

ENCYCLOPEDIA Eldonia



A Fantasy Role Playing Campaign Setting

KEITH DONE

ENCYCLOPEDIA



A FANTASY ROLE PLAYING CAMPAIGN SETTING



by
KEITH DONE

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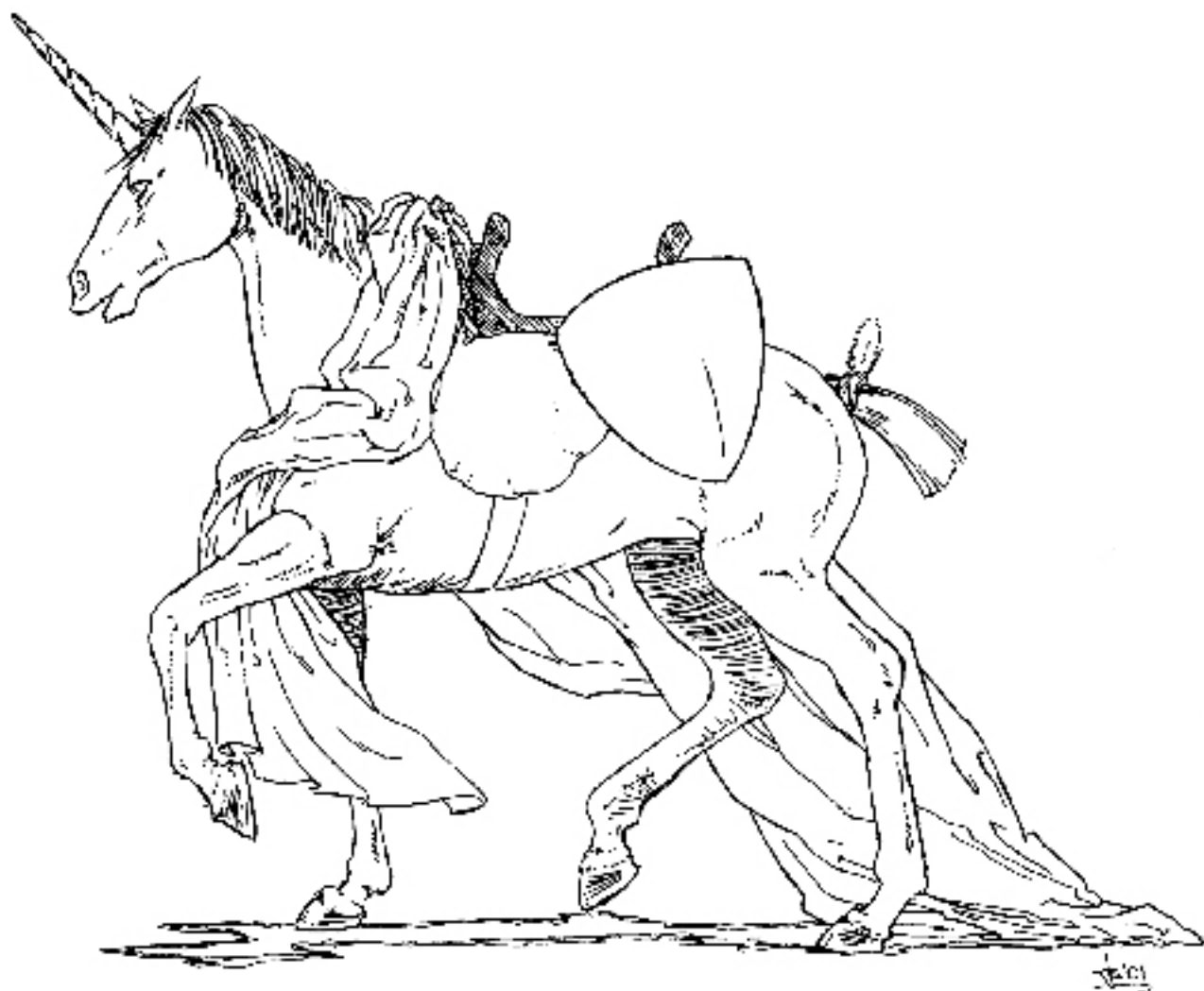
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Dedicated to Kaleece and Alex – the next generation





Etoria



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INTRODUCTION

The contents of this book are the culmination of twenty years of writing as a referee of role-playing games, principally for the fantasy-based genre, although I have had brief forays into horror and science-fiction. The "Encyclopedia Eldoria" is a stand-alone work intended to provide a referee with enough background material to begin running a fantasy role-playing campaign set in Eldoria. There will be other sourcebooks, providing greater detail on such areas as religion and major cities, but all you really need to kick off a campaign is the book you are holding.

The majority of the work concerning Eldoria is original and comes from my own RPG campaigns and from competitive tournaments I have written for Australian games conventions. However, I owe a debt of gratitude to my many friends and colleagues who have enjoyed playing in Eldoria over the past two decades and have encouraged, and continue to encourage me, to design material for my setting.

In many ways, the busy city streets and lonely country lanes of Eldoria have become as familiar to them as their own backyards. Quite a few people have received my blessings to create their own campaigns and tournaments set in Eldoria and, during the process, their numerous ideas and suggestions have crept back into the fabric of Eldoria over the years, becoming an inseparable part of its overall weave.

They have inspired me to build on many of their concepts and therefore this is their book as well as mine. I am truly appreciative of the laughter, tears and the high adventures that we have all shared in Eldoria and in the real world.

In no specific order of I would like to acknowledge the contributions derived from the following people:

Angela Caffrey, Terry Krause, Rob McCord, Malcolm Owen, Nigel Bell, Andrew White, Ken Spinaze, Adrian Mackay, Darren Catton, Mark Garnet, Joe Saina, Geoff Still, Sean Serin, Graham Stocks, Joanne Trim, Russell Proctor and Stephen Done.

Special thanks to:

Kain Whitehouse for his involvement on the Potions and Poisons section.

William Anderson of Comstar for his faith in bringing Eldoria to you, the reader.

Greg Lane, who planted the seed that became Eldoria, all those years ago.

ABOUT THIS PRODUCT

"Encyclopedia Eldoria" contains all the core source material that you need to start a role-playing campaign based in the fantasy realm of Eldoria. It has been written to be easily used in conjunction with most role playing resources and material currently available; the contents of "Encyclopedia Eldoria" being largely descriptive in nature, rather than rules heavy.

You will be able to purchase pre-made adventures and additional resource modules specifically written for Eldoria and you will also be able to integrate non-Eldorian products into the campaign setting, with little difficulty.

Besides this book, you will need the following items to

facilitate play:

RPG Rulebooks

Writing material.

Dice.

Players (of course)!

The rest of this introductory section provides a quick reference to Eldoria, its realms and nuances. It's kind of like a quick snap-shot of the overall campaign world. The remainder of the book is divided into the sections that gradually build a foundation for the Referee (and players) on the modern Eldorian setting.

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The sections are:

Religion

An overview of the Eldorian Pantheon, the religious beliefs of the people, priesthoods and the creation mythos.

History

The historical records of the Darktime and the Redemption up until the year 2150R*.

Geography

An introduction to the realms of the modern world.

Miscellany

Cultural details, racial traits and peculiarities unique to Eldoria.

*I have selected the year 2150R as a starting year for modern Eldorian campaigns as it is a time of political intrigue. Diplomatic ties between the realms of Sard and Elkia are at an all time low and war seems inevitable. The Churches of the Unholy Trinity have been proscribed in most places and have been driven underground, resorting to the establishment of secret temples in remote places; stealing sacrificial victims away in the dead of night. It is a time of uncertainty when villains are trying to seize power and heroes are needed to challenge them.

Now your players can take on the roles of those heroes, enter the world of Eldoria and have endless adventures. There are plenty of hooks to get them started – just turn to the History Section and read through some of the events and political situations occurring across Eldoria's many realms in 2150R.

CONCERNING THE WORLD

"Indeed it would seem that we dwell in a land blessed by the Gods, for only in Eldoria do we see the remaining signs of their divinity, in the power of the Tas which allows us to shape the world according to their great plan".

Abbot Uhsurn Canthrell, of the Church of Ormocea, in his opening address to the Congress of Odressi in 2100R

Somewhere in the Void there exists the star that is called Pharys, so named by scholars who dwell upon the second world

that circles it. That world is called Enshar; one of six bodies that make their paths about the life-giving sun and the only one that harbors life. It is a green, bountiful place dominated by vast oceans, having only two major land masses, one located in the northern hemisphere and one in the southern hemisphere. The southern continent is called Altarren and the northern landmass (which this book deals with in detail) is called Eldoria.

Enshar teems with animal and plant life which is, on the whole, very similar to our own. But in ages past, there were more fantastic creatures that walked the plains, delved in the oceans and crossed the skies of the planet. Most of these were destroyed in the great cataclysm that heralded in an age of chaos known as the Darktime, but some survived, as did the intelligent humanoid races (collectively called the Saahn).

In the countries that make up the continent of modern Eldoria, Humans have come to dominate most regions, particularly the coastlines and rivers that empty into the Greater and Lesser Inner Seas. Other intelligent humanoid races certainly exist, however their numbers are nowhere near that of the populations of the Humans.

The Human cultures are rich and varied, from the hardy Norse-like barbarians of Char-Endl to the exotic desert-dwellers of Y'sira. But while their ways can be very different from one another, they all tend to share a common tongue, set of laws and currency, due to the legacy of the Sardellan Empire. This great Empire colonized or conquered most of the Eldorian continent 700 years ago and, although it began its long decline and eventual disintegration many centuries past, its influences are still strong and seen throughout the Human world today.

The major realms and centers of power that influence Eldoria are detailed as follows:

ELKIA

A cultured and civilized land ruled over by the Lord Protector and the theocracy of the Holy Trinity, the churches that represent the three supreme deities of law and order in the world. Elkia was once a major part of the Homelands belonging to the Sardellan Empire and its people are constantly on guard against the threat of war from their neighbors in Sard.

SARD

Along with Elkia, Sard was once part of the Sardellan Imperial Homelands and is a mountainous land, rich in mineral wealth. It retains a strict feudal-like system of government, with lands divided between powerful lords, most of whom give patronage to the Church of Trezkillian (God of War).

LLAN

A heavily forested land, with large tracts of unexplored territory to the north and west. Llan has been devastated by past civil wars and was occupied by the Sardellan Empire. The country has recently prospered under the control of the mercantile guilds who have largely usurped political control from the old noble houses.

CHAR-ENDL

A frigid tundra with rugged coastlines defined by deep fjords. The Char-Endlese are a semi-nomadic culture with an entrenched clan system. In order to have any status in Char-Endl you must belong to, or marry into, one of the Ten Clans.

The people are followers of the God Hirath, whose icon is the Dragon. Draconic mythology and symbolism play a large part in the culture of the Char-Endlese.

Y'SIRA

Y'sira is a land of great deserts, located in the far south, beyond the Sea of Souls. The Y'siran capitol, Byalliz, is called the City of Thieves and is also the center of power for the Church of Daugron, Goddess of Fire. Y'siran traders travel the seas, selling their exotic produce throughout the ports of the northern realms.

LEEZERIA

The sacred country of the Leezari Elves, who guard its borders from intrusion by all other races. It is a largely unspoiled land of tranquil forest glades and beautiful mountains, with few permanent dwellings, save for its capitol, Tarimthol-Irl and the great learning center of Pharidor's Watch.

The Elves have remained isolated from the rest of Eldoria since the Darktime but have recently begun to have more contact with the world after an alliance was forged with the Human realms to provide aid to the Leezari in their eternal struggle with the Goblinskynd of Ahr-Ganiz.

RHENFARA

Separated from Y'sira by the impenetrable jungles of Po-Ka, in the west, Rhenfara is a land where martial skills are revered almost as an art. The people live in close harmony with the land and are guided by a Druidical order of Ulliah, originally a northern cult that gained a significant following in Rhenfara after they sought sanctuary in the south, following their expulsion from Llan, many centuries ago.

AHR-GANIZ

Ahr-Ganiz is the mountainous, cave-riddled home of the Goblinskynd, who retreated here after their ousting from eastern Leezeria during the Darktime. They are a diverse species, dedicated to retaking Leezeria and exploiting its natural wealth. They have been waging a genocidal war against the Elves for centuries. Most Human and Elven adventurers would only ever enter the dangerous territories of Ahr-Ganiz as an act of desperation.

NORTHLAND

A rustic, underdeveloped country that is noted for its rich agricultural produce. Northland's peaceful inhabitants are protected from Ahr-Ganiz by a unique treaty with the Hlisshicaari, a fierce reptilian race that dwells in the volcanic regions that range across its southern borders.

A monarch and parliamentary council govern the country and a small portion of the population is made up of Halflings.

MARITAAN

This is an arid land, with a geography containing many unusual rock formations, deep canyons and features etched out of the landscape by wind and water, over the ages. The population is a blend of the indigenous Y'naari-Su (a race steeped in ancient traditions and forgotten sciences) and the remnants of the Sardellan colonists who overran the country seven hundred years ago.

A mixing of the two cultures has resulted in the evolution



Eastport, the capitol of Northland, is basically no more than an overgrown village. The royal palace, the Castle of the Rising Sun, appears on a hill in the background

of a very conservative, yet advanced people, with a greater understanding of engineering and chemical sciences; skills that the rest of Eldoria lag behind in due to the reliance on magic to overcome technological problems.

TEMPEST

A city-state located at the heart of the Greater Inner Sea, built on three, small neighboring islands and on a vast network of platforms that have grown up over the sea separating them.

CONCERNING SOCIETY

Religion is perhaps the most influential force across Eldoria, both spiritually and politically. There are twenty-seven recognized deities, not including subservient angels, demons and other such creatures that are said to directly serve the ends of the Gods.

In several countries there is no separation between church and state, governmental control is directly in the hands of ruling clerical orders. Other countries are ruled by secular institutions but still are heavily influenced by the dominant religions in their region. The very fabric of Eldorian society is closely interwoven with the extensive Pantheon of Gods and this will become more evident as you read the historical and political sections contained in this book.

All recorded Human history revolves around a period known as the Darktime. Although scholars cannot be sure, it is thought that this period lasted at least 3000 years. It was an age of barbarism, when society fell apart and reverted to the rule of the strongest. It is remembered dimly as a time of unceasing conflict, worldwide famine and plague, a period when sorcery went unchecked and brought terror and destruction down upon the population.

Very few records were made during the Darktime and it seems that many of the writings that existed in the more enlightened ages prior to then, were deliberately sought out and destroyed as a result of a backlash against magic and those who practiced arcane arts. The common man came to revile knowledge of the ancient cultures and the Sorcerers of the world were eventually cast down.

The Darktime is defined as beginning with the Last Battle, a

monumental conflict between the Gods, resulting in their withdrawal from the mortal world. Prior to the Last Battle, the Saahn were drawn into a Divine civil war and suffered greatly as a consequence.

The Darktime ended with the discovery of the Three Books of Law by the Prophet Samroth. This event was called the Redemption and is said to have heralded in a new age of civilization, perceived as a second chance for the Saahn; the common belief being, that if the mortal races show sufficient faith, the Gods will return to the world again.

Accordingly, chronological dates of the Human calendar are denoted by 'R' or 'D'. The date 2113R means 2113 years after the Redemption. The date 2113D means 2113 years prior to the Darktime. Some of the non-Human races, noticeably the Elves, measure time with their own calendar systems.

CONCERNING NONHUMANS

Besides Humans, who control most of Eldoria, there are three other major races of humanoids in the world. Collectively, all these races are known as the Saahn:

ELVES

Known as the Leezari in their language, the Elves (as a nation) occupy Leezeria and have dwelled apart from other realms in Eldoria, dissuading Humans from intruding into their domain. Only in the last 200 years have they begun to have more contact with the 'outside' world, making alliances with the nations of the Greater Inner Sea and inviting Humans to settle their eastern frontiers.

Elves are essentially immortal, but few remain active beyond the age of 500 Human years. Between the ages of 350 and 500, most Elves succumb to a condition known as Priatharia, whereby they enter a permanent trance-like state, their body remaining perfectly preserved.

DWARVES

Also known as the Stonekin, the Dwarves have largely come to dwell amongst the cities of the Humans, typically working as smiths or masons. They are a people in transit, conscious of losing touch with their old ways.

Tales tell that, before the Darktime, the Dwarves once dwelled in the west, in grand underground halls, mining the depths of the world. Then some unknown rift between their clans drove many of the Stonekin eastward, to the lands of Men, where they tried to re-establish their ancient homes.

But the mines delved in the mountains throughout eastern Eldoria were a pale imitation of their cities of old and, over the centuries; successive generations have abandoned their traditions, deserting the mines to take up residence amongst the Humans.

Still, the grandeur of their lost heritage calls them and the Dwarves are a sad folk, lamenting over songs and stories of a forgotten age. Some heed the call and undertake the long pilgrimage to the west, to search for signs of Zarkanda-Zahl, the First Kingdom of the Dwarven Lords.

GOBLINKYND

This is a term for all intelligent, humanoid creatures (Goblins, Orcs, Ogres, Lizardmen etc.) normally considered belligerent to Humans. One of the few records that survived the Darktime tells of a climatic battle in which the strength of the Goblinkynd was broken and they were driven into the mountains for ever after.

They exist in small numbers throughout most of the modern world, hiding in secret labyrinths or caverns on the fringes of Human civilization. As a more formidable threat, they have evolved into a disunited nation in the mountainous lands of Ahr-Ganiz on the borders of the Elven lands, where they are numbered in the millions.

OTHER RACES

Other intelligent races (such as Gnomes and Halflings) exist in Eldoria but not in significant numbers that would constitute a nation. The realms of the Humans have eclipsed many of

these lesser people, who now dwell in secret or in more isolated regions.

More details of all races can be found in the section, "Miscellany".

CONCERNING MAGIC

Eldoria is often referred to as the Arcane Realm, a place where hidden super-physical powers exist that common-folk refer to as 'magic.' This unseen energy source is known as the Tas by more learned people. It permeates all living and non-living material and there are those skilled individuals who have discovered ways of drawing upon the Tas; allowing them to use its forces to create desired effects.

All sages agree that every practitioner of magic draws upon the Tas, regardless of the way that they tap its source. Although its energy permeates the very air that the Saahn breathe, it is strongest in the inner regions of Eldoria. The further away you progress from Eldoria's heartlands, the weaker the Tas becomes, until it is virtually non-existent in the Outlands of the Eldorian continent. Nobody knows exactly why this is so and it continues to remain a mystery, baffling the highest masters of the College of Arcane Science.

Despite the tyrannical reign of feuding Sorcerers that occurred in the Darktime, it was magic that ultimately enabled the devastated races of the Saahn to survive that terrible period. Naturally, civilization re-emerged in the more central parts of the continent, where magic gave Clerics and Wizards the upper hand in overcoming the difficulties that the new kingdoms faced. Even today, the population of Eldoria is still clustered around the middle of continent, about its Inner Seas, and only small, less advanced communities dwell in the areas bordering the vast open oceans beyond.



Both Clerics and Wizards create spell-forms by connecting the latent energy field of their personal aura with the Tas; an immense reserve of background energy that permeates all things.

The common person is well aware of magic existing alongside the rest of the natural forces of the world, although they have little idea how the Tas works (just like most people do not understand the physics involved in a nuclear explosion but know of its effects). The ability to tap the powers of the Tas remains limited to a very small part of the population, making magic an uncommon event but not something that the 'mundane' folk are totally unfamiliar with. Most people in the cities and surrounding regions have witnessed acts of magic once or twice in their lives.

There are two main divergent understandings of how the Tas may be sourced – the ways of the Wizard and the Cleric. Both disciplines use magic but their way of accessing the Tas and harnessing its power have evolved along very different lines. The method used by Wizards evolved in the golden age before the Darktime and it is thought that those who commanded the magic arts back then, wielded power significantly greater than modern Wizards. Certainly, magical constructs and artifacts made prior to the Darktime still function today and such devices are

exceedingly difficult for contemporary artificers to understand, let alone duplicate.

Wizardry involves a pseudo-science that forges a link with the Tas by a series of harmonic and manipulative distortions of the field. These techniques take the form of simple utterances of ritualized vocals and the weaving of set patterns with the hands. These are called Spells or Incantations. They cause the surrounding Tas energy to flow into the caster's aura, a natural field generated by all living creatures that is our connection to the Tas.

The invoker of the Tas triggers the desired outcome with similar vocal utterances used to draw the energy. Sometimes the presence of small amounts of specific organic or inorganic materials is required to assist with the translation of certain Spells. Likewise, the presence of large quantities of certain materials, particularly metals, inhibits contact with the Tas.



RELIGION

GENERAL OUTLINE

"Be it known that the Realm of Talyssar is the abode of many beings of great power but only the Divine Twenty-Seven are the creators; the children of Kalidath, who traveled far from their sacred home to make our world.

Beware imitators and interlopers lest they sway you from the true path"

Chapter Ninety-Seven, Verse Six of the First Book of Law.

A WORLD OF MANY GODS

Religion permeates all levels of Eldorian society, with twenty-seven deities making up the Pantheon. In addition, there are countless lesser Divine beings, called the Uushai, who have existed prior to the coming of the Saahn and were specifically made to serve the Gods during the time that they labored to fashion the world. The Uushai include such legendary figures as the great eagles, Kezrinn and Far-Eye, who serve Sé and the Muses, who do Ahridaar's bidding.

The Gods are called the Theledai in the High Tongue (High Tongue also being known as Uushai as the servants of the Gods taught this language to the Saahn). Each Theledai governs a certain sphere of influence that touches the lives of mortals; for example, Sé is the Goddess of the Sky, Faar is the Goddess of Agriculture and Ormocea is the God of Law.

The Pantheon is ordered so that there are nine 'Great Houses', each containing a 'mother and father Deity' and their single offspring. Each grouping thus contains three deities who generally share similar spheres of influence, although this is not strictly the case in all Houses. A breakdown of the Great Houses appears at the end of this section.

All of the twenty-seven Gods are considered to be real beings worshipped to varying degrees – some by large congregations, others by isolated cults. There is no 'disbelief' in each other's Gods and, although most people concentrate their worship on one particular Deity (usually passed on by family tradition), it is not uncommon to offer the occasional blessing to another member of the Pantheon.

For instance, a farmer may pay homage to Faar but, in time of drought, he may make an offering at the Sé temple for rain. This is acceptable to varying degrees depending upon the alignment of the religions involved and the standing arrangements between individual churches. As a general rule of thumb, Good religions forbid their followers from making any offerings to Evil religions and vice-versa. Neutral religions are governed by individual agreements with other Churches.

Belief in the myriad number of deities has had an overall effect of disunity upon Eldoria. Although it was initially a stabilizing factor that ended the Darktime, the proliferation of opposed religions has been one of two major contributing factors in the retardation of the social and scientific advancement of the world, the other being the reliance on magic and magical

devices.

The Gods govern all affairs, through their priesthoods, and these institutions tend to be very conservative and slow to embrace new ideas.

COMMON BELIEFS

Eldoria's twenty-seven religious institutions often have belief systems and morality tales that conflict with each others' version of Divine history. This is due to the doctrine of each Church being formulated from a combination of three main sources:

Rituals and tales that survived the Darktime intact.

The information contained within the Books of Law.

Dogma provided by prophets following the discovery of the Books.

It goes without saying that there are different accounts of Pre-Redemption events, which can be very confusing for historians. Theologians have sifted through the biblical works of all nine Houses and agree that the beliefs described in the following section forms the base of what is common to all Churches.

Where the Gods Reside

Most of what the clergy teaches its particular flock has been gleaned from the Three Books of Law, supplemented by folk tales and the views of individual prophets and interpreters of the Books.



The House of the Waters – Gurthor the Sea God and Liraan, Goddess of Rivers and Lakes are depicted in the foreground and Se, Goddess of the Sky stands behind them

The Theledai are the most powerful entities known to exist to the Saahn and are unique in that they all originated

from Kalidath, the First Heaven, a place that the Books of Law describe as an 'otherworldly realm.' It is beyond mortal reach; its distance cannot even be conceived by the most astute mathematicians of the temple of Theydori.

The Books go on to describe that the Gods of Kalidath exist in far greater numbers, but the Divine Twenty-Seven are the only Theledai ever to have entered the Prime Material Plane and made the great journey to establish a Second Heaven on the world of Enshar.

The Books also tell that, although the Gods created the world of Enshar and dwelled there for many millennia, they departed long ago and have not been abroad in the world for over 5000 years. All religions relate the same tale; that the retreat from the world by the Theledai was due to a terrible conflict that arose between rival Gods, which involved the mortal world as well.

It ended with the Gods bringing about their own downfall and banishment from the Enshar. They broke a number of their own fundamental laws and covenants, weakening their ability to remain in the world. Ultimately, they destroyed the Weiriding Stone, an artifact that gave them corporeal form and essence, resulting in the loss of their ability to exist in the Prime Material Plane. The Gods were thus removed forever from Enshar, bringing about the Darktime, the period of chaos that swept away the enlightened First Age of Eldoria.

As a result, they retreated to their only remaining sanctuary of Tarrisada, their heavenly domain that lay close to Enshar but outside its plane of existence. Here, they resolved to return to their original home of Kalidath but first they would have to sleep for many eons in order to regain the energy needed to traverse the great distance home to the First Heaven. So it is that the religions of the world busy themselves to heal the rifts of the past and return the Saahn of Eldoria to the worship of the Gods, ensuring that the Saahn find their place in Tarrisada and eventually come to gaze upon the holiest of all places, Kalidath.

Current theological belief of all Churches follows the dictum that those mortals who are faithful to the Gods will find their path to Tarrisada and so will gain passage to the First Heaven when

the Theledai awaken and abandon Enshar for good. By raising the level of devotion by mortals to the deities of the Pantheon, the Saahn will be able to rouse the Gods from their long slumber and so bring about the Awakening.

The clergy dedicate themselves to that most holy of days when the Gods will eventually be renewed and their most holy servants will join them in their great trek, traversing the Great Shadow on the final voyage to Kalidath.

Afterlife

As mentioned above, the Gods each maintain a separate domain of existence, located in a Plane known as Tarrisada, a sanctuary to which their essence returns if their link within the Prime Material Plane is compromised. If a mortal Saahn receives the Ritual of Recognition from their Church and remains sufficiently faithful to their God, after they die, their soul will be able to reach Tarrisada and they will serve the Uushai, the lesser Gods who maintain Tarrisada while the Gods sleep. The Uushai guard the resting form of their patron Deity in the afterlife, also awaiting the time of the Awakening.

When a mortal dies, their soul is drawn into the Tween-world, the place that exists as a kind of 'neutral zone' between divergent planes of existence. The Tween-world that connects Enshar to the other Known Realities takes the form of a vast Unending Sea and the souls of the Saahn translate there after death. It is like a main road that has exits to all other Planes.

To reward the faithful, the Gods passed on the Ritual of Recognition to their ancient high priests whom worshipped them at the Dawn of Time. After death, the Recognition Mark remains bound with the essence of the soul, extending the consciousness of a mortal, giving them greater capacity to continue the journey to the Tarrisada and so enter the afterlife.

In the Tween-World, the spirits of the dead are buoyed in the supernatural 'waters' of the Unending Sea. Those souls whose devotion is true, perceive a distant light shaped in the form of their Recognition symbol. By swimming toward this Divine beacon, the faithful reach the domain of their Patron God.

However, many, whose devotion wavers, are unable to



Shadowland, where the Goddess Sirrieth was imprisoned by the other Theledai in the Twilight Years. One way that mortals can find Heaven is to traverse her terrible realm via the Gray Road

traverse the great distance required to reach the safety of the Tarrisada. Instead, they linger, floating atop the waters of the Tween-World, retaining their previous form, their memories slowly fading. As their consciousness departs, they sink beneath the surface of the Unending Sea and their form dissipates, until they succumb to a state of absolute nothingness. Others are drawn away from the Light and befall other fates.

Shadowland

A danger that exists in the Unending Sea, that is a major obstacle to the Souls of the Saahn reaching Tarrisada, is the presence of Shadowland. This is a prison, in which the Goddess Sirth was condemned. Resembling a vast island, with sheer, unassailable outer cliffs, it is similar in nature to one of the protective domains of the Tarrisada but wards were set about it by the Theledai to specifically prevent Sirth translating between it and the Prime Material Plane. Ironically, the rest of the Pantheon now finds itself in the same position as Sirth, imprisoned within their respective sanctuaries of the Tarrisada, due to their own actions.

The full tale of Sirth is related in the next section of this book, the First Age: the Dawn of Time. In summary, Sirth is able to lure the Souls of the Saahn to Shadowland using a powerful glammer that convinces the unwary that her domain is the Heaven that they truly seek. Those whom enter Shadowland become her servants, should they stray from the safety of the Gray Road, which traverses her land. However, if they are strong-willed and resolute, they can pass through Shadowland and so come to their Tarrisada, by means of a portal that was made at the heart of Sirth's thralldom.

In essence, there are two paths to Tarrisada, equally fraught with peril; mortals can seek Heaven by traversing the waters of the Unending Sea or by walking the Gray Road of Shadowland.

It is written that, when the time of the Awakening comes, the Gods will break the wards of Shadowland, freeing Sirth. She will have domain over the world of Enshar and all those Saahn who remained unfaithful to the Gods and never found Tarrisada.

PRIESTS AND MAGIC

Many role-playing campaign settings feature Clerics or Priests as character classes and all are capable of casting magic spells. Not so, in Eldoria.

Only a few members of the clergy in Eldorian religions are capable of spell-casting. Certain people are blessed with such a devout belief in their Deity that they can access the Tas using sheer force of will. Like the science of Wizardry, sometimes vocals, gestures and a focus (like a holy symbol) help in the translation of Spells (called Miracles or Divine Renderings amongst the clergy). However, it must be stressed that, in the case of a Cleric, it is the strength of the individual's persona that is the primary cause of interaction with the Tas, using the age-old ways laid down by the priesthoods.

When playing in Eldoria, Referees should be conscious of the way magic works within the priesthoods. They should limit the number of Clerical characters in their campaign who use Spells to players and a few senior Priests of any individual temple. As an example, the Ormocean Church in Odressi (the

largest temple in Eldoria) houses some 350 clerics. Of these, twenty-five are Seervaati and only eight of these are above level 3 in ability.

Clerics draw Tas energy to create Spells in a distinctively different way than the manner in which Wizards and Sorcerers access the Tas, evidenced by the fact that Clerics can translate the power into a Miracle despite direct contact with large amounts of metal (e.g. the wearing of armor) that would otherwise interfere with the process.

The official title for a Cleric who is able to perform Miracles is a Seervaati (vessel of God's power) and all religions make concerted attempts to unearth potential talents by testing each new acolyte who enters service within a temple. In some religions (e.g. the Church of Pharidor) all ordained Clerics must be Seervaati.

Certain basic ritual invocations (typified by Orisons) are taught to all acolytes and some individuals are able to translate the Tas and 'test positive' for the potential to learn the higher divine rituals of their Church. These gifted few are given an immediate elevated status above other acolytes and are allowed certain freedoms to set their own goals and agenda within the framework of their order. Thus, Seervaati are free to wander the lands pursuing their own specific theological goals, while most other members of their Church are 'temple-bound', maintaining the administrative and preaching duties that their religion requires.

Most Churches maintain a special chapter within their ranks for the purpose of discovering Seervaati. These orders are referred to as Seercandum and are usually made up of talents drawn from the senior Seervaati. Their task is three-fold; to identify potential Seervaati by testing their ability to use Orisons, to maintain the rituals and reliquary of the Church and to regularly test identified Seervaati to see if they are powerful enough to be admitted to a higher circle of the Seercandum (and thus be introduced to their secrets and higher level rituals).

In game terms, if a Cleric has enough experience points to warrant an advance in level, first they must be initiated into a higher order of their Church by the Seercandum. The Seercandum are the keepers of the sacred texts and train worthy Seervaati in the next level of spells. This process can take several weeks.

Note that most Seercandum and their sacred texts exist only in the larger temples (usually in the cities) so a player who is a Cleric cannot suddenly gain access to spells in Eldoria while traveling in the wilderness; they must seek out the temples that have the resources to provide the training they require.

RECOGNITION

This is a common ritual performed by most religions, by which a person is made known to one Deity who will be their patron throughout their lifetime (although, on rare occasions, individuals may seek to take up Recognition with new Deity).

The Recognition ceremony takes place before, or on, the child's first birthday and is usually attended by the parents or the legal guardians. In many realms it is socially unacceptable not to be Recognized and carries a similar connotation as being a child born out of wedlock in our society.

Often, an unrecognized person will be unable to own land or become a member of a guild. A worse crime is claiming to be

Recognized when you are not. If discovered, by means of a Read Aura Spell, an Unrecognized person can run afoul of Ormocean Law and face stiff fines or imprisonment.

The Recognition ceremony is carried out by a Seervaati of the Church. Since the number of Clerics who are practicing Seervaati is not great, Recognition ceremonies are mainly held en masse, in summer, during a week-long time of celebration, called the Recognition Festival.

Several mainstream religions follow this example and hold similar group ceremonies over the same period. During this time, there is a pilgrimage of devotees who flock to the temples from the countryside to have their children Recognized. Some orders hold Recognition rituals at other times of the year (e.g. the Sirth and Xullia Churches hold their respective ceremonies in the March of Darkness, in winter).

The Seervaati uses the Orison Recognition to place a distinguishing mark into the aura of a person. This mark is referred to as a Stigma. The aura, itself, is an invisible energy field that surrounds all living, sentient beings. A trained Seervaati can see the aura as a field of radiant colors using the Orison, Read Aura.

