spirals to its conclusion.

Shiona (Dice Games): Played with six six-sided dice, this game requires the player to score combinations of up to three numbers. A player who scores a combination wins the throw (as do observers who bet on him to win), and receives a bonus for his next roll. One who fails to score a combination at all (or, at some stages of the game, a combination of a certain value or higher) loses, and must pass the dice to the next player.

Telrûd (Card Games): In this game, which has a maximum of five players, each player receives six cards. Through an elaborate system of discarding, trading, and further betting, he acquires another four cards. His goal is for as many of those cards to be from a single suit as possible; the player with the most suited cards wins (if two or more have an equal number, the suits rank in order of prominence).

Additionally, it's common for people to bet on all sorts of competitions: climbing races; gladiatorial fights; horse races; and more.

HIGH SOCIETY

The accompanying table lists negative modifiers to High Society rolls based on where the character comes from (or where he learned High

TURAKIAN AGE HIGH SOCIETY

Culture/Race

Character Is From

	Culture/Race Character Uses Skill On										
	Drakine	Dwarf	Elf	Indushara	Khoria	Kumasia	Mhorecia	Orc	Thûn	Vornakkia	Westerlands
Drakine	-0	-2	-2	-2	-2	-1	-2	-2	-3	-2	-2
Dwarf	-2	-0	-2	-3	-1	-2	-1	-3	-3	-2	-1
Elf	-2	-2	-0	-1	-3	-1	-1	-3	-3	-2	-1
Indushara	-2	-3	-1	-0	-2	-1	-1	-3	-3	-1	-3
Khoria	-2	-1	-3	-2	-0	-2	-1	-2	-3	-2	-2
Kumasia	-1	-2	-1	-1	-2	-0	-1	-1	-3	-1	-3
Mhorecia	-2	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-0	-2	-3	-2	-1
Orc	-2	-3	-3	-3	-2	-1	-2	-0	-3	-2	-3
Thûn	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-0	-3	-3
Vornakkia	-2	-2	-2	-1	-2	-1	-2	-2	-3	-0	-3
Westerlands	-2	-1	-1	-3	-2	-3	-1	-3	-3	-3	-0

*: "Westerlands" includes northern and central Mitharia.

Society, if different). A character can eliminate the penalty for another race or culture by buying a Cultural Knowledge (a type of KS) for that race or culture.

LANGUAGES

The Turakian Age Language Familiarity Chart on page 198 (which is, as always, optional) shows the major languages spoken in Ambrethel and their relationship to each other. In most cases, the name of the language tells you who speaks it, and/or where it's spoken.

Ghoralzod: The language of the Dwarves.

Khellian: The language spoken in Khelebria, though it's been displaced by Ilurian in some places.

Kralzaakr: The language of the Gargoyles.

Kuldrar: The language of the Trolls, and also of Giants.

Oormali: The language of Halathaloorm.

Rarshas: The language of the Leomachi and Pakasa.

Shalionderentine: The language of the Elves (except for Dark Elves).

Sinvaash: The language of the Vulture-Men of Sind.

Sithian: The language of Kurum-Sathiri.

Skhai: The language of the Orcs.

Uzdek: The language of the Ogres.

Vorazetherentine: The language of the Dark Elves.

Vugrash: The language of the Goblins.

MARTIAL ARTS

Here are some of the unique Martial Arts styles of Ambrethel.

Haidara

The *kshaivan*, or "warrior-priests," of Vendiya use this Martial Art, which they developed from Tran-Dhûk as a form of exercise and meditation but quickly turned to more practical application in their sectarian wars. Almost all warrior-priests buy Weapon Elements for this style (particularly for Blades).

HAIDARA

Maneuver	Phs	Pts	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
Block	½	4	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Clever Strike	½	5	+1	+3	STR Strike
Disarm	½	4	-1	+1	Disarm, +10 STR to Disarm roll
Dodge	½	4	—	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
Kick	½	5	-2	+1	STR +4d6 Strike
Strong Strike	½	4	+2	+0	STR +2d6 Strike
Throw	½	3	+0	+1	STR +v/5; Target Falls

Skills

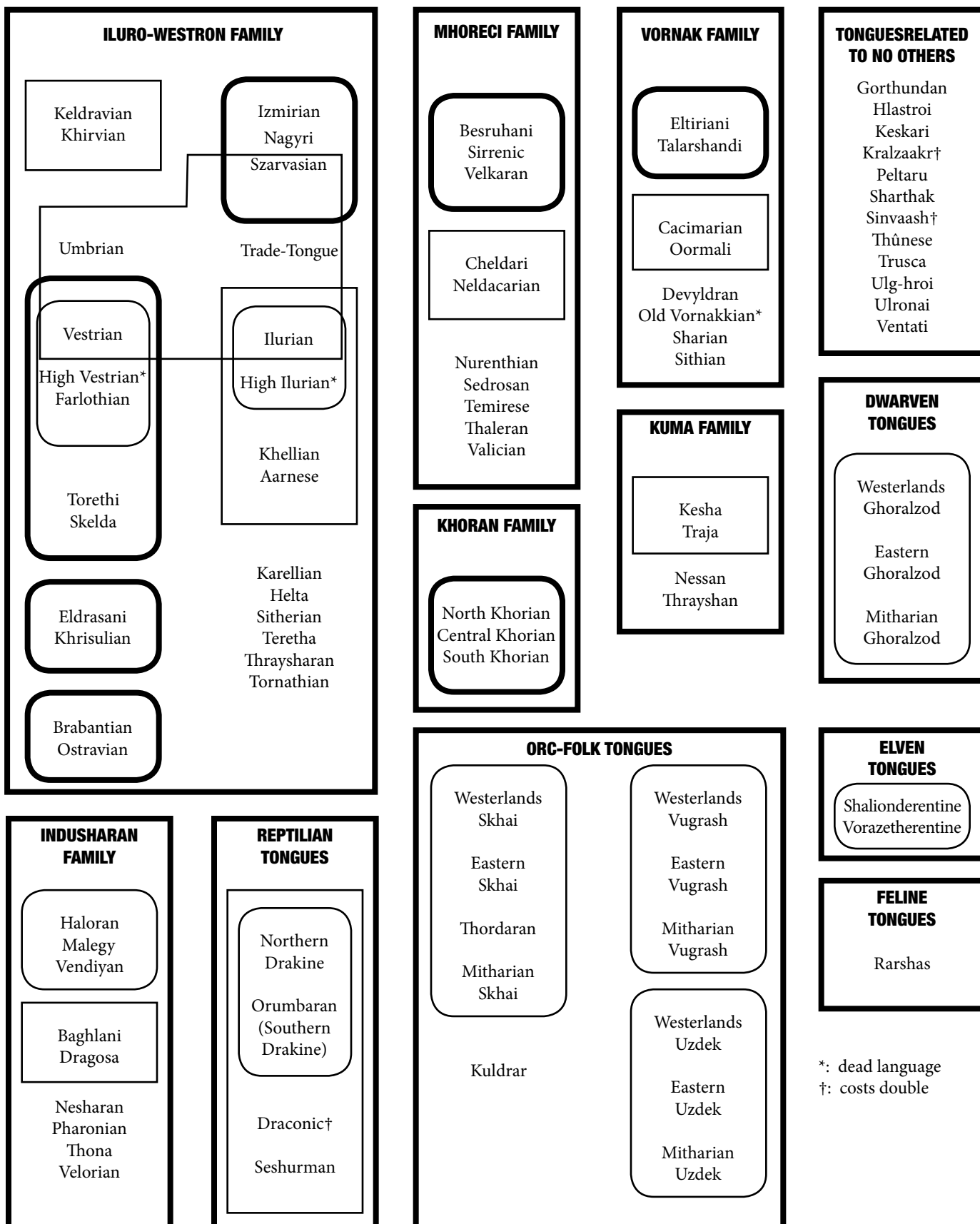
Acrobatics
Breakfall
Contortionist
KS: Tran-Dhûk
Sleight Of Hand
WF: Common Melee Weapons
WF: Off Hand

Elements Weapons

+1 Use Art with Blades
+1 Use Art with Clubs
+1 Use Art with Polearms
+1 Use Art with Staff

Optional Rules: The Clever Strike and Strong Strike take location rolls of 2d6+1. The Kick takes a location roll of 3d6. The other maneuvers take no location rolls.

TURAKIAN AGE LANGUAGE FAMILIARITY CHART



Tashala Kenar

Meaning “Moon-Duelling” in some ancient tongue, this is the swordfighting style of the Sisterhood of Saléa. It concentrates on broad, sweeping sword-strokes, quick dagger-thrusts, and lots of movement.

TASHALA KENAR

Used with Blades Weapon Group; Blades Weapon Element is Free

Name	Phs	Pts	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
Crescent					
Slash	½	5	-2	+1	Weapon +4 DC Strike
Disarming					
Strike	½	4	-1	+1	Disarm, +10 STR
Guarded					
Slash	½	5	+1	+3	Weapon damage
Lunge	½	5	+1	-2	Weapon +4 DC Strike
Parry	½	4	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Riposte	½	4	+2	+2	Weapon +2 DC, Must Follow Block
Sweeping					
Slash	½	4	+2	-2	Weapon + vel/5, Full Move

Skills

KS: Teshala Kenar

WF: Blades*

WF: Off Hand

Optional Rules: The Crescent Slash, Guarded Slash, and Riposte take location rolls of 2d6+1. The Lunge and Sweeping Slash take location rolls of 3d6. The other maneuvers take no location rolls.

Tharusidarion

The primary elven swordfighting art is *Tharusidarion* (“The Silver Dance”). It typically involves the use of longer one-handed swords such as broadswords and rapiers, but a few Elves have adapted it for short swords or greatswords.

THARUSIDARION

Used with Blades Weapon Group; Blades Weapon Element is Free

Name	Phs	Pts	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
Hasirialiatha	½	4	+0	+2	Weapon +2 DC Strike
Kumirisandu	½	4	+2	+2	Block; Abort
Lirithurinala	½	5	+1	+3	Weapon Strike
Vashalion	½	4	—	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
Damithriandi	½	5	+0	+1	Disarm, +10 STR

Skills

Fast Draw

KS: Tharusidarion

WF: Blades*

WF: Off Hand

Optional Rules: Both of the Tharusidarion strikes take a Hit Location roll of 3d6. The other maneuvers don’t require Hit Location rolls.

Tran-Dhûk

This strange and intriguing fighting style comes from Thon-Sa. With it, an unarmed warrior can take on an armed one and triumph! Skilled practitioners may even be able to fight multiple foes at once. Most warriors who face a master of Tran-Dhûk consider his abilities magic, not a learned skill, though in truth there’s nothing arcane about them.

TRAN-DHÛK

Maneuver	Phs	Pts	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
Block	½	4	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Disarm	½	4	-1	+1	Disarm, +10 STR to Disarm roll
Dodge	½	4	—	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
Escape	var	4	+0	+0	+15 STR vs. Grabs
Hold	½	3	-1	-1	Grab Two Limbs, +10 to STR for holding on
Kick	½	5	-2	+1	STR +4d6 Strike
Legsweep	½	3	+2	-1	STR +1d6 Strike; Target Falls
Punch	½	4	+0	+2	STR +2d6 Strike
Sword Hand	½	4	-2	+0	HKA ½d6 (2 DC)
Throw	½	3	+0	+1	STR +v/5; Target Falls
Vital Strike	½	4	-1	+1	2d6 NND(1)

Skills

Acrobatics

Breakfall

Contortionist

KS: Tran-Dhûk

Sleight Of Hand

WF: Common Melee Weapons

WF: Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons

WF: Off Hand

Weapon Elements

+1	Use Art with Axes/Hammers/Maces/Picks
+1	Use Art with Blades
+1	Use Art with Chain Weapons
+1	Use Art with Clubs
+1	Use Art with Polearms
+1	Use Art with Staff

Optional Rules: The Sword Hand, Punch, and Vital Strike take location rolls of 2d6+1. The Kick takes a location roll of 3d6. The other maneuvers take no location rolls.



Ulronai-Chitheru

The Ulronai are known and feared for their fighting skills. Ulronai children begin learning to handle blades at a very early age, and by the time they approach puberty they're already skilled warriors. They are taught a swordfighting styles called *Ulronai-Chitheru*, or "Ulronai Steelweaving." Ulronai-Chitheru operates on the principle that he who strikes first and hardest, wins. It concentrates on offensive power and speed, not on "finesse" maneuvers such as disarms and binds.

WEAPON FAMILIARITY

The new weapons listed on page 204 don't require special WFs to use; they fall into other categories (typically Blades). The exception is the Silver Branch Dagger, which does have its own 1-point WF (it's part of the Uncommon Missile Weapons group).

ULRONAI-CHITHERU

Used with Blades Weapon Group; Blades Weapon Element is Free

Name	Phs	Pts	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
Hwidathra	½	5	+1	+0	Weapon + vel/5, Full Move
Orunatiya	½	4	+2	+0	Weapon +2 DC Strike
Orushidaila	½	5	+1	+3	Weapon Strike
Oruskormaeli	½	5	-2	+1	Weapon +4 DC Strike
Strashuri	½	3	+0	+1	Weapon +2 DC, Disable
Taritaile	½	4	+2	+2	Block; Abort
Thasori	½	4	—	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort

Skills

- Fast Draw
- KS: Ulronai-Chitheru
- Rapid Attack
- Two-Weapon Fighting
- WF: Blades*
- WF: Off Hand
- WF: Thrown Sword

Weapon Elements

- +1 Use Art with Staff
- +1 Use Art with Polearms

Optional Rules: All the Ulronai-Chitheru strikes take a Hit Location roll of 3d6.

PERKS

Here's some Ambrethel-specific information about various Perks.

FRINGE BENEFIT: LORDSHIP

The different regions and cultures of Ambrethel use different terms for the various ranks of nobility, as indicated by the accompanying table.

FRINGE BENEFIT: RELIGIOUS RANK

The different religions of Ambrethel use different terms for the various ranks among the priesthood, as indicated by the accompanying table. Members of special religious orders, such as the Druids or the Laerinites, have an additional 2-point Fringe Benefit, representing their ability to obtain help and resources from the order in time of need.

TURAKIAN LORDSHIP TABLE

Value	Culture					
	Westerlands	Khirkovy	Mhorecia	Vashkhor	Indushara	Drakine
1	Squire	Squire	Squire	—	—	Tarana
2	Knight, Chevalier	Ritsar	Knight	—	Bahur	Taran
3	Baronet, Seigneur	Baronet	—	Ithadi	—	Ketrana
4	Baron, Thane	Baron	Baron	Ithat	Hisab	Ketrun
5	Viscount	Varcount	—	Konadi	—	—
6	Earl, Count	Count	Count	Konat	Karna	Menghan
7	Marquis	Markon	Markus	Naraki	—	—
8	Duke	Nyasar	Duke	Thukar	Badah	Sanagar
9	Grand Duke	—	Grand Duke	—	—	—
10	Prince	Tassaret	Prince	Ressan	Rajra	Indar
12	Crown Prince	—	Crown Prince	—	Shajar	Talindar
15	King	Tassar	King	Satran	Haraj	Sokindar
20	Emperor	—	Emperor	Hierakte	Ha-Haraj	Neren Sokindar

"Westerlands" typically covers northern and central Mitharia as well, and serves as a default for cultures and races not listed here. However, not all races or cultures may use all titles, and of course the relevant terms differ from language to language. Furthermore, the relationship of ranks from different cultures is, in many cases, approximate at best. Different cultures and regions apply the same title in different ways, making any valid comparison little more than a guesstimate.

TURAKIAN RELIGIOUS RANK TABLE

Value	Rank					
	High Church	Hargeshite	Thūnese	Kumasian	Indusharan	Drakine
1	Falman	Varo	Izûth	Girha	Masad	—
2	Taaleh	Robadi	K'ngra-Ya	Chaltaa	Injil	—
3	Taal	Robat	K'ngra	Karna	Ibada	Sehma
4	Shalan	—	Gshûl K'ngra	—	—	—
5	Alarch	Basa-Robat	Ylyth-Om	Sadaq	Mandira	Nairak
6	Archoth	Shaa-Robat	Hlag'm-Nûl	Mûkhad	Dihan	Macarsa
7	Ecclesiarch	—	Tlûrûth Vai	—	—	—
8	Bonifac	Lataro	Thûgong Vai	—	—	—

Where one religion (e.g., the High Church) covers many races and cultures, the relevant terms may differ from language to language. Furthermore, the relationship of ranks from different religions is, in many cases, approximate at best. For reference purposes, you can compare the values in this table to the values in the Religious Rank Table on page 100 of *Fantasy Hero* to determine roughly how powerful or influential a particular religious official tends to be.

DISADVANTAGES

Here’s some Ambrethel-specific information about various Disadvantages.

AGE

The accompanying table lists suggested Age ranges for non-human races. Races not listed use the same Age categories as Men.

TURAKIAN RACES
AGE TABLE

Race	Age 10-	Age 40+	Age 60+
Dwarf	1-40	160-239	240+
Elf	1-160	640-959	960+
Half-Elf	1-20	80-119	120+
Gnome	1-20	80-119	120+

SOCIAL LIMITATION

In addition to *Woman* (page 170) and *Ulronai* (page 30), there are two other Social Limitations that tend to occur frequently in Ambrethel. The first is *Slave* (Very Frequently, Major; 20 points); you can read more about slavery in the Turakian Age on page 173.

The other is *Barbarian* (Occasionally, Minor; 5 points). A barbarian character who spends most of his time in “civilized” lands usually has some difficulties. Even if he learns the language, he’s still likely to give himself away through his accent, his garb, his mannerisms, and his attitude. Civilized people usually dislike barbarians; they find them uncouth, dangerous, rude, and generally dislikeable. This sometimes restricts a barbarian’s ability to get a room for the night, makes city guards suspicious about him, and so forth.



EQUIPMENT



For the most part, the equipment and price list on pages 143-48 of *Fantasy Hero* applies to Turakian Age campaigns. Of course, the GM may need to adjust prices based on availability (few villages have a smith capable of making or repairing plate armor), demand (food prices go up in times of drought and famine), and other pertinent factors. The accompanying table lists additional, Ambrethel-specific, goods characters can buy.

MATERIALS AND CRAFTSMANSHIP

Weapons made by troll-smiths (page 69) have +1 DEF, +2 BODY, x1.25 mass, +1 STR Mod, and tend to hold an edge better than other weapons. They cost a minimum of 25% more than a normal weapon of the same type.

An object made of *velandi* (page 37) has +3 DEF and +3 BODY (a suit of *velandi* armor provides +2 DEF for only a 15% increase in weight). It costs a minimum of three times as much as a normal object of the same type.

An object made of Cacimarian steel (page 120) has +1 DEF and +1 BODY (a suit of Cacimarian armor provides +1 DEF for only a 15% increase in weight). It costs a minimum of 1.5 times as much as a normal object of the same type.

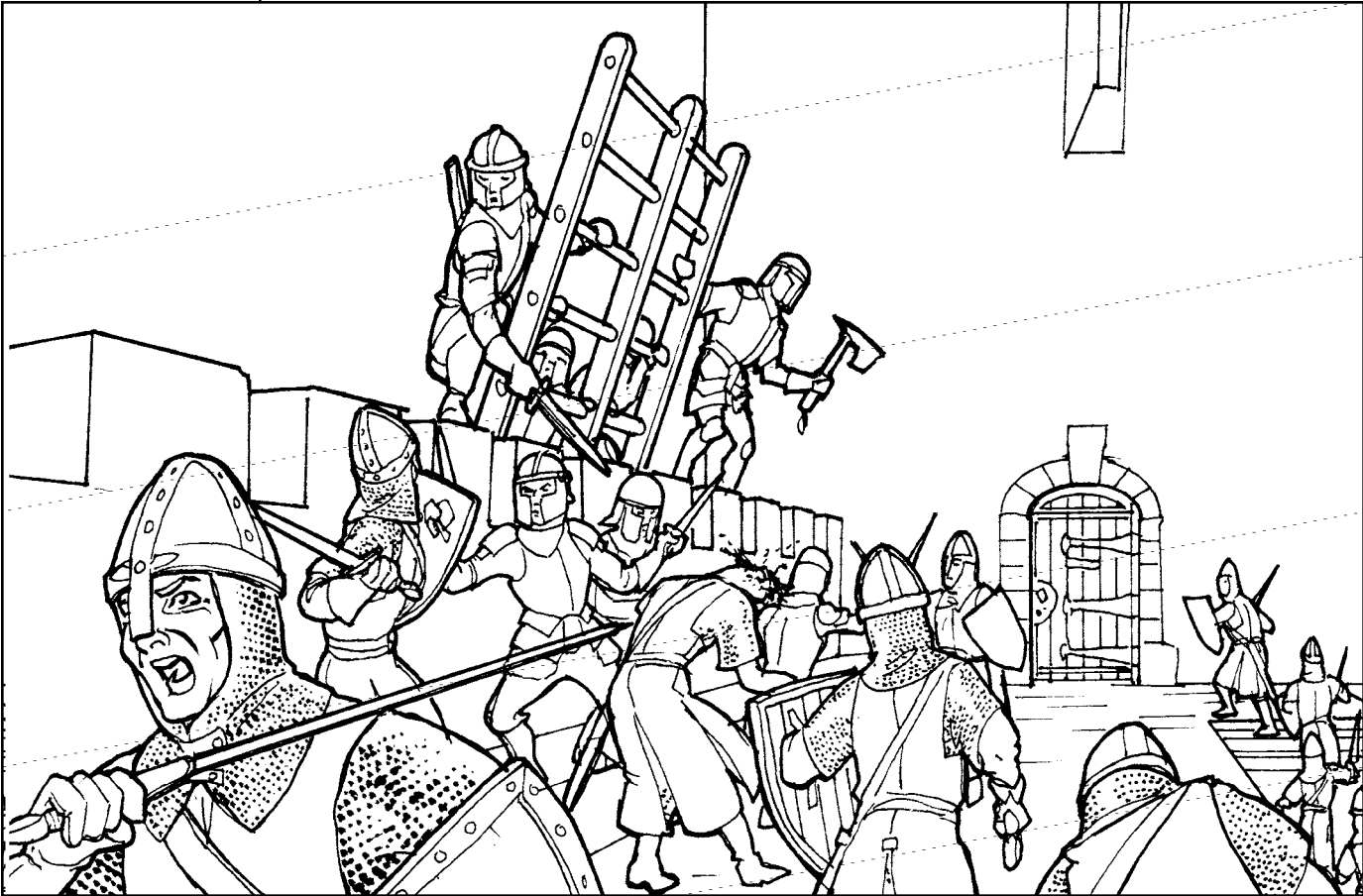
TURAKIAN AGE PRICE LIST

Item	Price	BODY	DEF	Mass	Notes
Weapons					
Ashurana	15 SP	6	5	1.2	
Barisi	12 SP	3	5	0.8	
Ophelite sun-axe	32 SP	6	4	1.7	
Silver Branch Dagger	12 SP	3	5	0.8	
Yahgahn	26 SP	5	5	1.2	
Food, Drink, And Spices					
<i>Besindi</i> spice (1 ounce)	8 SP	—	—	0.01	
Gnomish liquor (one bottle)	25 SP	1	1	0.3	
<i>Hra'sayai</i> (one bottle)	40 SP	1	1	0.3	
<i>Lethi</i> fruit (one)	1 SP	1	1	0.05	
Ostravian ale (1 barrel)	5 GP	4	3	20	
<i>Thakra</i> -root spice (1 ounce)	1 GP	—	—	0.01	
Slaves					
Weak/Unskilled	60 SP	4-8	N/A	100	
Average	80 SP	6-8	N/A	100	
Strong/Skilled	100 SP	7-10	N/A	100	
Spellcasting					
Enchanted Items	1 GP per -1 Magic roll penalty (see pages 229-30) See page 230				
Livestock					
Dog, elt-hound	32 SP	9	0	25	
Sotal	35 SP	15	1	620	
Miscellaneous Items					
Cloth (1 bolt)					
Linen	2 GP	1	1	2.0	
Wool	1 GP	1	1	2.0	
Silk	5 GP	1	1	2.0	
Eltiriani silk	8 GP	1	1	2.0	
Thona silk	8 GP	1	1	2.0	
<i>Lyoth</i> flowers (1 dozen)					
Common variety	1 SP	1	0	0.001	
Rare variety	5 SP	1	0	0.001	
Very rare variety	2 GP	1	0	0.001	

TURAKIAN AGE MELEE WEAPONS TABLE

Weapon	OCV	Damage	STUNx	STR Min	BODY	DEF	Mass	A/R Cost	Length	Notes
Ashurana	0	1d6	0	10	6	5	1.2	22/8	M	
Barisi*	0	1d6-1 AP	0	8	3	5	0.8	22/8	S	Can Be Thrown
Ophelite Sun-Axe Silver Branch	0	2d6	0	13	6	4	1.7	45/15	M	1½H
Dagger	0	1d6	0	8	3	5	0.8	26/9	S	Can Be Thrown
Yahgahn	0	1d6+1	0	11	5	5	1.2	30/11	M	

For explanations of the columns and notations on this table, see pages 163-66 of *Fantasy Hero*.



chapter six:



MYSTERIOUS WAYS THE GODS OF AMBRETHEL

THE GODS



Ambrethel is a land of many faiths, and thus many gods. Most are minor deities at best, worshipped by only a few folk or prayed to only for very specific things. Others are the mightiest of the mighty, able to shake the very foundations of the world with the wave of a hand.

THE GODS OF THE HIGH FAITH

Throughout most of Ambrethel, the predominant religion is the *High Faith*. Followed not only by most Men, but by Dwarves, Elves, Orcs, and several other peoples, it's a henotheistic religion. Though the divine names and religious practices used vary from people to people and region to region (see the Gods Of The High Faith table and later sections of this chapter), at its heart the High Faith is the same everywhere.

As the Gods Of The High Faith table shows, religious names and terminology can vary enormously from one place to another. To avoid confusion, this chapter focuses primarily on the Westerlands version of the High Faith, using other names and practices only where appropriate. Despite this,

you should assume that the cosmology, divine beings, and other aspects of the High Faith exist in other regions, just under different names and perhaps from a slightly different perspective.

ALMANDRÉ

The Four-Fold God, the Patterner, the Weaver
God of nature, the seasons, time, and fate

An old, clean-shaven man carrying a leaf-carved staff and garbed in robes that change color as the seasons pass, Almandré is the god of nature — all things that grow or run upon the earth, all waters and all stones, all of Ambrethel untouched by the hand of Man or Orc. His following is greatest in small villages and farming communities, and Elves especially revere him. A group of priests devoted to his worship, known as Druids, perform ceremonies to honor him at every full moon (see page 177).

Because living things grow and age, Almandré is the god of time as well, and the fate that time brings to all Men. It's said he weaves the pattern of a person's life into the great tapestry of the world, and clips the thread of that pattern when it's time for that person to pass from this world to the next.

THE GODS OF THE HIGH FAITH

Westerlands	Mhorecian	Hargeshite	Kumasian	Indusharan	Dwarven*	Elven	Orcish*
Almandré	Tumnor	Hacari Arrad	Malbara	Sattapar	Valaki	Pelmaroshavalenath	Kraygan
Asvalak	Sordath	Karraden	Rajrek	Akshar-Kya	Tharkano	Skelsirualord	Uldarec
Bandaro	Trémal	Avanos	Kebadak	Padama	Chûrûzal	Hawareshulavashthel	Vereg
Brandon	Hrestoke	Orontes	Ilmuhan	Vriksha	Bûrgar	Vakurinyalon	Rhend
Caligan	Vallutarin	Duragan	Saudar	Ashura	Inarond	Cashatholdalaneth	Erches
Eurinda	Alasahia	Elanya	Risanda	Apana Uja	Vandara	Fanalarielani	Yana
Faya	Nikya	Haruna	Saparti	Aghati	Kinina	Halaniashiriala	Asha
Forgil	Fethtir	Golesar	Kahatan	Steyar	Markû	Relbakiriohelen	Suln
Hornbrek	Tormar	Zorgun	Halintar	Nurasan	Mendrezoring	Giltashtorathnar	Belet
Hospin	Gilglin	Hiresun	Sahembi	Ulasnah	Orvesi	Hailostrianorinth	Kûr
Ishander	Vorgan	Saroglan	Tokobas	Radhu	Gundarak	Thelnaridrunorikanir	Orjeth
Kilbern, the Skyfather	Nimvorus	Torbalor	Vonos	Zopeshtar Adhimatra	Hamarrek	Toltiradalyrunorion	Gella Thekar
Korthund	Pellarin	Eskenn	Besarka	Kalsa-Tada	Korthund	Monjaroldraskonar	Garûnd
Lantiphone	Tifara	Manisa	Tipura	Karuna	Gûnaratha	Hiraluathtiriana	Jalka
Lithira	Yutheria	Kirenica	Sawara	Almora	Ebenra	Jaidashterthirialura	Lôtah
Meára, the Earthwife	Tairala	Antalya	Kirru	Aivoné	Valda	Saléadanseri	Athara
Mordak	Dzibiloth Karn	Zivar	Davargul	Gurisha	Zharketh	Isarowluthar	Kraan
Ophel	Larso	Osy	Sinnaro	Lahóm	Burûkaz	Virythazhinarion	Awenn
Saaltus	Shannus	Kairmo	Dengarah	Okata	Shalazondar	Havomreshasathon	Denvh
Saléa	Ulahni	Selayma	Suara	Shandara	Ûnsarana	Selestriarashiru	Seren
Sirella	Ailora	Caseri	Mendahuli	Acharya	Kundrala	Alariasharuthiri	Âlu
Vabanak	Nulsheth	Pazaru	Tengorak	Kapulah	Zelthûrak	Varsarukonthar	Mulg
Varidon	Kainur	Gaziandreth	Mengaja	Adhara	Arvald	Ystarriomardrel	Thorg
Ziandwyrrth	Ziandwyrrth	Ziandwyrrth	Ziandwyrrth	Ziandwyrrth	Ziandwyrrth	Ziandwyrrth	Ziandwyrrth

*: Gnomes and Halflings usually worship the dwarven versions of the gods, though with outlooks or approaches more appropriate to their own cultures. Goblins usually worship the orcish versions of the gods, though sometimes with slightly different names or attributes.

The other gods of nature — Bandaro, Eurinda, Korthund, and Sirella — are the sons and daughters of Almandré and Meára, and so are sometimes known as the Four Children.

ASVALAK

**The Lord of Battle, the Bloody God, the Slaughter-Lord
God of war, battle, slaughter, weapons, and warriors**

War often embraces the realms of Ambrethel, and behind and amidst every armed conflict, no matter how small or great, stands the Lord of Battle, Asvalak. Fierce-eyed and wild-bearded like a berserker, wielding his axe Skarl Skanath (“Doorway to Death”) and his shield Bastion, and garbed in chainmail, with the heads and skulls of his enemies tied at his belt, he is the matchless warrior, the fighting-man against whom no other fighting-man can stand. The *Benethar Sacur* tells how he slew the Thousand-Headed Hydra at the command of his father Mordak, and of his eternal battle against the *sorrag* armies of the Drakine gods.

Warriors and priests who specially revere Asvalak wear as a token a small talisman in the shape of an axe. Many people regard such allegiance with suspicion, afraid that the Bloody God’s battle-rage will afflict his worshippers without warning.

Some soldiers and knights regard Asvalak as a more noble god, one of the Blue and not the Scarlet. In this aspect he represents the nobility of war, the thrill of battle, and the honor and duty-mindedness of a true warrior. However, most people attribute those qualities more to Hornbrek.

BANDARO

**The Lord of Rivers, the Blood of the World
God of water, rivers, lakes, and streams**

A tall, broad-shouldered god with green hair and beard, Bandaro is the lord of the world’s waters (save the seas and oceans, which are given to Saaltus). When priests sanctify water in religious ceremonies, they call upon him for his blessing.

Few offer special prayers to Bandaro, since sailors have Saaltus and farmers Hornbrek and Lithira. But it’s not uncommon for someone fording a rushing river to make a special plea to Bandaro before beginning the task.

BRANDON

**The Guiding Hand, the Huntsman, the Treelord, the
Lord of Forests
God of forests, hunting, and hunters**

Whenever a man steps beneath the eaves of a forest to hunt, chop wood, or explore, he feels the divine presence of the god Brandon amidst the trees. The lord of the forested lands looks after his servants who venture within his domain, ensuring their safety and success. With his spear Colbar, and his bow and arrows that never miss, he strides on forest paths no Man can walk, slaying fell beasts

and evil monsters.

Brandon is also the god of hunting in general, wherever it may take place. He guides the shots and slings of hunters so that they may bring food back to their families and tribes. Hunters offer prayers to him before setting out on the hunt, and before they fire what they hope will be a killing shot.

CALIGAN

The Golden God, the Lord of Merchants, the Provider

One of the most popular gods in Ambrethel, Caligan is the patron of merchants and the god of trade, money, and prosperity. Religious art usually depicts him as a happy, handsome richly-dressed man holding a bag of coins, or several gold coins.

Most people pray to Caligan frequently — any time they’re about to make a deal, or take a risk to earn money, or are hoping for prosperity and wealth. Merchants often jointly invoke his name before beginning negotiations, as if to assure themselves they’re both dealing honestly.

EURINDA

**The Lady of the Leaves, Mistress of the Wilds, Protec-
tress of the Trees**

Goddess of animals, plants, and trees

Daughter of Almandré and Meára, Eurinda is a deity of nature and the natural world — much like her father, except that her special duty is to protect plants and animals (especially trees) from monsters, drought, poachers, greedy hunters, and the like. Although not commonly worshipped by everyday folks, she receives special reverence from Druidesses (female Druids).

Most people envision Eurinda as a beautiful young woman wearing sandals and a knee-length tunic. Her hair is dark and long, but tied up so that she can roam the forests; flowers or garlands of leaves often adorn it. She rarely fights, but when she must, she has a slender bow made for her by Brandon (whom she often accompanies on his wanderings) and Hornbrek.

FAYA

**Heartmaker, the Maiden, the Lady of Pain and Joy, the
Star of Beauty**

**Goddess of beauty, love, marriage, childbirth, and
children**

Faya, accounted by many the most beautiful of all the goddesses, appears as a young woman, elegantly dressed, with long, blonde hair. Beauty and love — and what they lead to, marriage and children — are her province. Many a man hoping to win the heart of his one true love, and many a maiden preparing for her wedding, have offered up solemn prayers to her; many an artist has asked her to inspire him with her radiant pulchritude.

FORGIL

The Lord of Thieves, the Nightwalker, He Who Lurks In Shadow

God of thieves and thieving

One of the sons of Mordak and Meára, Forgil is the patron of thieves and thieving. True to his nature, he's dark-haired and dark-eyed, and his weapons, the short sword Ilvorin and dagger Tarloc, are ones he stole from the forge of Ishander. But for all the scorn the other gods heap upon him, they rely on his quick wits and deft fingers when they must, such as the time he stole the Twelve-Faced Orb from Tho-Lheng, a Thona god.

Few people save thieves pray to Forgil, and if they do it's probably to ask him to turn his eyes and the eyes of his followers from them. Caligan and Forgil are bitter enemies, often exchanging barbed, sarcastic comments and coming to blows over the tiniest matters.

HORNBREK

The Stormlord, the Tempest-Master, Wielder of the Lightning-Bow

God of storms, rain, archery, and war

When thunder crashes and hard rains fall, Men pray to Hornbrek to spare them from his wrath; when crops need water, farmers ask Hornbrek to send a gentle rain. Hornbrek wields the Lightning-Bow, with which he fires thunderbolts both at Ambrethel and at the enemies of the gods, and thus is patron of archers as well; many an archer has Hornbrek's symbol, the crossed lightning bolts, carved into an amulet or talisman, or even etched into a bow or arm-guard. Hornbrek is also a war-god, one favored by fighting men uncomfortable with the worship of the Slaughter-Lord.

Religious paintings and statues show Hornbrek as a tall man with the well-muscled arms of an archer. His hair and eyes are storm grey, and in battle he wears elaborate plate-and-chain armor worked with stormcloud motifs.

HOSPIN

The Divine Healer, the Healer

God of healing, healers, mercy, kindness, and succor

Perhaps the most beloved god of the High Faith pantheon after Kilbern and Meára, Hospin is the god of healing, healers, succor, and mercy. It is from him the priests receive the curing-spells with which they restore injured workers, wounded soldiers and adventurers, and the sick to health... or sometimes even to life. He's seen as a middle-aged man with a careworn but kindly face, garbed in light blue robes; from his hands spill light and power.

ISHANDER

The Forgelord, the Master of Iron, the Swordmaker

God of smiths, metalworking, and alchemy

The smith of the gods, Ishander is depicted as a fiery-haired younger man of prodigious strength, dressed in traditional blacksmith garb. At his great forge Valinoss, he uses his hammer Rairos to craft the weapons and armor of the gods, and many other wondrous things besides. Sometimes he gives a truly worthy priest, paladin, or noble an enchanted weapon, and those who receive the gifts of the Forgelord rarely sully them with defeat.

Perhaps paradoxically, Ishander is also the patron god of alchemists and their Art. They see him as helping them "forge" their potions and constructs, and prefer to depict him more as one of their own — a noble-looking man wearing alchemists' robes and holding a mystic stone in his hand.

KILBERN

The Skyfather, the Just Lord

God of the sky, justice, truth, law, and order

The Skyfather and ruler of heaven, Kilbern is the most powerful and revered of the gods. Most people say a brief prayer to him when waking, and another right before going to sleep. He's portrayed as a tall, handsome, majestic lord, dark-haired and with blue eyes. When caparisoned for war, he wears armor crafted for him by Ishander, and wields the mighty sword Sarclaive and the shield Defender. He commands the host of the selestines and leads them into battle.

But Kilbern is more than simply the king of the gods; he's also the god of justice, truth, law, and order. Those who seek justice or wish to learn the truth pray to him. It's said the priests of the High Church can perceive any lie told in their presence thanks to the powers given them by the Skyfather.

KORTHUND

The Mountain-Walker, the Stonelord, He Who Shakes the Earth

God of mountains, rocks, stones, and metals

A god highly favored by the Dwarves, Korthund is the lord of rock and stone. He's envisioned as a stocky, almost Dwarf-like man of great strength, sometimes with skin or hair of living rock. When he's angry, the earth shakes and mountains crumble.

As the god of stones, Korthund is also the god of stonework, masons, and architects. Those who build with stone pray to him when they begin work, and the priests of the High Church perform a ceremony in his name to bless a finished building.



LANTIPHONE

The Lady of the Arts

Goddess of arts, crafts, and skill

Arts and craftwork — everything from goldsmithing and jewelrymaking to sculpting, woodcarving, singing, and mosaic work — fall under the patronage of Lantiphone, the Lady of the Arts. Like her sister Faya, she's beautiful and blonde-haired, with the tools of some craft (or perhaps a musical instrument) in her hands. Thanks to her, the palaces of the gods in the Meru Mountains gleam with exquisite decor and the finest artworks imaginable.

To a lesser extent, Lantiphone is patroness of all tasks that require skill and learning. Thus, everyone from thieves, to scholars, to trackers might pray to her at times.

LITHIRA

The Bounteous Lady, She Who Ripens the Grain

Goddess of agriculture, farming, herding, and growth

Everyone who grows food or herds animals prays to Lithira, the Bounteous Lady, who ensures that Hornbrek's rains and Meára's earth bring forth the crops needed to feed the people. Her touch ripens fruit, causes corn to grow tall and strong, and fattens sheep. Religious art depicts her as a wheaten-haired woman, past the first blush of youth but not yet old, wearing a tan gown; sometimes she has a garland in her hair or her hands are full of fruit and other products of the earth.

MEÁRA

The Earthwife, the Great Mother

Goddess of the earth and fertility

Mother of gods and provider of all things that grow from the fertile earth, Meára is beloved by all in Ambrethel. Farmers, women who wish to have children, and those who simply appreciate the bounty of nature pray to her; the priests of the High Church honor her with special outdoor ceremonies on the first day of every month. She is seen as a beautiful woman, neither old nor young, with a motherly look to her; she wears the simple clothes of common folk.

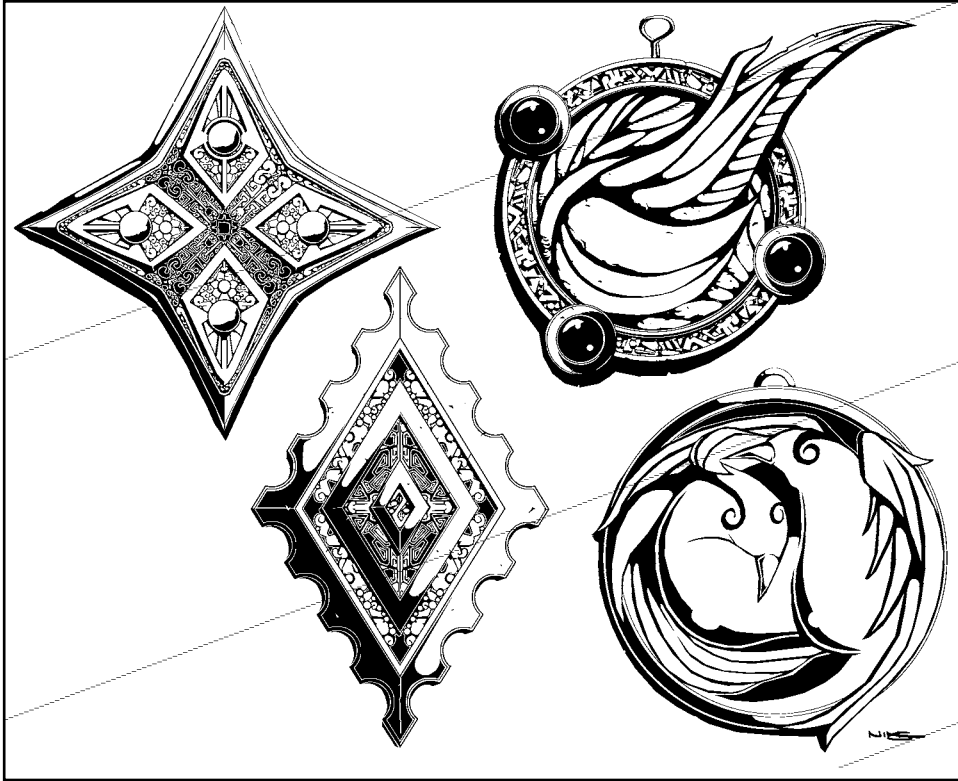
MORDAK

The Black God, the Lord of the Devils, the Shadow King

God of Evil, darkness, the Underworld, and death

Of all the gods, none is so hated or reviled as Mordak, the Black God, lord of Evil. All that is twisted, perverted, and foul springs from him, and any evil that befalls someone has its source in him. He is the chief of the Scarlet Gods. Only dark and evil cults worship him; no right-thinking persons pray to him, lest they attract his attention. The mere mention of his name causes people to make signs of warding.

As lord of the Netherworld, Mordak presides over the hosts of demons, devils, and Demon-handed, who serve him as the selestines do the Blue Gods. The souls of evil people not stolen by Es. Baliar he elevates to demonhood or undeath; he tortures with fiendish glee the Good souls Malavage filches from Elysium.



In battle, Mordak wears jet-black plate armor and carries a like-hued greatsword, Volscâth, whose very touch is death to mortals. His dark-grey skin is scarce lighter-hued than his armor, and a short beard along the jawline and around the mouth frames his face.

OPHEL

The Golden Lord, Fire's Master, the Radiant One, the Light of Hope

God of the sun, fire, light, and day

The god who blesses the world by carrying the holy light of the sun across the sky each day, Ophel is beloved and revered by all save those craven or evil beings who prefer the cloak of night. He's depicted as a man of shining radiance, bright-haired and bright-skinned, wearing a tunic of light; in times of war he dons golden armor and wields an axe he made from a piece of the sun; no evil thing can withstand its touch. It was he who gave Fire to Men.

On most days, the first prayer offered by priests is to Ophel, to ensure his safe journey through the Skyfather's land. They light a special candle in his honor that burns all day, flickering and going out only as the sun sets below the western horizon.

SAALTUS

The Sea Lord, the Lord of Ships

God of the sea, sailors, sailing, and ships

All the salty waters of the world are the province of Saaltus, who reigns over the creatures that live within them and the people that sail upon them. Sailors pray to him constantly for safe voy-

ages and good luck while at sea; fishermen seek his aid to make a fine catch. Those who anger him find the waters and sea-winds running contrary to their needs, and fish scared away from their nets.

Paintings and statues at sea-side temples depict Saaltus as an old man with long hair and beard and a stern countenance; sometimes he's shown riding a whale or dolphin. He carries Breakingwave, a great trident made for him by Ishander, and in times of battle wears magical armor made of sea-shells.

SALÉA

The Silver Lady, Night's Mistress, the Lady of the Crescent Radiance
Goddess of the moon and nighttime

As the Ophel-candle gutters out in temples all over Ambrethel, priests utter a prayer to usher in Saléa, the Silver Lady, as she begins her journey across the sky.

As Ophel — her husband and brother both — carries the sun through the sky, so does she carry the moon, changing its shape to mark the passing of the months.

Saléa is a favorite deity of many women, who believe she aids them in many ways. She's usually shown as a beautiful, dark-haired woman wearing a gown woven of pure moonlight.

SIRELLA

The Divine Breath, the Windlady, the Galemaiden
Goddess of the wind

When winds blow, for good or for ill, Men know Sirella the Windlady is among them. Depicted as a tall and graceful woman who moves with the speed of the winds she commands, she can use her powers to bring ships home swiftly (or blow them off course), raise or disperse tornadoes, and blind people with mists and fogs. Soldiers who need a cool breeze in the heat of battle, and people who want rainclouds blown away before a flood occurs, pray to her.

VABANAK

The Corpse-Lord, the God of the Tombs, the Great Necromancer

God of necromancy, black magic, and the undead

Son of Mordak, Vabanak the Corpse-Lord sits at his right-hand side in the depths of the Netherworld. He controls all necromancy and foul magic, gifting those who offer him obeisance with malign mystic powers. He created the first undead, and taught necromancers how to make more. Only cruel and evil people worship him, and even then

VARIDON

ZIANDWYRTH

Artists rarely depict the Laughing God, for fear of drawing his unwanted attention and thus having their luck drain away. When they do, they show a man heading toward old age, his windblown gray hair an untidy mess, his robes askew, his eyes containing just a spark of insanity.

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VARIDON

WHO CAME FIRST?

The *Benethar Sacur* does not tell the only tale of how the world and the peoples were created (though it agrees, in most particulars and all important points, with the holy books of the Khorian, Vornakkian, and Kumasian folk).

Some Men, primarily the Thûnese and the Indusharans, claim the gods created them first. The Thûnese lore is that their gods created them to hold sway over all the world, and made lesser Men to serve as their slaves and sacrifices. The Indusharans, who follow the High Faith in their own way, believe the gods created one Man, Kintan, who was their ancestor, and only thereafter, when they saw that their work was good, did they make the Three Brothers.

The Thona believe their gods formed them from the stones of the mountains and the breath of the wind — all other Men are “mud folk,” weaker beings created by weaker gods from weaker stuff. The barbarian tribes each have their own creation myth, exalting themselves over all others.

Dwarven sacred writings say the gods created the Dwarves first, hammering them from stone and thunder. They gave the mountains and hills and all their riches to their firstborn children, leaving the lesser lands for other peoples. The Elves say the gods made them at the same time as Ambrethel, as part and parcel of its self and as possessors of the spark of creation.

The Orcs have no story of the creation. Their lore seems to assume the

Lesser Gods

The gods listed above are the most powerful, most revered, and best-known of the deities of Ambrethel, but they're not the only ones. Many lesser gods exist, supplicated in prayers by small groups of people or for very specific reasons. Some of them include:

Aladan, god of wisdom, knowledge, learning, and lore

Ardilune, goddess of bards, storytelling, song, and poetry

Athizon, god of rats

Demica, goddess of disease

Desteron, god of horses and riding

Ingrais, goddess of assassins

Nelaros, god of just causes

Solêt, god of snow and ice

Tharex, god of curses

Cosmology

The *Benethar Sacur* tells how the gods created the world:

In the dawn before dawns, there was no world and no Men, only the Five Great Gods. And the Skyfather, the Earthwife, the Four-Fold God, and the Arcane looked upon the nothingness and despised it, wishing to create land and life that they might have worshippers. But the Black God shared not their desire, preferring the shadow and the silence to the brightness they would bring forth.

The four gods began the great work of crafting the world from the nothingness. They labored well and long, but their efforts were for naught; they had not, the four of them, the full measure of power to mold the world safe and whole. And so they spoke to the Black God, saying, “Come, brother, lend your might to ours, that the work might be completed well and true.”

And the Black God answered: “I seek not this thing thou seekest. Wherefore should I help thee?”

And the four gods said: “What dost thou wish, then, for thy aid?”

The Black God said: “That I may take unto myself my sister for three nights.”

And the Earthwife replied: “I will consent to this thing,” for greatly she desired to bring into being the world, full of growing things and Men.

With that the Black God lent his power to theirs, and together the Pentiad formed Ambrethel, bright and pure, as a home for their children Men and all living things. But because the Black God had a hand in its making, a taint

of Evil lies always upon the World, and Men must beware.

THE CREATION OF THE PEOPLES

The *Benethar Sacur* goes on to tell how the gods shaped clay, and water, and fire to form the Three Brothers, and thus brought Men into the world. From the stones of the mountains they made the Dwarves and the Trolls, from the wood and streams of the forests the Elves, from the grass of the fields the Halflings, and from the dark earth at the roots of the mountains the Orcs and Goblins.

THE MERU MOUNTAINS

The Blue and Grey Gods live in the sacred Meru Mountains on the plane of Elysium. Each has his own palace or hall there, though some visit their domains rarely; Saaltus, for example, prefers his mansions beneath the sea to the air of Meru, and Brandon often wanders the forests of Ambrethel rather than those of the celestial peaks.

The Scarlet Gods may come to Meru upon forbearance of the Skyfather, but they do not live there. They make their homes in the Netherworld, in dark halls haunted by damned spirits and foul undead. Only Forgil goes freely between the lands of Mordak and the mountains of the Blue.

Divine Beings

Below the level of the gods is a hierarchy of divine creations — beings of power beyond that of mortals, who serve the gods in all things.

THE SELESTINES

The Guardians of Heaven, the Hunters of Demons, the Holy Host of Kilbern, selestines are divine beings of great power, yet not so great as gods. Their semblance is that of men, with the heads and wings of eagles, sometimes garbed in kilts or tunics and sandals, sometimes in armor forged by Ishander himself. In battle they wield holy weapons: shining swords with blades of Oph-el's sunlight and Hornbrek's thunderbolts; maces whose heads are made from star-stuff and shine with a radiance that blinds all evil beings; spears with shafts taken from the *satha*-trees that grow on the slopes of the Meru Mountains and heads of Korthund's silver; arrows made of cloud and gold. Woe unto the Evil man who sees a selestine, for his doom is surely upon him; and blessed be man of Good whom the selestines aid and succor.

ESAILES

An *esaille* (Es.) (fem. *essaille* [Ess.]) is a holy man (or woman) granted special powers and semi-divine status by the Blue Gods (acting through the Bonifact) because of his piety and devotion to them. They once were Men (or perhaps came from other peoples), but after death (sometimes before) were elevated to the status of esaille by the Skyfather. Each has special duties, tasks, or areas of responsibility; some of the most notable among them include:

Ess. Anira: In life a mage and thief of Tornathia, Ess. Anira is the patron of adventurers who, by direct devotion or nobility of purpose and deed, serve the Blue Gods. Adventurers who seek out Evil creatures to slay, help the poor and downtrodden resist oppression, and recover long-lost sacred relics for the High Church (or equivalent) receive Ess. Anira's special attention; many of them offer prayers for her aid before beginning a quest.

Es. Baliar: Baliar is the soul-thief who serves the Blue Gods. When an Evil man dies, his soul goes to serve in the Host of the Damned, or perhaps to become an undead being... but not if Es. Baliar captures it in his star-woven net before it reaches the Netherworld. He takes the Evil souls he catches and roasts them on a spit over a sacred flame as punishment for their Evil deeds. He also protects the souls of Good folk from Malavage.

Es. Kiruin: The patron esaile of righteous struggle and noble causes, Kiruin stands in spirit beside those who fight on the Blue Gods' behalf in any way. It's said he sometimes manifests before a battle to bless the weapons of an especially worthy warrior.

Es. Larborn: A favorite of many merchants, travelers, and adventurers, Es. Larborn is the patron of inns and innkeepers. He insures that the ale is fresh and crisp, and that a fire's always burning in the fireplace on cold nights.

Es. Rostarien: When the burdens of rulership become difficult to bear, kings and nobles can call on their own patron esaile, Rostarien, for comfort and support. In life a king of a Westerlands realm that arose after the Drakine Wars, Rostarien was known for his just rule and wisdom.

THE DEMONHANDED

As above, so below. The Blue and Grey Gods have their esailes, but the Scarlet Gods have the *Vhornac Ranesh* — the Demonhanded, Men (and other peoples) so Evil and cruel that Mordak has given them dark, infernal powers and made them captains in the Host of the Damned. Chief among them is Malavage, the Lord of the Dark Rose, who steals the souls of Good men with his Accursed Hook as they ascend to Elysium; he ever wars with Es. Baliar.

THE GODS OF VORNAKKIA

The Men of deepest Vornakkia, long-sundered from their brothers to the west, worship strange gods unknown elsewhere in the world, gods who speak only to them and accept only their worship.

Devyldra

In the City of Black Bricks, people worship Ulinoor, the cat-goddess, who guards them from peril but punishes them when they are sinful. Her temple and many other places throughout the city are adorned with statues of her: a cat- (or sometimes lion-) headed woman, majestic, beautiful, regal, deadly. She needs no weapons, for her claws are sharp as swords, her holy breath as deadly as that of any dragon, her roar enough to tumble cities to rubble and shake the very earth itself.

The priests of Ulinoor — who include among their number the King of Devyldra, though he has few religious duties — walk the streets of the city every day, chanting paeans in praise of their goddess and doing good works in her name. At night they join the elder priests at the temple, where they feed the sacred cats (and many others!) and perform other tasks. It's whispered among the taverns of Devyldra that Ulinoor has given them the power to transform themselves into cats, and that they take this shape late at night to wreak vengeance on those who blaspheme against her.