It is considered by all theologians that, when a Recognized person dies, the mark placed upon them is seen by the Guardians of the Holy Houses and that this mark identifies them, allowing their souls passage into the Tarrisada of their patron Deity.

In the mundane world, Recognition allows you the privilege of entering the temple of your patron Deity. The follower of one particular patron may also have free access to other temples, depending on the relationship of their Church with other religions and those that they may have formal agreements with. Usually, at the very least, you will have access to the temples of all the religions within the same House grouping.

All of this does not mean that some magical force prevents you from entering a temple of a Deity that you are not Recognized to. Neither does it mean that Seervaati are continually acting like 'Recognition Police,' on the look out for intruders lurking in their congregational meetings. It is just good etiquette to ask for permission to enter a 'foreign' church if you are not Recognized to its Deity.

Once Recognized to a Deity, it is possible to 'swap' Patron Gods but this can be difficult and expensive! Most of the larger, well-established religions are signatories to the Merdarrian Accord. This was an agreement worked out by the Congress of Odressi (a religious council) to govern how Churches should deal with inter-denominational matters. Basically, the Accord states that a person can only ever have one Patron Deity at any one time but they can seek to 'transfer' to a new Patron provided certain guidelines are met. These include:

- An agreed tithe being paid to the old Patron Church by the new one (usually a minimum fee of 50 gold trades).
- The removal of the Stigma by the old Patron Church.

Although many Churches are signatories to the Merdarrian Accord there are exceptions (mainly cults) and these allow transfer of patronage by their own rules and according to ever-changing alliances.

NEW ORISONS

These two new Orisons (0 Level Cleric Spells) are reflective of the institution of Recognition to a Patron Deity, as practiced by most religions in Eldoria.



The Orison Read Aura is used mainly to distinguish that a person is indeed a true member of a Church, although it also has other subtle uses in determining basic traits of a person from reading their aura. Referees should be aware that the introduction of this spell does not mean there are 'aural police' hanging about temples, ensuring that only true believers cross the threshold. Seervaati are too few and far between to be involved in such mundane and exhaustive practices. However, the Orison would be used before allowing persons unknown to a Church access to its more private areas or sacred texts.

The Orison, Recognition, places a distinct Stigma into the aura of a subject and is the main device used to identify one to their Church and God. It is difficult to place such a Stigma into an unwilling person, although not impossible. A person can only have one Recognition stigma at any one time.

Read Aura

Divination

Level: Clr0, Drd0, Pal1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched.

Duration: One round

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: No

The aura is an invisible energy field that surrounds all living, sentient beings and is said to be a reflection of the soul.

Read Aura allows the caster to visualize the aura as a nimbus of radiant colors and determine some basic trait about the subject(s) as determined by the Referee.

Searching the aura is a move-equivalent action. A character would be able to cast the spell and spend the rest of the round perceiving one trait of the subject. The caster should nominate what they are looking for otherwise the Referee determines the overriding trait that can be distinguished.

Typical traits that can be seen in an aura:

- Any abilities that are currently subject to permanent or temporary ability loss.
- Negative energy levels.
- Disposition (friendly, unfriendly, hostile etc)
- If the subject is under the influence of any mind-based compulsion such as Charm or Domination.
- If the subject is CE or LG in alignment (it only picks out extremes).
- One of the skills of the subject
- The Character Class of the subject.
- Familiar Recognition Stigmata (see Recognition Spell).

Recognition

Transmutation

Level: Clr0, Drd0, Pal1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched.

Duration: Until removed

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: No

This spell places a distinguishable mark (called a Stigma) into a creature's invisible aura, which can be seen by anyone using Read Aura.

It is usually used by Clerics as a form of baptism, marking a follower of their religion so that the servants of their Deity recognize their soul in the afterlife.

By placing this mark, religions can be assured that someone who claims to be a follower of their God can be identified as such. The Recognition Stigmata of various religions are all different and kept a guarded secret so the caster of the spell can usually only recognize the Stigma of their own Church. Other Stigmata appear as part of the natural aura and cannot be discerned.

In other words, the Orison Read Aura detects a 'positive' but cannot distinguish between 'negatives' to provide a clearer picture.

The aura does not easily accept a Stigma, unless the subject is relaxed and willing to embrace the 'mark'. Recognition is usually performed in early childhood, when the infant is easily receptive to the Orison. A Will Save bonus of +4 applies to any unwilling target of Recognition. Only one Recognition Mark can be in place at any one time.



A Recognition Mark is placed into the aura of children at a young age and is a means of identifying someone who claims to be sworn to a particular faith. Only one Recognition Mark can be contained in the aura at time.

THE PANTHEON

THE HOLY HOUSES

As mentioned already, the Theledai are ordered into nine groups of three, each represented as mother, father and offspring Deity. These groupings are known as the Holy Houses of the Gods. The religious institutions that preach the gospels within the same House are usually on good terms with each other or have some form of alliance.

The Holy Houses are:

House of Wisdom Alignment: Lawful Good

The House of Wisdom is also known as the Holy Trinity across Human realms.

Ormocea Lord of Righteousness, the Arbitrator of the Gods, the Law Giver
Domains: Law/Good/Protection.
Appearance: A middle-aged bearded man with prismatic eyes.

Esmia Lady of the Tranquil Hand, Bride of Unfettered Tears, the Healer
Domains: Healing/Good/Protection
Appearance: A woman attired in white, usually depicted cradling a child.

Siritar The Golden Warrior, Champion of Heaven, Lord of Paladins
Domains: Strength/Good/Protection
Appearance: A young golden-haired man attired in silver armor

House of Secrets Alignment: Neutral Good

Theydori (Keeper of Hidden Secrets, Knower of All Things, God of the Mind)
Domains: Knowledge/Magic/Law
Appearance: A wizened old man, clutching a small wooden casket.

Gaien (The Holy Mother, the Mystery Immaculate, the Fertile Hand)
Domains: Knowledge/Protection/Trickery
Appearance: A matronly woman, usually represented standing beneath a stone arch.

Priath (Lord of Time, the Dreamweaver, the Silent God)
Domains: Knowledge/Magic/Travel
Appearance: A sylph-like youth shrouded in mist.

House of Life Alignment: Chaotic Good

Ahridaar (The Wanderer, the Lord of Supper, the Great Muse)
Domains: Travel/Luck/Good
Appearance: A stout man dressed in a colorful robe holding a harp.

Faar (The Queen of the Harvest, the Sower of Seeds)
Domains: Earth/Plant/Air
Appearance: One of four seasonal incarnations; Daughter Spring, Mother Summer, Lady Autumn and Winter Widow.

Rhioria (Goddess of Beauty, the Dancer at Dawn, Lady of Hearts)
Domains: Strength/Luck/Protection
Appearance: An unnaturally beautiful young woman who is accompanied by her Uushai Unicorn guardian, Astrellin.

House of Light Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Tarimth (The Lost God, Lord of the Elves, the Star Begotten)
Domains: Knowledge/Luck/Magic
Appearance: A winged Elven male with ebony skin.

Phelltar (The Maker, Lady of the First and Second Born, Queen of Light)
Domains: Protection/Knowledge/Strength
Appearance: A female humanoid with a featureless mirror-like skin.

Pharidor (Herald of the Dawn, the Golden Serpent, God of the Sun)
Domains: Sun/Air/Protection
Appearance: A gold-scaled winged serpent with the head of a male Elf.

House of the Land Alignment: Neutral

Ulliah (Lord of Forests, the Green King, the Herder of Trees)
Domains: Plant/Earth/Strength
Appearance: A tree-like humanoid

Yhancia (The Maker of the Stonekin, Queen of the Mountains, Watcher On High)
Domains: Earth/Fire/Law
Appearance: A heavy-set female with a third eye in her forehead.

Hirath (The Beastlord, King of Animals, the Great Shepherd)
Domains: Animal/Earth/Travel
Appearance: A shaggy-haired man robed in skins. Hirath also takes the form of a Black Dragon.

House of Waters Alignment: Chaotic Neutral

Gurthor (The Sea God, Ruler of the Five Seas, the Dweller in the Deep)
Domains: Water/Chaos/Travel
Appearance: A man with an octopoid head.

Liraan (The Wader in the Reeds, Goddess of Rivers and Lakes, the Crystal Queen)
Domains: Water/Law/Travel
Appearance: A woman whose skin continually runs with water. Her long hair is intertwined with water reeds.

Sé (The Stormbringer, Wielder of the Bright Spear, Lady of the Clouds)
Domains: Air/Chaos/Water
Appearance: A coltish young woman with wild hair, often accompanied by her Uushai companions; two eagles, Kezrinn and Far-Eye.

House of Power Alignment: Lawful Evil

Trezkillian (Wielder of the Thirsting Sword, God of War, the Dread King)
Domains: Law/War/Destruction
Appearance: An armored humanoid with the head of a serpent, Trezkillian has four arms; holding a mace, axe, spear and sword.

Daugron (Queen of Fire, the Soulburner, the Waster of Lands)
Domains: Law/Fire/Destruction
Appearance: A skeletal woman wreathed in fire.

Imaar (Master of the True Path, Bane of Wizards, Wielder of the Secret Arts)
Domains: Magic/Chaos/Trickery
Appearance: A sphere of scintillating blue energy.

House of Shadows Alignment: Neutral Evil

Xullia (Master of Fear, the Lurker in the Shadows, Lord of the Dark)
Domains: Evil/Trickery/Magic
Appearance: An area of complete darkness in which are two green glowing eyes.

Sirrith (The Pale Lady, Queen of Death, Mistress of Shadowland)
Domains: Death/Evil/Knowledge
Appearance: A white-skinned gaunt woman with ram's horns.

Tiea (The Trickster, Goddess of Thieves, the Luckchild)
Domains: Trickery/Luck/Evil
Appearance: A girl of about twelve years, usually shown with a stiletto blade concealed behind her back.

House of Doom Alignment: Chaotic Evil
The House of Doom is also known as the Unholy Trinity across Human realms.

Sadir (The Destroyer, the Raving God, the Great Enemy)
Domains: Destruction/Chaos/Evil
Appearance: A warped humanoid with crystalline growths protruding from his flesh.

Yaarneya (The Whore of Heaven, the Temptress, the Corrupter of Hearts)
Domains: Chaos/Evil/Travel
Appearance: A voluptuous woman from head to waist, with the lower body of a great white worm.

Kharic-Ohrm (The Plague Lord, God of Pestilence, Master of the Festering Hand)
Domains: Evil/Death/Trickery
Appearance: A humanoid figure with an insect-like head and limbs.



The House of Doom From left to right, Sadir the Destructor, God of Chaos; Yaarneya, the Corruptor of Hearts, Goddess of Entropy and Kharic-Ohrm, the Plague Lord, God of Pestilence. Collectively they are also known as the Unholy Trinity. Worship of the Churches of the House of Doom has been proscribed in most realms since 2105R.

THE FIRST AGE: THE DAWN OF TIME

“A great hall of polished stone and liquid light was fashioned at the heart of Godshome as a place where the Theledai could meet to share their visions or to air their grievances before Lord Ormocea. Twenty-seven great thrones were placed about the wide space of the hall, each wrought in a manner that reflected the dominion of its owner, and behind each throne stood a great arch, a portal to the personal realm of a God, a doorway to one of the many heavens, so to speak.”

Taken from the First Book of Law, “The Tales of the Theledai, Heaven in the Waking World”, Chapter Three, Verse Three.

This section contains a summary of what is known about the Gods and their interaction with the Saahn, during their time spent on Enshar, eons ago. Many aspects of the following tale are subject to debate and reinterpretation by specific races and religions (for instance the Stonekin place much more emphasis on Yhancia and her actions within the various stories of the Pantheon). But, overall the information contained here represents the common religious tales that are known and believed in by most mortals.

The time when the Gods actually inhabited Enshar and had day-to-day dealings with the Saahn, is referred to as the First Age of Eldoria. The cataclysm that followed, the Darktime, is called the Second Age and the Third Age, the Redemption, commenced with the discovery of the Books of Law.

The First Age itself, has three distinct periods; the time when the Gods alone dwelled in Enshar (often called the Dawn of Time), the time when the Saahn were brought into being and lived in harmony with the Gods (the Twilight Years) and the time when the Gods fought with the Saahn and amongst themselves (the War of Power).

It is thought that Eldorian civilization reached its zenith during the Twilight Years and that knowledge of science and magic in modern Eldoria is a mere shadow of what it was in those halcyon days.

TALES OF THE GODS

Most of the stories of what occurred in the Dawn of Time, when only the Gods dwelled within Enshar, are drawn directly from the First Book of Ormocean Law, although several other writings that survived the Darktime have also been accepted and included as embellishments to the original text of the great books, along with various interpretations of the texts by clerical scholars.

What follows is a condensed version of the eight major sections of the First Book that make up the history of the Gods.

Of The Theledai and the Tas

“And beyond the confines of paradise there lay unordered chaos and the High Lords looked upon its vast expanse and saw nothing of value that lay therein and they turned away and

bent their purpose to the Realm of Kalidath. But there were those amongst the High Lords who perceived from afar a light that shone in the chaos, like the dim flickering of a candle flame and they wished to go forth and fan that flame and help it blaze brightly like their own realm.”

Chapter One, Verse Thirty-Two of the First Book of Law.

Whereas the world of Enshar resides within the Material Universe, scholars have evidence that there are other realms of existence that coincide with our own and, indeed, it is claimed that Mages and Seervaati have visited these other realms from time to time during the First Age. Permanent gateways once united these separate worlds but most of these were sealed during the War of Power. These worlds are called the Known Realities and, of all the places charted and documented by the wise, only one Reality has remained beyond the reach of mortal Saahn – Kalidath, the First Heaven, the realm in which the Gods were born.

In the beginning there was only Kalidath and the Gods that dwelled within Kalidath were many. From within their realm they looked out upon the chaos beyond, that was called Talyssar, the Great Shadow. Most of the Gods perceived nothing in that vast emptiness that lay outside of Kalidath and so they concerned themselves with affairs within their own boundaries.

The Gods born of Kalidath had a shape and consciousness suited to their own realm and could not easily enter the chaos of Talyssar. To do so they had to translate themselves into forms that could exist in the alternate realities. This was a permanent change and in doing so their powers and abilities would be diminished. It is no wonder that the High Lords of Kalidath did not wish to concern themselves with Talyssar and what lay beyond.

But there were those amongst the Gods who studied Talyssar for a great time and they perceived that, at the very limits of the Universe, there was a power, an energy that was much the same as that which gave Kalidath its existence. It called to them over immeasurable miles, beckoning like a flame to a moth. Those who came to hold a fascination for this other power were called the Theledai and they named the power that lay beyond Talyssar, the Tas.

The Theledai were made up of nine Aercharns (a form of family) represented by a ‘mother’ and ‘father’ entity and an offspring resulting from their union. In total, they numbered twenty-seven and their leader was Ormocea the wise. He wasthe most learned in the physical and metaphysical laws of the Known Realities.

He pondered long and hard on the difficulties the Theledai faced in realizing their dream to conquer the vastness of Talyssar. The distance that separated Kalidath and the Tas was so great that it would take many ages of time to traverse the Great Shadow and the Theledai would deplete much of their strength in just undertaking the journey there.

Once they translated themselves into a form suited for existing in Talyssar they could remain there for many eons but, like a diver in the ocean, they had to eventually return to Kalidath

to restore their spiritual strength. If they did not do this, they would eventually lose their immortality and Divine powers.

In collaboration with Theydori and Priath, Ormocea devised a solution to the Theledai's dilemma. The Twenty-Seven would make the crossing of Talyssar and they would not return to Kalidath. They would devote their quest to shaping the distant Tas to their will and making a new home, a Second Heaven on the far-side of the Universe. It would be an all or nothing effort.

And so it was that the Theledai set forth across the Great Shadow together, in a fleet of silver Sailing Stars, intent on a similar purpose - to enter Talyssar and seek out this power that called to them. Upon leaving Kalidath they each assumed a form that could exist within the Material Universe trusting that their great number would make up for the strength that they would lose as part of the translation process. In the beginning, their form was the same; a humanoid shape that all Gods wore when they entered the Material Universe, but later, as they came to identify with aspects of what would become their new home, the Theledai adopted a wide array of forms, though most bore aspects of the primal humanoid shape.

The Theledai's voyage across the expanse of Talyssar seemed endless and many of them allowed Priath to weave a spell of sleep upon them so that their vigor would remain more intact. Not so three of the Theledai; Sirrith, Xullia and Tarimth were fascinated by the expanse of darkness that existed in the Great Shadow and remained awake during the entire voyage. They alone, of the Gods, saw all of its mystery on that long trek and were the first to see the form of the Tas as they drew near and they hastened to awaken the others to see share the great wonder.

Here the Prime Material Plane had a powerful focus in a single particular point in space and time. The Tas held the essence of creation for the Material Universe and, although it had similar patterns to the forces that permeated Kalidath, its complexities and weave were very different. It was an energy form that could be tapped and manipulated by those powerful enough to harness its power but it would not sustain the Gods. Unless they could unlock its secrets, they would have to return to Kalidath at some future time - their plan for 'all or nothing' depended on their ability to manipulate or alter the Tas.

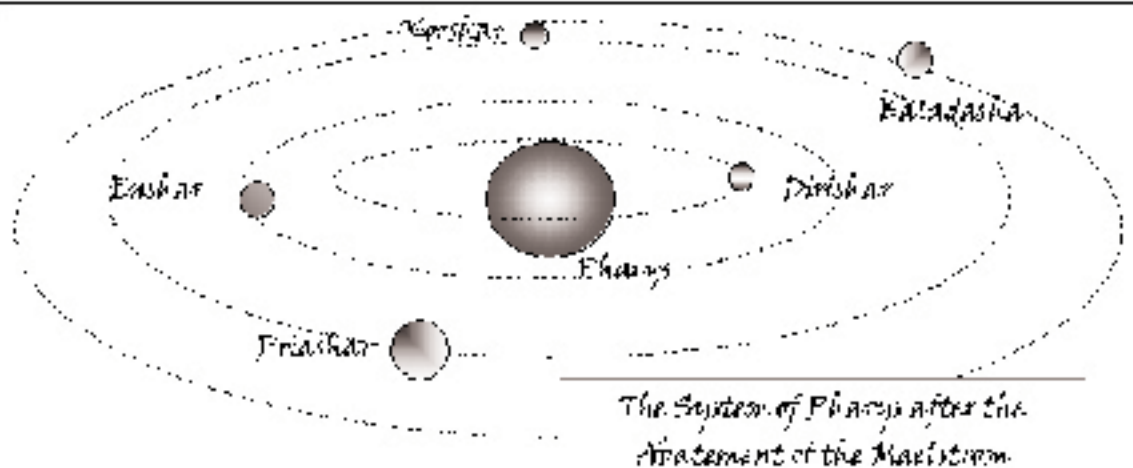
The Gods rejoiced that they had found the source of their desire but looked upon the face of the Tas and were perplexed by its alien nature.

Of all the Theledai, Imaar, alone, truly saw the Tas and understood its pattern, he perceived how to become one with the light of the Tas and so remain immortal on the distant shores of Talyssar. He interpreted what he could to his kinfolk but it was difficult to explain what he saw into terms that the others could understand. He was able to teach some of the other Gods of the Nine Houses how to tap into the Tas and manipulate its energy to create and alter the shape of the universe about them, but he was unable to make any of his kin understand the real inner power of the Tas.

So it was that those Gods who Imaar taught to be more adept at bending the Tas to their will gathered about Ormocea and agreed to begin the creation of a new realm. This would be their home within Talyssar. They drew upon their newfound power and caused the debris of chaos to coalesce into a great whirlpool of dust and rock, called the Maelstrom. The Goddess Daugron set a seed of fire into the firmament and Pharidor spun this into a great orb of light that was called Pharys.

The Gods watched from afar as worlds formed from the Maelstrom and they took the most beautiful of these, the second from Pharys, as their home, which they called Enshar (the Second Heaven). But Xullia, who preferred the darkness of the Great Shadow, spoke out against the light of Pharys and appealed to Ormocea, saying, "Thou hast brought radiance to the natural realm of everlasting night. Would thou have division amongst us already, where some would dwell in darkness and the others in light?"

Xullia's claim was supported by the other Gods who had made the waking voyage across Talyssar. Ormocea pondered upon Xullia's words and, in the end, summoned his son, Siritar and Trezkillian, the mighty. He commanded them to use their combined strength to turn the face of Enshar and set the world revolving, so that no one part of Enshar would remain in eternal night or day.



*The System of Pharys after the
Arrangement of the Maelstrom.*

The Gods Make Enshar

"With a booming voice that sounded like the crash of the waves upon the rocks, Gurthor sang to the oceans for a hundred days and a hundred nights and the waters grew as still as a lake upon a windless day. In the depths there arose a radiance of silver light that grew in intensity until all the oceans looked as though they were made of quicksilver.

And Gurthor's daughter, Sé, danced in the clouds and caused the rains to cascade into the silver catch-pools of her father and wherever a drop fell, there sprang into existence a living creature of unique form and hue that dove into the waters and delighted in its new-found life."

From "The Lexicon of the Seafarer", a religious handbook devised by the Temple of Gurthor.

As has been told, the Gods followed Ormocea's design in fashioning a place of dwelling for the Theledai in Talyssar and he conceived a great plan for the shaping of Enshar. His kindred Gods set about the enormous labors of creating a living world from the raw essence they had created, drawing upon their own strength and the powers of the Tas to render out Ormocea's plans. Although the overall endeavor was devised by the Law Giver, the other High Lords added touches of their own to the grand scheme, each an artist in their own right.

Yhancia, the Rock Delver, shaped the substance of Enshar and scoured its surface into great troughs and lofty spires. Sé, the Mistress of the Sky, enfolded the world with her blanket of clouds and caused the heavens to fill the troughs of Yhancia with water, making the oceans rise. But, in the highest parts of Yhancia's renderings, Sé's waters were without a pathway to these oceans, so Liraan, the Lady of Rivers, scoured the world with many deep lines and caused the trapped waters to flow as rivers and streams down to the oceans.

Ulliah, the Forest Lord, and Faar, the Maiden of the Fields, worked together to enhance Yhancia's works. They clothed the world in a sheaf of green, Faar sewing the wide plains and planting the fruits and flowers of the land, while Ulliah created the wilder places, the tall, impenetrable forests and deep, brooding jungles.

Gurthor, Lord of the Emerald Depths, entered the oceans that Sé had filled and, with the aid of his daughter, he brought forth the first life, the Nender-Saahn, being simple creatures bereft of the Divine consciousness of the Theledai. The oceans flourished with a myriad species and the Gods praised the great work of Gurthor. Many Theledai, delighted with his craft, learned from him the ways of making the Nender-Saahn. Chief amongst those who became most skilled at this craft were Sé and Hirath. The Goddess filled her skies with birds and Hirath, who became the Lord of Animals, fashioned the beasts that walked the lands. After a great age, the Gods rested for a while from their labors and marveled at the world they had created and gazed upon its glory and its new inhabitants.

The Crafting of the Weirding Stone

"Never again will the world see such a stately hall, where the High Lords sat in their great court and debated the ways of the world. Its walls were carved from adamantine and its floors were tiled in interlacing plates of platinum and gold. From its wide balconies you could see the blue depths of the Sarkoshian Ocean far below and the jeweled temples of the Saahn, set about the shoulders of Mount Heliphera."

Chapter Seventeen, Verse One Hundred and Six, of the First Book of Law.

With the world thus formed and teeming with new life, the Gods retreated to a land in the heart of Enshar, the island continent of Kordass, in the equatorial waters of the Sarkoshian Ocean. Here they made a vast mansion, atop the heights Mount Heliphera and they called it Godshome. It was fashioned according to the designs of Theydori, Master of Knowledge who delighted in the form of structures and shapes. From the Heights of Mount Heliphera, the Gods could survey all that they had made.

Fresh from their labors they looked upon their work and they wondered if they had the strength to continue, such had been the wearisome nature of the task so far. They contemplated the foreboding fate that still loomed over them, the need to unlock the inner secrets of the Tas or make the long journey across the Great Shadow, returning to Kalidath to renew themselves. It would be another long and draining voyage that most dreaded to undertake. They had come to love Enshar and did not wish to leave its shores.

Ormocea, ever the pragmatist, made plans for the return to Kalidath, proposing that those who had labored the most should make the journey, as they had become the weakest of the High Lords. But, of the Gods, these were the ones most attached to the world they had made and were loathe to leave it in the hands of other Theledai who had not contributed as much as they had to its shaping.

It was Imaar, the Lord of Magic, who offered a solution. As has been told, Imaar understood the power of the Tas far more than any of his peers. During the shaping of the world he had become disinterested with the physical process of building Enshar; all his will being focused on the Tas alone. But to attain the continuing respect of the Theledai and earn himself a place of grandeur in their eyes, he proposed an alternative to the eventual need to retire to Kalidath.

Imaar proposed that the magical essence that existed in Kalidath could be duplicated within Talyssar and blended with the Tas to ignite a new life source for the Gods. His plan was not without risk; to achieve this, each of the Theledai would have to give up all but the faintest trace of their remaining Kalidathian life force, pouring their essence into a crucible wrought by Imaar. With this device, Imaar could create a never-ending supply of Kalidathian energy, fueled by the power of the Tas.

After much debate, all agreed to participate in the ritual that Imaar proposed (albeit some were still wary of the success and outcomes of the procedure) and, with the help of Yhancia,



Ormocea (depicted in the foreground) had the Hall of Godshome built atop Heliphera, the highest mountain on the continent of Kordass. Here the Theledai rested from their labors in the world.

he fashioned his crucible from a mighty shard of crystal from the heart of Enshar. This was called the Weirding Stone and its facets had to be perfectly aligned for the purposes that Imaar proposed.

The Twenty-Seven gathered in the Hall of Godshome, about the marvelous creation of Imaar. As one, they poured their essence into the stone and the ritual of Imaar was a success, the remaining Kalidathian energy of the Gods now burned within the Weirding Stone forever, its power perpetually renewed by the Tas. The Theledai could connect to its emanations and drink from that power, remaining strong.

But the ritual was not without its casualties. Imaar, who took it upon himself to be a conduit, channeling the Tas into the Weirding Stone, took too much power into his being and became one with the energy source. His form vanished and all that remained was a scintillating globe of pure Tas light. Unable to communicate with his fellow Gods, Imaar was to eventually vanish from the world, to pursue his own interests, although he was sometimes seen again at Godshome and in the lands of the Saahn from time to time, for purposes that were not clear.

The second casualty of Imaar's ritual was SIRRITH. She faltered when she saw Imaar consumed by the Tas and her contact with the Weirding Stone was broken. Because of this she was not attuned to the device when her life force was drained into the gem. Her Divine powers were greatly diminished and she was left in a perpetual state of weakness, becoming known as the Pale Lady. With the disembodiment of Imaar there was no way to restore SIRRITH to health and she cursed Ormocea, vowing to get even with him, saying that, as their leader, he was to blame. Others also spoke out against the Law Giver, but most

rallied to his defense. The seeds of disunity were thus sown in the world. SIRRITH was later to arise again, after finding a new source of power, the very antithesis of the Tas.

With the ritual complete, the Weirding Stone itself was placed high atop the tallest tower of Godshome, where it burned as an everlasting fire, a symbol of the Theledai.

The Coming of the Saahn

"And Phelltar spoke the Rune again and, behold, the wooded valley flooded with mist and within the gray veil delicate forms seemed to take form and move therein. Then Pharys rose and the mist retreated and ten thousand Elves arose as one, from the dew-laden grasses. The boldest of the fair-folk moved cautiously toward Phelltar and spoke in the tongue of the Theledai, saying, "High Lady, tell me of this place and of my kin. Are you not the mother of us all and we your children?"

From the "Revised Word of Phelltar According to Claarin", as written by the Most Holy Rhaelan Sunder, 2110R.

With the completion of Godshome and a Kalidathian energy source available, the Gods busied themselves with individual interests. Some returned to making the world even more beautiful than it was and to flooding Enshar with new species of Nender-Saahn. Other Theledai set their minds to purposes, not yet realized, seeking their place in the fashioning of the world.

It came to pass that there was a plethora of creativity. Nender-Saahn filled the world, sharing the immortality of the Gods. They only died through harm or misfortune. But their

numbers were finite, as determined by their creator, a specific amount of a species were made that could not be made again – the act of creation involving a random element as dictated by the laws of the Universe.

Then Gaien, fearing that some of the beasts that she favored would become extinct, wove an enchantment about the world so that the living creatures of Enshar were divided into two sexes and were given the gift of procreation. This had the unforeseen effect of causing the Nender-Saahn to populate the world in plague proportions, devouring all the plants and trees and incurring the wrath of Ulliah and Faar.

Ormocea called together Priath, the Keeper of Time to bring mortality to the Nender-Saahn and imbue the creatures of the world with a limited life span. While all this was coming to a head, the Goddess Phelltar had devised a powerful magic, the Rune of Making. She had remained passive during the shaping of the world and had spent her time researching ways of imparting the sentience of the Gods into the Nender-Saahn.

She had been delighted with the splendor of the creatures that her kin had sent into the world but Phelltar wanted more; she wanted to create living things that could reason and see the wonders that the Theledai had made and hold their works in reverence. She wished to be adored, to be worshipped. However, Ormocea had decreed, under the guidance of Theydori, that sentience was what defined the very nature of the Gods. He forbade any of the Theledai to delve into means of using the Tas to create intelligent life.

To this end Phelltar conducted her work in secret and learned something of the skills of Hirath and Gurthor. She confided in them, telling them what she sought to do, promising she would teach them the Rune when it was complete.

And when the great Rune was finished she was true to her word. She gave knowledge of her magic to those who had helped her but that knowledge proved far too complex for others amongst the Theledai; the beings they created with the Rune were not true to the image Phelltar had in mind. The first sentient creatures made in Enshar were kept hidden and secret by the Gods who created them.

So it was that Hirath made the intelligent beasts of the land, including the centaurs and the unicorns. His crowning glory was the dragons, made with the help of Daugron. Gurthor made the humanoids of the deep, the Merfolk being his crowning achievement.

Both Gods kept their progeny concealed, away from the eyes of the other Theledai for they came to love the beings that they had brought into the world and greatly feared that, if Ormocea discovered their existence, he would have them destroyed.

Phelltar, who was fully competent with the Rune of Making, traveled to the distant northern lands of Enshar and used her powers to fashion the race of Humans, the first of the true Saahn, her Children, whom she also concealed in secret valleys and wooded glades. Here she marveled at her new creations but was saddened by the fact that they grew old and died, according to the dictates of mortality that had been imposed by Priath.



Gurthor used the Rune of Making to create beings at home in his ocean domain. He made the merfolk, sirens and selkie and concealed their existence in his palace in the deepest part of the sea.

So, although Phelltar loved her first-born Saahn, she wished to make a new race and she sought out Priath and showed him her Human creations. She offered Priath the Rune of Making in exchange for lifting his spells of mortality from the world, but although he greatly coveted the knowledge of the Rune, Priath would not defy Ormocea's will that all living things be made mortal.

However Phelltar was versed in the subtleties of the court of Godshome and met with Priath on a number of subsequent occasions in order to convince him to change his mind on the matter, teasing a little of the lore she required to imbue longevity in her creations, at each discourse. Eventually she pushed the boundaries too far and Priath finally betrayed her to the Law Giver.

However, Phelltar had gleaned sufficient knowledge from Priath to craft a new race of Saahn and she made them fairer and more resilient to the passing of time. They were unaffected by the ageing process that robbed Humans of strength and, ultimately life. Instead, the second-born Saahn passed into an endless sleep after three hundred or so years and it was Phelltar's hope that one day the Ban of Immortality would be lifted and those who slept would awaken.

These second-born Saahn were the Leezari, the Elves, and Phelltar gave to them a homeland, also in the north but to the east of the Humans. Here she held court with them and founded the first priesthood of the world.

THE FIRST AGE: THE TWILIGHT YEARS**DISSENT AMONG THE GODS**

"And Ormocea took from the Weirding Stone a power that was imbued with the essence of the gathered Theledai and made the Great Accord absolute by investing the Talisman of Law with that power. The Gods were thereafter bound to the Talisman, which Ormocea caused to be hidden in the world, so that none, even he, could undo the Accord or bend the laws of the universe to their will".

Chapter One Hundred and Ninety One, Verse Thirteen, from the First Book of Law.

As has been related, Ssirith was diminished by the ritual that enabled all other Theledai to retain their life-force in Talyssar. She established herself in the cold glaciers at the top of the world, sheltered in a palace of ice. Here, in her weakened state she gazed longingly at the Tas, trying to fathom a way to restore her lost powers. She continued to look upon the face of the Tas for five hundred years, desperately trying to unravel the patterns that had been clear to Imaar. Eventually, in her madness, she perceived a shadow within its light and, bending the last remnants of her will to that dark place, she saw another power that lay hidden within the Tas; the Vorg, an energy source that was the opposite of the Tas.

It could not be easily manipulated by any Theledai, being a force of pure destruction, threatening to consume all that would touch it. But Ssirith was beyond reason and reached out to become one with the Vorg. What was Ssirith was consumed; the last traces of her soul being replaced by the alien powers of the Vorg. She was filled with an essence that was the reverse of the life-giving forces of Kalidath and the Tas. Her Divine power was restored once again and she was able to use her abilities at the same level as she had prior to the activation of the Weirding Stone.

Ssirith and the Rune of Making

Ssirith returned from her self-imposed exile to the halls of Godshome but still feigned her weakness. Secretly, she plotted against the other Theledai and sought to make herself the ruler of all the Theledai.

Eventually news of the Humans and Elves that inhabited the northern lands became known to all of the Theledai and not everyone was overjoyed at the revelations. Theydori considered it most unwise to share the sentience of the Gods with these lesser creations. Sadir called the Saahn abominations and offered his services in destroying every last one of them. There was further disagreement between the Theledai with arguments being put forth in support of the Saahn and against them. The halls of Godshome rang with discord.

Ormocea decided to convene a council to discuss the implications of Phelltar's 'Children' and whether or not the Rune of Making should be made known to all who would use it or should be destroyed along with all its creations. Not all the Gods attended this council and, while others discussed these issues, Ssirith worked to progress her own plans. She planned

to craft her own Saahn and sought to make the Rune of Making hers alone.

Ssirith feigned friendship with Phelltar and brought her into her confidence, with offers to protect the Humans and Elves, keeping them safe from the likes of Sadir, while Phelltar answered the summons of Ormocea in the halls of Godshome.

Then, with Phelltar absent and the mortal races at her mercy, Ssirith drove the Saahn out of their lands and soon found out where the Rune of Making was concealed. She stole this away and tried to master its powers, to craft legions of stalwart warriors, more than enough to serve her needs.

But Ssirith, like many of the other Gods, failed to understand the Rune and found that all she could achieve was to instill the dead with the essence of the Vorg, giving them a semblance of half-life. In a fit of madness, she descended upon the 'Children' of Phelltar and slaughtered a great many of them, reanimating them as her servants.

Fearing that the other Theledai would come to find out what she had done and seek to punish her, she built a fortress called Dwimorvoren, which is Deathhold in the language of Men. It was an immense stone structure lying within the northern continent, in a range of high mountains. There she amassed her growing Undead army.

Indeed, the council meeting at Godshome soon heard of Ssirith's actions and Phelltar hurried to the north and, was distraught at what she found. Ormocea commanded his son, Ssitar to lay siege to Ssirith in Dwimorvoren and to bring the Pale Queen to justice in the Great Hall of Godshome.

So, for a long age, Ssitar led the forces that assailed Ssirith's fortress, unable to break the gates of the fortress. The Children of Phelltar, in the meantime, were brought to dwell in Godshome to await the judgment of the council, which continued its deliberations. Now the discussion turned not only to the Saahn but also to the escalating disunity between the Gods and the threat of the destruction of all that they had made in Enshar. The Gods began to despair of what had become of their Second Heaven.

Eventually, the gates of Dwimorvoren were laid bare but Ssitar discovered Ssirith had fled her dark fortress by secret ways. He reported this to the council and Ormocea commanded his son to seek her out across the length and breadth of Enshar. The hunt for Ssirith was a protracted one, the Pale Queen making use of the Rune in exchange for sanctuary in the realms of other Theledai, sympathetic to her cause.

Over many ages Ssirith remained free, one step ahead of the questing Ssitar; Trezkillian hid her in his mighty bastion that he commanded in the south, while Ulliah allowed her solace in his deepest forests. When forced to flee from Ulliah's glades, Ssirith made a temporary alliance with Gurthor, who sheltered her in the depths of his undersea palace for a time. There was always one of the Theledai who would offer Ssirith aid in order to gain further access to the Rune of Making for a time and so perfect their ability to shape sentient beings.

Meanwhile the council continued to meet in Godshome and the Humans and Elves dwelled on in that hallowed place, building a city about the shoulders of Mount Heliphera, making temples therein to worship the Gods. They called their new

home Phelltaria, in honor of their creator. The Gods who had been originally opposed to the creation of the Saahn wandered amongst them and became fond of their innocence and their wonder of all that the Gods had created. Even stern Theydori eventually went amongst them and gave to them a portion of his vast knowledge of the world and its place in the universe.

But still a shadow hung over the fate of the Saahn. In the Hall of Godshome, Ormocea spoke of the need to define a set of laws that would govern the future development of the world anew and would limit the Theledai's abilities to unmake that which had been put in place by others. The council continued to meet for many of our centuries and, in the end, all of the Gods (save SIRRITH) agreed to Ormocea's plan to be bound by a new set of laws. These would be reinforced by a covenant bound by the power of Kalidath and would impose restrictions on the abilities of the Theledai.

Ormocea's covenant was called the Great Accord and central to its power over the Gods was a magic device called the Talisman of Law. This was invested with the energies of the Weirding Stone, so that any who broke the Accord would break their link with the power of Kalidath radiated by the stone. This would mean that they could not dwell within Talyssar; they would lose most of their powers and would be forced to make the long trek back to Kalidath.

There were those Theledai who were against becoming part of the Accord but, in the end, these factions agreed to be bound by it on the basis that the Accord placed all the Gods on a level playing field, so to speak. Its main principles were:

- The Gods agreed to relocate from Enshar and view the development of the world from a separate plane of existence within Talyssar, beyond the Tween-World of the Unending Sea. This was called Tarrisada and it was divided into twenty-five separate realms (for SIRRITH and Imaar never came to dwell there).
- The Gods undertook a quest to create other worlds across the face of Talyssar, modeled on Enshar, the First Realm.
- The Saahn were to be given freedom to dwell within Enshar and, in death, their souls would travel to Tarrisada, to the realm of the Deity that they take as their patron in Enshar.
- No Theledai should bring harm upon another Theledai or to their creations.

Because the Theledai had already shown that they were capable of deceit and betrayal (acts that had been unknown in Kalidath) Ormocea had all the Gods pledge themselves to the Accord using the Talisman of Law. This artifact had been brought with him out of Kalidath; an icon of ultimate Order that defined the basic physical laws of reality and prevented them from being altered by those powerful enough to influence such laws.

Each of the Gods swore the oath of the Great Accord, while wearing the Talisman and, in so doing, part of the essence that was unique to each of them became one with the dictates of the Accord. If the Accord was broken, there would be unforeseen consequences for the Theledai. When the Accord was complete, the Talisman was hidden away from all the Gods, given over to the Malantha, spirits of the world, which had emerged at the

Dawn of Time. They dwelled unseen in the mountains, forests, lakes and seas and served no other lord, their sole reason for existence being to maintain the natural order of the world.



Unable to create a new race of living warriors with the stolen Rune of Making, SIRRITH slew the Second Born Leezari and raised them as Undead, using the power of the Vorg.

After the establishment of the Accord, the Gods began to spend less and less time in the Prime Material Plane. They busied themselves in their private domains within Tarrisada, fashioning their own sanctuaries, using the knowledge they had gleaned during the building of Enshar.

They became remote and isolated from each other, preferring to be worshipped by the Saahn instead of sharing the company of their own kind. The poison worked by SIRRITH

had forever destroyed the bond that had united them to build a Second Kalidath. They were flawed beings who had made a flawed Heaven.

Their main contact with the people of Enshar became the priesthoods and they rarely manifested themselves in the world, fearing they would break the Great Accord and suffer the consequences. Instead, they sent their Uushai servants into the world, the immortal servants that they had made to assist them when they first began their great labors. But even the visits of the Uushai became infrequent; the God's eyes were turned outward to the Great Shadow and the tasks agreed to in the Accord.

Some saw the light of Kalidath far away and dreamed of returning there. Others sought to begin anew and build more perfect worlds, for they now had the Weirding Stone as an anchor inside the Great Shadow and were no longer limited in how long they could remain there. And so it became time for a renewed search, a quest to discover places as rich in power as the Tas; regions where the forces of the Universe met and could be used to fashion wonders.

Of Shadowland

"And deep within the Keep of Thirteen Towers, in the realm of Shadowland, sits Sirth, upon her throne of skulls. In the Red Court the dead attend her and upon her borders the Grimorden keep watch. Sealed within her prison, the Pale Queen seeks of a way to return to the living world, sending her minions forth to strike fear into the hearts of Men and corrupt them to her cause."

Chapter Two Hundred and Eleven, Verse Seventeen from the First Book of Law.

It was during the time that agreement was reached upon the Accord that Sirth returned out of the east to pledge himself to the Talisman of Law, bringing with him Sirth, bound about with unbreakable chains wrought by Yhancia. He had captured her at last and brought her to Godshome for justice.

Ormocea wished to return the Pale Queen to Kalidath where she could no longer trouble the work of the Theledai in Talyssar, but Sirth, knowing that many of the Gods had sheltered her without Ormocea's knowledge, revealed this, saying they shared her guilt. She went on to pressure the council into coming up with an alternate punishment.

In the end it was agreed to create a prison that Sirth would be sealed in, once the Theledai removed their domain from Enshar. Ormocea charged Phelltar and Tarimth to create the prison but he would not allow the realm to be placed within Enshar or the God's new realms in Tarrisada.

He decreed that Sirth chose any other place but those two realms. So it was that the Pale Queen, in her guile, asked to be imprisoned in the Tween-World of the Unending Sea. The island of Shadowland was thus created but in doing so, this was to cause further friction between Sirth and Phelltar.

Twilight Ends

With Sirth banished from the world and secured in Shadowland for all time, the Gods made their exodus to Tarrisada

and, in those last days while some Theledai still walked in the world, the Saahn were relocated from their city of Phelltar to the lower lands of Kordass. The Theledai placed a ward about Godshome to keep the mortal races from entering the Halls of the Gods. Finally, at a gathering in the heart of Kordass, they made their farewells and ascended to their realms in Tarrisada and, once their affairs had been put in place, they traveled from there, deep into Talyssar to create new worlds amongst the Great Shadow.

But, on the eve of that departure, Tarimth, who had become a favorite of the Leezari, secretly told the Elves of the way to find the portal to the Unending Sea and of how to reach Tarrisada and the Holy Glade, which is the Heaven prepared for the true followers of the House of Light. Tarimth had become saddened by the fact that he would not see the second born for many ages. Knowing that the Elves had the longest lifespan of the Saahn, he encouraged those Leezari who grew weary of Enshar to make the journey across the Unending Sea and take residence in the Holy Glade and perhaps they would be reunited there.

This is where Sirth's cleverness came to the fore. She hated Phelltar for her own failure to use the Rune of Making to create true living Saahn. Above all, she hated Phelltar's prized second born; the Elves. She foresaw that Tarimth would tell the Elves of the pathway to the Holy Glade and so she had sought to have Shadowland positioned in the Unending Sea to lure the Leezari there. Using her remaining power over the Vorg, she created an enchantment that made Shadowland look like a paradise, a diversion to attract voyagers on the Unending Sea to its shores. In this way, Sirth ensnared many of the Elves during the centuries that followed the Twilight Years, until Tarimth and Phelltar discovered this and petitioned Ormocea to intervene.

The creation of the Great Accord forbade Ormocea to undo the legitimate creations of other Gods. When Sirth's enchantments were eventually discovered, it was impossible to remove them without breaking the Accord; the illusions remained, but instead, he bade Tarimth and Phelltar to make a pathway across the prison of Sirth, immune to the touch of the Pale Queen and her minions. This gave Elves who were led astray in future years another chance to find their way to the Holy Glade. Thus, the Gray Road was fashioned and remains the only hope of those Saahn who enter Shadowland to be delivered from its evil inhabitants.

Of Tarimth and the Grimorden

"And the Gods beheld the world they loved so well, ruled by those who would deny them, who spoke falsehoods unto their brethren, saying, 'Worship not some fanciful God but place thy faith in knowledge, the disciplines of masonry and the way of the alchemist.' And paradise was shook by the Gods anger. Ormocea sent word that a mighty host be gathered therein to wrest the world from those upstart Saahn who had led their flock down an unrighteous path."

From "The Last Days of the Saahn", a Pre-Redemption manuscript attributed to Elinsoth; Primate of the Church of Phelltar in Kordass.

With the passing of the Theledai, those Saahn that had been created in secret by the Gods and hidden within the sunless places of Enshar emerged into the world. Made without full understanding of the Rune of Making, they were often short-lived or bore few children. Their populations remained small (with the exception of the more prolific species of the Goblinskynd).

Amidst the oceans of the world there came the Merfolk, who set up their kingdom in the lost cities of Kordass, beneath the tropical oceans. They had been made partly in the image of true Saahn by Gurthor but needed to dwell in the sea to live. The Centaurs and Unicorns, fashioned by Hirath, rode the grassy plains of the north and were befriended by the Elves.

Countless other smaller Saahn, hidden away by the Theledai, came forth as well. The Faarsown, made by the Goddess Faar, whom Men call Gnomes, were one of the most eager to behold the world. They were followed by the diminutive Halflings, the Burrowers of the northern lands. After a great age the Dwarves emerged from their underground hideaways. And while all these new races marveled at each other and came to live amongst the established kingdoms of the Humans and Elves, there was still another species of Saahn who lingered in the dark; an aggressive race of predators who sought to conquer all others, the Goblinskynd.

The Goblinskynd were strong and numerous, trained in the martial skills to serve their lord Trezkillian. It was the hosts of Goblinskynd who first brought war to the world inherited by the Saahn, with an unprovoked attack on the Elves.

The Goblinskynd were led by the Grimorden, a race of Demons, who were later to become allied to Sirrith. Such was the ferocity of the Goblinskynd and the power of their demonic allies, the northern kingdoms were quickly overcome and the other Saahn fled to Kordass, in the hope that the Gods would hear their prayers for aid.

And aid was forthcoming. Tarimth, who had lingered to teach his beloved Leezari the lore of the Unending Sea, was the last of the Gods to depart Enshar. He had remained in Tarrisada, when the Goblinskynd began their war and his Uushai brought news of the plight of his people.

Tarimth risked the breaking of the Accord to prevent the destruction of the Elven kingdoms at the hands of the Goblinskynd. In order to appease the dictates of the Accord, he only directed his attentions to their Grimorden allies, who were not of Enshar, but were immortal servants of Trezkillian. Tarimth descended into Enshar and single-handedly slaughtered all but a few of the demons. The survivors that escaped sought sanctuary in Shadowland, where Tarimth could not go. In destroying the Grimorden, the Goblinskynd horde was leaderless and fled, their ranks harried by the armies of the Leezari and Humans.

But, by re-entering Enshar, Tarimth broke the Accord and the curse fell upon him, whereby he lost his link to the Weirding Stone. Faced with diminishment and, ultimately death, Tarimth was forced to undertake the great trek back to Kalidath. Saying a last farewell to the Leezari, he sadly departed and was never heard of again; said to have become lost in the Great Shadow. Elven prophecies tell that at the End of All Things, Tarimth will return to Enshar, renewed, and will lead his people to safety. But for now he can only guide the Saahn who worship him by

sending them portents or by leaving messages in the stars.



Tarimth, God of the Moon and Stars so loved the Leezari that he broke the Accord to save them and so his power was diminished and he was forced to return to distant Kalidath, the First Heaven.

That was the last time that one of the Theledai walked in Enshar for many centuries to come. The Gods watched over the world for a great length of time from their realms in Tarrisada, but one by one, they rose up into the Great Shadow and looked for new worlds to conceive. For centuries after that, the world was at peace and the priests of Enshar kept the focus of the Saahn on the true path; that of devotion to their High Lords and the maintaining of their realm according to their dogma.

Trouble in Paradise

But alas, the instructions of some of the Gods to their followers had been to cause discord in the world and the Churches of the Unholy Trinity, being comprised of the followers of Sadir, Yaarneya and Kharic-Ohrm, were the most active in this role. These religions corrupted many to their cause and delved into the lesser secrets of the Tas, into lore which was forbidden to the Saahn. With this power at their command, the Unholy Trinity spread mayhem across the world and the forces that opposed them had no choice but to delve into those very same powers to defend themselves against their evil; fire was needed to fight fire.

The Leezari were the people who came to lead the battle against those who served the Unholy Trinity. Having a longer life-span than Humans, they were more adept at mastering the ways of the Tas. Of the Leezari, the Darvinor were the most powerful. They had the longest lifespan of the mortal races and

few succumbed to Priatharia. However they were sterile and unable to reproduce; their original interest in studying the Tas was to learn a way to overcome their limitations and ensure the survival of their race.

The Darvinor had not been favored by Tarimth or any of the Gods while they still dwelled in Enshar. The Theledai found them to be too arrogant; they questioned everything and sought greater and greater knowledge from the Theledai. They were eventually turned out of Phelltaria and sent to dwell in the Eldorian continent.

Despite this, the mortal races knew who to seek out to oppose the worshippers of the House of Doom. Many battles were fought, mainly in Kordass and surrounding islands and, in the end, the House of Doom was defeated and Enshar settled back into an uneasy peace once more. But the world was forever changed; the Saahn had briefly tasted the creative (and destructive energy) of the Tas and wanted more.

The Darvinor became elevated in status by the other mortal races as a result of the key role they played in defeating the House of Doom and gained more access to the secrets of the Tas during the conflict. They became masters at using greater amounts of its powers to enhance their own realm in Eldoria and used this to combat the Goblinskynd who constantly threatened their homelands.

Then, in their arrogance, the Darvinor made a journey to Kordass and ascended the heights of Mount Heliphera, led by an ambitious Sorcerer-king named Dhamikohn. Using his command of the Tas, Dhamikohn broke the wards of the Theledai and claimed Godshome as his own.

Using the Tas to extend his years beyond those of the Leezari, Dhamikohn ruled over the world for ten generations and tried to emulate the Gods further by attempting to unravel the mystery of the Weirding Stone itself. Placed in the tower of Godshome, eons before, the Weirding Stone allowed Dhamikohn to perceive its connection to the Gods and he attempted to tap into its powers as well. But in doing so he alerted the Theledai to his intention and, as one, the Gods, who were spread out across the immense depths of the Great Shadow, turned their attention back to Enshar and began the return journey to set things aright.

The Darvinor, now steeped in the powers of the Theledai saw the coming of the Gods and Dhamikohn tried to unite all the Saahn in battle against their former High Lords, calling the Gods deceivers and promising the Saahn immortality and the knowledge of the Tas and of Kalidath. Despite his best efforts, many people of the world were not convinced to join as one under Dhamikohn; they held their faith (even those amongst the Elves) and would not take up arms against the Gods. Those who would not betray the Gods removed themselves to the far west of Kordass, while those who supported Dhamikohn and his followers stayed in the east about Mount Heliphera, busying themselves in the crafting of magic devices and weapons to do battle with the Gods, when they arrived.

And arrive they did. But Ormocea quelled the rage of his kin and reminded them of the Great Accord; that they may suffer the fate of Tarimth if they entered the realm of Enshar to smite Dhamikohn and his army. Instead, the Gods marshaled their forces in their realms of Tarrisada and sent emissaries

into Enshar to ascertain the loyalty of the divided forces of the Saahn. Armies arose allied to Dhamikohn and to the Gods and more weapons and artifacts of destruction were forged. The War of the Powers was set to begin.



The enigmatic Dhamikohn, portrayed in the Books of Law as the mortal responsible for the War of Powers

THE FIRST AGE: THE WAR OF POWER

“Thirty thousand spears stood like a forest in the front ranks of the Saahn and in their midst went Trezkillian, attired in black armor, his serpent head crowned by a horned helm. He rallied his forces to stand firm as the host of mounted lancers crashed like a wave upon them. In their train went giants, wielding clubs as great as oak trees and above circled dragons, looking for an opportune time to strike.

And Siritar, dressed in armor of gold, waded into the attack and was met by Trezkillian. Their otherworldly blades clashed in a rain of sparks and a concussion drove those who battled around them to their knees.”

Chapter Ninety-Six, Verse Eighteen from the First Book of Law.

THE TAKING OF GODSHOME

The Gods, wary of entering the world of Enshar at the risk of diminishing their powers, sent vassals and fearsome creations into the world to fight alongside the forces that still held them in reverence. Commanding all of the mortal armies of the Theledai was a Human campaigner, the priest Elinsoth (descendant of the priest Elinseth). He had won fame in the wars against the Houses of Doom. The followers of Elinsoth became known as ‘the Faithful’ and their strength lay in the great number of Seervaati,

who marched in their ranks, Priests who could use the Tas to perform divine invocations of power.

Opposed to them were those who disbelieved in the divinity of the Gods and allied themselves to Dhamikohn. They were called 'the Usurpers' and their leaders were Sorcerers and false clerics; those who had learned to manipulate the Tas through unnatural means, using constructs and raw elements to force a contact with the Tas.

The armies of Elinsoth, greatly bolstered by the minions of the Gods, made war against the followers of Dhamikohn and the land of Kordass became awash with the blood of the Saahn. The War of Power continued for generations and the cost was dear to the races of the Saahn. The capture of Godshome was contested on numerous occasions but it could not be wrested from the defiant Dhamikohn; the Usurpers held the east of Kordass and the Faithful held the west.

In a desperate act to break the deadlock, Phelltar chose to enter the world and personally lead the forces of Elinsoth against the Usurpers. In doing so, Phelltar broke the Great Accord and was weakened, however, she chose not to flee to Kalidath; her power and ability to use the Tas was still far greater than that of any other Saahn. She was adamant at remaining in the Prime Material Plane until her 'wayward' Children had been disciplined.

Phelltar's example caused others amongst the Theledai to cast aside the Accord and join with her in besieging Godshome. Notably Trezkillian and Siritar, who could not refuse the call to battle, came to Phelltar's aid. Pharidor, also of the House of Light, descended too and with him came Gurthor, Ulliah and Yhancia.

With the Gods manifest and fighting with them, the Faithful renewed their assault upon Godshome and a mighty engagement was fought about the heights of Mount Heliphera. The walls of Godshome were breached, but Dhamikohn escaped north to the continent of Eldoria with a great many followers and fortified the lands there. For many centuries there was a lull in the war, while both sides recouped from their losses and prepared for a fresh fight.

THE GODS TURN ON EACH OTHER

But old feuds still ran deep between the Theledai and, during this long period of idleness Tia, the Goddess of Mischief, persuaded the Unholy Trinity to pass into Enshar and side with the Usurpers. As a result, angry exchanges raged in Tarrisada between the Gods over this betrayal. A schism divided the remaining Houses and worsened until there came a time when all the remaining Theledai entered into Enshar and took sides with one or other of the two factions.

The Gods who had already sided with the Usurpers were originally Sadir, Yaarneya, Kharick-Ohm, Xullia and Tia but, in time, they won over Trezkillian and Daugron to their cause. The other Gods made an alliance to support the Faithful, save Esmia, who remained neutral, having been much aggrieved by the destruction and loss of life in Enshar. She remained in Godshome, when the other Theledai made preparations to wage war against the Usurpers, who had retreated northward, across the sea.

The armories of the Gods grew in size and finally around 400D the citadels of the Faithful were emptied and the Gods made war on the Usurpers, whose defenses had been built throughout Eldoria. Although there were countless minor skirmishes and raids throughout the next three hundred years, the War of Power was defined by three major battles, vast in scale.

The first of these was called the Battle of the Endless Sunset. The Armada of the Faithful first landed on the western shores of Vheridane and the ensuing engagement with the host of the Usurpers on those grim shores lasted for an entire year. The Theledai were far too confident and underestimated the determination of their opponents and the Dwarven fortifications that had been built across that region. After a costly campaign, the Faithful were forced to retreat back over the sea to Kordass to reconsider their plans and rebuild their forces, during which there was a period of fifty or so years of watchful peace.

Following this, the Faithful launched a series of attacks directed at the outer circle of island defenses that ringed the Eldorian mainland. These had been well-fortified by the Usurpers and their forces were personally commanded by the rogue Theledai. During the Battle of Endless Sunset, the Usurpers based in the island fortresses had posed a continued threat to the exposed rear of the Faithful legions. But despite their best efforts, the Faithful only managed to take Kultuus, the smallest of the defensive strongholds and they gave up their attacks against the other islands. These numerous concentrated assaults upon the outer defenses of Eldoria were known collectively as the Battle of the Citadels.

Again, this was followed by a long respite, during which the Gods commanding the Faithful resolved to destroy the defenders of Eldoria, once and for all. The greatest army that the world has ever seen was assembled upon the plains of Kordass, the lands stripped to make a vast flotilla, and they embarked northward for the final confrontation.

In this last battle, the full weight of the Faithful fell upon all frontiers of the enemy in one stroke. The borders of Eldoria were overrun and Dhamikohn and his followers were gradually driven to the heart of the continent and made their last stand on the island of Baladara, on the Plains of Madriss.

THE BREAKING OF THE ACCORD

The two forces confronted each other there for the Last Battle; the innumerable array of the Faithful and the smaller army of the Usurpers. Ormocea called upon the servants of Dhamikohn to surrender and a place in Tarrisada could still be theirs but none of the remaining force faltered and they stood resolute in their defiance. The horn of battle was sounded and the melee began.

Perhaps Ormocea's will was bent toward fulfilling the completion of the War of Power or perhaps Xullia clouded the field of battle with shadow, but none there recognized the fact that Sadir, the Destroyer, was absent from the Plains of Madriss. In secret, Sadir had led a small force south across the ocean, avoiding the marauding ships of the Faithful by traveling in the skirts of the Meridathian Maelstrom and so the God came to the eastern shores of Kordass. He commanded his small but elite force to assault the defenses of Mount Heliphera, which was garrisoned by a token force and, overcoming their enemies, the

host of Sadir seized the Grand Hall of Godshome.

Here, Sadir made his purpose clear. He would sunder the Weirding Stone of Imaar, set within the Hall long ago and, in so doing, would destroy the life essence of the Gods, forcing them all to return to Kalidath. But here, before the very face of the blazing Weirding Stone, Esmia, the Lady of Healing, who, alone of the Gods, had remained in Kordass, challenged Sadir. She would not allow the Lord of Destruction to undo the only remaining source of life energy that the Gods possessed in all the realm of Talyssar. She placed herself between Sadir and the Weirding Stone.

Without hesitation, Sadir struck Esmia aside, mortally wounding her. His attack on Esmia was the greatest affront to the powers that bound the Accord; its most sacred vow being that which prevented the Theledai from harming each other. The involvement of the Theledai in the War of Powers had already significantly worn away at the Accord and Sadir's actions finally destroyed it and released the power of the Talisman of Law.

The immediate effect was that all the Gods instantly became mortal in the world of Enshar and as Esmia's blood stained the floor of Godshome, the Theledai who fought on the field of Madriss, perceived their own mortality and the jeopardy they were now placed in. They withdrew from the fray, both those who fought on the side of the Usurpers and those who fought for the Faithful.

And in that hour, Sadir struck the final blow against the Theledai. He smote the Weirding Stone with a mighty blow and fractured it for all time. The shockwave went to the very foundations of Kordass and the continent foundered, sinking beneath the sea in a single day. With the destruction of the Weirding Stone, the Theledai were cut off from their life essence. The energy of the Tas was still there for them to command but no longer did it carry the life-sustaining energies of Kalidath; from that moment they were rendered mortal, susceptible to harm from the lower magics and mundane sources of the world. Time was now their enemy and, with each passing minute, the power that made them what they were, bled away into the surrounding field of the Tas.

In order to preserve their remaining essence, the Gods withdrew to their sanctuaries in Tarrisada and here they met in final council, those who had fought on both sides of the conflict, to seek a course of action. Ormocea quietened the grievances aired by all sides of the dispute and showed them their folly, laying the dead form of his wife, Esmia, before them. The reign of the Theledai in the Great Shadow was at an end. There was no Imaar to make a new Weirding Stone; he alone had the insight into the inner workings of the Tas and the skill to craft that most ancient of artifacts.

Instead, Ormocea decreed that the last remaining Theledai should forgive one another and seek redemption and renewal in blessed Kalidath, the First Heaven, that all longed to return to. But to make that journey the Gods would need to draw upon strength they no longer possessed; only by resting for a great age could they gather their reserves of energy and then begin that final trek home. So it was that the Theledai went into a magical sleep that was spun by Priath, the Dreamweaver; a slumber that

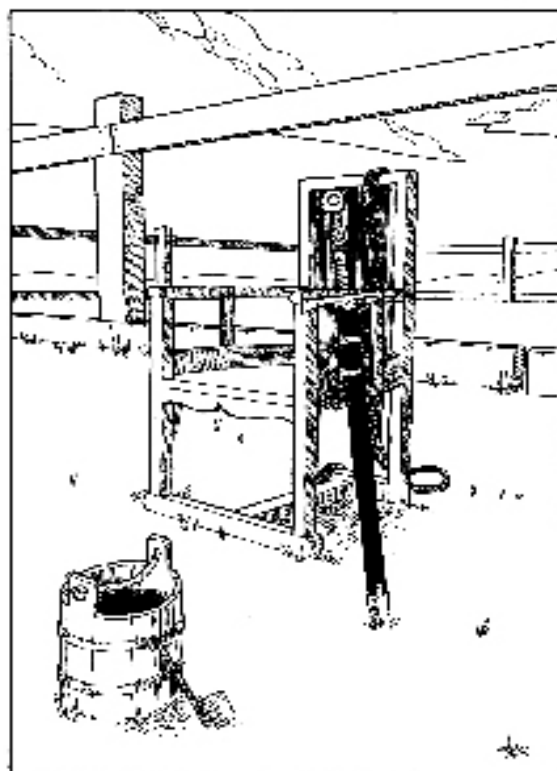
would last for many generations of Saahn. Custody of Tarrisada was given over to the Uushai, who would guard their celestial realms until the time of the Awakening came and the Gods began the voyage across the Great Shadow.

With the passing of the Gods from the world and the cataclysm that engulfed Kordass, the face of Enshar was changed and the Saahn and other creatures that fought upon the Field of Madriss were forced to disperse and flee the fire and storms that swept the world.

Some still remained within Eldoria, clinging to the remnants of civilization and for a while their kingdoms survived; a shadow of the former glory of days gone by. But eventually they too fell into ruin; famine and disease swept the land and order gave way to chaos.

The world passed into the Darktime and for an unknown age the Saahn suffered; their races driven to the very brink of extinction.

But amongst them, there remained those who remembered the Theledai and longed for a return to more innocent days. The great temples of Heliphera were destroyed and their priesthoods scattered but individuals still offered silent prayers to their deities and kept the memory alive, awaiting the time when the Saahn would embrace the names of the Theledai anew and the world would be given a second chance.



H I S T O R Y

THE RECKONING OF TIME

"And it is said that the ghost of Taranae walks the halls of the Palace Imperial on the anniversary of her death, crying in frustration at what her lords have done to her beloved Empire".

From "Chronicles of Sardell" by Farwic Earlin, chief historian of the Lord Protector of Denhaven.

Most Eldorian history following the passing of the Gods has been drawn from the thousands of records that were compiled (and continue to be compiled) by the Chroniclers of Jasper, an institution of historians who emerged at the height of the Sardellan Empire and were given patronage by Empress Taranae. They have a long-standing association with the Church of Ahridaar and continue to be the most respected chroniclers in modern day Eldoria.

The scant amount of information we know about the briefly flowering civilizations that existed just prior to the Darktime and the tales of the Darktime itself is attributed to the work of the legendary scholar and Wizard, Xavinn, a renowned preserver of literature. Xavinn is best known for his collection of magical artifacts associated with books and writing.

Events contained in most histories are ordered according to the Gilliard Calendar, devised by the Chroniclers of Jasper around 1205R. It divides the known history of the world into three distinct periods - the Darktime and the ages before and after the Darktime. The Darktime was an extensive period of unrest and barbarism in which most records of the ancient world were lost and/or destroyed. Only a few tales and rumors have survived this terrible age. It is unclear which remaining records are based on truth and which are complete fabrications, being no more than fairy tales.

Because the loss of knowledge was so immense, it is not even known how long the Darktime lasted. Modern scholars, of the College of Arcane Science, who have examined all the records that do exist, estimate that it must have been a duration of somewhere between 3,000 and 5,000 years.

The Darktime officially begins with the ascendancy of the Gods to Tarrisada after the Last Battle and ends with the Redemption, the discovery of the Books of Law by the Prophet Samroth. Because recorded events during the Darktime are scarce, historical references are usually only made to the period after the Redemption and to the small amount of documented history discovered that encompasses the time prior to the Last Battle (mainly the age of the Saahn following the Twilight of the Gods).

Dates after the Redemption incorporate the use of the letter 'R' with the number. For example, 2050R means two thousand and fifty years following the discovery of the Books of Law (the Redemption). Dates before the Darktime use the letter 'D' with the number; 390D would mean a year three hundred and ninety years before the Darktime.



ORDER OF THE ELDORIAN YEAR

There were a few abortive attempts to introduce a common calendar during the early years of the Kingdom of Sardell. At this time, most realms in northern Eldoria used different timelines, devised around their own dynasties and the dominant religions in their area,

Naturally, this caused complications as trade began to cross regional boundaries during around the year 1000R. There was a lot of well-meaning rhetoric between learned people from different countries; the political divide was such that a common calendar could not be agreed upon.

However, as with a number of other common conventions shared across Eldoria in 2150R, the spread of the Sardellan Empire led to a renewed push to introduce a calendar, during the reign of Taranae.

The task fell to Lanis Gilliard, a scholar and student of the Priath Cult, and a member of the Chroniclers of Jasper. He was commissioned to devise a calendar by the Empress in 1540R.

The Elves of Leezeria have always used their own measurement of time and continue to do so. It is called the Phelltarian Almanac and is more agrarian in nature, closer to our own seasonal cycle.

Gilliard's year is complex (which is probably why it suited the Ormocean Church) and is divided up as follows, according to the daily rotation of Enshar (approximately identical to Earth at 23 hours 59 minutes and 21.1223 seconds) and its annual orbit of Pharys (360 days). The year is further divided into nine phases referred to as the Marches (originally named after the nine Houses of the Gods). Over the centuries, some of the names of the Marches changed, reflecting more of the occurrences and climatic conditions prevalent at specific times of the year.

Each March consists of three Spans of thirteen days (plus one Festival day held at the start of the March, coinciding with the full moon). The Spans names are derived from the names of the Gods. During each March Festival, common-folk are usually freed from their labors and celebrate. Market days are often held in the cities during Festival.