The Gods Who Watch Over Eltirian

The people of the city of Eltirian worship seven strange gods — the gods whom, they claim, led their ancestors to freedom from Talarshand, and who told them where to build the City of Seven Gates. Known as *the Gods Who Watch Over Eltirian*, they are:

Aberac, god of walls and barriers

Vasheelra, god of spiders and rats

Gamarion, god of ghosts

D'vern-Séach, god of silver and gold

Tjjalis, goddess of the nighttime spaces

Arrialis, goddess of the mantelpiece

Elefthérion, god of knives

Aberac, the greatest of the Gods, is the protector of Eltirian, a god of defense, resistance, and privacy. Depicted as a tall, strong man wearing chain-mail and carrying an enormous shield and a mace, he's served by a priesthood mostly made up of men. They wear robes of navy blue, and must carry a shield with them (even if but a buckler) at all times. They perform a special ceremony to honor him at noon on the first day of each month.

Vasheelra, god of spiders and rats, is a god of the streets — the patron of common folk, thieves, and others of their ilk. He wears a black cloak

Continued from last page

world has always been, and will always be.

The Drakine say their six strange gods created first the world, and then the dragons. When the dragons proved too strong and fierce to be made to worship, the gods took some of them, and from them formed the Drakine. All other peoples came after, to serve the Drakine or be ruled by them.

OTHER OORMALI GODS

Here's a list of just a few of the other gods worshipped by the Oormali:

Avall, god of roofs

Fôdla, goddess of flowers

Folkan, god of beards

Heepîra, goddess of birds

Kobellus, god of streets

Kûnata, goddess of whores

Ladina, goddess of lamps

Lishas, the kitchen-goddess

Maldor, god of beer and ale

Sharn, god of bribery

Trôddan, god of boots

and tunic and conceals his face behind a featureless black mask. His priests wear black robes with golden spider-web designs designating rank, and sometimes conceal their face with masks similar to the god's; dark rumors say that, like the priests of Ulinoor, they can assume the totem shapes of their god. They hold worship services for the Spider God every evening after the sun has set. Once every ten years, they give leave to the Thieves' Guild to come into Vasheelra's temple and perform the Thieves' Ceremony, in which they thank Vasheelra for their successes over the past decade.

Gamarion, god of ghosts, watches over the Eltirian dead. He guides them to an afterlife of bliss in his realm. He's also the patron of necromancers, and is usually depicted wearing the garb of an Eltirian boneworker: a black robe, with a black hood or skullcap, and a short cloak the color of dried blood (sometimes his face is a skull, sometimes that of a Man). His priests and priestesses wear robes the color of dried blood; they perform ceremonies every month to honor the dead, and on the winter solstice hold a great feast in Gamarion's honor.

D'vern-Séach, god of silver and gold, is the patron of wealth, commerce, and merchants, and to some extent of the nobility as well. His priests dress as elaborately and richly as he is depicted as dressing. To become priests, they must not only demonstrate piety but buy their way into the priesthood at enormous costs... but thereafter can reap great profit from the tithes made to the Merchant-God's temple. On the ides of each month they sacrifice statuettes to him, the more expensive and elaborate the better; the priests, in conjunction with the city's goldsmiths, silversmiths, and lapidaries, compete to offer up the best statuette.

The goddess of the nighttime spaces, Tjjalis, rules the night, the stars, romance, and love; the wizards, astrologers, and diviners of Eltirian also name her their patron. A dark-haired beauty wearing an Eltirian evening gown made out of a piece of the night sky, she is served only by priestesses. They wear robes of purple (for lower ranks) or blue-black (high ranks), with gorgets of black velvet embroidered with the goddess's symbol (a slim-rayed, seven-pointed star). She has no temple; ceremonies to her are performed at night, outdoors, at places determined by divination.

Arrialis, goddess of the mantelpiece, is the goddess of home and family, and the patron of mothers and of midwives. Neither she nor her priestesses wear any distinctive garb, appearing for all the world like ordinary Eltirian housewives and maidservants, but they carry as her token a tiny golden broom. She is worshipped at small household shrines, not at any temple.

Elefthérion, god of knives, rules over warfare, warriors, weapons, combat, death, and assassination. Sometimes he's depicted as a thief or assassin armed with two daggers; at other time as an Eltirian army commander wearing chain mail and holding one of the distinctly-hilted Eltirian longswords. His priests and priestesses must carry dagger and sword at all times, and wear robes of

red underneath blackened chain mail. His ceremonies take place on the third day of every month, and before and after battles.

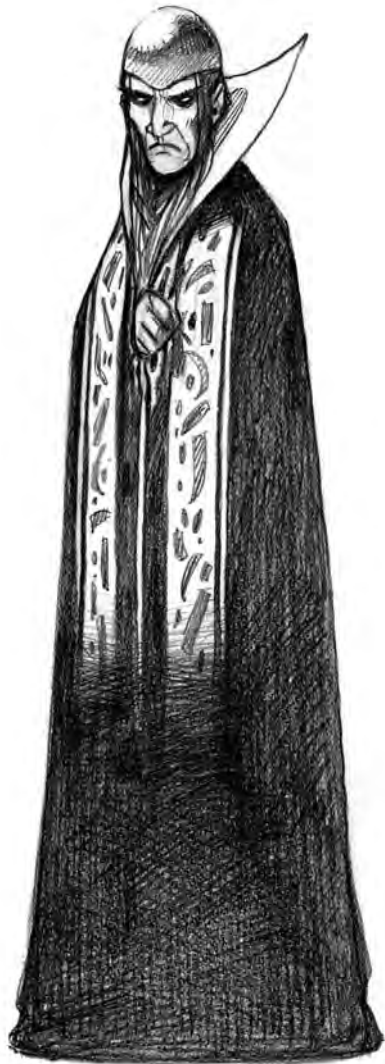
Halathaloorm

The Oormali seem to have no preference in gods, worshipping all with equal respect and equal disregard. Within the high and mighty walls of their city there are temples of the High Church, of the Hargeshite faith, of the gods of some other Vornakkian cities, of strange barbarian gods, and of many other deities, more than any man could count, including some worshipped nowhere else. Special reverence is sometimes given to Wahesh-wool (their name for Bandaró) as patron of the waters which are the lifeblood of the city, and Besekk the crocodile-god. It sometimes seems as if an Oormali has a god for everything, no matter how trivial; for example, an Oormali merchant going to gamble offers up a prayer to Jhejhorion, god of dice, to ensure the bones fall his way.

Kurum-Sathiri

The Sithians have what may be the only monotheistic religion in Ambrethel. They worship a god they call Mahin ("The Highest"), whose priests claim he is the one and only god that exists. Their sacred scrolls say he created the heavens, earth, seas, and underworld with but a wave of his hand, and Men and other races by forming them from trees and plants, and that he rules over all existence. When confronted by adherents of other faiths who want to know how their priests can receive divine spells and visitations if their gods do not exist, Mahin's priests explain that all other "gods" are either demons in disguise or *héléambré* (forms, aspects, or avatars) of Mahin, who chooses so to speak to foolish unbelievers.

Mahin organizes his priesthood into a strict hierarchy. The leader of the faith, a man of great prestige, power, and piety, is the *Mahinturé*, or "Mouth of God." Through him Mahin speaks, commanding the people and priests of Kurum-Sathiri to do that which is right and proper to do. Serving the Mahinturé are twelve *Hinta Hreska*, or "High Priests," the highest-ranking cleric most people (or even priests) will ever meet. Below them are *reska-shura*, or "arch-priests," and lastly the *reska*, or priests (sing. *resk*). Most priests have groups of the faithful who look upon them as their primary source of divine wisdom, solace, and comfort; the priests in turn rely on these "congregations" as a source of gifts (both to themselves and to the temple as a whole) and information.



Talarshand

The green- and yellow-garbed Talarshandi worship but one deity: S'taa'sha, the Great Scaly One, god of reptiles. Depicted as a gigantic man with the head of a crocodile, the tail of a lizard, six reptilian arms, and green-and-yellow-scaled skin, he is said to live in the depths of the S'taa'rthek, a jungle not far from Talarshand. His priests, who rule the city, sacrifice humans to him (mostly criminals and prisoners of war) every full moon at the top of his enormous pyramid-temple at the heart of the city, and every summer solstice they travel to the S'taa'rthek to make further obeisances and commune with him.

Zhor Cacimar

The Cacimarians have a pantheon of over a dozen major gods, and perhaps three times that number of lesser gods, guardian spirits, and the like. Chief among their deities are: Valarash, god of fire; Zharinda, goddess of beauty and love; Tyrekos, god of war; Mrudorren, god of trade and wealth; and Lalaru, goddess of luck.

Unlike the henotheistic High Faith, the Cacimarian religion is true polytheism — each god has his or her own priesthood, temples, rituals, holy books, and religious trappings. Most Cacimarians choose one of the major gods as their primary patron deity, but also offer prayers, obeisance, and sacrifices to several others (sometimes *all* others) as a way of maintaining the gods' favor. Cirgaath, the god of death and lord of the underworld, is almost never mentioned or prayed to, save by the priests in his small, sepulchral temples and necromancers seeking his blessing and power.

THE GODS OF THÛN

The gods of Thûn are strange and disturbing to other peoples; their very names inspire fear. According to the lore of the sorcerer-priests, their gods reside not in some far-off heaven, but in the depths of the world, where other gods, unnamed and unloved, imprisoned them long ago. The sorcerer-priests work to free them, and their brood, from their tellurian captivity, that they might give the lords of Thûn dominion over all the world.

Mightiest of all the gods of Thûn is S'thlaggha, the King in Sapphire Robes, the Key of Power. The House Everlasting, greatest temple in Thûn, is his, for he lies chained and restless in the nigh-bottomless pit on whose edge the House rests. The Ancient Enemies had to split the towering Peaks of Threng to find a prison that would hold S'thlaggha. Tall he is, ten times taller than the tallest of giants; his thousand arms each have the strength of any lesser god, his thousand eyes see all, his thousand mouths consume any who dare to stand against him.

Of scarce less power than S'thlaggha are the Twin Gods: N'ggog-Eyl, the Lord of the Scarlet Infinities; and Ûm'vaveht, the Chaos Irresistible. Long ago they were cast down into the earth, far below sacred Thûn, by the Ancient Enemies, and the temple of Tarklesh marks where they fell, and where one day they shall rise again.

But no temple marks the prison of Yûlg'gwtha, the Encompassing Effulgence. Crushed beneath the very bulk of Mount Athoombvahoreg he lies, sometimes struggling fitfully against his bonds, shaking the very earth in his desire to be free. But not even an entire mountain can hold back his strength, for whispers of his dark and eldritch wisdom wend their way into the minds of his worshippers, and at times he can send forth a servitor to aid them. The sorcerer-priests make an annual pilgrimage in his honor, climbing to the very top of the mountain to offer him many sacrifices.

Last and weakest of the Thûnese gods, but one still stronger by far than the puny gods of other Men, is the Dweller in the Deep, Shothu-H'gyth. She lies bound in the depths of the sea, her tentacles trapped within the cage the Ancient Enemies forged for her, and her awesome power sapped. Her symbol, the broken spiral, adorns many a quay and boat on the Thûnese coasts.

THE GOD KAL-TURAK

Among those who serve him — including many Orcs, Goblins, and Trolls, some Ulg-hroi and other evil Men, and the like — Kal-Turak the Ravager is often regarded as a god, and worshipped in foul ceremonies involving blood sacrifices. Whether he be a god for true or not, no one can yet say, but upon experiencing his power many doubt him not.

THE GODS OF THON-SA

The mysterious Thona have two groups of gods. Ruling from the heavens high above are the Celestial Kings, deities of great power and lofty concerns. From the Divine Emperor Chundaru to the least of the Kings, few of them have any concern for mortals; they accept the prayers and sacrifices offered to them as their just and proper due, but rarely respond (though they grant their priests spells as other gods do, lest their worshippers be seen as less powerful or worthy than those gods'). Only Mingwe, the god of luck, and Buphá, the goddess of storms, oft touch the lives of the Thona.

But a Thona has not just gods to receive his prayers. To him, all things — every tree and stream, every rock and stone, every breeze and building — have their own *jumlai*, or spirits. To them he prays for favors, for protection, for prosperity. A Thona sets out not on a journey until he supplicates the jumla of the roadway, nor enters a building without silently saying a word to beg its jumla's grace and shelter.

THE GODS OF THE BARBARIANS

Each of the barbarian peoples of Ambrethel has its own tutelary deities, guardian spirits, or tribal fetishes to worship. Most have no true priests, as a Westlander or Khorian would use that term, but shamans who mingle the arts of the divine and the arcane in some strange measure.

THE BAGHLANI

Scattered across the Baghlan Plateau are sacred monoliths — towering fingers of rock set there by the gods themselves according to the Baghlani. The tribes fight for possession of these holy sites, and when a tribe has one, it prays to the spirit of the stone (who has no name). If a tribe controls two or more monoliths, it prays to both spirits, and so is doubly blessed. A tribe without a monolith is weakened and shamed, and must redouble its efforts to take one.

THE GORTHUNDA

The Gorthunda worship beings they call the Three Great Gods. Mightiest of them is Dongra, goddess of the *pawari*, who provides for warrior and wife alike, and keeps the Gorthunda healthy and strong. Her husband is Turor, god of war and thunder, who gives the fire of battle into the Gorthunda, making them matchless warriors. Both of them contend against Taimellar, the god of darkness, who reigns at night and brings misfortune and woe to Men.

The Gorthunda know as well of the nearness of the Spirit World, and seek to propitiate its denizens and so spare themselves from the spirits' malice. No Gorthunda wife is fool enough to feed her family before putting a bowl of sheep's milk outside the tent for the spirits, and no warrior goes a-hunting without promising the spirits the first blood from the kill.

THE HLASTROI

Most Hlastroi still follow the ancient ways of their forefathers, a form of spirit-worship in which the prayers of shaman, hunter, and warrior alike placate the spirits of forest, field, stream, and fire to keep the Hlastroi safe and thriving. But these days, as contact with the Westlanders increases, some have adopted the Westlander gods, only renaming them to suit themselves. Some shamans darkly predict that should more Hlastroi turn their backs on the spirits, the spirits will do the same to the Hlastroi, and disaster befall.

THE KESKARI

Among the Keskari, the patriarch of a family — the oldest male still in possession of his faculties, typically — chooses a god-spirit for that family. Established families chose their god-spirits long ago, but new ones must make that decision as soon as they build their house. The men of the family carve the face (and sometimes the whole form) of the god-spirit into the roofbeam of the house, and often into its support-columns and other places as well; some families carve a wooden statue of their god-spirit and place it in the compound in front of the main door to the house. The women of the family make offerings to the god-spirit every morning and every full moon, and at times an *annikki* — a wandering Keskari shaman — comes by and performs more solemn, complex rituals to the god-spirit.

THE PELTARU

The Peltaru worship Julija, the Great Mountain Spirit, the god who oversees them and all their works and deeds. Like the Hlastroi and the Gorthunda they also make offerings to many lesser spirits of the wilds, but Julija rules over all others and grants the Peltaru shamans their spells.

THE TRUSCA

Among the Trusca, each tribe takes a guardian spirit or totem, naming itself after that being — the Night Panther, the Sun Porcupine, the Wisdom Crow, and the like. To that totem all members of the tribe pray for whatever they might want, be it luck in hunting, success in battle, an easy childbirth, or the winning of a beautiful maiden to wife. A tribe's shamans embody the totem and its qualities, sometimes gaining strange powers or taking on a bit of the totem's appearance as a result.

THE ULG-HROI

To the Ulg-hroi, the Lord of the Devils — Mordak — is the one and only god. They propitiate him with bloody rituals and human sacrifice, and he gives their shamans diabolic powers and demon-servants in return. Some Ulg-hroi have also begun to pray to Kal-Turak, thinking him the son of the Black God, and Mordak seems not to object.

THE VENTATI

It is said by the Vashkhorans that the Ventati do not worship gods, but instead the weapons they bear into battle. When a Ventati receives a new weapon, he bonds its spirit to himself with a special ceremony; when it finally breaks or becomes unusable, he buries it with a formality other peoples accord only to nobles and kings. It's even said that Ventati shamans know special spells to awaken and enhance weapon-spirits.

THE GODS OF THE DRAKINE

The Drakine worship gods strange to the other peoples of Ambrethel — gods unlike the deities of the High Faith or the spirits of the barbarians and Thona. Drakine religious art depicts each of them as a sort of dragon-man: large humanoid bodies covered with scaly skin; long necks and heads more draconic than those of the Drakine; leathery wings projecting from their shoulder-blades; the power to breathe holy fire on their enemies. The Drakine believe their gods created the world, then the dragons, then the Drakine, then all other peoples for the Drakine to rule.

Six gods have the Drakine:

Terrut-Seh, god of War

Nethad-Seh, god of Magic

Strala-Seh, goddess of Sky

Dargon-Seh, god of Earth

Berrem-Seh, god of Fire

Tamna-Seh, goddess of the Home

Terrut-Seh, god of War, is the king of the Drakine gods. He is stronger than all the rest, and they humble themselves before him when his fierce wrath causes the thunder to roll and the lightning to strike. He is also the patron of kings and nobles.

Nethad-Seh, god of Magic, is Terrut-Seh's brother. It was he who gave magical powers to the dragons the gods created, and in turn to Drakine who possess the Gift. His irresistible spells make him almost as mighty in battle as Terrut-Seh.

Strala-Seh, goddess of the Sky, is Terrut-Seh's wife. She covers the world with the blanket of Night, and lifts it again when Day arrives. She sets the sun and moon in their courses and keeps them moving at a steady pace, and she gives rain to the Drakine that their crops may grow.

Dargon-Seh, god of Earth, blesses the crops of the Drakine, so that they may grow when Strala-Seh's rain falls upon them. He is master of all things within or on the earth, including animals, plants, trees, mountains, rocks, and buried treasure.

Berrem-Seh, god of Fire, is both a blessing and a curse to his people. He gives them fire as he gave it to the dragons, but as a tool rather than a weapon, that they may warm themselves, forge metals, cook food, and more. Yet he also causes wildfires and housefires when not properly propitiated through burnt offerings of animals and valuables. Since the Drakine burn their dead, he is the ruler of the underworld as well — the god who leads Drakine

souls to the afterlife and watches over them there, administering punishment or reward as appropriate based on how a Drakine lived his life.

Tamna-Seh, goddess of the Home, is wife to both Dargon-Seh and Berrem-Seh. She sees to the health, safety, security, and prosperity of the Drakine, and every Drakine home has a small shrine to her.

THE SORRAG

Where Men, Dwarves, Elves, and Orcs have both selestines and demons, the Drakine have but one divine servant — the *sorrage*. A *sorrage* looks like a Drakine god in its upper body (though nowhere near as large, strong, or majestic), but its lower body is two serpent-like tails. The gods send red and gold-scaled *sorrage* to Drakine who have lived well and deserve the protection and aid of heaven, and black and green-scaled *sorrage* to punish, hinder, and even slay Drakine who have lived evilly or betrayed their people. But red or black, the *sorrage* defend the Drakine and their gods against their enemies; the chronicles of both Men and Drakine record many tales of wars between them and Asvalak... though the chronicles differ as to the victor.

THE GODS OF OTHER RACES

While the gods described above are the most commonly-worshipped in Ambrethel, they're not the only ones. The Lesser Races have their own deities.

THE DARK ELVES

The *Hwalurulasiolar* were once normal Elves, but Toltiradalyrunorion (Kilbern) darkened their skins and sent them to live far underground because of their worship of Isarowluthar (Mordak) and the acts of great cruelty they performed in his name. The Dark Elves worship Isarowluthar, for though he could not prevent their exile he helped them survive it, and eventually to thrive in their new home.

The dark elven sacred texts, written on paper made from the woody stalks of giant underground mushrooms and indicted with inks brewed from the blood of Elves, say that Isarowluthar set three of his children as their special guardians. Thûgo-radanirion, god of strength, makes the Dark Elves mighty in battle, and lets them prevail against their many enemies both in the Sunless Realms and on the surface. Sikirarthasanaila, goddess of stealth and guile, likewise aids them, but in the opposite way, by giving them the cleverness and caverncraft to outwit their foes. And Whandurashaneshir is the god of dark elven magic, who gifts dark elven wizards with spells and forges enchanted blades for dark elven warriors.

Dark elven priests wear purple robes woven from the skins of giant worms, pectorals shaped from the husks of giant spiders, and headdresses made from the alchemically-stiffened skins of giant lizards. In their ceremonies they carry iron lamps that burn with an eerie, phosphorescent witchfire.

THE ERQIGDLIT

After the gods punished them for their sins by transforming them into dog-headed humanoids, the Erqigdlit chose in turn to reject the gods who had “betrayed” them — all but one. For when the gods debated what to do with the Erqigdlit, a single god — Sûnac, the god of dogs — spoke in their defense, though they had never offered him any special worship before. Since Sûnac dared to ask mercy for the Erqigdlit, the gods chose not to slay them, but to give them a head like unto Sûnac’s. Therefore the Erqigdlit chose to take Sûnac as their god in all things: their protector, their provider, the Packlord, He Whose Howl Shakes The Stars.

The Erqigdlit have few true priests, though. Mostly each of them worships Sûnac in his own way, sometimes at small communal shrines erected wherever many of them live. Those who do become his priests wear kilts and wrap-around mantles colored a dull yellow.

THE LEOMACHI AND PAKASA

Those who speak Rarshas worship Oncazha, who usually takes the form of a gigantic, jaguar-like cat. Sometimes hunters find his enormous tracks on the ground, and following those tracks always leads them to game. Those destined to become Oncazha’s priests and priestesses wake up one morning in late childhood to find that he has marked them with his pawprint in the middle of their foreheads. Thereafter they are schooled in his ways, and in time join his clergy.

THE RAN-TARI

Most tribes of Ran-tari worship the god Bhatrak, whom they depict as a gargantuan frog (but who has the power to assume other forms, such as that of a tall, handsome, strong Ran-tari). They consider some giant frogs and toads to be Bhatrak’s servants, or in the case of truly gigantic members of those species his avatars. When they can, they built temples to him, complete with golden frog-idols.

The priests and priestesses of Bhatrak wear a special vest or cape made of strips of colored cloth, with the colors and patterns indicating rank or authority. They carry staffs made of wood and carved with frogs or frog-like shapes on top; sometimes they enchant these staffs.

THE SESHURMA

The gods of the Seshurma are like those of the Drakine, but they differ in name, appearance, and attributes, and there are eight of them (a goddess of water and god of hunting being the two additions). Seshurma priests build and tend temples deep inside the swamps and jungles where their people live, decorating them as they may with mosaics, wall-paintings, and objects of gold and silver.

It’s said that a few tribes of Seshurma, crueler and more predacious than their kin, worship S’taa’sha, the reptile-god of Talarshand. Like the Talarshandi priests, these Lizard-Folk sacrifice Men (and members of other races) to the Great Scaly One in horrific ceremonies of fire and blood.

THE SHARTHAK

Those who have suffered the depredations of the shark-men sometimes claim they are godless beings, or at best worshippers of Mordak, for no other god could love them. But in truth, their cities under the waves contain temples to a dread and powerful god — the Great Devourer, Shatharak. Shatharak they depict as a gargantuan four-armed Sharthak, each of his teeth as large as an adult Sharthak, accompanied by a vast school of giant sharks who obey his every command. When they return from raids on surface cities or attacks on ships, Sharthak warriors give a fifth part of their loot to Shatharak, that he might again bless them with prey.

Shatharak’s priests are all elderly Sharthak — called “Toothless Ones” though they may yet have many teeth — who are no longer fit for raiding or fighting. Through him they gain the power to help the warriors and keep the community safe from danger. In addition to their black manta-skin robes, they wear much jewelry and other adornments made from gold taken in Sharthak raids.

THE TROLLS

The Trolls worship an extensive pantheon of gods, one with even more major deities than that of the High Faith. Chief among them are Ghornak, the creator-god who uses entire mountains for his throne; Urgrel, the battle-god, who gives Trolls strength and endurance; and Larkarn, who gave the Trolls fire and taught them smithing, weaving, and all other skills.

Trolls build their temples underground, in enormous caverns hollowed out specifically for that purpose. Their priests wear voluminous ochre-colored hooded robes and have a holy literature nearly as extensive as that of the High Church.

RELIGION



The religions of Ambrethel are, in many ways, as varied as the gods themselves — though the fact that so many peoples worship the same gods (even if the names differ) creates some similarities and links between those faiths.

THE HIGH CHURCH

The largest religion in the world, the one with the most temples and followers, is the High Church of the High Faith. It stands in opposition to the Hargeshite faith, which it considers a great heresy and terrible danger to the souls of millions of people. It predominates in the Westerlands, Mhorecia, and much of Mitharia.

The symbol of the High Church, displayed at all temples and shrines, and carried by all priests in the form of an amulet or talisman, is a blue four-sided “star,” each side slightly concave and of equal length. A few cultures or regions have different holy symbols. For example, the Indusharans use a small silver bell as their talisman, and the Kumasians two diamonds in outline (one inside the other).

Doctrines And Practices

While many variations on High Church ceremonies and practices exist throughout Ambrethel, the core elements of the Church's theology and doctrines remain more or less the same everywhere.

The High Church is a henotheistic faith, meaning that all priests and worshippers follow all the gods. There's no such thing as a “priest of Ophel” or a “temple of Kilbern” — there are just High Church priests (who worship all the gods) and High Church temples (where all the gods are worshipped). However, some priests, such as members of the orders described on pages 177-80, do feel a particular affinity for a particular god or esaile and offer special worship to him, and some temples emphasize certain gods over others for various reasons. Similarly, a person who seeks aid or comfort regarding a subject within a particular god's purview usually offers up a special prayer just to that god.

BLUE, SCARLET, AND GREY

Despite the henotheism of the High Faith, there are a few gods that no right-thinking person, be he priest or layman, worships. High Church theology divides the gods into three groups: Blue; Grey; and Scarlet.

The *Blue Gods* are those gods generally regarded as being friendly and helpful to their worshippers (at least in the proper circumstances).

They look after their followers, providing aid and comfort in times of trouble, and strength in times of weakness. The Skyfather is, of course, the greatest of these gods, but more gods fall into this category than any other.

The *Grey Gods* represent forces or concepts that sometimes help Men, but sometimes do not, and whose attention and affection Men cannot rely on. These include most gods of natural phenomena (such as Almandré) and Varidon, god of magic. Men worship the Grey Gods, but are ever wary of them.

The *Scarlet Gods* are not worshipped in the temples of the High Church, save perhaps indirectly as part of the worship of all the gods. They are dark and evil, bearing malice toward Men and all living beings; they enjoy seeing people suffer. Mordak, the Black God, leads this group; Asvalak, Forgil, and Vabanak belong to it as well. The only true worshippers these gods have are Men who are evil themselves — members of cruel cults who seek power over other Men, black-hearted necromancers and witches, and priests whose minds turn wholly to Evil.

CEREMONIES AND PRAYERS

At most High Church temples, monasteries, abbeys, and chapels, a typical day begins at dawn, with the Ceremony of the Greeting of the Radiant One. This brief prayer of thanks to Ophel is followed by a longer worship ceremony to all the gods. The priests then break their fast and go about their daily work.

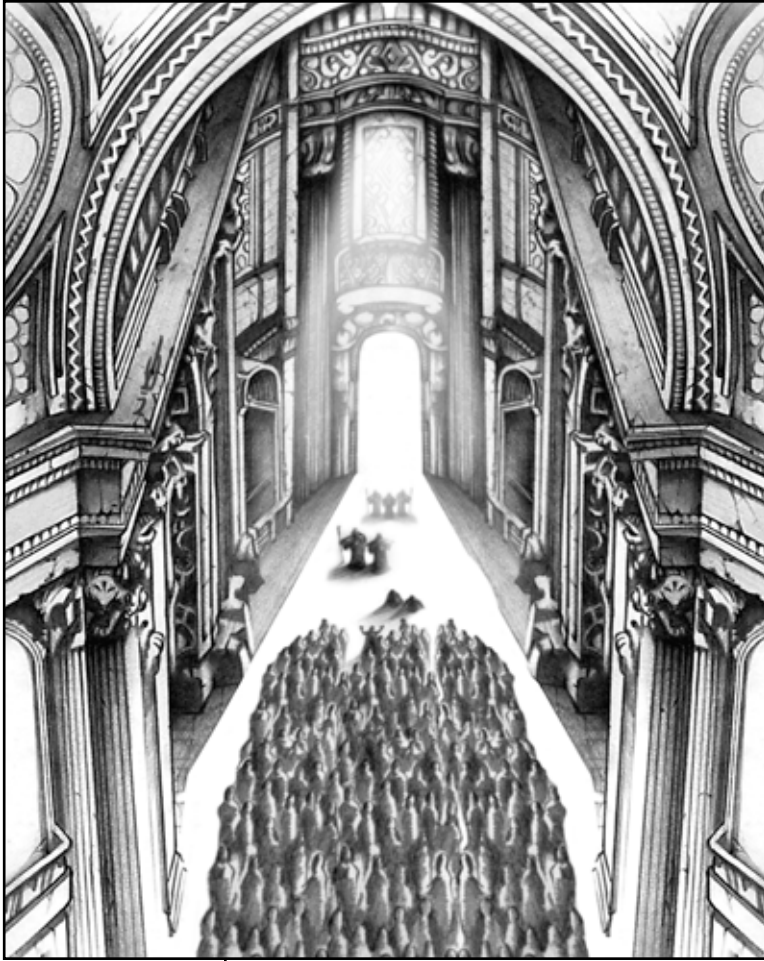
Work stops half an hour before noon for another worship ceremony, followed by the mid-day meal. The priests then continue their work — writing or illuminating manuscripts, raising food for the temple, copying holy books, building or repairing the temple, and so forth — until the sixth hour after noon. Then they have the largest meal of the day, followed by a worship ceremony lasting at least an hour (and in some temples, as much as two hours). After that they have a little time to themselves, and then go to sleep.

Lay people who live near a temple are welcome to attend any of these ceremonies. However, only the most devout tend to do this; most folk wait for special occasions to attend temple.

Holy Days

But of course, not all days are “typical.” On Freeday (or an equivalent day in other calendars; see page 165), the priests hold a special morning worship ceremony which many layfolk attend. This ceremony usually lasts one to two hours.

In the Westerlands, the High Church observes five High Holy Days. On these days, all the faith-



ful attend temple for worship ceremonies lasting almost all morning. In the afternoon they're free to celebrate in other ways. (In other lands, the Church chooses other appropriate days on which to perform these special rites.)

Additionally, many days throughout the year are specially devoted to a particular god or esaile. In that case, the priests usually perform a ceremony dedicated primarily to that being, featuring his trappings and symbols above all others.

HOLY BOOKS

The main holy text of the High Church is the *Benethar Sacur*, or Book of the Holy Word. It contains the holy truth of how the gods created the world, stories about each of the gods, details of the gods' worship, and much else that is needful. Thanks to scribing-spells, every priest has his own copy of the *Benethar Sacur*, but some of the most devout still prefer to carry a copy they have written out themselves. The memorizing of passages or entire chapters of the *Benethar Sacur* is considered a sign of piety, and more than a few priests can recite the entire book by heart.

Just as the doctrines and practices of the High Church tend to differ a little from region to region (see below), so too does the text of the *Benethar Sacur*. For example, the Indusharan version tells a slightly different story of the creation of Men. Similarly, the elven, dwarven, and orcish texts differ here and there. However, the vast majority of the text remains identical from place to place.

The *Benethar Sacur* is not the High Church's only holy text; over the millennia tens of thousands of pages of doctrinal discussion (and debate!), holy prophecy, and theological analysis have been written, much of it inspired by the gods themselves. Chief among these secondary texts is *The Skyfather's Wont*, written in 1218 FE by the priest Sanhedrin, who received the holy words directly from Kilbern himself. The *Wont* sets forth the Skyfather's commands and advice for leading a just and right-ful life. Its often pithy sayings and instructions have become commonplace throughout the world (particularly in the Westerlands), and the book itself has influenced the legal decisions and law codes of more than a few kings and nobles.

DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE

According to the High Faith, when a person dies his soul goes to Elysium (if he was a good and righteous person) or the Netherworld (if he was evil, cruel, greedy, or a blasphemer). In Elysium, a soul becomes part of the Skyfather's Host and spends eternity in bliss, doing whatever it desires. In the Netherworld, where Mordak reigns, evil souls are rewarded for their wickedness by becoming part of the Host of the Damned, which the Black God (or powerful necromancers) sometimes release into the world to wreak havoc, or bring back to unlife as various types of undead monsters.

Since the Blue Gods would prefer to see evil souls punished instead of rewarded, and the Scarlet Gods would rather torment the souls of the righteous than let them enjoy eternal bliss, divine beings war with one another for control over the souls of the dying. Es. Bailiar uses his holy net to try to capture evil souls before they reach the Netherworld, so that he may take them to his palace and torment them over sacred fires until the evil passes from them or they are destroyed. From the Netherworld, Malavage the Demonhanded rises with his Accursed Hook to snare the souls of good folk so the Black Gods may torture them, perhaps turning them to evil, binding them into Evil enchanted items, or simply destroying them for the sheer pleasure of it.

THE GODSBAN

At times, a king or a people turns away from the High Church, rejecting its doctrines or the commands of its priests, perhaps even descending into heresy. If such actions greatly offend the gods, they will lay the *Godsban* on that people. When the Godsban applies, no priest of the High Church may minister to any of that people, nor perform worship ceremonies for them, nor cast spells of divine magic for them. The offenders are completely cut off from all spiritual grace and aid, and the soul of anyone who dies under the Godsban goes to the Netherworld to be tormented by the Scarlet Gods.

Since the Godsban has such a powerful effect on peoples' lives (both temporal and spiritual), its imposition causes great dismay. If it was a ruler or noble who caused the Godsban to fall, rioting and his overthrow at the hands of his subjects are not unknown, for the Godsban terrifies most folk.

However, since the gods can make their will known through their priests, and even speak directly to a layperson if they must, the Godsban rarely falls; few people are foolish enough not to change their behavior after receiving a warning from the Skyfather himself!

Much to the aggravation of some priests, who would like to see the priesthood's influence in society increased, neither the Bonifact nor any other priest can invoke the Godsban. Only the gods themselves can impose it, thus preventing it from becoming a political weapon.

VARIATIONS OF THE HIGH CHURCH

As mentioned above, High Church practices and doctrine tend to vary a little from place to place. Some of these differences become extreme, leading to long and intense theological arguments between priests. Only on the rarest of occasions do the gods intervene and proclaim the holy truth; they seem to prefer that Men work these matters out for themselves.

Heltica is currently experiencing a religious conflict relating to the proper interpretation of parts of the *Benethar Sacur* and possible corruption within the priesthood. See page 149 for more information.

The Indusharan High Church uses an iconography and ceremonies that differ significantly from those of the Westerlands, Mhorecia, or northern Mitharia. It depicts the gods with different appearances (often including strange attributes such as multiple arms, eyes, or heads), and its version of the *Benethar Sacur* does not agree in all particulars with that of the rest of the Church. Furthermore, while Indusharan priests and worshippers acknowledge the authority of the Bonifact, they're usually more inclined to listen to their *dihani* (the highest-ranking priests in their religious hierarchy) than to the pronouncements from Ytheis.

The Karellian High Church includes several gods among the ranks of the most important gods that the rest of the Church does not. See page 151 for more information.

The Keldravians consider their king a semi-divine figure — a belief the rest of the Church labels the Keldravian Heresy, even though (to the puzzlement of many) the Godsban has not fallen. See page 61 for more information.

In the Kumasian High Church, the order of worship of certain gods varies. The Kumasians believe that Kirru (Meára) is the most powerful and important of the gods, and that Vonos (Kilbern) serves her. Their iconography also changes the appearance and attributes of the gods somewhat, though not so much as Indushara does.

The Tornathian High Church uses slightly different rituals and iconography than found elsewhere in the Westerlands. However, the differences are so slight that even the most hard-nosed priest can't quite call them heresy.

The Tyrandine High Church considers the Tyrandine queen a spiritual figure and Church leader. See page 89 for more information.

The Priesthood

The priesthood of the High Church in the Westerlands is among the most detailed and elaborate in the world; only the Thúnese religion and some Vornakkian faiths have similarly well-developed priesthoods.

BECOMING A PRIEST

The High Church permits both men and women to take holy vows and hold any rank within the priesthood. Many are the priestesses of the High Church, and several times woman have risen to become the Bonifact. Priests and priestesses may marry, but only within the priesthood; their children usually become priests as well.

Training for the priesthood requires many years and usually begins in childhood, when the prospective priest is only ten or eleven years old. The priests recognize within a child the vocation for a religious life, and take such children under their wing to teach them in Church schools. After four to six years of study (depending on aptitude and other factors), an acolyte takes his final holy vows and becomes a *falman*, or monk. Many remain at this level of the priesthood all their lives, content to live and work in a monastery or abbey and further the goals of the Church in their own quiet ways. But those who hear a greater calling study for another two to four years and become true priests.

THE HIGH CHURCH HIERARCHY

The lowest rank of the priesthood (save *falman*) is *taaleh*, a minor priest. After taking his final holy vows, a student ascends to this rank. The Church usually assigns him to serve as a minor functionary in a large temple, or may give him his own temple or roadside chapel in some distant village or other out-of-the-way place. If he does his job well, eventually he receives further responsibilities and authority, becoming a *taal* or true priest.

Beyond the rank of *taal*, ascending in the High Church hierarchy requires taking on a great deal of responsibility, and overseeing the religious lives of many people. The next rank is *shalan*, given to a priest who has authority over a temple, abbey, monastery, or other institution with many lesser priests. Shalans in turn answer to *alarchs*, who have authority over many temples within a region or fief (sometimes an entire small realm).

All the *alarchs* of a kingdom or region answer to an *archoth*, the highest-ranking priest that most lay worshippers can ever hope to see (and that only a few times in their lives). Archoths are priests of great holiness, wisdom, and power. The greatest and most pious of them may in time become *ecclesiarchs*. There are only a few dozen ecclesiarchs throughout the world, each responsible for all temples and worshippers within a region.

The head of the High Church, the Anointed of the Gods, from whom the wisdom of the Blue Gods flows, is the *Bonifact*. He is chosen for life by the ecclesiarchs, usually from among their own ranks but sometimes from other priests when the gods

OTHER RACES AND THE HIGH FAITH

Many other races than Men follow the High Faith, each in its own way.

The Dwarves have a priesthood of five ranks: *Menzeg* (Junior Priest); *Farzeg* (Senior Priest); *Khaldazeg* (High Priest); *Zorelzeg* (True Priest); and *Zegtarzeg* (Priest of Priests). The *Zegtarzeg* is equivalent to the Bonifact, and very few *Zorelzeg* (similar to the Ecclesiarchs) exist. Most of the authority within the Dwarven High Church is wielded by the *Khaldazeg*, who have final control over who's chosen to be a priest and where priests are posted. Dwarven worship ceremonies almost always take place underground; dwarven temples are usually filled with elaborate stonemasonry and artwork, and are among the most beautiful structures in the world.

The Elves have little in the way of a formalized priesthood, body of ritual, or the like. An Elf who feels a religious calling follows it as he will, preaching and ministering to others when and where he feels he should. Most elven forests have at least one sacred grove where the presence and beneficence of the gods seems stronger than normal.

Likewise, the Orcs have no organized priest to speak of — in fact, a group of Orcs typically has a shaman, not a priest. When two or more priests quarrel over who has the authority in a given situation, they settle the matter with a duel. Each shaman conducts worship ceremonies when he wants to, how he wants to.

so inspire them. Within the Church, the Bonifact's word is law, and many kings and worshippers treat it that way as well. The Bonifact resides at the Cathedral Meruvoisin in Ytheis, the largest High Church temple in all the world.

As of 5000 SE, the Bonifact is Santarin, a priest born in Mezendria who has held the Holy Seat for almost ten years. An adventurer for a brief period in his youth, the Bonifact is regarded man of awe-inspiring virtue and piety, not to mention great holy powers. Still relatively young and vigorous, he's expected to remain Bonifact for at least another two decades... though the rise of Kal-Turak, which weighs heavily on his soul, may change that.

Holy Vestments

Priests of the High Church wear blue vestments in the form of long robes that fasten down the side with sleeves that become wider at the cuff. The collar of the robe rises about an inch to circle the neck. All priests wear the holy talisman of the faith (see above), usually on a necklace. The higher-ranking the priest, the more elaborate his vestments; he may add doublets, surcoats, mantles, and other garments as needed or dictated by Church doctrine.

The vestments of priests from other regions or cultures may differ. For example, Indusharan holy garb consists of a loose, long-sleeved, single-piece robe of blue, plus a piece of colored or patterned cloth wrapped loosely around the waist and legs to hold the robe in but still allow some freedom of movement. Both genders usually wear the holy talisman on a chain around the neck (or sometimes the wrist); they never cut their hair, instead binding it up around the head in turban-like fashion but allowing a single braided ponytail to fall down the back (but no lower than halfway down).

Other Priesthoods

As indicated by the Turakian Religious Rank Table on page 201, in other lands and cultures the hierarchy of the High Church may differ slightly not just in terms of titles, but the ranks and positions within the priesthood. Among the Bonifact's many servants are priests whose job it is to keep track of these matters and resolve all issues of "religious protocol" when priests from different branches of the Church work together. But regardless of region or culture, all of the faithful recognize the authority of the Bonifact to some degree.

Priests And Politics

As one of the primary institutions in society, the High Church wields enormous social and political influence. A disapproving priesthood can topple a king; a vigilant priesthood can lead the charge against incursions of heresy, monsters, or Evil. When the Church indicates its opinion of a particular subjects, many worshippers take that opinion as the equivalent of religious doctrine and follow it accordingly.

Despite this, the High Church usually tries to distance itself from secular politics on a day-to-day basis. It has enough to do just ministering to the needs of the people and making sure all proper reli-

gious observances are made. It doesn't also have the time to review government activities and express its opinion. But in times of crisis, when the need is great, or if some policy affects the Church itself, it will be quick to make its feelings known.

Temples

The temples of the High Church vary from land to land and century to century in terms of architectural style, size, and other factors, but certain constants remain. First, almost all temples are "elevated" to some degree — they're built on the top of a hill (even an artificial one), and usually require worshippers to ascend a broad staircase to reach the main doors.

The main doors usually lead straight into the main worship hall. This is a room large enough to hold many worshippers; it's usually circular, oval, or five-sided in shape. At the center of the room, mounted on a tall dais, is the altar, where the priests stand to perform religious ceremonies and read from the holy books. Most altars are rectangular, but square, circular, or five-sided ones are not unknown.

All but the smallest chapels and temples also contain quarters where the priests and temple servants live, as well as kitchens, dining halls, scriptoriums, libraries, and other facilities related to Church business or life. Large temples may become small cities in and of themselves!

THE HARGESHITE FAITH

The Hargeshite faith is followed in Vashkhor, Ashurna, Khepras, and some parts of Vornakkia and Mhorecia. It's similar in most ways to the High Church (allowing for linguistic and cultural variation). But it has some profound differences, and those differences have given rise to the greatest religious schism in world history. In many ways, the High Faith has never fully recovered from the breaking-away of the Hargeshites.

The symbol of the Hargeshites is the Twin Birds — mystic birds resembling beautiful blue doves with long forked tails. They're usually depicted flying past each other, or standing back-to-back so that one partially overlaps the other, and sometimes their tails curl around and sort of frame the whole symbol.

Doctrines And Practices

The main points of difference between the High Church and the Hargeshite faith, as proclaimed in the writings of Hargesh himself and elaborated on by generations of later scholars and philosophers, are as follows. (For topics not covered, assume general agreement between the two religions, but with the necessary changes in points of detail.)

First, the Hargeshites do not recognize the existence of the "Grey Gods" as a category. To them, all gods are either Blue or Scarlet, and to be

worshipped accordingly. While seemingly trivial, this point of doctrine represents one of the most profound differences between the two religions; it's been the cause of wars and many other conflicts. The accompanying table lists which gods fall into which categories in each faith.

Second, while the Hargeshite faith is nominally as henotheistic as the High Church, it emphasizes that aspect of the faith less. As a result, over time the priesthood has become riven with factions of priests who focus most of their worship on one god they favor. This in turn creates a complex web of religious politics that sometimes turns violent. See page 104.

Third, the Hargeshites consider the hierakte of Vashkhor to be a sacred, even semi-divine, figure. While his word is not as important as that of the *Lataro* (the Hargeshite bonifactor), its religious weight is second only to his.

Fourth, the Hargeshite faith provides far fewer roles for women. There are no Hargeshite priestesses, only priests, and priests cannot marry. The only positions women have within the Hargeshite church are as *fah-shala* ("nuns" leading ascetic lifestyles in isolated temples devoted solely to them), *shalharun* ("holy prostitutes" made available to the priests on certain holidays), and as temple servants and slaves. Many Hargeshite priests regard all women as unholy and will not touch, work with, or even look upon them if at all possible.

Fifth, Hargeshite doctrine tends to look warily (at best) upon races other than Men. Since no other people has adopted the Hargeshite faith, some priests have concluded that Dwarves, Elves, Drakine and other races are all corrupt creations of Zivar, and to be avoided... or destroyed. The Elves of Melurashondar's Retreat are testimony to the fanaticism with which some Hargeshites subscribe to this belief.

Sixth, Hargeshite worship ceremonies often involve minor sacrifices of small animals, primarily a particular type of goose-like bird raised in temple compounds. While High Church ceremonies may feature symbolic sacrifices of food, wine, oil, or the like, they almost never include the spilling of blood.

Seventh, the Hargeshite faith has different holy days and religious festivals, based on the Vashkhoran calendar (see page 165).

HOLY BOOKS

The main Hargeshite sacred text is the *Kutsal Deftair*. It's similar to the *Benethar Sacur* in most respect (in fact, the two are identical in many passages), but includes the complete text of Hargesh's writings and other additions, making it significantly larger and heavier. The Hargeshites have many other books as well — if anything, their written commentaries and debates are more extensive than those of the High Church.

BLUE, SCARLET, AND GREY

God	High Church	Hargeshite	Sphere Of Authority
Almandré	Grey	Blue	Nature, the seasons, time, fate
Asvalak	Scarlet	Scarlet	War, battle, slaughter, weapons, warriors
Bandaro	Grey	Blue	Water, rivers, lakes, streams
Brandon	Blue	Blue	Forests, hunting, hunters
Caligan	Grey	Blue	Trade, money, merchants, prosperity
Eurinda	Blue	Blue	Animals, plants, trees
Faya	Blue	Blue	Beauty, love, marriage, childbirth, children
Forgil	Scarlet	Scarlet	Thieves and thieving
Hornbrek	Grey	Blue	Storms, rain, archery, war
Hospin	Blue	Blue	Healing, succor, mercy, kindness
Ishander	Blue	Blue	Smiths, metalworking, alchemy
Kilbern	Blue	Blue	Sky, justice, truth, order
Korthund	Grey	Blue	Mountains, rocks, stones, metals
Lantiphone	Blue	Blue	Crafts, arts
Lithira	Blue	Blue	Agriculture, growth, farming
Meára	Blue	Blue	Earth, fertility
Mordak	Scarlet	Scarlet	Darkness, evil, the underworld, death
Ophel	Blue	Blue	The sun, fire, light, day
Saaltus	Grey	Blue	The sea, sailors, ships
Saléa	Blue	Blue	The moon, nighttime
Sirella	Grey	Blue	Wind, clouds, fog
Vabanak	Scarlet	Scarlet	Necromancy, black magic, the undead
Varidon	Grey	Blue	Magic, wizards
Ziandwyrth	Scarlet	Blue	Chaos, luck, humor, madness

The Priesthood

The hierarchy of the Hargeshite church is roughly the same as that of the High Church, though it lacks some ranks (see page 201). But as mentioned above and on page 104, it's a much more politically complicated organization. Priests tend to organize themselves into factions, and sometimes those factions fight among themselves in various ways.

All this affects the recruitment and training of new priests. Technically, a candidate for priestly training presents himself at a temple, where the priests evaluate his fitness for the job and decide whether to admit him to study (they rarely accept any candidate over 14 years of age). After his training, the new priest is free to choose which faction he will join. But that's rarely what happens. In most cases, the temple the prospective acolyte visits, or the priest with whom he first talks, steers him toward a particular faction. Most acolytes choose a faction within a month of beginning their studies, and competition among the acolyte-factions is as fierce as that among the priests themselves.

VESTMENTS

The main Hargeshite vestment is a double-breasted robe tied with two sashes (one whose ends dangle to the right, one to the left); the respective colors of robe and sashes indicate rank and the like. The Twin Birds symbol of the Hargeshite doctrine is usually in evidence in at least one place (such as on a chain around the neck), and may also be embroidered into the robes, attached to the sash-ends as weights, or something similar. The priests keep their heads and faces clean-shaven.

OTHER RELIGIONS

For information about other priesthods and religions, refer to the descriptions of the gods on pages 213-18. Since those are lesser religions, and usually followed in one small area, all that needs to be said about their priests and priesthods can be found there.

THÛNESE RELIGION

The Thûnese have no name for their religion — they simply refer to it as “the religion,” since they consider all other religions false and foolish. And when the sorcerer-priests finally free the gods, the rest of Ambrethel shall learn this truth as well.

The Thûnese religion has no single holy symbol, unless maybe the uneven-sided and asymmetrical pentagon that is the footprint of many Thûnese temples. Instead, each god has its own symbol: for S'thlaghha, a Sapphire Key; for N'ggog-Eyl and Ûm'vaveht, the Two Pillars bound in a single chain; for Yûlg'gwtha, a Nine-Rayed Starburst (in the center of which is inscribed a special rune with no meaning in any language); and for Shothu-H'gyth, a Broken Spiral.

Doctrines And Practices

Like the High Church, the Thûnese religion is a henotheistic faith. However, even though every priest worships all the gods, as in Vashkhor most of them choose one god to propitiate especially, and it is this god whom that priest works most diligently to free. Unlike Vashkhor, the level of competition and bickering between adherents of different gods is usually minor; all the priests understand they're working together for the benefit of the gods (and themselves!).

The doctrines, theology, customs, and ceremonies of the Thûnese religion are shrouded in secrecy. Most rituals are performed inside temples, by priests alone, and no layperson or unbeliever may look upon them. Some ceremonies, particularly ones involving human sacrifice, occur outside or at sacred sites where others may observe. All known ceremonies involve lengthy readings from holy books, the use of fire (torches and candles, at the very least), and patterns of complex movements by junior priests around the chief priest conducting the ritual (who never leaves the place where he stands).

HOLY DAYS

The Thûnese sorcerer-priests keep precise track of time and the movement of the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars both Greater and Lesser. Their religious calendar, described on page 165, contains a multitude of holy days, each with its own specific rituals and rites — and a sorcerer-priest must learn them all by heart. Their most holy days come at the end of one *Thûgogra* (a “Great Cycle” of 60 years) and beginning of another.

HOLY BOOKS

Similarly, the Thûnese religion has many sacred texts and scrolls, but no one of them has achieved the predominance of the *Benethar Sacur* or *Kutsal Defair*. The holy texts belong to the temples, not the priests themselves; they're inscribed in folios larger than a man can easily carry, with pages made of the carefully-treated hide and wing-leather of certain species of giant bat. Many mages throughout Ambrethel eagerly desire to look at

the Thûnese books, for they contain strange spells known nowhere else.

DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE

The Thûnese believe that after they die, their souls go to join their gods and serve them in all things that they might desire. A Thûnese who is worthy may have his soul sent back to be reincarnated in another body, or for the sorcerer-priests to use in the crafting of enchanted items and undead guardians. Some sorcerer-priests have the power to remember their past lives; a few claim to be able to recall dozens or hundreds of past lives with crystal clarity.

The Priesthood

Becoming a sorcerer-priest of Thûn is no easy task, for the gods would not have the weak and talentless serve them. Only he who is strong of both body and mind can survive the trials placed before a potential acolyte.

The sorcerer-priests refuse to examine a postulant (as they call someone who seeks to join their ranks) until at least his sixteenth birthday. They cast spells upon the postulant to ascertain his fitness for the role of sorcerer-priest and his desirability to the gods. If he passes that test, the sorcerer-priests then test both his wit and his strength with a series of puzzles and challenges. Given the difficulty and dangerousness of all these tests, postulants who fail any of them die, or are kept for use as human sacrifices, or are turned away from the temple in shame.

Once accepted into the priesthood, a postulant becomes an acolyte and goes to live in a temple. For twenty years he studies and trains, having no contact with anyone from the outside world. His wellbeing and even life are in the hands of the sorcerer-priests, any one of whom may use him as they see fit. If he survives this period of study, he becomes an *izûth* (a “monk,” the lowest-ranking Thûnese priest).

An *izûth* who serves well becomes a *k'ngraya* after a few years. As long as he continues to perform his duties without major difficulty or problems, he slowly but surely ascends the ranks of the priesthood, at least as far as *yllyth-om* (the equivalent of an alarch). Thereafter positions in the priesthood are scarce, and only those who truly deserve them for reasons of piety and power (and sometimes treachery) receive them. Any severe infractions, failures, blasphemies, sins, or other problems along the way not only tend to bring a sorcerer-priest's career to a screeching halt, they may result in his becoming a human sacrifice at the next major ceremony. (See page 201 for a list of the ranks in the Thûnese priesthood.)

For more about Thûnese sorcerer-priests and Thûnese society, see page 121.

VESTMENTS

Thûnese sorcerer-priests wear long robes made of rich material, embroidered with arcane runes and holy symbols in two panels running down each side of the body. Red, green, black, and gold

are the colors used for the robes; the patterning of the colors, plus the specific runes and symbols on the panels, indicate a sorcerer-priest's rank. They cover their heads with featureless skullcaps, but the Thùgong Vai wears a crown-like adornment made of copper instead.

Temples

Most Thùnese temples are five-sided step pyramids, but the sides of the pyramid are not uniform in length, nor arranged with symmetry; to the eyes of a non-Thùnese, the effect is confusing and ugly, perhaps even disturbing. Most (but not all) of the temples are not hollow; instead, they have separate buildings nearby where the sorcerer-priests live and work. Some of these temple-complexes are enormous, with hundreds or thousands of people (plus nearly as many slaves).

THE DRAKINE

The Drakine faith is an old and proud one that has changed little over the millennia. Even between Arduna and Orumbar the religion remains largely the same, thanks to the speaking-spells used by the priests.

The sacred symbol of the Drakine religion is a sort of rising gout of flame. In talisman form it's usually made of gold, perhaps with precious gems inset for a particularly wealthy or devout priest.

Doctrines And Practices

The Drakine have little interest in teaching Men, Dwarves, or other races about their religion, but a few things have been learned through observation, stolen holy texts, and the like. The Drakine have an elaborate theology, one that most Men and other races find strange, even confusing.

CEREMONIES AND PRAYERS

For Drakine priests (*sehma*), and many lay Drakine as well, the twenty-four hour day is divided into six four-hour periods (*truzhai*), one devoted to each of the Drakine gods. The priests stop whatever they're doing (or awaken, if asleep) to perform a ten-minute ritual honoring each god at the beginning of his *truzha*. Each day some of the priests attached to a temple have the duty to perform longer ceremonies honoring one or more of the gods, which means there's usually a ceremony being conducted in the main hall of a Drakine temple at least half of the time during an average day. On holy days, the main hall may never empty.

A typical Drakine religious ceremony involves a great deal of fire — burning braziers, the eternal flame on the altar, candles and lamps lit or snuffed at various times in various ways, and the like. (It's not unknown for Drakine religious ecstasies to douse themselves in holy oil and set *themselves* on fire... and a few, thanks to holy powers or the grace of the gods, even survive.) In many of the rituals,

sacrifices are performed by slitting the throat of an animal (usually large lizards bred especially for this purpose), collecting its blood in a bowl, and then burning it to ashes in the altar-fire. Despite many lurid stories to the contrary, the Drakine do not sacrifice Men or other races to their gods.

Holy Days

The Drakine calendar (page 166) actually contains relatively few holy days when compared to the calendars of the Westerlands, Vashkhor, or Thùn. Special worship ceremonies, to be attended by all Drakine able to do so, take place at noon on the fifth day of the week; equinoxes and solstices are also times to perform and attend special rites. The five Days of Remembrance at the year's beginning are the holiest days of the Drakine calendar, when all work stops in favor of ceremonies and celebrations.

HOLY BOOKS

The Drakine have two holy books. The first is the *Crengallen*, a comparatively short text carried by every priest (and many devout lay worshippers as well). Consisting mainly of extended parable-like stories involving such layered symbolism that no non-Drakine could ever hope to fully comprehend, the *Crengallen* serves as both a holy book and a guide to proper living for the Drakine people. Its precepts inhabit and influence Drakine legal codes, business dealings, and childrearing, among other things.



The second is the *Zhedden Tanore*, or “Sacred Commentaries.” Actually an entire library rather than a single book, the *Zhedden Tanore* contains comments on, discussions of, and debates about the words of the *Crengallen*. A special body of Drakine priests convenes a meeting every five years to determine what new works merit inclusion in the Sacred Commentaries.

DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE

As discussed on page 168, the Drakine burn their dead, thus freeing the soul to continue its journey. As the soul escapes the body, the god Berrem-Seh leads it to the afterlife, where the Three Wise Dragons preside over it and judge its conduct and merit in life. If it lived a good and true life, Berrem-Seh takes it on to the Land of the Happy Dead, where it enjoys its just reward. If it lived a cruel, sinful, or evil life, Berrem-Seh takes it to the Houses of Torment to be punished. Once it receives sufficient punishment to balance out its wickedness, the torturers release it to the Land.

The Priesthood

The Drakine believe that those who are destined to become priests are marked by the gods from their very first day. Special priests gifted with the holy power to see the “gods’ mark” travel the land, examining babies and small children. When they find a future priest, the child is taken from his parents and consigned to the care of the nearest temple, where the priests raise him to join their ranks. At age 18, he formally joins the priesthood.

The Drakine priesthood is a simple one, with only three ranks. Most of the priests are *sehma*, meaning simply “priest.” The *sehma* perform most religious duties, preside over smaller temples, and in general see to most of the religious needs of the Drakine people. Priests of great skill and piety may

be promoted to the rank of *nairak*. A *nairak* has authority over a large temple, a city, a region, or the like. Presiding over the *nairaka* are the *Macarsa*, the highest-ranking priests, of whom there are only six. They choose whom to elevate to *nairak*, and when one of their number dies elect someone to replace him.

VESTMENTS

A Drakine priest’s garb consists primarily of a sleeveless ankle-length robe in different colors — red for a *sehma*, gold for a *nairak*, and black for a *Macarsa*. But priests also wear elaborate sets of religious jewelry, usually made of plain gold. Bracelets, pectorals, and armbands, all engraved with religious scenes or symbols, predominate, but other types of jewelry (belts made of gold plates, headbands, finger-rings) also appear from time to time.

PRIESTS AND POLITICS

The Drakine priesthood is an important element in the Drakine social structure. Although the priesthood doesn’t have the same authority as a king or noble, priests can easily sway public opinion by speaking against (or in favor of) something. Though most priests prefer not to involve themselves in secular governance, when they realize the gods want them to speak out, they do.

Temples

Drakine temples always have six domes, each covering an area specially devoted to the worship of one of the six gods. In that area, the god’s symbols and motifs predominate, mosaics and paintings depict tales of his triumphs, and there’s a special altar for worshipping him. During religious ceremonies, the priests and worshippers travel from one altar to another in a ritual pattern, performing the proper obeisances at each.

chapter seven:



MYSTIC LORE

TURAKIAN MAGIC

TURAKIAN MAGIC



In Ambrethel, wizards organize magic into twelve major *arcana*, sometimes referred to as “colleges” or “schools” of magic:

Alchemy, the Art of creating potions, elixirs, and the like by mixing and activating various substances and, in the process, unlocking the magical essences within them.

Conjuration, the Art of summoning beings from this and other planes of existence, and of controlling and banishing them.

Divination, the Art of finding and foretelling.

Druidry, spells relating to, using, or affecting animals, plants, and nature in general. (When cast by a Druid, Druidry spells are a form of divine magic.)

Elemental Magic, spells related to the four Greater Elements — Air, Earth, Fire, and Water — as well as the Lesser Elements (such as Ice and Light).

Enchantment, the Art of crafting and using enchanted items.

Necromancy, magic pertaining to life, death, undeath, and related subjects, usually considered a black and evil Art.

Sorcery, magics of the mind, thought, illusion, and deception, regarded by many with suspicion and fear.

Thaumaturgy, the Art of transforming, altering, and redirecting energies and matter, including shape-shifting and related spells.

Theurgy, magics pertaining to various Divine and Infernal powers of Turakia, and celestial magics deriving from the power of the stars.

Witchcraft, an Art combining various lesser aspects of other arts, such as Alchemy, Conjuration, Druidry, Elemental Magic, and Necromancy, as well as hedge magics and other “low spells,” but no less powerful than the other *arcana* for all that.

Wizardry, a catch-all term for magic and spellcasting in general, but also used to refer to any spells or bodies of mystic lore not a part of any other *arcana*, such as spells of general utility (e.g., spells that detect or dispel magic), naming-magic, spells of sheer mystic power, and the like.

LESSER ARCANA

Wizards, being both powerful and pedantic, often argue, quibble, and even fight over the exact demarkations of the *arcana*, or over whether a particular body of spells constitutes an *arcana* of its

own rather than belonging to some other *arcana*. Here’s a brief (and not necessarily complete) list of “lesser” *arcana* recognized by some mages (others would simply lump all of these into Wizardry):

Arcanomancy, magics that work with, concern, or manipulate pure magical energy and fundamental arcane forces.

Areomancy, or battle magic — spells meant to be used in warfare, sieges, and mass combat situations (see *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*, page 237).

Rune Magic, spells that invoke the power of spoken or painted runes, sigils, glyphs, and like symbols, often known to or used by Dwarves and some “primitive” races of Men.

Shamanism, the Art of summoning, contacting, controlling, or otherwise making use of or allowing the caster to interact with spirits.

Song Magic, a form of spellcasting involving the singing of magical songs to create various arcane effects.

Ulronai Warrior-Magic, the warrior-enhancing spells known only to the Ulronai people.

DIVINE MAGIC

Priests’ spells — divine magic — do not belong to any *arcana*. Instead, they’re all cast with a version of the *Power Skill* called *Faith*. Paladins also use this Skill for some of their powers. See page 249 for some divine magic specific to the gods of Ambrethel.

Perceptions Of Magic

Ambrethelan mages consider magic (or the Arts Arcane, as it’s most often referred to) to be a sort of “inexhaustible natural force” or phenomena which they know how to work and manipulate, much like a blacksmith works and manipulates iron to create what he wants (though magic is, of course, infinitely more flexible than metal). It’s a diffuse natural force — even mages who can effortlessly perceive magic don’t see “magical energy” wherever they look the same way ordinary people can perceive earth or air just about anywhere — but it exists everywhere. A cast spell “harnesses” and “manipulates” this force to work the spellcaster’s will; the more skilled and experienced a mage is, the more readily and powerfully he can manipulate magic.

A few spellcasters claim they can “see” magical forces, and cast spells by altering or shaping those forces — they “weave” arcane energy into a fireball

when they cast that spell, or “mold” it into a protective barrier when they cast Wizard’s Shield. Other wizards dismiss this claim as nonsense.

LEARNING SPELLCASTING

The working of magic is a skill, like weaving, goldsmithing, or coopering, but it’s not one that just anybody can learn. Only people with a certain potential or perspective — what most mages call “the Gift” or “the Talent” — have any capacity for learning spellcasting. (Mages sometimes refer to people who cannot cast spells as the Untalented.) The Gift manifests differently in different people. Some have a low Talent and won’t ever be able to learn more than a few weak spells, whereas others are mystical prodigies who may one day possess the power to shake the world. Some mages even believe that Talent comes in “flavors,” indicating which arcana or types of magic the person is best suited for.

Throughout Ambrethel, the process of becoming a wizard begins with a visit to an established mage. If he’s helpful or interested in taking on apprentices, the mage can test the prospective candidate. A simple Detect Magic spell can perceive whether someone has the Talent, and possibly even the degree of his Talent and whether it inclines him toward any particular arcana. Wizards who frequently test potential wizards (such as the Master of Students at a mages’ guild) often have special spells specifically designed to perceive Talent.

Apprenticeship

Once it’s been determined that a person has the Talent, plus the desire to study magic, he has to find a master — an established mage willing to train and teach him. In cities this is rarely a problem; in rural areas it may prove more difficult. However, even if the mage-to-be can find a wizard, there’s no guarantee that wizard wants to take on any apprentices. Most wizards are willing to teach students as part of their obligation to the Arts, but some just want to be left alone. In many cases, the easiest place to find training is a mages’ guild. Guilds by definition want to perpetuate the practice of their “profession,” and bringing in a mage-to-be may lead to an increase in the guild’s potential power and influence.

The exact terms of an apprenticeship can vary. Usually the apprentice trades years of his labor and aid for training, but in some cases a monetary payment changes hands (this is particularly common with guilds). Most apprenticeships are “for life,” meaning until the master chooses to release the apprentice from training, but others specify a term of years. (In either case, the apprenticeship also ends if the master does not fulfill his obligation to teach his apprentice the practice of magic.) During his apprenticeship, an apprentice must obey all of his master’s orders and is subject to his master’s whims; some wizards are notoriously neglectful or abusive masters who care little for the welfare and safety of their apprentices.

Typically, after an apprentice learns enough, his master promotes him to journeyman. He’s still under the bonds of apprenticeship at this point,

but generally has more freedom, and can take on additional responsibilities (such as teaching apprentices). Once the master feels the journeyman has learned enough to be considered a true mage, he releases the journeyman from his apprenticeship to make his own way in the world (though most masters and students maintain some sort of professional relationship throughout their lives). In guilds, strict deadlines may govern the process of going from apprentice to journeyman to master; for example, if an apprentice has not learned all the guild requires of him to graduate to journeyman in a defined number of years, he’s considered untrainable and released from his apprenticeship.

In game terms, there are no specific guidelines indicating how powerful an apprentice or journeyman is; this varies from place to place, master to master, mystical tradition to mystical tradition. (Not to mention campaign to campaign.) Generally speaking, an apprentice would likely be built on about 25-75 points, with the ability to cast a few simple spells of general utility (such as Detect Magic or Wizard’s Hand) plus the requisite Skills. A journeyman would be built on about 76-149 points and have a broader range of spells and Skills. At the 150 Character Point starting level of the campaign, a spellcaster can be considered a true mage, released from any obligation to his master (other than those imposed by affection and respect).

Wild Talents

A few spellcasters, generally ones with high innate levels of Talent, don’t necessarily have to take the road of apprenticeship to attain mystic power. Instead, they’re so naturally inclined to cast spells that they develop the ability to do so themselves, by trial and error and inherent “skill” — much in the same way that some people have a lot of artistic talent and teach themselves how to draw, paint, or sculpt. The mages of Ambrethel refer to these spellcasters as “Wild Talents,” since they’re often considered dangerous, unpredictable, or uncontrollable (though in truth they’re no more so, on the average, than trained mages).

For a Wild Talent, the *Magic Skills* he buys represent not learning and training, but raw talent, ability, and potential. Wild Talents usually have only two or three Magic Skills, and a relatively small selection of spells (often powerful ones). They tend to know few, if any, magic-related KSs and other Skills, since they don’t have the formal training required to tell one type of demon apart from another, conduct spell research, or the like.

MAGIC AS COMMODITY

As with anything else valuable and useful, magic and spells often become a commodity. People who can afford it hire wizards to cast all sorts of spells for them — the Crimson Ring to transport a trader from one city to another in the blink of an eye, a healing-spell to save a sick relative, a spell of foretelling to determine what course of action the person should take, and so forth.

Prices for spellcasting services vary, but one constant applies throughout Ambrethel: it’s expensive. As mages are fond of saying, “power is power,”

and if they casually or cheaply make use of their power for others, not only are they taking money out of their own pockets, but they're diminishing the mystery of it in the eyes of the Untalented. Even in places where there's no mages' guild to regulate the arcane trade, by unspoken agreement wizards tend to keep their prices high.

While each GM should set spellcasting prices at the level most suitable for his campaign, as a general rule of thumb the minimum price of a spell should be 1 gold piece (GP) per -1 in the Magic Roll penalty (minimum of 1 GP). For example, if a spell has a Magic Roll penalty of -4, the minimum cost to cast it is 4 GP. The prices rise from there based on the rarity, desirability, danger, and utility of the spell in question. Healing-spells often cost more; so do spells that provide the customer with some long-term power or benefit. Prices may dip slightly if many "trade wizards" compete for customers (as happens in cities); conversely, they often rise if there's only one wizard in town.

Enchanted Items

Enchanted items follow a different pattern. Unique or powerful ones are almost *never* sold; if someone wants to dispose of one, he trades it to a wizard for other enchanted items (Trisadion is a particularly good place to find a mage willing to make a deal like this). If one was to be sold, the minimum price would be roughly 10 gold pieces per Active Point in all the item's powers — a price too steep for most folk to meet.

Commonplace items — primarily potions made by alchemists — don't use the same guidelines. They're often made to be sold; many alchemists are traders as much as they are spellcasters. But they're still not cheap; potions are powerful things, not objects most commoners and townsfolk can afford. Typically, the minimum price for a potion is 1 silver piece (SP) per Active Point in all the potion's powers, but this may drop due to competition (or rise if the cost of obtaining the ingredients rises).

The GM should handle the buying and selling of enchanted items with great care. In most cases, Ambrethelan enchanted items should be special and intriguing, not the Fantasy equivalent of clock radios and power tools. While human (dwarven, elven, drakine...) nature dictates that anything valuable will have some sort of price put on it in the right circumstances, allowing characters to buy and sell magical objects not only ruins a lot of the Fantasy "feel" of the setting, it may create significant game balance problems within the campaign.

Buying And Casting Spells

To cast spells from an arcana, a spellcaster must have a *Power Skill* for that specific arcana (or, in the case of Elemental Magic, for each type of magic learned — Earth Magic, Fire Magic, Ice Magic, and so on). Spellcasters buy their spells individually — they can't buy them in Power Frameworks, though they can sometimes define a single spell as a Framework — but they divide the Real Point cost of the spell by 3.

If a spell is built as a Multipower, the caster only divides the reserve cost by 3; the slot costs then add to that to determine the total cost of the spell. When a character casts the spell, he chooses which slot (or combination of slots) he wants to use, then modifies his Magic roll based on the Active Points involved.

If a spell is built as an Elemental Control, divide the total cost of the EC by 3, but the minimum cost is 1 point for the reserve plus 1 point for each slot. When a character casts the spell, he chooses which slot (or combination of slots) he wants to use, then modifies his Magic roll based on the Active Points involved.

All spells, arcane or divine, must take *Requires A Skill Roll* as a Limitation unless the GM allows an exemption. Attack spells must also take *Spell* (-½) as a Limitation (see *Fantasy Hero*, page 246). No other Limitations are required, though OAF, Gestures, and Incantations are extremely common, and several others (Concentration, Extra Time, Side Effects, Ritual, and the like) are also used.

Turakian Age spellcasters may buy Endurance Reserves to power their spells. If a character buys a Reserve and it's depleted or lost, the character may use his personal END to cast spells, but they cost double their normal END cost. If a character chooses to use only his normal END for spells, they have their normal END cost.

The Turakian Spell List

This book does not contain a complete list of Turakian Age spells. The magic of Ambrethel is so extensive that it's in another book — *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*. This chapter contains approximately 100 additional spells (and two new arcana) that don't appear in the *Grimoire*, but for the bulk of the spells appropriate to this setting you need that book.

ARCANE MAGIC



Here are some arcane magic spells for the Turakian Age, in addition to the thousands of others found in *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*.

THEURGY

Also known to some wizards as High Magic, *Theurgy* is an unusual and dangerous Art which offers great power to he who can master it. It involves two types of spells: first, magics pertaining to various Divine and Infernal powers of Turakia; second, celestial magics deriving from the power of the stars.

Unlike most spellcasters, theurgists rarely place their names upon spells they have created. They feel it tempts fate too much and may attract the attention of the gods more easily.

DIVINE- AND INFERNAL-POWERED SPELLS

The first type of Theurgy spell draws on the power of a god, demon, or similar being, thus granting that power, or some other power or quality associated with that being, to the caster. In essence, such a spell draws Divine or Infernal power to Ambrethel for the caster's use, though he can only use it for abilities or qualities associated with the being from whom he obtained it. It's similar in some respects to what a priest does with divine magic... except that the priest uses the god's power with the god's permission (even encouragement), whereas the theurgist "steals" or "borrows" the power. If the being perceives what the theurgist is doing, he may punish the caster appropriately; thus, many of these spells have the *Limitation Side Effects* (the damage or other effect from the Side Effect is the punishment inflicted by the being).

The sample spells described below only begin to scratch the surface of what a theurgist might do with this sort of magic. You could also adopt the Divine Magic spells (page 249) as Theurgy spells with just a few changes, or alter spells from *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire* to fit the "special effect" of Theurgy.

CELESTIAL MAGIC

Some Theurgy spells draw on the arcane powers of the stars (both greater and lesser) and the Sun and Moon. In Turakian occult philosophy, every star and constellation (particularly the Greater Stars) has some mystic significance, and the theurgist bases spells on this.

The Greater Stars

Turakian astrologers have identified five special stars, marked not only by their unusual colors but the fact that they appear in the sky in patterns that do not match those of the other stars. They call these *Greater Stars*, and since there are five, theurgic thought associates each of them with one of the Pentiad.

The Greater Stars are:

Heremos the Brown: Visible only to specially-trained astrologers, Heremos lurks in the night sky like a doom waiting to happen. As Mordak's star, it's shunned by right-thinking theurgists. It's associated with the qualities of stubbornness, revenge, anger, swiftness, and cruelty, with bad luck, and with warfare.

Nevara the Green: Nevara shows itself in both the dawn and dusk skies, signalling the beginning and end of the day. It is Meára's star, proving that she watches over all the people of Ambrethel when they wake and when they go to sleep. It's associated with the qualities of love, kindness, charity, mercy, humility, and forgiveness, with good luck, and with Water.

Tharasis the Red: Proud and fiery, Tharasis gleams in the night sky like a ruby. It's associated with the qualities of decisiveness, power, determination, and resistance to evil, with blood and Fire, and with healing. It is the star of Kilbern Skyfather, and priests offer special prayers to him when it rises.

Turanus the Pale: Varidon's star is the most unusual of the Greater Stars. Astrologers claim that it changes shape from day to day, reflecting the uncertainty of magical power. It's associated with the qualities of unpredictability and cleverness, with Air, and with magic in general.

Zesura the Rose: Where Tharasis is a fiery, even angry, red, Zesura is a pale and beautiful red, a Greater Star the color of a sunset or a rose. It's associated with the qualities of calmness, slowness, deliberation, wisdom, and intuition, with prophecy and foretelling, and with Earth. It is Almandré's star, so Druids offer it special veneration on holy nights.

The Lesser Stars

All other stars — the common, blue-white shining ones that appear every night — theurgists know as *Lesser Stars*. Unlike the Greater Stars, which move and appear on their own, the Lesser Stars form constellations, and some of these have mystic significance as well. Examples include:

TO THE STARS

Many times in the history of Ambrethel, spellcasters have attempted to use magic to obtain a closer view of the stars, or even to travel to them on wings of mystic power. To date, all of these efforts have failed. Most spellcasters believe the gods have established a Barrier which prevents Men from reaching the stars; a few theorize that the stars themselves emit some sort of anti-magic field that negates the power of spells used "against" them.

THE ALCHEMY
OF THE GREATER
STARS

Alchemists frequently use the terms and symbolism of Theurgy in their formulae, to disguise their knowledge and wisdom from the uninitiated. Here are the common correspondences between the Greater Stars and various substances:

- Sun:** gold
- Moon:** silver
- Heremos:** iron, lead, agate
- Nevara:** quicksilver, emerald
- Tharasis:** steel, copper, ruby
- Turanus:** sulphur, diamond
- Zesura:** cinnabar, tin, rose quartz

Dornac: Dornac is the Great Dragon, supposedly the most ancient ancestor of all wyrms. The *Benethar Sacur* tells how he dared to assault Elysium, and the Skyfather cast him down, broken and dying, to earth. Theurgically, Dornac symbolizes power, pride, and risk-taking... but with the dangers those things entail.

Gehrashar: Gehreshar is a legendary hero-king of the Leomachi, the lord who led them out of cold and peril to the warm and fertile lands of the Makari Plains and gave them their first cattle to eat. Theurgically, this constellation represents protection and prosperity.

The Hammer: Shaped like its namesake, the Hammer stands for strength, determination, and willpower. Theurgists say, "He who wields the Hammer hesitates not, though all the world stand against him."

The King: Considered by many astrologers to be the ruler of all the other constellations, the King signifies nobility, honor, and just rule. It's said no usurper or unworthy lord can look upon the King without trembling in fear.

The Scythe: The Scythe is a constellation of ill omen for many. It signifies death and destruction, or in a (possibly) more pleasant sense, change (often drastic and unexpected, but not necessarily bad).

The Wand and the Staff: This pair of constellations, one right next to the other, look like two wizards' tools to Ambrethelian astrologers. Thus it is that to theurgists they symbolize arcane puissance and mystic might.

Offensive Spells

ARROWS OF THE STORMLORD

Effect: RKA 3d6, Armor Piercing, +2 Increased STUN Multiplier
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 200"
Magic Roll Penalty: -9
END Cost: 9

Description: With this spell, a theurgist fires one of Hornbrek's arrows — a *small* one — at his foe. If Hornbrek notices this, the caster feels the brunt of the blast instead.

Game Information: RKA 3d6, Armor Piercing (+½), +2 Increased STUN Multiplier (+½) (90 Active Points); OAF Expendable (small piece of star-iron incised with theurgic runes, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (200"; -¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (RKA 2d6; -½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 20 points (final cost to caster: 7 points).

BANDARO'S BREATH

Effect: Life Support (Expanded Breathing: Breathe Underwater)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Uncontrolled (duration of 1 hour, +30 minutes per point by which the caster makes his Theurgy roll)
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 0

Description: This spell grants the caster one of the powers of the god of water — to breathe in that selfsame element.

Game Information: Life Support (Expanded Breathing: Breathe Underwater), Uncontrolled (duration of 1 hour, +30 minutes per point by which the caster makes his Theurgy roll; +½) (7 Active Points); OAF (theurgist's wand; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Drain END 2d6; -¼). Total cost: 2 points (final cost to caster: 1 point).

THE BLACK GOD'S CLOUD

Effect: Darkness to Sight Group
Target/Area Affected: 6" Radius
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: 100"
Magic Roll Penalty: -7
END Cost: 3

Description: This spell conjures some of the shadow-stuff which constantly surrounds Mordak and uses it as a weapon. Should Mordak sense the theft, he casts some of his shadow into the caster's eyes for a time.

Game Information: Darkness to Sight Group 6" radius, Reduced Endurance (½ END; -¼) (75 Active Points); OAF Expendable (piece of black cloth cut from the robes of a priest who has performed rituals to honor Mordak while wearing it, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (100"; -¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Sight Group Flash 8d6; -½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 17 points (final cost to caster: 6 points).

CHILL SCYTHE

Effect: RKA 3d6, NND, Does BODY
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 30"
Magic Roll Penalty: -13
END Cost: 13

Description: A skilled theurgist can harness the Black God's power for more than blinding enemies. With this spell, he touches the target with some of Mordak's very life-force, causing horrific, often fatal, wounds.

Game Information: *RKA 3d6, NND (defense is Power Defense; +1), Does BODY (+1) (135 Active Points); OAF Expendable (chip of metal from a scythe-blade that injured someone, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (30"; -¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Energy Blast 4d6; -¼), Spell (-½). Total cost: 28 points (final cost to caster: 9 points).*

Options:

1) Strong Spell: Increase to RKA 4d6. 180 Active Points; total cost 38 points (final cost to caster: 13 points).

2) Weak Spell: Decrease to RKA 2d6. 90 Active Points; total cost 19 points (final cost to caster: 6 points).

3) The Corpse-Lord's Touch: Some theurgists use a version of this spell that draws not upon the Black God's energy, but that of his son Vabanak. It requires them to touch the target of the spell. Change Limited Range (-¼) to No Range (-½). Total cost 27 points (final cost to caster: 9 points).

DORNAC'S GLORY

Effect: Aid PRE 5d6
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -5
END Cost: 5

Description: This spell grants the character some of the glory and majesty of the celestial dragon Dornac, making it easy for him to impress or command people.

Game Information: *Aid PRE 5d6 (50 Active Points); OAF Expendable (dragon's scale inscribed on the back with a picture of Dornac, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Costs Endurance (-½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Sight Group Flash 6d6; -½), Self Only (-½). Total cost: 10 points (final cost to caster: 3 points).*

Options:

1) Strong Spell: Increase to Aid PRE 6d6. 60 Active Points; total cost 13 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).

2) Weak Spell: Decrease to Aid PRE 4d6. 40 Active Points; total cost 8 points (final cost to caster: 3 points).

3) Thelignar's Invocation Of The Glory: This form of the spell, created by the theurgist Thelignar in the 4500s, allows the caster to grant the power of Dornac to another person. Remove Self Only (-½). Total cost 12 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).

PENTACLES OF HEREMOS

Effect: Varies
Target/Area Affected: Varies
Casting Time: Varies
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Varies
Range: Varies
Magic Roll Penalty: Varies
END Cost: Varies

Description: This spell allows the caster to gather to himself one of the powers of Heremos the Brown. With it he can make himself swifter or stronger, inflict bad luck on others, or use several other powers. To cast it, he must have a sheet of vellum on which he has inscribed, with special inks, the pentacles (mystic diagrams) associated with Heremos and its movements through the sky. When he casts it, all the pentacles disappear (the one representing the power called on disappears last), and the vellum vanishes in a brief flash of magefire.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 17 *Pentacles Of Heremos:* Multipower, 60-point reserve; all OAF Expendable (piece of vellum with the pentacles of Heremos indited upon it in special inks by the caster, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (varies; -¼)
- 1u 1) *Stubbornness Of Heremos:* Mental Defense (15 points plus EGO/5); Common Limitations (Side Effect is -4 EGO for 1d6 minutes), Only Works Against Mind Control (-1)
- 1u 2) *Strength Of Rage:* Aid STR 5d6; Common Limitations (Side Effect is character acquires the Disadvantage *Berserk: in combat, go 14-, recover 11-* as long as he has any STR from the Aid), Self Only (-½)
- 1u 3) *Swiftness Of Heremos:* Aid SPD 4d6; Common Limitations (Side Effect is Ego Attack 2d6), Self Only (-½)
- 2u 4) *Curse Of Heremos:* Major Transform 2d6 (person into person with Disadvantage *Unluck 4d6*), Continuous (+1); Common Limitations (Side Effect is character must immediately make an Unluck 2d6 roll, and suffer any attendant consequences), Limited Target (sentient beings; -¼)
- 1u 5) *War-Blessing Of Heremos:* +3 with All Combat; Common Limitations (Side Effect is character suffers -3 OCV for 1d6 minutes), Costs Endurance (to cast; -¼)

Total cost: 23 points (final cost to character: 12 points)

PENTACLES OF NEVARA

Effect:	Varies
Target/Area Affected:	Varies
Casting Time:	Varies
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Varies
Range:	Varies
Magic Roll Penalty:	Varies
END Cost:	Varies

Description: This spell allows the caster to gather to himself one of the powers of Nevara the Green. With it he can make himself attractive to others (or cause them to fall in love with him against their will) or luckier than normal, or use several other powers. To cast it, he must have a sheet of vellum on which he has inscribed, with special inks, the pentacles (mystic diagrams) associated with Nevara and its movements through the sky. When he casts it, all the pentacles disappear (the one representing the power called on disappears last), and the vellum vanishes in a brief flash of magefire.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 18 *Pentacles Of Nevara:* Multipower, 62-point reserve; all OAF Expendable (piece of vellum with the pentacles of Nevara indicted upon it in special inks by the caster, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (varies; -¼)



- 1u 1) *Beauty Of Nevara:* Aid COM 2d6, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Hour; +1); Common Limitations (Side Effect is Drain COM 2d6 with same Delayed Return Rate), Self Only (-½)
- 1u 2) *Nevara's Influence:* Mind Control 10d6, Telepathic (+¼); Common Limitations (Side Effect is Ego Attack 2d6), Set Effect (fall in love with caster; -1)
- 1u 3) *Blessing Of Nevara:* Luck 6d6; Common Limitations (Side Effect is character must immediately make an Unluck 2d6 roll, and suffer any attendant consequences), Costs Endurance (-½)
- 1u 4) *Nevara's Soothing Waters:* Life Support (Diminished Eating: no need to drink), Usable Simultaneously (up to 16 people at once; +1¼); Common Limitations (Side Effect is character suffers Drain END 2d6), Costs Endurance (to cast; -¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 1 Day (-0)

Total cost: 22 points (final cost to character: 10 points)

PENTACLES OF THARASIS

Effect:	Varies
Target/Area Affected:	Varies
Casting Time:	Varies
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Varies
Range:	Varies
Magic Roll Penalty:	Varies
END Cost:	Varies

Description: This spell allows the caster to gather to himself one of the powers of Tharasis the Red. With it he can sheath himself in holy fire (or blast others with it), destroy the undead, protect himself from Evil magics, or heal the injured. To cast it, he must have a sheet of vellum on which he has inscribed, with special inks, the pentacles (mystic diagrams) associated with Tharasis and its movements through the sky. When he casts it, all the pentacles disappear (the one representing the power called on disappears last), and the vellum vanishes in a brief flash of magefire.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 17 *Pentacles Of Tharasis:* Multipower, 60-point reserve; all OAF Expendable (piece of vellum with the pentacles of Tharasis indicted upon it in special inks by the caster, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (varies; -¼)
- 1u 1) *Sword Of Tharasis:* RKA 4d6; Common Limitations (Side Effect is Drain END 2d6), Only Works Against The Undead (-1)
- 1u 2) *Shield Of Tharasis:* Force Field (10 PD/10 ED/10 Mental Defense/10 Power Defense); Common Limitations (Side Effect is Drain END 2d6), Only Versus Evil Magics (GM defines "evil," but it usually includes Necromancy and Witchcraft attacks, as well

- as divine magic associated with the Scarlet Gods or cast by their priests; -½)
- 2u 3) *Fires Of Tharasis*: RKA 2d6, Armor Piercing (+½), +2 Increased STUN Multiplier; Common Limitations (Side Effect is Ego Attack 2d6)
- 1u 4) *Mantle Of Tharasis*: RKA 1d6, Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Common Limitations (Side Effect is -3 on Theurgy rolls for 1d6 x 10 minutes) **plus** Force Field (10 ED); Common Limitations (Side Effect is -3 on Theurgy rolls for 1d6 x 10 minutes), Linked (-½), Only Works Against Limited Type Of Attack (fire; -½)
- 1u 5) *Tharasis's Healing Touch*: Simplified Healing 4d6; Common Limitations (Side Effect is -3 on Theurgy rolls for 1d6 x 10 minutes)

Total cost: 23 points (final cost to character: 12 points)

PENTACLES OF TURANUS

Effect: Varies
Target/Area Affected: Varies
Casting Time: Varies
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Varies
Range: Varies
Magic Roll Penalty: Varies
END Cost: Varies

Description: This spell allows the caster to gather to himself one of the powers of Turanus the Pale. With it he can augment the power of his magic, enhance his own cleverness and perceptiveness, give himself the seeming of another person, or harness the winds to do his bidding. To cast it, he must have a sheet of vellum on which he has inscribed, with special inks, the pentacles (mystic diagrams) associated with Turanus and its movements through the sky. When he casts it, all the pentacles disappear (the one representing the power called on disappears last), and the vellum vanishes in a brief flash of magefire.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 17 *Pentacles Of Turanus*: Multipower, 60-point reserve; all OAF Expendable (piece of vellum with the pentacles of Turanus indicted upon it in special inks by the caster, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (varies; -¼)
- 1u 1) *Turanus's Beneficence*: Aid Magic 4d6, any one Magic power/spell at a time (+¼); Common Limitations (Side Effect is -3 on Theurgy rolls for 1d6 x 10 minutes)
- 1u 2) *Turanus's Breath*: Energy Blast 5d6, Does Knockback (+¼), Double Knockback (+¾); Common Limitations (Side Effect is Drain END 2d6), Limited Range (15"; -¼)
- 1u 3) *Headwinds And Crosswinds*: Drain Flight 3d6, Ranged (+½); Common Limitations

(Side Effect is Drain END 2d6)

- 1u 4) *Insight Of The Pale*: Aid INT 2d6, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Hour; +1); Common Limitations (Side Effect is Drain INT 2d6 with same Delayed Return Rate), Self Only (-½)
- 1u 5) *Turanus's Mantle*: Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, Touch, and Smell/Taste Groups, any humanoid form), Imitation; Common Limitations (Side Effect is Drain COM 1d6, Delayed Return Rate [points return at the rate of 5 per Hour])

Total cost: 22 points (final cost to character: 11 points)

PENTACLES OF ZESURA

Effect: Varies
Target/Area Affected: Varies
Casting Time: Varies
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Varies
Range: Varies
Magic Roll Penalty: Varies
END Cost: Varies

Description: This spell allows the caster to gather to himself one of the powers of Zesura the Rose. With it he can force someone to become calm or still, call on the power of the Earth to let someone move over it at greater speed, or even glimpse dimly the course of things to come. To cast it, he must have a sheet of vellum on which he has inscribed, with special inks, the pentacles (mystic diagrams) associated with Zesura and its movements through the sky. When he casts it, all the pentacles disappear (the one representing the power called on disappears last), and the vellum vanishes in a brief flash of magefire.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 17 *Pentacles Of Zesura*: Multipower, 60-point reserve; all OAF Expendable (piece of vellum with the pentacles of Zesura indicted upon it in special inks by the caster, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (varies; -¼)
- 1u 1) *Peace Of Zesura*: Mind Control 9d6, Telepathic (+¼); Common Limitations (Side Effect is Ego Attack 2d6), Set Effect (become calm and at peace; -1)
- 1u 2) *Zesura's Sight*: Clairsentience (Sight Group), Precognition; Common Limitations (Side Effect is Drain EGO 2d6), Precognition Only (-1), Vague And Unclear (-½)
- 1u 3) *Strength Of Zesura*: Aid EGO 2d6, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Hour; +1); Common Limitations (Side Effect is Drain EGO 2d6 with same Delayed Return Rate), Self Only (-½)
- 1u 4) *Earth's Aid*: Aid Running 4d6; Common Limitations (Side Effect is Drain DEX 2d6), Self Only (-½)

Total cost: 21 points (final cost to character: 10 points).

POWER OF THE HAMMER

Effect: Aid EGO 4d6, Delayed Return Rate (5 points per 5 Minutes)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -6
END Cost: 6

Description: This spell calls upon the qualities of the Hammer — the strength of will it's said to provide — and gives them to the caster.

Game Information: Aid EGO 4d6, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per 5 Minutes; +½) (60 Active Points); OAF Expendable (crystal etched with the constellation of the Hammer, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Costs Endurance (-½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Drain EGO 2d6; -¼), Self Only (-½). Total cost: 13 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).

Options:

- 1) **Nelgamrond's Hammer:** Increase to Aid EGO 5d6. 75 Active Points; total cost 17 points (final cost to caster: 6 points).
- 2) **Roddik's Hammer:** A theurgist can cast this version of the spell on someone other than himself. Remove Self Only (-½). Total cost: 15 points (final cost to caster: 5 points).

SHINING BLAZE OF THE SUNLORD

Effect: Sight Group Flash 4d6
Target/Area Affected: 4" Radius
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: 30"
Magic Roll Penalty: -6
END Cost: 6

Description: This spell conjures a pool of noon-bright sunlight to blind the theurgist's foes. But should he fail to cast the spell properly, the sunlight enters his own eyes and keeps him from seeing for a time.

Game Information: Sight Group Flash 4d6, Area Of Effect (4" Radius; +1), Continuous (+1) (60 Active Points); OAF Expendable (small silver mirror, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Extra Time (Full Phase to cast; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (30"; -¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Sight Group Flash 6d6; -½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 13 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).

Options:

- 1) **The Second Spell Of The Shining Blaze:** This more powerful form of the spell allows the caster to move the pool of light. Add Mobile (+1). 80 Active Points; total cost 17 points (final cost to caster: 6 points).

SKYFATHER'S SWORD

Effect: HKA 3d6, Only Works Against Evil Beings
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Lingering (1 Turn)
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -7
END Cost: 7

Description: This spell invokes the Skyfather's holy energy and forms it into a sword-like shape. The theurgist then uses this "blade," which remains in existence for up to a Turn, to strike any Evil foe. For purposes, of this spell, "Evil" includes all demons and undead creatures, any priest or knowing worshipper of any Scarlet God, and any obviously Evil being or persons who knowingly serve them (such as Kal-Turak and his servants). The GM decides whether or not a being qualifies as "Evil."

Game Information: HKA 3d6, Lingering (1 Turn; +½) (67 Active Points); OAF Expendable (tiny silver sword, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Works Against Evil Beings (-½), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Drain END 2d6; -¼), Spell (-½). Total cost: 15 points (final cost to caster: 5 points).



STRENGTH OF THE SLAUGHTER-LORD

Effect:	Aid STR 4d6, Delayed Return Rate (5 points per 5 Minutes)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Casting Time:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
Magic Roll Penalty:	-6
END Cost:	6

Description: Through this spell the caster can take to himself some of the strength of Asvalak.

Game Information: *Aid STR 4d6, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per 5 Minutes; +½) (60 Active Points); OAF Expendable (shard from the blade of an axe used in battle etched with a special rune, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Costs Endurance (-½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Drain END 2d6; -¼), Self Only (-½). Total cost: 13 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).*

Options:

1) The Slaughter-Lord's Blessing: A theurgist can cast this version of the spell on someone other than himself. Remove Self Only (-½). Total cost: 15 points (final cost to caster: 5 points).

WAND'S STRENGTH, STAFF'S POWER

Effect:	Aid Theurgy 4d6, any one Theurgy spell at a time, Delayed Return Rate (5 points per 1 Minute)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Casting Time:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
Magic Roll Penalty:	-6
END Cost:	6

Description: This spell draws upon the magic-enhancing power of the Wand and the Staff to increase the strength of the caster's Theurgy spells.

Game Information: *Aid Theurgy 4d6, any one Theurgy spell at a time (+¼), Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per 1 Minute; +¼) (60 Active Points); OAF Expendable (crystal etched with the constellation of the Wand and the Staff, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Costs Endurance (-½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Drain EGO 2d6; -¼), Self Only (-½). Total cost: 13 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).*

ZIANDWYRTH'S TOUCH

Effect:	Major Transform 4d6 (sane person to mad person)
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Casting Time:	Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	30"
Magic Roll Penalty:	-6
END Cost:	6

Description: This spell inflicts upon the target the divine touch of Ziandwyrth, which drives Men mad. If the theurgist does not cast the spell correctly, he may begin to feel his own sanity slipping away....

Game Information: *Major Transform 4d6 (sane person to person with the Psychological Limitation Utterly, Gibberingly Insane [Very Common, Total]) (60 Active Points); OAF (unevenly-shaped piece of finely-polished opal; -1), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (30"; -¼), Limited Target (sentient beings; -¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Drain EGO 2d6; -¼), Spell (-½). Total cost: 13 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).*

Options:

1) Ziandwyrth's Grasp: Decrease to Major Transform 3d6 and add Continuous (+1). 90 Active Points; total cost 19 points (final cost to caster: 6 points).

Defensive Spells

Theurgy is less given to defense than to offense, but its repertoire includes a few protective magics.

SKYFATHER'S SHIELD

Effect:	Force Field (8 PD/8 ED/8 Mental Defense/8 Power Defense)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Casting Time:	Half Phase
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
Magic Roll Penalty:	-3
END Cost:	3

Description: This spell calls upon Kilbern's holy power to protect the caster from harm. While the spell is in effect, a golden-white glow surrounds the theurgist.

Game Information: *Force Field (8 PD/8 ED/8 Mental Defense/8 Power Defense) (32 Active Points); OAF Expendable (piece of milky-white glass etched with theurgic symbols, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Drain END 2d6; -¼). Total cost: 9 points (final cost to caster: 3 points).*

Options:

1) **Skyfather's Strong Shield:** This form of the spell provides greater protection against beings who are Evil (see *Skyfather's Sword*, above). Add Force Field (+4 PD/+4 ED/+4 Mental Defense/+4 Power Defense) and Only Works Against Evil Beings (-½). 32 + 16 = 48 Active Points; total cost 9 + 4 = 13 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).

STONELORD'S BODY

Effect: Armor (8 PD/6 ED)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: This spell invests the theurgist with the power of Korthund the Stonelord, transforming his body to stone to protect him from attacks. (In games that use the Knockback rules, the GM should rewrite this spell to include a few inches of Knockback Resistance.)

Game Information: *Armor (8 PD/6 ED) (21 Active Points); OAF Expendable (chip of marble etched with a theurgic symbol, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Costs Endurance (-½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (-2 to Theurgy rolls for 1d6 Minutes; -¼). Total cost: 5 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).*

Options:

1) **Stonelord's Blessing:** This version of the spell can be cast on either the theurgist or someone else. Add Usable By Other (+¼). 26 Active Points; total cost 6 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

Movement Spells

RIVERLORD'S PATHWAY

Effect: Swimming +10"
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: This spell invokes the power of Bando to move the caster swiftly through the water.

Game Information: *Swimming +10" (10 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman with water-runes engraved upon it; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Drain END 2d6; -¼). Total cost: 3 points (final cost to caster: 1 point).*

STONELORD'S PATHWAY

Effect: Tunneling 6" through DEF 6 materials, Only Through Earth And Stone
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 3

Description: This spell calls upon the Mountain-Walker's power to open the very earth and rock themselves and create a path for the theurgist. Once created, the Pathway remains open; the spell does not allow the caster to close it.

Game Information: *Tunneling 6" through DEF 6 materials (30 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman with stone-runes engraved upon it; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Medium (earth and stone only; -½), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Drain END 2d6; -¼). Total cost: 8 points (final cost to caster: 3 points).*

WINDLADY'S PATHWAY

Effect: Flight 12"
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: When a theurgist casts this spell, Sirella's winds gently lift him up and propel him swiftly through the air for as long as he desires and can maintain control of the spell (*i.e.*, can spend END).

Game Information: *Flight 12" (24 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman with wind-runes*

engraved upon it; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Drain END 2d6; -¼). Total cost: 7 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

Sensory Spells

THE BLACK GOD'S EYE

Effect: Nightvision
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: What darkness the Black God creates, he can also banish. This spell draws upon his power to part the darkness for the theurgist, allowing him to see normally even at night. As long as it remains in effect, the caster's eyes are a solid, eerie black.

Game Information: Nightvision (5 Active Points); OAF Expendable (small chip of obsidian, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Costs Endurance (-½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Sight Group Flash 3d6; -¼). Total cost: 1 point (final cost to caster: 1 point).

THE KING'S EYE

Effect: Detect Rightful King (INT Roll +5)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Full Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: The bane of usurpers and regicides everywhere, this spell allows a theurgist to perceive who is the lawful and rightful king of a realm. However, he must be within 1" of a person to use the spell on him.

Game Information: Detect Rightful King (INT Roll +5) (Sight Group) (8 Active Points); OAF Expendable (small piece of a mantle, cape, or crown worn by a rightful king, Very Difficult to obtain; -1½), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase to cast and use; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Sight Group Flash 3d6; -¼). Total cost: 2 points (final cost to caster: 1 point).

SKYFATHER'S PERCEPTION

Effect: Detect Spoken Falsehood (INT Roll +3)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Full Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: The Skyfather is the Truth and the Way, as the priests say, and this spell proves it. When it's in effect, the theurgist can perceive that a falsehood spoken in his presence is a lie. It typically doesn't reveal when the speaker shades the truth, or speaks only part of the truth; it just reveals direct lies. The caster doesn't know what the truth is, or why the person who spoke lied, but he knows a lie was spoken.

Game Information: Detect Spoken Falsehood (INT Roll +3) (Hearing Group) (6 Active Points); OAF Expendable (small piece of a robe worn by a judge, Very Difficult to obtain; -1½), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase to cast and use; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Sight Group Flash 3d6; -¼). Total cost: 1 point (final cost to caster: 1 point).

Miscellaneous Spells

GEHRASHAR'S GUERDON

Effect: Luck 6d6, Only Lasts Until A Roll Succeeds
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: 1 Turn
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Persistent (see text)
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 0

Description: This spell calls upon the power of the Leomachus of the Skies to grant the caster luck. Once cast, it remains in effect until the caster makes a Luck roll that rolls at least one "6." Thereafter the caster must cast the spell again if he wants to continue to be lucky.

Game Information: Luck 6d6 (30 Active Points); OAF (piece of star-iron carved into a special theurgic talisman; -1), Extra Time (1 Turn to cast; -¾), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Lasts Until A Roll Succeeds (-¼), Requires A Theurgy Roll (-½), Side Effects (Unluck 3d6 afflicts caster for 1d6 Minutes; -¼). Total cost: 7 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

GIFT OF THE SILVER MISTRESS

Effect: Sight Group Images, +2 to PER Rolls (create moonlight)
Target/Area Affected: 4" Radius
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: 120"
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: When the theurgist casts this spell, he gathers some of Saléa's moonlight and creates a pool of it that dispels gloom and darkness within a 4" radius area (though it does not do so as thoroughly as Ophel's sunlight would). Amorous-minded theurgists sometimes use this spell to create a romantic ambience for a "moonlit dinner" or the like.

Game Information: *Sight Group Images*, +2 to PER Rolls, *Increased Size* (4" radius; +½) (24 Active Points); OAF (a moonstone engraved with a theurgic rune; -1), *Extra Time* (Full Phase to cast; -¼), *Gestures* (-¼), *Incantations* (-¼), *Only To Create Light* (-1), *Requires A Theurgy Roll* (-½), *Side Effects* (Drain END 2d6; -¼), *Spell* (-½). Total cost: 5 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

HEALER'S TOUCH

Effect: Simplified Healing 3d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: 1 Minute (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 3

Description: This spell allows some of Hospin's power to flow into the theurgist's hands, and thence into an injury to heal it.

Game Information: *Simplified Healing* 3d6 (30 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman with healing-runes engraved upon it; -1), *Extra Time* (1 Minute; -1½), *Gestures* (throughout casting; -½), *Incantations* (throughout casting; -½), *Requires A Theurgy Roll* (-½), *Side Effects* (Energy Blast 3d6; -¼). Total cost: 6 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

ULRONAI
WARRIOR-MAGIC

As discussed on page 14, the Ulronai are a mysterious people turned nomad when most of them were slain, and their civilization destroyed, by the Lord of the Graven Spear over two thousand years ago. Even in their earliest days, the Ulronai were known as fierce warriors of great heart — a people willing to settle any affront with blade or fists, and a foe not even the most powerful king would take lightly.

One of the reasons Ulronai are so acclaimed in war is their unique *warrior-magic* (or, in their tongue, *Talacóriom*) — a special arcana of spells that enhance a warrior's ability to fight, making him a nigh-unmatched master of blade and bow. The Ulronai name for one who possesses knowledge of these spells is *Talárion-Corum*, which roughly translates as "warrior-mage." Other folk have less complimentary names for Ulronai warrior-wizards; one of the most common, and least pejorative, is "witchblade."

Warrior-magic is a relatively restricted form of spellcasting. Not only does it cover a limited subject — personal combat — but it's difficult to use compared to many arcana. Many of the spells require a Full Phase to cast, and they often cost more END than normal. An Ulronai warrior-mage often has to watch his END expenditure closely.

The Ulronai do not teach their warrior-magic to other peoples, and relatively few of them study other types of magic. They go to great lengths to keep their magics secret, and anyone who steals them earns the undying enmity of every Ulronai.



Offensive Spells

DELTARION'S WORD OF LUCIDITY

Effect: Sight Group Flash 6d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Zero Phase
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: Created by Deltarion Bloodlock, most famous of the Ulronai warrior-mages, the Word Of Lucidity blinds a person standing near the caster. The caster holds his hand, with fingers clenched together, in front of the target's face; when he speaks the incantation and opens his fingers, a bright flare of light dazzles the target's sight. Unlike most warrior-magic spells, the Word Of Lucidity is quickly cast.

Game Information: *Sight Group Flash 6d6, Trigger (mystic gesture; +¼) (37 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), No Range (-½), Requires An Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 12 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).*

DESTRIER'S DREAD

Effect: Drain PRE 4d6, Only Versus Horses
Target/Area Affected: One horse
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 300"
Magic Roll Penalty: -6
END Cost: 6

Description: No knight or mounted warrior can fight effectively from a terrified mount, and this spell lets a warrior-mage take advantage of that weakness.

Game Information: *Drain PRE 4d6, Ranged (+½) (60 Active Points); OAF Expendable (a few drops of blood from a horse slain in battle, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Versus Horses (-1), Requires An Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 11 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).*

THE FIRST SPELL OF THE WARRIOR'S LAMENT

Effect: Dispel HKA 15d6, Only Versus Weapons
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 50"
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 8

Description: This spell causes a single melee weapon to shatter. It does not work on blunt weapons (such as clubs), non-weapon attacks (such as an animal's claws), on ranged weapons, or on enchanted weapons.

In game terms, a character who successfully casts this spell rolls his Dispel dice. If he exceeds the weapon's Active Points, he Dispels the HKA it's built with. This causes the weapon to break into pieces and become useless; restoring it to a useful state requires repairs with Weaponsmith.

Game Information: *Dispel HKA 15d6 (45 Active Points); OAF Expendable (shard from a sword used in battle, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½), Limited Range (50"; -¼), Noisy (-¼), Only Versus Mundane Weapon HKAs (-½), Requires An Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 8 points (final cost to caster: 3 points).*

Options:

1) The Second Spell Of The Warrior's Lament: Also known as the Spell Of The Archer's Lament, this spell causes bows, crossbows, and similar weapons to shatter. As above, but change to RKA. 45 Active Points; total cost 8 points (final cost to caster: 3 points).

GLITTERSHARP

Effect: Aid HKA 5d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -7
END Cost: 7

Description: To cast this spell, an Ulronai must take a handful of steel dust ground from sword-blades used in battle and rub it into his bladed weapon (a sword, axe, spear, or the like). For the next minute, whenever he strikes someone with that blade, the weapon does +1d6 Killing Damage (this is base damage). The dust on the weapon gives it a curious and distinctive "glittery" look, and the blade leaves a gentle veil of glitter in the air behind it for a second or two when swung.

Game Information: *Aid HKA 5d6 (standard effect: +1d6), Delayed Return Rate (points fade*

at the rate of 5 per 5 Minutes; +½) (75 Active Points); OAF Expendable (steel dust ground from swordblades used in battle, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Adds To Bladed Weapon Damage (-¼), Requires An Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll (-½), Self Only (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 15 points (final cost to caster: 5 points).

Options:

1) Yelvairi's Glittersharp: Some Ulronai learn a version of Glittersharp that they can apply to the weapons of their comrades. Remove Self Only (-½). Total cost: 17 points (final cost to caster: 6 points)

SILVER RAIN AND STEEL THUNDER

Effect: Dispel Armor 10d6, Only Versus Metal Armors
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 50"
Magic Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 6

Description: Also known as the Third Spell Of The Warrior's Lament, this spell causes a single suit of metal armor to shatter; the name comes from the sound that occurs when the pieces fall to the ground. It does not work on non-metal armors (such as leather armor), on innate abilities built with the Power *Armor*, or on enchanted armors.

In game terms, a character who successfully casts this spell rolls his Dispel dice. If he exceeds the armor's Active Points, he Dispels the Armor it's built with. This causes the armor to fall to pieces and become useless; restoring it to a useful state requires repairs with Armorsmith.

Game Information: *Dispel Armor 10d6* (30 Active Points); OAF Expendable (link from a suit of chainmail worn in battle by someone who was slain while wearing it, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½), Limited Range (50"; -¼), Noisy (-¼), Only Versus Mundane Metal Armors (-½), Requires An Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 5 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

THE SPELL OF THE FAR-FLUNG BLADE

Effect: Ranged Advantage (+½) for an HKA built on up to 75 Active Points
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant (Lingering; 1 Minute)
Range: Varies
Magic Roll Penalty: -7
END Cost: 3

Description: One of the best-known of the Ulronai warrior-magics, this spell allows a warrior-mage to slash at a distant target with a handheld weapon — and cut him as if he were standing right next to him! Every bard knows the story of the Five Dancing Ulronai, a group of warrior-mages who stood on a hilltop and all used the Far-Flung Blade to keep at bay a horde of Orcs. A noble who saw them from afar mocked them for what he thought was a foolish dance... then took back his words when he saw the heaps of orcish corpses the "dance" had created.