The concept of Festival came from the First Book of Law, where Ormocea finally accepted the Saahn into the world and decreed:

"Let the Saahn learn something of the wisdom of each of their Lords for a span of forty sunsets. And on the day that follows let them contemplate what they have learned and use that knowledge to better their lot in life."

Chapter One Hundred and Eighty-Four, Verse Two, the First Book of Law.

In 1703R, names were also given to the thirteen days that make up each Span, in order to honor past heroes and monarchs of the Empire. Previously these had simply been assigned numbers (e.g. the 1st Day of Ormilon, the 2nd Day and so on).

The Eldorian concept of a day (for most of the population) begins at dawn. All measurement of the passage of time for any particular day revolves around the rising of the sun. Along with calendars, came ways to mark the passage of time, particularly smaller periods that became known as, 'watches', a watch roughly equivalent to an hour of our time.

As early as 900R the Rhenfarans devised means of keeping time, using tapers that burned at a set rate and were marked with regular gradients. Eventually, more sophisticated ways of telling time were devised, including water-clocks and sundials. The first mechanical clocks were introduced to the Sardellan Empire by the Y'naari-Su of Maritaan, around 1550R.

The Marches, Spans and Days

(The Holy March) Mid-Winter

Ormilon
Eskas
Sirilien

(March of Water)

Gurthlon
Liiakas
Selien

(March of Gold)

Talthor
Xulkas
Noriath

(March of Earth)

Ullion
Yhankas
Hiralien

(March of Light) Mid-Summer

Taimthor
Phellkas
Pharalien

(March of Fire)

Trezkillor
Daukas
Imalien

(March of Life)

Ahrilon
Faarkas
Rhiolien

(March of Air)

Sardilon
Yaarkas
Ohrmlien

(March of Shadows)Xullion

Sirrakas
Tielien

The Festival of each March is referred to using the name of the first Span of that period (e.g. the day of rest at the start of the March of Life is called the Festival of Ahrilon). Then comes the thirteen days of the Span:

Draelinzar
Samrozar
Derelzar
Balanzar
Xarizar
Drydanzar
Gadwyzar
Zharazar
Fyrezar
Tabiazar
Farazar
Galdezar
Pharlanzar

The formal way of representing a date in Eldoria, in scholarly circles is as follows:

Draelinzar Ahrilon, 2150R.

Merchants and commoners use numerical references, linked to the Marches. Thus, the date above would be recorded as the 2nd of Life, 2150R, in a trade contract (remember the first day is the Festival).

Marches

The following dates give you an idea of how seasonal changes fit into the Eldorian year.

Spring (6th Water – 14th Earth)

Generally, as winter ends, heavy rains begin to fall throughout the north and central regions of Eldoria, with lighter rains along the coastlines of Y'sira and Rhenfara. These conditions continue for most of the March of Water, making travel very difficult in many areas.

The well-established roads of Sard were built as a direct result of the inability to move large companies of troops during the appalling weather that occurs in the region during the March of Water.

The rainfall abates by the end of the March and cloudy but stable conditions prevail, leading to the opening up of roads and sea lanes.

Summer (14th Earth – 15th Fire)

The warmer Marches culminate with midsummer's day (Drydanzar Phellkas) during which time crops grow tall and people across Eldoria daub their homes with thirrish, a flame-retardant concoction used to prevent damage from the firestorms of the March of Fire.

Throughout the end of summer and into the early dry days of autumn, the skies of Eldoria turn a brooding rust color, as the world of Enshar passes through "Daugron's Seeds", a belt of dust and micro-asteroids that have an eccentric orbit about Pharys.

During the March of Fire, there are continual detonations and pyrotechnic flare-ups across the cloudy heavens. Brief, but frequent showers of burning hail threaten the cities and towns and forest fires are common. On rare occasions, Enshar passes through more substantial parts of the asteroid belt and small meteors impact on Enshar, particularly across Eldoria. The vigilance of organized watches and the traditional use of the fire-retardant wash, thirrish, help minimize the damage to life and property until the firestorms pass by the March of Life. Understandably, this is a holy time for the Church of Daugron, in Y'sira, with sacrifices being made in honor of the Deity.

Autumn (16th Fire – 22nd Air)

As the firestorms abate in the latter part of the March of Fire, the population of Eldoria takes stock of any damage and, during the cool, but tranquil, days of the March of Life, harvests get underway, farm stock is slaughtered and preserved and seed is stored.

Electrical storms and strong winds are prevalent during the March of Air and early snows begin to fall throughout Char-Endl by the last Span, moving southward by the 20th of Air.

Winter (24th Air – 5th of Water)

Heavy snows fall across Eldoria as far south as Zaramoor, in Elkia. The rest of the inner regions experience cooler weather patterns. Mid-winter is on Sirrith's Eve (the new-year) on the 40th of the March of Shadows.

The snows cease shortly after the new-year and cold conditions remain throughout most of the Holy March, until the rains come.

Trade, shuts down over the winter Marches, starting up again over the March of Gold. Farmers begin to till the land, planting their crops during the early Spans of the March of Earth.

NOTES ON THE MARCH OF FIRE

As mentioned above, Enshar passes through "Daugron's Seeds" during part of its annual orbit of Pharys. Most of the debris of this asteroid field consists of dust and matter that reacts with the upper atmosphere, causing detonations and bright flares, as it is consumed. Some of the larger particles fall to earth as burning hail and, on rare occasions, a larger meteor makes an impact

To establish the nature of this unique atmospheric activity in your campaign, and its possible effects on your players and/or the region they are in, use the following guidelines:

The March of Fire takes place largely in summer over a 40-day period. From the 1st of Fire to the 20th, the sky will take on an increasing shade of rust-brown with ochre and orange clouds. This will reverse between the 21st and the 40th, with the skies returning to blue.

The cloud cover will begin to build up from the 12th of Fire and by the 18th it will be permanently overcast all over Enshar and firestorms will continually cause spectacular displays across the sky until the 23rd, when the clouds will begin to dissipate



Heavy rainfall across northern Eldoria plays havoc with travelers in many areas during the early part of spring, which falls in the (appropriately named) March of the Water

and the storms lessen.

During each day of the March of Fire check to see if there are any unusual occurrences to describe to players. Make a d20 check using Table EE1.

Table EE1

Die Roll	Result
1-19	No visible effect
20-29	Firestorm
30-37	Burning Hail
38+	Meteor

Modifiers

Beginning with the 1st day of the March of Fire add a +1 cumulative bonus to the die roll up to a maximum of +20 on the 20th. As at the 21st the bonus drops to +19 and continues to reduce by a factor of 1 each day, until the 1st day of the March of Life, when the effects dissipate totally.

Results

Firestorm

The upper atmosphere in the immediate vicinity sees spectacular pyrotechnic displays. Blazing fire and exploding flares erupt amongst the clouds, accompanied by deafening concussions. The storm lasts 3d20 minutes and otherwise has no other effect.

Burning Hail

A firestorm is in the immediate vicinity and debris, in the form of burning pebbles, falls to the ground in a wide area. The storm lasts for 3d20 minutes but the hail falls for only 1d4 minutes of that period (Referee's discretion).

The hail has the standard chance of setting combustibles on fire with a +1 bonus for every minute that the hail falls. Those not under cover also take 1d4 points of subdual damage every round they remain exposed to the hail.

Note: the fire-retardant thirrish (a sticky paste, blue in color) reduces the chance of catching fire (-6 adjustment to the standard roll). During the March of Fire, most important buildings in major cities and towns are painted with thirrish (80% chance). In regional areas and poorer

parts of cities there is a 30% chance that buildings are treated with thirrish (see thirrish in the Miscellany).

Note: the spell Call Lightning still functions normally during a firestorm, however there is a chance that it will manifest as though it was the spell Fireball (cast at the same level). This chance is random and cannot be controlled by the caster (roll a d20 and if a 1 or 20 results a Fireball is formed).

Meteor

A firestorm is active in the immediate vicinity, culminating in a small meteor crashing to the ground.

First establish how close to your players the meteor falls by rolling a d20. Providing your group is within 100 yards of each other at the time, select someone at random as the potential Ground Zero point, roll a d20 and consult Table EE2:

Table EE2

Die Roll	Distance
1-10	2d10 miles
11-17	20+ 6d100 yards
8-19	1d20 yards
20	Ground Zero

Damage from a meteor strike is (understandably) devastating. At Ground Zero, damage is 20+10d20. For every 5' beyond Ground Zero, damage is reduced by a factor of 5.

A Reflex Saving Throw can be made by anyone who is a minimum of 15' from Ground Zero. A successful roll will halve all damage.

Following the initial blast, check the standard chance of anyone or anything within 50' of Ground Zero catching fire.

Key to Gilliard's Calendar (opposite)

- ☼ Start of spring
- ☀ Start of summer
- ☾ Start of autumn
- ❄ Start of winter
- ☄ Firestorm activity



Early Autumn in a Llanish community east of Jurgenstown. A meteor scours the blue skies, attracting the attention of local farmers

CHRONOLOGY OF THE REDEMPTION

These are a few of the main historical events occurring in the 2150 years that have followed the discovery of the Books of Law:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 The discovery of the Three Ormocean Books of Law.
Destruction of the city of Uraz in the Kingdom of Tariz (Y'sira).</p> <p>2 Occupation of southern Ahr-Ganiz by Elves, they rename the region, Dalafor.
First Ormocean temple built at Jasper.
The city of Tai-Kaiyan, in the Maritaani Outlands declares its independence from its monarchy on Orlon.</p> <p>7 Elves establish a settlement in the west at Pharidor's Watch.</p> <p>8 Clan wars in Char-Endl force the second migration of the Khalasian tribes into Llan.</p> <p>12 The Chieftain Thoelar of Jasper embraces the Ormocean religion and sets out to sway others to their teachings.
Y'naari-Kahn pirates active throughout the Golden Sea and the Sea of Souls.</p> <p>50 War erupts between warlords in Sard and Elkia. Thoelar is killed at the battle of Templeton Bridge. He becomes the first saint of the Ormocean church. The temple in Jasper is sacked.
Devastating raids on Northland by Goblinskynd forces. Halfling and Human communities retreat further north.</p> <p>74 Tarrian Darkhelm drives the Goblinskynd out of the southern parts of Northland</p> <p>75 Elven communities living in the east of Llan relocate into the deeper forests of the west to avoid contact with Humans.</p> <p>95 Elves of Leezeria realize that the Eldarwood Trees are becoming extinct and organize the Druidical order of the Shaedarfyn to protect the remaining groves.
Goblinskynd armies raid Dalafor but are driven back. Pharidor's watch becomes a center of culture and learning for Elves.
Trade between early inhabitants of Llan and Elkia.
Founding of the great northern cities of Gablehead and Denhaven.</p> <p>155 Ormocean church in Jasper regains strength under the protection of the petty King Vhantarin.</p> <p>188 Keljak Tribes first appear in the deep deserts of Y'sira.</p> | <p>225 The Dwarves first appear in Karashar-Zahl, an island Kingdom in the Sea of Five Winds.</p> <p>302 Ormocean church in Jasper invites scholars to study the Books of Law, kept at St. Thoelar's Abbey.
King Drydan of the Khalasian people founds the Kingdom of Khalast (Llan), with its capitol in Quorull.</p> <p>327 Rich deposits of ore and precious metals discovered by Dwarves of Karashar-Zahl. Zalgaari, the Excellium City, is founded.</p> <p>394 Keljak take on the worship of Daugron and spread their beliefs across Y'sira.</p> <p>399 The Y'naari-Kahn find and occupy Sinkhole Deep.</p> <p>401 A Human Druidical following of the God Ulliah arises in the Stonebrow Mountains</p> <p>428 Unification of rival warlords under one king in Sard, Clannith and Elkia. The Kingdom of Sardell is born with its capitol at Jasper.</p> <p>500 The Keljak rule all of Y'sira
Yaarneyan cult dominates Maritaan</p> <p>510 Diamondwood discovered on Southwind Island</p> <p>511 The three original Books of Law are destroyed in a fire, although hundreds of copies remain</p> <p>520 Goblinskynd attack Dalafor and cut the Elven territory off from the Leezerian Kingdom for a time. Goblinskynd make advances into Leezeria and are quickly checked at the Battle of Moonstar Meadow.</p> <p>524 Daugron missionaries arrive in Vheridane.</p> <p>527 Y'siran city of Byalliz founded.</p> <p>528 Thundering Peaks erupt.
Border Skirmishes between Sardellan soldiers and the Kingdom of Khalast.
First Expedition to the Towers of Ice in Northland.</p> |
|---|---|



535 Trade flourishes across the Greater Inner Sea.

- 540 Second Expedition to the Towers of Ice.
- 541 Druids in Stonebrow Mountains, led by the rebel Izrach, are rounded up and exiled by the Sardellan King. They settle in Rhenfara and are known as the Brotherhood of the Dead Tree.
- 600 The Great Civil War tears the Kingdom of Khalast apart. Fighting continues on and off for centuries until the military is decimated.
Brotherhood of the Dead Tree in Rhenfara converts local clans and becomes the ruling faction there.
- 612 Civil war in Malonia, Akalastian separatists demand a free state.
- 694 The Rose Plague arises in Khalast and decimates the region before sweeping southward. Hundreds of thousands die.
Colonization of islands of the Sea of Souls, largely by Sardellans escaping from the Rose Plague.
- 701 Yorrith Derelon circumnavigates Eldoria.
- 718 Unification of the decimated Khalasians with the Llanadan people of the Stonebrow Mountains. The Kingdom of Llan is born.
- 788 The first comprehensive sea charts of the Lesser and Greater Inner Seas, the Sea of Souls and the Golden Sea are made available to mariners.
- 800 The infamous assassins' guild, the Cult of the Withered Blade, emerges in Byalliz.
- 803 Sardell makes a number of territorial claims on mountain passes owned by Llan.
- 804 War between the Char-Endlese clans. The 'Snow Queen' of Clan Usak threatens to conquer the other clans.
- 807 The Snow Queen is defeated at the Battle of Chakotai. She flees after the battle and is not heard of again.
- 844 Sardell makes claims on the Llanish town of Darringmoor.
- 900 The College of Arcane Science and the Guild of the Magi is formed to 'better' the image of Wizards and forms a 'code of conduct'.
Sardell seizes key passes in the Stonebrow Mountains and annexes Darringmoor. Llan is in too weak a position to contest the Sardellan incursion.
Y'siran forces cross the Niblfir River and conquer the Arimah Kingdom.
- 965 Xarick II of Sardell declares he is emperor and pursues an aggressive policy of expansion, committing permanent garrisons to areas colonized or conquered.
- 974 Emperor Xarick II of Sardell devotes a major part of his treasury to raising a large fleet to be based at Denhaven.
- 998 Night of the Child. Cult of the Withered Blade, under threat from Thieves' Guilds slays the children of the senior Guild members. The Cult leaves Byalliz to establish itself temporarily in southern Elkia.
The first telescope is made by the Elven church of Tarimth, allowing the clergy to study the star system of Pharys.
- 1002 Treaty of Odressi. Several major churches establish temples at a site on the island of Baladara in a bid to create a sanctuary for religious orders. The island later becomes known as the Holy Isle.
- 1005 Eruption of Mount Kazkar on the Last Isle ends the Kingdom of Dragonhome.
- 1051 Sardellan merchants establish trade with the Char-Endlese at Cetairi. A small garrison is kept there.
Dissent on Dormos over Sardellan rule
Goblinynd attack on Dalafor but they are driven back. A University is built at Pharidor's Watch.
Ohridane the Seer claims to have found the undiscovered Fourth Book of Ormocean Law. The book is judged a heretical forgery and Ohridane is burned at the stake, along with the Book. Rumors abound that copies were made and that the contents bear startling revelations about the First Age.
- 1069 Llan, feeling threatened by Sardell makes a number of treaties with Y'sira and Northland.
- 1080 Rhenfaran Clan Chiefs initiate the exploration of Po-Ka.
- 1100 Llanish nobility combine their household armies to besiege Darringmoor and free the town from Sardellan rule. The Llanish army is routed at the Battle of Salligar's Mill.
Yaarneyan cult spreads its influence into the ruling families of the Y'naari-Kahn.



- 1202 Formal diplomatic exchanges between the Kingdom of Sardell and the Y'siran Empire. Ormocean ambassadors are active in Byalliz.
- 1203 Char-Endlese dragonships begin pillaging the coastlines of the Greater Inner Sea. Cetairi is attacked.
- 1235 Sardellan troops based in Dormos invade Maritaan. Brief skirmish with Y'naari-Kahn forces but Sinkhole Deep is captured within the year. Yaarneyan cult is deposed and Y'naari regent placed on the throne.
- 1238 Sardell invades Llan and quickly crushes any remaining opposition.
Y'naari-Kahn forces still active in the east of Maritaan engage the occupying Sardellan forces at the Yenedain River. The Y'naari are defeated and formally surrender to Sardell.
- 1259 Baron Undal of Llan incites rebellion in Nohlera and holds the city against Sardellan troops for a year.
- 1260 Llanish nobles in exile call upon Y'sira to honor its treaty with Llan and attack Sardell. Diplomatic hostilities are rife.
- 1311 The remnants of the Yaarneyan cult are driven out of Maritaan by the Sardellan governors.
Y'siran ships begin landing goods (and weapons) in western Llan. Sardellan warships begin attacking Y'siran merchantmen vessels on the high seas.
- 1338 Y'siran forces clash with Rhenfarans at border posts along the Niblfir River.
- 1344 Goblinskynd armies attacking Northland are defeated by Lizardmen tribes of the Ruby Ranges. The people of Northland make an agreement with the Lizardmen to defend Northland's southern borders in exchange for food in winter. The Treaty of the Blue Feather is signed.
- 1361 To avoid attacks from Char-Endlese dragonships, traders in the Greater Inner Sea begin to exchange cargoes at the Lonely Islands. A small settlement grows up there.



- 1375 Ormocean ambassadors ordered out of Byalliz. Diplomatic ties between Sardell and Y'sira are cut off. Y'sira begins a campaign of increasing its naval strength.



- 1383 The Great Llanish Rebellion. The Boy King Junian leads a rebellion against the occupying Sardellan forces and manages to secure Quorull, Tokia and Slaarn.
- 1385 Sardell retakes Llanish cities and burns and pillages Slaarn and Tokia. Brutal Trezkillian warlords are placed in control of Llan.
Assassination attempt on the Sardellan Emperor Draelingus III. Y'siran conspiracy suspected. Sardell signs an alliance with Rhenfara to pressure Y'sira.
- 1400 King Olondorth of Northland is deposed by opportunists.
- 1401 Sardell undertakes a 'peaceful' occupation of Northland at the request of the deposed King Olondorth, who is reinstated.
- 1453 Most major religions are now represented in Odressi on the Holy Isle. Some trouble arises between traditionally opposed factions
- 1458 First War of Tears. Massive Goblinskynd invasion of Dalafor drives the Elves into the southern fens. Goblinskynd forces turn west and a long protracted war is fought in eastern Leezeria
- 1468 The Goblinskynd are pushed back into Ahr-Ganiz but Dalafor is lost for good. Many Elves migrate west to their lands in Lyrie.
The cult of Imaar assassinates the Archmage of the College of Arcane Science. Animosity grows between the cult and schooled wizards.
- 1477 Y'siran troops land on Sharruck Island and occupy it. They base their fleet there.

- 1483 Birth of Viritath, Y'sira's greatest leader.
- 1498 Elves establish a line of forts in the east to guard against future Goblinskynd intrusion.
The Unholy Trinity are active against the Holy Trinity in Odressi. The Ormocean church creates the secret order of the Stormwatch.
- 1500 The religions of Odressi invite a secular body to govern the city to ensure that the temples do not interfere with each other's affairs. The office of the Citylord of Odressi is created.
- 1501 Birth of Taranae, Sardell's greatest monarch.
- 1522 Viritath leads Y'siran forces into Rhenfara and seizes most of the coastal villages of Po-Ka.
- 1523 Battle of Fardamon's Straits. Y'siran merchantmen, escorted by warships are engaged by the Sardellan fleet near Karashar-Zahl. Y'sirans turn back to Sharruck Island.
- 1526 Queen Taranae ascends throne of Sardell.
- 1528 Repeated skirmishing between Y'siran and Sardellan shipping.
The Jade Colossus is raised in honor of Viritath – patriotic fervor is at a high in Y'sira.
- 1529 The Imperial court encourages Sardellan farmers to cross the Passage of Thungar and settle in the deserted western lands of Leezeria. Taranae is testing the waters with the Elves.
- 1532 Battle of the Deepfin Channel. Y'siran fleet engages the Sardellan fleet off Sharruck Island. The Y'sirans lose the day and their fleet is destroyed
Invasion of the Y'siran mainland by Sardell. Tariziach is taken and Byalliz is blockaded. Rhenfarans launch attacks against Y'siran holdings in their country.
- 1534 Byalliz taken by Sardell. Battle of Dead Dunes near Terl. Viritath's land forces are defeated by a combined Sardellan and Rhenfaran force. Viritath is slain in battle. Keljak fundamentalists abandon the coast and retreat to the Outlands.
- 1540 Major volcanic explosion on Korfah, in the Sea of Souls.
Citylord of Odressi uses the Monks of Light as a 'police force' against clergy capable of using divine power.
- 1555 Death of Empress Taranae. She leaves the throne without an heir. There are thirty-two claimants to the crown – the Kinstrife begins.
- 1560 The Guilds of Llan begin to hire large companies of mercenaries for the nobility to lead into battle against the Sardellan warlords occupying their land
- 1563 Civil war threatens to divide the Empire between lords supporting the faiths of the Holy Trinity and those supporting the Trezkillian religion.
- 1564 Regional Sardellan governors in Dormos, Tritonia and Eriana declare themselves independent of the Empire. Siritar and Trezkillian Royal Guards, seeing the wealth of the Empire being carved up between greedy nobles, agree to defend Jasper until the time when a new Sardellan monarch arises – the Imperial State of Jasper is founded.
- 1567 An army led by three nobles aligned to the Holy Trinity tries to take Jasper and is routed at the Battle of Traitor's Field. Two other armies also try and fail over the next two years. Jasper holds firm.
After seven years of conflict, Llan regains its independence from Trezkillian warlords. The Guilds continue the hire of mercenary companies and effectively initiate a bloodless coup whereby the balance of power shifts from the nobility to the merchant classes.
- 1580 Founding of the City-State of Tempest at the Lonely Isles.



- 1603 Second War of Tears. A major invasion of Lezeeria by Ahr-Ganiz. Eastern territories are secured by Goblinskynd forces, Tarimthol-Irl is threatened.
- 1604 Tarimthol-Irl is besieged and parts of the ancient city are sacked by Goblinskynd. Although the Goblinskynd are driven out of the capitol, war continues.
- 1605 The Stonekin Migration. The Dwarves of Karashar-Zahl are forced to flee a cataclysm on their home island. They set sail in twelve great ships to establish new homes.
- 1606 King Guddarth of Karashar-Zahl lands with two ships in Lezeeria, seeking land for his people. He allies with The Elvenking to drive the Goblinskynd back into Ahr-Ganiz. The Dwarves are given the eastern territories of Lezeeria as reward.
- 1640 Y'sira breaks away from the old Sardellan Empire and forms a new regime under the K'luuds (petty rulers under the sway of the Daugron Church)

1658 Illixia first appears in northern countries surrounding the Greater and Lesser Inner Seas.



1677 Formal end to the Kinstrife of the fractured Sardellan Empire. Powerful Houses agree to terms that will divide the remaining parts of the Empire. Sard and Elkia become two separate countries again. The city of Jasper and the Imperial State of Sardell is all that remains of the old Empire.

Extensive redevelopment of Llan's canal-based transportation by King Dalafyd I.

1703 The College of Arcane Science is severely damaged by an explosion when a senior Wizard attempts to unlock the secrets of Averaach.

1751 Limited space on the Lonely Isles, results in the construction of platforms in Tempest, extending the size of the merchant city.

1785 Civil war in Maritaan between Trezkillian factions. King Carashal emerges as the new monarch, with the backing of the Y'naari people.

1789 Tempest's platforms link all the Lonely Isles, covering an area of one square mile.

1791 King Dalafyd II completes the canal-based transportation systems of eastern Llan.

1792 Denhaven becomes the new capitol of Elkia and seat of power of the Lord Protector.

1800 Third War of Tears. Goblinskynd break out of Ahr-Ganiz and overrun the Dwarvish Kingdoms and besiege the Elven forts. For more than one hundred years Goblinskynd run unchecked in eastern Leezeria, despoiling many sacred sites.

1801 Piracy rampant in the Sea of Souls, island settlements constantly plundered

1802 Jersal Londar, a pirate, becomes so powerful that he takes control of Southwind Island and Sharruck Island. He establishes hereditary rule and calls his kingdom "Londar's Land".

1848 Civil war in Llan between noble houses vying for the throne. The Guilds remain neutral. Rebel forces besiege Quorull and the King flees to Elkia only to return and win back the throne with the support of the Guilds.

1864 An attempt by the Cult of Imaar to destroy the College of Arcane Science is thwarted. The ringleaders are executed.

1874 Trade with several islands in the Sea of Five Winds opened up by Y'sirans. First trade with Revertoll Island begins.

1909 The Ten Days War between Sard and Elkia fought along the Furlflow River.

1950 The Unholy Trinity are accused of crimes in Odressi, in relation to the forbidden practice of acquiring slaves for rituals. The Priesthoods debate that they have religious freedom to pursue the doctrines of their church.

1962 The Battle of a Thousand Arrows. A force of Elves, Dwarves and Men engage the major Goblinskynd force occupying Leezeria and defeat it. Showing no mercy, they harry the Goblinskynd as their army retreats east. Not one creature makes its way back to Ahr-Ganiz.

The Elven King, Hylara Pelentine, proclaims the region east of the Mountains of the War-Watch the "Crownless Lands". Whoever can occupy them and hold them (other than Goblinskynd) can have them. Immigrants, desperados and refugees begin to make their way there.

Grant of Lyrie – Elven western lands ceded to Humans who helped the Elves.



2012 Civil War on the Last Isle, Prince Altrand tries to unsuccessfully seize power from his brother, Rhannald.

2050 Mammoths hunted to extinction in Char-Endl.

2100 The Five Years of Doom. Assassination of the Citylord of Odressi. A period of civil unrest across several lands. Many old conflicts and territorial disputes resulting from the division of the Sardellan Empire arise again. Several noble houses stage brief coups in Sard, Elkia, Odressi and Maritaan. Some are backed by the Churches of the Unholy Trinity.

- 2105 The Church of Ormocea is instrumental in having the worship of Kharic-Ohrm, Yaarneya and Sardir banned in most countries. The temples of the Unholy Trinity are destroyed in Odressi and many other cities; their senior priests are executed and the cultists exiled.
- 2125 Sard seizes territory near the Porgruu Bogs from Elkia.
- 2128 Birth of Dasanda Duelbane, Llan's notorious 'Mercenary Queen'.
- 2141 Kharichaan becomes Grand Chancellor of the Sardin Republic.
- 2145 Theft of the Elven vessel "Tarimth's Star" prior to her launch. The ship reappears as the "Ashen Avenger", captained by the notorious privateer, "The Shark Lord".
- 2150 Full-scale military build up by Sardinian and Elkian forces along the Fulflow River.



CHRONOLOGY OF PRE-REDEMPTION HISTORY

"Let us build the world again upon the ruin of the old. I care not if the Gods or mortal Saahn rule this realm, I simply wish to raise a roof against the rain and feed my family."

"The New Kingdom", by Korlin Xarl, 34D

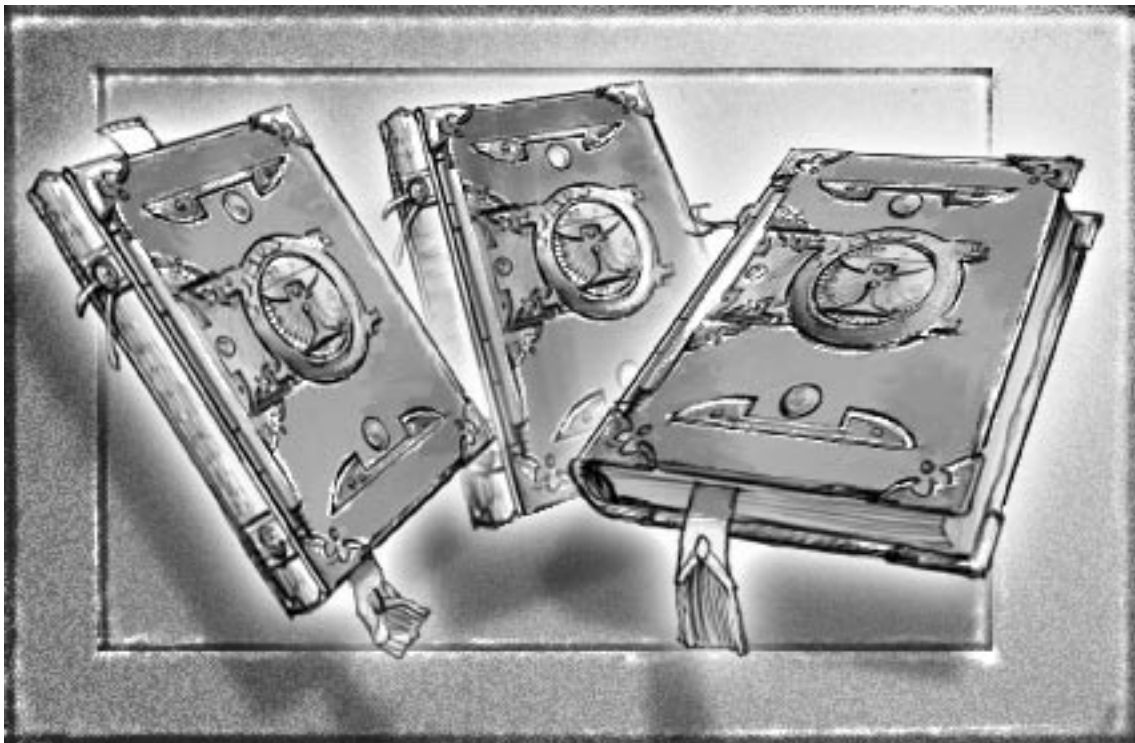
IN THE WAKE OF THE GODS

The Books of Law recount that, in the Twilight Years, the Gods traveled into the Great Shadow to create new worlds and, in their absence, the Saahn assumed control of Enshar. Other than what is contained within the Great Books and a number of other religious documents, there are only a few other historical documents and relics that were made before the Darktime that survived the destruction of that period and give us any other insight into history.

The main non-religious histories from the First Age, now kept by the Church of Theydori in Odressi, are a set of ancient Elven chronicles called "The Commentaries of Lyanther" and a Human account of the decades following the Last Battle, called "The New Kingdom", by Korlin Xarl. Xarl's work is considered fictional at best by the Churches, although many scholars find value in some of the cultural insights Xarl provides when recounting the fleeting years of life before the Darktime set in.

In addition to these works, there are numerous derelict buildings and structures featuring pictograms and writings left by the Uushai (the heralds of the Gods who had most commerce with the Saahn and maintained the records of the First Age).

They describe various aspects of life in ancient times but, since very few examples of their writing remain, the



The Books of Law contain most of what is known about the age prior to the Darktime

understanding of the Uushai language is still in its infancy; there is not a lot that has been gleaned from these as yet.

Of records left by the Darvinor, who were the Elven race who masterminded the rebellion against the Gods, there is nothing. The Leezari themselves know little of the Darvinor, saying they were an enigma even to them. The Darvinor kept themselves apart from all other mortal races and were rumored to have highly developed telepathic powers, which is one explanation for the lack of writings that have been discovered.

After the Last Battle, there is no mention of the Darvinor, their leader Dhamikohn or how they fared. They simply seem to have vanished from the face of Enshar. One theory is that they led the brunt of the defense against the Theledai during the War of Powers and few survived the carnage of those years. When the Darktime came, they were hunted down and killed, being universally hated as the Saahn who brought the misery of those dread times upon the world.

DHAMIKHON AND THE KINGDOM OF KORDASS

The Books of Law do make much mention of the Darvinor Sorcerer, Dhamikohn, who rose to power and became King, learning of the Tas and usurping Godshome, despite the warnings of the Gods. Dhamikohn is demonized and described as the villain of the piece, portrayed as being largely responsible for turning the Saahn against the Theledai (although it is also suggested that he was merely the minion of the Unholy Trinity).

“The Commentaries of Lyanther” do name an Elven leader called Dhamikohn but it is unclear if he was of royal lineage or attained the status of monarch. He is portrayed more as a learned sage and seer, influential with the Darvinor Council that governed their affairs at the time.

Dhamikohn is also described as being obsessed with mastering the powers of the Tas and is first mentioned as being an Elf of ‘middle-age’, residing in the court of the Elven Queen Saranthia in the year 4,000D.

At this time it is related how he visited the kingdoms of the Humans and the Stonekin to learn of their lore and to cement ties amongst the more dominant races of the Saahn. There is definitely mention of a great Elven Kingdom that Queen Saranthia ruled over and, conceivably, this could have been located in Kordass. It describes the great palace of the Leezari and how it stood on the shoulders of a great mountain, a description that is consistent with that of Phelltaria and Mount Heliphera.

It is apparent that many races of Saahn dwelled in Kordass between the years 4000D and 1000D and that there were numerous cities situated upon the continent’s northern and eastern coasts. There is evidence that there was a great religious upheaval around 2100D, with records of temples being disbanded or targeted and looted by mobs in the eastern parts of Kordass. A state of civil disorder existed for approximately five years before the land was divided into two ‘camps’ – one that appeared to be run on strict religious lines and one that was more liberal in its beliefs.