In game terms, this spell provides the *Ranged Advantage* to any HKA weapon built on up to 75 Active Points. Per the usual rules, applying this Advantage to an HKA may diminish the amount of damage the wielder can add with his STR.

Game Information: *Ranged Advantage* (+½) for an HKA built on up to 75 Active Points, Lingering (1 Minute; +¾), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (74 Active Points); OAF (miniature sword wrapped with a bowstring used in battle; -1), Extra Time (Full Phase to cast; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Adds To Weapon Damage (-¼), Requires An Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 18 points (final cost to caster: 6 points).

THE SPELL OF THE CHARMED BLADE

Effect: +4 OCV with HTH Combat
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: This spell enhances the caster's accuracy with swords, fists, staffs, and other melee attacks.

Game Information: +4 OCV with HTH Combat (20 Active Points); OAF Expendable (grip-wrappings of a sword that wounded or killed someone in battle, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Costs Endurance (-½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires An Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 5 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

THE SPELL OF THE SWIFT ARM

Effect: Lightning Reflexes (+6 DEX for All Actions)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: None
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: By calling on his warrior-mage's training, the caster can use this spell to make himself swifter (and thus deadlier) than normal.

Game Information: *Lightning Reflexes* (+6 DEX for All Actions) (9 Active Points); *Costs Endurance* (-½), *Requires An Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll* (-½). Total cost: 4 points (final cost to caster: 1 point).

THE SPELL OF THE TRUE ARROW

Effect: +4 OCV with Ranged Combat
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: This spell enhances the caster's accuracy with archery (and other Ranged attacks).

Game Information: +4 OCV with Ranged Combat (20 Active Points); *OAF Expendable* (three inch-long rune-carved segment of the shaft of an arrow that wounded or killed someone in battle, *Difficult to obtain*; -1¼), *Costs Endurance* (-½), *Gestures* (-¼), *Incantations* (-¼), *Requires An Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll* (-½). Total cost: 5 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

THE SPELL OF THE WARRIOR'S BRAWN

Effect: Aid STR 4d6, Self Only
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This spell augments the warrior-mage's Strength, making him an even deadlier warrior.

Game Information: Aid STR 4d6 (40 Active Points); *OAF Expendable* (a few drops of blood spilled in battle, *Difficult to obtain*; -1¼), *Costs Endurance* (-½), *Gestures* (-¼), *Incantations* (-¼), *Requires An Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll* (-½), *Self Only* (-½). Total cost: 9 points (final cost to caster: 3 points).

THARASIN'S STARBOW

Effect: RKA 3d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 225"
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 8

Description: One of the flashiest warrior-magic spells, the Starbow creates a bow and arrow of glowing arcane energy. The warrior-mage fires it as he would an ordinary bow, though it requires no particular strength or concentration to do so and can easily be fired from horseback; if he doesn't

know how to use a bow, he suffers the standard -3 OCV penalty.

Game Information: RKA 3d6 (45 Active Points); *OAF Expendable* (white arrow feathers used on arrows fired in battle, *Difficult to obtain*; -1¼), *Extra Time* (Full Phase; -½), *Gestures* (-¼), *Incantations* (-¼), *Increased Endurance Cost* (x2 END; -½), *Noisy* (-¼), *Requires An Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll* (-½), *Spell* (-½), *Unfamiliar Weapon Penalties Apply* (-0). Total cost: 9 points (final cost to caster: 3 points).

VARUNAI'S SCYTHING-SPELL

Effect: +6 OCV with Sweep
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 3

Description: Varunai Three-Edge, the famed warrior-mage with whom Deltarion Bloodlock apprenticed, created this spell for use with his renowned greatsword Vashturi, which Deltarion now bears. It grants the caster the ability to strike many foes at once with ease.

Game Information: +6 OCV with Sweep (30 Active Points); *OAF Expendable* (bit of whetstone carved into the shape of a scythe-blade, *Difficult to obtain*; -1¼), *Costs Endurance* (-½), *Gestures* (-¼), *Incantations* (-¼), *Only Works With Weapons* (-¼), *Requires An Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll* (-½). Total cost: 7 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

Defensive Spells

ARCHER'S BANE

Effect: Missile Deflection (any non-gunpowder physical projectile)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Uncontrolled (duration of 1 Turn, +1 Segment per full two points by which the caster makes his Ulronai Warrior-Magic roll)
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 0

Description: Similar to the Thaumaturgy spell of the same name, this spell causes arrows and other missiles fired or thrown at the caster to fly astray, missing him. It does not work against Ranged attack spells, including spells that create "mundane" missiles out of thin air.

Game Information: *Missile Deflection* (any non-gunpowder physical projectile), *Uncontrolled* (duration of 1 Turn, +1 Segment per

full two points by which the caster makes his Ulronai Warrior-Magic roll, does not work against magically-created or -enhanced physical projectiles; +½) (15 Active Points); OAF Expendable (three inch-long rune-carved segment of the shaft of an arrow that missed its target in battle, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 5 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

KAMMELARD’S BLESSING OF HEALTH

Effect: Armor (6 PD/6 ED), Only Applies In Personal Combat
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: This spell enhances a warrior-mage’s ability to dodge and parry attacks in personal combat (this includes Ranged combat attacks made against him). The spell keeps him hale, hearty, and whole-skinned, and thus able to remain in the thick of the fray to fight his foes.

Game Information: Armor (6 PD/6 ED) (18 Active Points); OAF Expendable (link from chainmail worn in battle by someone whose life was saved at least once by that armor, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase to activate; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Applies In Personal Combat (-¼), Requires An Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 4 points (final cost to caster: 1 point).

Movement Spells

DATRIEN’S SPELL OF THE SWIFT STEP

Effect: Aid Running 3d6, Self Only
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 3

Description: This spell grants a warrior-mage the power to run much faster. Although it can be used for mundane reasons, it’s most often cast to allow rapid movement around a battlefield.

Some Ulronai also learn a version of this spell for use on horses. It’s basically the same as Cythara’s Spell Of The Swifter Steed (*The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*, page 53).

Game Information: Aid Running 3d6 (30 Active Points); OAF Expendable (piece of boot leather, Easy to obtain; -1), Costs Endurance (-½),

Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires An Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll (-½), Self Only (-½). Total cost: 7 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

Sensory Spells

NIGHT’S EYES

Effect: Nightvision
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Full Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: This spell allows a warrior-mage to see at night-time as if it were daylight. It does not allow him to see through Darkness-based spells.

Game Information: Nightvision (5 Active Points); OAF Expendable (small crystal etched with an Ulronai light-rune, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase to cast; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires An Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 1 point (final cost to caster: 1 point).

Miscellaneous Spells

VORNISHAK’S MANTLE OF CONCEALMENT

Effect: Invisibility to Sight Group
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Full Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 4

Description: One of the few warrior-magic spells of general utility, the Mantle Of Concealment hides the caster from the eyes of men.

Game Information: Invisibility to Sight Group (20 Active Points); OAF Expendable (small disk of clear, polished glass, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Extra Time (Full Phase to cast; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½), Requires An Ulronai Warrior-Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 5 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

REGIONAL & CULTURAL MAGIC



Some of the regions and cultures of Ambrethel are known for their unusual magics and spellcraft. Here are just a few examples of that; GMs and players are encouraged to create more such spells.

To learn a regional or cultural spell during character creation, a character has to come from that land or civilization and study magic there, or at the GM's option must establish some other reasonable connection with that region or culture. Most of these magics are well-guarded secrets, not spells taught casually to anyone who wishes to know them, so the GM may refuse to allow PCs to learn them if he doesn't think they would be appropriate for a particular character or campaign.

THALERAN MAGIC

From its earliest days, Thaleran-Saar has reputedly been a place of strange, dark magics — perhaps because so many of its kings have been accomplished wizards as well as warriors and rulers. Some of the spells found in the grimoires of Thaleran wizards include:

DEMONBINDING

Effect: Aid HKA 3d6, Only Applies To Weapons
Target/Area Affected: Self (one weapon)
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 3

Description: This Conjunction spell summons a minor demon and binds it into a weapon, thereby increasing the weapon's destructive power until the demon manages to work its way free and return to its home plane. While the spell remains in effect, the weapon flickers with an eerie, cold demonic fire that gradually fades as the demon leaves.

Game Information: Aid HKA 3d6 (30 Active Points); OAF Expendable (shard of a sword used in battle that's been etched with a special conjuror's rune, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Costs Endurance (-½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Applies To Weapons (-½), Requires A Conjunction Roll (-½), Self Only (-½). Total cost: 6 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

FIGHTER'S FOOTFALL

Effect: Teleportation 5", Position Shift
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Zero Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: This Wizardry spell, thought to have been developed by one of the Thaleran kings, allows the caster to teleport himself a short distance, changing his orientation in the process if desired. Among other things, this allows the caster to get behind an opponent to attack him (which usually reduces his DCV). However, since "setting" the spell's Trigger requires 2 Phases of mystic preparations (which may be performed at any time before the spell is used), a character generally can't use it twice in the same battle.

Game Information: Teleportation 5", Position Shift, Trigger (uttering an arcane word, the "setting" of which requires 2 Phases of advance preparations; +¼) (19 Active Points); OAF Expendable (two highly-polished crystals, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Wizardry Roll (-½). Total cost: 6 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

THE PHANTOM KNIGHTS OF THALERAN-SAAR

Effect: Summon 16 496-point Phantom Knights
Target/Area Affected: Special
Casting Time: 1 Turn (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -12
END Cost: 12

Description: A tale is told in Thaleran-Saar of a band of Thaleran knights who went out to fight the Gorthunda, years ago. None of the knights returned, but so great is their loyalty to and love for the Thaleran throne that a Thaleran spellcaster can summon them to fight his foes. He must convince them to fight, though; as dead men, they're not always particularly concerned with the events of the Living World. (If the caster's foes threaten Thaleran-Saar in particular, the GM may reduce or waive the Conjunction roll penalty, or consider the Phantom Knights to act as if the spell has an *Ami-*

cable Advantage, since they'll want to come protect the realm.)

To create a Phantom Knight, use the *Ghost* character sheet from page 120 of *The HERO System Bestiary*, but increase its Flight to 15" (+21 Character Points) and add the power *Phantom Weapon* (HKA 2d6, Affects Physical World (+2), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); No STR Bonus (-½); total cost: 70 points).

Game Information: *Summon 16 496-point Phantom Knights (119 Active Points); OAF Expendable (a knotwork made of string woven from the fur of the Valician hill-wolf, wrapped around a stone from Thaleran soil, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), Requires A Conjuration Roll (-½). Total cost: 24 points (final cost to caster: 8 points).*

THALERAN FIRE

Effect: RKA 2d6, Penetrating (x2)
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: 30"
Magic Roll Penalty: -9
END Cost: 9

Description: This Fire Magic spell creates a writhing, twisting column of purplish fire that wraps itself around the target, almost as if it were a serpent. As it moves around and over the target's body, it burns him, eventually slaying him — if the caster is hardy and determined enough to keep its tiring effects going long enough.

Game Information: *RKA 2d6, Continuous (+1), Penetrating (x2; +1) (90 Active Points); OAF Expendable (coal taken from a brazier used in a demon-summoning spell, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (30"; -¼), Requires A Fire Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 26 points (final cost to caster: 9 points).*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Spell:** Add Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼). 97 Active Points; total cost 28 points (final cost to caster: 9 points).
- 2) **Weak Spell:** Decrease to RKA 1d6. 45 Active Points; total cost 13 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).

THÛNESE SORCERY

The sorcerer-priests of Thûn are legendary for their strange and frightening spells and magical powers, which include both arcane and divine magics. The examples given here represent just a few of the arcane spells. Despite the name, they aren't necessarily part of the arcana of Sorcery; here "sorcery" is used in its more general sense of "dark, mysterious magics."

CHEGHAHM'S FIRST SPELL OF THE FATAL FRIGHT

Effect: RKA 3d6, NND, Does BODY
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 30"
Magic Roll Penalty: -13
END Cost: 13

Description: The gods of the Thûnese are so strange, eerie, and powerful that they're frightening to all — even the priests who worship them. This spell heightens that fear to the point where the victim can literally die of fright.

Characters must have the GM's permission to buy this spell. One of its defined defenses is "PRE 25+," and normally a defined amount of any defense isn't allowed. While it's appropriate for this spell, the GM may want to consider it carefully before allowing the Fatal Fright in his game.

Game Information: *RKA 3d6, NND (the defense is any PRE bought "only to protect against Presence Attacks," having PRE 25 or greater, or being protected by a spell that provides Power Defense; +1), Does BODY (+1) (135 Active Points); OAF Expendable (a talisman woven from threads taken from the vestments of five deceased Thûnese sorcerer-priests, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (30"; -¼), Requires A Wizardry Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 30 points (final cost to caster: 10 points).*

Options:

- 1) **Cheghahm's Second Spell Of The Fatal Fright:** This form of the spell affects all who hear the caster's dread incantation. Add Area Of Effect (15" Radius; +1) and Personal Immunity (+¼), change Limited Range (-¼) to No Range (-½), and consider the Incantations to be "voice range Incantations" (*Fantasy Hero*, pages 133-34). 191 Active Points; total cost 40 points (final cost to caster: 13 points).

INVISIBLE FIRES OF THE IMPRISONED ONES

Effect:	HKA 2d6, Penetrating, +1 STUN Multiplier, Invisible Power Effects
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Casting Time:	Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Constant
Range:	30"
Magic Roll Penalty:	-9
END Cost:	9

Description: This spell invokes the awesome power of the Thūnese gods to burn the target with an invisible mystic fire. Observers can see and hear the sorcerer-priest gesturing and incanting as he casts the spell, and they can see the victim's flesh burn, but the flames themselves remain hidden from the eyes of all.

Game Information: HKA 2d6, Continuous (+1), Penetrating (+½), +1 STUN Multiplier (+¼), Invisible To Sight Group (special effects of power are Invisible, but source of power is not; +¼) (90 Active Points); OAF Expendable (the stub of a candle used in a Thūnese religious ritual and carved with special runes, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Extra Time (Full Phase to cast and to maintain; -½), Gestures (throughout casting and maintenance; -½), Incantations (throughout casting and maintenance; -½), Requires A Wizardry Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 19 points (final cost to caster: 6 points).

THE THŪNESE DAGGER

Effect:	HKA 1½d6, Armor Piercing
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Casting Time:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Lingering (1 Turn)
Range:	Touch
Magic Roll Penalty:	-5
END Cost:	5

Description: Thought by many to be an enchanted item, this is actually a spell that uses a small golden ball (about two inches in diameter, sometimes larger). When the spell is cast, the sorcerer-priest need only brush the ball against the target, and the target suffers wounds as if he'd been struck with a magical dagger!

Game Information: HKA 1½d6, Armor Piercing (+½), Lingering (1 Turn; +½) (50 Active Points); OAF (small golden ball, see text; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Wizardry Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 14 points (final cost to caster: 5 points).

THE YIINASHC CHAIN

Effect:	Entangle 5d6, 5 DEF, Affects Desolidified
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Casting Time:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	30"
Magic Roll Penalty:	-7
END Cost:	7

Description: This spell conjures a Yiinashc Chain, a type of magical Thūnese fetter that doesn't seem to obey the laws of geometry or matter, making it disturbing to look at or touch. It can imprison anything, even a vampire in mist form or a ghost.

Game Information: Entangle 5d6, 5 DEF, Affects Desolidified (+½) (75 Active Points); OAF Expendable (link from a chain worn by a person who died wearing it, twisted into an almost unrecognizable shape, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (30"; -¼), Requires A Wizardry Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 19 points (final cost to caster: 6 points).

VALICIAN MAGIC

Valician wizards, including the Yellow Kings, often learn special spells, many of which are directly tied to the soil or bounds of Valicia itself. Some examples include:

NALVAZAR'S SPELL OF THE MURDEROUS CROWS

Effect:	Darkness to Sight Group + RKA, both Usable As Attack
Target/Area Affected:	1" Radius
Casting Time:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Constant
Range:	50"
Magic Roll Penalty:	-4
END Cost:	4

Description: This spell summons a small flock of Valician crows, renowned for their size and ferocity. The small murder attacks the victim, swarming around him so tightly that he cannot see (or be seen), and pecking and clawing at him. They have no chance of harming an armored man, but an unprotected one can die from their attack.

Game Information: Darkness to Sight Group 1" radius, Limited Range (50" +¼), Usable As Attack ("sticks" to victim and moves with him as he moves; +1) (22 Active Points); OAF Expendable (feather from a Valician crow, Easy to obtain; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Works Within The Bounds Of Valicia (-¼), Requires A Conjuraction Roll (-½), Spell (-½) (total cost: 6 points; final cost to caster: 2 points) **plus** RKA 1 point, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), Continuous (+1), Limited Range (50" +¼), Usable As Attack ("sticks" to victim

and moves with him as he moves; +1) (19 Active Points); OAF Expendable (feather from a Valician crow, Easy to obtain; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Linked (-¼), Only Works Within The Bounds Of Valicia (-¼), Requires A Conjuraton Roll (-½), Spell (-½) (total cost: 5 points; final cost to caster: 2 points). Final cost to caster: 4 points.

THOTAIN'S SPELL OF WELCOME INSIGHT

Effect: Deduction (INT Roll +6), Only To Discern Conspiracies, Plots, And Intrigues
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Full Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: Valicia is a land filled with political machinations, intrigue of all sorts, conspiracies, and plots. Sometimes determining who's in league with whom, and who intends to hatch what plots, is difficult for even the most experienced Valician noble to ascertain — but not if he has this spell. It grants the caster special insight into such matters, allowing him to discern from even the tiniest and most indirect clues what's really going on. However, it's useless unless he actually has *some* clues or bits of information; it cannot provide answers in the absence of facts to work from.

Game Information: *Deduction (INT Roll +6) (15 Active Points); OAF (small crystal orb; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Instant (-½), Only To Discern Conspiracies, Plots, And Intrigues (-1), Requires A Wizardry Roll (-½). Total cost: 3 points (final cost to caster: 1 point).*

VALICIAN BLACK

Effect: Aid STR 5d6, Only Works Within Valicia, Only Works On Those Loyal To Valicia
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -5
END Cost: 5

Description: This spell mystically imparts the great strength of one of the Black Kings of Valicia to a person loyal to the realm. It has no effect on a person not loyal to the realm (though the caster cannot discern this; the spell is not an Enhanced Sense), and does not work unless cast on someone within the bounds of Valicia.

Game Information: *Aid STR 5d6 (50 Active Points); OAF Expendable (a small piece of cloth from clothing worn by a Black Prince or Black King of Valicia, Very Difficult to obtain; -1½), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Works Within The Bounds Of Valicia (-¼), Only Works On Those Loyal To Valicia (-¼), Requires A Thaumaturgy Roll (-½). Total cost: 10 points (final cost to caster: 3 points).*

THE SPELL OF XANTHIC AGONY

Effect: Drain DEX and STUN 2d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: 50"
Magic Roll Penalty: -5
END Cost: 5

Description: When this spell is cast, a cloud of motes of yellow light surrounds the target. Whenever a mote touches him, he feels terrible agony — agony so great he cannot even control the workings of his own limbs, and eventually collapses in a heap on the ground.

Game Information: *Drain DEX and STUN 2d6, two Characteristics simultaneously (+½), Continuous (+1), Limited Range (50"; +¼) (55 Active Points); OAF Expendable (a small piece of cloth from clothing worn by a Yellow Prince or Yellow King of Valicia, Very Difficult to obtain; -1½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Wizardry Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 14 points (final cost to caster: 5 points).*

TURAKIAN DIVINE MAGIC



The divine magic spells on pages 245-65 of *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire* are all appropriate, even recommended, for Turakian Age campaigns. But within Ambrethel there also exist many spells of divine magic granted by specific Ambrethelan gods, and a few of those are described here. Given the large number of Ambrethelan gods (not to mention the number of Ambrethelan priests!), it would be possible to fill an entire book with nothing but Ambrethelan divine magic. What you'll find here is just a small sampling, with a focus on the gods of the High Faith (though with a change of name and special effect you can convert them to the use of other religions). Feel free to create other spells for specific deities if you wish. (You could quickly create more divine magic spells from Theurgy spells by changing the Theurgy spells' required Magic roll.)

HIGH FAITH AND HARGESHITE DIVINE MAGIC

Here are some divine spells granted by the gods of the High and Hargeshite faiths — the names might differ from place to place, culture to culture, race to race, but the powers of the spells remain the same.

Spells Of Healing And Curing

EURINDA'S HEALING HERBAL

Effect: Aid Healing 3d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 3

Description: With this spell, a priest can convert some leaves, petals, roots, or other appropriate plant parts into plants with healing properties, which he can then use to augment any form of healing-magic. He must have the plant parts to use the spell.

Game Information: *Aid Healing 3d6 (30 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Requires Appropriate Plant Parts (see text; -¼). Total cost: 6 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).*

HOSPIN'S HEALING TOUCH

Effect: Healing 3d6, any one Characteristic
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: 1 Turn (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: While Ambrethelan priests normally manifest the Divine Healer's power through standard healing-magics (see *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*, pages 245-48), sometimes spells or other powers cause harmful effects other than ordinary wounds. This spell allows a priest to cure those afflictions, too.

Game Information: *Healing 3d6, any one Characteristic (except BODY or STUN) at a time (+¼) (37 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½). Total cost: 7 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).*

JOY OVER PAIN

Effect: Touch Group Flash 2d6
Target/Area Affected: One woman in childbirth
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: By channeling the power of Faya, goddess of childbirth, a priest can ease the pangs of a woman in labor. The mother-to-be may still take STUN and/or BODY from the event, but even if so, she won't feel a thing.

Game Information: *Touch Group Flash 2d6, Continuous (+1) (12 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Gestures (throughout casting and use; -½), Incantations (throughout casting and use; -½), No Range (-½), Only Affects Women Giving Birth (-2), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½). Total cost: 2 points (final cost to caster: 1 point).*

Offensive Spells

BANDARO'S WHELMING WAVE	
Effect:	Energy Blast 6d6, Does Knockback
Target/Area Affected:	14" long, 2" wide Line
Casting Time:	Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	No Range
Magic Roll Penalty:	-7
END Cost:	7

Description: This spell creates a tall, strong wave of water that smashes into and through the priest's foes, injuring them and often sweeping them along with it. The wave is 2" wide; it starts in the hex immediately in front of the priest and travels for 14".

Game Information: *Energy Blast 6d6, Area Of Effect (14" long, 2" wide Line; +1¼), Does Knockback (+¼) (75 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), No Range (-½), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 15 points (final cost to caster: 5 points).*



THE BLACK GOD'S CARESS	
Effect:	Drain STR, CON, INT, and EGO 3d6
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Casting Time:	Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Touch
Magic Roll Penalty:	-6
END Cost:	6

Description: When Mordak grants this spell to one of his priests, he allows the priest to channel a tiny mote of the Black God's own dark energy into the target, weakening and enfeebling the victim both physically and mentally.

Game Information: *Drain STR, CON, INT, and EGO 3d6, four Characteristics at once (+1) (60 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 13 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).*

Options:

- 1) The Black God's Strong Caress:** Mordak gifts some priests with an even more powerful version of this dread spell. Increase to Drain 4d6. 80 Active Points; total cost 18 points (final cost to caster: 6 points).
- 2) The Black God's Bolt:** This form of the spell works at range. Add Limited Range (40"; +¼). 67 Active Points; total cost 15 points (final cost to caster: 5 points).

THE BLACK GOD'S GRASP	
Effect:	Drain BODY 8d6
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Casting Time:	Extra Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Touch
Magic Roll Penalty:	-8
END Cost:	16

Description: When a priest casts this spell, he channels some of the Black God's dark death-force into the body of the victim, inflicting terrible wounds and pain. Fortunately, if the attack doesn't slay the victim outright, the injuries caused by the attack heal swiftly, since exposure to the positive life-energies of the world reverse the spell's effects.

Game Information: *Drain BODY 8d6 (80 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Extra Time (Extra Phase; -¾), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 15 points (final cost to caster: 5 points).*

THE CORPSE-LORD'S TOUCH

Effect: Aid Necromancy 3d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This spell allows the priest to “touch” a necromancer with Vabanak’s essence, thereby augmenting the power of the necromancer’s spells.

Game Information: *Aid Necromancy 3d6, any one Necromancy spell or power at a time (+¼) (37 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God’s Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 9 points (final cost to caster: 3 points).*

Options:

1) The Corpse-Lord’s Gift: Sometimes the Great Necromancer grants a purer gift to his priests. Add Delayed Recovery Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Hour; +1). 67 Active Points; total cost 17 points (final cost to caster: 6 points).

FROM ISHANDER’S FORGE

Effect: Add Armor Piercing (+½) to weapon
Target/Area Affected: One HTH Combat weapon
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -7
END Cost: 7

Description: This spell makes an ordinary weapon seem as if it just came from Valinoss with a special enchantment of cutting and smashing. In game terms, this spell adds the *Armor Piercing* (+½) Advantage to any HTH Combat weapon built on up to 60 Active Points (that includes all the weapons listed in *Fantasy Hero*). If the weapon is already Armor Piercing, it becomes double Armor Piercing (which allows it to counteract a level of Hardened defenses). If the weapon is already enchanted in any way, the spell will not affect it. The effect lasts as long as the caster keeps paying END and maintains Line Of Sight to the weapon.

Game Information: *Armor Piercing (+½) for any HTH Combat weapon built on up to 60 points, Continuous (+1), Usable By Other (+¼) (67 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God’s Purposes (-½), Only Works On Mundane Weapons (-¼), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 16 points (final cost to caster: 5 points).*

GALEMAIDEN’S TWISTING WIND

Effect: Energy Blast 6d6; Dispel Tornado 20d6
Target/Area Affected: 3” Radius/One tornado
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 300”
Magic Roll Penalty: -6
END Cost: 6

Description: This spell calls upon Sirella’s power to allow the priest to create a miniature tornado with which to attack his enemies, or to disperse an existing tornado to save innocents from it.

Game Information:**Cost Power**

- 15 *Galemaiden’s Twisting Wind:* Multipower, 60-point reserve; all OAF (holy talisman; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God’s Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Spell (-½)
- 1u 1) *Tornado:* Energy Blast 6d6, Area Of Effect (3” Radius; +1); Common Limitations (-3)
- 1u 2) *Disperse Tornado:* Dispel Energy Blast 20d6; Common Limitations (-3), Only Works On Tornado-Type EBs (-2)

Total cost: 17 points (final cost to caster: 7 points).

HANDS OF THE BLOODY GOD

Effect: +4 in HTH Combat
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 4

Description: By casting this spell, a priest invokes the aid of Asvalak, god of battle, who lays his hands upon the subject of the spell and grants him greater skill and ferocity in battle. Large handprints in blood appear on the subject’s shoulders to mark the fact that he has the god’s power within him.

Game Information: *+4 in HTH Combat, Usable By Other (+¼) (25 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase to cast; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½), Only When Serving The God’s Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½). Total cost: 5 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).*

HORNBREK'S THUNDER-ARROW

Effect: Hearing Group Flash 6d6
Target/Area Affected: 4" Radius
Casting Time: Zero Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Linked to a fired arrow
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: A priest can only cast this spell, which requires little more than the uttering of a single mystical word, while firing an arrow. The spell "attaches" some of the Stormlord's energy to the arrow, causing a deafening thunderclap when it strikes its target.

Game Information: *Hearing Group Flash 6d6, Area Of Effect (4" Radius; +1¼), Trigger (when the spell is cast simultaneously with firing an arrow; +¼) (45 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Linked (to a fired arrow; -¼), Requires A Faith Roll (-½). Total cost: 13 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).*

Options:

1) Hornbrek's Mighty Thunder-Arrow: This form of the spell links a powerful thunderbolt to the arrow, instead of just a thunderclap. Change to Energy Blast 6d6, Area Of Effect (6" Radius; +1¼). 75 Active Points; total cost 21 points (final cost to caster: 7 points).

MOON-MAGIC

Effect: Aid Characteristics 2d6, Women Only
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 3

Description: The Silver Lady grants this spell to some priestesses (never to priests). It allows them to channel the magic of the Moon into themselves (or any other woman) for many different purposes.

Game Information: *Aid 2d6, any one Characteristic one at a time (+¼), Delayed Recovery Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Minute; +¼) (30 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Only Works On Women (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 6 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).*

RADIANT BOLT

Effect: RKA 2d6, Only Versus Infernal And Undead Beings; Sight Group Images (create light)
Target/Area Affected: 1" Radius
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: 30"
Magic Roll Penalty: -10
END Cost: 10

Description: This spell lets the priest wield some of Ophel's holy sunlight as a weapon against demons, undead, and similar beings. No such creature caught in a beam of the Golden Lord's light can hope to survive for long.

Game Information: *RKA 2d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), Continuous (+1) (75 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (30"; -¼), Only Versus Infernal And Undead Beings (-1), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Spell (-½) (total cost: 14 points; final cost to caster: 5 points) **plus** Sight Group Images, +4 to PER Rolls (22 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (30"; -¼), Linked (-½), Only To Create Light (-1), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Spell (-½) (total cost: 4 points; final cost to caster: 1 point). Total final cost to caster: 6 points.*

Options:

1) From Dawn To Zenith: This form of the spell allows the priest to move the pool of sunlight from one place to another. Add Mobile (+1) and Ranged (+½) to both powers, and remove Limited Range (-¼). 120 + 55 = 175 Active Points; total cost 24 + 10 = 28 points; final cost to caster 8 + 3 = 11 points.

SPEAR OF THE SKYFATHER

Effect: RKA 4d6, Only Versus Evil
Target/Area Affected: One Evil character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 300"
Magic Roll Penalty: -6
END Cost: 6

Description: This spell creates a bolt formed from the holiest of holy powers, those of the Skyfather himself. It can affect any Evil being. For purposes of this spell, "Evil" includes all demons and undead creatures, any priest or knowing worshipper of any Scarlet God, and any obviously Evil being or persons who knowingly serve them (such as Kal-Turak and his servants). The GM decides whether or not a being qualifies as "Evil."

Game Information: *RKA 4d6 (60 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's*

Purposes (-½), Only Works Against Evil Beings (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 13 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).

VARIDON'S JAVELIN

Effect: Energy Blast 10d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 250"
Magic Roll Penalty: -5
END Cost: 5

Description: This spell of the Arcane to let a priest do what a wizard so often does: blast his foes with the pure might of magic!

Game Information: *Energy Blast 10d6 (50 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 12 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).*

VARIDON'S MANTLE

Effect: Aid Arcane Magic 3d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -10
END Cost: 10

Description: This spell lays the power of the Great Wizard upon an arcane spellcaster, increasing the power of all of the mage's spells. It has no effect on any type of divine magic.

Game Information: *Aid Arcane Magic 3d6, all Arcane Magic spells and powers simultaneously (+2), Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per 5 Minutes; +½) (105 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 21 points (final cost to caster: 7 points).*

Defensive Spells

THE BLACK GOD'S HAND

Effect: Force Field (10 PD/10 ED/10 Mental Defense/10 Power Defense)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: This spell extends the protection of the Shadow King to the priest. Like all spells associated with Mordak, it's considered a form of black magic, and casting it too often may corrupt the priest. When in effect, it surrounds the priest with a sort of flickering, ghostly black fire.

Game Information: *Force Field (10 PD/10 ED/10 Mental Defense/10 Power Defense), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (50 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼), Spell (-½). Total cost: 13 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).*

NIGHTWALKER'S MANTLE

Effect: Invisibility to Sight Group, No Fringe, Only In Darkness/Shadows
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Full Phase to cast
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 3

Description: This spell channels the power of Forgil, god of thieves, to the priest. As long as the priest remains in darkness or shadow large enough to cover his whole body, no matter how dim that darkness may be, he cannot be seen by the eyes of Men.

Since Foci that provide Invisibility cannot be Obvious, Forgil allows a priest who casts this spell to hide his holy talisman underneath his robes so that it's not readily apparent that there's a Focus involved with the spell.

Game Information: *Invisibility to Sight Group, No Fringe (30 Active Points); IAF (holy talisman; -½), Extra Time (Full Phase to cast; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only In Darkness/Shadows (-½), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½). Total cost: 8 points (final cost to caster: 3 points).*

HORNBREK'S MANTLE

Effect: +4 DCV, Usable By Other
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase to cast
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: A person affected by this spell receives the protection of Hornbrek in battle, making him much more difficult to hit. Attacks seem to swerve aside from him at the last minute, or “just barely miss” when it looks like they’ll hit.

Game Information: +4 DCV, Usable By Other (+¼) (25 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase to cast; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God’s Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½). Total cost: 6 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

ZIANDWYRTH'S MIASMA

Effect: Force Field (15 Mental Defense)
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase to cast
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: This spell channels a tiny fraction of the Laughing God’s madness into the priest’s mind, forming a “shell” of chaotic thoughts that makes it hard for Sorcery spells to have any effect on the caster’s mind. Unfortunately the madness also disorders the priest’s thoughts a little.

Game Information: Force Field (15 Mental Defense) (15 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Extra Time (Full Phase to cast; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God’s Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Side Effects (-2 to all INT-Based rolls while spell remains in effect, always occurs; -¼). Total cost: 4 points (final cost to caster: 1 point).

Options:

1) Touch Of Miasma: Sometimes Ziandwyrrth allows a priest to grant the power of this spell to another person. Add Usable By Other (+¼). 19 Active Points; total cost 5 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

Movement Spells

THE HUNTSMAN'S FOOTFALL

Effect: Gliding 6”, Invisible to Hearing Group, Ground Gliding, Only In Wilderness Areas
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Full Phase to cast
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: This spell allows a priest to move through wilderness areas — forests, fields, marshes, mountains, and the like — without leaving tracks or making a sound. It’s an ideal spell for hunting, among other things.

Game Information: Gliding 6”, Invisible to Hearing Group (+¼) (7 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase to cast; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Ground Gliding (-¼), Only In Wilderness Areas (-1), Only When Serving The God’s Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½). Total cost: 1 point (final cost to caster: 1 point).

Options:

1) The Huntsman’s Band: Brandon teaches some priests a form of this spell that they can cast on many people at once. Add Usable Simultaneously (up to 8 persons at once; +1). 13 Active Points; total cost 2 points (final cost to caster: 1 point).

SEA LORD'S AID

Effect: Aid Swimming 2d6, Delayed Return Rate, Only Works On Sailed Vehicles
Target/Area Affected: One sailed vessel
Casting Time: Full Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This spell places Saaltus’s blessing upon a sailing vessel, making it cut through the waves with great swiftness. The spell ends immediately if the vessel drops anchor or otherwise comes to a standstill.

Game Information: Aid Swimming 2d6, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per 6 Hours; +1¼) (45 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only For Water Vehicles With The Sailed Limitation (-1), Only When Serving The God’s Purposes (-½), Others Only (-½), All Points Fade Immediately If Vessel Stops Moving (-¼), Requires A Faith Roll (-½). Total cost: 7 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

STONELORD'S TOUCH

Effect: Tunneling 6" through DEF 6 materials, Only ; Clinging, Only To Stone

Target/Area Affected: Self

Casting Time: Half Phase

Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations

Duration: Constant

Range: Self

Magic Roll Penalty: -3/-1

END Cost: 3/1

Description: Through this spell, Korthund grants the priest two powers. One is to create a tunnel through earth and rock so that he (and those who follow after him) may effortlessly travel through stony obstacles. The second is to cling to rock and stone like a fly clings to a wall, making it an easy task to scale tall mountains and sheer walls.

At the GM's option, a character can use the *Moving Through Rock* aspect of this spell as a way to dig underground halls and chambers. By using it only one hex at a time, the priest can hollow out entire underground kingdoms in a relatively short time.

Game Information:**Cost Power**

- 9 *Stonelord's Touch:* Multipower, 30-point reserve; all OAF (holy talisman; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½)
- 1u 1) *Moving Through Rock:* Tunneling 6" through DEF 6 materials; Common Limitations (-2½), Limited Medium (earth and stone only; -½)
- 1u 2) *Grip Of Stone:* Clinging (normal STR); Common Limitations (-2½), Costs Endurance (-½), Only To Cling To Stone (-1)

Total cost: 11 points (final cost to caster: 5 points).

Sensory Spells

SKYFATHER'S JUDGMENT

Effect: Detect Spoken Falsehood (INT Roll +5)

Target/Area Affected: Self

Casting Time: Half Phase

Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations

Duration: Constant

Range: Self

Magic Roll Penalty: -1

END Cost: 1

Description: This spell gives the priest the Skyfather's own sense for the Truth. When someone lies to him, the priest knows it. He cannot discern the truth — just the fact that a lie is being told — but he can tell whether the lie is a minor or great one, and whether it involves shading the truth, omitting the truth, outright falsehood, or the like.

Game Information: *Detect Spoken Falsehood* (INT Roll +5) (Hearing Group), *Discriminatory* (13 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½). Total cost: 3 points (final cost to caster: 1 point).

Miscellaneous Spells

CRAFTING-SPELL

Effect: +4 with all PSs relating to hand craftwork

Target/Area Affected: Self

Casting Time: Full Phase to cast

Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations

Duration: Constant

Range: Touch

Magic Roll Penalty: -2

END Cost: 2

Description: Through this spell, Lantiphone grants the priest (or one person whom the priest chooses) great skill at all crafts of the hand — smithing, painting, sculpting, illumination, weaving, wood-carving, and so on. It provides no benefits to craft-skills not involving the making of something with the hands (such as various game-or music-related PSs).

Game Information: +4 with all PSs relating to hand craftwork, *Usable By Other* (+¼) (25 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase to cast; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½). Total cost: 6 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

Options:

- 1) **Touch Of Rairors:** This spell, which comes from Ishander rather than his sister, aids smiths and

alchemists instead of craftsmen. Change to +4 with all PSs relating to smithwork and with Alchemy and related PSs. 25 Active Points; total cost: 6 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

THE FOUR-FOLD BLESSING

Effect: Luck 6d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase to cast
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Uncontrolled (duration of 1 hour, +1 hour per point by which the Faith roll is made)
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -5
END Cost: 5 to cast

Description: When a priest casts this spell, he invokes Almandr  s blessing upon the recipient, such that the Patterner bends the warp and woof of fate for a short time to aid the recipient as best he may.

Game Information: Luck 6d6, Usable By Other (+1/4), Uncontrolled (duration of 1 hour, +1 hour per point by which the Faith roll is made; +1/2) (52 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Costs Endurance (to cast; -1/4), Extra Time (Full Phase to cast; -1/4), Gestures (-1/4), Incantations (-1/4), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-1/2), Requires A Faith Roll (-1/2). Total cost: 13 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).

THE GOLDEN HANDFUL

Effect: Major Transform 4d6 (air into coins like those being held)
Target/Area Affected: One handful of coins
Casting Time: 1 Turn (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -7
END Cost: 7

Description: A blessing from Caligan himself, this spell allows the priest to duplicate a handful of ordinary coins — whatever type of coins the caster is holding. It only works on a handful of coins (at most), and only on ordinary coins such as are currently being circulated somewhere in the world (in other words, it won't affect magical coins, antique coins, or the like). The Provider only allows a priest to cast this spell once per day.

Since this spell can have significant effects on a local economy, not to mention removing one possible motivation for PCs to go adventuring, the GM should monitor its use carefully, and forbid it if necessary.

Game Information: Major Transform 4d6 (air into ordinary coins like those being held, "heals" through another casting of this spell on those coins), Improved Results Group (any type of coin, based on what's being held; +1/4) (75 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Costs Endurance (-1/2), Extra Time (1 Turn;

-1 1/4), Gestures (throughout casting; -1/2), Incantations (throughout casting; -1/2), Limited Target (a handful of coins; -1), No Range (-1/2), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-1/2), Requires A Faith Roll (-1/2), 1 Charge (-2). Total cost: 8 points (final cost to caster: 3 points).

THE HEARTMAKER'S MANTLE

Effect: Aid COM 2d6, Delayed Return Rate
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This spell allows Faya, the goddess of beauty, to touch someone and enhance his physical attractiveness for a short time.

Game Information: Aid COM 2d6, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per 3 Hours; +1 1/4) (45 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Costs Endurance (-1/2), Extra Time (Full Phase; -1/2), Gestures (-1/4), Incantations (-1/4), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-1/2), Requires A Faith Roll (-1/2), Spell (-1/2). Total cost: 9 points (final cost to caster: 3 points).

LITHIRA'S BOUNTY

Effect: Change Environment (enhance fertility), Long Lasting
Target/Area Affected: 32" Radius
Casting Time: 1 Minute (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -5
END Cost: 5

Description: This spell channels the power of the Bounteous Lady into a farmer's field, making it more fertile — more plants grow, and they're bigger than normal, ensuring a far larger harvest. The spell has no effect on non-domesticated plants (such as weeds), nor on animals or people.

Game Information: Change Environment (enhance fertility) 32" radius, Long Lasting (for one crop) (50 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Extra Time (1 Minute; -1 1/2), Gestures (throughout casting; -1/2), Incantations (throughout casting; -1/2), Instant (-1/2), No Range (-1/2), Only Affects Domesticated Plants (-1/2), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-1/2), Requires A Faith Roll (-1/2), Spell (-1/2). Total cost: 7 points (final cost to caster: 2 points).

VORNAKKIAN DIVINE MAGIC

Here are just a few of the hundreds of spells granted by the various Vornakkian gods to their priests.

ABERAC'S SHINING MACE

Effect: HA +6d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Lingering (1 Turn)
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -5
END Cost: 2

Description: The Protector of Eltirian knows that sometimes the best defense is a good offense. To that end, he sometimes grants this spell to his priests. It creates a mace-like weapon of navy blue energy which they can wield against their foes.

Game Information: HA +6d6, Lingering (1 Turn; +½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (52 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Gestures (-¼), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 11 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).

THE CALL OF ULINOOR

Effect: Summon 16 cats built on up to 200 points
Target/Area Affected: Up to 16 cats
Casting Time: 1 Minute
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -7
END Cost: 7

Description: The cat-goddess of Devyldra often grants her priests the power to summon her feline followers, be they the housecats of the black-bricked streets or the black lions of the Devyldran plain. The cats aren't automatically friendly to the caster, though.

Game Information: Summon 16 cats built on up to 200 points, Expanded Class (mundane felines; +¼) (75 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Extra Time (1 Minute; -1½), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Summoned Being Must Inhabit Locale (-½), Arrives Under Own Power (-½). Total cost: 11 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).

Options:

1) Ulinoor's Blessed Call: This form of the spell renders the cats kindly-disposed toward the caster. Add Loyal (+½). 105 Active Points; total cost 16 points (final cost to caster: 5 points).

THE SEAL OF CIRGAATH

Effect: RKA 6d6, NND, Does BODY, Trigger
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: 1 Hour (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -15
END Cost: 29

Description: Sometimes Cirgaath, the feared death-god of Zhor Cacimar, grants to a specially-favored priest the knowledge of a death-rune so powerful that anyone who gazes on it dies. The priest can then inscribe the rune on something (typically the inside of a book, or the like) that the intended victim will see — and when the victim sees it, he dies. However, the spell does not work *only* on the intended victim; if someone else sees the Seal first, it affects him instead.

Game Information: RKA 6d6, NND (defense is Power Defense; +1), Does BODY (+1), Trigger (someone gazing upon it; +¼) (292 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour; -3), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), No Range (-½), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼), Spell (-½). Total cost: 38 points (final cost to caster: 13 points).

THE TOUCH OF S'TAA'SHA

Effect: Multiform into were-reptile shape
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: 1 Minute
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Persistent
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -6
END Cost: 6

Description: This spell allows a priest of the Great Scaly One to change into a strange-looking were-reptile man — a being that walks upright on two legs, but has the scales, fangs, and claws of various reptiles. However, he can only take the were-reptile shape for a maximum of an hour a day.

For the were-reptile form, use the were-tiger (*The HERO System Bestiary*, page 101), but remove the Shapechanging and Lycanthrope's Bite powers, and add a Strong Venom bite from page 29 of that book for a total of 304 points. (If necessary, recalculate the cost of the spell to add in the character's own Skills and other pertinent abilities.)

Game Information: Multiform into 304-point were-reptile shape (61 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Costs Endurance (to change form; -½), Extra Time (1 Minute; -1½), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), May Only Remain In Were-Reptile Form For Up To 1 Hour Per Day

(-¼), *Only When Serving The God's Purposes* (-½), *Requires A Faith Roll* (-½). *Total cost: 10 points (final cost to caster: 3 points).*

WISDOM OF TJJALIS

Effect: Precognition
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: 1 Minute
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This spell grants to a priestess of Tjjalis the wisdom of the astrologers — the ability to read the future in the stars. The visions Tjjalis thus sends are not always as clear as the priestess would like when they concern events not soon to come, but for near future events tend to be highly accurate. However, Tjjalis only allows a priestess to use this spell once per month.

Game Information: *Clairsentience (Sight Group), Precognition (40 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (1 Minute; -1½), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), No Range (-½), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Precognition Only (-1), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Time Modifiers (-½), 1 Charge which Recovers per Month (-3). Total cost: 4 points (final cost to caster: 1 point).*

THÛNESE DIVINE MAGIC

Just as the sorcerer-priests of Thûn have arcane magics known nowhere else, so to do they possess strange divine magics sent by their Imprisoned Ones.

CHAOS-MARK

Effect: Drain STR, DEX, INT, and EGO 4d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 50"
Magic Roll Penalty: -9
END Cost: 9

Description: With this spell, a sorcerer-priest can place the Mark of Ûm'vaveht on a foe, which appears as a disturbing-looking rune branded on his forehead and elsewhere upon his body. The Mark infuses him with the essence of the Chaos Irresistible, so disordering his form that he cannot make it function aright for a time. As the spell fades, so to do the marks on the body.

Game Information: *Drain STR, DEX, INT, and EGO 4d6, four Characteristics at once (+1), Limited Range (50"; +¼) (90 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 22 points (final cost to caster: 7 points).*

THE POWER SAPPHIRE

Effect: Growth
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This spell grants to the sorcerer-priest a tiny mote of the power of S'thlaghha, which is so great that his form grows and becomes stronger to encompass it. While the spell remains in effect, the sorcerer-priest's skin and clothes take on a distinctive bluish hue.

Game Information: *Growth (+45 STR, +9 BODY, +9 STUN, -9 KB, 50,000 kg, -6 DCV, +6 PER Rolls to perceive, 16m tall, 8 m wide) (45 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½). Total cost: 13 points (final cost to caster: 4 points).*

THE SUNDERING OF THE VEIL

Effect:	Extra-Dimensional Movement (any point in any plane)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Casting Time:	1 Hour
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
Magic Roll Penalty:	-8
END Cost:	12

Description: At times a sorcerer-priest must journey among the Scarlet Infinities, seeking the wisdom, lore, and magic needed to free his gods. To send one of their number on such a quest, a group of sorcerer-priests must use this ritual.

Game Information: *Extra-Dimensional Movement (any point in any plane) (40 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour; -3), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), Increased Endurance Cost (x3 END; -1), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-1 per 5 Active Points; -1), Ritual (5 casters; -¾). Total cost: 4 points (final cost to caster: 1 point).*

DRAKINE DIVINE MAGIC

Drakine priests have a large body of magical lore to draw upon. Here are just a few of the spells they can cast.

BREATH OF THE GODS

Effect:	RKA 2½d6, Penetrating
Target/Area Affected:	13" Cone
Casting Time:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	No Range
Magic Roll Penalty:	-10
END Cost:	10

Description: This spell grants a Drakine priest the power to breathe out a gout of the sacred dragon's fire of the gods.

Game Information: *RKA 2½d6, Area Of Effect (13" Cone; +1), Penetrating (+½) (100 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), No Range (-½), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 22 points (final cost to caster: 7 points).*

COMMUNION WITH THE FIRSTBORN

Effect:	Mind Link (any four dragons); +20 PRE, Only For Presence Attacks Against Dragons
Target/Area Affected:	Up to four dragons/Varies
Casting Time:	Half Phase
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Constant
Range:	LOS/Self
Magic Roll Penalty:	-2 for either power
END Cost:	2 for either power

Description: This spell grants a Drakine priest the power to commune with dragons. Not only can he communicate with them through his mind alone, but they usually regard him with much greater respect than they ordinarily would (and dragons often look more favorably on Drakine than on other humanoid races to begin with).

Game Information:**Cost Power**

3	<i>Communion With The Firstborn:</i> Elemental Control, 20-point powers; all OAF (holy talisman; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Requires A Faith Roll (-½)
2	1) <i>Dragon Mindspeech:</i> Mind Link (any four minds in a specific group [dragons]); Common Limitations, Costs Endurance (-½)
2	2) <i>Impressing Dragons:</i> +20 PRE; Common Limitations, Only For Presence Attacks Against Dragons (-2), Costs Endurance (-½)

Total cost: 7 points (final cost to caster: 3 points).

THE MIGHT OF TERRUT-SEH

Effect:	+20 STR, Only In Battle Versus Non-Drakine
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Casting Time:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
Magic Roll Penalty:	-2
END Cost:	2

Description: Terrut-Seh, the Drakine war-god, sometimes favors priests who have proven themselves in battle with this spell. It greatly enhances the priest's Strength — but only when he fights against other races.

Game Information: +20 STR (20 Active Points); OAF (holy talisman; -1), Costs Endurance (2 END per Phase to maintain the spell, plus the END for the STR used when it is used; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only When Serving The God's Purposes (-½), Only Works In Battle Versus Non-Drakine (-1), Requires A Faith Roll (-½). Total cost: 4 points (final cost to caster: 1 point).

ENCHANTED ITEMS



Here are just a few of the many different types of magical items created by Ambrethelan enchanters. See *Fantasy Hero* and *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire* for even more enchanted items characters might find, steal, or create.

Armor And Shields

ANSGAR'S ARMOR

Effect: Armor (11 PD/11 ED), Aid STR 3d6, Teleportation 20", and Telescopic (+12 versus Range Modifier) for Sight Group

Target/Area Affected: Self

Duration: Persistent/Instant/Instant/Persistent

Range: Self

END Cost: 0/3 Charges/2 Charges/0

Breakability: 11 DEF

Description: Created by King Ansgar of Khrisulia, sometimes known as Ansgar the Twice-Lived (page 152), to give to those he favors or supports, one of these suits of plate armor not only protects the wearer to an even greater degree than ordinary plate, it provides several other magical powers. First, it can make the wearer stronger three times a day. Second, it allows the wearer to teleport himself up to 130 feet twice a day. Third, as long as the wearer has the helmet on, it gives him the keen eyesight of an eagle.

Game Information:

Cost	Power
8	<i>Ansgar's Armor (Protection):</i> Armor (11 PD/11 ED) (33 Active Points); OIF (-½), Mass (Half Mass; -½), Independent (-2)
8	<i>Ansgar's Armor (Enchanted Strength):</i> Aid STR 3d6, Trigger (spoken command word; +¼) (37 Active Points); OIF (-½), Independent (-2), 3 Charges (-1¼)
9	<i>Ansgar's Armor (Wizardwalking):</i> Teleportation 20", Trigger (spoken command word; +¼) (50 Active Points); OIF (-½), Independent (-2), No Noncombat Movement (-¼), 2 Charges (-1½)
5	<i>Ansgar's Armor (Helmet Of Eagle's Sight):</i> Telescopic (+12 versus Range Modifier) for Sight Group (18 Active Points); OIF (-½), Independent (-2)

Total cost: 30 points.

ARMOR OF THE VULNERABLE FOE

Effect: Armor (6 PD/6 ED), Change Environment (-3 to DEX Rolls)

Target/Area Affected: Self/1" Radius

Duration: Persistent/Constant

Range: Self/No Range

END Cost: 0/1

Breakability: 6 DEF

Description: In addition to the protection of the chainmail itself (which weighs little and does not require the usual upkeep), this armor grants the wearer a valuable power. When he activates and maintains its power (which tires him out), anyone in HTH Combat with him (*i.e.*, who enters the hex he's in, be it friend or foe) must make a DEX Roll each Phase at a -3 penalty. If the victim fails the roll, he does something clumsy — the GM decides exactly what. Possible actions include slipping and falling, tripping over one's own feet, dropping or losing a grip on one's weapon (or shield), and the like. The important thing is that the failed roll puts the victim at a temporary disadvantage in combat. (In game terms, the clumsiness is built with Change Environment; since it has No Range, the GM should allow the effect to move with the wearer as he moves.)

Game Information:

Cost	Power
5	<i>Chainmail Protection:</i> Armor (6 PD/6 ED), Hardened (+¼) (22 Active Points); OIF (-½), Mass (Half Mass; -½), Independent (-2)
3	<i>Clumsy Foe:</i> Change Environment 1" radius (clumsiness), -3 to DEX Rolls, Personal Immunity (+¼) (14 Active Points); OIF (-½), Independent (-2), No Range (-½)

Total cost: 8 points.

CHAINMAIL OF THE SILENT STEP

Effect: Armor (6 PD/6 ED), Invisibility (Hearing Group)

Target/Area Affected: Self

Duration: Persistent/Constant

Range: Self

END Cost: 0

Breakability: 6 DEF

Description: This suit of chainmail carries two enchantments. First, it's strengthened with magic so that it provides more protection than normal chainmail, yet only weighs half as much. (Additionally, it always remains clean and in good repair.) Second, it allows the wearer to move with absolute silence. It doesn't jingle, the wearer's footsteps make no sound, and so forth. Many rogues eagerly seek out Chainmail of the Silent Step.

Game Information:**Cost Power**

- 5 *Chainmail Protection:* Armor (6 PD/6 ED), Hardened (+¼) (22 Active Points); OIF (-½), Mass (Half Mass; -½), Independent (-2)
- 9 *Enchantment Of Silent Movement:* Invisibility to Hearing Group, No Fringe, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (30 Active Points); OIF (-½), Independent (-2)

Total cost: 14 points.**INVISIBLE ARMOR**

Effect: Armor (3 PD/3 ED), Invisible Power Effects

Target/Area Affected: Self

Duration: Persistent

Range: Self

END Cost: 0

Breakability: 5 DEF

Description: This suit of enchanted leather armor is as tough as the strongest reinforced leather armors, even though it only has the weight and discomfort of ordinary cloth. More importantly, it cannot be seen — a character can wear it over his clothing and no one will ever be able to tell without touching him. (In game terms, this armor isn't bought as a Focus, thereby keeping it from having a perceivable special effect, but for all other purposes you should treat it like an OIF because of its special effect.)