The religious kingdom was first established by Elinseth, who was the First Primate of the Phelltarian Church. His followers became known as the Faithful and occupied most of the north and west of Kordass, where he preached against the evil Usurpers of the east, who occupied Mount Heliphera and

Godshome.

About 2050D Dhamikohn is said to have sent out word to all those who would learn of the magics of the Tas to come forth and join him. A great conclave of learned scholars and sages became enshrined at Godshome and the arcane arts were born from their research. The amazing thing is that Dhamikohn is later described as being a personage of power amongst these Sorcerers as late as the year 1500D, which has led scholars to theorize that there was either a dynasty of Elven kings who took the name of Dhamikohn, or that this was the same Dhamikohn and that he had survived the Priatharian syndrome suffered by most Elves, to become numbered amongst the few that attained true immortality.

THE LAST BATTLE

The events leading up to the Last Battle are not well documented. Many of the pictographs found in Uushai ruins show representations of the Gods returning to the world from the stars and of great activity amongst the many races of the Saahn. Some are shown clearly worshipping the Gods and offering homage to them upon their return to Enshar. Other Saahn are depicted making magical weapons of war and putting aside a great armory to do battle with the Gods.

Lyanther’s histories verify that there were many years of preparations by the ‘Usurpers’ for the return of the Gods and that most work was centered about a city called Caldarta, where the master weaponsmiths of the age worked hand in hand with mighty Sorcerers to craft a multitude of magical weapons, armor and artifacts. Lyanther’s descriptions of Caldarta seem to indicate that it was not a city of Kordass but was located somewhere on the Eldorian continent. Although the exact location of Caldarta has never been found, it continues to be a place much sought after by modern-age Wizards and adventurers. Many magical items used in present day Eldoria were crafted in the Weaponshops of Caldarta and can be identified by one of the seven distinctive runes of the master-artificers. Magical devices of their like have rarely been crafted since then and the College of Arcane Science is still trying to unlock the secrets of the Caldartan Weaponsmiths today.

Lyanther describes the coming of the Gods to Enshar in the final chapters of his book. The Theledai, fearing to transgress the rules of the Accord, did not appear in person but sent their emissaries to appear before Elinsoth of the Faithful (a descendant of the Phelltarian primate, Elinseth) and enticed him to wage war upon the Usurpers of Godshome. Lyanther’s histories end with the call to arms of the Faithful but do not include the long and costly series of wars that followed. The account in the Books of Law must be looked to for this chapter in history.

Korlin Xarl, in his tome, “The New Kingdom”, briefly tells of the final stages of the war, when the Theledai had descended into Enshar to reclaim Kordass and Godshome, driving the Usurpers into the north. The Last Battle takes place on the Plains of Madriss, which are located on the Isle of Baladara (that later became the Holy Isle) and lasted three days before the Usurpers claimed victory, having broken the army of the Faithful, after the Gods retreated from battle and took sanctuary in Tarrisada. In Xarl’s account he makes no mention of the destruction of the Weirding Stone but attributes the victory to the ‘cunning’ of

Dhamikohn. So, once again, there is mention of the enigmatic figure of the Darvinor Sorcerer, although what his involvement was in the Last Battle is not made clear.

Xarl simply states, "It was Dhamikohn who played the master stroke and tipped the scales for mortal Saahn in their darkest hour. His sacrifice and the sacrifice of his kin changed the world and delivered it from eternal war."

After the Last Battle the surviving Saahn of the Usurpers and the Faithful parleyed and many of those who were loyal to the Gods agreed to make peace and go about the rebuilding of the world. However others amongst the Faithful remained resolute and retreated to build their own fortifications throughout Eldoria; some set sail for Kordass, not knowing the fate of that continent. Tales tell of the hardship faced by those who sailed south with the Faithful, saying that eventually some of those ships came to the shores of Altarren, the southern continent of the world.

Xarl gives an account that, for a period of ten years, civilization blossomed with its center being based on Baladara, beneath the mountain of Heaven's Reach. Instead of being devastated by the diminishment of the Gods, many Churches, though lacking in congregational support, reinvented their structure and grew stronger in their resolve to remain loyal to the Theledai and retain the faith.

The Schools of Magic that had arisen under the tutelage of Dhamikohn removed themselves to the Elven city of Tarimthol-Irl but as the Elves became increasingly isolationist in the years that followed, the concept of a united magic order foundered and the Human practitioners of the arcane arts were forced out to find service in the employ of other patrons out in the wild world.

Then, as though the civilized world was perched upon the crest of a wave, a series of disputes between rival Human lords in Baladara escalated into a civil war. At the same time, in Leezeria, the Elves were beset with Goblinskynd armies, emerging out of the mountains of Ahr-Ganiz. Having fled the Last Battle to lick their wounds, they had rebuilt their numbers and grown bold enough to carve their own slice out of the new world.

At the same time that these conflicts erupted, Eldoria was struck by a series of floods and famines, resulting from climatic changes that had been increasing since the destruction of Kordass. Plague followed and overnight society broke apart. The Saahn were fractured, spreading out across the continent of Eldoria and beyond.

The brief chance of a new age, founded by those who had challenged the Theledai and survived, was extinguished and replaced by an unrecorded time of ignorance and brutality. It would take thousands of years for enlightened Saahn to rediscover the legacies of old and embrace the teachings of the Gods anew, returning restoration and civilization to the world.

THE SECOND AGE: THE DARKTIME

THE COLLAPSE of CIVILIZATION

The Darktime saw the complete breakdown of Pre-Redemption civilization across most of Enshar, as influential lords attempted to seize control in the years that followed the Last Battle. Social conventions did not collapse immediately,

as evidenced by the attempt to rebuild a cohesive community at Heaven's Reach but, once differences of opinion were aired, they rapidly went into a spiraling decline and were exacerbated by the simultaneous onset of climatic change. This meteoric fall of the last remnants of the civilized world can be blamed on two major contributing factors, relating to religion and sorcery.

Firstly, society had undergone a great upheaval in coming to terms with opposing arguments that the Theledai were of a Divine or mundane nature, as put forth by the Faithful and the Usurpers. Then there was the culture shock of the Gods vanishing from Enshar altogether at the height of the greatest conflict that the Saahn had ever seen. It devastated the followers of the Gods, leaving them without meaning in their lives. Although many Clerics were able to find rationale for the Gods' departure it was hard for their congregations to come to terms with the loss. Soon false prophets and unscrupulous power-mongers preyed upon these disaffected people, getting them to join their personal quests and causes; the pathway was opened to anarchy.

Secondly, the Sorcerers who had been instrumental in the defense of Eldoria became free agents. They had once been well disciplined and unified under the regime of Dhamikohn, using their powers judiciously. After the Leezari made the decision to oust Human Sorcerers from Tarimthol-Irl, their powers were up for grabs by whoever could afford their services.

Magic began to be used with no restraint or fear of consequence at the command of lords who would stop at nothing to seize control of the emerging society. Even worse, many Sorcerers tried to set themselves up as rulers of the Saahn in their own right. This was the time of the Serpent Kings, when a terrible war between rival mages created havoc in the land and put terror into the hearts of the common-folk. To this day, even though there may be little difference in how a Seervaati Priest and a Sorcerer manipulate the energy of the Tas, it is the latter that is treated with suspicion and distrust, due to the evil their forebears unleashed during the Darktime.

Although many fables of the period tell of the rise of powerful Sorcerers such as Telimanka the Black and the Lich Queen of Angarrath, the fact is that no kingdom ruled by a magic user lasted long and none survived the Darktime. The Serpent Kings ruled with terror but in the end their realms were short-lived, being destroyed by uprisings or by the poisoned blade of 'trusted' friends. Their focus was solely on magic and their failure to connect with the people who surrounded them led to their ultimate downfall.

THE GREAT MIGRATIONS

The multi-racial society on Baladara was the last real hub of civilization left over from the First Age but soon after the Last Battle it quickly dissipated, the smaller populations of demi-humans growing weary of the growing disputes that were largely Human-based. They left to settle other regions, leaving the Humans to sort out their differences.

The Dwarves retreated to the west of Eldoria and decided to hide themselves away from the world, fearing that the Gods would return. They delved in the depths of the earth and built mighty mansions of stone in secret.

The Leezari fortified their land against all other races and fought a never-ending struggle against the Goblinskynd on their

eastern borders in a narrow neck of land that became known as the Isthmus of Strife.

The Halflings originally migrated to Northland but were later driven out by invading Goblinyind, only to return later, settling Northland alongside Humans. Their hardy constitutions and preference for underground dwellings made them well suited to the cold climates.

The Gnomes sought refuge with the Elves of Leezeria and were granted lands to the south for a while. They later spread to the wild lands of the Sard-Elkian land mass and some even braved the warmer climate of Rhenfara.

The Human population spread out across the islands of the Sea of Souls and, as hostilities there also grew, they continued farther a field into the great southern lands of Y'sira, Maritaan and Rhenfara. Some settled the lower reaches of Sard and Elkia.

During the Darktime, the Sea of Souls and the lands surrounding it remained the heart of the stronger Human power bases and, consequently, the site of most of the Human conflict. The climatic change made the lands north of the Straits of Haven too cold and barren for most Human tribes; they preferred the warmer climes around Zaramoor and Knotwood Grove.

But just as the scattered Saahn were establishing new kingdoms across Eldoria, the populace was decimated by the simultaneous outbreak of two separate plagues; the Rose Plague, that originated on Baladara and spread across the Sea of Souls and the Halocean Fever, that was brought by refugees from islands in the south of Enshar, fleeing from hardships there. The effect of two such virulent and deadly plagues occurring within a short time of each other drove the people of Eldoria into complete barbarism.

Soon after documents mention the coming of the plagues to Eldoria, most of the records of that time end. The next documents that are found are stories and chronicles from the Redemption, diaries and personal logs that describe a change in the world, with the snows of the north retreating, allowing Human tribes to recover and expand northward, in the ensuing squeeze for territory.

One of the earliest groups of Humans to migrate across the face of Eldoria were the Nalarian people, a hardy, though docile race, known for their distinctive art and their strict following of

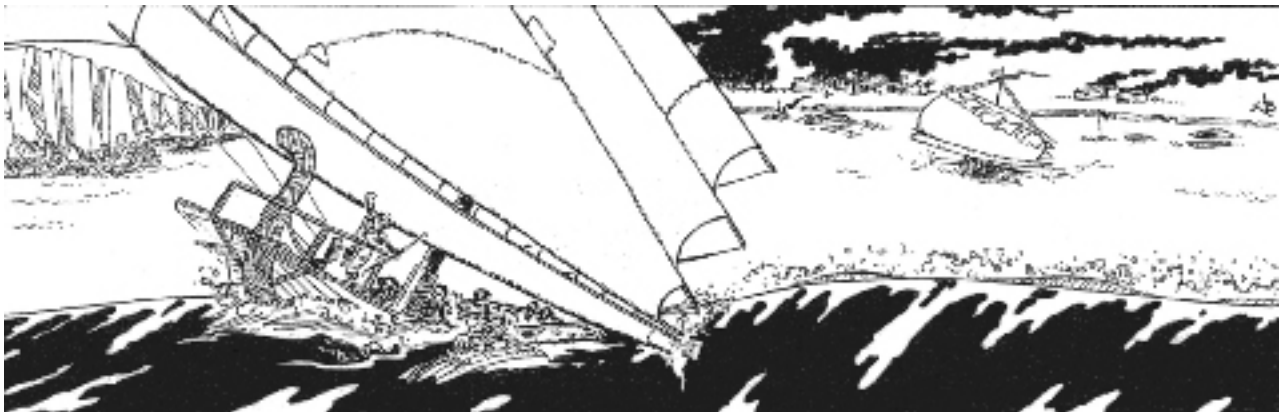
the doctrine of the Goddess Gaien, a fertility Deity. The Nalarians traveled throughout many lands, always spreading further a field. They were a nomadic folk and found it hard to settle in one place but their 'civilizing' influence was often evident in regions where they traded and mixed with other Human tribes. They were a people steeped in lore, who retained knowledge of the old magics.

In some areas they did actually establish permanent communities for a while but, when the other tribes of Humans began the great migrations throughout the north of Eldoria, the Nalarian society, either broke up and left for fresh lands or was absorbed by the new cultures.

The Nalarians were followed about 500 years later by the Human tribes known as the Akalastians. They moved up from the region that forms the south-most tip of Sard and settled across the northern lands about the Lesser Inner Sea. Most favored the fertile river valley of the Furlflow, while others continued into the east and joined with the Nelandai, a people who had originated from around Zaramoor. Later, an aggressive tribe of Humans, the Tarkians, invaded the region from the west, possibly coming out of Vheridane or the western Outlands. They forcibly established their own lands alongside those of the Akalastians and Nelandai.

Meanwhile, the Khalasian tribe spread out of the middle regions of Northland, across the tundra of Char-Endl. A great many halted their exodus at Midwaine Headland, believing the frozen lands to be endless. They assumed a nomadic existence in the far north, following the great herds of game that they found there. However others amongst the Khalasian went beyond Midwaine Headland and so discovered the wild, forested lands north of the Stonebrow Mountains. Here they encountered and befriended the Nalarian folk they found dwelling there and, over time, a kingdom called Khalast was established, integrating the Nalarians into the Khalasian culture.

In the southern part of Eldoria, the more fertile areas of Y'sira (the coastal regions and the lands surrounding the Foaming Gauntlet) were settled by the Zurandi; a Human tribe from the Outlands. At one time, they occupied all of the coastal plains of Y'sira and Rhenfara but, after their Rhenfaran settlements suffered from constant raiding by Y'naari pirates, they became diminished in the east and those that remained were later conquered and absorbed by the Ziaddan, a warrior



Y'naari raiding ships from the island kingdom of Orlon regularly attacked coastal settlements bordering the Sea of Souls in the latter days of the Darktime, taking slaves.

race that originated in the Gorrabandi Veldt of the Outlands. The Ziaddan are rumored to have had early ties with the Keljak tribes, who later emerged from their desert homelands to occupy all of Y'sira.

The Y'naari, a seafaring race, were active for many centuries raiding the settlements in the Sea of Souls and were so aggressive in their expansion that they may well have gone on to establish a thriving empire. They originated in the islands located some 1,000 miles east of the Eldorian continent and eventually came to establish a kingdom in the northern Outlands of Maritaan.

This was known as the Kahn Dynasty and the Y'naari-Kahn made numerous attempts to expand across the Golden Sea into Northland, where they established a trading post at the site of Eastport.

Archaeological finds in Potterville, discovered over the past fifty years indicate that the Y'naari went on to traverse Northland, with a view to building a fleet there and raiding the Greater Inner Sea. However, the settlement at Eastport was raided constantly by Goblindynd who were active at the time, ranging far beyond their traditional homeland in Ahr-Ganiz.

The Y'naari-Kahn eventually abandoned their foothold on the Northland mainland and remained based in Maritaan; their conquests halted by their formidable western neighbors and by the rise of the Yaarneyan religion, which effectively destroyed the higher echelons of Y'naari society by the time the Darktime ended.

THE THIRD AGE: MODERN HISTORY

THE FIRST MILLENIUM: 1R – 1000R

"Let us not dwell on what was, but look to what will be. I swear before the Balance that I will lead you into the light, into a place where we shall both find peace. I shall never take that path back into the darkness that we have passed through."

King Draelingus I, at his coronation.

AKALASTIA AND KHALAST: THE EARLY REALMS OF THE NORTH

The Third Age of Eldoria is designated as beginning with the discovery of the Books of Law by the Prophet Samroth. Of course it wasn't as though, from this defined point in history, the Darktime suddenly ended and the Saahn had instantly rediscovered religion and civilization. For centuries the tribes of Humans had been slowly establishing more secure tenure on the land, building permanent settlements and fortifying them against attack. What makes the time of Samroth unique as a turning point in history is that, instead of the knowledge contained in the Books being made secret, Samroth made them very public, attracting wise sages and learned people from all over the disunited petty kingdoms that made up Akalastia.

These scholars tended to stay on in Jasper, where the Three Books were displayed and they helped contribute to the creation of, what has been termed, 'the Crucible of Civilization'.

Common ideas and values were extolled by this coming together of great thinkers and their vision became the cornerstone of what the 'more civilized' rulers saw as desirable goals to strive for.

At the time that Samroth discovered the Three Books; the realm of Akalastia occupied all the territories between the north-most tip of the Grand Escarpment in the west and the Passage of Thungar in the east and was bordered in the north by the line of the Stonebrow Mountains. It was made up of sixteen states, each ruled by a petty king and united only against the threat of invasion by the Kingdom of Khalast, north of the Stonebrow. The most powerful of these states was Tarkia that was the seat of power of the warlord Balangar, who had adopted the religion of Ormocea, allowing Samroth to preach in his domain.

The Books of Law were discovered at the site of Balangar's hill fort in Jasper and, through Samroth, the king was able to unite the Tarkian Clans and strengthen his position for many years. Jasper became a center of commerce because of this; the 'jewel' in the crown for ambitious lords in the north. The city changed hands a number of times over the next hundred years, becoming part of the Kingdom of Derriad, which then fell to the Kingdom of Clannith.

A succession of small wars gradually reduced Akalastia to three large states by 418R; Sard in the west, Clannith in the center and Elkia in the east. The Church of Ormocea worked tirelessly during this period to unite the remaining factions and their efforts were rewarded in 428R when it was agreed that there would be but one Kingdom that was to be called Sardell and that the Ormocean Church would control the laws of the land and the Church of Trezkillian (that had a major following amongst the nobility of Sard) would govern all military affairs.

Jasper became the seat of power of the new Kingdom and remained the key center of civilized life in the northern realms of Eldoria for generations to come.

By 699R, extensive work on the city by masons and artisans made it an immaculate place to live. It was walled about with defensive perimeters and towers and the inner city contained the most magnificent architectural features of the time, notably Saint Thoelar's Abbey, the Samroth Bridge and the King's Hall.

Meanwhile, in the north, the Khalasian people had emerged from Char-Endl in the eastern lands along the Greater Inner Sea and, by 1R, had established a number of outposts around the Bay of Storms. In 8R there was a second great migration into that area by the Khalasians; they expanded along the eastern coastline of (what is now) Llan and moved south toward the Stonebrow Mountains, establishing the settlements of Slaarn and Tokia. The Kingdom of Akalastia, to the south, became wary of their northern neighbors and rapidly moved to establish forts along the borderlands. There were a number of minor skirmishes but nothing that amounted to outright war.

The Khalasians themselves were always a people too busy fighting among themselves to be concerned with fighting against others. They owe this to inter-tribal feuding dating back to the time they dwelled in the tundra regions that now make up Char-Endl.

However, in 302R, the charismatic leader Drydan was successful in unifying the rival chieftains and creating the Kingdom of Khalast. Drydan, a man of ambition, claimed all



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the land north of the Stonebrow, from the Greater Inner Sea to the western highlands. This was quite a claim really, considering future turmoil within the Kingdom would prevent Khalasians settling anywhere other than in the eastern lowlands for the next thousand years (although the presence of the fierce Bloodmane barbarians who ranged the highlands may have contributed to the reluctance of the Khalasians to settle the west).

Drydan had the settlements of Slaarn and Tokia fortified and established his throne at Quorull, beside the mouth of the Drissada River. He placed great power in the hands of his nobles and created an entrenched feudal society throughout Khalast. By 310R, Drydan's Kingdom looked like it would eclipse its southern neighbor.

The lords of the remaining states of Akalastia were worried by the consolidation of power in the north and this is perhaps one of the contributing reasons to the success of the Ormocean Church in creating the united Kingdom of Sardell.

THE KINGDOM OF SARDELL

Draelingus I was the first ruler of Sardell and he spent most of his life closeted away in council chambers in Jasper, appeasing the factions that had been brought together to form his kingdom. His successors invested the Ormocean Church with a great deal of administrative power and concentrated on expanding their realm. They gradually began to annex new lands surrounding the kingdom, with one of the earliest successes being the occupation of all the passes through the Stonebrow Mountains.

King Gadwyll I secured Thurindor, the key route into central Khalast in 493R. Gadwyll had his lords who held land in the north build defensive forts and watchtowers to guard the passes.

Around 530R, King Aldynn I of Sardell approved the upgrading of the northern forts to full-scale garrisons, capable of maintaining sizeable forces on the border of Khalast. This was in response to a number of skirmishes with Khalasian war bands active south of the Stonebrow Mountains. The King sent his best Trezkillian commanders to oversee the building of the new fortifications, giving them leave to rule the borderlands with an iron fist. They soon came to blows with an order of Ulliahn Druids who maintained a number of sacred sites around Mount Sark. The Druids had a great following amongst the Llanadan people, tribes of hardy mountain folk who had moved into the Stonebrow at the same time as the coming of the Khalasians.

The Druids were led by the renowned Izrach, a man of legendary cunning, who wielded considerable control over natural magics. Izrach and the Llanadan were no great friends of the Khalasians but swore fealty to the King in Quorull, in return for his protection.

The Trezkillian warlords despoiled several places of worship about Mt. Sark in order to acquire resources to build their new defenses, cutting down timber from forbidden groves. The Ulliahn Druids and their people received no recompense for their loss and there was no immediate justice from the Khalasian king. They began a guerilla war against the Sardellan troops stationed near Mount Sark.

This, of course, resulted in greater atrocities by the Trezkillians until the whole situation in the Stonebrow Mountains scaled out of control and a Khalasian army was rumored to be finally

mustering in Slaarn. There were a number of repeated clashes between scouting parties in the region, which culminated in the Battle of Norlon's Pass, in which the Trezkillian forces repulsed an attack by a larger Khalasian contingent. Following the battle, a Khalasian traitor provided information on the whereabouts of Izrach's main encampment and a company of Trezkillian soldiers captured the Druid with the aid of two Sorcerers, especially sent to the region from Jasper for the purpose of combating Izrach's power.

As a display of contrition by the Sardellans, Izrach was not executed but exiled across the sea, far to the south, with his core group of followers. Eventually, Izrach settled in Rhenfara and founded the Brotherhood of the Dead Tree, a Druidical Order which continues to rule that country today.

Between the years 500R and 600R Sardell made repeated claims on the independent Kingdoms of Zaramoor and Malonia, fledgling states that had come into being shortly after the Redemption. They were located in the southern parts of the Sard-Elkia land mass. Sardell maintained that the people of both kingdoms had kinship with the people of Sardell, stating that the Akalastian people had originated from Malonia and the Nelendai traced their heritage back to Zaramoor.



Izrach, Archdruid and rebel. He was captured and exiled by the Sardellans and went on to found the nation of Rhenfara, in the south of Eldoria.

Both regions had since seen a peaceful influx of migrations from the islands of the Sea of Souls and had become multicultural in makeup. However groups of Akalastian and Nelendai 'purists' dissatisfied with their lot in life made approaches to the monarchy in Sardell, claiming they were persecuted under the new regimes in the south. There is some evidence that suggests there was collusion between political activists of Malonia and Zaramoor and the Archbishop of Karhaven in creating a situation that eventually led to war.

In 612R civil insurrection broke out in Malonia, with Akalastian separatists wanting to create a free state. This was followed by similar unrest in Zaramoor in the following year. Sardell aided the separatist movements involved in both disputes, smuggling weapons to them and making threats against the

existing rulers.

Then in 620R, Sardell invaded both kingdoms, supposedly to rescue their kinfolk from slaughter at the hands of their oppressors. Malonia was decimated by the ensuing war and never recovered. Its people were absorbed into Sardell and most became part of the commerce and activity that grew up in the subsequent years around the port cities of Karhaven and Gablehead. Other Malonians fled into the wilderness of the Grand Escarpment and continue to live a primitive tribal existence to this very day, mistrustful of outsiders and always ready to attack unprotected merchant caravans.

The Kingdom of Zaramoor fared better. Its monarch surrendered to Sardell and pledged fealty to the monarch in Jasper. An occupying presence of Trezkillian military ensured that the region remained loyal and the nobles who commanded the companies there were granted much of the land as their own. They came to establish many manors and keeps throughout the countryside between 622R and 635R and enjoyed a far greater amount of autonomy than other nobles.

The last king of Zaramoor was Calynn II. After him the monarchy simply 'faded away', the role of king having become relegated to a mere figurehead. The Trezkillian lords retained real control of the region and even after the collapse of the Empire and the creation of Elkia, Zaramoor always remained strongly allied to the Trezkillian faith.

The period 600R to 700R was also a time of rapid growth in the world of commerce. Trade with the island kingdoms of the Sea of Souls and the theocracy in Y'sira brought in all manner of exotic goods. Merchants thrived in the boisterous trading ports, like the Twin Cities of Haven (Karhaven and Denhaven). There was a population move to the larger cities and the first Guilds emerged to govern the quality and price of produce and manufactured goods. The western territories of Sardell evolved as the main center of primary produce, with a rich grain belt and mixed farmlands, located near Yarcia, and abundant mineral deposits throughout the Grand Escarpment. In the east, Denhaven and Steelguard became centers for craftsmen of all persuasions. In particular, the quality of the weapons forged by its master smiths, was quickly recognized by foreign traders and became a sought after commodity, as did the fine, delicate porcelain that was a product of the capitol, Jasper.

As Sardellan trading ships charted the seas of the south, famous explorers like Captain Talan Yance moved beyond the safer waters of the coastlines and out into the open oceans. In 701R, Yorrith Derelon successfully charted the Eldorian continent, opening up trade routes for merchant traffic. The coastal lands of Eldoria (collectively called the Outlands) were sparsely settled by nomadic barbarian tribes and, despite attempts to establish colonies in the southern and western Outlands during the 700's R, there were few regions discovered that were rich enough in natural resources to make the effort worthwhile. What is more, it became apparent that the ability to use the Tas became weaker the further that you sailed from the heartlands of Eldoria. Magic was used to overcome many aspects of day-to-day hardship in Eldoria and was becoming entrenched in the higher echelons of Sardellan society. This made life in the Outlands even less appealing, especially in the light that many monstrous predators

and the more primitive tribes that had survived the Darktime made the region their hunting grounds. Despite the existence of a few larger settlements that arose from the forced migrations of refugees, escaping from political and religious wars, the outer coasts of Eldoria remained (and still remain) sparsely populated and backward, compared to the Eldorian interior

However, during their voyages across the Sea of Souls, Sardellan merchantmen came across many islands with primitive cultures and began trading with the people they discovered. Soon Ormocean and Esmian missionaries were following in their wake, accompanying colonists looking for new opportunities abroad. The Rose Plague that had ravaged much of the population of Khalast in 695R was also having its effect on Sardell by this stage and many people joined the outgoing missions to escape from the deadly disease, adding to the colonization efforts in the Sea of Souls.

Sardellan ships plied the waters of the Greater Inner Sea and had opened up trade with Char-Endl and Northland. Some attempt was made at establishing a dialogue with the Kingdom of Leezeria but the strange Elven folk continued their position of isolationism and rejected all attempts at diplomacy with a determined but polite warning to Humans to stay out of Elven lands. The reputation of the Leezari for Sorcery and skill in battle made even the most aggressive Trezkillian lords balk at leading an army against the mysterious and largely unknown perils of the forested lands of the east. It would be many centuries before the Leezari would emerge from their homelands to actively seek contact with Humans.

Politically, the early monarchs of Sardell were a lack-luster lot, who tended to rely on the advice of their Trezkillian and Ormocean advisors who made up much of the Sardellan parliament in Jasper, the real ruling force in the kingdom. Khalast (that later became Llan) was viewed as a constant threat by the nobility of Sardell and the northern garrisons continued to be maintained on the northern borders, despite the expense. In 600R, when the Great Houses of Khalast became embroiled in a civil conflict that was to last over 200 years, the pressure of a looming war was relaxed and Sardell took the advantage of the disunity of its northern neighbor to seize more and more of its borderlands.

This culminated with the annexure of the Khalasian town of Darringmoor in 950R, giving Sardell a much-needed port on the Greater Inner Sea. The success of the actions against its northern neighbor imbued the Sardellan King Xarick II with an appetite for war and a desire to conquer more land outside of the kingdom. Indeed, at his coronation, he proclaimed himself 'Emperor' of Sardell and promised his Trezkillian warlords that he would give them full rein to provide him with the territories that went with the title. By 1000R, the dawn of Imperial Sardell was at hand.



Xarick II of Sardell, an ambitious monarch who set his country on the path to become an Empire, encompassing most of Eldoria.

THE BRIEF RISE AND TRAGIC FALL OF KHALAST

Between the years 300R and 500R the Kingdom of Khalast had everything going for it. King Drydan, its founder, was a charismatic man with a vision of establishing an economically secure nation under his benevolent monarchy. He deliberately devolved power, giving the great noble Houses direct control of the lands that they held. This was a token of his belief in a land unified by nobles who truly honored the royal family and wished to work together for the benefit of the kingdom. Perhaps he was naïve but Drydan and his successor, Eladan managed to govern Khalast amiably, as a feudal society, for over one hundred years. There were a number of border disputes with Sardell in the 400's but the Khalasians handled the resulting conflicts with honor and cool-headedness.

Although they were not a great seafaring nation, the Khalasians opened up some limited trade with their cousins in Char-Endl, sending their distinctive vessels (called Slynds) up along the Shattered Coast to barter in Cetairi. Khalasian Slynds even managed to cross the Greater Inner Sea before the Sardellans and establish early contact with Northland. In some ways, the kingdom was more advanced than their southern rivals, especially in the area of architecture and engineering. Evidence of this can be seen in their early use of the flying buttress, in combination with domed structures, to create buildings on a grander scale in places like Quorull and Slaarn. This type of architecture did not come into vogue in Sardell until the 13th century R, while the Khalasians were familiar with these building techniques from the 4th century.

It is during the 6th century R that Khalast's first real woes began. As part of the process of investing power with the noble families of Khalast, the monarchy relied upon the concept of divine right to maintain respect and loyalty. The main religions worshipped by Khalasians (at this time) were those of Phelltar and Faar. The royal family claimed that the House of Alithar had been

directly ordained to rule the Khalasians by the Goddess Phelltar at the Dawn of Time. As evidence, they cited old manuscripts that had been kept by House Alithar for generations.

The Phelltarian Church was protected and patronized by the monarchs of Khalast and were, naturally, happy to support this view. However, as priests from Khalast joined other scholars in traveling to Jasper to view the transcripts of the Three Books of Law, questions began to be raised about the validity of the claims made by House Alithar. The Books of Law certainly made no mention of any link between House Alithar and the Goddess and this fuelled debate amongst the clergy. Such was the intensity of the debate that a religious conclave was held in Quorull in 587R, to bring regional priests into line. The conclave concluded that the royal family's claims were legitimate and the transcripts in the Three Books were incomplete in their meaning.

However, for one young priest, P'tar the Resolute, the conclave was a travesty and he was quite sure of the meaning of the Books of Law – the House of Alithar were not ordained to rule by divine right and the concept of a ruling monarch was abhorrent to the philosophy of Phelltar.

After continuing to preach against Church dogma, P'tar was defrocked by his peers but continued to travel the roads of Khalast, expounding the evils of the monarchy. King Halidan II forbade the authorities to take any action against the upstart cleric, conscious that, by doing so, he may make P'tar a martyr. This approach may have worked except for the scheming of Baron Ursanda of Slaarn, a senior member of House Kordahl, who had delusions of grandeur about claiming the throne for his own.

House Kordahl had a long history of grievances against the ruling family and Ursanda saw an opportunity to use the outspoken P'tar in weakening the power-base of House Alithar. He secretly financed P'tar and allowed him to build a temple in Slaarn, devoted to the 'true word' of Phelltar. Soon, Slaarn was home to a growing religious order, called the True Phelltarian Church, devoting their activities to undermining the monarchy.

P'tar was a charismatic speaker and, given the trappings and legitimacy provided to him by Baron Ursanda, the new Church began to spread its influence beyond Slaarn, growing in popularity with the commoners. By 595R there was great unrest in Khalast as a direct result of the spread of the True Phelltarian faith; six of the fourteen Great Houses were allied to P'tar's Church. At the King's Council, held in the March of Fire that year, a motion was proposed that the Royal Family renounce its claim of divine right in lieu of an 'elective' form of choosing monarchs, whereby representatives of the Fourteen Houses would decide who should succeed the throne. The motion was defeated by the narrowest of margins.

The Barons allied to the True Phelltarian Church continued to put pressure on King Halidan and, when he became seriously ill with Halocean Fever, in the winter of 599R, Baron Ursanda made his move. He raised an army of knights and peasant levies and marched upon the settlement of Tokia, capturing it after a hard-fought battle.

The Baron hung the lord of Tokia, who was the King's cousin, and had his men put the clergy of the Old Church of Phelltar to the sword. When he heard of this, it is said that

P'tar the Resolute was appalled by the actions of the Baron and demanded a meeting with Ursanda to discuss his unwarranted actions. But P'tar and his retinue were ambushed by a company of men-at-arms while in transit between Slaarn and Tokia and the priest was killed. It was widely reported that the company responsible for his death were from House Tharlen, enemies of House Kordahl, but the Tharlens denied this, suggesting the Baron himself was responsible for the murder of P'tar the Resolute.

Whatever the truth may be, the Baron moved quickly to shore up the leadership of the True Church, supporting the replacement of P'tar with a Bishop named Gyllus, a member of the House of Kordahl. The Baron and his army sheltered in Tokia for the rest of winter and when spring came to the land in 600R, he joined with the forces of his allies and marched northward against the King at Quorull. The Great Civil War had begun.

The savagery of the Llanish Great Civil War is legendary and still divides people in Llan. Tales are told of barbaric acts that chill the souls of even the most seasoned veterans of the Mercenary Companies, operating in Llan today. Ursanda's campaign was brief and effective and he drove his forces headlong across the Rolling Dales, engaging King Halidan's army at the fords of the Mirrow River, near the town of Hatherlinn. The King's forces were routed and those who surrendered were later drowned in the Mirrow, one by one.

The King's personal guard had been bolstered by professional soldiers and peasant levies from the Houses of the Tharlens, the Falwyns and the Loyanns. But they were severely demoralized by the fact that Halidan refused to lead the army and had abdicated his throne to his son, Pardalan, an inexperienced young man who insisted on marching against Ursanda, against the advice of his captains.

Pardalan was hacked to pieces after the Battle of Mirrow Ford and the gruesome remains were sent to his father in a jeweled urn. Quorull itself was under siege by the end of summer but most of House Alithar and the new King, Eridine, had fled by sea to hill-forts in Nohlera.

A protracted conflict set in after that in which the loyalties of the Great Houses shifted continuously in a bid to get a bigger slice of the cake that was on offer. Former allies turned on each other and the nobility ignored their oaths to protect the people who farmed their lands, concentrating on fighting distant battles, while petty robber knights usurped their estates at home.

The conflict helped repair the damage done to the divided Phelltar Church, with priests putting aside their differences after the first 50 years of the war, to try and get some kind of peaceable solution accepted by the warring Barons. When their pleas went largely unheard, the clergy ended up denouncing the nobility and told their congregations to refuse the feudal levy and fight no more for their lords. As a result, many of the nobles turned on the Church, burning their temples and seizing their property. The Phelltarian Church of Khalast was so badly affected that it did not recover until the 22nd century R, when the famous Phelltarian priest, Rhaelan Sunder, visited Llan during his evangelistic crusade of the region.

Stories of the casualties suffered by the Khalasian people in the never-ending battles and retributive attacks on the general

populace were so profound that in 625R a large group of Esmian clergy arrived from Sardell to help set up places of healing in the southern areas, principally in Slaarn and Tokia. But such was the insane brutality and paranoia of the rival Khalasian lords that they turned on the Esmians, seeing their gesture as nothing more than an invasion Orchestrated by the Sardellan King. The carnage continued with no side gaining the upper hand, the conflict stabilizing briefly in 694R with the onset of the Rose Plague, which tore through the Kingdom reducing the remaining population by a half.

Then in 751R The Houses Baelinsar and Narrill sought an alliance with the Llanadan tribes of the Stonebrow Mountains and, assembling a great force that flocked to their banner, the lords of those Houses led their host on a campaign that conquered all of Khalast. The task was completed inside a year, so exhausted and depleted had their opposition become. A new King, Faelorin, was placed on the throne and based himself at the Keep of Talindar, the nearest fortification to the old capitol of Quorull, after that town had been burned to the ground during the war.

Having established peace in the region, the Llanadan people sought leave to return to their homes in the Stonebrow Mountains. But just as the Kingdom of Khalast began to pull itself back from the brink of self-extinction, it was threatened by its old enemy Sardell, making claims on disputed territories once more. King Faelorin, anxious to maintain stability, offered the Llanadan permanent holdings in the rich lowlands and to unify their people, he arranged the marriages between the Fourteen Houses and the most important families of the Llanadan. Not everyone in the Great Houses initially supported this move by the King but, with Sardell encroaching on their southern borders, there was little else they could do to win the continued service of Llanadan. Thus, the Kingdom of Llan was born and almost immediately, found itself coming to blows with the expanding Empire of Sardell.

Y'SIRA: THE POWER IN THE SOUTH

With the Empire of Sardell expanding in the north let's shift our focus to the development of the lands south of the Sea of Souls. During the Darktime, after the fall of Heaven's Reach and the dispersion of Humans across the Sea of Souls, the people known as the Zurandi settled the fertile coastline of Zuvinar Bay and the river valleys of the Zyle River and the Foaming Gauntlet. The Zurandi were of the Faithful, which is to say they favored the Gods during the War of Power. They built a great city called Uraz, on the coast, half way between the two major rivers and this became the center of civilization in the south, with a theocracy emerging to rule over it, devoted to the Goddess Daugron. They called their land Tariz (which means the Place of Fire).

The Zurandi were great innovators, their understanding of the environment enabling them to overcome the harsh conditions of the desert. They knew how to cultivate their land by making economic use of water, creating irrigation channels and sinking deep wells. This allowed them to establish extensive farmlands, where they grew a variety of crops unique to the warm, dry climate of Tariz. These included dates, spiceberries, pommeraje and therge. Their meat stocks came from herds of goats and a

hardy breed of cattle called nulaks. This all went to feeding a thriving culture that rapidly spread to settle other areas along the coast, perhaps the most notable being Byalliz and Tariziach.

The Daugron priesthood that governed the Theocracy of Tariz was a benevolent institution, at this time, and devoted itself to appeasing the Goddess through animal sacrifice, the carcasses of which were butchered and then roasted over the fires of Daugron to be served at great public feasts. These feasts honored the Goddess of the Sacred Flame, whose clergy were omnipotent and beyond criticism. Despite having absolute control of the population, the Church governed affairs fairly, without using the brutal methods that they later came to be known for. The records concerning Tariz, that survived this early part of Y'siran history, speak of no major war or conflict; the commoners were happy to serve Daugron and their welfare was looked after by the Church.

There were some brief battles with other races intent on invading the kingdom, notably the Y'naari-Kahn pirates and a barbarian horde called the Jarde, from the Coasts of Za-Kariden. However, the standing army of Tariz was well trained and defeated the Jarde in several engagements near Byalliz. At sea, their small, maneuverable fighting ships proved more than a match to deter seaborne raids by the Y'naari. As a result, the culture of Tariz flourished and grew stronger over the next few centuries.

The buildings of the Zurandi people used a combination of abundant limestone and granite found in the mountains behind the coast and displayed a more open plan than those of their northern Human counterparts. They favored flat roofs (due to the lack of precipitation) and designed their residences around a central courtyard garden, open to the air. Their clothing reflected their climate and would have been considered immodest even by modern standards. Both men and women were short tunics of light fabrics and it was not uncommon for both sexes to go bare breasted within their own homes.

Despite the strength of its early beginnings, the Kingdom of Tariz came to an abrupt end as a result of a combination of natural disasters. Firstly, around 1R, a large meteor fell off the coast of the capitol during the March of Fire, impacting in Zuvinar Bay. Uraz was struck by a tsunami that all but destroyed the great city. Records of the falling star appear in the northern countries; many tapestries and documents of that era showing a blazing star in the heavens. This was around the same time that the Books of Law were discovered.

Although the populace of Uraz was devastated by the tsunami, they were rallied by the Daugron Church and began the task of rebuilding their city only to be beset, two Marches later, by a series of sandstorms that continued, without end, for approximately six weeks. Uraz and its surviving people were eradicated from the face of Enshar.

Following the fall of Uraz, the Kingdom of Tariz split into a number of independent city-states. The dominance of the Daugron Church had been weakened by the loss of its centralized hierarchy, allowing a number of secular leaders (called K'luuds) to assume power in many of these places. However, in a bid to retain some semblance of control, surviving elements of the Daugron Church began preaching that the old theocracy had

been weak and lenient and that Daugron had visited her wrath on Uraz as a result. The fiery meteor that was the catalyst for the city's destruction was used as a visible manifestation of the Goddess's displeasure. The new Church was dominated by more fanatical representatives of the clergy and they were able to maintain direct rule over Byalliz and a number of settlements throughout Ikle's Head, including the important lead and copper mines of Terl.

While the K'luud's of the west concerned themselves with rebuilding their kingdoms and the establishment of trade with nations of the Sea of Souls, the priests of Byalliz concentrated on assembling and equipping an army and, during the 2nd and 3rd centuries R, spread their territories eastward, conquering the small Jarde kingdoms along the Coasts of Za-Kariden.

During this period of expansion, the armies of Byalliz began to encounter tribes of nomadic people who claimed to have crossed the deep deserts from the Outlands of Eldoria. They were called the Keljak and were experts at desert survival, proving fierce opponents in battle. Their people had seen the great star fall from the sky to their north, many years ago, and they believed that this was a signpost to paradise, foretold in their religious prophecies. For over a century, Keljak scouting parties had been trailblazing a path northward through the massive range of mountains, known as the Dunewall. From there, they had explored the deep deserts, marking out caches where water could be found, so that eventually the entire Keljak nation could follow the scouts' path to the 'promised land'.

Many Keljak warriors, who came with these scouting parties remained and were enlisted to fight for Byalliz. They visited the beautiful city for themselves, bringing gifts for the Daugron priesthood from their Chiefs. In return, the priesthood sent missionaries back across the deep deserts with the Keljak and they learned that the tribes of the Outlands were of a great number and their warriors adept at highly mobile combat, using small but fast horses called Wikkani (which means wind colt).



The great Ziggurat of Byalliz. The flame that burns in its brazier has remained unextinguished for over 1000 years.

The Keljak worshipped a single God called Kavast, who represented the four elements. Kavast was not one of the Divine Twenty-Seven but the Daugron missionaries were able to convince the tribal shamans of the Keljak that Kavast and Daugron were one in the same, fire being the most powerful of the elements. They spoke of Byalliz and the fertile coasts of the fractured Kingdom of Tariz as being the promised country that Kavast had said his people could find in the north.

Traffic continued between the Outland settlements of the Keljak and Byalliz for nearly 50 years, then during the 5th century R, a vast exodus of the Keljak began, Orchestrated by their Chieftain, Kazanku. They crossed the Dunewall en masse and descended into the deserts beyond, eventually coming to Byalliz. Integration with Zurandi people was not easy but the priests of Daugron made it clear that the Keljak were most welcome and even handed direct rulership of Byalliz to Kazanku, who was crowned K'luud. In doing so, the Daugron Church ended up creating a hierarchal division in the Y'siran society that worsened in the centuries after. Being Keljak provided a person with status and privileges beyond those of commoners and soon the original citizens of Byalliz found themselves the servants of an imported regime and people..

The long-term strategy that the Daugron priesthood had for encouraging the immigration of the Keljak was to use their plentiful supply of warriors to conquer the city-states of the west. Spurred on by the rhetoric of the Daugron Church, Kazanku began an immediate assault upon the other city-states, capturing Tariziach, the most powerful of their by 500R. This was the birth of the nation of Y'sira and the end of the fractured kingdoms.

The rest of the old kingdoms were quickly subjugated by the new Keljak regime, bringing sweeping social changes to the old Zurandi communities. For one thing, the Keljak believed in slavery; those defeated in war could be taken as slaves. Status amongst warriors of the Keljak was determined by the number of slaves they incorporated into their household and the new K'luud wished to display his power by adding a sizable amount of slaves to his palace in Byalliz. This posed a dilemma for the Daugron priesthood. They could not simply say that all the Zurandi race conquered by the Keljak were now slaves, after all, most of the existing priesthood were of the Zurandi. Instead, a compromise was reached, whereby the families in the defeated cities had to offer up one of their sons and daughters, aged between twelve and twenty-five, as slaves. This was a once off transaction; after that, all the population would be considered as citizens of the new land and all future slaves would be procured by conquest and trade abroad.

The Keljak and the priesthood were the only ones allowed to keep slaves and this added to the widening of social divisions in Y'sira, along racial lines. While the Keljak used slaves mainly as a labor source, the Daugron Church introduced Human sacrifice to its rituals in 700R, as a means of praising the Goddess, creating spectacle and intimidating any subversive parts of society. The Church had come full circle from being benevolent rulers of the land to the dictatorial mouth-piece of an imported power.

During the 9th Century, Y'sira put a great effort into exploring the southern waters, both of the Sea of Souls and the Outland coastlines. They established a productive trade network

with countries as far north as Llan and they colonized some of the islands off Eldoria's southern coast. Y'siran foods and crafted goods were in great demand in Sardell and the art of wine-making, that had been common at the time of Tariz, was introduced to the northerners in 805R. Y'sira exported its 'exotic' produce along with jade, precious gems, rugs, perfume and rare spices. It imported timber, grain, wool and base metals.

In Byalliz there was much social unrest between the Zurandi and Keljak. The Keljaks' elevated position meant that they received the key jobs in the K'luud's administration and thereby became the upper class of the city, causing the creation of a more impoverished Zurandi. The best of housing, food, wine and services were afforded by the Keljak and, as a result, a black market grew up for the purpose of purloining similar merchandise for the rest of the population.

Thieves' Guilds emerged, making use of an extensive undercity beneath Byalliz. This consisted of numerous caves and tunnels, which had been formed by the passage of ancient lava tubes and subsequent watercourses, flowing through the region in ages past. These were later excavated by the owners of buildings in Byalliz, becoming basements and networks of connecting subterranean passages. They made ideal hiding places for thieves and factions plotting against the K'luud.

Crime emerged as a normal way of getting things done on the streets of Byalliz, the richer quarter of the city may have been owned by the Keljak but the rest was the domain of a secretive lawless society, earning Byalliz the title of the 'City of Thieves'. The notorious Assassin's Guild, the Cult of the Withered Blade, had its origins in Byalliz amongst these underground organizations, before it relocated its activities to the northern realms of Eldoria.

In the 10th century R, there was a renewed conquest of the east, which saw the Keljak Horde cross the Niblir River and take the Kingdom of the Arimah in 950R. Beyond this lay the impenetrable rainforest jungles of Po-Ka, impeding any further expansion by land, although some abortive attempts were made to build roadways through the jungle, along the coastline. Y'siran expansionism now looked to the sea for further conquests and, alongside its large merchant fleet, the K'luuds of Byalliz began to assemble a larger war-fleet. By the year 1000R it was obvious that the northern kingdom of Sardell and Y'sira were destined for a future clash of empires.

THE TRIBES OF RHENFARA

Most of the Darktime legends that survived and tell of the early days of Rhenfara were translated by Rhenfaran tale-weavers. They say how the wide veldt was ruled by the Nender-Saahn, the beasts, and that the Saahn feared to roam with the beasts because they had lost their innocence and had turned away from the High Lords. But the people of the Ziaddan had never strayed from belief in their Gods and so became one with the land of Ru-faran, that later became known as Rhenfara.

The Ziaddan were said to be distantly related to the Keljak and dwelled for many centuries in the southern Outlands until the devastating effects of the Rose Plague and famine drove them northward, across the Ijanka Mountains and into the wide plains that lay beyond. They were a proud race of warriors with a 'hunter-gatherer' culture; they knew very little of farming and

agriculture, other than the keeping of a domesticated animals for wool and milk.

There was a constant rivalry between the tribes of the Ziaddan, resulting in many long-standing feuds. Although there was a truce made during the time of the Ziaddan migrations, once the lands of Ru-faran were settled, old hostilities continued and inter-tribal wars broke out, consisting of small raids to steal women and burn dwellings.

The tribes also assailed the small city state of Yagash (now Hrygashan), which existed on the coast, in the far west of Ru-faran.

The people of Yagash were called the Arimah and were of the race of Halflings. Their origins before this time are unknown but they were quite civilized and had built their city into the cliff-sides that back onto the jungles in the region. They harvested the sea and were a peace-loving folk, unable to defend themselves against the constant raids of the Ziaddan tribes. Instead, many Arimah abandoned Yagash for the dense rainforests of Po-Ka and legend has it that they discovered a mountain of gold, deep within Po-Ka and built a fabulous city there, called Corithaal, a place of wealth and splendor. Some Arimah sailed west, along the coast and made a kingdom in the narrow tract of land between the Jungles of Po-Ka and the Niblfir River, which they shared with Human settlers until it was conquered by Y'sira in 950R.

The Ru-faran tribes continued their rivalries for a number of centuries until the coming of the Archdruid Izrach, in 543R. Izrach and his followers hailed from the distant northern Kingdom of Khalast, where the Archdruid had fought against the encroachment of sacred sites by the Kingdom of Sardell. Captured in 541R, Izrach was exiled and eventually found his way to Ru-faran, hearing of the mighty forests of Po-Ka that lay there.

Izrach established a settlement on Sunachi Head at Xioraja and soon Ziaddan tribes were on his doorstep. But the Archdruid used his powers to protect the settlers of Xioraja and told the Ziaddan tribesmen to go and spread the word of his arrival to their chieftains, that he would meet them in council. The chieftains each hoped to gain some advantage against each other by allying with this strange, powerful 'shaman.' They descended from the Plains of Okkanda to the coast to talk with the newcomers and see the powers that they had been told about for themselves.

The Archdruid swore that he and the Ulliahn brotherhood would serve the Ru-faran tribes equally and teach their wise men their ways with nature. But it was on the condition that the tribes unite and cease their pointless quarrels. As a scripted display of power, Izrach breathed life into an old dead tree that overlooked the site of the council and ten branches were renewed in greenery. The chieftains, who numbered ten, were impressed by Izrach's symbolism and command of the Tas. They swore everlasting fealty to one another and pledged their loyalty to the Druids – thus the Brotherhood of the Dead Tree was born and the land was renamed Rhenfara (place of life).

The Brotherhood removed to Yagash in 755R, in order to be close to the great jungle forest of Po-Ka. They came to call the ancient Arimah city Hrygashan and, between 759R and 804R raised over one thousand standing stones along the coastline of Sunachi Head. They trained the shamans of the Ziaddan in the

lore of Ulliah and, so that the original warrior culture would not be diminished, they created the Tazannai Games, an annual series of athletic and martial competitions, from which the tribes won tribute and ransom from each other. The Games were embraced by the people of Rhenfara and became a focus for important political and religious festivals in later years.

Although it intended only to be a religious advisory body, the Brotherhood of the Dead Tree eventually became part of the central ruling body of Rhenfara, the Dead Tree Council. The Council was made up of representatives of the tribes and an equal number of Druids. They assembled only once per year, during the span of the Tazannai Games, to discuss the amendments to laws, settle tribal disputes and set quotas and limitations on the hunting of herd beasts and the use of arable land.

In the 10th century, Y'siran traders were frequent visitors to Rhenfara, interested in obtaining timber, ivory and base metals from the Ziaddan culture. The Brotherhood treated the foreigners with respect and sent ambassadors to the west, to see the wonders of the great city of Byalliz. These 'spies' returned with disturbing tales of the expansionist policies of the Keljak and, after the fall of the Arimah Kingdom, along the Niblfir River, the Dead Tree Council held a special session, to discuss the formation of a standing army and the fortification of Hrygashan.

By 1000R, Rhenfara was preparing itself for battle.

THE DECADENT DYNASTY OF KAHN

The land that is now modern Maritaan has always been an arid, hard place, with little vegetation in its western plains and even less in its high ranges in the east. During the Darktime, scattered nomadic tribes of Humans and Goblinskynd eked out an existence in Maritaan, establishing permanent communities along some rivers or at water sinkholes. They lived a primitive lifestyle and it is only with the arrival of the Y'naari-Kahn that real settlement of Maritaan got underway.

The Y'naari were a seafaring race that came to Eldoria from the eastern oceans, beyond the Golden Sea. Their histories tell that their predecessors once dwelled on a continent with a warm climate, where their Kings ruled over a land called Mai-Tekaan, until it was consumed by 'Great Serpents'. Mai-Tekaan could have been one of the several nation states said to have made up Kordass and the destruction by 'Great Serpents' may have been the sinking of the island during the calamity that followed the destruction of the Weirding Stone. Some of the old accounts say that, when the mountains of Kordass had vanished beneath the waves, the 'Wyrms of Daugron' came forth from the depths and devoured most of the fleets that had put to sea to escape. Even today, those mariners who have dared to explore the storm-filled waters of the Sarkoshian Ocean, report the presence of serpentine monsters, 'able to wrap their coils about a vessel and, in so-doing, drag it beneath the waves'.

The ships of the Y'naari sailed north from Mai-Tekaan and they established settlements upon the island of Orlon, east of the Eldorian landmass. After several generations they began to explore the seas west of Orlon. They used their naval supremacy to raid other settled islands for slaves and riches, increasing the wealth and power of the Kings of Orlon.



Lai-zhan Kahn, the first monarch of Tai-Kaiyan, a city of opulence and unparalleled decadence.

Eventually, the Y'naari vessels ranged further to the west in a bid to discover fresh places to raid and came to discover the Eldorian mainland. They penetrated into the inner seas of Eldoria and built a permanent port and garrison in the north-eastern Outlands of Maritaan. This port was called Tai-Kaiyan and it quickly grew in prosperity and began to eclipse the throne in Orlon.

The noble family of Kahn became influential in Tai-Kaiyan and sought to found a new dynasty, independent of the monarchy in Orlon. The Lords of Kahn had long been held in disfavor by the rulers in Orlon, known as the Family of Daikimo. One of the reasons that they were so despised was that the Kahn devoted all their time to raiding westward, rather than tending the court of the Daikimo King. This was seen as an insult to the throne.

Around 2R, the Kahn declared Tai-Kaiyan to be independent of the Daikimo Dynasty and a brief war ensued, mainly fought upon the high seas. In a climatic battle, the rival fleets of the Kahn and the regal Daikimo engaged each other off Rorak Isle. The Lords of Kahn destroyed the fleets of their King but they did not go on to attack the Daikimo on Orlon, instead they retreated to Tai-Kaiyan and fortified their holdings there. However, they were never troubled by the remnants of the Daikimo Dynasty again; the Y'naari people on Orlon were decimated by volcanic activity on Orlon in the century following the Battle of Rorak Island.

The Lords of Kahn created their own royal line in Tai-Kaiyan, the Kahn Dynasty, with Fenyun-Kahn founding the new line of Kings. Fenyun extended the city of Tai-Kaiyan and used the riches accumulated by the Lords of Kahn, to build a magnificent residence, called the Jeweled Palace. So many riches went into the grandiose structure that the Y'naari were soon forced to renew their raids on coastal communities in Eldoria

and the islands beyond, to secure more slaves and treasures. The Y'naari terrified the populations dwelling about the coasts of the Sea of Souls, pillaging communities as far west as Ikle's Head in Y'sira. They were most active between the years of 10AR and 100AR, but after then, the noble families who commanded these raids began to fall under the influence of the Yaarneyan cult, who had penetrated the higher social echelons of Tai-Kaiyan, including the Lords of Kahn.

The Yaarneyan cult believed in the pursuit of an entirely hedonistic lifestyle and was most successful wherever centers of power and wealth existed. The cult originated throughout some of the distant islands to the east of Eldoria and some of its more influential members were captured in raids and brought back as slaves to Tai-Kaiyan, where they quickly began to make inroads into polite society. It wasn't long before senior cultists had enough amassed wealth to build a temple to Yaarneya in Tai-Kaiyan. Soon after, it became quite fashionable amongst rich Y'naari families to have a spiritual advisor and tutor, from the temple, to assist with the ordering of their households. What usually followed were the corruption of the household to complete belief in Yaarneya and the total pursuit of pleasure in life.

By 390R Tai-Kaiyan had become a city suffering decadent decline. The merchant classes assumed defacto control of the country but were unsuccessful in staging a coup against the Kahn Dynasty, as the army remained fanatically loyal to the Kahn. Instead, many families who sought a better life, relocated to the south. Here they discovered the lost city of Sinkhole Deep. They occupied the ancient site and founded a new community in central Maritaan, making it the center of agriculture and trade by 500R. By this time, all of Tai-Kaiyan was under the effective control of the Yaarneyan cult and the city had become a place of dread, feared by the southern Y'naari, who renamed themselves Y'naari-Su.

No real leaders emerged in the regime that governed Sinkhole Deep; everyone was too frightened to become 'known' to the powers in the north. People feared a summons to the Court of the Sighing Palace (the new title of the Jeweled Palace) where it was rumored that the Yaarneyan Cult practiced human sacrifice amongst many other evil and debauched ceremonies.

For many centuries, the Y'naari-Su of Sinkhole Deep lived under the distant shadow of an oppressive regime, supplying Tai-Kaiyan with grain, goods and people (many who were never heard of again). It was therefore easy to understand the ease at which they later embraced the legions of Sardell, when the Empire landed upon their shores in 1235R to add Maritaan to their conquests.

THE ELVEN LANDS

The Leezari Elves, it is told, decided on a policy to ban other races from their lands shortly before the Darktime. They declared the land of Leezeria, from the Passage of Thungar to the Golden Sea, their own and forbade any other Saahn to walk within their realm, without leave to do so. The reasons behind this are relatively obscure, the Leezari people had fought side by side with other races of Saahn during the War of Power and there had been little evidence of racial divide then or in the time before that great conflict. It has been suggested that the

rise in the misuse of magic by non-Elven practitioners was a contributing factor but this cannot be the sole reason behind the 'cold shoulder' that the Leezari gave the other Saahn.

The Leezari, being largely a nomadic folk who subsisted as hunter-gatherers, had few established settlements. Tarimthol-Irl was the only fortified city that existed prior to the Darktime and continues as the capitol today, although it is now grossly under populated. It was here that the Leezari centralized their Kingdom and held on through a number of wars with the Goblinskynd of Ahr-Ganiz fought during the Darktime. At the cost of many lives, the Elves drove the Goblinskynd into hiding in the eastern mountains and scourged the land of other Saahn tribes who tried to maintain settlements in their realm.

The land suffered great damage during those wars and Leezari dedicated themselves to the protection of the remaining unspoiled forests and pristine glades. In particular, the Druidical Order of the Shaedarfyn, a sect devoted to the God Ulliah, was given grants of land to watch over, that even the Elves could not enter without permission. These were the most sacred groves, where the Sylvaari, Malantha and other creatures of nature still dwelled; places like the Glades of Peace, the Alfarren Highlands, Eldarwood, the Obsidian Valley and Woodnymph Dale.

As the Darktime faded and their Kingdom was secured, the Elves began to spread themselves further across Leezeria, establishing a few more permanent settlements, such as Sunds (Elven garrisons) and Tairns (above ground tree dwellings). These outlying communities that based themselves of the southern and eastern coasts soon found they were being raided by Y'naari-Kahn pirates and many Elves were taken into slavery.

As a reaction to these attacks, the Elvenking ordered the retreat of all communities from the coasts and the establishment of Sunds in areas where it was absolutely necessary to maintain a settlement on the seaboard. The attacks diminished in time, the Y'naari being no longer active after 100R.

In that same year, a scholarly retreat came into being on the coast of southwest Leezeria. It was located at Pharidor's Watch and became a center devoted to the study of ancient texts and the pursuit of arcane magic. The Shaedarfyn also based their members here, as the sacred groves of Alfarra and Eldarwood were located in close proximity to the region. Pharidor's Watch had previously been a Sund, the original settlement, strengthened against the raids by the Y'naari-Kahn. Its stone bastions became home to the greatest library that the Leezari ever assembled.

Despite concerns of the Elves of Tarimthol-Irl, some Leezari communities refused to withdraw to safer locations. Although it had been the place of the greatest amount of conflict, many Leezari went to the distant east, close to the great mountain ranges where the Goblinskynd still brooded. Here lay the isolated Elven Province of Dalafor, a wilder, brooding land of moors and wide marshlands. These were loved none-the less by many Elves because of their 'untamed nature'.

On the shore of the Golden Sea, the Elvenking's own brother, Aerund, began work on Elvenholme, a beautiful citadel and port. Further inland, Aerund raised Anandezra, a keep built amidst the glorious waters and wildlife of the Gyldian Marshes. There were a few initial attacks by Orc and goblin tribes but these were easily defeated and they were sent packing back

into the mountains. The Province of Dalafor was firmly in the hands of the Leezari and its population doubled over the next 200 years.

But in 520R, a massive force of Goblinskynd struck both south and west out of the Mountains of Terror and, although they were halted in the west at the Battle of Moonstar Meadow, they entrenched themselves along the Sharl River and effectively cut off the Province of Dalafor from the rest of Leezeria for over a century.

TO LANDS NORTH

During the first millennium, the lands that make up modern Northland and Char-Endl saw a vast number of migrations. There were a great number of Human tribes of the Khalasian people who came to settle the fertile valleys of the Fleetfoam, Iriss and Crystal Rivers throughout the Darktime. To the north, in the colder realms, the Halfling people appeared, moving from the arctic conditions of the Outlands after completing a long trek around the eastern coast. They found the Khalasian Humans in the region to be quite peaceful and traded goods with them at Greenwood. The Halflings began to integrate with the Humans as the Darktime came to a close but then the Goblinskynd emerged from the southern mountain realms and assailed the Khalasians, driving many tribes northward across the Thrullin River and into the icy wastes of Char-Endl. The Halflings and the remaining Khalasians retreated to the forested parts of the northeast.

In 72R the Goblinskynd renewed their drive into Northland and pushed the remaining Halfling and Khalasian tribes into the foothills of the Towers of Ice. These were a range of mountains with no known passes and were said to be impossible to scale. Here they existed in miserable conditions for centuries. Life was very harsh and they were constantly on guard against Goblinskynd patrols and raiders. Only as the Goblinskynd began to amass forces against the Leezari in the south did the Human and Halfling tribes move south and resettle the more arable lands again.

In Char-Endl, the Khalasian migration drove about as far westward as Midwaine Headland before most tribes became reluctant to go further, believing it to be all ice. Those tribes that did continue eventually came to the forested lands beyond to found Khalast. The tribes who remained in the tundra of Char-Endl found ample game in summer and hunted bison and mammoth across the plains, returning to Midwaine Headland each winter to shelter from the cold. Here, they held a great celebration, offering praise and worship to their many animal totems. Dragon myths were prevalent through their culture and the symbol of the Dragon was entrenched in their art and social structure and, used by their chiefs to represent their status in the Clans.

The chiefs of the mighty Clans surrounded themselves with a cadre of fighters that they called Dragoncarls; they were the elite and received better weapons and armor and a bigger cut of booty. The Clans fought on occasion but these disputes were nothing that attributed to more than inter-tribal squabbling. They were largely nomads, following game and they also turned out to be nomads of the sea; gifted mariners, plying the waters of the Greater Inner Sea in their famous dragonships.



A woodcarver works on a figurehead for a Char-Endlese ship, making a traditional representation of the dragon, a key icon in their culture.

The first major conflict that occurred took place in the 9th century R, when a Sorceress, known as the Snow Queen, arose to prominence in the Thundering Peaks. She became the leader of Clan Usak, one of the stronger tribes, as well as a primitive people from the Mountains of the Last, called the Tokapans. She drove the Char-Endlese Clans out of Midwaine, one by one, pushing them east. But the Clans she had disaffected quickly dropped any existing feuds they had with each other and united, attacking the Snow Queen's army at Chakotai, near Sheridori. Clan Usak was utterly destroyed, although the Snow Queen escaped and was not heard of again. The victors drove the Tokapans back into their mountain homes and took the surviving Usak as slaves.

THE DWARVES EMERGE

It has been told how the Dwarves went west, after the failure of the Saahn to unite and maintain a lasting peace after the Last Battle. The tales of the modern Stonekin say that they built a magnificent mansion beneath the earth, in the Outlands of the West, by the sea. It was called Zarkanda-Zahl (or Dwarvenhold), the likes of which no living Dwarf has ever seen. Here they delved throughout the Darktime, unaware of the terrors and plagues that devastated Humans in the east. It is not clear if the great underground city of Dwarvenhold suffered some unspecified calamity toward the end of the Darktime or whether its people still dwell on in secret within its stone halls, but a large group of Dwarves crossed the Sea of Five Winds in a great fleet, around 225R, landing on the island of Karashar-Zahl.

Here they established a mine and a Kingdom under the rule of Thrune Stonesunderer. It turned out to be a most profitable adventure and a city called Zalgaari (the Excellium City) was raised on the island. Three other mines were delved in the Grand Escarpment, in the nearby mainland of western Sardell, a sparsely occupied region, at this time in history.

Beneath the Grand Escarpment the Dwarves found a vast

grotto and built a port facility there, called Zethain. From this subterranean harbor, Stonekin ships sailed the seas of Eldoria between 400R and 1000R trading with Human cities; selling precious metals and gems for grain, ale and salted beef. Y'siran merchants are reported to have traveled north and landed at Zalgaari to trade, marveling in its architecture and stupendous wealth. They asked of where the Stonekin had originally come from but where met by a wall of silence. Few talked about the past and those that did would only say enigmatic things along the line of, "What is past is past" or "We no longer know our kin in the west, so we will not speak of them at all".

Whatever had happened to drive the Dwarves into the east was a sensitive issue, wrapped in mystery and was not talked about.

THE AGE OF EMPIRES: 1001R – 1500R

"Gentlemen, if we do not prevail on this day, I fear our children will speak the Y'siran tongue and we will all be offering prayers to Daugron."

Admiral Quinn, commander of the Sardellan fleet at the Battle of the Deepfin Channel, 1532R.

THE RISE OF THE SARDELLAN EMPIRE

No one doubts that the Empire of Sardell left its mark upon the face of modern Eldoria. Even the Elves, who have traditionally discounted the influence of Humans in the world, acknowledge the power and might of Sardell, at its height. It was the rise of the Empire that convinced the Leezari to look beyond their forest kingdom and forge alliances to help them in their battles against their Goblinskynd enemies.

Most countries found themselves influenced by Sardell, during the five hundred years that the Empire dominated affairs in Eldoria, whether they had been peacefully integrated into the Empire or suffered forced occupation as a result of conquest. Its legions were the finest trained and equipped soldiers (even by today's standards) and were led by the most brilliant tactical leaders of that age, largely drawn from the Church of Trezkillian.

Where the legions went, the missionaries of Esmia and Ormocea would follow, bringing a social revolution to the lands that had been conquered, instilling laws, healing halls, education and a common language. As a result, those nations who came into contact with Sardell found themselves adopting many aspects of the culture that had contributed to the success of the Empire.

While many countries defied Sardell and fought furiously against their invading armies, in many cases, life was improved for the general populace of the conquered nation, once the fighting was over. The Churches of the Holy Trinity made a concerted effort to introduce beneficial institutions into all corners of Eldoria and the testament to this remains today. The laws of Ormocea are entrenched throughout most Human lands and the Sardellan tongue is the chief language used across Eldoria. The Empire may now be divided and fractured, but its unifying influence remains.