Game Information: *Armor (5 PD/5 ED) (15 Active Points); Independent (-2). Total cost: 5 points.*

SHIELD OF GRASPING

Effect: +2 DCV; HA +2d6; Telekinesis (24 STR), Only To Grab/Hold Weapons

Target/Area Affected: Self/Self/One character

Duration: Constant

Range: Self/No Range

END Cost: 0

Breakability: 13 DEF

Description: This shield is carved with the head of a monster or beast of some sort. In addition to the protection a shield normally provides, when an opponent strikes the shield (*i.e.*, attacks the character and misses by 1-2), the character can instantly activate the shield's other power: the head on the shield comes to life and grasps the weapon that struck it in its jaws. The grasping power remains in effect as long as the user wills, or until he falls unconscious.

Game Information:**Cost Power**

- 2 *Shield Of Grasping:* Multipower, 10-point reserve; all OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
- 1u 1) *Defense:* +2 DCV; OAF (-1), Real Armor (-¼), Mass (Half Mass; -½), STR Minimum (10; -½), Independent (-2)
- 1u 2) *Shield Bash:* HA +2d6; OAF (-1), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½), Real Weapon (-¼),

STR Minimum (10; -½), Side Effects (OCV penalty equal to DCV bonus, always occurs; -½), Independent (-2)

- 11 *Grasping Jaws:* Telekinesis (24 STR), Trigger (mental command word; +¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (63 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Only To Grab/Hold Weapons (-1), Only Affects Weapons That Miss Target Due To Shield's DCV Bonus (-½)

Total cost: 15 points.**SHIELD OF WITHERING**

Effect: +2 DCV; HA +2d6; Drain BODY 2d6, Damage Shield

Target/Area Affected: Self/Self/One character

Duration: Constant/Instant/Constant

Range: Self/Self/Touch

END Cost: 0/0/5

Breakability: 10 DEF

Description: This shield contains a potent Necromantic enchantment. In addition to the protection a shield normally provides, the user can activate a withering power that affects anyone who touches the shield (*i.e.*, who attacks the character and misses by 1-2, or who touches the shield in some other way). The withering power remains in effect as long as the user can maintain it (*i.e.*, pays END).

Game Information:**Cost Power**

- 2 *Shield Of Withering:* Multipower, 10-point reserve; all OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
- 1u 1) *Defense:* +2 DCV; OAF (-1), Real Armor (-¼), Mass (Half Mass; -½), STR Minimum (10; -½), Independent (-2)
- 1u 2) *Shield Bash:* HA +2d6; OAF (-1), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum (10; -½), Side Effects (OCV penalty equal to DCV bonus, always occurs; -½), Independent (-2)
- 11 *Withering:* Drain BODY 2d6, Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (+½) (50 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Only Affects Persons Who Miss Target Due To Shield's DCV Bonus Or Otherwise Touch Shield (-½)

Total cost: 15 points.

Rings

MESMERIC RING

Effect: Mind Control 12d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Charges: 9 Charges
Breakability: 12 DEF

Description: This ring is usually made of gold, with small opals or *virgalai* set all around it in a sort of spiral pattern. To use it, the wearer holds up his hand (usually palm first, but not necessarily) in front of the target's eyes. The ring then allows him to take control of the victim's mind, but he must speak aloud the commands he wishes the victim to follow. The ring only has enough mystic energy to be used nine times per day.

Game Information: *Mind Control* 12d6 (60 Active Points); *OIF* (-½), *Independent* (-2), *No Range* (-½), 9 Charges (-¼). Total cost: 14 points.

RING OF WAND IDENTIFICATION

Effect: Detect Powers Of Wand 17-, Discriminatory, Analyze
Target/Area Affected: One wand (or like item)
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
END Cost: 0
Breakability: 4 DEF

Description: This ring fits snugly on the finger when worn, but if taken off can, at the user's command, expand in size to fit over any wand, staff, rod, or like enchanted item. When the wand passes through the ring, the caster learns everything there is to know about its powers — what types of powers it has, how strong they are, the number of charges it has remaining, and so forth. (It does not, however, tell him the wand's command word, history, or the like.)

Game Information: *Detect Powers Of Wand* 17- (no Sense Group), *Discriminatory*, *Analyze* (21 Active Points); *OIF* (-½), *Independent* (-2), *Instant* (-½). Total cost: 5 points.

RING OF THE WARRIOR'S SKILL

Effect: Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Persistent
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Breakability: 1 DEF

Description: A character wearing this ring, which is usually made of silver and engraved with scenes of battle, has a much better chance to avoid blows and other attacks than he normally would.

Game Information: *Combat Luck* (3 PD/3 ED) (6 Active Points); *OIF* (-½), *Independent* (-2). Total cost: 2 points.

STEELHAND RING

Effect: Force Wall (30 PD/30 ED), Hardened, Only Protects The Hand On Which It's Worn
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Persistent
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Breakability: Unbreakable

Description: This is a thick steel ring, almost more suited for use as a hair-ring or the like. While the character wears it, the hand it's on (including the wrist and the three inches of the forearm closest to the hand) are virtually immune to injury. The character can stick his hand into a blazing fire and pull out a red-hot ember without burning himself, or grasp a razor-sharp swordblade without suffering a cut. An elephant could stomp on his hand and not cause so much as a scratch.

Game Information: *Force Wall* (30 PD/30 ED), *Hardened* (+¼), *Reduced Endurance* (0 END; +½), *Persistent* (+½) (337 Active Points); *OIF* (-½), *Independent* (-2), *No Range* (-½), *Self Only* (-½), *Only Protects The Hand On Which It's Worn* (-2). Total cost: 52 points.

Staffs

BATTELMAGE STAFF

Effect: Various Attack Powers
Target/Area Affected: Varies
Duration: Instant
Range: Varies
Charges: 60 Charges that Never Recover
Breakability: 16 DEF

Description: While most wizards want to avoid combat, a few relish their ability to lay their foes low with spells. This staff, designed for just such mages, makes them puissant fighters with a variety of attack powers at their fingertips. The staff also protects the wielder from harm, and that magic lasts even when its Charges are used up.

Game Information:

Cost	Power
14	<i>Battlemage Staff</i> : Multipower, 80-point reserve; all OAF (-1), Independent (-2), 60 Charges for entire reserve that Never Recover (-1½)
1u	1) <i>Shattering Blow</i> : HA +8d6; OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)
2u	2) <i>Spinning Blow</i> : Energy Blast 8d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex Doubled; +¾), Personal Immunity (+¼); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), No Range (-½)
1u	3) <i>Fire Arrows</i> : RKA 2d6, Armor Piercing (+½), +2 Increased STUN Multiplier (+½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Requires 3 Charges Per Use (-½)
2u	4) <i>Sleep-Spell</i> : Drain STUN 4d6, Ranged (+½), Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per 5 Minutes; +½); OAF (-1),

Independent (-2), Requires 2 Charges Per Use (-¼)

- 1u 5) *Blindfoe*: Sight Group Flash 12d6; OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

- 2 *Shielding*: +2 DCV; OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

Total cost: 23 points.

STAFF OF THE FOUR WINDS

Effect: Energy Blast 8d6, Variable Advantage (+1 Advantages)

Target/Area Affected: One character

Duration: Instant

Range: 550"

Charges: 40 Charges that Never Recover

Breakability: 22 DEF

Description: This staff can invoke, and blast the wielder's enemy with, any one of four winds: the chill North Wind (NND, defense is Life Support [Safe Environment: Intense Cold]); the strong East Wind (Does Knockback, Double Knockback); the unstoppable West Wind (Continuous); and the gale-like South Wind (Area Of Effect [4" Radius]).

Game Information: *Energy Blast 8d6, Variable Advantage (+1 Advantages, but limited to the four specific Advantages described in the text; +1¾); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), 40 Charges that Never Recover (-1½). Total cost: 20 points.*

STAFF OF SCINTILLATION

Effect: Various Attack Powers

Target/Area Affected: Varies

Duration: Instant

Range: Varies

Charges: 60 Charges that Never Recover

Breakability: 10 DEF

Description: This staff, usually made of some dark-colored wood, has motes of brilliant color appearing, disappearing, and moving around it (unless the user stops the effect with a mental command). When activated, it can create bright patterns of colored light for various effects, such as blinding someone, taking control of a person's mind, or inflicting pain.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 9 *Staff Of Scintillation*: Multipower, 50-point reserve; all OAF (-1), Independent (-2), 60 Charges for entire reserve that Never Recover (-1½)

- 1u 1) *Patterns Of Scintillation*: Sight Group Images, -5 to PER Roll, Increased Size (16" radius; +1); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

- 1u 2) *Blinding Scintillations*: Sight Group Flash 10d6; OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

- 1u 3) *Stunning Scintillations*: Energy Blast 4d6, AVLD (defense is Power Defense; +1½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

- 1u 4) *Mesmeric Scintillations*: Mind Control 10d6; OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Limited Normal Range (10"; -½)

Total cost: 13 points.



**USABLE
SIMULTANEOUSLY,
ONE AT A TIME**

The rules specify that a Usable By Others power can only be used by one character at a time; Usable Simultaneously increases this number by allowing the character to give the power to multiple people (possibly including himself) at once. But in some Fantasy settings or schools of magic, a spellcaster can cast a spell on multiple people — he just has to take the time and energy to do so one-by-one.

To create this sort of power, reduce the value of Usable Simultaneously by ¼ (minimum value +¼). The *Usable Simultaneously* Advantage defines the maximum number of people the power can be given to in the normal fashion, but the character must use an Attack Action and make an Attack Roll for each individual he wants to give the power to (including himself, if appropriate). He must take any other appropriate preparations — using an Expendable Focus, paying END, making a Skill Roll, and so forth — each time he grants the power to another person.

STAFF OF WIZARDWALKING

Effect:

Teleportation 40", Teleportation 20", MegaScale

Target/Area Affected:

Self

Duration:

Instant

Range:

Self

Charges:

60 Charges that Never Recover

Breakability:

16 DEF

Description:

This staff, usually carved of a light-colored wood and set with dark stones (such as jet) or ebony-wood inlay, allows a wizard to vanish and, in the blink of an eye, re-appear elsewhere — up to 200 km away!

Game Information:

Cost

Power

14

Staff Of Wizardwalking: Multipower, 80-point reserve; all OAF (-1), Independent (-2), 60 Charges for entire reserve that Never Recover (-1½)

2u

1) Short-Range Wizardwalking: Teleportation 40"; OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

1u

2) Long-Range Wizardwalking: Teleportation 20", MegaScale (1" = 10 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +¾); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Requires 4 Charges Per Use (-½)

Total cost:

17 points.

Wands

WAND OF AQUATIC MASTERY

Effect:

Life Support (Expanded Breathing: Breathe Underwater), Usable Simultaneously, Environmental Movement: Aquatic Movement

Target/Area Affected:

One character per Charge

Duration:

Constant

Range:

Touch

Charges:

50 Charges lasting 1 Hour each that Never Recover

Breakability:

4 DEF

Description:

This wand is made of a long piece of coral, carved to look like a series of rushing waves and cataracts of water. It allows the caster to grant up to eight people (possibly including himself) the ability to breathe underwater. He can only grant the power to one person per Phase. Each group of eight people requires only 1 Charge to grant the power to (if the user voluntarily chooses to grant the power to less than eight people, doing so still uses up 1 Charge; he can't "save up" the remainder and grant the power to that many people later without expending a charge). Additionally, the wand grants the user only the power to move without hindrance while underwater.

Game Information:

Cost

Power

2

Aquatic Comfort: Life Support (Expanded Breathing: Breathe Underwater), Usable Simultaneously (up to eight persons at once, one at a time; +¾); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), 50 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Hour

each that Never Recover (-0)

1 Aquatic Mastery: Environmental Movement: Aquatic Movement (no penalties underwater); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

Total cost: 3 points.

WAND OF THE FIVE FIRES

Effect:

Various Fire-based attacks

Target/Area Affected:

Varies

Duration:

Instant

Range:

Varies

Charges:

50 Charges for entire Multiplier

Breakability:

18 DEF

Description:

This wand, a favorite of Fire Mages, can produce five different Fire effects: a swift-flying dart, good for attacking targets at range; a miniature fireball able to hit multiple targets at once; a firestorm that can harm even more targets at a time; a broad lance of fire that can wreak havoc among packed masses of men; and the power to cause someone to burst into flames.

Game Information:

Cost

Power

16

Wand Of The Five Fires: Multipower, 90-point reserve; all OAF (-1), Independent (-2), 50 Charges for entire reserve which Never Recover (-1½)

2u

1) Fire Dart: RKA 3d6, Armor Piercing (+½), No Range Modifier (+½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

2u

2) Miniature Fireball: RKA 3d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), Armor Piercing (+½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

2u

3) Fire Lance: RKA 3d6, Area Of Effect (18" Line; +1); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Requires 3 Charges Per Use (-½)

2u

4) Firestorm: RKA 3d6, Area Of Effect (5" Radius; +1); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Requires 3 Charges Per Use (-½)

2u

5) Immolation: RKA 2d6, NND (defense is Power Defense; +1), Does BODY (+1); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Requires 4 Charges Per Use (-½)

Total cost:

26 points.

WAND OF TALONS

Effect:

Telekinesis (30 STR)

Target/Area Affected:

One character

Duration:

Constant

Range:

60"

Charges:

50 Charges that Never Recover

Breakability:

9 DEF

Description:

This is a slender wand about a foot long, carved from the bone of a roc; set at the tip is a golden talon. When the user speaks the command word, a bolt of golden-hued energy lances out and grabs the target with a talon-like "hand." The caster may then move the object as he wishes, but each Phase he maintains the effect requires him to expend a Charge.

Game Information: *Telekinesis* (30 STR) (45 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Limited Range (60"; -¼), 50 Charges that Never Recover (-1½). Total cost: 8 points.

WAND OF THUNDERSTORMS

Effect: Hearing Group Flash 10d6; Change Environment (-3 to Sight Group PER Rolls); RKA 3d6, Armor Piercing
Target/Area Affected: 6" Radius/125" Radius/One character
Duration: Instant/Constant/Instant
Range: 375"/335"/30"
Charges: 50 Charges for entire Multiplier
Breakability: 15 DEF

Description: Made of iron, tipped with jacinth, and etched with storm-runes, this wand can project the thunderstorm in its many aspects: the deafening thunderclap; the driving rain; the devastating lightning.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 14 *Wand Of Thunderstorms:* Multipower, 75-point reserve; all OAF (-1), Independent (-2), 50 Charges for entire reserve which Never Recover (-1½)
 2u 1) *Deafening Thunderclap:* Hearing Group Flash 10d6, Area Of Effect (6" Radius; +1¼), Personal Immunity (+¼); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
 1u 2) *Driving Rain:* Change Environment 125" radius (driving rain), -3 to Sight Group PER Rolls, Personal Immunity (+¼); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
 1u 3) *Devastating Lightning:* RKA 3d6, Armor Piercing (+½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Requires 2 Charges Per Use (-¼), Limited Range (30"; -¼)

Total cost: 18 points.

Weapons

CLUB OF GIANT BLOWS

Effect: HA +5d6, Does Knockback, Double Knockback
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
END Cost: 0
Breakability: 12 DEF

Description: Made from a giant's club cut down to fit the hands of a Man and then enchanted, this weapon strikes with titanic might, sending the foe flying.

Game Information: HA +5d6, Does Knockback (+¼), Double Knockback (+¾), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (62 Active Points); OAF (-1), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½), Independent (-2), STR Minimum (15; -¾), Two-Handed (-½). Total cost: 11 points.

MACE OF THE FRAIL STEEL

Effect: HKA 1½d6; Drain DEF 1d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
END Cost: 0
Breakability: 9 DEF

Description: This mace strikes with great power and force, but it does more than just inflict injury. Each hit from it weakens the opponent's armor, until eventually that armor provides no protection against attacks. The weakening effect is only temporary... but even a few seconds' weakness in battle may mean a man's death.

Game Information: HKA 1½d6, +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (44 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), STR Minimum (12; -½) (total cost: 10 points) **plus** Drain DEF 1d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (15 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Linked (-½), Only Affects Worn Armors (-¼) (total cost: 3 points). Total cost: 13 points.



RUNEBLADE

Effect: HKA 2d6; **Varies**
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch/**Varies**
END Cost: 0/**Varies**
Breakability: 17 DEF

Description: Generally regarded as evil and dangerous, Runeblades are powerful enchanted swords with arcane runes engraved on the blade. Each rune grants a specific power to the wielder. Most are usable only a few times a day, but some apply at all times. The rune-powers listed below are just one possible set of runes; some wizards choose others.

Game Information:

Cost	Power
10	<i>Runeblade:</i> HKA 2d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (45 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), STR Minimum (12; -½)
19	<i>Runes:</i> Multipower, 75-point reserve; all OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
1u	1) <i>Rune Of Agony:</i> Drain STUN 5d6, Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per 5 Minutes; +½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Linked (to blade's HKA; -¼), 4 Charges (-1)
1u	2) <i>Rune Of Blindness:</i> Sight Group Flash 12d6; OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Linked (to blade's HKA; -¼), No Range (-½), 4 Charges (-1)
2u	3) <i>Rune Of Command:</i> Mind Control 12d6, Telepathic (+¼); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), 12 Charges (-¼)
1u	4) <i>Rune Of The Fiery Blade:</i> HKA +1d6 (adds to Runeblade HKA); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
1u	5) <i>Rune Of Soul-Leeching:</i> Drain BODY 7d6; OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Linked (to blade's HKA; -¼), 1 Charge (-2)
1u	6) <i>Rune Of Vigor:</i> Aid STR and CON 5d6, two Characteristics simultaneously (+½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), 4 Charges (-1)

Total cost: 36 points.

SLAUGHTER-AXE

Effect: HKA 2d6+1, +1 STUN Multiplier plus HKA +1d6, Requires An EGO Roll
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
END Cost: 0
Breakability: 12 DEF

Description: This large and somewhat cumbersome great axe is a holy weapon blessed by the power of Asvalak, god of war. Ordinarily it's simply a powerful enchanted axe, suitable for a strong warrior. But the wielder can, if he so desires, call upon the power of the god inherent in the axe. This makes the weapon even deadlier, as it seemingly comes alive in the wielder's grasp and moans a strange, eerie battle-cry when it's swung. But in so doing, the wielder risks being taken over by the axe's power and going into a berserk battle-fury from

which he may not emerge for a long time.

Game Information: HKA 2d6+1, +1 STUN Multiplier (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (61 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), STR Minimum (18; -1), Two-Handed (-½) (total cost: 11 points) **plus** HKA +1d6 (adds to base HKA) (26 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), STR Minimum (18; -1), Two-Handed (-½), Requires An EGO Roll (assumes roll of 12- or 13-; -¾), Side Effects (character becomes Berserk in combat, recovers 8-, always occurs; -½) (total cost: 4 points). Total cost: 15 points.

TRIPLE DAGGER

Effect: RKA 1d6, Autofire (3 shots)
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant
Range: RBS
END Cost: 0
Breakability: 7 DEF

Description: This item looks like an ordinary, if very well made, dagger designed solely for throwing. But when thrown, it separates into three deadly blades! Even better, once it strikes the foe, the three blades fly back to the owner's hand, reforming into one as they come. Only an appropriate Dispel or like power can stop the Triple Dagger from returning to its owner. (In game terms, the Dagger is not bought as a Focus, so it can't be Grabbed or otherwise taken away from the character in combat.)

Game Information: RKA 1d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1) (34 Active Points); Independent (-2), All Autofire Shots Must Be Used Against Same Target (-0), Range Based On STR (-¼). Total cost: 10 points.

VERSE-SWORD

Effect: HKA 1½d6/**Varies**
Target/Area Affected: One character/**Varies**
Duration: Instant/**Varies**
Range: Touch/**Varies**
END Cost: 0/**Varies**
Breakability: 7 DEF

Description: A Verse-Sword is a type of blade often carried by priests and paladins of the High Church. Engraved on the blade is a verse from the *Benethar Sacur* which refers or relates to the power conferred by the blade. They're normally made by priest-smiths, and considered to be divinely inspired, so they're greatly desired even though they're not necessarily as powerful as some magical weapons.

Described below are several Verse-Swords, each is assumed to be a longsword. In addition to the blade, pick one of the verse-powers (or, in rare cases, two).

Game Information:

Cost	Power
8	<i>Verse-Sword's Blade:</i> HKA 1½d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (37 Active Points);

OAF (-1), Independent (-2), STR Minimum (12; -½)

Verse-Powers

- 2 *No Evil Can Escape The Sight Of The Righteous*: +2 Sight Group PER Rolls and Night-vision (9 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Only Works When Sword Is Drawn (-½) (total cost: 10 points)
- 5 *The Skyfather's Hand Shields Those Who Place Themselves In Evil's Path*: Force Field (3 PD/3 ED/8 Power Defense), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (21 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Only Works When Sword Is Drawn (-½) (total cost: 13 points)
- +5 *And Then He Smote Him With A Fierce Blow*: Increase sword's damage to HKA 2d6, +2 Increased STUN Multiplier (total cost: 13 points)

Miscellaneous Items

AMULET OF COMPREHENSION

Effect: Universal Translator (INT Roll +5)

Target/Area Affected: Self

Duration: Persistent

Range: Self

END Cost: 0

Breakability: 5 DEF

Description: When worn, this amulet allows the wearer to understand virtually any form of speech (and respond in kind), or to read and write virtually any type of script. At the GM's option it may not work on scripts protected by magical spells, ancient tongues never spoken by Man, or the like.

Game Information: *Universal Translator* (INT Roll +5); OAF (-1), Independent (-2). Total cost: 6 points.

AMULET OF ORCS

Effect: Summon eight 43-point Orcs, Slavishly Loyal

Target/Area Affected: N/A

Duration: Instant

Range: No Range

Charges: 1 Charge

Breakability: 29 DEF

Description: This amulet, usually made of greenish stone but sometimes of iron or bronze, is carved to look like eight interlocked orcish warriors. When the user throws it on the ground and speaks the command word, it transforms into eight orcish warriors (each armed with a longsword, a heavy bow with 10 arrows, lamellar armor, and a medium shield) who serve the character loyally. He may only summon the orcs once per day, though they'll perform the standard number of tasks for a Slavishly Loyal creature (character's EGO/1) before vanishing; when they all vanish, or when the character chooses to dispense with their services for the day, the amulet reappears in the character's hand.

If one of the orcs dies, he's still in the amulet when next it appears, and can be Summoned again the next day.

Game Information: *Summon eight 43-point Orcs (Monsters, Minions, And Marauders, page 77) with 29 Real Points' worth of equipment, Slavishly Loyal (+1) (144 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), 1 Charge (-2). Total cost: 24 points.*

CRYSTALLINE BIRD

Effect: Mind Link (any one person), No LOS Needed

Target/Area Affected: One character

Duration: Instant (see text)

Range: Planetary

END Cost: 0

Breakability: 5 DEF

Description: This item looks like a songbird made with exquisite care and exacting detail from the finest crystal. It can carry a spoken message, of any length, to a single person designated by the owner. It flies to the target mind at a speed of approximately 200 leagues (600 miles) per hour, unerringly finds him wherever he may be, and delivers the message. It may receive a message in reply, then returns to its owner. If for some reason the target mind cannot be found (because it's covered by Invisibility to the Mental Sense Group, it no longer exists for some reason, or the like), the Bird goes to where its owner *thinks* the mind is, then returns without having delivered its message.

Since a Crystalline Bird is an OAF, it is possible for someone to capture it in mid-flight and then break it, use spells to dispel its owner's control over it and then take control of it anew, and so forth. For game purposes, assume it has SPD 12, Flight 67" (x2 Noncombat), DEX 30, EGO 20. (Alternately, the GM could build it as an Automaton.)

Game Information: *Mind Link (any one mind), No LOS Needed (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), Extra Time (exact time depends on the distance between the character and the target mind, but a minimum of 1 Minute; -1½), Independent (-2), Instant (-½), Can Only Convey One Specific Message At A Time (-1). Total cost: 4 points.*



NECKLACE OF PASSION

Effect: +10 COM, Seduction (PRE Roll +5)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Persistent/Constant
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Breakability: 3 DEF

Description: This magnificent necklace, made of gold or silver and set with many gems, is not half so beautiful as she who wears it. It enhances the wearer's beauty and allure, making her all but irresistible.

Game Information:

- Cost Power**
- 1 *Enhanced Beauty:* +10 COM (5 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
 - 3 *Enhanced Allure:* Seduction (PRE Roll +5) (13 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

Total cost: 4 points.

PEARL OF GREAT FORTUNE

Effect: Luck 8d6
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Persistent
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Breakability: 8 DEF

Description: This large, flawless pearl is often set into an item of jewelry (such as a necklace or tiara), or into a staff or other object the character can easily carry. But its power — to grant luck to its owner — outshines its beauty.

Game Information: Luck 8d6 (40 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2). **Total cost: 10 points.**

TALISMAN OF RUNCIFER

Effect: Aid Magic 4d6, Force Field (15 PD/15 ED/15 Mental Defense/15 Power Defense), both only for arcane magics
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Instant/Persistent
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Breakability: Unbreakable

Description: These incredibly rare and valuable objects — usually, but not always, in the shape of an amulet-like disk made of an unidentifiable metal engraved with obscure magical runes — were made thousands of years ago by the Arch-Wizard Runcifer. It not only augments the owner's magical powers, it provides him with potent protection against other wizards' spells.

Game Information:

- Cost Power**
- 38 *Arcane Augmentation:* Aid Magic 4d6, all Magic spells and powers simultaneously (+2), Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per 6 Hours; +1¼) (170 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Only Applies To Arcane Magics (-½)
 - 24 *Arcane Abjuration:* Force Field (15 PD/15 ED/15 Mental Defense/15 Power Defense), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½) (120 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Only Versus Limited Type Of Attacks (arcane magic attacks; -1)

Total cost: 62 points.

Unique Enchanted Items

These enchanted items are special. They're unique objects, created by spellcasters or other beings of tremendous power, and they possess abilities greater than those of other magical items. Most are unbreakable, or nearly so — at best, the only way to destroy one would be to find its one great weakness or vulnerability (such as being burned in a holy fire lit by the Bonifactor on the first day of the year, being smashed with the hammer that forged it, or being eaten by a god or mighty dragon).

THE BLOODSTAINED SCROLLS OF THRONEK

Effect: Various Necromancy-related Skills
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Breakability: Unbreakable

Description: Despite its name, this item is but a single object — a scroll about two feet long and of varying thickness, depending on the chronicler describing it. Made of human skin, on which its words are written in blood, it was created by the First Epoch necromancer Thronek to record his deeds and lore, and those of his fellow necromancers. Throughout the centuries it has continued to grow, with words mystically appearing on its seemingly endless roll of “parchment” every day. Those who seek the secrets of the Death Art could find no better way to learn them than to read the Scrolls; it's said that several powerful spellcasters, including Sa'akiv and Kal-Turak himself, eagerly seek this item.

When Thronek fled his tower in 434 FE to escape the approaching armies, he took the Bloodstained Scrolls with him. Where and when Thronek died... if die he did... no one knows, and likewise the whereabouts of the Bloodstained Scrolls remains a mystery. Several times over the millennia, powerful wizards have claimed that the Scrolls appeared without warning in their workrooms, despite any magical wardings designed to prevent such intrusions, only to vanish again after some part of it had been read. Some scholars speculate that Thronek gave the Scrolls a life and powers of its own, and that it has some goal or purpose no one has yet discerned.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 2 *Chronicles Of Necromancy*: +5 to Necromancy rolls (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
- 3 *The Necromantic Key*: +8 to Spell Research (Inventor) rolls (16 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Only For Necromancy Spells (-1)
- 3 *Chronicles Of Necromancy*: KS: Necromancy 20- (11 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
- 3 *Chronicles Of The Necromancers*: KS: Nec-

romancers 20- (11 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

- 3 *Lore Of The Unliving*: KS: The Undead 20- (11 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
- 3 *Lore Of The Tomb*: KS: Tombs, Crypts, Graves, And Burial Customs Of Ambrethel 20- (11 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

Total cost: 17 points.

HLOSTIN'S ARMOR

Effect: Armor (12 PD/12 ED), Hardened; Simplified Healing 4d6, Trigger
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Persistent/Instant
Range: Self
END Cost: 0
Breakability: Unbreakable

Description: Hlostin the Necromancer-Thaumaturge, a powerful wizard of the mid-First Epoch, created the suit of enchanted plate armor that bears his name. Possessing the weight and comfort of ordinary clothing, the armor combines Hlostin's two favored arcanae in an unusual way. Whenever a physical blow strikes the armor, it activates a healing-spell that repairs (in whole or in part) the wound the wearer takes from that blow (if the wearer loses neither STUN nor BODY from a particular blow, that blow does not activate the healing magic). The armor has no effect on physical impacts that are not blows (such as falls), nor on non-physical attacks (such as many spells).

Upon his death in 2346 FE, Hlostin willed the Armor to one of his former apprentices, Gaynelle. She wore it briefly, but lacking a taste for the adventuring life and any shred of sentimentality for her old master, traded it to an unknown wizard for several other enchanted items. The armor surfaced again briefly during the Szarvasia-Drakine War of the 3500s, when it was worn by a Szarvasian knight, Sir Arszet, who refused to tell anyone where he got it. When he died, Sir Arszet left it to his son, from whom it was stolen in 3571 SE. No reliable report of its whereabouts or use have been made since.

Game Information: *Armor* (12 PD/12 ED), *Hardened* (+¼) (45 Active Points); *OIF* (-½), *Independent* (-2) (total cost: 13 points) **plus** *Simplified Healing 4d6, Trigger* (when the armor is hit by, and the wearer suffers injury from, a physical blow; +¼), *Reduced Endurance* (0 END; +½) (70 Active Points); *OIF* (-½), *Independent* (-2), *Self Only* (-½) (total cost: 17 points). **Total cost: 30 points.**

THE SCREAMING STAFF OF MADWYL

Effect:	Various powers
Target/Area Affected:	Varies
Duration:	Varies
Range:	Varies
END Cost:	0
Breakability:	Unbreakable

Description: This item looks like an ordinary wizard's staff that's been badly warped and twisted by powerful arcane forces. On the very top is carved a strange head, looking something like a cross between a malevolent demon and a ribald jester. The Staff's powers are many and varied, and seem to involve some sort of Chaos magic or strange Thaumaturgy unlike no other in Ambrethel. The Staff's name comes from its *Screaming* power, which causes it to emit an eerie, almost maddening keening when the user "awakens" it.

Oddest of all, no one knows who "Madwyl" is, though the name is associated with the Staff from its very first mention in the chronicles of wizardry. Some scholars believe he is a reclusive, long-forgotten wizard, while others think him some sort of demon; a few believe the name isn't that of a being at all, but a corruption of the term "mad will," referring to what's required to control the Staff.

The Screaming Staff has existed since the earliest days; Runcifer, Sothuz, and Oldrusan Magisterios all described it in detail in their workbooks, implying that they had the time and leisure to examine it at length. A wizard named Xaragon wielded it during the Drakine Wars, after which it became lost for a time. A thief named T'allissa Darkveil claimed in her memoirs to have stolen it from the treasure-vault of a Basidrunian nobleman in 3212 SE. She supposedly sold it to a Khirkovy mage for a princely sum, but no other account verifies her words. The Staff surfaced again in 4355 SE, when the elven adventurer-mage Melcathrianorion carried it for several decades. It was lost when he and his companions failed to return from an expedition into the Ulimar Jungle, and has not been heard of since.

Game Information:

Cost	Power
37	<i>The Screaming:</i> Hearing Group Flash 15d6, Area Of Effect (12" Radius; +1), Continuous (+1), Personal Immunity (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (169 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), No Range (-½)
10	<i>Fortune Favors The Madwyl:</i> Luck 8d6 (40 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
7	<i>Twisting Of The Mind:</i> Mental Defense (30 points + EGO/5); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
47	<i>Madwyl's Maladies:</i> Multipower, 187-point reserve; all OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
4u	1) <i>Caprice Of Form:</i> Major Transform 5d6 (anything to anything; heals back by being touched with the Staff while the wielder utters a specific nonsense rhyme), Improved Results Group (anything; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (187 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Limited Range

(50"; -¼), 9 Charges (-¼)
4u 2) <i>Madwyl's Whisperings:</i> Drain INT and EGO 8d6, two Characteristics simultaneously (+½), Limited Range (50"; +¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (180 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
4u 3) <i>Madwyl's Dance:</i> Entangle 7d6, 7 DEF, Based On Ego Combat Value (Mental Defense applies; +1), Takes No Damage From Physical Attacks (+¼), Works Against EGO, Not STR (+¼) (175 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Cannot Form Barriers (-¼), Mental Defense Adds To EGO (-½)

Total cost: 113 points.

THE STAFF OF VASHTORI

Effect:	Summon VPP; Mind Control 12d6, Only Versus Summoned Beings; Force Field (12 PD/12 ED/12 Mental Defense/12 Power Defense), Only Versus Summoned Beings
Target/Area Affected:	Varies
Duration:	Instant/Instant/Constant
Range:	No Range/LOS/Self
END Cost:	Varies
Breakability:	Unbreakable

Description: The name of the wizard Vashtori instantly evokes thoughts of the arcana of Conjuraton, to which he devoted so much of his life and work. As part of that work, he crafted this Staff, which carries powerful Conjuraton magics.

First, the Staff has the power to Summon virtually any type of creature, being, or object. In game terms, this is a Variable Power Pool that can only be used for powers built with Summon; the user changes the VPP with his *Conjuraton* Skill. Second, the staff can quickly and easily place a powerful *Conjuror's Chains* spell upon any Summoned being (including ones not Summoned by the Staff). Third, it provides powerful arcane protections against attacks made by Summoned beings (again, including those Summoned by means other than the Staff.)

Made of ebony wood set with conjuror's runes in red gold, and capped and shod with matching gold, the Staff passed to Wyndara Blaitheclock upon Vashtori's death at the hands of the Lord of the Graven Spear. She carried it for several centuries, but took it with her when she and her companions went to fight the dragon Methvegar in 3346 SE... a battle from which none of them ever returned. However, when the warrior Ullshazzar and his adventuring companions slew Methvegar in his Skyclaw lair in 4156 SE, the Staff was nowhere to be found.

Game Information:

Cost	Power
110	<i>Powers Of Conjuraton:</i> Variable Power Pool, 100 base + 50 control cost; OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Only For Summon (-1)
23	<i>Conjuror's Chains:</i> Mind Control 15d6 (Summoned Beings class of minds), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (94 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

- 14 *Conjuror's Shield*: Force Field (12 PD/12 ED/12 Mental Defense/12 Power Defense), Reduced Endurance ($\frac{1}{2}$ END; $+\frac{1}{4}$) (60 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Only Works Against Limited Type Of Attack (the attacks and powers of Summoned beings; $-\frac{1}{4}$)

Total cost: 147 points.

THE TALISMAN OF THE TWISTED GOD

Effect: Aid Divine Magic 4d6; Force Field (15 PD/15 ED/15 Mental Defense/15 Power Defense) versus Divine Magic; Extra-Dimensional Movement (to Elysium or the Netherworld)

Target/Area Affected: Self

Duration: Instant/Persistent/Instant

Range: Self

END Cost: 0

Breakability: Unbreakable

Description: This enchanted item looks like a holy talisman to an unknown god. In its original form, it was apparently in the shape of the god himself — a tall, humanoid being of noble bearing but vague facial features — but at some point in the past, it was twisted by a being of immense strength, in much the same way that a Man twists a towel to wring out water.

The Talisman has several powers, all of which seem to involve the awesomely powerful divine magic it possesses (even laymen can sense its holy power). First, it augments the divine magic spells cast by its owner. Each day, the GM rolls the Aid

power, and the effect applies to all of the owner's divine magic spells and powers during that day. Second, it protects the wearer from divine magic used against him (though this has the downside of making it difficult to use divine healing-spells on the owner). Some scholars who have studied the Talisman believe this is a new power, one that resulted from the "twisting" of the Talisman (which may have warped some of its powers). Third, the Talisman can transport its owner to either Elysium or the Netherworld upon command (though the denizens of those realms may not necessarily appreciate frequent visitors).

He who possesses the Talisman must keep it with him at all times (usually by carrying it in a pocket, or attaching it to a thong and wearing it around the neck). If he takes it off or puts it away from himself, it vanishes, never to be seen again until someone else finds it — and no one can predict where it will go when it disappears. (The same thing occurs if the owner tries to "turn off" or not use one of the Talisman's powers.) This has caused it to change hands dozens of times during the history of Ambrethel. It was first found in 1435 FE in the ruins of Iluria by a High Church priestess named Thoraina, but she had it only a few days before it vanished. Since then, it's been owned by kings, adventurers, commoners, nobles, heretics, and people of virtually every race on Ambrethel. After vanishing, it's apparently appeared in kings' vaults, locations in various ruins, treasure chests in the Sunless Realms, on the ground in the Gorthundan Steppes, on the roofs of tall towers, and many other places. Its last confirmed owner was the Eltiriani



priest Angalac in 4817 SE, but he had to give it up when he needed healing-magic to save his life after suffering a bad fall, and it hasn't been found since.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 42 *Divine Augmentation:* Aid Divine Magic 4d6, all Divine Magic spells and powers simultaneously (+2), Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Day; +1½) (180 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), All Points Fade At The End Of The Day (-¼)
- 25 *Priestbane Shield:* Force Field (15 PD/15 ED/15 Mental Defense/15 Power Defense), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½) (120 Active Points); OAF (-1), Always On (-½), Independent (-2), Only Works Against Limited Type Of Attack (divine magic; -¼)
- 11 *The Gate To Heaven And Hell:* Extra-Dimensional Movement (to any location in Elysium or the Netherworld; see page 161), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (45 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

Total cost: 78 points.

VASAK'S BATTLESTONE

Effect:	Various Attack Powers
Target/Area Affected:	Varies
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Varies
END Cost:	0
Breakability:	Unbreakable

Description: Vasak of the Seventeen Stones was a powerful wizard of the early Second Epoch; he died fifteen hundred years ago. His sobriquet comes from the fact that he possessed a large number of enchanted gemstones. Most (though not all) of these were fairly ordinary and have long since been lost to the mists of time, but one among them — the Battlestone — has achieved renown due to its great power and checkered history.

The Battlestone is a facetless red gem a little larger than a songbird's egg. It floats in the air about two inches in front of the center of the owner's forehead, maintaining its position no matter how the owner moves his head (though if forced to, it can move in until it touches the owner's forehead). It possesses several combat magic powers of great strength, any one of which the owner can effortlessly access (but the owner must be a wizard; the Battlestone doesn't respond to the commands of those who have not mastered the Arts Arcane). However, it's relatively easy to snatch the Battlestone away from its owner, or for the owner to lose it.

Upon Vasak's death in 3487 SE, the Battlestone passed to a series of his most favored apprentices. Each of them died under mysterious circumstances within a few years, leading some adventurers to believe the Battlestone carries a powerful curse of some sort. It then vanished from the annals of history until 3987 SE, when it's known to have been in the possession of the wizard Methren. When he died in 4213 SE, he left it to his son, the warrior Gebaral, who gave it to his wizardess wife Vellissa as a wedding present. The two of them were lost during an adventure into the Sunless Realms in 4240 SE. The Battlestone surfaced again in the mid-4900s in the hands of the wizard Halvargen, a member of Zhargaron's Fist (see page 143). During the chaos surrounding the Fist's fall, the Battlestone was lost; no one knows who (if anyone) possesses it now.

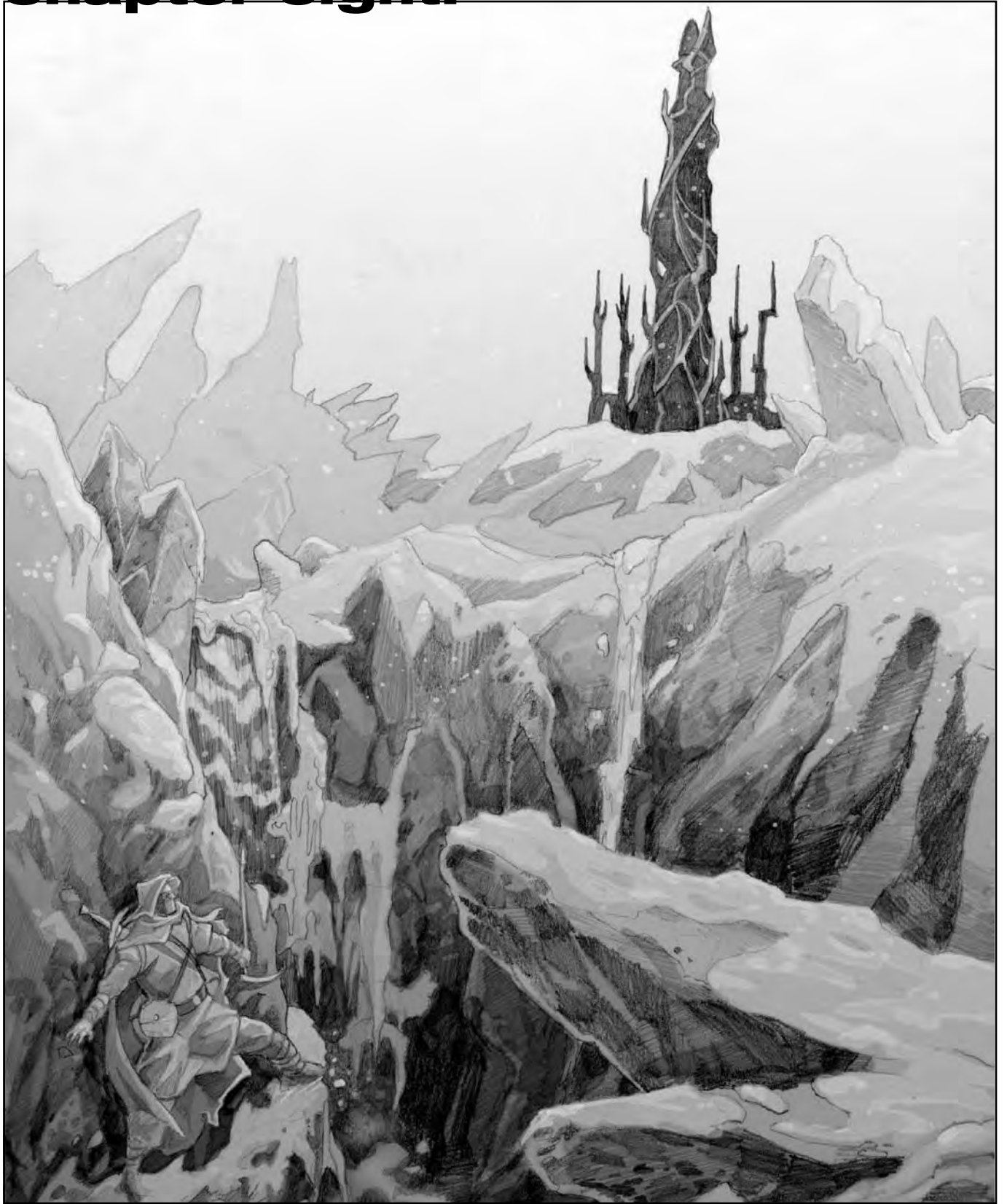
Game Information:

Cost Power

- 30 *Vasak's Battlestone:* Multipower, 120-point reserve; all OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
- 3u 1) *Arcane Blast I:* Energy Blast 12d6, Line Of Sight (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
- 3u 2) *Arcane Blast II:* RKA 4d6, Line Of Sight (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
- 3u 3) *Sorcerous Blast:* Ego Attack 8d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
- 3u 4) *Sorcerous Chains:* Mind Control 12d6, Telepathic (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
- 2u 5) *Wizard's Hand:* Telekinesis (30 STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
- 3u 6) *Warrior's Weakness:* Drain STR, CON, END, and STUN 3d6, four Characteristics at once (+1), Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per 5 Minutes; +½), Ranged (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
- 2u 7) *Arcane Augmentation:* Aid Arcane Magic 4d6, all Arcane Magic spells and powers simultaneously (+2); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Self Only (-½), 1 Charge (-2)

Total cost: 49 points.

chapter eight:



GAMEMASTERING THE TURAKIAN AGE

THE LATER HISTORIES



The default period for a Turakian Age campaign is 5000 SE, when Kal-Turak is beginning his rise to power, causing unrest and chaos throughout the world — which means numerous opportunities for adventure! However, not all GMs may want to set their campaigns at that point during the Turakian Age; some may prefer an earlier or later period. Here's a brief description of the history of Ambrethel from 5001 SE until 7996 TE (Third Epoch). It touches only on the major events, typically those surrounding the life of Kal-Turak (and unlfe of Takofanes the Undying)

5001-5511 SE: KAL-TURAK'S TRIUMPH... AND FALL

For the decade after 5000 SE, Kal-Turak built up his forces and his magical might, and also made secret alliances with some evil (or potentially evil) powers — Valicia, Thalera-Saar, Talarshand, Thún, and others. In 5010 SE, he struck, overrunning the Gorthundan Steppes and slaying many of the nomadic horsemen with the aid of the Ulg-hroi. The Gorthunda who escaped fled into Khirkovy (where most were slain by fearful Khirkovy princes) or the Sirrenic Empire (where the emperor gave them the lands north of Talorné to live in, in exchange for their service to the Empire).

From 5011-5154 SE, Kal-Turak embarked on a campaign of conquest that brought most of the Westerlands and Mhorecia under his rule. The ranks of his already-vast armies swelled after each battle, when he used his Necromancy to bring the dead back to life in his service. From 5155-5213 SE, he tightened his hold on western Arduna and conquered Khorla and Vornakkia, in the process completely razing the cities of Marasa and Halathaloom. By this point, his powers were so great that he became, in effect, a demi-god, and could grant spells to priests who worshipped him. Then his armies crossed the sea to Mitharia....

By 5278 SE, Kal-Turak ruled all the world, Arduna and Mitharia alike. Ground beneath his heel, the people of Ambrethel had no choice but to obey his every whim and give him whatever he wanted — their wealth, their sons and daughters for his foul experiments (or for the pleasure of his armies), their very souls. Many served him willingly, in adoration and fear.

In 5394 SE, Kal-Turak's hold upon the world became even greater. After a quest of eight years, he found the fabled Crowns forged by his "uncle" Krim. He crafted for himself the Dragon Crown to control them, and placed spells upon them to dampen their power, then gave them to his chief servants — his Satraps, who rule the world in his name.

But in 5500 SE, a prophetic conjunction of four stars — one each for Men, Drakine, Dwarves, and Elves — inspired the beginnings of rebellion. Working in great secrecy, the leaders of the revolt sought, and found, the master necromancer Sa'akiv, who long ago abandoned his Tower of Bone and fled into hiding to avoid being pressed into the Ravager's service. With Sa'akiv's help, the Four Peoples forged a great blade, Auralia, filled with the holy power of the Skyfather and their own righteous determination to be free. They placed it in the hands of the paladin Venghrest and begged him to lead them. But Venghrest needed no importing, and gladly took up the task of slaying the Lord of Turakia.

Soon rebellions broke out all over the world, straining the power of Kal-Turak to stem them all at once. Thanks to the actions of a few brave heroes, Kal-Turak's mightiest army was lured into a trap and destroyed, and in 5511 SE the Four Peoples marched on Darkspire itself. In a terrible battle lasting a month and a day, the Ravager's forces were slowly destroyed... until at last Kal-Turak himself came out to fight. Thousands of the rebels he slew with but a wave of his hand, and their shrieking souls fed him necromantic strength. But he could not slay Venghrest, upon whom the protection of the gods was laid, and the two joined battle. With a terrible clash, Venghrest drove Auralia straight through Kal-Turak's heart just as the Lord of Turakia cast against him a withering-spell so strong, and so profane, that not even the shield of the Blue Gods could save the paladin's life.

The Four Peoples tore down Darkspire, slaying the Dark Mother in the process (though the Crowns of Krim, and many of Kal-Turak's other items of power, were never found). Deep beneath the surface of the world they buried Kal-Turak, setting spells about him to ever prevent him from rising to life once more, and they left Auralia in his sarcophagus with him, that its holy power might reinforce their incantations. Then they began to rebuild their world.

And so the Third Epoch began.

5512-7996 TE: TAKOFANES THE UNDYING LORD

For nearly two thousand years, Ambrethel enjoyed a time of unprecedented peace and prosperity: a second Golden Age. But all that is good must end someday, and so it was that in 7436 TE, Kal-Turak rose from the dead as the Archlich Takofanes — so powerful was his Necromancy that not even Auralia, not even the spells of the greatest wizards of Ambrethel, could prevent his return, given time. But he was weakened. After hiding Auralia, he went into hiding himself, determined to rebuild his power and resume his rulership of the world.

In 7675 TE, confident of his new power, he struck, destroying the realm of Thengaria that then occupied much of the lands once known as Turakia. He rebuilt Darkspire, and all the world trembled. For the next fifty years, he slowly extended his sway, as the lands nearest the north fell to his influence and power and began serving him.

In 7765 TE, the Four Peoples attacked, hoping this time to end his evil before it could come to full power... but they failed, their armies driven over Kal-Turak's Wall by the Undying Lord's undead legions. Gathering the bodies of their kings, Takofanes took the bones and made for himself the Throne of Human Ivory. He now claimed all Arduna, and while he sometimes allowed the Four

Peoples to rule themselves according to his law, he demanded a heavy tribute. Of this time, which Men called the Years of Anguish, the Bloodstained Scrolls of Thronek wrote many tales of horror, not the least of which was the Undying Lord's conquest of Mitharia by means of plague-spreading colossi.

For nearly two centuries, the world suffered in the grip of Takofanes as it never had, not even under Kal-Turak. Every kingdom, every city, every land sent him an annual tribute of blood and skulls, and the temples to the Blue Gods were torn down and replaced with ones exalting Mordak, Vabanak, and Takofanes himself. The King of the Throne of Human Ivory had his own priests, the mightiest of whom was the vampire Luthec.

In 7958 TE, a band of noble heroes began a quest to save the world. To do that, they had to recover Auralia. After much toil and sacrifice, they found the sacred blade... but then learned of a prophecy which said they needed three other enchanted items as well: the Sword for Men, and the other three for Drakine, Dwarves, and Elves, respectively. By 7963 TE, they had them all, but still they lacked the power to raise the army needed to overthrow the Dread Lord.

They waited, and planned, and watched for over thirty years. Then, in 7996 TE, they learned Takofanes planned to cast the Invocation of the Black Sun and plunge the world into perpetual darkness. Knowing their time had come, the Four Peoples rose up and attacked Takofanes. They slew his armies and destroyed his undead servants, but

then the Archlich struck back, using all the magic at his command. The wizards and priests of the world opposed him, but it was a terrible battle and a near thing, in which many of them died. So great were the powers unleashed that a cataclysm resulted, tearing continents in two, levelling mountains, and raising new lands out of the sea.

But their sacrifices were not in vain, for the Four Peoples triumphed. Takofanes was slain, and before the world could come to a final end, their leaders buried him once more, this time far deeper still, with stronger spells to keep him ever dead. And with that Ambrethel itself died, and fell into darkness and ruin, awaiting the awakening of a new world.



TURAKIAN CAMPAIGNING



Given the size and scope of the world of Ambrethel, you can run just about any sort of Fantasy campaign you want in the Turakian Age setting. While it's definitely a High Fantasy setting, you could even ratchet the level of magical power down a few notches if you prefer; for the most part, all that requires is changing a few historical events where magic has strongly impacted the world, and restricting characters' spell selections.

Most Turakian Age campaigns feature starting characters built on a maximum of 150 Character Points — 75 Base Points, plus up to 75 points from Disadvantages. The sample characters in *Fantasy Hero* and Chapter Nine are built using these standards. However, you can change that to suit yourself without any problem. For a *really* High Fantasy game, one where wizards can casually cast spells of awesome power and warriors and rogues have abilities to match, try starting with 150 Base Points plus up to 100 points from Disadvantages. For a lower-powered game, look into 50 Base Points plus up to 50 points from Disadvantages.

Turakian Age campaigns should use Normal Characteristic Maxima. They use Knockdown, but not Knockback (though some spells and abilities have the *Does Knockback* Advantage).

Here are a few suggestions for possible Turakian Age campaigns.

SWORDS AGAINST THE RAVAGER, PART I

The typical Ambrethelan campaign pits the heroes against Kal-Turak (and his minions) during the early stages of his ascendancy — in 5000 SE, the default campaign starting date presented in this book. At this point, Kal-Turak possesses great power, but not yet as much power as he will ultimately obtain, so he's comparatively vulnerable. The heroes have a chance to strike at him and stop him before he really has a chance to build up his power base. That's why the history after 5000 SE is in this chapter, not Chapter One; since the players don't know about the post-5000 history, the GM can change it — or allow them to change it through their actions — if he wants.

Most Swords Against The Ravager campaigns take on an epic scope and tone, as the PCs set out to save the world (and, hopefully, succeed). It starts out relatively low-key, with beginning heroes taking on the lowest levels of Kal-Turak's "organization" — his spies, bands of marauding Orcs and Ulg-hroi, and so forth. As their power increases, so does Kal-Turak's, and they slowly but surely take on more and more powerful opposition. If all goes well,

eventually they can confront the Ravager's entire army as he prematurely launches his attempt at world conquest because of their efforts. If they survive, they come face to face with Kal-Turak himself, and the fate of the world hangs in the balance.

Plot Seeds

Something's Rotten In Keldravia: While visiting Antyratori for some reason, the PCs stumble across a plot. The evidence seems to suggest that two or three high-ranking Keldravian nobles are actually servants of Kal-Turak! They and their spies have been undermining the realm so Kal-Turak can more easily conquer it in a few years. But is all as it seems... or is some *truly* evil noble framing his enemies in the hopes the PCs will bring them down?

Saving The Wolf: Using powerful magics, Kal-Turak teleports a vast army into Khirkovy and easily conquers the realm. The commander of his forces, a smart and powerful Ogre warrior, puts Tassar Borwyg and his family in the dungeons of Karzoi pending beheading. The heroes have to make their way to Karzoi across a war-ravaged land and rescue the royal family, then spearhead a counter-attack to drive the enemy into the sea. Perhaps they can persuade the Gorthunda to help...

The Battle Of Garelsketh: Kal-Turak looses his legions, sending them over the Wall and south across the Evling River to attack the Sirrenic Empire; Valicia and Thalera-Saar are numbered among his allies. Trapped with a small detachment of Sirrenic soldiers at Garelsketh, the PCs must put their lives on the line to save the world from the Ravager's army.

SWORDS AGAINST THE RAVAGER, PART II

If fighting Kal-Turak in 5000 SE doesn't appeal to you or your players, advance the calendar a little — to, say, 5225 SE, when Kal-Turak has already conquered much of the world. By this point, pretty much all of Arduna has fallen to him (though Mitharia yet remains free). Marasa and Halathaloom are but ruins, and many other cities stand half-destroyed. Here and there tiny pockets of resistance exist, but no major armies can take the field against the Ravager's legions of Orcs and undead. Into this desolate world come the PCs, who have to find a way to fight back and save the world.

In this sort of game, the odds are stacked against the heroes. Therefore you may want to have the players build them on more than 150 points to start — they're going to need all the help they can get!

Plot Seeds

The Banner Of The Sun: The PCs hear a rumor about the Banner of the Sun, an Ophelite enchanted item that can kill dozens, if not hundreds, of undead beings in the space of a few seconds. It's the perfect weapon to use against Kal-Turak's army — but where can they find it, and what will they have to do to get it? And by this point, Kal-Turak's lieutenants have probably heard the rumors, too....

The Besruhani Wedge: Kal-Turak has but a tenuous hold on southwestern Mhorecia; part of the Besruhani army, as well as significant numbers of the Chelda and Neldacari peoples, remain free, hiding among the hills. The heroes have to mold these disparate elements (many of whom hold ancient hatreds against each other) into a fighting force and strike back at Kal-Turak's orcish hordes... and then continue northward to free other lands.

Operation Back Door: With the help of some skilled wizards, the heroes "wiretap" into some of Kal-Turak's magical communications with his lieutenants in the field. In doing so, they learn about a secret entrance that will let them get into Darkspire undetected. Now they must journey into Turakia and stealthfully make their way into the heart of the enemy's stronghold to slay him... but what if the message is a ruse?

SWORDS AGAINST THE UNDYING KING

As if taking on Kal-Turak isn't dangerous enough, for a truly epic campaign you can start the game in the 7900s, making the PCs the band of heroes who set out to save the world by finding Auralia and slaying Takofanes the Undying. The first part of the campaign focuses on the Quest for Auralia... and then for the other three items needed to fight the Dread Lord. After they acquire all four, they have to unite Men, Drakine, Dwarves, and Elves and march on Darkspire. Epic battles follow, with the adventures alternating between mass combats in which the PCs lead powerful military units, and behind-the-scenes "commando raids" and "counterintelligence work" to keep the Army of the Four Peoples on the road to success. And then, at long last, after countless sacrifices, the heroes have to face the King of the Throne of Human Ivory himself....

For this campaign, it's best if the PC group includes at least one Man, one Elf, one Drakine, and one Dwarf. That way the heroes can keep the powerful enchanted items and all confront Takofanes together in the final, climactic game session. (The nature of the other three items is left vague so the GM can tailor them to suit the PCs.)

Plot Seeds

Descent Into The Sunless Realms: The heroes learn that the Elf-item they need has been held by the Dark Elves for millennia. They must travel to the dark elven kingdoms deep beneath the surface of Ambrethel to beard the Dark Elves in their very lair and recover it. Along the way they confront numerous other monsters, and possibly even become involved in Sunless Realms political maneuverings.

Spirits Of Evil: A powerful Ulg-hroi shaman and his legions of devils and evil spirits is playing havoc with the PCs' army. They have to find a way to lure him into single combat so they can destroy him... but what happens when he turns the tables on them and brings them with him to the Spirit Realm, where he's more powerful than ever?

A Friend In Need?: A dragon of great might and magic, Keldazurel, shows up at the PCs' camp and offers to help with the war effort... in exchange for vast amounts of treasure from the Archlich's tower, including a few specific enchanted items. The dragon's help would be most welcome, for he can sweep entire legions of Orcs before him — but is it worth it, and can the PCs be sure he's not really working for Takofanes?

OF GODS AND MEN

The religions of Ambrethel are many and varied — and they don't always co-exist peacefully. While true religious wars aren't common, competition among religions for worshippers exist, and fanatics on all sides wish to see their faith exalted above all others. The PCs, many of whom may be priests or temple functionaries, become involved in this world of religious politics and conflict.

Plot Seeds

They Who Must Awaken: A scholarly old priest comes to the PCs, great concern writ prominently on his face. According to his researches, the time is almost here when the stars will be right and the gods of Thûn can free themselves from their ancient prisons! The heroes must first find an eccentric, mysterious astrologer to study the priest's notes and confirm that what he says is true, then secretly make their way to Thûn to stop the ceremonies that will free the Imprisoned Ones.

The Great Crusade: A movement, spearheaded by the Anvilites, is growing in the West to send a great army on a crusade to destroy the Hargeshite "heretics." The Bonifact has no desire to start a holy war, but may not be able to resist the political pressure for long. He needs the PCs to look into the situation and find a way to make the Anvilites and other pro-crusade partisans back off.

Taking The Throne: The Bonifact has died, and the Ecclesiarchs seem unable to make a decision as to who should succeed him. Within the High Church, everyone with any power and influence is trying to find a way to gain the office for himself. The PCs find themselves trapped in the middle of all this and have to decide which candidate or faction to support.

HONOR AMONG THIEVES

This type of campaign takes place primarily within the confines of one city — probably Aarn, but possibly Tavrosel or the like — and focuses on thievery and the underworld. The PCs are all thieves, cutpurses, assassins, roguish wizards, and other denizens of the streets. Some adventures focus on planning and executing elaborate thefts,

while others involve wars between thieves' guilds, intra-guild political machinations, manipulating city politics to the thieves' benefit, and so forth.

For a campaign like this, you need not only a reasonably well-developed city, but lots of NPCs. Not only do you have to know who the powerful and influential thieves are within the city, but you need plenty of other "contacts" for the PCs to to get involved with. You don't have to prepare character sheets for every NPC, but you should at least make note of each one's name, personality, goals, resources, and locations where he can be found.

Plot Seeds

A Dagger In The Night: A prominent merchant is slain by a thrown dagger as he walks home from a feast with many equally prominent nobles — and the dagger looks just like the ones used by one of the PCs! Now hunted by the City Guard, their own guild, and bounty hunters out for the reward on their heads, the PCs have to clear their names and find the real killer.

The Eye Of Numarios: The PCs are hired to steal a large gem called the Eye of Numarios, which supposedly once belonged to a wizard of the same name, and may have magical powers. It's now in the possession of another wizard, and well-guarded by traps and sentinels. The job itself will be difficult enough — but who hired the PCs, and why? And what if the rumors are true that the Eye contains the soul of Numarios, and it's looking for a new body to inhabit?

The Challenge Of The Tower: A powerful wizard with a love of games and puzzles has a standing challenge: he has to visit other planes of existence one night every three months to commune with his special gods of wizardry and renew his powers. For that one night, any thieves who wish to enter his tower and steal the fabulous treasures therein is welcome to try... but of course, they'll have to overcome guardians, traps, and puzzles to get to the treasure-chamber. Anything the thieves make it back out of the tower with, they can keep, with the wizard's congratulations for a game well-played.

KING AND COURT

In this type of campaign, the PCs are all noblemen and other officials in a particular royal court — or they may even be the king and royal family themselves! The adventures focus on court intrigue, kingdom politics, international diplomacy, and warfare. Instead of adventuring solely for their own benefit and profit, the PCs may find themselves having to do what's best for their kingdom and subjects, even if the personal cost is an enormous one.

Plot Seeds

Love, True Love: One of the PCs falls in love with a noble maiden who's been promised in marriage to another man. First he has to win her love, then he has to find a way to break the arranged marriage and persuade the girl's father to give him the girl's hand. To make matters worse, maybe the PC's family and his true love's family are longstanding rivals or enemies.

Caught In The Middle: Enemies threaten the kingdom from both sides. If the king moves in force against one, he leaves his realm open to attack by the other — but if he splits his army, neither part has the strength to win. The PCs have to find a way to resolve the situation and keep the kingdom from falling.

Enchanted Romance: The PCs discover that the court wizard is having a love affair with the princess (or even the queen). At first this just seems like a useful bit of information in case they ever need a favor from either party — but then they learn other facts that make it seem as if the court wizard is using his influence over the woman to engineer some sort of coup! What's going on, who's really involved, and how can the heroes put a stop to it without sullying the name of a (probably) innocent woman?

WIZARDRY FAIR AND FOUL

In this campaign, all (or most) of the PCs are wizards of some sort. They may all belong to the same mages' guild, or perhaps have banded together to form their own guild. The game focuses on wizardly politics, rivalries among spellcasters, quests for long-lost lore and enchanted items, and the like.

Plot Seeds

Charter Membership: A new mages' guild has offered the PCs membership, claiming their power and prestige will "put the guild on the map" and make it a player in wizardly politics overnight. The offer's almost too good to resist... so there's got to be a catch. What is it, who's behind it, and how can the PCs manipulate the situation for their own benefit?

Scavenger Hunt: One of the master wizards in the PCs' guild, or a powerful wizard to whom they owe a favor, needs certain rare items and substances to complete a great work of Enchantment. He sends the PCs to obtain them... but it turns out that even the ones that seem easy to find on the surface have hidden implications and dangers.

Unexpected Delivery: A mysterious messenger brings one of the PCs a small chest. Inside the chest is a powerful enchanted item. Who sent it, and why?

THE GM'S VAULT



This section contains additional or secret information about Ambrethel that's for the GM's eyes only. *If you're not a GM running a Turakian Age campaign, don't read this section!*

If the GM's Vault doesn't comment on some part of the main text, it's usually safe to take what's written there as accurate (or left to your own interpretation). But of course you're free (and even encouraged) to change anything in this book to suit your own preferences or campaign.

WARFARE, CONFLICT, AND REBELLION

Throughout Chapter One (history) and Chapter Three (kingdoms), you've read of many old hatreds and rivalries flaring to life, centuries- or millennia-long disputes about to come to a head, kings and emperors contemplating campaigns of conquest against their neighbors, dissatisfied native peoples plotting rebellion, and other signs of imminent warfare, strife, and conflict. These are all symptoms of Kal-Turak's rise to power and prominence. Ordinarily Ambrethel would be a more peaceful place (at least slightly), but the evil influence of the Ravager has cast a shadow on Men's souls. This heightens negative emotions like hatred and greed, disrupting the social fabric and making Kal-Turak's goal of world rule all the more attainable.

CHAPTER ONE

PAGE 8 — THE EARLIEST DAYS

The lore of the *Benethar Sacur* and other sources does not, of course, tell the whole truth, but it's close enough. Men (and other races) spread throughout both Arduna and Mitharia long before recorded history began. Many, including some barbarian tribes (such as the Hlastroi, Ventati, and Gorthunda) and a few civilizations (such as the Indusharans and Thūnese), are survivors (at least in small part) of the cataclysms and divine wars that ended the Primeval period preceding the Turakian Age — though at best they remember the earlier era dimly through mysterious legends. Others are new creations of gods eager to repopulate the world so worship of them could resume; these include Ordon, Khor, Sirrenos, and their many descendants who are, as a group, dominant throughout the world during almost all of the Turakian Age.

PAGE 8 — MEN IN MITHARIA

Dwarven and Elven histories correctly assert that those races were in Mitharia before Ardunan Men came there, though the realm of Azarthond certainly did not exist in its present form at that time. Similarly, the Indusharans were already in Mitharia when the "sun-skinned Men" (as early Indusharan records refer to Ardunans) traveled into their lands. The Drakine of Orumbar were as well, though unlike the Indusharans they are not remnants of Primeval times, but rather were created by the Drakine gods from the fires and stones of the Peaks Of Ash.

PAGE 10 — THE FOUNDING OF TALARSHAND

Vornak did not found Talarshand; that's but a legend the Talarshandi favor because it augments their city's prestige. Vornak barely got south of the Chekuru River when he fell to a fever brought on by an ill-treated wound received from an Orc. His people buried him in the caves in some hills not far from the river. It was Vornak's sons, and the sons of his people, who spread further south to settle the peninsula that bears his name.

PAGE 11 — AMBERNAUD AT CANOSA

The wizard Ambernaud, well-known for his mastery of Arcanomancy (among other arcana), showed up on the battlefield and fought for Shaldrin for two reasons. First, a woman for whom he felt affection asked him to protect her brother, a Shaldrinan captain. Second, and more importantly, a rival of his, the dragon Grendaresk, was secretly fighting for Ledris, and Ambernaud wished to test the strength of his arcanomantic spells against the wyrm's powerful magics.

PAGE 13 — INTRAVIUS AT AMBERLEAF

The dragon Intravius did not precisely attack Amberleaf without provocation. The wizard Thurlond Fiveforms, a bitter enemy of Intravius's, lived there at the time, and Intravius took him by surprise and slew him, destroying the town in the process. In 5000 SE, the ruins remain a haunted and forlorn place, inhabited by Seshurma and sometimes explored by adventurers; see page 61.

PAGE 13 — THE LORD OF THE GRAVEN SPEAR

Except for the fact that he was born in the year 2809 FE, the exact origins of the Lord of the Graven Spear are left to you. He might be the child of demons (since he certainly exercised great

authority over many infernal beings), or the scion of some dark god (even Mordak or Vabanak)... or both, or something else altogether.

The Ulronai attacked the Spearlord for a simple reason: their leaders told them to. The Ulronai chieftains recognized the evil in the Lord, and decided that Rhelvurath — one of their *thalu-hrindar* (“bloodlock”), or prophetic leaders — was destined to command them in a war that would stop the Lord. Unfortunately, they were wrong.

The Lord and his armies avoid the remaining Drakine kingdoms because whatever demon or god supplies the Lord with demons for his armies tells him to. Why this would be so is, again, up to you; perhaps the Drakine made a pact with this being to spare themselves.

PAGE 17 — VULTHAR ZOND

Vulthar Zond is not, as legends hint, an Ulronai warrior-mage. Rather, he’s an accomplished warrior and wizard who, through torture and sorcery, stole the secrets of warrior-magic from an Ulronai mercenary. His sorceries led him to a large lump of star-iron in the northern Valician Hills, which he used to forge the magical weapons and armor that helped him in his rise to power. His descendants eventually melted these items down to create Korrm, the Sword Of Fangs (see page 301).

PAGE 18 — THE ECLIPSE

The Great Eclipse of 3333 heralded the birth of Kal-Turak, Ravager of Men. His sire was the Lord of the Graven Spear; his dam the Dark Mother, a demoness of great power who carried him for five hundred years. (The demon-lord Krim is the Dark Mother’s “brother,” making him Kal-Turak’s “uncle.”) During that time he absorbed great magical power and learning from his infernal mother, and so was born a mighty wizard. His birthing-place was in the far North, on the spot where Dark-spire now stands. In his fierce desire to be born, he burst forth from the Dark Mother’s womb, ripping her body asunder. She remains in the bowels of his citadel to this day, alive still, her body torn open and ever bleeding, oozing ichor and other foulness, serving him as advisor and oracle as he demands.

PAGE 18 — THE INGUSHEL REVOLT

Vashkhor secretly aided the Ingushel revolt to free a Hargeshite realm from Sirrenic control, and at the same time weaken its rival the Empire.

PAGE 18 — THE HARGESHITE DEVASTATION

The reports that Caldiran intended to foment traditionalist rebellion in Vashkhor are untrue (though it was responsible for the revolt in Shal-drin) — the Emperor’s spymasters were also in the pay of the Hargeshite priesthood, which had no intention of allowing “the heretical foulness that is Caldiran” to continue to exist and to “threaten” Vashkhor.

Emperor Emre did indeed commit suicide after learning what the Devastation had done.

PAGE 19 — YARGETH

Yargeth is not necessarily dead. His spider demon masters *may* have killed him — but they could just as easily release him from an eternity of torment in the Netherworld and give him one more chance to serve them properly... as an ally or servant of Kal-Turak.

PAGE 19 — ANGAROTH THE DEFILER

Angaroth rose to power for one reason: Kal-Turak. The Ravager recognized something in the young chieftain — a spark of evil and malice he could fan into a flame. And so he secretly supported him, weakening his enemies and strengthening his allies, until Angaroth commanded the respect of all Ulg-hroi. Then, using Oneiromancy, he planted in Angaroth’s mind dreams of blood and plunder that no Ulg-hroi could resist.

Angaroth died long ago, but Kal-Turak knows where the Ulg-hroi buried him. When the time is right, he will bring the Defiler back from the dead and loose him on Arduna once more.

PAGE 20 — THE SCARLET PLAGUE

The Scarlet Plague is an arcane devising of Kal-Turak’s, which is why it’s so hard to cure even with magic. He tested it on Kumasia, and now holds it in reserve as a secret weapon.

CHAPTER TWO

PAGE 34 — THE DWARVEN REALMS

The Dwarves of Gasharth, in the eastern Snowthorns, long ago fell under the sway of the Lord of the Graven Spear and descended into evil, helping him as they might but keeping their aid secret. (Many Dwarves know of it, though, so you may wish to inform players with dwarven characters about this.) They are now strong allies of the Yellow King of Valicia, and are sure to help him in whatever bid for power he makes.

The Dwarves of Rodathur, Delgalakh, and Harkonn, in the Skyclaw Mountains, find themselves in a precarious position. They’re between Vashkhor and the Sirrenic Empire, two ancient enemies always trying to find ways to come to grips with one another. The Dwarves trade with both, but the time may come when they’re forced to choose sides... and their choice may tip the balance of power in the region.

CHAPTER THREE

PAGE 51 — VANERISHADRA THE APOSTATE

Who or what Vanerishadra is, and the truth behind his doctrine, is left for the GM to resolve. He’s very much alive somewhere in Ambrethel, but exactly where depends on his background. Was he a dark elf using Sorcery to disguise himself and create rifts within elven society? A demon creating trouble for fun? Kal-Turak, or a servant of Kal-Turak, trying to weaken Elvenholme? Or was

he a genuinely devout, if fanatical, Elf who truly believed the words he spoke?

PAGE 52 — THE CONQUEST OF KHELEBRIA

The Khelebrians' belief that the Mhendarian Palatinate invaded Khelebria under false pretenses is absolutely incorrect. A group of Khelebrian bandits did burn Forgald (in fact, some of them were associates of the Khelebrian king and paid him hefty bribes to ignore their activities). The invasion was totally justified.

PAGE 53 — THE CORMOUTH RAN-TARI

The Ran-tari of the Cormouth Swamp do worship a frog-god (just like other Ran-tari), but their recent activity has nothing to do with religion. Rather, it's a symptom of the increasing evil in the world brought on by the rise of Kal-Turak. Ending the threat would require a torturous trek into the swamp past Ran-tari patrols and ambushes to destroy the Ran-tari city and temple in the heart of the marshlands.

PAGE 54 — THE WOLF-WINTERS

The odd weather in Vestria in 4773-75 SE was created by Kal-Turak as a means of testing the defenses of the powerful kingdom and his own ability to alter the weather from afar with the help of a group of local followers. He has maintained this cabal of followers ever since with gifts of gold and magic, and it remains ready to do his bidding should the need arise. Most of them live in Odellia, but the rest are scattered throughout the land.

PAGE 55 — SKARILL

Skarill exists. He's a frost giant of great strength and guile, and his lieutenants include other giants and Trolls, including a skilled trollish wizard.

PAGE 56 — THE VALLEY OF THE SIXTEEN STONES

The monoliths were erected in ancient days, perhaps before Men even came into the Westerlands, by Trolls to commemorate a victory in battle over some giants and mark the graves of the troll-kings who fell there. The runes on the stones are older versions of troll-runes, known only to a few trollish wizards. Buried beneath the circle are some underground tunnels and chambers containing the troll-kings and their treasure. The portal into the burial hall only opens if a specific troll-spell is recited on a specific day at a specific time; otherwise it's not even detectable (by magic or otherwise), much less accessible.

PAGE 56 — THE STORMLORD'S CURSE

The storm that struck Aarn in 4712 SE was just an ordinary storm, though the GM could certainly make it something else if he felt like it. In campaign terms, it's included so Aarn has a lot of ruined and rubble-filled underground areas where PCs can explore, hunt monsters that have moved in, and search for treasure. The underground areas also make excellent hiding places for Scarlet God cults, bands of assassins, and the like.



PAGE 57 — THE AARNESE THIEVES' WAR

The conflict between the various Thieves' Guilds of Aarn began a few years ago, when a strange-looking priest who called himself Black visited each of the guilds in turn, even the ones who take great efforts to hide their guild-halls. To each he reported that Forgil, god of thieves, was seeking the greatest thief in Aarn, and would reward that thief with riches and power beyond reckoning if he could perform a special task the god would set him. To each guild-leader Black gave a token of power to prove the truth of what he said, and then disappeared, never to be seen again. The guildmasters assume that whichever guild can gather to itself all of the tokens will be adjudged the city's greatest guild, and its leader the city's best thief. Whether this is what Forgil intended, only the GM can say...

PAGE 57 — THE AVALAR

Unbeknownst to most Aarnese, including its kings and nobles, the Avalar colossus is actually a gargantuan stone golem created by the Mages' Guild. As part of the Guild's compact with the city, the Guild leaders swear a solemn oath to use the Avalar to protect Aarn from invaders, attackers, and other threats. They reveal its existence to the king, if he knows of it not, when such a crisis threatens the city.

PAGE 59 — BALGAR

It's true Balgar enjoys good drink and food, pretty women (of any social class), and entertain-

ments of all sorts, and often pursues them when he should be doing things more seemly to a king's son. But King Angandirron's frustration over his son's misconduct is an act; Balgar works on his father's behalf, keeping an eye on the street and reporting back what he hears. His network of friends and contacts throughout the city make him one of his father's most accomplished spies... and possibly the key to Angandirron's ability to retain the throne, should the nobles become any less supportive.

PAGE 60 — KELDRAVIA

Although it seems a fairly stable kingdom on the surface, Keldravica actually seethes with political intrigue. Since moving against the king openly could spell disaster for an ambitious noble (because of the king's semi-divine status), nobles eager to acquire greater power and wealth act against him (or their rivals) indirectly through blackmail, bribery, assassination, and magic. Player characters who unwittingly get involved in Keldravian politics somehow — even simply by performing a mission of mercy for some noble or powerful merchant — may automatically acquire enemies without even knowing it.

PAGE 61 — IRONTOOTH

The tower of Irontooth was built by the Black God to mark the prison of Kzhath-Kurush, one of his Demonhanded, who fell in battle there long before the age of Men. Kzhath-Kurush lies defeated but not destroyed, and while Mordak cannot free him for fear of earning Kilbern's wrath, he set the tower in place to attract adventurers in the hopes some of them would unwittingly loose the Demonhanded's chains. The tower contains numerous mystical traps, monsters, and other threats, with plenty of treasure to tempt foolhardy adventurers. It's all arranged so that if an intruder dies, his soul funnels down to feed Kzhath-Kurush... who will eventually have the strength to free himself after he consumes enough souls. If a group of adventurers defies the odds and makes it all the way to Kzhath-Kurush's tomb, the Black God has set up a potent illusion and clever trap designed to trick them into freeing the Demonhanded anyway.

PAGE 61 — AMBERLEAF

There's no treasure at Amberleaf (or at least, not unless the GM chooses to put some there); see page 279 for an explanation of why Intravivus attacked. The only thing adventurers are likely to find there is a group of unfriendly Lizard-Folk.

PAGE 61 — THE KELDRAVIAN HERESY

The kings of Keldravica do, in fact, have the blood of Asvalak in their veins, though by this point it's so diluted even the mightiest of Divination spells can barely perceive it. No Godsban has fallen on the Keldravians for the reasons of faith discussed on page 289. As evil rises and tensions increase throughout Ambrethel, it's possible Asvalak will seek to strengthen his blood in the Keldravian line, so that the Keldravians may spread battle and terror as far as possible (perhaps by serving Kal-Turak's cause).

PAGE 62 — PRINCE TENKA'S DEATH

Prince Tenka did not die naturally. His "choking" was the result of a subtle poison. The House of Veleki remains alive in Khirkovy today, and its members are quick to say (when they think none of the Tassar's loyal vassals are listening) that the throne was stolen from them. They lack the power and wealth to try to seize the crown, but would willingly take steps to destabilize Khirkovy so they could seize power.

PAGE 63 — EVENTS IN KHIRKOVY

The Khirkovy princes and nobles are not as united behind Tassar Borwyg as they might seem on the surface. Besides the disloyal House Veleki (see above), Prince Zovan Lunets of Narkosk lusts for the throne (and for one of the Tassar's daughters). He would do nearly anything (save allying with the Gorthunda, whom he hates with a fiery passion) to obtain it — it was House Lunets that hired the assassin who tried to kill Tassar Faddan.

The poor catches Khirkovy fishermen have suffered in recent years are caused by Kal-Turak, who has loosed a horde of sea-monsters into the Sea of Ice. He hopes to weaken the North-Land so that, in time, it will present no barrier to the armies he plans to send against the Westerlands.

PAGE 64 — MEZENDRIA

King Rheldane has a problem he doesn't know about. His wife, Queen Varina, once a princess of Khirkovy, detests him. She's having affairs with *both* a Mezendrian noble, Duke Wilarn, and Prince Pavyan of Ossani in her homeland. One of the members of her retinue, Taal Tasya, is secretly a wizardess as well as a priestess, and uses her mystic powers to help the queen commit (and hide) her indiscretions. With encouragement from the bewitchingly beautiful Varina, either or both of them might make trouble for Mezendria.

PAGE 66 — THE MIRCASĖAN WONDERS

The two items Prince (later King) Jolar brought back from his adventures are powerful enchanted items he obtained while adventuring in the lands that would one day be southern Vashkhor. The first is a ring inhabited by seven ifrits (*Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, page 52). It may Summon each ifrit once per day, and after being Summoned the ifrit performs a maximum of nine tasks before returning to the ring. The second is a Talisman of Protection which creates a Force Field with 20 points of defense in all categories (it costs 0 END and has Invisible Power Effects [Fully Invisible] as well, so the wearer can keep the Talisman hidden under a tunic or doublet and no one will know he's protected).

PAGE 67 — THE SZARVASIAN WYRM

It's true that Szarvasia is a prosperous land generally at peace; it's a much better place to live than many. But no one in the land is aware of a great danger lurking to the west. In the Thurisian Mountains, not far from the city of Argovhan, the proud and mighty dragon Sarkan Mindenhar,

asleep for centuries on a bed of gold and riches, is at last beginning to awaken. And when he finally opens his eyes, no doubt he will be hungry....

PAGE 70 — UNREST IN VERLICHTEN

Baron Arendell has indeed sought the help of an evil spellcaster — Hrakorth the Scarlet (page 298) — in his quest to break away from Thurgandia. He has also sent embassies to the Tower of Bone and to Toromthiis, but neither Sa'akiv nor Zaargorath Khrom has responded favorably to him... yet. In exchange for their aid, Arendell promises what he promised Hrakorth: gold; claims over lands conquered in Thurgandia (and the plunder obtained from sacked cities); and the right to explore the ruins of Iluria without interference from adventurers.

PAGE 71 — THE FACES AT GRIMSKLIFT

The Grimsklift faces were carved thousands of years ago by a stone giant wizard as part of a powerful Conjunction spell. He was unable to finish the work before he died, and thus the spell remains incomplete. If the PCs track down the details of the spell, now scattered through various giantish lorebooks, they could complete the spell... but it's up to the GM to decide just what strange beings the spell summons, and why the giantish wizard wanted to conjure them.

PAGE 72 — THE THURISIAN MOUNTAINS

The Dwarves of Algarhaime and Norross do indeed know passes through the Thurisians, though they are narrow and difficult, suitable only for travel by people on foot. They charge dearly for this knowledge, and require those who would take the passes to go blindfolded at times to preserve their secrets.

Whether some wizards, powerful or otherwise, have made their homes in the Thurisians is up to the GM.

PAGE 73 — THE GNOMES OF MNOOS FOREST

The group of Gnomes in Mnoos Forest didn't lie to King Laudrec when they told him their ancestors once lived there... but they didn't tell him the whole truth. They failed to mention that their forefathers destroyed their own homes by creating some powerful enchanted items they lost control of. The Gnomes seek these items in the belief they can control them. They're near to finding them, and once they have them they'd not only be able to resist King Laudrec's attempt to collect the taxes, they could probably bid fair to conquer his kingdom.

PAGE 74 — PIRATES OF THE DRAKINE COAST

Pirates are, in fact, unusually common along the Drakine Coast, for the Syndics of Chiref secretly give them commissions as privateers against the shipping of other realms as a way of filling their own coffers even further. They go to great pains to conceal this, for they know it could cause a war if proof of it were to leak out.

PAGE 77 — QUEEN ELDORIS OF CELBARIA

Although she puts up a brave front in public, Queen Eldoris suffers from a fatal disease, thought incurable even by magic, that she contracted when a noblewoman, jealous about the Queen's dalliance with her husband, sought to slay Eldoris by magic. It won't be long before the signs of the disease become apparent, which may put Princess Tiphain in the uncomfortable position of having to choose a husband far sooner than she'd like.

PAGE 77 — WIZARD'S VALE

Wizard's Vale offers several things for spellcasters. First, the gigantic meteorite that landed there centuries ago still provides star-iron for the creation of magical weapons, armor, rings, and the like. Second, numerous herbs with magical or healing properties, including many found nowhere else in Arduna, grow here. Third, the waters of the Vale are particularly useful for making potions; at your option, a vialful of it may provide 1 "Character Point" for creating potions and the like (see *Fantasy Hero*, page 277). As the main text notes, the residents of the Vale have taken steps to ensure that no one "overfarms" the Vale... though that's not to say some unscrupulous spellcasters don't try to.

PAGE 78 — KING KIRRI'L'S DISAPPEARANCE

King Kirril and Queen Neola were kidnapped by magic by Lady Helida of Celbaria. She hoped to cast Sarreshar in disarray and disrupt its wine trade, thus enriching herself when she stepped in to take over where Sarresharan vintners faltered. But her plan failed, and now she has no idea what to do with her captives. She can't bring herself to kill them, but every day that passes increases the risk of discovery....

PAGE 79 — MOUNT MELGAR

No attempt to "colonize" Mount Melgar has ever succeeded because its caverns are the highest stronghold of the Migdalar (*Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, page 67). Several tunnels leading deeper into the Sunless Realms originate beneath Melgar, making it a logical acquisition for the powerhungry Migdalar. From here they monitor the surface folk, often manipulating events in the Bandit Lands, Aarn, and Tornathia... and sometimes beyond... for their own benefit.

PAGE 80 — THE YELLOW KINGS

The increased mystical power of the Yellow Kings of Valicia in recent times is due to the House of Khrom's acquisition of the Lorebook of Shondigrath, a grimoire written by a powerful, if enigmatic, wizard of the First Epoch. It contains many unique magics that have augmented the Yellow Kings' already large arsenal of spells. If someone were to steal the Lorebook from King Zaargorath, he would stop at nothing to get it back; he considers it a source of good luck as well as powerful magics.

PAGE 80 — ZAARGORATH'S AMBITIONS

Zaargorath Khrom, Yellow King of Valicia, is indeed as ambitious as the main text implies. He feels it's his destiny to expand the borders of Valicia, and that the Lords of Khrom have too long ruled too little land and had too little prestige among the kings of the Westerlands. Right now the Drakine Realms are the chief target of his plans, though he'd rather bring the Valician Hills firmly under his sway... and then perhaps lay waste Thaleria-Saar and claim its strange magical lore (not to mention Korrm) for himself.

PAGE 80 — THE TOWNS OF THE SHAANDA

The traffic along the Shaanda River could easily support a major city or two. Most people believe that none exist because the hills are too inhospitable for a city. While it's true the hills would make establishing a city difficult, it wouldn't be impossible. But there's another factor at work: the shards of the Spear. The shards fell into the waters of the Shaanda, thus mystically "poisoning" it and causing such ill-luck to befall the towns along the river that none can ever grow to become true cities. The shards also tend to attract monsters and other threats to the area.

PAGE 82 — MOUNT KELUURAZOND

It's true that Korthund raised Mount Keluura-zond, but not as the site of a palace, and not to give it to some Gnomes (the Gnomes moved in of their own accord much later). Instead, Keluura-zond is a prison — deep down, at its roots, a *sorrag* of great power with whom the Stonelord once fought lies bound by chains both physical and mystical. In case anyone ever reached the prison somehow (perhaps with the help of the Drakine gods), Korthund placed around it many fiendish traps (again, both physical and mystical) and guardians that even the most skilled adventurer could not hope to defeat... perhaps.

PAGE 82 — KING LYNDANAR

The fears of the Ingushelan nobility are justified — King Lyndanar is virtually a puppet of Hierakte Sairhan, not due to any undue pressure or influence but simply because Lyndanar greatly admires his friend the Vashkhoran emperor and wishes he could emulate him. He spends a lot of time planning elaborate invasions of other realms (primarily the Sirrenic Empire), but never acts on any of those plans. Should Vashkhor ever decide to attack Ingushel — and Sairhan would certainly be willing to, in the right circumstances — the invasion would be an easy thing to accomplish, since King Lyndanar would be paralyzed with indecision, certain that his "friend" would never do something so cruel.

Queen Chiselda, disgusted with her husband and his general lack of attention toward her, has turned to a series of affairs and dalliances to ease her boredom and lash out at him indirectly. Any handsome male who catches her eye — an adventurer visiting the court, for instance — would almost certainly receive a discreet "proposition" from her.

PAGE 84 — DUKE ANTREG

Duke Antreg's own coffers have been greatly enriched by trade with Vashkhor. A man of exceeding greed and vanity, he would hate to see anything cause the trade to cease. In the event it seems that another war might break out between the two empires, he might even go so far as to try to manipulate events behind the scenes to stop it, or to bring it to a swift conclusion... even if that meant revealing Sirrenic secrets to Marasa.

PAGE 84 — THE SIRRENIC SUCCESSION

While Alvar is definitely the heir to the Lapis Throne based on Sirrenic law, the succession is not quite as clear-cut as it seems. His younger brother Xanton has the Talent, and the court wizard Eglenor and his followers have tutored him in the Arts Arcane for years. Eglenor would strongly prefer for Xanton to get the throne, since that would greatly increase his own power and influence in the realm. Eglenor has begun considering ways to dispose of Alvar so that Xanton can take his place as heir apparent.

PAGE 85 — LADY TALAYNE AND THE MELGORIAN CIRCLE

Who will Lady Talayne wed? What is the Melgorian Circle up to? These plot seeds are left for you to develop.

PAGE 86 — THE HALF-BROTHERS OF ULYU THAAR

The Palehanded King left most of his half-brothers alive because he believes they may be the key to greater power for him. In ancient Thaleran grimoires, he has found words that he interprets to mean that if he sacrifices his half-brothers in a complicated ritual, he will gain vast mystic powers. Whether he reads the words aright, and if so what the ritual requires, is up to the GM. In the meantime, as the main text notes, it's possible one of the half-brothers could try to usurp the throne, assassinate the king, or otherwise cause trouble.

PAGE 87 — YLVAREC

The royal palace of Thaleria-Saar may *look* defenseless, but in truth it's anything but. The Thaleran kings had the aid of their strange magics and conjured servants while building it, and forged into its very stones are demonic warriors able to emerge and fight at the proper call. No king has ever had to call upon them, so their existence remains a carefully-guarded secret.

PAGE 93 — THE ELVES OF ELRUNE

The Elves of the Elrune Islands don't actually possess any special enchanted weapons or items of great power. However, many of them are accomplished wizards, and if push came to shove Elrune could mount some potent defenses against attackers. In the past several decades they have repelled several Sharthak raiding parties, though why the Sharthak have suddenly taken an interest in the Islands remains unknown.

PAGE 94 — PRINCE VARDELSUN

Unbeknownst to King Selgan, Vardelsun is not his son. Selgan is sterile, and Queen Dalara, sensing this, gave herself to a traveling bard that she might conceive an heir anyway. (Their daughter, Sharla, is the result of a similar encounter.) If House Ang-hard (or its supporters) ever found out about this, it could cause enormous political turmoil, perhaps even civil war, since King Selgan is too proud to admit that it could ever be true.

PAGE 95 — THE AKRISSA SWAMPS

For the most part the Akrisa Swamps are just normal swamps, but they got started nearly three thousand years ago when two Nurenthian wizards fought a Duel Arcane near one's tower. Both of them died in the confrontation, in the process creating the Swamps, which later grew due to natural action. The wizard's tower long ago sunk all the way into the swamp, but if some adventurers could find it (and fight off the dark-scaled, S'taa'sha-worshipping Seshurma who consider the site sacred), it might hold some valuable treasures.

PAGE 104 — ASHURNA

Recent discontent in Ashurna (and Khepras, for that matter) has not been entirely legitimate. Kal-Turak's spies and servants have been among the people, whispering traitorous thoughts and encouraging conduct disloyal to Vashkhor. The Ravager hopes to turn these people to his side, that he may establish strongholds in their land from which to strike at Khorla. If this were to become public knowledge, the king and people would be quick to re-align themselves with Vashkhor.

PAGE 106 — SAILING TO VORNACKIA

The mariners are correct — since Ambrethel is a globe, a ship sailing west from Vestria (or Karellia, or the like) will eventually reach Vornakkia. However, the seas between the two lands are extremely deadly, prone to unpredictable storms and filled with terrible sea monsters. The merchant who first finds a quick, safe way between the two lands (if one exists) will make himself fabulously rich.

PAGE 106 — SHAR

The Council's fears of Vashkhoran invasion are not unwarranted, though Vashkhor has as yet made no open move toward Shar. To keep watch for any sign of attackers, the Council has established a series of secret watch-posts in the Askellon Bluffs and along the Leros River, manned by skilled rangers and wizards.

Each of the Masked Lords chooses his own successor, almost always one of his children, subject to a vote of approval by the other six. If a Lord dies unexpectedly, the other six fill his seat by acclamation, again usually selecting one of his children if that's appropriate.

PAGE 109 — VÛRAN

The Seven Sorcerers are each individually powerful, of that there is no doubt. But what makes their magic strange and even more potent, and what brings them together as a group, are the arcane powers provided them by a mysterious being they know only as the One Who Dwells Beneath (or, the Dweller Beneath). Not long before their conquest of Vûran, the Dweller contacted each of them through dreams and mystic trances, offering them great power both magical and temporal if they would do as he bid them. Greedy and powerhungry, each of them accepted... though each of course hopes to find a way to gain the upper hand and take all the power for himself one day.

Unbeknownst to the Seven Sorcerers, the One Who Dwells Beneath is, like the gods of Thûn, an imprisoned Elder Worm who hopes to free himself. Chained in caverns deep, deep beneath the Chekuru Jungle, this being, whom some folk of the region long ago worshipped as the dark and corrupt god Narthash-O, hopes to manipulate the Seven Sorcerers into freeing him. Although he hates (and fears) his brethren who are gods to the Thûnese, he might even be willing to "team up" with them if they could all find a way to achieve their freedom by bringing their pawns together.

Kapros's explorations of the Chekuru Jungle have not been entirely without fruit — though that's what he's told his compatriots. He's found one or two ruins, and though he hasn't had time to delve into them in earnest, his initial searches hint that much treasure, and perhaps long-lost lore or magics, may lie within. He's also heard from some Seshurma of a vast, ruined temple in the heart of the jungle, and he hopes to learn more about this soon.

PAGE 111 — HARIN REKHAN OF DEVYLDRA

The ruler of Devyldra does have it in mind to attack another city, probably Halathaloom, in a campaign of conquest — but he is not Harin Rekhan. He is a masquer (*Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, page 65) who secretly slew Rekhan when the harin was hunting and took his place. The masquer intends to hold on to power as long as it can (and has sent word to others of its kind to join it), but can't resist creating mischief, havoc, and misery in the meantime. Rekhan's son Salmalin suspects that something is wrong with his father, but as yet it's only a vague suspicion, not enough to spur him to any action.

PAGE 113 — KURUM-SATHIRI AND VIRGALA

Eltirian's suspicions are correct — the Sithians are trying to find their own source of *virgala* so they can avoid the ruinous Eltirian monopoly. Having had no luck developing their own mines, they're using rangers and other explorers to try to find a way through the Ghenu-Shatha Mountains so they can buy from the miners directly. (Failing that, they may resort to magic to *make* a pathway, if they must.) If they succeed, it would be a significant blow to Eltirian.

PAGE 113 — LORD DHENACH

Who had Lord Dhenach killed? That's a mystery left for the GM to decide. It could be a rival among the Eltiriani nobility, Talarshand, a jealous husband (Dhenach being a notorious philanderer), or any of a dozen other possibilities.

PAGE 113 — BENEATH ELTIRIAN

Unbeknownst to most Eltiriani, their city was built over a much older city, long ruined and gone by the time of the First Epoch. Those who descend into the deepest sewers and cellars beneath the city may find some strange things indeed... and perhaps even their deaths!

The old city beneath Eltirian was built by some people or race of the Primeval age that came before the Turakian Age — possibly the Elder Worm, but perhaps someone else altogether. The GM is encouraged to be imaginative, weird, and fiendish.

PAGE 113 — THE LIVING STATUES

There's nothing sinister about the Living Statues. They were created long ago by Ziandwyrrh, who put them there as little more than a practical joke. However, anyone who tracks the statues' movements over a long period may discover that their movements form strange runes, and that these runes, if deciphered, hold the key to some powerful new spells — a gift from the Madman of the Gods to those with enough patience and cleverness to play his game.

PAGE 116 — THE TABLETS OF ZARANTHU

The Tablets are Elder Worm relics from the Primeval age that preceded the Turakian Age; the words on them are part of a chronicle of Elder Worm history, not a spell of any sort. The thieves who have tried to steal them have almost all been sent by the sorcerer-priests of Thûn, who believe the Tablets are holy relics (because their gods told them so) and desperately want to acquire them.

PAGE 118 — THE ELECT AND THE GREAT TEMPLE

As mentioned on page 290, the true rulers of the priesthood of S'taa'sha — the powers behind the public faces of the Elect — are S'taa'sha's Get, half-reptilian, half-human priests of great power. Some of the blood from sacrifices runs down through channels in the altar to secret chambers within the temple itself, where the Get drink it as if it were wine. Sometimes they dine on human flesh as well.

The Elect is not as unified a body as it would appear to the city or to casual observers. A lot of infighting goes on in the council-chambers, and it's not unknown for members of the Elect to come to blows, or to hire assassins to dispose of their rivals. S'taa'sha says nothing about this. The Get choose the members of the Elect to suit their own purposes; among themselves they determine who leads through the simplest methods — he who is strongest and cleverest rules, until someone stronger or cleverer takes his place.

PAGE 120 — THE DRAGONRIDERS OF KA'RÛK

The Dragonriders are servants of Kal-Turak, who sent them with orders to lay waste the city and take all the Cacimarian steel (and steel objects) they could find. Since that ploy failed, he has resorted to more devious means, including stealthy theft and bribery, to obtain the weaponry he wants for his best lieutenants.

PAGE 122 — THE FIRES OF THÛN

The stories are true in that the sorcerer-priests of Thûn have been busier than normal — but not for the reasons whispered in taverns and kings' courts. An important conjunction of the stars approaches, and it is that to which the sorcerer-priests respond in their aeons-long quest to free their unholy gods. They have no alliance with Kal-Turak. The Ravager has tried several times, using disguises, Sorcery, and other means, to have himself initiated into the Thûnese priesthood — but every time, the sorcerer-priests perceive him and his aims, and reject him utterly. They see in him a great threat to their goals, and only if their gods told them to would they aid him. But neither will they oppose him, unless he sends his armies to the Black Isle; the Thûnese care not what happens to the rest of Ambrethel.

PAGE 122 — YUBHA

The stories told about *yubha*-gems are true. While the sorcerer-priests claim possession of all of them for themselves alone, because they are the blood and tears of the imprisoned god, some peasants mine them in secret to sell to outlander traders. *Yubha* gems are ideally suited for the creation of many enchanted items or use as a material component for many spells, which is why mages value them so highly.

In game terms, each carat of pure, flawless *yubha* provides 3 “Character Points” toward the creation of enchanted items (see *Fantasy Hero*, page 277). A spellcaster may substitute an equivalently-sized *yubha* for any other gem (or gem powder) as a spell component.

PAGE 122 — THE VHARN TORAC ARCHIPELAGO

For the most part, the islands are as described in the main text. However, many sorcerer-priests live there largely because they can sense, with their mystic “eyes,” a strange, arcane power residing in or underneath these islands. What it is they cannot say, and their gods remain silent on the matter.

PAGE 123 — THE RENOPANS OF ARESCA

While pirates slew *almost* all of the Renopans, some escaped into the mountainous, jungle-covered interior. There they now live in deep caves where they still worship their fire-god... or actually, lava-god. Though the scum of Aresca Town and Daggerport know it not, the mountains of Aresca are volcanic, and it may be that one day soon the Renopan god will lash out at his people's tormentors in righteous fury.

PAGE 125 — THE KESHA NOBLES

Kal-Turak is manipulating the disruptive nobles of Keshman; he has many spies and servants in Kumasia. The Ravager recognizes the strategic importance of Keshman's location for his plans of world conquest, and wants to weaken and destabilize the land so that he can take control of it.

King Markandor, a wise and insightful man, knows someone or something is manipulating the nobles, and so has not moved against them; instead, he's trying to find out what's really going on. However, he has quietly bolstered the strength of his own armies, and those of nobles whose loyalty he does not question.

PAGE 126 — LORD SHIROSHAN

It's absolutely true that some nobles of Korem-Var long for a... well, more *noble* existence than what they have now. They want to sweep aside the corrupt, hedonistic leaders of Korem-Var and tear down the Malachite Tower. Lord Shiroshan is a leader among this group, in part because, unknown to the Kresata, he's a spellcaster of some minor power who can use spells to hide his actions and stay in touch with his allies without raising suspicion. But he's not sure the "rebels" can change Korem-Var all on their own, and he's looking for help.

PAGE 128 — THE KUMASIAN RUINS

There *are* ruins deep in the Kumasi Jungle — ruins of a city of an ancient race of Men of Primeval times, a race powerful in magic and strong in war, but whose blasphemous sorceries and traitorous alliances with the Elder Worm called down the gods' doom upon them. Wealth untold, and great magical power, awaits whoever first finds the ruins... but who knows what might dwell there now, and are the riches of a cursed people cursed as well?

PAGE 130 — THE SERPENT-MEN

The Serpent-Men, or *Ssujala* in their own tongue, are evil denizens of the Sunless Realms, and allies of Kal-Turak to boot; the scarlet nagas are one type of nobility among them. But their attack on Halore (and other Indusharan realms) was prompted not by the Ravager, but by a war between themselves and the Migdalar (*Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, page 67) which forced them to retreat to the surface world temporarily (where they made the best of a bad situation by pillaging and searching for new weapons to use against their acephalic enemies). After the underground war changed direction, they returned to the Sunless Realms once more... but who knows when they may decide to attack the surface world for real?

To create a Serpent-Man, use the Package Deal on page 42 of *Fantasy Hero*.

PAGE 133 — THE NESHARAN DROUGHT

The recent drought in Neshara is the result of subtle Orumbaran magic. The empire hopes to weaken its neighbor to the north, while strengthening the southern faction that favors its own plans (a faction it supports with money and other aid) by allowing rains to continue to fall there.

PAGE 133 — NESHARAN RUINS

Are there any Nesharan ruins? That's up to you. The early tribes of Neshara didn't build cities, but might have built isolated towers — and of course, long-forgotten wizards, or the folk of Primeval times, may have left buildings behind... buildings possibly filled with treasure, but maybe cursed as well...

PAGE 134 — ORUMBARAN SHIPBUILDING

All the ships being built in Hamba'ne are, as many people suspect, the nucleus of a war-fleet, not new trading vessels. The *Neren Sokindar* is taking care to make the ships look like trading vessels, and some have even carried cargoes to and from other cities, but he has attacks on Aplion and Tarran more in mind.

PAGE 135 — THE STONE OF WINTERS

There is no such thing as the Stone of Winters (unless, of course, Vabanak hears about it and decides to create one...). The whole story is just a fanciful legend.

PAGE 135 — THE PEAKS OF ASH

The volcano of the Peaks of Ash is so active because a "colony" of fire elementals has made its home deep in the volcano's depths. Periodically they quarrel or fight, and eruptions occur. If an alchemist or enchanter were to acquire some lava from the volcano and keep it molten until he could pour it into a mold, it would provide 4 "Character Points" toward the creation of enchanted amulets involving Fire Magic (see *Fantasy Hero*, page 277).

The "ash monsters" spoken of by the Velorians exist — they're just a form of earth elemental that arises from the local land because of the elemental energies given off by the fire elementals and the eruptions they cause. While they can't leave the Ashy Waste, they're hostile to non-Earth creatures and will fight and slay them whenever possible.

PAGE 136 — KING IRRUS'S CHILDREN

The deaths of King Irrus's children was *not* an accident. It was arranged by agents of Orumbar working together with Lord Helekon, who now stands to inherit the throne and has promised to surrender to Orumbar in exchange for a lordship from the *Neren Sokindar*. If King Irrus were to find this out, his rage would be terrible to behold, and he might even unlock the forbidden lorebooks of Kristor which have lain in the royal treasury for centuries....

PAGE 137 — HARAJ KADDAR'S DEATH

The suspicions that *Harasha* Upala caused Kaddar's death are not true. The disease was just that — a disease — and while she was quick to take advantage of her husband's death, she had nothing to do with it. Though why the spells of the priests could not cure the *haraj* remains something of a mystery...

PAGE 138 — THE BAGHLANI MONOLITHS

The monoliths aren't actually monoliths, they're sarcophagi sent to this plane from a Netherworld-like plane of evil and horror. If the proper

words are spoken and the right spells cast when the stars properly align, a monolith will open, revealing the vast treasures contained within... but also the undead horrors locked inside!

PAGE 139 — ALADRON'S WELL

Some people who drink from Aladron's Well do receive visions. If a character drinks from the Well, roll 3d6. If you roll a 3, in 1d6 hours the character has a vision of something that will happen to him within a year from that day. Roll 1d6 — on a 1-5, the vision is of something unpleasant; on a 6, it's of something pleasant.

PAGE 140 — SLAYING SARGATH

Arhardt, High King of Teretheim, has hired bands of adventurers to kill Sargath twice, but both have failed. He dares not try again, for fear Sargath will find out and take revenge... but he would richly reward anyone who slays the Vampire Lord and spares Teretheim from his possible attentions.

For Sargath himself, use the Greater Vampire writeup (*The HERO System Bestiary*, page 126), but remove most of his Disadvantages (particularly the Susceptibility to sunlight, but not the Susceptibility to holy places and things), and give him about another 150 points' worth of wizard's Skills and spells.

PAGE 141 — THE MONSTER WAR

The attack by Grenjar Darkbeard and the monsters he led was not a random thing. A coward and traitor fleeing from the wars of the cloud and fire giants of Arduna, he and his followers found a home in the Thraysa Mountains. There they soon heard rumors of a fabulous treasure hidden in a long-lost wizard's crypt in central Ostravia. Knowing they couldn't approach it by stealth, they chose to approach it by force, gaining plunder to augment the hoped-for treasure along the way. But Grenjar Darkbeard never found the crypt, and his descendants have not yet mustered the strength to try again.

PAGE 143 — THE DEMON-ELVES OF SHULARHALEEN

One of the reasons the Elves of Shularahaleen have such a distaste for outsiders is this: many of them are demon-worshippers.

Years ago, some of the darkest-hearted of the Shularahaleen Elves were seduced to the worship of Mordak, and learned to summon demons to participate in their foul worship ceremonies. Some have even kidnapped Men and other folk and sacrificed them to the Black God. Not all the Shularahaleen Elves follow Mordak, but at least half of them do, and the others tolerate their activities as long as they keep them reasonably quiet.

Among some other Elves who have heard rumors of Shularahaleen diabolism, it's said that deep within the Shadowwoods stands a great temple to Mordak, built with stone mined by dwarven slaves and adorned with gold and silver ornaments made from the loot taken from Men the Elves have slain or sacrificed. If so, no outsider has ever so much as glimpsed it, or sensed its evil presence from afar.

PAGE 144 — WITCH'S HOLLOW

Witch's Hollow is a place touched by the god Vabanak, and thus consecrated to his purposes and the purposes of those who knowingly or unknowingly follow him. Any spellcaster who casts a Black Magic, Necromancy, Witchcraft, or Scarlet God-specific divine magic spell there receives a +2 bonus on the Skill Roll used. The GM must decide what, if anything, characters can do to cleanse the place.

PAGE 152 — THE MADNESS OF KING ANSGAR

Ansgar has not gone mad — he's been fending off repeated mystic assaults by Kal-Turak, who hopes to turn the Khrisulian king to evil (a state of mind that Ansgar's undead form somewhat inclines him to). Sometimes the Ravager's attack succeeds for a while, making Ansgar act out of character; at other times Ansgar finds a way to fight off his enemy for yet a while longer. But he knows that if he doesn't find help somewhere, it's only a matter of time before he falls wholly under Kal-Turak's sway....

PAGE 153 — DANGER BENEATH ROSSKELD

While it's true that Rosskeld doesn't threaten any other lands, it's not strictly accurate to say that no lands threaten it. There's a place in the hills of South Rosskeld where the Sunless Realms come close indeed to the surface. A kingdom of Dark Dwarves controls that territory, and they're considering an attack on the surface world (once their wizards finish making helms for all their warriors that provide some shielding against the bright light that Dark Dwarves so despise). From Rosskeld they can attack Azarthond, or head west into the heart of the continent to plunder and pillage.

PAGE 155 — ULRUM'S WELLS

The new wells in Ulrum hide a secret. One of them is not only a well, it links to a secret escape tunnel that can take High King Arhardt far out into the countryside or down the coast to some natural caves.

PAGE 156 — NOREG'S THRONE

Noreg's ghost, a strong one with unusual powers, does indeed haunt the Throne. If someone were to find a way to capture it and bond it to an item, that person would have a talisman with the power to persuade, awe, or intimidate Orcs.

PAGE 157 — THE HALLS OF THE KINGS

The Halls do not have a corps of immortal Gorthunda guards; that's just a legend told to scare off potential looters. However, the tombs themselves are often protected with traps, and in the case of truly powerful war-chiefs, sometimes guardian golems made of grass and clay are sealed within the tomb as well. A few Gorthunda dead, primarily powerful shamans, sometimes come back to "life" as undead, and eagerly await tomb-robbers who will unwittingly free them.

PAGE 158 — WILDERLAND

Wilderland is left as a blank slate on which the GM may draw as he sees fit. If the PCs want to carve out a kingdom for themselves, or explore lands where almost no one has ever gone before, this is the place where they can do it... assuming they're willing to get that close to Turakia.