Sardell was born out of the ashes of the old Akalastian

kingdoms in 428R, after the unification of Sard, Clannith and Elkia. A succession of rather uninspired monarchs reigned, who were mainly occupied with bringing dissident tribes on the mainland, into the Kingdom. The early rulers of Sardell were under the guidance of Barons loyal to the Ormocean and Trezkillian faiths and remained totally under control of the Churches for many centuries. Only in the 10th century R did a line of Kings emerge who were strong enough to put forward their own policies and beliefs. Until this time, the ruler of Sardell had traditionally been Recognized to Ormocea as their patron Deity. When Erdwain II died without a direct heir in 948R, his cousin Zharrad assumed the throne. Zharrad came from a branch of the royal family whose patron was Trezkillian, God of War and refused to change Recognition to the Ormocean faith after he became King.

Zharrad began his reign by immediately making a number of territorial claims over the tattered remnants of the strife-torn Kingdom of Khalast. This culminated in the seizure of Darringmoor in 950R, providing Sardell with a major port on the Greater Inner Sea and opening up greater opportunities of trade with Char-Endl and Northland. Zharrad's reign was followed by the ambitious King Xarick II, who was the monarch who declared Sardell an Empire and built a vast armada of warships with which to conquer all of Eldoria.

The new millennium began with a succession of monarchs that adopted Xarick's aggressive policy of colonial expansion over the next 500 years, invading Maritaan and pressuring Northland and many of the island kingdoms of the Sea of Souls into swearing fealty to the Emperor of Sardell. 'Allies' of Sardell had to submit to having their realms garrisoned by Trezkillian troops, devoted to 'protecting' the territories of their newfound friends.

Sardell reached the height of its expansion during the 16th century R. This was the Golden Age, the reign of the legendary Empress Taranae, who ascended to the throne in Jasper in 1526R. She was a shrewd and charismatic politician, who listened to the advice of her Barons but did not let them command her. With most of the northern realms flying the banner of the Empire, her ambitions turned east to the virgin forest lands of Leezeria. Little was known about the Elves who guarded this mysterious realm but it was rumored that they were powerful Sorcerers and that their armies, though small in number, were well-disciplined and well-armed.

Spies brought stories to the Empress and her War Council, saying that the Elves had suffered great losses from a continuing conflict with the Goblinskynd of Ahr-Ganiz and that Leezeria's forces were committed to the battlefields of the distant east. This was the opportune time to move against the Elves.

In 1529R, Taranae encouraged the settlement of unoccupied lands on the shores of western Leezeria by Sardellan farmers. This was a litmus test, designed to see the response of the Elves to this intrusion into their lands. After a period of five years, there was no challenge to the occupation and Taranae made plans to move troops into Leezeria. A number of cavalry units were deployed into the lands settled by Sardellans but a full-scale assault upon Leezeria never came; a new threat from the south drew the attention of the Empress and occupied her legions for

the remaining years that she sat on the throne.



The Empress Tarane, Sardell's greatest monarch. All factions were united by her.

THREATS TO THE EMPIRE

During the 500 years that Sardell grew powerful in the north, the Keljak were very aware of the potential challenge to their culture and set about making their nation a ready match for the Northern Kings. They had already established trade with the north before the Second Millennium and their small, but swift merchant vessels could be seen frequenting the ports of Sardell, Llan, Char-Endl and Northland. Y'sira prospered and Byalliz was a city of wealth and fortune.

Early in the 11th century R, commercial rivalry began to occur between the merchants of Jasper and those of Byalliz. The Y'sirans began to be hit with stiff tariffs and customs charges when trying to land goods in Sardellan ports. The Y'siran merchants began to concentrate on trade with Llan and Northland instead, abandoning the Sardellan markets.

The King of Llan capitalized on this by entering formal trade agreements with Y'sira that included placing an embargo on Sardellan goods and forming a military alliance in the event of war. This drew angry words from the throne in Jasper and the Sardellans continued a campaign of disputing a number of strategic parts of their adjoining borders with Llan.

Diplomatic ties between Llan and Y'sira grew stronger and by 1100R, King Rolin II, of Llan, felt that he was in position to retake Darringmoor, the Llanish port that had been seized by Sardell in 950R. He asked for the promised support from Y'sira and the K'lud of Byalliz sent a token force of 100 of his best archers to bolster the Llanish army.

Llan did move against Sardell and took Darringmoor and held the town for a week before the occupying force was routed and driven out of the city, only to be slaughtered in open battle at

Salligar's Mill, a week later. Twenty-two of the Y'siran archers were captured during the battle and brought before the King of Sardell. They were sent back alive to Byalliz, but with their right hands removed. This was the first gesture of animosity in a long series of tit-for-tat incidents that would occur over the next few centuries.

In 1238R, Sardell responded to Llan's new-found confidence and finally launched a full-scale invasion of its northern neighbor, quickly conquering the disunited noble factions and scattering their poorly trained professional soldiers and disillusioned peasant levies. The morale of the Llanish people received a crippling blow and it took over twenty years before any organized resistance arose against the Imperial occupying force. A minor Llanish rebellion began in 1259R, led by Baron Undal of Nohlera. The charismatic young noble managed to rouse sufficient local support to seize control of Nohlera and hold it for two seasons. Two Sardellan Legions were sent to besiege the northern town in the autumn of 1259R and the Baron successfully defended Nohlera, while a diplomatic mission was sent by ship for the distant shores of Y'sira, to seek aid.

The Baron sent letters to the K'luid of Byalliz, calling upon him to honor the Llan-Y'siran Alliance. Unfortunately, the Keljak faction in Byalliz refused to get involved in a war so far away from their shores. Instead, their eyes were fixed on more local affairs; in Rhenfara, their eastern neighbors were engaged in fortifying the town of Bhiritaan on the Niblfir River and garrisoning the region with a large contingent of warriors. Instead of troops, all the K'luid would offer Baron Undal were weapons, food and financial support.

In 1260R a fleet of Y'siran merchant ships sailed north through the Passage of Thungar with the intention of landing at Nohlera to relieve the embattled Llanish fighters with fresh supplies. The Y'sirans were challenged by Sardellan warships and turned back. Within the year, Nohlera fell to the Sardellans but the Baron and the ringleaders escaped to continue a campaign of resistance to foreign rule. The Y'sirans were outraged over the incident at sea and made it known that their captains were free to attack and sink Sardellan vessels if encountered on the high seas. The Sardellan Emperor, Hallador I, responded with a formal blockade of all Y'siran traffic into the Greater and Lesser Inner Seas.

During the latter part of the 13th century R there were frequent acts of sanctioned piracy across the Sea of Souls, between Sardellan and Y'siran vessels. Both nations supported the activities of freebooters, equipping them with ships to pillage the sea-lanes. Inadvertently, they gave birth to the Society of the Seahawks, a loose fraternity of cutthroats and thieves, who continued to operate long after the fall of both Empires, raiding merchant shipping from havens in Londar's Land.

The K'luid of Byalliz continued to lend support to various noble factions in Llan and, in order to avoid the blockade of the Greater Inner Sea, Y'siran ships landed on the far western coast of Llan, a wilder land populated only by a few brave settlers. Despite terrible conditions, the Y'sirans were able to move a substantial amount of armor and weapons across the Stonebrow Mountains and into the river system of the High Lakes during the mid 14th century R, predating the expeditions of western

Llan by the explorer, Sannith Kreen, by 500 years. These arms found their way to rebels in the east and certainly helped give the Llanish forces teeth when the Great Rebellion erupted in 1383R.

The Great Rebellion was a brave but doomed attempt to free Llan from the shackles of the Empire. It was led by the Boy King, Junian; by all accounts a figure-head monarch only, who was controlled by House Kordahl and House Saxtar. The Barons of those two great Houses managed to patch together a loose confederacy of the other noble families of Llan, long enough to deal the complacent Sardellan garrisons a severe blow and free most of the Llanish Lowlands. Junian was portrayed as the embodiment of the spirit of ancient King Drydan and even the embittered peasant farmers left their plows to join the army of the Boy King. But the old feuds between the nobles still existed in the background, festering and unresolved. This was to be the downfall of the Great Rebellion.

In 1384R, the Sardellan Emperor sent his elite Trezkillian Legions, The Black Widow and The Lords of Death, north to deal with the insurrection. King Junian's fledgling army met them in battle at the Pass of Thurindor and, while the Llanish forces did give the overconfident Sardellan force a run for their money, disputes between their commanders lost them the day. During the height of the battle, the lords of three major Llanish Houses argued with each other over the disposition of their men and removed their levies from the field. The disunited army was swept aside and King Junian taken prisoner and sent south to Jasper, to spend his days in Traitor's Tower. Baron Ohris of House Saxtar tried to keep the rebellion alive but found support for the cause rapidly diminishing.



The standard of the "Lords of Death", one of Sardell's Trezkillian Legions. An elite unit of the Empire, their emblem inspired fear wherever they went, such was their reputation in battle.

Most of the remaining Llanish army was still made up of peasant soldiers, already disillusioned by the past activities of

the nobles in the terrible civil wars. When the Barons argued and lost King Junian and the Battle of Thurindor Pass, the peasants felt betrayed and saw it as just another sign that nothing had changed in Llan. They began to abandon their liege lords, at first in ones and twos and then in droves.

By the winter of 1385R, the Great Rebellion was over and Llan would have to wait for the Kinstrife before the opportunity arose to free the land again. This time, leadership would not come from the Noble Houses but from the middle classes of Llan, from the Merchant Guilds.

Meanwhile, Y'sira had become involved in a series of attacks on defenses along the Niblfir River, pitting the Keljak against the Ziaddan spearmen of Rhenfara. It was the first time that the Keljak had found an enemy that was their equal and the battles were often ritualistic, pitting captains of both sides against each other in single combat. The Rhenfaran fortifications at Bhiritaan were besieged at least three times during the period 1387R and 1391R but the town remained in Ziaddan hands, despite a concerted assault on its walls that used the magical support of Seervaati of the Church of Daugron.

In Spring 1391R, Emperor Draelingus III of Sardell was assassinated while visiting Zaramoor and, although there were doubts raised as to the faction behind his death (Draelingus had a lot of enemies), the propaganda machine of Sardell pointed the finger at Y'sira. An alliance was entered into between Sardell and the Brotherhood of the Dead Tree, the ruling council in Rhenfara, and within the year Sardellan troops landed in Bhiritaan to lend aid to the Ziaddan there. The Keljak found their forces on the defensive and were driven back across the Niblfir.

THE 'FRIENDS' OF THE EMPIRE

While Sardell was dealing with Llan and Y'sira by flexing its military muscles, elsewhere in Eldoria, its battle standards were being raised by the diplomatic efforts of its noble dignitaries and religious spokespeople. There were many realms willing to share in the success of the Empire and others who thought it best to accept Sardellan occupation without a fight.

Rhenfara had Sardellan troops based within her western borders but the country was never under direct control of the Empire. Rhenfara's rulers saw wisdom in allying with the Sardellans against Y'sira and, as part of their deal, the Brotherhood of the Dead Tree won important concessions that allowed its Druids to return to sacred parts of Llan and renew the protection of those ancient sites.

During the 13th century R, Sardell had invaded Maritaan and, although plenty of military action was required to establish Imperial dominance over the region, the majority of the Maritaani people embraced the invaders, joining with them to overthrow their corrupt and decadent rulers, the Y'naari-Kahn. The local Sardellan governors allowed the leaders of the Y'naari-Su (the faction that had allied with them) to maintain existing control over local authorities and invited their most senior representatives to take a place on a ruling council. There was a unique blending of the original Maritaani culture and the Sardellan culture that occurred during the 14th and 15th centuries R, much more so than in any other realm of Eldoria that the Empire occupied. When Sardell went into decline and many of its nobility returned to the Homelands, this new regime in Maritaan continued, where

so many others simply collapsed.

Northland is another realm that had a less confrontational relationship with the Empire. In 1401R, Olondorth, the Halfling King of Northland, faced a potential coup in the usually tranquil capitol of Eastport. The threat came from a small but determined group of Human councilors who sat on the Royal Parliament. They wanted to rewrite the constitution of Northland so that a new Human lineage replaced the existing traditional Halfling royal family and they were not above resorting to violence to achieve their ends. The tranquil countryside of Northland had hardly seen any war, since the Goblindynd incursions and the King only maintained a token guard of twelve Human knights. The councilors were capable of inciting a large band of rogues to usurp power in Eastport unless the King abdicated.

However, Olondorth proved a cunning political chess-player. Sardellan diplomats had been frequenting his court and the King knew full well that they were spies, sizing up the strength of Northland prior to landing an invasion fleet on his country's western shores. Olondorth pre-empted this by explaining his domestic dilemma to the Sardellans and petitioning them for help, making a secret alliance with the Sardellan throne.

In 1400R, King Olondorth was removed from the throne by the conspirators and in 1401R a Sardellan legion landed at Potterville and crossed Northland, arriving at Eastport in high summer. The commanding General found that word of their arrival had preceded them and that King Olondorth had been fully reinstated by the time they marched upon Parliament Hall.

The Sardellans acted as a 'police force' for the duration of their stay in Northland. Although not under the direct control of the Northland monarchy, they lent sufficient support to maintain the status quo. Northland remained at peace and the idyllic rural landscape had a lingering influence on many of the soldiers of the occupying forces. When the Kinstrife came, men of rank and their levies were required to return and fight in the Homelands. Many ignored the summons and decided to remain in Northland, choosing the lifestyle of country gentlemen or tenant farmers, content to live under the wise rule of the Halflings.

The only lasting reminder that the Sardellans were ever present in Northland (besides the Sardellan language) is a large fortification on the southern cliffs overlooking Potterville. In the 15th century R this castle housed a fighting force of one hundred men, in modern times it is now a grain storehouse for the wheat harvests of the Empty Downs.

Many of the Island Kingdoms of the Sea of Souls also accepted Sardellan rule and allowed Imperial garrisons to be established, especially after the increase in piracy in the region (inadvertently caused by the Empire and its dispute with Y'sira). In most cases, the Sardellans left these island posts as the Kinstrife worsened and the locals gained a keep or larger fortification. In a few cases, the Sardellan captains of these garrisons took control of the islands and set themselves up as local rulers. The Islands of the Keeper and Dormos are typical examples of places where Sardellan leaders set up their own petty regimes.

OF WAR AND PEACE: 1501R – 2150R

"I will not give this city up to those who would seize her treasures and works of art to fill their war chests. I offer a truce to our brothers in arms; let our Orders both wear the crown of the Empire until someone who is worthy sits upon the throne again."

From a letter to General Kallid Xelles, penned by Commander Lorinn Calster of the Siritar Order of the Imperial Guard, 1562R.

VIRITATH THE GREAT

In the early years of the 16th Century R a secondary migration of Keljak emerged from the Outlands, crossed the Dunewall and descended into Byalliz. These were Keljak fundamentalists, known as the Rajheer, devotees of the God Kavast (who is not numbered amongst the Divine Twenty-Seven). They had remained in their Outland strongholds when many of their kin departed long centuries past, but in 1520R a famine drove many northward.

When the Rajheer came to Byalliz, they saw their kindred as living a soft and corrupt life, beguiled by the Daugron Church and the court of the K'luud. They spoke openly against the regime in Y'sira and won the hearts and minds of many dispirited warriors.

Amongst their ranks was a young influential leader named Viritath who spoke of leading the people of Y'sira in a quest to destroy the Kingdoms of the North and establish Keljak rule across the face of the world. Viritath was opposed by the Daugron Church who tried to have him killed, shortly after his arrival in Byalliz. The assassination attempt was discovered and Viritath used this to attack the Church, turning this around as an example of the corruption of the Daugron faith. He was actually successful in dividing the priesthood, promising that those who supported him would be given a place within the clergy of Kavast - it was Daugron who was but one aspect of Kavast and not vice-versa.

There was blood in the streets in Byalliz and (to a lesser degree) in Tariziach but it was all over within a span and the Daugron Church and the institution of the K'luuds was deposed. Viritath was the new power in Y'sira and he began a path to lead his nation to glory, starting with a renewed attack on Rhenfara. In 1519R, after thousands of young fighting men of Y'sira flocked to answer his summons to war, Viritath massed troops in the east and struck at the forts that were positioned along the Niblfir River. The Sardellans had garrisoned a legion at Bhiritaan, as part of their alliance with Rhenfara and this was the first time that the Keljak had fought the armored knights of the north.

Viritath led the Keljak Horde personally and used a tactic that he called "the wind and the stone" against the Sardellan troops. Instead of meeting the Sardellans head on in battle, he continually harried them with his mounted archers, always making it appear that his forces had been routed, keeping his enemy on the move in pursuit of him. This had the effect of making the Sardellans over-confident as well as wearing them down and drawing them away from more advantageous terrain.

When Viritath judged the time was right, he would commit his massed foot soldiers, armed with scimitars and tall wooden shields. They would enter the fray, while the cavalry units hemmed in the enemy from the flanks.

Viritath used these methods with deadly effect at the Battle of Hordiz Canyon, where he lured the Legion of the Scarlet Shield away from the protective walls of Bhiritaan and into a melee in the rocky terrain west of the Niblfir. The Sardellans were cut off from their garrison and butchered over three bloody days.

The Rhenfaran warriors, used to the ways of the Keljak, were not so easily defeated but, none the less, Viritath and his army captured all the settlements along the fertile lands of the Niblfir, taking Bhiritaan in 1521R. They continued on to occupy all the coastal towns and villages along the Arimah Coast by 1522R. In the winter of that year, the Keljak were encamped no less than 150 miles from Hrygashan, capitol of Rhenfara. However, constant threat of harassment by Sardellan warships made Viritath wary of overextending his lines of supply and committing a major force to the siege of the city. He needed to beat Sardell at sea to continue his war against Rhenfara; otherwise Sardellan ships would simply land forces behind his lines to attack the Keljak supply train.

In 1523R Viritath committed a great part of the Y'siran Fleet to a daring attempt to strike a blow directly against the capitol of Sardell. For years, the Y'sirans had continued to supply money and weapons to the noble factions of Llan, who continued fighting against the occupation of their land. The Sardellans considered this aid ineffectual and showed little interest in diverting any significant part of its navy to the Sea of Five Winds to deter Y'siran activity.

The Y'siran fleet that sailed north into the Sea of Five Winds in the summer of 1523R was much larger than the normal merchant convoy. It was commanded by Admiral T'paan, a cautious but capable leader and consisted of 120 warships. Aboard the fleet was embarked a force of 2000 elite Keljak, intent on landing on the western coast of Sardell, near Yarcia. From there they would move quickly to threaten Jasper and it was perceived that this would draw Imperial troops from garrisons in Llan, leading to a general uprising in that country.

The plan relied on catching the Sardellans unaware and had great potential for success, where it not for a stroke of luck that alerted the Imperial Navy to the movement of the Y'siran fleet. After following the coastline of Zar-Kariden, Admiral T'paan struck out from Ikle's Head for the west coast of Sardell, only to have the fleet dispersed by a cyclone.

During a break in the storm, elements of the Y'siran fleet encountered Sardellan warships, driven west from patrols near Odressi by the same storm. The movement of the Y'siran Fleet was reported and, in the days that followed, the Sardellan naval command, based at Zaramoor and Magar's point made the decision to muster every available vessel they could and pursue the Y'sirans up the western coast.

A number of separate skirmishes occurred over the following week as Admiral T'paan desperately tried to regroup his dispersed armada near the island of Karashar-Zahl. It was here, at the Straits of Fardamon that the rag-tag Sardellan fleet,

consisting of 70 vessels, engaged the surviving ships of Y'sira, now numbering 104. The battle was ferocious and indecisive, with both fleets losing more than half their number, before disengaging and fleeing to homeports. But this was a critical blow for Viritath; the ships carrying the majority of troops for the northern campaign were sunk and any chance of continuing the plan was over. Y'sira had been dealt a heavy blow that ended any of its ambitions to strike at the Sardellan heart.

THE EMPRESS TARANAE

Three years after the Battle of Fardamon Straits, a new monarch had come to the throne of Sardell, a young woman who was the only heir of King Draelingus IV, after he died of the Rose Plague, along with his wife. The infant Princess Taranae was raised by stewards who took control of Sardell at this delicate time; they were the Archbishop Astaran, an Ormocean of incorruptible piety, and Lord Marshall Gaeling, a Trezkillian allied noble and seasoned campaigner.



Talin Astaran became Archbishop at the relatively young age of thirty-seven. Wagging tongues in the Imperial Court of Jasper claimed that the priest was secretly the lover of the Empress; hence his meteoric rise in power.

Taranae was tutored by these two powerful courtiers who were from totally different backgrounds. Somehow the strange combination worked and produced a monarch with a will of iron, respectful of her councilors, yet no man's lackey.

She gave a hint of her determined nature at her coronation, saying, "On this day I inherit an Empire and I shall not have rest until the shadow of our glory falls fully on the lands to our south".

This was clearly directed at the spread of the Y'siran Empire and was a forewarning of the war to come. Even as Viritath turned his attention toward Sardell, so Taranae made plans to eclipse the rival empire that the Keljak were carving out. Her first action was to order the rebuilding of the fleet that had taken a mauling at Fardamon and to bolster support to the Empire's Rhenfaran allies.

Taranae was one of those rare monarchs who inspired loyalty across all spectrums of society, commanding support from commoners, nobles and rival religious factions. While Sardell had wavered during the rule of the Stewards, when Taranae finally took command, the Empire was galvanized once more and had purpose - and that purpose was to defeat Y'sira.

In 1532R diplomats of both Empires tried to woo the petty King of Southwind Island to allow a major naval garrison to be built there. Neither side was able to convince the King to allow their vessels anchorage at Southwind and things came to a head when both the fleets of Sardell and Y'sira were ordered into the region. Here, they clashed again, but this time, Admiral Loras Quinn (Sardell's foremost naval strategist) was at the helm and the Sardellans won the day at the Battle of Deepfin Channel, effectively defeating their opponents and ending Y'sira's naval power in the Sea of Souls.

The remnants of the Y'siran fleet fled to Byalliz and played no real part in the remaining conflict between the two Empires.

THE FALL OF Y'SIRA

With his war fleet now totally out of action, Viritath could no longer afford to keep the confrontation with Rhenfara going; the threat of his troops being cut off by a Sardellan landing in force was too great. No sooner had he begun to withdraw warriors back across the Niblfir River, than Sardell struck, depositing seven legions in Tariziach and blockading Zuvinar Bay.

To make matters worse, the Daugron Church in Tariziach had been at odds with Viritath's promotion of the forbidden God Kavast. They went over to the Sardellans and lent their support to the invaders, calling them liberators and encouraging the population to fight against the Keljak instead. This caused many instances of insurrection in towns where the Keljak had long been despised for their cultural superiority.

The ground war in Y'sira centered on the capture of Byalliz. As the Sardellan legions closed the noose about the capitol, Viritath abandoned the city, preferring to trust to the Keljak's advantage in mobile combat. After several minor battles, the Keljak Horde entrenched itself in a maze of ravines called the Cobra's Nest. This terrain, located to the west of Byalliz, provided an ideal defensive position while also allowing raiding parties to strike out at the Sardellan legions. Repeated attacks by Keljak light horsemen did a great deal of damage to the enemy but the Sardellans could afford the losses and tightened the

noose about the area.

By 1534R the Keljak Horde had exhausted the natural food sources of the Cobra's Nest and Viritath sent out a holy summons for all his loyal followers to assemble for a battle ordained by Kavast to take place near the small town of Chard. A force of 12,000 Keljak finally emerged from their hiding place and engaged the full might of the Sardellan Empire. They faced a combined force of 20,000 Imperial and Rhenfaran troops that finally broke the back of the Keljak Horde at the Battle of Dead Dunes.

Viritath was slain in the battle and the survivors of the Horde fled into the deep desert and beyond, eventually returning to their ancient homes in the Outlands. The Sardellans established control of Y'sira and reinstated the line of K'luuds in Byalliz. The chapters of the Daugron Church that had assisted the Sardellans in Tariziach were given leave to reestablish clerical dominance over all of Y'sira, under the guidance of Ormocean missionaries.

THE KINSTRIFE

In the two decades that followed the conquest of Y'sira, Empress Taranae worked tirelessly to consolidate her vast realm. She ensured that governors were appointed who were more moderate in their capacity to rule, replacing the more 'overzealous' commanders of the Trezkillian Orders. Although the Trezkillians had been needed during the time of conquest they were too heavy-handed in times of peace. Taranae would not risk giving them political control of a stable Empire, lest idle hands turned to plotting against the throne.

Missionaries of the Ormocean and Esmian Churches visited the far-flung outposts of Sardell to set up halls of learning and healing. In particular, the laws of the Three Books replaced local laws in many places and the tongue of Sardell was introduced as the common language. Wealth, in the form of tribute and taxes, poured into the Sardellan Homelands and the Empress commanded that a great program of public works be undertaken to make the major cities places of splendor. The magnificent Naesada Palace was built in Jasper during this time, along with the great walls of Denhaven and the terraced streets of Gablehead.

Roads, temples and monuments to Taranae were built across the Empire and Eldoria saw a great upsurge in economic and social prosperity. It was as though the lands that had been conquered and those who had allied themselves to Sardell's cause sought to truly unite and share in Taranae's vision of a single world order and a dream of continued peace.

Unfortunately the vision was short-lived. The Empress died in 1555R after she suffered a sudden illness. She never married and left the Empire with no direct heir and no clear instructions concerning her choice for succession. There was a gathering of noble claimants to the throne who came together in Jasper by the end of the year to put forward their case before a Council of Ascendancy. Unfortunately, the Council collapsed into rounds of unresolved squabbling and it became apparent that greed was the main motivating factor of most of those who sought the title of Emperor. The Council ended in division and bloodshed, when the Trezkillian Cleric, Adynn Karnig, attempted to seize power in the capitol, taking command of the Legion of the Iron Wolf

and directing its troops to arrest the senior members of the other factions attending the Council.

Only the combined intervention of the Imperial Guard (a Siritar Order) and the Legion of the Sundered Spear (another Trezkillian Order) put a stop to the schemes of Karnig and saved the lives of many of the Empire's senior nobles. The commanders of the Imperial Guard and the Sundered Spear, seeing the disunity that was displayed at the Council, agreed to maintain control of the capitol until a true heir was found. There followed a decade of negotiation and posturing between the great families of Sardell and the political factions they supported. Then, in 1564R, Lord Harrin Landan, an Ormocean-aligned noble who had been a governor for the Empress, declared Denhaven, and the lands surrounding it, an independent Kingdom. As a consequence, all hell broke loose.

What followed was called the Kinstrife, which involved 100 years of infighting between rival families and opposed Churches, tearing the Empire apart and taking a terrible toll on life and property. The concept of a united Empire was lost on all but the Imperial commanders based in Jasper, as competing Lords led their loyal forces into battle to capture territory and plunder the riches of the larger cities and towns.

As fighting escalated in the Imperial Homelands, many factions called upon the support of relatives and allies who still were trying to govern affairs in the provinces, awaiting some outcome that would restore Imperial power again. This began to look more and more unlikely, so many heeded the call to return home and took the troops they commanded with them. Other Lords decided to remain in the provinces and take control until the situation resolved itself and an Emperor was declared. More ambitious Sardellan governors saw the writing on the wall and immediately declared their independence of the Imperial Homeland and seized power of the region they occupied.

In Maritaan, where the Sardellan conquerors had successfully co-existed and integrated with the local Y'naari-Su, there was a brief struggle for control amongst rival Imperial factions that resulted in the founding of a new powerful dynasty, with the marriage of a Sardellan King to a Y'naari Queen.

In 1640R, in Y'sira, the Sardellan governor withdrew most of the garrison based throughout the region and the local militia, spurred on by the Daugron Church, overthrew the remaining Sardellans who chose to remain in Byalliz and Tariziach. They slaughtered those Sardellan troops and their families who decided to stay in Y'sira and destroyed many of the Ormocean and Esmian missions that had been established at that time.

A NEW ORDER IN LLAN

When the Kinstrife began, a number of Trezkillian nobles, and the legions loyal to them, continued to hold power in Llan until 1567R. There were several organized rebellions, led by Barons of Llan but the general populace showed reluctance to become involved and so the attempts at insurrection were short-lived and the reprisals were swift and brutal. In the end it was the merchant guilds that were instrumental in ousting the Trezkillians.

The occupying force in Llan was, on the whole, very disciplined and determined to establish itself as the permanent overlords of the region. However, there were some elements

who acted as freebooters, pillaging and sacking towns at their leisure. After the Guild Hall in Nohlera was looted and burned to the ground and a heavy taxation placed on all produce by a local Trezkillian nobleman, the Guildmasters met secretly and made a pact to fund a major rebellion. They planned to hire mercenaries to fight the Trezkillian legions and drive them from their country.

Not wishing to become involved directly in leading the campaign (lest the rebellion failed) they involved the nobility of Llan in their scheme, having the Barons who were more experienced in battle, direct the rebellion and command the mercenaries. Most of the mercenary force that was eventually brought into the conflict was actually sourced from disaffected soldiers of the old Empire; men whose companies had become leaderless as a result of a breakdown of command in the Kinstrife. Other mercenaries were recruited from Char-Endl.

It took seven long years to destroy the effectiveness of the Trezkillians, who retreated slowly across the Stonebrow Mountains and into northern parts of the Imperial Homelands. Due to their continued presence on the borders being a threat to Llan, the Guilds continued to maintain the mercenary companies, paying them to garrison the southern frontier.

Following the success of the rebellion, the King of Llan was returned to the throne on the unanimous decision by a Council of the Great Houses and, as the Kinstrife worsened in the south and the threat from the Trezkillians diminished, the King ordered the disbanding of the mercenary companies and the reestablishment of rule by the Barons and a return of the feudal military levy.

The Guilds, who had enjoyed an elevation in social status while their mercenaries controlled power, resisted a return to the old traditions of Llan and refused to dismiss the companies in the south. Instead, they summoned the leaders of the mercenary bands to a clandestine meeting in Nohlera and paid them an additional tribute to remain loyal to the Guilds. The Great Houses were divided, some being aghast at the concept that merchants would aspire to be the equals of the nobility, while other Barons (particularly those from less powerful Houses) were eager to support the Guilds, seeing that they could prosper in a new order.

Civil war has always been the national sport of Llan and, this time, it was no different. There was a single battle fought between a Llanish army led by the Crown Prince Aerlin and the combined mercenary companies, paid by the Guilds, under the command of Orrith Kamora, a respected mercenary captain. The battle took place, just south of Nohlera and resulted in the defeat of the Llanish force and the capture of the Crown Prince. In return for his son's life, the King of Llan agreed to sign a charter that set out the constitution of the new regime and how the country would be administered. It was called the "Proclamation of Renewal" and basically left the Great Houses their estates but ended the feudal system. Instead, it invested the Guilds with much more control of the labor force and management of the resources of the land. The King remained as a figurehead and signatory to the policies of a Council, made up of elected Guildsmen and the more powerful of the Great Houses.

THE TRANSITION OF POWER

Elsewhere in the fading Empire of Sardell, the transition of power was less bloody. Many island outposts throughout the Sea of Souls became petty Kingdoms ruled by the Sardellan occupants; some formed a coalition with the original inhabitants or even returned total control over to them. By 1650R the struggle for dominance in the Homelands bogged down and a diplomatic solution was sought to divide the territory between the competing antagonists.

In 1677R, an Ormocean abbot, named Ormond Mordling was instrumental in bringing the parties together in Karhaven and the Treaty of Four Swords was negotiated, which recreated the old territorial boundaries of Sard and Elkia; those allied to the Church of Trezkillian would control Sard and those who supported the Holy Trinity would rule Elkia. This treaty did not please everyone, especially those Trezkillian families who owned estates in Zaramoor. But none could deny that it was the best of all the solutions put forward.

Since the treaty was established, Sard and Elkia regained much of the power the Empire once held in the region. Although the division into two separate realms brought about relative stability to the area, the hurts and injuries visited upon various noble families during the Kinstrife remained a much talked about issue, sung about in taverns by bards and used to foster feuds by political opponents. Despite the efforts of the ruling authorities (in both Sard and Elkia) to improve relations, a rivalry between the two countries continues to grow, especially amongst the commanders of the more elite military units on both sides of the border. Old claims about territory are still made and border skirmishes and duels between commanders are frequent.

As an oddity, the old Imperial capitol of Jasper retained its independence despite the Treaty of Four Swords (which recommended the city be made part of Sard). The old capitol of Jasper is still ruled by the combined elements of Trezkillian and Siritar military orders that proclaimed their unswerving loyalty to Sardell and pledged to hold the city until the return of a new Emperor to the throne. They defended Jasper against attacks by both sides during the Kinstrife and they continue to maintain their position of stewardship of Jasper and the surrounding lands (called the Imperial State) in defiance of the rhetoric coming out Denhaven and Gablehead, saying the treasures of the city belong to the Emperor and not the individual noble families of Elkia or Sard.

Y'SIRA AFTER THE EMPIRE

In Y'sira, the Daugron Church achieved prominence after the withdrawal of Sardellan forces and those who had adopted the religion of Kavast faced a terrible retribution. The hereditary line of the K'luids was reinstated in Byalliz, although they continued to be nothing more than puppet rulers of the Church. The new regime in Byalliz made Zurdicata (an obscure Y'siran tongue) the common language taught in Y'siran schools once again, but it is interesting to note that they still adopted a number of conventions that the Sardellans introduced, including many of the laws brought by Ormocean justicators.