CHAPTER FOUR

PAGE 169 — THÛNESE BURIAL

After they receive a corpse, the sorcerer-priests may do one of several things with it. First, if they need more servants, they may return it to unlife as a skeleton or zombie. Second, they may give it to one of their gods (or his servants), presumably for use as food. Third, the bodies of other sorcerer-priests, kings, nobles, and the like are usually entombed in special crypts in the bowels of Thûnese temples.

CHAPTER FIVE

PAGE 182 — THE SCORPION LORDS OF TARKLESH

Th'naah Aghorya of Thûn is not the leader of the Scorpion Lords. Although referred to as a group, they are not (though two or more of them sometimes meet for training or to exchange trade secrets) — each Scorpion Lord acts on his own.

PAGE 184 — WARRIORS OF RENOWN

The speculation about Sir Gazimar is correct — he slew Zaazondrûn, but was in turn slain by the great wyrm, and both their bones now lie moldering in Zaazondrûn's cave. But with his dying breath the dragon placed a curse upon his hoard, such that none who would come to take his gold would live long to enjoy it. As yet, no one has found and taken the gold of the Cursed Caves; neither has anyone recovered Sir Gazimar's wondrous blade, Galabrand.

Vilkun Hawkblade has indeed adventured in Vashkhor without the officials of the Hargeshite Empire learning of it. He'd make a superb guide for a band of adventurers that had to do the same thing... provided they were willing to obey his orders.

PAGE 186 — THE TRUSCA

Rumors of Trusca-Orc interbreeding are true; the Trusca long ago forged alliances with some of the Orcs of the Snowthorns, and sometimes seal those pacts with marriages. They often accord children of those marriages great respect and status. Brogarl Steelaxe, one of their greatest chieftains, is a Half-Orc.

PAGE 188 — THE ORDER OF THE ESTOILE

The knights of the Estoile have a secret alliance with the Anvilites, and support that group's agenda of smashing the Hargeshite heresy. More than a few of the knights want to see the Westerlands kings declare a Great Crusade against Vashkhor.

PAGE 194 — DRUATHEK THE MALEFICENT

Druathek is not living in southern Mhorecia. He was up until about ten years ago, when he disguised himself and gained admission to the Mages' Guild of Aarn. He needs the Guild's library to research certain foul spells he requires for his latest scheme.

PAGE 194 — THE BLACK GUILD

It's true that the Black Guild exists, and that it's located somewhere in Tornathia (usually Tatha Gorel, but it does move on occasion). But the members of the guild have no interest in politics, and don't kidnap children — they simply want to teach their Art to apprentices, and plumb the mysteries of the Long Sleep, without interference from "ignorant louts."

PAGE 194 — THE COVEN OF D'YOS

The exact motivations and goals of the Covenant of D'yos are left to the GM. They could be an evil group, selling their services and information to the highest bidder, or perhaps they watch over the world so they can prevent evils before they occur. They might not even be native to Ambrethel....

CHAPTER SIX

FAITH IN THE TURAKIAN AGE

Ambrethel is a world of not just many gods, but many doctrines and creeds — this despite the fact that the gods communicate regularly with people, instructing them and even giving some of them special powers. This schism of belief is by the gods' design.

To exist, a god needs worship. Worship is his meat; it sustains him and makes him stronger. But meat without wine is a bitter meal, and faith is the gods' wine.

Faith requires belief in the absence of proof, and the gods of Ambrethel prove their existence every day. They grant spells and powers to priests and paladins, which those servants use to help other people, and sometimes the gods themselves appear in the world. Thus, the worship of the gods brings direct, tangible benefits to the people of Ambrethel; they worship not because they have faith, but because they'd be fools not to.

Therefore to create faith, the gods had to give Men (and Dwarves, and Drakine, and Elves...) something to believe in that could not be proven. By telling each group of priests — Westerlanders, Hargeshites, Kumasians, and so on — that their names, practices, and doctrines are the One True Way (or at the very least by not definitively settling theological disputes), they create faith. When priests and people know others have as much contact with the gods as they do, only faith tells them that their creed is correct. And thus the gods have their wine, though at times it is as bitter as the blood their worshippers shed.

For similar reasons, the gods usually leave Men (and other races) to handle their own affairs, regardless of the cruelty or injustice that results.

SALGRITH THE BLINDWYRM

One of the most feared denizens of the Sunless Realms (page 160) is Salgrith the Blindwyrm, a blind dragon of immense power and wealth. In addition to the power he possesses simply because he's a dragon, he also has the ability to cast spells, and owns many enchanted items he uses when fighting adventurers.

For Salgrith, use a Greater Dragon from page 66 of *The HERO System Bestiary*, but give him the same ability to perceive vibrations that the giant scorpion (page 90 of that book) has. Additionally, he has the following mystical powers: 120 points' worth of arcane spells, Divination 20-, Earth Magic 20-, Fire Magic 24-, Necromancy 15-, Thaumaturgy 20-, Wizardry 22-. Round him out with some enchanted items of your choice, and you should have a foe capable of challenging any group of adventurers.

The gods can enter Ambrethel if they choose — but if they did so, Men would soon come to depend on the gods to solve all the world's problems, and that does the gods no good.

PAGE 213 — THE PRIESTS OF ULINOOR

It is true that some priests of Ulinoor — not all, but some, the most devout and experienced — can take the shape of cats, but only at night unless they get special dispensation from their goddess. They buy this as a Multiform of two shapes (one a common housecat, one a great cat of the character's choice) with the Limitation *Can Only Change Form At Night* (-½). (For these purposes, night means 6:00 PM to 6:00 AM.)

PAGE 214 — THE PRIESTS OF VASHEELRA

Likewise, Vasheelra's priests can buy a Multiform into a spider and/or a rat if they wish... but they may change form at any time, not just at night.

PAGE 215 — S'TAA'SHA

S'taa'sha is real, and does live in the S'taa'rthek. Whether he is truly a god, or just some strange monster, what philosopher can say? — yet the priests of Talarshand receive their divine magics just like any other priests. Even if not a true god, he is still far too powerful for any but the mightiest group of heroes to have any hope of defeating.

The rituals performed in the jungle by the Talarshandi priests every summer include offering up certain young priestesses to their god as his wives. The next year these women are returned to them, and after reaching the Great Temple, they give birth to S'taa'sha's Get — powerful half-reptilian men and women who serve as the secret protectors and true leaders of the Great Scaly One's priests.

PAGE 215 — THE GODS OF THÛN

The gods of Thûn are not truly gods at all. They are remnants of the Elder Worm, a race of strange mystic power who came to the world during the Primeval era tens of thousands of years ago, and contended for mastery of it with the gods who walked the Earth then. In time, they were defeated; many fled, but some of the most arcanelly powerful were imprisoned by their enemies, that they might no longer work their evil on the world.

The gods of that time are long dead, perhaps, but the bonds and boundaries they set upon their foes remain intact... for now. The sorcerer-priests of Thûn seek ways to free their gods from captivity, and those gods in return receive such trickles of lore and power from them as the Elder Worm sees fit to give and can manage to release. If the sorcerer-priests ever succeed in freeing their gods, they will discover to their sorrow that the gods care no more for them than any other Men; all who live will find themselves ground beneath the coils of the Elder Worm.

PAGE 216 — KAL-TURAK

Kal-Turak is not a god... yet. As of 5000 SE, and even through his conquest of the world and

eventual overthrow and death, he lacks the power to truly be a god, though he does not stop his followers from worshipping him. To the extent any of his followers seem to possess divine magic, Mordak or Vabanak grant it to them out of amusement.

PAGE 218 — SESHURMA AND S'TAA'SHA

The rumors are true — some of the Lizard-Folk do worship S'taa'sha. Compared to temples to the standard Seshurman gods, which are usually made at least partly of wood, wattle-and-daub, or the like, temples to the Great Scaly One are always made entirely of stone (which means they can only be built on firm ground).

CHAPTER SEVEN

PAGE 231 — THE GREATER STARS

The Greater Stars are not actually stars — they are the planets of Earth's solar system visible to the Ambrethelans. Specifically, they are:

Heremos the Brown: Mercury
Nevara the Green: Venus
Tharasis the Red: Mars
Turanus the Pale: Saturn
Zesura the Rose: Jupiter

Similarly, many of the constellations known to the Turakians have modern equivalents:

Dornac: Draco
Gehrashar: Sagittarius
The Hammer: the Little Dipper
The King: Orion
The Scythe: the Big Dipper
The Wand and the Staff: Gemini

Attempts to view or travel to the stars by magic have failed because, at this particular place and time, the magic of Ambrethel is closely tied to Ambrethel. Attempts to use it outside of the world — in outer space, in other words — automatically fail, possibly resulting in the death of the person using them. (This does not affect attempts to travel to other planes of existence, since the planes wizards can reach by magic have their own means of powering magic even when the wizard leaves Ambrethel's plane.)

PAGE 269 — ENCHANTED ITEM HISTORIES

The descriptions of each of the unique enchanted items described at the end of Chapter Seven includes a brief paragraph describing the item's history and whereabouts. The endings of these histories are left vague so you can turn the items into plot devices if you wish.

PAGE 270 — THE SCREAMING STAFF OF MADWYL

Madwyl is a god from the Primeval Age that preceded the Turakian Age. He's very much a lesser god, to be sure, but a god nonetheless, devoted to the concepts of caprice, fortune, Chaos, and strange fate. (In some ways, he might be seen as a predecessor of Ziandwyrth, though both of them would be

offended by the comparison.) If the Staff is ever broken or destroyed, Madwyl will be freed to work his bizarre and deadly sense of humor upon the world.

PAGE 272 — VASAK'S BATTLESTONE

There's no curse on the Battlestone. Adventuring mages just lead dangerous lives and make a lot of enemies, and sometimes they die in unusual ways.

PLOT SEEDS



The other chapters of this book, not to mention the GM's Vault, include hundreds of ideas for adventures, ranging from the obvious to the subtle. In addition to those, here are some plot seeds to spark the GM's imagination.

After Canosa: After helping Shaldrin win the Battle of Canosa in 766 FE, the wizard Ambernaud used spells to disguise several powerful enchanted items and left them in the hands of his beloved and her family. What's happened to them today? Is it possible to combine them into one larger, much more powerful item... and if so, has someone found this out and embarked on a quest to obtain the items for his own evil use?

The Archway To Iluria: A powerful wizard hires the heroes to go back in time to the city of Iluria before it was destroyed (using a unique spell of his to make the journey) and retrieve a seemingly trivial enchanted item that was lost in the city's fall. Why is this item so important to him?

Blades From The Thurisians: An Umbrian *Drusaidi Shanir* (page 193) has gone renegade, and instead of helping to fight off Orcs is now leading a large army of them down from the mountains to attack his homeland before the Umbrian army can mobilize against him! What happened to him... and how can the heroes stop him in time?

The Bloodstained Tower: For some reason there's no chronicle of anyone having destroyed or explored Thronek's tower after he was driven away from it in 434 FE. All information regarding it seems to have been lost. The heroes have to find it, explore it, and hopefully survive the experience to bring back what's sure to be a rich treasure... and in the process, perhaps find out why all information about the place has been so mysteriously covered up. And just what finally happened to Thronek himself, anyway?

Castle Of The Rat: In Vestria, a small village has begun to suffer the depredations of unseen monsters in the night. Women and children have been kidnapped, and menfolk slain. The heroes track the monsters to a nearby ruined castle, where they discover that a family of wererats has moved in... and attracted Goblins and other monsters to their lair!

The Caves Of Askellon: In the Askellon Bluffs of Shar, where the Leros River meets the Baskalay, the rulers of Shar have established watch-posts to look

for signs of invasion by Vashkhor. The watchers have discovered several strange cave-complexes among the Bluffs, and those of their number who have explored them have never returned. What lies deep beneath Askellon?

The Children Of Kaylind: In the Sirrenic Empire, they tell the story of Red Bohdan, the king of Kaylind, who in 883 FE kidnapped the children of King Venaman of Nathair and buried them alive beneath the city of Anlar Tel. Now, at a time when there's a strange conjunction of the stars identical to one that same year, children all around Kaylind (what's now the east-central region of the Sirrenic Empire) are disappearing. Where are they going and what's happening to them?

The City Beneath The Waves: The heroes must find and explore the sunken ruins of Sargelieth Zir. They may simply be in search of riches and enchanted items, but perhaps they must find some long-lost relic of the city to cast a spell to save a friend of theirs from some dread malady or curse. Who knows what evils they might unleash in the remnants of that foul city?

The Diary: The heroes stumble across a thick, handwritten "book" that purports to be the diary and log of some long-lost adventurer of whom they've heard. The book details several adventures, including a lengthy expedition into the Sunless Realms, but ends inconclusively... and with a tantalizing hint at a great treasure sought but never recovered. Can the heroes piece together the clues in the book, and other information, to find the treasure whereof their long-dead brother speaks?

The Dragons' Child: A Drakine mother whose child is about to be taken away to become a priest appeals to the heroes to save them both; she doesn't want to give her child up, and he doesn't want to leave his mother.

Feast Of Death: Assassins attack the Royal Knights of Szarvasia at their monthly feast, slaying several. Is this a prelude to an attack on Szarvasia itself, or is something else going on?

Fighting The Garmave: A group of Keldravian nobles who have a fierce hatred for the Trusca hire the heroes to spy on the upcoming Garmave (a Trusca gathering, see page 186). They want to gather information that will help them attack and destroy the hated hill-folk. When the PCs are dis-

covered, they have to fight their way out of Trusca territory... but how did the Trusca find them? Is it possible the nobles secretly tipped them off in the hopes of starting a war?

Finding Azarthond: The ancestral halls of the Dwarves of Azarthond, also known as “Azarthond,” have long been lost; Beken and his followers deliberately hid all knowledge of them so the Dwarves wouldn’t be tempted to return. In the centuries since, all traces of the once-proud underground realm have been lost... but it may be that there’s treasure there still, for those with the wit and strength to find the place.

The Golden Army: A group of unscrupulous thieves conspires to steal all the golden statuettes offered to D’vern-Séach (see page 214) one particular month. The heroes have to find out about this plot and stop it... or, if they’re larcenously inclined, maybe take on the job for themselves!

The Halflings’ Gold: The Halflings of Myrwick Strand are having great difficulty raising their annual tribute to Keldravia due to a poor harvest, and King Volmar has made some not-too-subtle threats about what will happen if they don’t pay soon. They beseech the heroes to help them.

Hammer And Anvil: A group of Anvilites is determined to start a war between Vashkhor and the West so that “the Hargeshite heretics and blasphemers can be wiped from the face of Ambrethel forever.” They begin killing Hargeshite priests visiting the West, and High Church priests visiting Khorla. Can the heroes find out what’s going on and stop them before they get the war they want?

The Heart Of The Griffin: One of the Knights of the Griffin has fallen in love with the Princess Aireline of Mezendria, and she with him. However, since it’s unlikely her father would allow her to make such a politically useless match, the young lovers have appealed to the heroes for help in convincing King Rheldane to let them wed.

Hiding The Black: Some Black Goblins plan to disguise themselves as Good Goblins, then sack cities in Shar by taking them by surprise. The heroes have to uncover this plot and put a stop to it... then lead a retaliatory expedition into the Goblin Marches!

Hovenn Gold: The gold found in the Hovenn River recently is not from any natural source — the nuggets and flakes people have found are washing down from a hoard in the mountains. Can the heroes figure this out and find the hoard... and if so, who owns and protects it? Or will the owner find out what’s happening, decide he’s being robbed, and attack Rosskeld?

In The Hands Of The Slavers: Slavers kidnap the daughter of a wealthy, prominent nobleman. Her father hires the heroes to find his daughter and rescue her, promising great rewards (possibly even

including her hand in marriage) should they succeed. Will he keep his promise? Even if he doesn’t want to, will his daughter fall in love with one of her rescuers and insist on the marriage anyway?

The Quest Into Shadow: The heroes must find the long-lost, mysterious island of Khem (page 179) and loot its many treasures. But it may be that there will be Shadow-Priests who have their own ideas about what should happen to that treasure....

Relic Hunting: The heroes hear a new tale about one of the unique enchanted items described in Chapter Seven (or perhaps some other item, created by you). This sparks their interest and their avarice, and off they go a-hunting. But finding and obtaining so powerful an enchanted item is never easy or free of peril....

The Return Of The King: The last descendant of the Nezhargi kings of Zhor Cacimar (page 119) wants to regain his family’s long-lost throne, and seeks the heroes’ help. If the PCs won’t help him voluntarily, he’ll compel their aid through blackmail, Sorcery, and other means.

School Days: King Rheldane hires one of the heroes to train the Mezendrian heir in wizardry. This gets the PCs involved in Mezendrian local politics and other potentially dangerous social situations.

The Shards Of The Spear: Someone is trying to gather up the shards of the spear carried by the Lord of the Graven Spear. Who’s doing this, and why? The Spear would be a powerful tool in the hands of an evil warrior... such as one of Kal-Turak’s lieutenants.

The Trolls’ Hoard: It’s said the Spearlord gave the Trolls of Tharnrek many gifts, including some enchanted items. The Trolls have certainly used some powerful enchanted weapons and other items in their conflicts with the kingdoms of Men. What did the Spearlord give them, exactly? Do those items still exist, and if so, are they exerting any malign influence that might cause another war between Trolls and Men?

The Tower On The Rock: Just off the Vashkhoran coast, at the town of Carshan, there stands a tower on a rock. Once the home of the feared wizard Khaldarem, it’s long been abandoned and fallen into ruin — but lately the townsfolk have seen flickers of green flame in the windows, and goblinish figures dancing on the remains of the roof. What’s going on?

The Worm Turns: A host of strange humanoids, mingling the features of Man and carrion worm, has attacked people near several cities in the Sirrenic Empire, including Rhelsha and Tor Athtar. Who are these disgusting, evil people, and what do they want? Do they have any connection with the legends about the God of the Worms (*Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, page 13)?

chapter nine:



NOBLES, KNIGHTS & NECROMANCERS THE RENOWNED OF AMBRETHEL



CHARACTER SHEET NOTATION

Generally, the text of the character sheets in this book should be pretty straightforward and easy to understand. Consult the Glossary in the *HERO System 5th Edition*, and the example powers in that book, if you have any questions about abbreviations, terms, or notations. The *Writer's Guidelines*, available on the Hero Games website (www.herogames.com), also provide some information about character sheet formatting.

In a Multipower, a “u” next to the cost indicates a Fixed (or “ultra”) slot, and an “m” a Flexible (or “multi”) slot.

Under the END column, a number in brackets indicates Charges (however, the bracketed number next to STR is an END cost).

BARON EIDARD PLOT SEEDS

At court in Garioch, Baron Eidard takes offense at some trivial comment made by a Vestrian emissary and backhands the man, inflicting a wound that festers and eventually proves fatal. Now Duke Scarlon has to find a way to keep King Almund from marching to war... but he can't do it openly, lest his nobles come to think him weak and conciliatory. He (or possibly Baron Eidard) recruits the PCs to help

Continued on next page

EIDARD GLAHAIREN, BARON RAGNALL

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	20	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 [2]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
22	CON	28	13-	
17	BODY	14	12-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
6	PD	1		Total: 6 PD (0 rPD)
5	ED	1		Total: 5 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
9	REC	0		
44	END	0		
50	STUN	9		Total Characteristics Cost: 113

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost Powers END

Martial Arts: Weapons Combat				
Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes	
5 All-Out	+1	-2	Weapon +4 DC Strike	
4 Attack	+0	+2	Weapon +2 DC Strike	
4 Charge	+0	-2	Weapon +2 DC Strike +v/5, FMove	
4 Defend	+2	+2	Block, Abort	
5 Probe	+1	+3	Weapon Strike	
3 Observant:	+1	PER with all Sense Groups	0	

- Perks**
- 25 Contacts: 25 points' worth throughout Skelda, Vestria, and Khirkovy
 - 4 Fringe Benefit: Lordship: Baron
 - 5 Money: Well Off

- Talents**
- 10 Follow-Through Attack
 - 11 Inspire

- Skills**
- 15 +3 HTH
 - 3 Bureaucratics 13-
 - 3 Conversation 13-
 - 3 Deduction 11-
 - 3 Gambling (Card Games, one Dice game) 11-
 - 3 High Society 13-
 - 3 Interrogation 13-
 - 2 KS: Heraldry 11-
 - 2 KS: Skelda Law 11-
 - 1 KS: Vestrian Law 8-
 - 2 KS: Vestrian Nobility 11-
 - 3 Language: Vestrian (completely fluent;

- Skelda is Native)
- 1 Literacy
- 3 Persuasion 13-
- 3 PS: Nobleman 11-
- 5 Riding 13-
- 3 Stealth 12-
- 2 Survival (Mountains) 11-
- 3 Tracking 11-
- 4 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 147
Total Cost: 260

- 75+ Disadvantages**
- 10 Dependent NPC: Eilith (wife) 8- (Normal)
 - 20 Dependent NPCs: three young children 8- (Incompetent)
 - 10 Hunted: King Almund VIII of Vestria 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
 - 15 Psychological Limitation: Cares Deeply For The Welfare Of His Subjects (Common, Strong)
 - 15 Psychological Limitation: Ardent Proponent Of Skelda Independence (Uncommon, Total)
 - 115 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 260

EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Damage	STUN	STR	Min	Shots
Great Axe	0	—	2d6+1	0	16	—	—
Short Sword	0	—	1d6	0	10	—	—
Dagger#	0	—	1d6-1	0	6	—	—

Armor
Plate-and-chain armor (DEF 7)

Gear: Just about anything he needs; well-trained heavy warhorse

Clothing: Finely-made tunic and pants on most occasions, court clothes when necessary

Background/History: The thirty-second son of House Glahairen to rule the Barony of Ragnall in Skeld, Eidard was born on a storm-tossed night nearly thirty years ago — and it seems as if his life's been stormy ever since. His father died in a border skirmish with another Skelda noble when Eidard was only ten. He remains convinced to this day that Vestria had something to do with his father's death, since Baron Mordan and his retainers were more than a match for any band of Garven men!

After his father died, Eidard became baron, but he was too young to rule so the Duke established a regency council. He formally took his title and swore allegiance to Duke Scarlon when he turned

Continued from last page

18 — but only after a sharp political struggle with one of his uncles, who tried to usurp the barony.

Eidard has ruled since then, though his hot temper and fierce hatred of Vestria has caused him trouble more than once. He's earned the nickname "Boarheart" for his valor in battle, but his outspokenness has brought the Duke's displeasure down on his head several times. Perhaps age and fatherhood will moderate his loose tongue... but it may just make him more irascible.

Personality/Motivation: As both a noble and something of a self-made man (since he had to fight for his title), Eidard is both confident and headstrong. He doesn't like being told what to do, particularly being told that he can't do or have something he wants. But he's not as stubborn or foolish as he sometimes looks; he has a knack for figuring things out unexpectedly, and usually learns from his mistakes.

Even for a Skelda, Baron Eidard has an unusually strong hatred for Vestria and Vestrians — and he doesn't care who hears him say so. At first this was because he thought Vestria responsible for his father's death; now it's something so ingrained that it's as natural to him as breathing. A person could no more convince him of *anything* good or praiseworthy about Vestrians than they could make him

chop off his own hand — the only way to "cure" him of his prejudices is to kill him.

Unlike many nobles, Baron Eidard genuinely loves and cares for his land and his subjects. If they're hurting or in need, he does what he must to keep them safe and healthy, even if it means dipping into his own coffers from time to time. But this has earned him their great love and respect; there's not a man or woman in Ragnall that wouldn't lay down his life for his Baron if asked.

Quote: "Those Vestrian dogs have kept us chained too long!"

Powers/Tactics: Baron Eidard is a big, immensely strong man, and he uses his size and strength to his advantage in combat. He wears heavy armor and wields a great axe by preference, allowing him to smash through enemy shields and lines with ease (he's particularly good at broad axe-strokes that slash through two opponents at once [his Follow-Through Attack]). Although he's no great shakes as a tactician, his size and loud voice tend to inspire others to follow him and fight for him.

Campaign Use: Baron Eidard's purpose in the campaign is to stir up trouble. He's constantly egging on Duke Scarlon to go to war with Vestria; the Duke, while sharing Eidard's sentiments, is older, cannier, and more cautious, and so has to rein in his fiery baron from time to time. But then Eidard goes and says something to provoke the Vestrians again, and the Duke has to find some way to patch things up.

You could create an intriguing story by bringing Baron Eidard's two Psychological Limitations into conflict: his people need help, but only Vestria can provide it. Can he swallow his pride and hatred to get what his people need? If so, how will he blow off steam later?

Baron Eidard generally doesn't Hunt people. He's busy running his barony and enjoying life; he doesn't usually hold grudges (except against Vestria). If he felt he had to Hunt a PC, he'd track the character down and call him out for single combat.

To make Baron Eidard tougher, increase his defenses a bit and give him some more combat-oriented abilities and Talents. To weaken him, reduce his STR to 20 and/or his SPD to 3, and get rid of his Follow-Through Attack.

Appearance: Eidard Glahairen, Baron Ragnall, is a tall, beefy, burly-looking, florid-faced, bearded man of the Skeld highlands, with a barrel chest and arms that look strong enough to tear a tree from the ground. In battle he wears plate-and-chain and wields a large, heavy battle axe; at other times he wears the simple tunic-and-pants common to Skelda men, but of course his clothes are more elegant and finely-made than those of a commoner.

with this sensitive diplomatic task.

Baron Eidard hires the PCs to make trouble in Vestria and stir up a war. If possible, they should take actions that weaken the Vestrian army.

Someone has kidnapped the Baron's wife! He immediately suspects the Vestrians, and his outrage may cause a war Skeld's really not ready for yet. Duke Scarlon calls in the PCs to find and rescue her before the Baron does something he'll regret later.



GRENDAROS PLOT SEEDS

Grendaros knows the PCs by reputation and approaches them with a plan. He's heard about a group of Dark Dwarves in the Sunless Realms who are moving from one group of caverns to another. The heroes can attack them during the move, eliminating a force for Evil and stealing all their treasure at the same time — what do they say? (It might all be as Grendaros describes... but it's possible he's working with the Dark Dwarves instead!)

Grendaros chances upon the PCs in the middle of a desperate battle and pitches in to help them win it. Now they owe him one — how will he try to collect?

A “victim” of one of the PCs' adventures or schemes hires Grendaros (and a band of mercenaries he's recruited) to take revenge on the heroes.

GRENDAROS

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 [2]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
18	CON	16	13-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
7	PD	3		Total: 10 PD (5 rPD)
7	ED	3		Total: 10 ED (5 rED)
4	SPD	10		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	0		
36	END	0		
40	STUN	6		Total Characteristics Cost: 107

Movement: Running: 8”/16”
Swimming: 3”/6”

Cost Powers **END**

Martial Arts: Swordfighting

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Counterstrike	+2	+2	Weapon +4 DC Strike, Must Follow Block
4	Lock	+1	+0	Bind, 40 STR
4	Parry	+2	+2	Block, Abort
5	Plunging Strike	-2	+1	Weapon +6 DC Strike
4	Slash	+0	+2	Weapon +4 DC Strike
5	Thrust	+1	+3	Weapon +2 DC Strike
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added in)			
5	<i>Fangs:</i> HKA 1 point (½d6 with STR)			
8	<i>Claws:</i> HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR);			
	Reduced Penetration (-¼)			
2	<i>Drakine Skin:</i> Damage Resistance (2 PD/2 ED)			
5	<i>Drakine Eyes:</i> Nightvision			
4	<i>Swift-Limbed:</i> Running +2” (8” total)			
1	<i>Swift-Limbed:</i> Swimming +1” (3” total)			
5	<i>Tail:</i> Extra Limb, Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)			

Perks

10 Contacts: 10 points' worth among various military and adventuring groups

Talents

6 Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)
10 Deadly Blow: KA +1d6 with any HTH weapon
5 Rapid Healing

Skills

10 +2 HTH
3 Climbing 13-
3 Fast Draw (Common Melee Weapons) 13-
3 Healing (Paramedics) 12-
3 Interrogation 13-
2 KS: Arduan Militaries 11-
2 KS: Heraldry 11-
2 Language: Sirrenic (fluent conversation; Northern Drakine is Native)

2 Language: Tornathian (fluent conversation)
2 Language: Trade-Tongue (fluent conversation)
1 Literacy
1 Lockpicking 8-
3 Riding 13-
1 Security Systems 8-
3 Sleight Of Hand 13-
3 Stealth 13-
3 Streetwise 13-
3 Tactics 12-
1 Tracking 8-
1 Trading 8-
4 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 151

Total Cost: 258

75+ Disadvantages

20 Psychological Limitation: Utterly Self-Centered (Common, Total)
15 Psychological Limitation: Greedy (Common, Strong)
5 Rivalry: Professional, with another mercenary or adventurer
143 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 258

EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Damage	STUN	STR	Min	Shots
Longsword	0	—	1d6+1	0	12	—	—
Battle Axe	0	—	2d6	0	13	—	—
Dagger#	0	—	1d6-1	0	6	—	—
Crossbow, L.	0	+1	1d6+1	0	12	10	—

Armor

Leather armor (DEF 3) (Hit Locations 3-6, 10-11, 14-18)
Chainmail (DEF 6) (Hit Locations 7-9, 13)
Medium shield

Gear: Thieves' tools (carefully hidden), backpack, medium warhorse

Clothing: Adventurer's garb

Background/History: Growing up in Chiref, Grendaros was a tough young Drakine who got into trouble constantly. As a teenager he nearly beat his father to death during an argument. When the city guard came to arrest him, he fled and never looked back.

Grendaros took a job with a group of adventurers as a laborer and torch-bearer, but his strength, size, and take-no-prisoners attitude soon attracted his employers' attention. One of the warriors taught him how to use a blade, and the rest of his skills Grendaros picked up “on the job” over the next several years. Although he tends to get into confrontations with authority figures and fellow adventurers all too frequently, he's developed a reputation as a talented warrior who's good to have on your side when a horde of Orcs is charging.

Personality/Motivation: Like all too many adventurers, Grendaros is completely self-centered. He only cares about himself, and if he can't see a benefit for him personally, he usually doesn't want to get involved. Although he's not openly larcenous or murderous when it comes to his fellow adventurers (since that's a good way to earn a reputation that keeps anyone from wanting to work with you), he's more than willing to take advantage of an opportunity if one arises. At least one adventuring party he worked with never made it back from an adventure alive because Grendaros turned on the others when they were too weak to fend him off, killed them, and took their possessions.

In most situations, Grendaros tries to radiate an air of calm, cool, competence. He thinks of himself as a skilled professional adventurer (he's right, in some respects), and he wants others to perceive him in the same way. The only thing that's likely to crack his professionalism is being taunted, belittled, or insulted; he rarely responds to such remarks gracefully.

Quote: "And how do I benefit from this "plan" of yours?"

Powers/Tactics: Grendaros is a skilled warrior who typically wields a longsword and carries a shield; he wears less armor than most warriors because he counts on his scaly skin, his ability to dodge (*i.e.*, his Combat Luck), and his defensive Martial Maneuvers to keep him safe. He also tends to heal rapidly and is good at shrugging off the worst effects of his injuries pretty quickly.

During his career as an adventurer, Grendaros has picked up a few roguish Skills to complement his fighting abilities. He prefers to keep these Skills secret if he can, only using them if there's no other choice or not doing so means losing treasure.

Grendaros has earned plenty of treasure over the years, and while he spends a lot, he can't spend that much. Since it's difficult to carry so much cash around, he usually keeps one fat purse filled with silver on his belt, a smaller purse (or two) of gold and silver concealed on his person, and a few small gems for emergencies. The rest of his loot he's invested in various trading ventures, inns, and the like throughout Arduna, giving him a network of grateful business partners who can do favors for him in a pinch.

Campaign Use: Grendaros is the sort of NPC the heroes might encounter when they're looking for someone to round out their group, or if they follow up on a rumor the Drakine warrior's spread around in an effort to dig up some work. If all goes well and he's earning enough money, Grendaros will be a fine, professional adventuring companion. If things don't go well, he may turn out to be a viper in the party's midst.



While he's not overly vengeful, Grendaros knows how to hold a grudge and could easily wind up Hunting a PC (or developing a PC as a Rival). As a Hunter, he carefully stalks his intended victim, waiting for an opportune moment to make a deadly sneak attack or take his quarry at a disadvantage. He doesn't care if his victim knows who he is or other such nonsense; if he goes after someone, all he cares about is that they die.

To make Grendaros stronger, improve some of his Characteristics a little (perhaps including SPD 5), or add more Talent or Combat Skill Levels; you could also give him some enchanted items. If you need to weaken him a bit, drop his STR, DEX, and CON to 18, and get rid of one of his CSLs (and maybe a Martial Maneuver or Talent or two).

Appearance: Grendaros is a Sunscale Drakine. He's tall, broad-shouldered, and strong, with the build and muscles of a trained and seasoned warrior. He wears leather armor augmented by patches of chain in places, and carries a round metal shield embossed with his personal symbol, a coiling serpent. His weapon is a broad-bladed longsword, and he also carries a battle axe and a dagger (and at times, a light crossbow).

**HRAKORTH
PLOT SEEDS**

Hrakorth hears rumor that a lorebook he'd very much like to have has surfaced (so to speak) in the hands of a spellcaster of the Sunless Realms. Unwilling to risk his own safety trying to steal it, he tricks the PCs into doing his dirty work.

Hrakorth decides it's time to settle down. That means he needs a kingdom and a wife, and he starts with the second. Which princess should he beguile into becoming his doting bride... and how will the PCs stop his plans?

The PCs meet a Golden Basilisk paladin who has a prisoner. He claims the prisoner is Hrakorth, whom he defeated. At first, the paladin's story seems legitimate — but soon cracks appear in the facade, and the heroes begin questioning whether the prisoner is Hrakorth... or even whether the paladin is a paladin! What's going on, and what danger does the answer hold for the PCs?

HRAKORTH THE SCARLET

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
25	PRE	20	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
12	COM	1	11-	
5	PD	3		Total: 5 PD (0 rPD)
5	ED	2		Total: 5 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
5	REC	0		
40	END	5		
30	STUN	4		Total Characteristics Cost: 117
Movement: Running: 6"/12"				
Cost	Spells	END		
2	Alzamar's Cloak Of The Unseen (FHG 182)	2		
5	Banishment (FHG 27)	6		
5	Belzorath's Dominion Of The Mind (strong version) (FHG 167)	6		
4	Belzorath's Spell Of Waking Dreams (16" radius) (FHG 176-77)	4		
2	Blaithelock's Sphere Of Air (FHG 70)	2		
5	Boadlane's Lens Of Enlightenment (FHG 220)	3		
3	Create Skeleton (FHG 141)	7		
3	Create Zombie (FHG 145)	7		
1	Detect Illusion (FHG 184)	2		
1	Detect Magic (strong version) (FHG 221)	1		
6	Druathek's Osseous Malady (FHG 147)	7		
5	Fiery Orbs (FHG 91)	5		
6	Fireball (FHG 91)	7		
4	The First Spell Of The Crimson Ring (FHG 232)	4		
5	Hands Of Stone (FHG 75)	6		
3	Hrakorth's Invocation Of The Clinging Shadow (FHG 115)	3		
3	Jezric's Spell Of True Seeming (FHG 190)	18		
3	Khelred's Flammiifer (FHG 94)	0		
5	Lightning Bolt (FHG 66)	6		
5	Magefire (FHG 95)	6		
1	Mending-Spell (FHG 241)	2		
5	Mindreading (FHG 172)	6		
2	Mistshaping (FHG 73)	3		
5	Mystic Dart (FHG 225)	6		
3	Nature's Wheel (FHG 200)	4		
4	Prismatic Blast (FHG 177)	5		
4	Quench Flame (FHG 95)	4		
8	The Second Spell Of The Crimson Ring (FHG 233)	8		
4	Shadow Form (FHG 114)	4		
4	Shadowweaving (FHG 115)	4		
3	Shape Of Stone (FHG 190)	2		
22	The Spell Of Locking And Opening (FHG 243)	var		
2	The Spell Of True Necromancy (FHG 162)	4		
5	Stelrane's First Spell Of The Slumbrous Vapors (FHG 68)	6		
6	Stelrane's Spell Of Dispersion (strong version) (FHG 223)	7		

11	Stone Into Mud (easy version) (FHG 77-78)	13
2	Thaumaturgic Sculpting (FHG 195)	3
8	Vashtori's Infernal Invocation (easy version) (FHG 26)	15
5	Vashtori's Second Spell Of Beast-Calling (FHG 22)	6
8	Vashtori's Second Spell Of Monster Summoning (FHG 23-24)	9
6	Veltharex's Spell Of Torment (FHG 153)	7
10	Wall Of Fire (easy version) FHG 97)	5
6	Wall Of Stone (FHG 81)	7
2	Wings Of The Wind (FHG 71)	2
2	Wizard's Power (FHG 228)	3
3	Wizard's Shield (FHG 231)	2

Powers

42	<i>Reserves Of Wizardly Might:</i> Endurance Reserve (120 END, 30 REC)	0

Perks

10	Money: Wealthy

Skills

12	+4 with Magic
17	Air Magic 20-
17	Conjuration 20-
3	Conversation 14-
3	Deduction 13-
17	Earth Magic 20-
17	Fire Magic 20-
3	High Society 14-
1	Literacy
17	Necromancy 20-
3	Seduction 14-
13	Shadow Magic 18-
17	Sorcery 20-
3	Spell Research (Inventor) 13-
3	Stealth 13-
3	Streetwise 14-
13	Thaumaturgy 18-
17	Wizardry 20-
3	Scholar
4	1) KS: Arcane And Occult Knowledge 15-
1	2) KS: Conjuration 11-
1	3) KS: Demons 11-
1	4) KS: Dragons 11-
1	5) KS: Elemental Magic 11-
2	6) KS: Legends And Lore 13-
2	7) KS: Mages 13-
1	8) KS: Nobles Of Ambrethel 11-
1	9) KS: The Undead 11-
1	10) KS: Wizardry 11-
3	Linguist
1	1) Central Khorian (fluent conversation) (Kesha is Native)
1	2) Eltiriani (fluent conversation)
1	3) Ilurian (fluent conversation)
1	4) Shalionderentine (fluent conversation)
1	5) Vestrian (fluent conversation)
1	6) Westerlands Skhai (fluent conversation)
1	7) Westerlands Vugrash (fluent conversation)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 476

Total Cost: 593

75+ Disadvantages

- 20 Hunted: the Golden Basilisk Paladins 11- (As Pow, NCI, Capture)
- 20 Hunted: an enemy wizard 11- (As Pow, NCI, Capture/Kill)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Evil, Cruel, And Selfish (Very Common, Strong)
- 458 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 593

EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Damage	STUN	STR	Min	Shots
Dagger#	0	—	1d6-1	0	6	—	—

Armor

None

Gear: Varies, depending on his current activities; he has the wealth and power to obtain just about any mundane item he needs.

Clothing: Fine red robes (Wraithrobes; see below)

ENCHANTED ITEMS

These are enchanted items Hrakorth has found, stolen, or received as gifts. “FH” indicates a page in *Fantasy Hero*; “FHG” a page in *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*.

Crystalline Bird (see page 267)

Iron Serpent Wand (FHG 131)

Ring Of The Deadly Touch (FHG 123, but IIF)

Ring Of Invisibility (FH 283)

Shield Amulet (as Shield Belt, FH 288, but IAF)

Staff Of Wizardly Might (FH 285; roll 3d6 to determine the number of Charges in slots that have them)

Wand Of Fascination (FH 285; 11 Charges remaining)

Wizard's Sack (FH 288)

Wraithrobes (Desolidification, 3 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each)

Background/History: The birth and youth of the evil wizard known as Hrakorth the Scarlet are shrouded in mystery. Most believe him to have been born in Kumasia or southern Mitharia sometime in or around the 4700s, but this is pure speculation based on comments he has made.

The earliest chronicles that mention Hrakorth's name are records of mages' guilds in Velkara and Tyrandium that list him as a student. Thereafter he supposedly apprenticed to various other mages, sometimes disguising himself. On more than one occasion he killed his master when he had the chance, stole everything he could, and vanished.

In the past two centuries, Hrakorth has clashed with several adventuring groups as part of various schemes of his to obtain more power and wealth. His efforts to stir up Tharnrek against Khirkovy in the 4830s failed due to the vigilance of the ranger Astelard and his friends (though the Scarlet Mage's efforts to prod the Gorthunda into raiding Khirkovy a few years thereafter succeeded). He subverted the Mages' Guild of Aarn from 4872-4874 SE and used it for his own purposes, until a clever young astrologer discovered his deceptions



and the Guild drove him out (costing him several powerful enchanted items in the process). Most recently, in 4986 SE he tried to kill the royal family of the Mhendarian Palatinate for reasons unknown, but was foiled by the Noble Knights of Val-Darran and the court wizard after he murdered several prominent nobles. He's laid low since then, but he's sure to surface eventually.

Personality/Motivation: Hrakorth the Scarlet has a well-deserved reputation as one of the cruellest mages alive. He thinks nothing of committing acts of wickedness, depravity, and greed that most people would shudder at, and gladly does whatever he must to obtain the things he wants. Murder, theft, and corruption are just means to ends for him... and ones he enjoys using.

What's worse, Hrakorth is not evil simply for the sake of being evil (though the occasional gratuitous act of cruelty always amuses him). He's evil for a purpose, usually something that involves improving his own power or station in life. He's calculating, clever, and insightful, and he usually has at least two backup plans in case his main plan goes awry.

Quote: “Your spells are weak, your lore feeble. Do you truly think you can stand against the Scarlet Mage and live?”

Powers/Tactics: Hrakorth is known in magical and adventuring circles for the breadth of his arcane lore. He has studied at least nine arcana, or about three times more than most wizards attempt, and he's well-versed in all of them. He possesses a deep arsenal of spells, and many more are locked within

- 3 Tactics 13-
5 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Korrm

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 237

Total Cost: 410

75+ Disadvantages

- 10 Hunted: other Mhorecian and Westerlander kings 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
15 Psychological Limitation: Powerhungry (Common, Strong)
310 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 410

EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Damage	STUN	STR	Min	Shots
Korrm	+2	—	2½d6 AP	+1	12	—	—
Dagger#	0	—	1d6-1	0	6	—	—

Armor

Enchanted chainmail (see below)

Gear: Varies, depending on his current activities; he has the wealth and power to obtain just about any mundane item he needs.

Clothing: Royal robes or daily clothing

ENCHANTED ITEMS

Korrm, the Sword of Fangs: Forged by Vhorlac Thaar in 4717 SE, Korrm is a weapon of great mystic and demonic power. Its blade is distinctively-shaped, with an odd cleaver-like formation at the tip, and the arcane energies which fill it give it great cutting power. That power becomes even greater when the wielder lets the sword feed. By grasping it hard enough, the wielder causes the “fangs” on the hilt to bite into his hand and draw blood (1 BODY’s worth per Turn), fueling the power within the sword. He cannot keep this up for long, but it makes the sword all the more deadly in short confrontations. (Additionally, it’s much harder to disarm the wielder when the fangs are sunk into his flesh.) Due to its unusual shape and nature, Korrm requires its own unique Weapon Familiarity to wield properly.

Cost Power

- 15 *Korrm’s Blade:* HKA 2½d6, +1 Increased STUN Modifier (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (70 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), STR Minimum (12; -½)
7 *The Power Of Blood:* Armor Piercing (+½) for HKA (35 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), STR Minimum (12; -½), Side Effects (character loses 1 BODY per Turn on Segment 1, always occurs; -½)
2 *Bite Of The Fangs:* +10 STR, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (15 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Only To Prevent Being Disarmed (-2), Only Applies When AP Applies (-½)
3 *Korrm’s Demonic Presence:* +15 PRE (15 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Only For Fear/Intimidation-Based Presence Attacks And Skill Use (-1)

- 2 *Accurate:* +2 OCV (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
2 *As Good As A Shield:* +2 DCV (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Only When Drawn And Wielder Is Not Using A Shield (-½)

Total cost: 31 points

Bracers Of Avoidance (Teleportation 5”, Trigger [mental command]; 4 Charges)

Crystal Ball Of Farseeing (used by his court mage; FH 287)

Enchanted Chainmail (Armor [8 PD/8 ED], Hardened)

Trollfist Ring (HA +4d6)

Background/History: A young king of a little over two dozen winters, Ulyu Thaar took the throne in 4994 SE following the death of his father, Kethul Jhenar, from illness. While still a prince, Ulyu spent several years as an adventurer, journeying throughout Arduna in search of excitement, riches, and magic as a member of the Company of the Fire-Drake. With the help of the powerful Thaleran royal sword, Korrm, he enjoyed great success as an adventurer, but after most of the Fire-Drakes died during an expedition into the Sunless Realms (an adventure of which he does not speak), he returned to Thaleran-Saar to resume his princely duties.

King Ulyu has been a surprisingly conservative and cautious ruler to date. He has strengthened the Thaleran Wall (which had fallen into some



ULYU THAAR
PLOT SEEDS

King Ulyu wants to build a new tower onto Ylvarec, the royal palace. But the only person who can do the work he has in mind is Ghendar, a dwarven engineer and architect who mysteriously vanished some years ago. He hires the PCs to find Ghendar and bring him safely to Malrevor.

Several members of the Tattooed Legion of Vorasq, who are supposed to be bound to Thaleria-Saar with magical oaths of loyalty, try to kill King Ulyu and usurp the throne. Who turned these elite soldiers, and how? King Ulyu hires the PCs to look into the matter, since he dares not allow any of his nobles learn anything about this.

A scarred, old-before-his-time warrior comes to the PCs. He claims he was a member of the Company of the Fire-Drake, and that on their last adventure King Ulyu was possessed by a terrible demon. He seeks the PCs' help in finding a way to free the Thaleran king from the demon's grasp.

neglect under his predecessors) and hired mercenaries to improve the training of the Thaleran army, but that is all... so far. His courtiers and generals see him as ambitious and eager for greater power, and they await the day when he begins to put his many plans into action.

Personality/Motivation: The Thaleran nobility (not to mention many other Arduunan kings) read Ulyu Thaar aright: young and full of fire, he's eager for the glory of war and conquest. He wants more land, more power, and more wealth, so it may only be a matter of time before his armies march. But as yet he has not made up his mind who would make the best target for his ambitions, and it may be that events to the North will change the focus of his interest.

In pursuit of his goals — success as an adventurer, strengthening Thaleria-Saar, conquest — King Ulyu can be absolutely ruthless. He knows what he wants, and he knows what it will take to get it, and he has few (if any) scruples about doing what it takes. He's killed many a man (and Dwarf, and Elf, and Orc...) with his own hand, and less casual evils come just as easily to him if need be. Some people say Korrm whispers in his mind, urging him on to deeds none of his ancestors dared perform.

Quote: "It is an elegant thing, is it not, to cause the death of a man as one wills?"

Powers/Tactics: Ulyu Thaar is a skilled swordsman, tactician, and ruler. He's adept at balancing the needs of the various factions within Thaleria-Saar — the nobles, the army, traders, and others — to ensure that each is happy (or at least that they're all unhappy in the same degree) but poses no threat to his rule. He does not take well to being questioned, or obeyed with anything less than precision and alacrity; he's killed a few nobles, right in the middle of court, for daring to voice concerns about his policies.

Ulyu Thaar wields Korrm, the feared Sword of Fangs. While using Korrm exacts a price, it's one the Palehanded King is willing to pay. He considers the blade a good luck talisman to boot, and keeps it with him everywhere he goes. As a backup weapon he carries a dagger at most times, and usually a short sword or hand axe as well if going into battle. He does not use a shield (Korrm protects him), but does have a suit of magical chain mail that's as sturdy as plate but weighs no more than cloth.

Campaign Use: The Palehanded King makes an excellent master villain for the early stages of a Turakian Age campaign. For beginning PCs, he's a powerful opponent, and even experienced heroes may hesitate to tackle him one-on-one. But eventually the heroes will defeat him, at which point he can slink off into the shadows... or become one of Kal-Turak's chief lieutenants.

If the PCs attack Ulyu Thaar within the bounds of Thaleria-Saar, they are committing a capital crime. Evil and oppressive he may be, but he is unquestionably the lawful king of the realm, and no other sovereign would deny it. By assaulting him the heroes may cause all sorts of unexpected political trouble; he's not some Orc-chieftain they can kill without consequence.

To strengthen Ulyu Thaar, increase his Characteristics a little, give him more Skills (or Martial Maneuvers), and perhaps supplement his arsenal of enchanted items. To weaken him, reduce his SPD to 4 and remove an enchanted item or two.

Appearance: Ulyu Thaar, king of Thaleria-Saar, is a well-muscled warrior of slightly anemic appearance. His right hand — his sword-hand — in particular looks markedly pale, even to a casual observer. He wears kingly robes and a tall crown on state occasions, and fine but functional clothes at other times, favoring the colors purple and gold. He usually has Korrm with him, often drawn even when it's not appropriate to have a naked blade present.

VELTHAREX THE LICH				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 [2]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
25	CON	40	14-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
25	INT	15	14-	PER Roll 14-
20	EGO	10	13-	ECV: 7
30	PRE	20	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
6	COM	-2	10-	
10	PD	4		Total: 10 PD (10 rPD)
10	ED	5		Total: 10 ED (10 rED)
5	SPD	30		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
9	REC	0		
60	END	5		
50	STUN	7		Total Characteristics Cost: 194

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost	Spells	END
5	Boadlane's Lens Of Enlightenment (FHG 220)	3
4	Carlaysha's Spell Of Enervation (FHG 224)	6
6	Create Ghost (FHG 140)	16
5	Create Mummy (FHG 141)	16
3	Create Skeleton (FHG 141)	7
13	Create Specter (easy version) (FHG 142)	32
5	Create Vampire (FHG 143)	16
4	Create Wight (FHG 144)	12
9	Create Wraith (easy version) (FHG 144)	23
3	Create Zombie (FHG 145)	7
19	Death Touch (FHG 145)	27
1	Detect Magic (strong version) (FHG 221)	1
4	Druathek's Necromantic Fetters (FHG 146)	6
4	Enflame (FHG 89)	0
6	Fireball (FHG 91)	7
4	The First Spell Of The Crimson Ring (FHG 232)	4
7	Hailstorm (FHG 108)	9
9	History Of Blood (FHG 147)	6
3	Icy Ground (FHG 109)	4
3	Khelred's Flammifer (FHG 94)	0
5	Magefire (FHG 95)	6
5	Magefire Arrow (FHG 89-90)	6
5	Mystic Bolt (FHG 224)	7
5	Mystic Dart (FHG 225)	6
6	Mystic Wall (FHG 229)	8
4	Quench Flame (FHG 95)	4
4	Roddik's Blizzard (FHG 110)	4
7	Sa'akiv's Premonition Of The Grave (FHG	

	148)	7
6	Sa'akiv's Soulripping (FHG 149)	9
8	The Second Spell Of The Crimson Ring (FHG 233)	8
4	Soul Feeding (FHG 165)	0
22	The Spell Of Locking And Opening (FHG 243)	var
2	The Spell Of True Necromancy (FHG 162)	4
6	Stelrane's Spell Of Dispersion (strong version) (FHG 223)	7
1	Summon Ghoul (FHG 150)	3
12	Thronek's Spell Of Withering (FHG 152)	17
6	Veltharex's Spell Of Torment (FHG 153)	7
3	Wall Of Bones (FHG 160)	4
3	Wraithform (FHG 160)	4
2	Wizard's Bulwark (FHG 230)	3
2	Wizard's Power (FHG 228)	3
3	Wizard's Shield (FHG 231)	2
Powers		
50	<i>Lich's Power:</i> Endurance Reserve (150 END, 35 REC)	0
60	<i>Lich's Touch:</i> Drain BODY and STUN 3d6, any two Characteristics simultaneously (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	
10	<i>Untiring Body:</i> Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) for STR	0
15	<i>Lich's Body:</i> Does Not Bleed	0
10	<i>Lich's Body:</i> No Hit Locations	0
10	<i>Lich's Body:</i> Damage Resistance (10 PD/10 ED)	0
1	<i>Lich's Body:</i> +2 PD; Only Protects Against Slashing Or Piercing Attacks (-½)	0
1	<i>Lich's Body:</i> +2 PD; Only Protects Against Piercing Attacks (-1)	0
6	<i>Lich's Mind:</i> Mental Defense (10 points total)	0
10	<i>Lich's Body:</i> Power Defense (10 points)	0
50	<i>Lich's Vitality:</i> Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality)	0
6	<i>Lich's Senses:</i> +2 PER with all Sense Groups	0
6	<i>Lich's Senses:</i> +4 PER with all Senses; Only To Perceive Images Created By Means Other Than Necromancy (-1)	0
5	<i>Witchfire Eyes:</i> Infrared Perception (Sight Group)	0
5	<i>Witchfire Eyes:</i> Nightvision	0
20	<i>Lifesense:</i> Detect Life 14- (no Sense Group), Discriminatory, Range	0

Perks

10 Money: Wealthy

Skills

15 +5 with Spells

3 Analyze Magic 14-

3 Concealment 14-

2 Cryptography 14-; Translation Only (-½)

3 Deduction 14-

25 Fire Magic 25-

15 Ice Magic 20-

3 Interrogation 14-

2 Language: Sirrenic (fluent conversation; Velkaran is Native)

1 Language: Temirese (basic conversation)

1 Literacy

35 Necromancy 30-

3 Spell Research (Inventor) 14-

3 Stealth 13-

15 Witchcraft 20-

31 Wizardry 28-

3 Scholar

4 1) KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 16-

2 2) KS: Demons 14-

4 3) KS: Legends And Lore 16-

2 4) KS: Mages 14-

4 5) KS: The Undead 16-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 692**Total Cost: 886****75+ Disadvantages**

15 Hunted: the Fists of the Skyfather 8- (As Pow, NCI, Kill)

20 Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of The High Church And All Priests (Common, Total)

20 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Holy Power attacks (Common)

20 Vulnerability: 2 x BODY from Holy Power attacks (Common)

736 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 886

VELTHAREX
PLOT SEEDS

A Sedrosan dealer in antiquities claims to have for sale a relic from Dalvedar's tower. Veltharex, hearing of this, wants the object. The PCs have to save the dealer from the lich's followers, and then find out what makes this particular item so important.

An underground kingdom of Myrmex (*Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, page 54) has begun threatening Veltharex's realm. Rather than risk more of his followers and resources, he decides to trick the PCs into taking care of the insect-folk for him.

Pleased with Veltharex's deeds and words of praise, the god Tharex grants him special unholy powers. Now stronger than ever, Veltharex decides the time has come to extend his realm into the surface lands and launches a campaign of conquest.

EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Damage	STUN	STR	Min	Shots
None	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Armor

None	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Gear: Normally none, but he can obtain whatever gear he needs.

Clothing: Tattered, rotting robes

ENCHANTED ITEMS

Belt Of Power (Endurance Reserve [50 END, 15 REC] for spells)

Diplomat's Ring (Universal Translator, INT Roll +3)

Pectoral Of Bedazzlement (Sight Group Flash 4d6, Damage Shield, 4 Charges lasting 1 Turn each)

Ring Of Levitation (FH 283)

Ring Of Penetrating Sight (FH 124)

Wand Of The Five Fires (see page 264; 36 Charges remaining)

Background/History: In the 4600s, a boy named Dalvedar was born in Velkara. As he grew, he displayed signs of the Talent, and was eventually taken in by a mage for training. He developed an interest in several arcana, first and foremost among them Necromancy. After finishing his apprenticeship, he became an adventuring mage. After several years of traveling the world, fighting monsters, and acquiring treasure, he retired from that career and returned to Velkara to take up the peaceful life of a studious mage.

But such was not to be. For a decade he conducted his studies, but his delvings into Necromancy became more and more foul and corrupt, until the good people living near his tower could tolerate no more. Led by the local priests, they stormed his tower one night, taking him by surprise while he was in a mystic trance. Stripped of his magical defenses and unable to cast spells, he was burned alive in the courtyard of his own tower, which was then cast down.

But Dalvedar had planned for such misfortune as this. Three full moons later, he arose from the grave as a lich, and chose for his new life the new name Veltharex (meaning "scion of Tharex," the god of curses). His powers now greater than ever, he terrorized the countryside for weeks, taking bloody revenge on those who slew him. But when three Golden Basilisk paladins came to Velkara to destroy him, he fled into the Sunless Realms.

Since then, Veltharex has made himself something of a power in the underground lands beneath southeastern Mhorecia, and through agents and followers the surface realms of that region as well. With many undead at his command, he continues with his necromantic studies... and woe unto anyone who attracts his attention as a possible subject for experiments.

Personality/Motivation: Like most liches, Veltharex wants to increase his own power and wealth, destroy his enemies, and at times wreak havoc among the living. He has a great hatred for both priests and paladins, and won't pass up an opportunity to destroy (or desecrate) a temple or torture a holy man to death. Unfortunately, due to a quirk in the spell that gave him lich-life, he suffers extra damage from attacks that use holy power — such as most divine attack spells and paladin powers. He's tried, without success so far, to remove this flaw, or at least shield himself against it.

Quote: "You are in my grasp now, and your gods cannot protect you."

Powers/Tactics: Veltharex has no fighting skills to speak of; when he battles his enemies, he does so with magic and undead soldiers. He usually favors Fire Magic to begin with, but quickly shifts to Wizardry or Necromancy spells if they seem more likely to harm his foes or provide him with the pleasure of watching his enemies die slowly or in pain. (A spell he created, Veltharex's Spell Of Torment, is a particular favorite.) Between his magefire spells and Necromancy, adventurers may find it difficult to resist his magic.

Veltharex has worked long and hard to make his underground domain his "home," and he won't leave it without a battle. He's not willing to fight to the death, but he'll come as close as he can before fleeing to safety.

Campaign Use: Veltharex is a master villain suitable for GMs who don't want to run world-spanning campaigns involving the likes of Kal-Turak. For a campaign set in southern Mhorecia, Veltharex makes an excellent puppetmaster, string-puller, and ultimate villain. You can also use him as a "template" for other liches.

Veltharex won't Hunt heroes himself, but he'll send undead and other followers to Hunt on his behalf. He'd only stir out of his lair to attack someone directly if he were in mortal danger or simply couldn't resist the opportunity to wreak a horrific revenge for some great wrong done to him.

To make Veltharex stronger, expand the range of arcana he can cast spells from and give him more spells, or give him more magical items. Making him weaker usually involves getting rid of some of his spells.

Appearance: Veltharex has the classical look of a lich — his body is skeletal, with a few bits and pieces of sere flesh clinging to it here and there. An unholy green flame burns in the eyesockets of his skull, and arcane power crackles around his bony hands. He wears robes which were once rich and elaborate, but now show signs of decay and rot. He also has a jewelled collar/pectoral and matching belt, and rings on several of his fingers.

ALLIES



BULGAN

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
21	STR	12	13-	Lift 467 kg; 4d6 [2]
21	DEX	36	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
18	CON	16	13-	
17	BODY	14	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
5	PD	1		Total: 8 PD (3 rPD)
5	ED	1		Total: 8 ED (3 rED)
4	SPD	9		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	0		
36	END	0		
40	STUN	3		Total Characteristics Cost: 103

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
Leaping: 6"/12"

Cost	Powers	END
2	<i>Swift-Limbed:</i> Running +1" (7" total)	1
2	<i>Strong Leaper:</i> Leaping +2" (6" forward, 3" upward)	1
2	<i>Eyes Like A Hawk:</i> +1 PER with Sight Group	0
6	<i>Eyes Like A Hawk:</i> Telescopic (+4 versus Range) with Sight Group	0

Perks

5	Fringe Benefit: Lordship: Gorthunda Chieftain
2	Reputation: skilled Gorthunda chieftain (among the Gorthunda and those living near them) 11-, +2/+2d6

Talents

9	Ambidexterity (no Off Hand penalty)
6	Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)
4	Mounted Warrior (HTH)
4	Mounted Warrior (Ranged)
4	Rapid Archery

Skills

10	+2 HTH
6	+3 OCV with Bows
2	Animal Handler (Equines) 13-
3	Breakfall 13-
3	Climbing 13-
2	Navigation (Land) 12-
3	Persuasion 13-
9	Riding 16-
3	Stealth 13-
4	Survival (Arctic/Subarctic, Temperate) 12-
3	Tactics 12-
3	Tracking 12-

3	Trading 13-
4	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 104

Total Cost: 207

75+ Disadvantages

5	Hunted: by Hentai's brothers and family 8- (Less Pow, Kill)
15	Psychological Limitation: Cares Deeply For The Welfare Of The Gorthunda (Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of The Ulg-hroi (Common, Strong)
5	Rivalry: Professional, with Odenggam (see page 63)
92	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 207



BULGAN PLOT SEEDS

Bulgan is hurt in a raid on the Westerlands and gets separated from his warriors. Before they can find him, the PCs do. How will they react to him... and what happens if his tribe finds he's been helped by outlanders?

After an Ulg-hroi raid kills many of his strongest warriors, Bulgan appeals to the PCs (whom he's met before, somehow) to help him fend off the cruel eastern nomads.

Odenggam secretly contacts the PCs, offering them much gold if they'll kill Bulgan for him.

EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Damage	STUN	STR	Min	Shots
Yahgahn	0	—	1d6+1	0	11	—	—
Dagger#	0	—	1d6-1	0	6	—	—
Bow, Light	0	0	1d6	0	8	20	—

Armor

Leather armor (DEF 3)
Small shield

Gear: Saddle and riding gear, weapon maintenance supplies, a few days' food and water

Clothing: Leather and furs

Background/History: One of the best-known and most-admired chieftains among the Gorthunda, Bulgan was born the fourth son of a lesser chieftain; no one ever expected him to amount to anything. But as he grew, it quickly became apparent that he had the strength, swiftness, and keenness of judgment to become a truly great Gorthunda leader. His brothers stepped aside in his favor, allowing him to take their father's place as head of their tribe; he in turn rewarded them with wealth, honor, and positions of prestige and responsibility.

Bulgan seized the opportunity to expand his power when a more powerful chieftain, Hentai, insulted him at a gathering in 4997 SE. He challenged Hentai to a duel. Most Gorthunda thought he'd die in the fight, but Hentai had allowed himself to become weak and soft. After just a few minutes, Hentai's head was no longer attached to his shoulders, and Bulgan was chieftain of two tribes. Hentai's people, who cared little for their brutal and foolish former chieftain, welcomed Bulgan, though Hentai's brothers and family have never forgiven him and still seek his death.

For the past three years, Bulgan's tribe, now one of the largest among the Gorthunda, has grown and prospered under his wise leadership. Many believe he will become one of the greatest Gorthunda chieftains, but an obstacle stands in his way — another chieftain, Odenggam, who's known in the Westerlands for the swiftness and cruelty of his raids. Bulgan, wiser by far than his rival, thinks the time is coming when the Gorthunda may have to ally with the Westerlanders instead of attack them, since Kal-Turak threatens them both... but he may have a hard time convincing his people of that.

Personality/Motivation: Bulgan is a wise man who's learned how to balance the needs and desires of his tribe against the vision he has for himself and the Gorthunda. He wants to do what's best for the Gorthunda, but he recognizes that this may require changes in millennia-long traditions. He has even thought of journeying into the West to learn more

about its people and its ways, but is not yet sufficiently secure in his power to take that chance. For the time being he's more inclined to take outlanders prisoner and try to talk to them, instead of simply killing them the way most Gorthunda chieftains would.

For all his insightfulness, Bulgan is still a Gorthunda. He reacts strongly, often violently, to any challenges to his position or his honor, has a deep hatred of the foul Ulg-hroi, and often deals with problems in what more "civilized" people would consider brutal, barbaric ways. The fact that he knows change may be necessary doesn't mean he intends to make any more changes than he absolutely has to.

Quote: "More is demanded of a chieftain than a strong arm and a swift sword. The mind must be strong as well, and the eye swift."

Powers/Tactics: Bulgan is a typical Gorthunda warrior, accustomed to fighting from the saddle in quick, decisive cavalry attacks. He wears light armor and carries only a small shield and a few weapons so that he doesn't get weighed down and can move speedily. He prefers HTH Combat, but will hang back and pepper his opponent with arrows if necessary.

Campaign Use: Bulgan represents a possible ally for the PCs, but one they're going to have to work hard to win over to their cause. He's a proud and honorable man, accustomed to great deference and respect, and he won't tolerate being treated like a "simple barbarian." He's likely to look on the PCs as people he can learn from... but he expects them to think of him the same way.

Bulgan generally won't Hunt heroes. If they make him angry enough, he'll attack them, or lead his people against them, but once he exacts the revenge he considers appropriate, he'll drop the matter.

To make Bulgan stronger, give him some Martial Arts with his *yahgahn*, or perhaps a Deadly Blow ability. To weaken him, reduce his Characteristics a little, and get rid of a Talent or two.

Appearance: Bulgan wears clothes made from the best furs and leathers by the most skilled seamstresses among his people, and a fur-lined, peaked golden helmet given to his people as a gift long ago by some Ardunan king. He's taller than most Gorthunda, but still an inch or three shorter than the average Westerlander soldier. He's got the trim, well-muscled body of the hardened rider and warrior, but his face displays more wit and wisdom than most Gorthunda possess.

DELTARION BLOODLOCK

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
18	STR	8	13-	Lift 300 kg; 3½d6 [2]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
20	CON	20	13-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
23	PRE	16	14-	PRE Attack: 4½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
6	PD	2		Total: 9 PD (3 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 9 ED (3 rED)
4	SPD	10		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	0		
40	END	0		
31	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 110

Movement: Running: 7"/14"

Cost	Spells	END
4	Deltarion's Word of Lucidity	4
3	The First Spell of the Warrior's Lament	8
5	Glittersharp	7
1	Kammelard's Blessing of Health	2
3	The Second Spell of the Warrior's Lament	8
2	Silver Rain And Steel Thunder	6
2	The Spell Of The Charmed Blade	2
3	The Spell Of The Far-Flung Blade	3
1	The Spell Of The Swift Arm	1
2	Varunai's Scything-Spell	3
2	Vornishak's Mantle Of Concealment	4

Powers

Martial Arts: Ulronai Chitheru
("Ulronai Steelweaving")

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
5 Hwidathra	+1	+0	Weapon + vel/5; FMove
4 Orunatiya	+2	+0	Weapon +2 DC Strike
5 Orushidaila	+1	+3	Weapon Strike
5 Oruskormaeli	-2	+1	Weapon +4 DC Strike
3 Strashuri	+0	+1	Weapon +2 DC, Disable
4 Taritaile	+2	+2	Block; Abort
4 Thasori	—	+5	Dodge All Attacks; Abort
2 <i>Swift-Limbed:</i> Running +1" (7" total)			1

Perks

20	Follower: Lasdreval (medium warhorse with special abilities; see text)
12	Reputation: skilled Ulronai warrior-mage/ <i>thalu-hrindar</i> of the Ulronai (throughout the world) 14-, +4/+4d6

Talents

6	Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)
5	Magesight

Skills

15	+5 with <i>Ulronai Chitheru</i>
12	Targeting Skill Levels: +4 versus Hit Location modifiers with All Attacks
3	Climbing 13-
3	<i>Gaherathir:</i> Fast Draw (Common Melee

	Weapons) 13-
3	Healing (Paramedics) 13-
3	High Society 14-
2	AK: The Westerlands 11-
2	AK: Mhorecia 11-
1	AK: Vornakkia 8-
3	KS: Arcane And Occult Knowledge 13-
3	KS: Legends And Lore 13-
2	KS: History 11-
1	Literacy
3	Persuasion 14-
3	Riding 13-
3	Stealth 13-
2	Survival (Temperate) 13-
3	Tracking 13-
1	Trading 8-
19	Ulronai Warrior-Magic 21-
4	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons
1	<i>Komyri Narathir:</i> WF: Off Hand
3	Linguist
1	1) Besruhani (fluent conversation; Ulronai is Native)
1	2) Cacimarian (fluent conversation)
1	3) Eltiriani (fluent conversation)
1	4) Ilurian (fluent conversation)
1	5) Trade-Tongue (fluent conversation)
1	6) Umbrian (fluent conversation)
1	7) Vestrian (fluent conversation)
1	8) Westerlands Skhai (fluent conversation)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 206

Total Cost: 316

75+ Disadvantages

20	Distinctive Features: Ulronai (Not Concealable; Causes Major Prejudice)
5	Distinctive Features: bloodlock (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)
10	Hunted: Shûlac 8- (As Pow, Kill)
15	Psychological Limitation: Implacable Foe Of Evil (Common, Strong)
20	Social Limitation: Ulronai (Very Frequently, Major)
171	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 316

EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Damage	STUN	STR	Min	Shots
Vashturi	+1	—	2d6	0	17	—	—
Behruweth	+1	—	1d6+1	0	14	—	—
Chavûryn							
Ghral#	0	—	1d6-1	0	6	—	—

Armor

Leather and light chainmail (DEF 4)

Gear: Haversack, various tools and implements (for weapon maintenance, armor repair, writing, and other tasks), flask of *Ulrothiadrac* ("Ulro's Nectar," an Ulronai liquor), one week's rations and water, bedroll and tent, lantern and two flasks of oil, 50' of fine rope

Clothing: Adventurer's clothes, foul-weather robe (usually keeps one suit of finer clothes with him as well)

DELTARION PLOT SEEDS

Bloodied and battered, Deltarion staggers into the PCs' camp one night and collapses. What's happened to him... and how does it involve the PCs?

Deltarion hears rumors about a long-lost wizard's tower that may contain riches and magical lore. Eager to learn more, but knowing it's too dangerous an adventure for him alone, he approaches the PCs to see if they're interested in accompanying him.

A man who looks like Deltarion — he's definitely an Ulronai, and has a bloodlock — attacks the PCs (inflicting grievous wounds) and then flees. Is it really Deltarion... and if so, why would he attack them and then run away?

LEGENDARY AND ENCHANTED ITEMS

Vashturi: Vashturi ("Steelblade") is an ancient blade of proud lineage. Ulronai legend tells that it was given by the gods to Kynerion, a *Taláirion-Corum*, in the early years of the Second Epoch. It happened that a great force of Orcs came upon Kynerion and his band of warriors. Though they fought fiercely and true, they were sore outnumbered, and one by one they fell before the strength and wicked might of the Orcs. At last only Kynerion, his sword shattered by the force of his enemies' blows, remained alive, and he fled, seeking to escape the Orcs and bring word of them to those of his people who dwelt nearby. And as he fled he found himself riding beside a rapid, rock-strewn river.

Of a sudden he looked up, and saw that ahead of him, by the side of the river, there was a great stone, and seated on the stone was a man, or so Kynerion took him to be. He was dressed all in black robes, and his face was hidden by a hood. In his right hand he held a greatsword, its point resting on the stone.

"Ho, Kynerion! You are sore pressed," the man in black said.

"Aye, I am, Grandfather, but what of it? Still I live, and while I live, my foes know the meaning of fear."

"But you have no blade anymore."

"With my bare hands I will kill them, if I must, but a blade true and strong would be the better yet. What of the one that you carry? Will you give it to me, or sell it?"

"Sell *Vashturi*?" the man asked, now speaking in Ulronai. Then Kynerion knew him for more than a man, for only one of the gods, or their messengers, would speak the Tongue of Ulro to him. "It is beyond whatever price you could pay."

"I would give all that I have, to own such a blade," Kynerion said.

"And still it would be beyond your price. Vashturi must be earned by one noble of heart, and bold of deed. But you *have* earned it, Son of Ulro. I see in your soul the valor of a warrior born and blessed to the True Path."

"My thanks, Grandfather. I will treasure Vashturi always, and in no wise will I dishonor it."

"That is good, for you will have need of Vashturi's sharpness, and your own honor, in the days to come. But look you!" he said, pointing back the way Kynerion had come. "Your foe approaches."

Kynerion turned to look, and saw the Orcs coming towards him on their tall horses. "Quickly, Grandfather, the sword!" he said, but received no response. Turning back, he saw that the man was gone, but Vashturi remained, stuck into the ground beside the stone. Grasping its hilt, he pulled it forth, and rode to meet his foe. And though eight Orcs surrounded him, one by one he slew them, and Vashturi's blade was baptized in blood.

Vashturi is a greatsword, nearly six feet long from hilt-ring to blade-tip. The blade is nearly five of those feet, with a ricasso 5 inches long that ends in a small, short spur (more like a lip or rim) that gives the rest of the blade the appearance of grow-

ing out of the shorter, wider ricasso. The pommel is a steel ring about 2½ inches in diameter. The grip is wrapped in leather colored dull red. The crossguard/quillons is steel, with a shallow oval droop and an upright prong at either end, and no quillons block.

At the base of the ricasso, near the crossguard, are etched three small Ulronai runes: *Válimm*, the Rune of Strength; *Cabring*, the Rune of Valor; and *Rondivar*, the Rune of Power. While neither these runes nor the sword itself are enchanted, it is said that they impart their qualities to the sword and its bearer nevertheless. Those qualities are:

- *Stillness Of Stone:* When thrust into the ground or other object, Vashturi does not waver or wobble
- *Noble Appearance* (+5 PRE for Presence Attacks; see *Fantasy Hero*, page 183)
- *Heart Of The Mountain:* Vashturi's DEF is considered Hardened, and it has one level of Difficult To Dispel to protect it from spells

Behruweth: Behruweth ("Heart's-Blood") is a falchion crafted by Varunai Three-Edge especially for his greatest apprentice, Deltarion Bloodlock. Forged using secret Ulronai weaponsmithing techniques, and all of Varunai's consummate skill, it was annealed in the blood of Orcs and Orc-kin, the better that it might seek and spill such blood. It has a +1 OCV bonus when used against Orcs, Goblins, Ogres, and their ilk.

Behruweth has a blade about three feet long, slightly curved at the point, with a false point. It has a short steel quillons with a shallow droop and a small quillon block, and a straight grip wrapped in brown leather and terminating in a small "wheel" pommel.

At the base of the blade, on either side of the quillon block, are two Ulronai runes: *Hwashenth*, the Rune of Swiftiness; and *Thengri*, the Rune of Might. While neither these runes nor the sword itself are enchanted, it is said that they impart their qualities to the sword and its bearer nevertheless.

Chavúryn Ghral: Chavúryn Ghral ("Little Brother") is a fighting dagger commissioned by Deltarion from the Ulronai swordmaster Gashírin Cgor-Athir (now deceased). It has a thick, sharp blade about one foot long, well-suited to blocking the heavy blows of swords and other weapons. It is double-edged, with a very short ricasso, and the blade is silvered. The grip is specially crafted to fit Deltarion's hand, with a thick, slightly drooping quillons and a small "ball" pommel, both made of steel colored black, and a grip wrapped in black leather. It is a normal dagger in most respects, but has +1 DEF due to the quality of its forging.

Ring Of Dragons: Deltarion found this enchanted ring during one of his adventures. Three times a day, for one minute each time, it provides him with a Force Field (8 ED/10 Mental Defense).

Background/History: Born in southwest Tyrantium in 4972 SE, Deltarion is an Ulronai warrior-mage of great power and skill, perhaps the most powerful one in Ambrethel as of 5000 SE. In his youth he trained with the famed warrior-mage Varunai Three-Edge, learning much from him (and in time receiving from him the renowned greatsword Vashturi). Since leaving Varunai's tutelage, he has become a peripatetic adventurer, criss-crossing much of Arduna on the back of his horse Lasdreval. He's made many friends... but many enemies as well, such as the brutal Talarshandi warrior and slaver Shúlac.

The Ulronai look to Deltarion for leadership and deliverance, for he is a *thalu-hrindar*, a "blood-lock," a man with a single blood-red lock in his hair. In all Ulronai history there have been fewer than half a dozen bloodlocks, each of them prophesied to lift from the Ulronai the great curse laid upon them so long ago by the Lord of the Graven Spear. Deltarion does not know if he can succeed where those who came before him failed, but he is determined to try.

Personality/Motivation: The most important thing Deltarion learned from his master Varunai is this: those who possess power must use it not for themselves, but for the good of all. True to his training and the nature of his people, he is a valiant and noble warrior, given on the one hand to acts of honor and goodness towards those who are worthy, and on the other to unstinting opposition against the evil and cruel.

Deltarion takes his role as a protector and representative of his people very seriously; he sees his life not as something to be idly enjoyed, but as a tool given him by the gods to perform their good works upon this world. Great deeds and heroism are expected of him as a bloodlock, and he sometimes wonders if he is up to the task.

Quote: "Come, hellspawn! Come to your death! Whether weapons or the Art is required, I shall destroy you!"

Powers/Tactics: As a trained *Talárior-Corum*, Deltarion is skilled both at warfare and at wizardry. He can use most weapons skillfully; he favors the greatsword, the battle axe, the spear, and the dagger, but can use others if need be. When weapons of mere steel are not enough, he can bring the powers of *Talacóriom* to bear. He's always eager to learn more warrior-magic, and if he hears of one of his fellows may try to find him to exchange spell-lore. But since *Talacóriom* spells are often tiring to cast, Deltarion must employ his magic cautiously, lest fatigue disable him.

In battle, Deltarion normally wields Vashturi. He uses cautious, defensive attacks (such as *Orushidaila* or *Strashuri*) until he gets a measure of his foe, then switches to more aggressive maneuvers if appropriate. If he feels the need for greater protection, he'll wield *Behruweth* in his right hand, keeping *Chavúrny Ghral* in his left for parrying (*i.e.*, to use WF: Off Hand) or a quick stroke of opportunity. He does not normally carry a ranged weapon,

relying on spells and thrown daggers if necessary, but may bring along a spear or bow if he knows in advance he'll need it.

Accompanying Deltarion on most of his adventures is Lasdreval, his warhorse. More intelligent and better-trained than most horses, Lasdreval also has greater strength, speed, agility, and stamina than normal for his kind. At times his noble bearing can even inspire other horses to greater effort. (In game terms, Lasdreval has an Aid END 2d6 that he can use on himself and up to seven other horses so they can run faster for a longer period of time.)

Campaign Use: Deltarion is a powerful and helpful ally for a group of PCs — but not one so powerful that he'll overshadow them. His magic won't make theirs look weak (since he can't do many things that even the youngest true wizard can), and his fighting skills aren't necessarily enough to put him head-and-shoulders above other warriors.

Deltarion might hunt an evil person, or a PC he somehow thought was evil, but it's not in his nature to pursue someone for a long time. He's more free-spirited, going where the mood of the moment strikes him and stories of adventure lure him.

To make Deltarion tougher, increase his Characteristics a bit and give him some more spells (maybe even broaden his magical repertoire to include other arcana). To weaken him, do the opposite — reduce his Characteristics and remove some of his spells.



LAVREN
PLOT SEEDS

Lavren tells the heroes he's got a *really* good piece of information for them — but he'll only give it to them if they help another friend of his with a little problem he's having....

A prominent noble is found dead in the street — and all the clues point to Lavren! He begs the PCs to clear his name and keep him from the hangman's noose.

Lavren goes missing. The PCs start to look for their friend and uncover a particularly sordid situation involving two corrupt nobles, a witch, an elt-hound, and a bottle of gnomish liquor.

Appearance: Deltarion is a tall, thin man, with the muscular build of a trained warrior, the rawboned look of a man who spends much time outdoors, and the studious eyes of a scholar. Like many Ulronai, he's cleanshaven and tends towards pallor. His hair is a whitish-grey and worn long (shoulder-length); he ties it back in a ponytail with a silver ring (an Ulronai *salashyr*) carved with a knotwork design. Standing out on the left side of his head among his white locks is a single unbraided lock of hair colored blood-red. This *thalu-hrindar*, or "bloodlock," is a mark of destiny and power; its color cannot be changed or disguised by means mundane or magical, though it can be cut off.

Deltarion typically wears light chainmail over rugged leathers. His tunic and pants are black (belted with a brown leather belt made with a draconic design) and a brown leather vest. His boots are brown, and finely-made. He wears his great-sword Vashturi on his back, its grey steel hilt-ring visible over his left shoulder; the sword's scabbard is specially designed for quick and easy drawing of the weapon. He carries his falchion Behruweth on his left hip, and his dagger Chavûryn Ghral at his left. He carries another dagger in his boot, and several throwing knives cleverly concealed about his person. In bad or cold weather, he wears a hooded robe of purple-grey, and sometimes a cloak of the same color as well. On the ring-finger of his right hand he wears a gold ring carved to resemble a dragon coiled around his finger.



LAVREN

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
5	STR	-5	10-	Lift 50 kg; 1d6 [1]
10	DEX	0	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
10	CON	0	11-	
8	BODY	-4	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
6	COM	-2	10-	
3	PD	2		Total: 3 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	1		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
2	SPD	0		Phases: 6, 12
3	REC	0		
20	END	0		
16	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: -3

Movement: Running: 4"/8"

Cost	Powers	END
7	<i>Not Easily Impressed:</i> +15 PRE; Only To Protect Against Presence Attacks (-1)	0
3	<i>Observant:</i> +1 PER with all Sense Groups	0
-4	<i>Limp:</i> Running -2" (4" total)	

Perks
40 Contacts: 40 points' worth throughout Aarn
15 Favors: 15 points' worth throughout Aarn

Skills
3 Conversation 11-
1 Gambling (Dice Games) 8-
6 AK: Aarn 15-
6 KS: Aarnese Current Events And Gossip 15-
2 KS: Aarnese History 11-
6 KS: Aarnese Legends And Lore 15-
6 KS: People Of Aarn 15-
3 Persuasion 11-
2 PS: Begging 11-
2 PS: Storytelling 11-
5 Stealth 12-
7 Streetwise 13-
3 Trading 11-
2 WF: Daggers, Slings

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 115

Total Cost: 112

75+ Disadvantages
10 Destitute
20 Psychological Limitation: Compulsive Gambler (Very Common, Strong)
7 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 112

EQUIPMENT						
Weapon	OCV	RMod	Damage	STUN	STR	Min Shots
Dagger#	0	—	1d6-1	0	6	—
Small Sling	0	-1	1d6-1	+1	6	5

Armor
None

Gear: Begging bowl

Clothing: Tattered robes and rags

Background/History: Unless you're an Elf or a wizard, it's hard to remember a time when Lavren

wasn't on the streets of Aarn, making his living both as a beggar and as a source of information for the thieves, nobles, whores, adventurers, and traders who throng the streets. He's been doing it since he was a boy and his mother (whom he barely remembers) abandoned him. These days it's hard to find anyone, from King's Hill to the docks, who knows as much about the city and its goings-on than he does.

Personality/Motivation: Lavren actually makes a lot of money as an "information broker." The problem is that he loses it almost immediately, because he's a compulsive gambler... and not a good one, either. He'll bet on virtually anything, and play any game that can be played for money. When the professional gamblers of the streets see him coming, they know they're about to make some money.

Quote: "I might know something about that... but I'm too hungry to remember. Maybe if I had a silver piece to buy some bread and cheese..."

Powers/Tactics: Lavren is no combatant, though he does carry a dagger hidden in his rags. If anyone threatens him, he'll try to trade his way out of the confrontation with information... but few people are stupid enough to lean on him, since he has a lot of powerful friends throughout the city who value his services and look out for him.

Campaign Use: Lavren is an ideal Contact and source of information about Aarn for the PCs. If they visit the world's largest city (and what adventurer doesn't at least once in his career?), he's just the man they need to see for the latest gossip, information, and rumors.

Lavren doesn't Hunt people, though he might snoop around trying to find out valuable information if he thinks he can get away with it. It would be hard (and pointless) to make him much weaker; if you want to make him tougher, change his history to say that he used to be an adventurer (a warrior or rogue), and give him a few Skills to reflect those "glory days."

Appearance: Lavren is a man of middle age (perhaps older), with a wrinkled (and usually dirty) face and a scraggly, greying beard. He wears whatever clothes he can find or steal, though even the nicest of them quickly becomes dirty, torn, and dishevelled.

TRESECK

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [2]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
7	PD	4		Total: 7 PD (1 rPD)
7	ED	4		Total: 7 ED (1 rED)
3	SPD	5		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
31	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 61

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost	Powers	END
1	<i>Orcish Hide:</i> Damage Resistance (1 PD/1 ED)	0
5	<i>Orcish Eyes:</i> Nightvision	0
3	<i>Orcish Senses:</i> +1 PER with all Sense Groups	0

Perks

18 Vehicle: Caravel (*HERO System Vehicle Sourcebook*, page 109)

Skills

1	Acrobatics 8-
3	Breakfall 12-
7	Climbing 14-
7	Combat Sailing 14-
2	CK: Aarn 11-
2	CK: Brelg 11-
2	CK: Denzali 11-
2	CK: Tretha 11-
6	KS: The Mariners' World 15-
5	KS: Pirates 14-
5	KS: Ships 14-
1	Language: Aarnese (basic conversation; Thordaran is Native)
1	Language: Kesha (basic conversation)
1	Language: South Khorian (basic conversation)
1	Language: Trade-Tongue (basic conversation)
1	Literacy
6	Navigation (Marine) 14-
3	PS: Knot-Tying 12-
3	PS: Sailor 12-
3	PS: Rope Use 12-
3	Stealth 12-
3	Streetwise 12-
7	Trading 14-
4	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 106

Total Cost: 167

75+ Disadvantages

10	Hunted: Zulgar 8- (As Pow, Kill)
15	Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of Pirates (Common, Strong)
5	Rivalry: Professional (with another Thordaran captain)
62	Experience Points

TRESECK PLOT SEEDS

While sailing on another ship, the PCs come upon the *Sea Dragon*, floating in the middle of the ocean without a single crewmember! There are no signs of a struggle, and the hold is full of valuable goods. What's happened here?

Treseck appeals to the PCs for help. It turns out that he had to deal with some pretty unsavory characters back in Thordaran to get the money to buy the *Sea Dragon*. He's long since paid them off, but now they're after him to do some "favors" for them.

Treseck contacts the PCs. It seems he was blown off course by a storm recently, and ended up at an island he didn't recognize and that's not on any charts. The whole place had a dark, evil feel to it, and he wants someone to find out what's on it. He offers to take the PCs there on the *Sea Dragon* if they'll explore the island.

Total Disadvantage Points: 167

EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Damage	STUN	STR	Min	Shots
Broadsword	0	—	1d6+1	0	12	—	—
Dagger#	0	—	1d6-1	0	6	—	—

Armor

Leather (DEF 3)

Gear: Sailor's gear

Clothing: Leather pants and vest (plus a shirt, in cold weather)

Background/History: Treseck was born in Gorana Thek, the son of a sailmaker. From an early age he was around docks, ships, and sailors most of the time, and listening to their stories and banter awakened in him a desire to become a mariner himself. He ran away from home at 13 to become a cabin boy, and eventually a sailor. After serving as a mate or officer on several ships, he scraped together enough money to buy his own caravel. Christening her the *Sea Dragon*, he set out to make a name for himself as both a mariner and a trader.

Since then, Captain Treseck's become well-known in the coastal lands of the Khelvarian Ocean and the Sea of Storms. He does his best to buy low and sell high, but he'll only carry first-rate goods; otherwise he'd feel like he was cheating his customers. He doesn't mind carrying a passenger or three, either, provided they don't get in the crew's way...

Personality/Motivation: For the most part, Treseck is a typical merchant-captain. His mind's focused on commerce; he wants to find a way to make the most money with the least effort or risk. But he's not truly greedy the way most merchants are; if anything, he's drawn to deal-making and dickering for the intellectual and social challenge they provide.

If Treseck has any passions other than trade and the sea, it's his absolute hatred of pirates and corsairs. He's run up against them a few times (one in particular, a Vornakkian named Zulgar), and has always come out ahead... so far. Although his ship is not a ship of war, he has a knack for taking on pirates and finding a way to defeat them (or, more accurately, trick them into defeating themselves).

Quote: "Watch that line, Grenack! Keep that sail taut, or we're in danger of heeling over!"

Powers/Tactics: Treseck isn't really a combatant, though he knows well how to wield a blade if he has to. If forced into a confrontation, he uses his sailing skills to maneuver for the best position, then goes for the kill... though he prefers to capture pirate ships and loot so he can make money off them.

Treseck's ship, the *Sea Dragon*, is an old caravel that's been patched up and repaired so many times that there probably isn't a single board left over from the original construction, but it's a tight and sturdy vessel for all that. Treseck loves her and her crew dearly, and won't hesitate to stick up for either if he has to. He's started more than a few dockside tavern brawls when some half-drunk sailor said something disparaging about his "beauty."

Campaign Use: Treseck offers your campaign two things. First, he's a way for the heroes to get from one place to another if they have to sail (which gives you the opportunity to introduce some maritime encounters and adventures). He's also an excellent contact among the world of sailors and sailing, not to mention a good friend. Second, since he's an Orc, he gives you a chance to turn the players' perceptions upside down; he's not sword-fodder like most greenskins, he's an intelligent, successful trader who just wants to be treated fairly... the same way he treats everyone else.

Treseck's not going to Hunt anyone — he has a business to run — but he might spend time chasing down a nasty crew of pirates if he felt he could put a stop to them. If you want to make him tougher, give him more warrior abilities, such as Martial Arts for his blade, higher Characteristics, or the like. To weaken him, reduce his Characteristics a little.

Appearance: Treseck is a mariner-captain from Thordar. Orc though he may be, his face displays a level of wit, sophistication, and experience that indicates just how good a captain he is. He wears the typical leather pants and vest of the Thordaran Orcs; the vest is decorated with patterns and symbols that display his clan affiliation. He carries a heavy dagger in a scabbard on his right hip at all times, supplementing it with a broadsword if he expects to have to fight.



WOLFGANG BRANDHAME
Crown Prince of Thurgandia

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
23	STR	16	14-	Lift 600 kg; 4½d6 [2]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
20	CON	20	13-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
14	COM	2	12-	
8	PD	3		Total: 8 PD (0 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 6 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
9	REC	0		
40	END	0		
50	STUN	8		Total Characteristics Cost: 124

Movement: Running: 7"/14"

Cost Powers **END**

Martial Arts: Weapons Combat

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
5	All-Out	+1	-2	Weapon +6 DC Strike
4	Attack	+0	+2	Weapon +4 DC Strike
4	Charge	+0	-2	Weapon +4 DC Strike +vel/5, FMove
4	Defend	+2	+2	Block, Abort
5	Probe	+1	+3	Weapon +2 DC Strike
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added in)			
2	<i>Strong Runner:</i> Running +1" (7" total) 1			

Perks

- 20 Contacts: 20 points' worth (nobles and other noteworthy figures throughout the Westerlands)
- 16 Follower: Varulf (war dog)
- 12 Fringe Benefit: Lordship: Crown Prince
- 5 Money: Well Off

Talents

- 14 Fearless
- 10 Follow-Through Attack
- 11 Inspire

Skills

- 10 +2 HTH
- 4 +2 OCV with Battle Axes
- 3 Climbing 13-
- 3 Deduction 12-
- 5 High Society 14-
- 2 AK: The Thurisian Mountains 11-
- 5 AK: The Westerlands 14-
- 2 CK: Bellinberg 11-
- 2 KS: Heraldry 11-
- 2 KS: History 11-
- 2 KS: Nobles Of The Westerlands 11-
- 2 KS: Orcs And Their Kin 11-
- 2 Language: Aarnese (fluent conversation; Ilurian is Native)
- 2 Language: Tornathian (fluent conversation)
- 2 Language: Vestrian (fluent conversation)

- 2 Language: Westerlands Ghoralzod (fluent conversation)
- 2 Language: Westerlands Skhai (fluent conversation)
- 2 Language: Westerlands Vugrash (fluent conversation)
- 1 Literacy
- 3 Healing (Paramedics) 12-
- 1 Navigation (Land) 8-
- 3 Oratory 13-
- 3 Persuasion 13-
- 2 PS: Nobleman 11-
- 3 Riding 13-
- 2 Survival (Temperate) 12-
- 7 Tactics 14-
- 3 Tracking 12-
- 5 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Off Hand

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 207

Total Cost: 331

75+ Disadvantages

- 5 Hunted: Baron Arendell of Verlichten 8- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Noblesse Oblige (Common, Strong)
- 236 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 331



WOLFGANG
PLOT SEEDS

While adventuring in the Thurisian Mountains, Wolfgang learns some things that lead him to believe the Orcs of the mountains are massing under a mysterious leader for an attack on Thurgandia, Szarvasia, or Umbr. He asks the PCs to come help him put a stop to the invasion before it gets started.

Wolfgang asks for the PCs' help. Some mysterious malady has struck down the Knights of the Hound, one after the other, and he can't figure out what's causing it.

The fact that Wolfgang remains unwed puzzles and disturbs not only his parents, but the people of Thurgandia. For some reason, he all of a sudden seems unusually smitten with one of the many princesses and noble maidens that constantly parade through the Thurgandian court in an effort to attract his attention. What's so special about this woman?

EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Damage	STUN	STR	Min	Shots
Battle Axe	0	—	2d6	0	13	—	—
Hand Axe	0	—	1d6	0	6	—	—
Dagger#	0	—	1d6-1	0	6	—	—

Armor

Chainmail (DEF 6)

Gear: Given his position and wealth, Wolfgang can obtain just about any type of mundane item he needs.

Clothing: Fine garb befitting a crown prince (at home); adventurer's garb (when adventuring)

ENCHANTED ITEMS

Helm of the Iron Mind (provides 15 points of Mental Defense, +EGO/5).

Background/History: Born in 4970 SE, Wolfgang is the eldest son of King Aurick of Thurgandia, and thus the crown prince of that realm. Since he was old enough to learn he's had the best teachers and tutors for everything from art, to history, to warfare — but it's the latter he's truly excelled at. Since being knighted at age 15, he's been one of the leaders of Thurgandia's armies, not just of the Knights of the Hound (whom the crown prince traditionally commands) but of all the soldiers. He enjoys great popularity among both commoners, soldiers, and nobles alike.

Disdaining many of the day-to-day tasks that fall on nobles' shoulders, Wolfgang has spent much of his life adventuring in and around Thurgandia. He frequently leads expeditions of his companions (fellow adventurers) into the Thurisian Mountains to fight Orcs, Trolls, and other monsters. He's friends with the kings of both Norross and Algarhaime, and often spends time among the Dwarves (who gifted him with his enchanted helmet). Since his father remains young and vigorous, Wolfgang may enjoy a long career as an adventurer before having to settle down to rule... or he may find himself leading Thurgandia's armies into battle against Kal-Turak, or the chaos the Ravager's rise has begun to stir up.

Personality/Motivation: Despite his sometimes stern and unforgiving approach to problem-solving, Prince Wolfgang is an honorable and kind-hearted man who believes strongly in the concept of "noblesse oblige." As a ruler, he thinks he should not only set an example for his people with proper conduct, he should do whatever he can to help the downtrodden and unfortunate. If that means distributing the treasure he brings back from an

adventure to the poor of Thurgandia, so be it; if it means implacably opposing all who would threaten Thurgandia, he'll do so.

Quote: "For Thurgandia!"

Powers/Tactics: Wolfgang is a strong, skilled, and powerful warrior. He favors the battle axe as his weapon, but can wield many others if need be. His size, commanding voice, sheer presence, and gift for tactics and strategy make him a superb war-leader.

In combat, Wolfgang prefers to take the direct approach, wading right in and attacking with everything he's got. But he's neither a fool nor a berserker; if his initial attacks don't make progress, he'll step back, go on the defensive, and try to find a weakness he can exploit.

Campaign Use: Wolfgang represents a way for you to connect the PCs to the worlds of the nobility and warfare. As an adventurer, he gets along well with other adventurers who share his attitudes and beliefs, and by spending time around him the PCs can get to know other people in his circle (possibly including King Aurick, who'd make an excellent patron, or his sisters Marliissa and Adela, potential romantic interests).

Wolfgang's not inclined to Hunt anyone, particularly other adventurers, but he's quick to seek vengeance for any threat to Thurgandia. If he thinks a character presents a threat to his kingdom, he'll do whatever he must to eliminate that threat.

To make Wolfgang stronger, increase some of his Characteristics a bit, or broaden the range of his Skills — as an adventurer, he could have picked up all sorts of information and "tricks" that most crown princes don't have. You could also give him another enchanted item or two. To weaken him, reduce his Characteristics.

Appearance: The crown prince of Thurgandia is a stocky, powerfully-built man with dark hair and a long, dark moustache. When ready for battle or adventure, he wears chainmail and a great helm, covering the mail with a surcoat depicting his symbol, a stone tower. His primary weapon is a single-headed battle axe; the weaponsmith who crafted it cut out of the center of the blade a crescent-shaped section following the blade's edge, so that the axe sings a strange and deadly song as Wolfgang swings it through the air. In his left hand Wolfgang carries a hand axe, balanced for throwing but also suitable for parrying or making a quick chop against an undefended area. Verulf, his warhound and faithful companion, accompanies him nearly everywhere he goes.

TURAKIAN MONSTERS



DEMONS, TURAKIAN

The folk of the Turakian Age have their own demons to fear. Though similar in some ways to the demons of Christian lore of a later time, particularly in terms of motivation and methodology, in other ways they're very different. They serve Mordak and his brood (sometimes collectively referred to as the Lords of Hell), and form the armies led by the Demonhanded.

STANDARD TURAKIAN DEMON

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
35	STR	25	16-	Lift 3,200 kg; 7d6 [2]
21	DEX	33	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
23	CON	26	14-	
18	BODY	16	13-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
30	PRE	20	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
2	COM	-4	9-	
12	PD	5		Total: 20 PD (8 rPD)
12	ED	7		Total: 20 ED (8 rED)
4	SPD	9		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
12	REC	0		
46	END	0		
48	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 148 (+42 with NCM)

Movement: Running: 9"/18"
Leaping: 7"/14"

Cost	Powers	END
22	<i>Fangs:</i> HKA 1d6 (2d6 with STR), Armor Piercing (+½)	2
10	<i>Demonic Strength:</i> HA +3d6; Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)	1
25	<i>Crushing, Strangling, Throttling:</i> HKA 1d6 (2d6 with STR), Continuous (+1), Penetrating (+½); Must Follow Grab (-½)	4
37	<i>Corrosive Slime:</i> HKA 1d6, Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (does damage in HTH Combat; +¾), Penetrating (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); No STR Bonus (-½)	0
24	<i>Demon's Carapace:</i> Armor (8 PD/8 ED)	0
30	<i>Infernal Shield:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 25%	0
50	<i>Infernal Form:</i> Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality)	0
5	<i>Infernal Mind:</i> Mental Defense (8 points total)	0
10	<i>Infernal Form:</i> Power Defense (10 points)	0
6	<i>Demon's Legs:</i> Running +3" (9" total)	1
10	<i>Demon-Walking:</i> Clinging (normal STR)	0

5 *Demon's Eyes:* Infrared Perception (Sight Group) 0

Skills

15 +3 Hand-To-Hand
3 Interrogation 15-
3 Stealth 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 255

Total Cost: 403

75+ Disadvantages

20 Distinctive Features: Aura Of Infernal Evil (Concealable With Effort; Causes Fear)
15 Physical Limitation: Must Obey Anyone Who Knows Its True Name (Infrequently, Fully Impairing)
15 Physical Limitation: Restricted By Pentagrams, if confined within a pentagram cannot leave or affect anyone or anything outside the pentagram (Infrequently, Fully Impairing)
25 Psychological Limitation: Utterly Evil (Very Common, Total)
25 Psychological Limitation: Utterly Loyal To Mordak (Very Common, Total)
25 Susceptibility: to holy places and objects, takes 2d6 damage per Phase demon is on holy ground, in a holy place, or within 1" of a holy object (Common)
203 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 403

OPTIONS

Cost	Power
5	<i>Multiple Arms:</i> Extra Limbs (typically two or four)
12	<i>Tentacles For Arms:</i> Add Stretching 2", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Limited Body Parts (arms only; -¼)
+23	<i>Mandibles:</i> Increase Fangs to HKA 2d6
10	<i>Demon's Sting(Sting):</i> HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR)
65	<i>Demon's Sting (Venom):</i> Drain CON 4d6, Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Hour; +1), NND (defense is appropriate LS [Immunity]; +1), Personal Immunity (+¼); 4 Charges (-1), HKA Must Do BODY (-½), Extra Time (onset time begins 1 Minute after victim is bitten; -1½), Gradual Effect (4 Minutes; 1d6/1 Minute; -½), Linked (to RKA; -½) plus RKA 4d6, NND (defense is appropriate LS [Immunity]; +1), Does BODY (+1), Personal Immunity (+¼); No Range (-½), 4 Charges (-1), HKA

Must Do BODY (-½), Extra Time (onset time begins 1 Minute after victim is bitten; -1½), Gradual Effect (4 Minutes; 1d6/1 Minute; -½)

Description: Turakian demons come in many different forms. This one represents an “average” demon; you can customize it with the listed options if you like (or make other changes, if desired).
This demon has a roughly humanoid form, but its body is a shadowy, inky sort of black, and it has a carapace and skin something like that of a beetle. Its hair and fingers are tentacle-like, and a fetid, corrosive slime drips from its body.



TURAKIAN FANGED DEMON

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
30	STR	20	15-	Lift 1,600 kg; 6d6 [3]
25	DEX	45	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
30	CON	40	15-	
25	BODY	30	14-	
25	INT	15	14-	PER Roll 14-
26	EGO	32	14-	ECV: 9
35	PRE	25	16-	PRE Attack: 7d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
22	PD	16		Total: 22 PD (14 rPD)
22	ED	16		Total: 22 ED (14 rED)
5	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
15	REC	6		
60	END	0		
60	STUN	5		
Total Characteristics Cost: 264 (+140 with NCM)				

Movement: Running: 12”/24”
Leaping: 6”/12”
Flight: 20”/40”
Teleportation: 30”/60”

Cost	Powers	END
100	<i>Demonic Powers:</i> Variable Power Pool, 40 base + 20 control cost, Powers Can Be Changed As A Zero-Phase Action (+1), No Skill Roll Required (+1)	var
30	<i>Demonic Weapon:</i> HKA 3d6 (5d6 with STR); OIF (demonic weapon; -½)	4
45	<i>Demonic Claws:</i> HKA 2d6 (3d6+1 with STR), Armor Piercing (+½)	4
45	<i>Demon Powers:</i> Elemental Control, 90-point powers	
49	1) <i>Demonic Blast:</i> Energy Blast 15d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3
63	2) <i>Hellfire Aura:</i> HKA 2½d6, Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (+½), Penetrating (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); No STR Bonus (-½)	0
45	3) <i>Demon Gate:</i> Teleportation 30”, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
14	<i>Demon's Skin:</i> Damage Resistance (14 PD/14 ED)	0
90	<i>Infernal Shield:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50% plus Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75%	0
10	<i>Demonic Mind:</i> Mental Defense (15 points total)	0
10	<i>Demonic Shield:</i> Power Defense (10 points)	0
50	<i>Infernal Form:</i> Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality)	0
27	<i>Demon Wings:</i> Flight 20”; Restrainable (-½)	4
12	<i>Demon's Legs:</i> Running +6” (12” total)	1
10	<i>Demon's Eyes:</i> Infrared Perception and Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group)	0
42	<i>Sense Souls:</i> Detect Life Force 14-, Discriminatory, Analyze, Range, Sense, Targeting, Tracking	0
Skills		
20	+2 Overall	
10	+2 Hand-To-Hand	
3	Concealment 14-	
3	Persuasion 16-	

- 3 Stealth 14-
5 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Whip

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 686

Total Cost: 950

75+ Disadvantages

- 20 Distinctive Features: Aura Of Infernal Evil (Concealable With Effort; Causes Fear)
15 Enraged: if thwarted or tricked (Uncommon), go 11-, recover 11-
0 Physical Limitation: Human Size
15 Physical Limitation: Must Obey Anyone Who Knows Its True Name (Infrequently, Fully Impairing)
15 Physical Limitation: Restricted By Pentagrams, if confined within a pentagram cannot leave or affect anyone or anything outside the pentagram (Infrequently, Fully Impairing)
25 Psychological Limitation: Utterly Evil (Very Common, Total)
20 Psychological Limitation: Overconfidence (Very Common, Strong)
5 Rivalry: Professional (with other Fanged Demons, for power and influence)
25 Susceptibility: to holy places and objects, takes 2d6 damage per Phase demon is on holy ground, in a holy place, or within 1" of a holy object (Common)
735 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 950

Description: Fanged demons are among the most powerful and dangerous in the Netherworld. Each has a large, horned head with a gaping, fang-filled mouth, two arms with three-fingered hands, each finger tipped with a long, sharp talon, and a serpent-like tail instead of legs.



UNBURNED

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	15	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 [2]
12	DEX	6	11-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
10	CON	0	11-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
5	INT	-5	10-	PER Roll 10-
0	EGO	0	—	ECV: N/A
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
6	COM	-2	10-	
5	PD	9		Total: 5 PD (5 rPD)
5	ED	12		Total: 5 ED (5 rED)
2	SPD	0		Phases: 6, 12
7	REC	0		
0	END	-10		
—	STUN	—		
				Total Characteristics Cost: 34 (+5 with NCM)

Movement: Running: 3"/6"
Leaping: 1"/2"

Cost	Powers	END
15	<i>Fangs:</i> HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
18	<i>Claws:</i> HKA 1d6 (2d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Reduced Penetration (-¼)	0
20	<i>Fury Of The Imprisoned Soul:</i> Aid SPD 6d6; Self Only (-½), 2 Charges (-1½)	0
12	<i>Untiring Body:</i> Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) for STR	0
15	<i>Unburned's Body:</i> Does Not Bleed	0
10	<i>Unburned's Body:</i> No Hit Locations	0
45	<i>Unburned's Body:</i> Takes No STUN	0
60	<i>Fire Will Not Touch Him:</i> Armor (20 ED); Only Versus Limited Type Of Attack (Fire; -½)	0
4	<i>Undead Body:</i> +2 PD; Only Protects Against Slashing Or Piercing Attacks (-½)	0
3	<i>Undead Body:</i> +2 PD; Only Protects Against Piercing Attacks (-1)	0
15	<i>Undead Body:</i> Damage Resistance (5 PD/5 ED)	0
50	<i>Undead Vitality:</i> Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality)	0
-6	<i>Slow:</i> Running -3"	
3	<i>Tireless:</i> Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) on Running	0
1	<i>Tireless:</i> Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) on Leaping	0
1	<i>Tireless:</i> Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) on Swimming	0
5	<i>See Life:</i> Infrared Perception (Sight Group)	0
6	<i>Undead Senses:</i> +4 PER with all Senses; Only To Perceive Images Created By Means Other Than Necromancy (-1)	0
5	<i>Tail:</i> Extra Limb, Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)	0

Skills

- 3 Climbing 11-
1 Language: Drakine
3 Stealth 11-
4 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 293

Total Cost: 327

75+ Disadvantages

- 10 Physical Limitation: Affected By Necromancy (has EGO 15 for purposes of necromancy spells, and can be affected by necromancy-based Presence Attacks) (Infrequently, Greatly Impairing)
- 0 Physical Limitation: Human Size
- 15 Physical Limitation: Machine Intelligence (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
- 5 Physical Limitation: Reduced Leap, can only leap 1" (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 222 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 327

Ecology: In the Drakine religion, it is imperative to burn the deceased and reduce his body to ash, that his soul may ascend to the gods. Drakine whose corpses are not burned sometimes return to unlife as Unburned, horrific undead creatures with a hunger for the flesh of the living (particularly Drakine flesh).

Personality/Motivation: An Unburned knows nothing except its craving for the flesh of the living, and perhaps a desire for revenge against those who failed to burn its body properly. Unlike many other types of undead, an Unburned makes a poor guardian or soldier.

Powers/Tactics: In battle, an Unburned uses its powerful fists, or wields weapons. It knows nothing of pain, despair, or surrender.

An Unburned possesses two unusual powers for an undead creature. First, since fire did not burn its body in life, fire cannot bite on its body in unlife. Second, by calling on the fury of its imprisoned soul, an Unburned can temporarily

boost its own swiftness, making it a far deadlier opponent.

Campaign Use: An Unburned is basically a powerful zombie with a cultural twist. Using one instead of a more garden-variety skeleton or mummy helps to distinguish Ambrethel from other Fantasy settings, and may give the players a moment or two of hesitation and doubt.

Appearance: An Unburned is an undead Drakine, with foul, rotting flesh (or sometimes just bones), but its claws and fangs have elongated, giving it an even more horrific appearance. Its eyes burn with an eerie green arcane fire.



SUBJECT MATTER INDEX

This index lists page references for the various subjects covered in this book, such as “History” or “Skills.” For an encyclopedic index of the people, places, organizations, and things of the Turakian Age, please download *The Encyclopaedia Turakiana*, a PDF available for free from the Free Stuff page on the Hero Games website (<http://www.herogames.com/FreeStuff/freedocs.htm>)

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