The K'luids fortified the west bank of the Niblfir River in the 18th century R and retained an aggressive dislike of their Rhenfaran neighbors. Strangely, most old scores with Sardell



Ormond Mordling, an Ormocean priest from Odressi, was instrumental in finding a solution for the Kinstrife after he brought the opposing factions together in Karhaven in 1677R.

seemed to have been forgiven. Instead, an economic rivalry has arisen, with Y'siran traders becoming active again in all northern ports from the middle of the 18th century R; they simply replaced warships for merchant ships.

Despite recent problems with breakaway city-states in the west, Y'sira remains a strong and dominant realm in the south.

THE AGE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Between the 1700's and 2000's R, other than the assistance that was given to the Elves in the Third War of Tears the Human realms of Eldoria settled into a period of relative calm. With no major wars occupying the minds and money of Men, there was a rise in prosperity and a renewed interest in trade. This allowed a renaissance in art, culture and basic sciences to take place. Genuine social gains were made, giving the common person greater access to land and self-determination. Feudalism gave way to more democratic forms of government, in countries like Elkia, Llan, Rhenfara, Maritaan and Northland.

Great civic works were undertaken to repair the damage that had taken place after centuries of war; artisans being employed to make the cities of the north places of splendor. Great roads were laid across Sard and Elkia, the most ambitious being a highway that crossed the Grand Escarpment, uniting Western Sard with the more populated east.

The theatrical arts were more accessible and became popular with common-folk, especially the works of the playwright, Syllandus Whinn, who wrote twenty great plays that explored the follies of humanity. His best loved work, still performed in modern theaters, is the whimsical farce, "Beggars and Barons". There was a renewed patronage of all the arts, with composers, sculptors and painters finding employment in the households of

the wealthy. Not to be outdone by the secular world, patronage from a number of the more influential Churches led to the Immaculate Movement, whereby a group of leading painters refused to create any work of art unless it glorified the Gods in some way. Some of the famous paintings that came out of the Immaculatists included, "The Grace of Rhiora", "Dawn over Godshome" and the scandalous "Yaarneya's Midnight Feast" in which it was claimed that, Sellisa, High Priestess of the Esmian temple in Denhaven, was the inspiration for the many lewd figures depicted in the work.

However, past conflicts had not been forgotten and old rivalries still simmered beneath the surface. There were political groups with old scores to settle and their rhetoric gradually gave way to acts of violence. In 2100 R everything boiled over when the assassination of the Citylord of Odressi heralded in the Five Years Doom.

THE FIVE YEARS OF DOOM

In 2100R, there was an abortive attempt to seize power in Odressi, following the Citylord's murder. The coup was led by, Erlwick Rhull, a minor official of the city, who was supposedly supported by the Churches of the Unholy Trinity. This brazen attempt to control the city, in a place that was founded to be the most sacred of religious havens, sparked off all manner of rebellions and civil wars across Eldoria. If someone could overthrow the Citylord of Odressi, then it may be possible to usurp power in your own region.

In Sard, there was bloodshed between rival Trezkillian Orders in Gablehead and Yarcia and an attempt by nobles allied to the Ormocean Church in Zaramoor, to oust Trezkillian families who had chosen to remain in that region after the Treaty of the

Four Swords. In far distant Maritaan, its monarch was attacked by an assailant in the pay of the Cult of Yaarneya but managed to survive. Even in sleepy Northland, a plot was uncovered to depose the monarchy and take control of parliament.

For five years there was constant upheaval, in many countries and city-states. Anarchists, with a wide range of political agendas, fought to unsettle the conservative elements that had secured a new hold over Eldoria. However, the Ormocean Church was successful at laying the entire blame for the insurrection upon the religions of the Unholy Trinity. It was true that they had rallied to the side of Erlwick Rhull in Odressi and individuals amongst their cults had been associated with several incidents in Maritaan and Elkia, but they were certainly not capable of orchestrating all of the troubles that emerged between 2100R and 2105R.

The matter was debated in a great Congress of Churches held in Odressi but despite a lot of sympathy being shown by the more neutral religions toward the Unholy Trinity, the Cults of Kharic-Ohrm, Sadir and Yaarneya were all proscribed in Odressi and the worship of the Gods of their House forbidden under pain of death. Most countries adopted this ruling in the following Marches, arresting individuals who were known to follow the forbidden Gods and (more importantly) seizing their property and wealth.

After the Five Years Doom, a certain amount of stability returned again, as though the old grudges of the past had been ignited by the violent acts of that period and then burned away. But with the appointment of the charismatic Kharichaan, Chancellor of Sard, in 2141R, things began to look dark again. Kharichaan was given his position of Chancellor because most Trezkillian Lords viewed him as a moderate. However, soon after assuming the title, Kharichaan began to gear up Sard for battle, giving those commanders who supported a war with Elkia, more troops and positioning their legions on the northern frontiers.

In the latter half of 2149 R, Kharichaan made territorial demands on the land due east of the Porgruu Bogs and on Zaramoor. Elkia refuted Sard having any claim to the territories and moved troops north to garrison forts along the northern front. They also moved to increase the presence of soldiers loyal to the Siritar faith in Zaramoor and blockaded the Straits of Pharidor with a third of their fleet.

As the Eldorian calendar moves into the year 2150 R, war seems inevitable.

THE WARS OF TEARS

The Elves of Leezeria continued to live on in isolation up to and following the collapse of the Empire. It has been suggested that, once Sardell had subjugated Y'sira and the mysterious realm of Vheridane to its east, Taranae would have turned her attention to Leezeria. However, it has been recorded that Taranae had a healthy respect for the powers of magic and that she utilized Wizards as spies and diviners, to learn what they could of their neighbors to the east. She was well aware of the reputation the Leezari had for sorcery and was reluctant to send her legions into the unknown terrain of Leezeria.

The Elves suffered greatly in their terrible struggle against the war-machine that was Ahr-Ganiz, fighting against the Goblinskynd army in three major conflicts, called the Wars of

Tears. In the First War (1458R – 1468R) they were taken by surprise when their eastern province of Dalafor was permanently cut off from the rest of Leezeria. Only 2,000 Dalaforian refugees survived the carnage and the Elves were unable to dislodge the invaders from the neck of land, known as the Isthmus of Strife. Instead the Leezari established a line of Sunds (hill forts) across the Isthmus in the Mountains of the War-Watch. These guarded the west from an attack against the forest communities that were spread throughout the Glades of Peace and the capitol, Tarimthol-Irl.

Although many assaults were made against the Goblinskynd lines along the Sharl River in the century that followed, the defenses remained resolute and unbreached, with reinforcements pouring into the fight from the nearby mountains. Dalafor stood alone, and although many Leezari there continued to evacuate by sea, the people of fair Anandezra found themselves trapped in their Keep, where they continued a long and bitter struggle against their Goblinskynd besiegers. Over time, they cursed their kin in the west, saying they had been abandoned. The Dalaforian Elves became a fey folk, rumored to have turned to dark arts in order to deliver them from the Goblinskynd. Anandezra fell in 1588R and its people fled to hide in the marshes, hills and mountains; many turned to an underground existence.

The Second War of Tears was fought from 1603R to 1606R and was a savage and more costly affair. The summer of 1603R saw a new attack on Leezeria spearheaded by Orcs and goblin war bands and supported by large groups of ogres, trolls and knolls. The Goblinskynd were also commanded by a number of demonic beings, summoned by Orcish Shamans. The power wielded by the demons allowed the main army to effectively cut-off the defenses of the Mountains of the War-Watch and continue on to besiege and wreak havoc upon Tarimthol-Irl.

During the Second War of Tears, the Leezari were assisted by a chance landing of Dwarves on their southern shores; four Stonekin Clans seeking new lands to establish colonies. Their Overlord, King Leozan I, agreed to fight alongside the Elves in return for land. The Dwarven army played a pivotal role in stopping the Goblinskynd from advancing further west and when the war was over, the Stonekin were given the Mountains of Maederith (later renamed the Kallid-Zhal Mountains) and the surrounding lands to build their Kingdom.

In addition, the Elvenking, Daladion Pelentine, made the unprecedented decision to send ambassadors out into the Human world to initiate limited trade and alliances. The Elvenking's decision was not popular amongst all his people; some wished no contact with the First Born, citing their violent, short-lived existence as the thing that threatened the ethnicity of the Elven race.

The Third War of Tears came in 1800R, at a time when the Human realms were experiencing their period of sustained peace.

The Goblinskynd attacked in massive force and with the aid of dark sorcery. Some rumors spoke of the involvement of the legendary Drow. A large Goblinskynd force steamrolled over the Dwarven Kingdoms in the Kallid-Zahl Mountains, eventually entering and destroying each mine in turn. A second, larger force penetrated deep into western Leezeria, after leaving a besieging



During the Second War of Tears, a chance landing by Stonekin seeking a place to establish a new kingdom, saw an alliance between Elves and Dwarves. Leozan I swore fealty to the Elvenking and the Stonekin drove the Goblinskynd host from Leezeria's borders.

force to occupy the Elves defending the Sunds in the Mountains of the War-Watch. Tarimthol-Irl was taken and partly razed and retaken in the same span by the Elves. The Elvenking, Milandes Pelentine II was slain during the battle.

The Elves held Tarimthol-Irl and the lands west, as far as Pharidor's Watch, fighting a bloody and costly hit-and-run campaign over the next 150 years. The Goblinskynd forces rampaged unchecked throughout the north of Leezeria, defiling many Elven tombs in the Girdle of the Gods and despoiling the forested lands of Woodnymph Dale. There was a stalemate for many years with over a hundred recorded battles fought along the line of the Silvercrest River to Mount Orne.

Miraculously, the Sunds in the Mountains of the War-Watch held out, mainly due to the fact that the main force of Goblinskynd was concentrated on offensives against the forces situated west of Tarimthol-Irl.

Then, in 1959R, there was a renewed offensive and the Goblinskynd regained control of the capitol, driving the Elves back into Eldarwood, where the Leezari fought on bravely along the very edge of their western frontiers, their backs against the Aewyth Mountains. Pharidor's Watch became their new temporary capitol and this was Leezeria's most desperate hour.

It was the Humans who helped them stem the tide. The diplomatic efforts of King Daladion had paid off, after Elven ambassadors traveled to Port Lyrie and spoke of the danger to the Human lands, once the Goblinskynd had conquered and enslaved the Elves of Leezeria. Realizing how close the Goblinskynd forces were in relation to the Passage of Thungar, a united force of Elkian and Sardian military landed at Port Lyrie and joined with the Elves to march on Tarimthol-Irl. Their ranks were further increased by a large mercenary force; made up mainly of Char-Endlese free-booters looking for some action. The mercenaries were financed by the Tempest Guild of Gold and they landed a great fleet of dragon-ships on the northern shores of Leezeria, near the site of Taricktown (a settlement they later established as a permanent trading post with the Elves). The mercenaries relieved the besieged Sunds in the Mountains of the War-Watch

and rallied the remaining Dwarven forces of the east.

The Sardian and Elkian legions aided the Leezari in a bitter-fought campaign, in which the Goblinskynd force was finally broken and routed at the Battle of Red Meadows, fought in 1962R on the Plains of Eldartronn. The Goblinskynd army was routed and fled east, harried along the way by Human and Elven cavalry forces. They were driven headlong into the Char-Endlese mercenaries and vengeful Dwarven warriors who were mopping up the smaller Goblinskynd war band left to lay siege to the Sunds of the War-Watch.

In a final engagement, the remaining Goblinskynd made a stand on the Battle Downs, near Rallish. The Battle of Ten Thousand Arrows, as it was called, lasted four days and it was claimed that not one creature of Ahr-Ganiz escaped the field - all were slaughtered and the Sharl River ran red with their blood for two weeks afterwards.

The Elven population had been decimated in the Third War of Tears and the surviving people centered themselves around Tarimthol-Irl once more. The new Elvenking, Hylara Pelentine, gave thanks to the Humans who had aided them and made large grants of land to thank them for their efforts. He declared that his people would no longer dwell in the east of Leezeria and proclaimed the region beyond the Mountains of the War-Watch to be 'crownless' and announced that Humans were free to live there if they so desired. In the west, Hylara ceded the coastal plain beyond the Aewyth Mountains, except for the region south of the Myentaria River, where Pharidor's Watch lay. As a final gesture of a new era of cultural exchange, the Elvenking opened up the University at Pharidor's Watch for Human Wizards and scholars to visit and learn of the arcane arts and lore of the Leezari.

This western territory was claimed by the authorities of Port Lyrie, who agreed to open up trade with the Elves, on behalf of Sard and Elkia, establishing an Elven Quarter in their city for artisans and craftspeople from Leezeria. The Human armies that had helped defend Leezeria returned to their homelands during 1962R - 1963R, but many of the peasant levies and

even a number of lords and their people, decided to take up the Elvenking's offer, choosing to stay on in the Crownless Lands and build farmlands and communities. In the later decades that followed, refugees and fortune-seekers, looking for a chance to own their own land, also came to settle the region, willing to live in the shadow of Ahr-Ganiz. Most of these migrants convinced themselves that the Goblindynd had been so decimated during the Third War of Tears that it would take many centuries for them to recover. Any future war would be a problem for another generation to deal with.

The Dwarves, like the Elves, were depleted in numbers to such an extent that they could no longer effectively maintain their mines of the Kallid-Zahl Mountains and groups who did venture there found that the ruins had become a haunt for numerous monsters that had been part of the Goblindynd vanguard. These foul beasts had sought the safety of the mountains, when the Goblindynd army was defeated. Instead, the Stonekin built communities in the Crownless Lands, in conjunction with the Humans. They lived above ground in huts of wattle and daub with roofs of tall thatch, living in a new age of culture shock, as their old traditional way of life became lost to them.

In the year 2150 R, Humans are still not completely free to travel in central Leezeria and those seeking to enter those lands must seek permission from the Elven Ambassador to the Realms Beyond, who resides in Port Lyrie. Trespassers on Leezerian soil are quickly apprehended and taken to the nearest Sund, stripped of their possessions and questioned about their activities, before being escorted to the borders. Humans who persist in entering Leezerian territory find themselves imprisoned for a few years or given over to authorities in Port Lyrie, where they face up to five years forced service as an oarsman on a Lyrian merchantman.

ELDORIA 2150R

"And the House that contained the world will be divided but its children will dwell still therein, in separate rooms. And for a time they shall know peace. But the Dark Son, he who sits upon the left hand of the Shadow, will enter that place and he will set the children against each other again. And although victory will go to the eldest child, the Dark Son will have sown the seeds of death that will consume the House forever."

From the Prophecies of Ohridane the Seer

IN BRIEF

The following information contains a glimpse of affairs as they stand on the Eldorian continent as at the 1st day of Earth 2150R. These are all great plot-hooks and the Refereess may wish to use some of these political scenarios as the backdrop for their own campaigns. For instance, the players may become involved in smuggling secret documents between the Lords of Zaramoor and the Chancellor of Sard or participating in the annual cattle-drive to deliver the Blue Feather Bounty to the Hlissicaari of the Ruby Ranges.

If nothing else, this section provides a feel of 'current affairs' of Eldoria.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SARD AND ELKIA

Perhaps the most important political event looming on the horizon in 2150R is the threat of a full-scale war between Sard and Elkia. Both countries carry a lot of grievances between rival noble families as a result of struggles that occurred during the Kinstrife and the loss of traditional holdings that came with the division of the Empire into the two separate states.

The main protagonists are the Trezkillian aligned families that dominate Sard and the nobles Lords aligned to the Holy Trinity, but there are also a number of more complex and subtle interactions being played out in the background.

For instance, a powerful group of families who were traditional supporters of Trezkillians during the height of the Empire still hold estates around Zaramoor, in southern Elkia. In order to retain their lands, when the Treaty of Four Swords created Sard and Elkia, they swore fealty to the Lord Protector of Denhaven and renounced their active allegiance to the Trezkillian Military Orders, although they retained the right to make offerings to the Trezkillian faith in their private chapels.

The Lords of Zaramoor have always enjoyed the popular support of the people in the region, regardless of religion and politics. With war seeming inevitable, Elkians are wondering which way their allegiances will go. Certainly, the Chancellor of Sard has made several public speeches in the Kazilin Council Hall of Gablehead, reminding the Lords of Zaramoor of their heritage and asking for their support if war breaks out. Zaramoor has made no public reply, although it is rumored that emissaries of Chancellor Kharichaan have been busy visiting southern Elkia, during the winter of 2149 R.

The Lord Protector of Denhaven has positioned the Regiment of the 3rd Sunhillow Medium Foot in the Splintrock Mountains, north of Zaramoor, and has sent the Knight Captain of the 3rd to Zaramoor to have the Lords renew their oaths of allegiance to Elkia. To date, the Lords have been polite and have entertained the Knight Captain, but have not taken their oaths. It is known that they have no love for the new Chancellor of Sard but they have many grievances against the regime in Denhaven. Perhaps they will use their position to gain more land or titles in Elkia, or perhaps they will heed the call of the Trezkillian war-horns and raise an army to threaten the soft underbelly of Denhaven?

Another factor complicating a war between Sard and Elkia is the Imperial State. This small remnant of the Sardellan Empire lies right amongst the battle lines of the northern borders of Sard and Elkia. It is populated by factions loyal to both sides of the conflict, The capitol, Jasper, is garrisoned by the best-led and most effective fighting force in Eldoria – the combined might of the Legion of the Sundered Spear and the Imperial Guard.

The sovereignty of the Imperial State has been disputed by authorities in both Sard and Elkia for the past three hundred years but neither country has been keen to try to wrest the territory from the Stewards of Jasper. Many recall past attempts to contest the Imperial Lands during the Kinstrife and the defenders of Jasper dealt crippling blows to the attacking factions.

The territories that make up the Imperial State are situated in a narrow tract of land between the Porgruu Bogs and the division of the Furlflow River into its two tributaries. Any

attacks through the region force armies of Elkia or Sard to make a difficult trek north, around the swamplands of the Porgruu and into the narrow winding defiles of the Stonebrow foothills. It would be an advantage for any army to gain passage through the Imperial State or, at least, to obtain a declaration of their neutrality in the event of any conflict in the area.

So, for the past two years, diplomats from Gablehead and Denhaven have been trying to make alliances with the authorities in Jasper, who still remain unmoved and uncommitted. Of late, the diplomats have changed their rhetoric and are rumored to be targeting individual commanders of the Imperial military, trying to divide the alliance in Jasper and get them to go against the will of the Stewards. There was a rebellion in one of the river-forts along the Furlflow East in 2149 R. A Captain of a company with allegiances to the Holy Trinity seized control of a strategic bridge into the Imperial State and hoped to get nearby, like-minded captains, to join him. The plan was then to ask for the aid of the Siritar Order of the Protectors of the Faith (which was conveniently on maneuvers close to the Furlflow East) to help their Siritar brothers and thereby gain a foothold into the Imperial State.

Unfortunately (for the Captain who started the rebellion) the commanders of the nearby forts refused to support the rebellion, despite their association with Siritar. They remained loyal to the overriding values of the Stewards. However, the incident did have the effect of souring relations between the Legion Sundered Spear and the Imperial Guard; the soldiers of the Guard now being considered susceptible to betraying the traditions of Jasper in the eyes of the Legionnaires.

Yet another faction to consider in a Sard-Elkia conflict are the Barons in Llan who have had a long-standing association with the Sardinian nobility of Yarcia. Many Barons would like to oust the Guilds and their domination of Llan but the mercenary companies are the obstacle that must be removed first. It is quite possible that the more powerful Barons will support Sard in a war against Elkia, threatening Elkian positions east of the Furlflow from behind and striking through the strategic Pass of Thurindor. In return, the Llanish Barons would expect Sard to help them rid their land of the mercenaries, once the conflict with Elkia is resolved.

Wary of this eventuality, the Lord Protector of Denhaven has dispatched a herald to the Guildmaster of Quorull, offering a truce with Llan, after centuries of disputes over Darringmoor. He has agreed to cede the city to the Guilds, providing Elkia's fleet retains access to its harbor. Both sides continue to bargain with each other, their agents constantly delivering proposals and counter-proposals.

On the home front in Sard, the Chancellor has won the approval of the Trezkillian commanders who crave battle. However, the more conservative nobles, who lead the regular legions of the army, are divided in their support for Kharichaan. Kharichaan managed to alienate some of his closest supporters when he recently influenced the Kazilin Council, pressuring them to allow the establishment of a temple devoted to the Goddess SIRRITH in the capitol. Most citizens felt uneasy, to say the least, at allowing the Cult of the Dead Queen to practice openly amongst them. They aired their concerns over Chancellor

Kharichaan's motives in allying himself with the Cult, making it clear that they would not tolerate a proliferation of SIRRITH followers throughout the rest of Sard.

Kharichaan explained to the dissident lords that the only reason that he had allowed the SIRRITH Cult to base themselves in Gablehead, was that they brought mountains of wealth to the empty war-chests of Sard. The high priests of the Cult had agreed that their Seervaati would assist with the war effort; their powers would be lent to support the Sardinian Legions fighting against any Ormocean Orders, the Holy Trinity bring traditional enemies of the SIRRITH Cultists. For now, the Lords of Sard have agreed to support a war against Elkia but they are unhappy with the Chancellor and there are rumors of a movement growing to challenge him in Council and have Kharichaan ousted.

THE FREE CITIES OF Y'SIRA

In Y'sira, the city of Tariziach has recently declared its independence and abandoned the ancient practice of slavery, freeing thousands of its people. Tariziach has a long history of rivalry with the regime in Byalliz. It is the second largest city in Y'sira and its people are largely from pure Zurandi descent.

The Priests of Daugron, who ruled over Tariziach, were deposed and replaced with a young aristocratic ruler, K'mati V'zaar, whose pedigree was traced back to the time of the Kingdom of Tariz. V'zaar was declared the K'luud of the city-state of Tariziach and reinstated the religion of Kavast. The religion had become popular in Tariziach during the time of Viritath and was subsequently driven underground when the Daugron Priesthood regained control of Y'sira, following the withdrawal of the Sardellan occupying force.

In freeing the slaves of Tariziach, V'zaar immediately created a loyal militia determined to keep the city-state independent. Their patriotic fervor made up for their smaller numbers, when the K'luud of Byalliz landed a force of soldiers near Tariziach, to put down the insurrection. The defenders of Tariziach were outnumbered by three to one but won the day, putting the army of Byalliz to flight and taking many others captive. Most of the prisoners, impressed by V'zaar's charismatic rhetoric, opted to join the rebellion in Tariziach.

For a year, Tariziach has remained defiant against the central authority of Byalliz and the outlying towns of Kandibar, Rhazeen and Farikzuun have joined V'zaar's cause and, together, they have declared themselves the Free Cities.

V'zaar has emissaries busy trying to garner support from overseas but his worship and active promotion of the God Kavast has greatly hampered these efforts. Although many northern lords are receptive to the idea of dealing with a new power base in Y'sira, their clerical advisors remind them that Byalliz is governed by a priesthood of the Divine Twenty-Seven; the Free Cities offer prayers to a Deity ruled as fraudulent and heretical by the Congress of Odressi.

The K'luud of Byalliz and his Daugron minders have spent the latter part of 2149R training and equipping a new army to march against the Free Cities and end the reign of V'zaar. In the meantime, V'zaar is rumored to have sent an envoy across the deep deserts, in a bid to cross the Dunewall Mountains and so come to the Outland territories of the Keljak. It can only be surmised that V'zaar is attempting to win support of the Keljak,

the ancient warriors that once elevated Y'sira so that it rivaled the Empire of Sardell.

A MISSING HEIR OF MARITAAN

A political crisis is coming to a head in Maritaan regarding the succession to the throne. King Rasamar II died in 2149R and his only son Gawthrain was due to inherit the title of King. At the time of his father's death, Gawthrain was overseas receiving an education under some of the great tutors of Odressi. Or so everyone thought.

When a party of Maritaani courtiers was sent to fetch Gawthrain and return him home for his coronation, they discovered he had left Odressi two spans prior to their arrival. His teachers claimed he had grown discontent with his life in Odressi and had assumed the prince, and his small entourage, had returned to Maritaan. No clue was found as to the whereabouts of Gawthrain and the Maritaani party returned to their homeland to report their news to the Thraade Council, the ruling body of Maritaan.

Maritaani law states that, with the death of a monarch, a new ruler must take the throne within one year. The next in line, after Gawthrain, is his cousin, Luras, by all accounts a petulant youth who is supported in his claim for the throne by his uncles, Fandarin and Wyst. They are power-hungry individuals who have a disdain for the existing harmonic structure of rule in Maritaan and it is likely they would have Luras enact policies that would be to their direct benefit, regardless of the risk of plunging the nation into civil dispute.

The Thraade Council have declared that the search will continue to bring the true King back to Maritaan within the year; Gawthrain must stand in the Hall of Kings in Sinkhole Deep before the end of the March of Fire, 2150R in order to claim the kingship. Until then, the Council continues to govern temporarily, preventing Luras and his uncles from seizing the throne. Trusted servants of the Council have been dispatched to seek word of Prince Gawthrain. Even Luras's uncles have pitched in, sending their own agents to look for the Prince (although cynics claim that any men in the pay of Fandarin or Wyst are likely to be hired assassins).

The race is on to locate the errant successor to the Maritaani Kingdom before time runs out and the crown passes to Luras and (indirectly) into the hands of schemers and plotters.

NORTHLAND AND THE TREATY OF THE BLUE FEATHER

Northlanders are, by their nature, not political animals and resolve most of their differences openly and amicably. However, they are not without their own peculiar problems, especially when it comes to their alliances with the Hlisshicaari of the Ruby Ranges. These Lizardmen have kept their southern borders free of infiltration by the Goblinskynd of Ahr-Ganiz for centuries, following the historical Treaty of the Blue Feather, which was signed in 1344R.

Each year in Northland, there is a great cattle-drive, whereby the Human drovers provide the Lizardmen with food stocks, to see them through the next winter. In return, the Hlisshicaari guard the mountain passes in the south, ever vigilant against movements of Orc raiding parties from the Mountains of Terror.

This arrangement has been in place since 1344R and has served Northland well. They have no need to maintain any large army and war and conflict on a grand scale is relatively unknown to them.

The Hlisshicaari dwell in a volcanic band of mountains, where the ambient temperatures suit their physiology. They cannot exist in the north as the colder climate makes them slow and somnolent. They rarely travel further than Greenwood, however in late 2149R a representative of the Hlisshicaari nation came to speak before the Northland parliament in Eastport, which was a landmark occurrence. The Hlisshicaari speaker told of a factional split amongst the Lizard tribes that would impair their ability to defend the Northland borders until such a time as one of the factions defeated the other. The people of Northland were advised to prepare themselves for the possibility of attacks by Goblinskynd raiders during the coming year.

As 2150R arrives, the Hlisshicaari are still in dispute and the Parliament of Northland is hastily trying to build fortifications in the south and organize an effective militia.



A Hlisshicaari Warrior in full regalia. Few of the Lizardmen are seen in Northland, preferring the warmer climate of their volcanic homelands in the Ruby Ranges.

What is more, the Blue Feather Tribute is in danger of not taking place, with the usual farmers who participate in the annual cattle-drive refusing to act as herdsmen, owing to the danger of attack by Goblinskynd or the breakaway faction of the Hlissicaari themselves. Non-delivery of the annual tribute may draw an adverse reaction from the Lizardmen who are supportive of the treaty with Northland.

Queen Rose has met with her parliament for urgent talks to resolve the dilemma. A mercenary captain from distant lands is supposed to have offered his services in bringing a force of soldiers into Northland to assist with the defense of the country and to offer protection to the cattle drovers. The Queen is concerned about the presence of a foreign force being active in Northland at such a crucial time, especially when there is a great need for sensitivity in dealing with the complex protocols of the Hlissicaari. Queen Rose has deferred her decision to employ foreign mercenaries in Northland and is seeking an alternate solution, to see if something can be done internally that will deliver this year's tribute to the Hliss, as well as ensuring the defense of their southern communities from attack.

UNEASE IN CHAR-ENDL

After years of peace in the region of the Greater Inner Sea, reports of attacks on isolated coastal communities and merchant shipping has been tabled before the Golden Assembly, in Tempest. Several Dragonlairds of eastern Char-Endl have defied their time-honored arrangements with Tempest to abstain from engaging in piracy in the Greater Inner Sea. They have resumed the practice of raiding smaller settlements on the coast to secure booty and slaves. The dissident Dragonlairds have been operating out of bases in the maze-like network of fjords that extend along the length of the Frozen Shelf.

During 2149R, warships of the Lyrian Fleet played a cat and mouse game to intercept the raiders but, more often than not, the fast, maneuverable dragonships outran the big Lyrian vessels and lost them in the dangerous waters off the Frozen Shelf, a labyrinth of pack-ice, floating amidst the thick fogs of the region. At last year's Na-Tagwah meeting, held annually in Cetairi, a delegation from Tempest was in attendance, led by Morlin Kordenn, brother of the Citylord of Tempest. Morlin demanded that the Dragonlairds of the senior Clans discipline their brethren in the east and put an end to their barbaric practices.

This did more bad than good, with Morlin's rhetoric overstepping the boundaries of Char-Endlese etiquette. Several members of his delegation were taken captive and had their heads skewered on poles outside the Kyasa of the Dragonlaird. Morlin escaped the same fate by fleeing to the small, but well-fortified, garrison on the Island of Tidemark, off the Cetairi coast. This is a military outpost maintained by Tempest.

The Char-Endlese launched an assault on the garrison, demanding the head of Morlin to satisfy the honor of the Dragonlaird. The attack failed due to the innate defenses of the garrison and the Char-Endlese lack of skill in siege warfare. Since then, the Dragonlaird has ordered Tidemark Keep to be blockaded, in an effort to starve out Morlin Korden.

The local Druidical Order of Hirath did its best to resolve the situation but to no avail and the Citylord of Tempest is at a loss what to do next. He needs to win back the respect of the

Dragonlaird and the other senior chieftains in order to put an end to the threat of piracy in the region but he is loathed to hand over his dearly loved brother to his protagonists. The standoff at Tidemark continues and the communities of the Greater Inner Sea nervously watch the horizons for the red sails of the Dragonships that still prowl their waters.

"THE ASHEN AVENGER"

For two centuries, Londar's Land has protected the interests of pirates operating in the Sea of Souls, allowing their vessels safe harbor in Maedori, so long as captains and their crews obey the Laws of Londar when ashore and pay tribute to the First Captain.

The major powers in the Sea of Souls have voiced their complaints about this arrangement and threatened to invade the island on numerous occasions but they have been reluctant to carry out their threats for a number of reasons. Firstly, the Laws put into place by Jersal Londar 300 years ago, set out a code of 'ethics' that pirates were to abide by, in order to use Maedori as a shelter. Most importantly, the Code guaranteed the safety of the crew and passengers of vessels targeted by pirates and prevented the capture or deliberate sinking of ships.

Over the years that followed the introduction of the Code, there was a marked change in attacks on ships in the Sea of Souls. There was less resistance from a vessel boarded by pirates and a great saving in capital as far as trading companies were concerned; crews were left unharmed and their ships were not taken or sent to the bottom of the sea.



Posters like this can be seen throughout the drinking holes of ports in the Sea of Souls, all offering a handsome price for old "Sharkey".

The second reason that the authorities were reluctant to take action was that the Code demanded that persons of title, taken for ransom, were to be treated humanely and brought to Maedori,

where they would be kept in reasonable accommodation by the authorities, while representatives of the First Captain negotiated their release.

Piracy had always plagued the Sea of Souls and would continue to do so but the Laws of Londar helped to reduce bloodshed and financial burden of losing ships; therefore the city of Maedori was perceived as a 'necessary evil' and was left alone to prosper.

In 2145R, the Elvenking of Leezeria was to be presented with a ship, symbolizing his newfound ties with the Human Realms. The vessel was named "The Ashen Traveler" and was jointly built by shipwrights of Lyrie and Pharidor's Watch. Its upper decks were carved from polished Balasian Oak and its main mast was said to be made from Eldarwood, a rare and sacred tree. However, on the eve of its launch, "The Ashen Traveler" was stolen by unknown persons and vanished for six spans.

It reappeared in 2148R, renamed "The Ashen Avenger", the pirate vessel of an enigmatic captain going by the grandiose title of 'The Shark Lord'. The captain and his distinctive vessel have become well known over the past two years, harassing shipping across the Sea of Souls and, according to eye-witnesses, using magic to summon mists and hide their vessel from pursuit. The Elvenking immediately made it known through his ambassador in Port Lyrie, that the, so-called, "Ashen Avenger" was to be returned to its rightful owner at all costs; pressure was placed on those Human Realms seeking to trade with Leezeria or learn secrets of Elven lore to locate the Shark Lord and seize his ship.



"The Shark's Maw" is the symbol of pirates in Eldoria. Its origins can be traced back to the Y'naari who had a tradition of hanging the jaws of sharks from their masts.

This resulted in the Conclave of Odressi making it understood, in no uncertain terms, that the First Captain of Londar's Land was to impound the "Avenger" when it next visited Maedori harbor. In turn, the more powerful pirate captains who sheltered in Maedori also made it clear that they would consider such a move to be against the very law put down by Jersal Londar in 1805R and threatened the possibility of a general uprising if the First Captain complied with the wishes of the Holy Isle.

Over the next year, the Conclave of Odressi worked to have all major ports in the Sea of Souls agree to a charter to impound "The Ashen Avenger" on sight and commissioned a small fleet of privateers to hunt down the Shark-Lord.

In deference to the plight of the First Captain, the Shark-Lord avoided the necessity to berth in Maedori but late in 2149R, "The Ashen Avenger" was cornered by three privateer vessels off the coast of Maritaan and fought a bloody battle that resulted in the sinking of two of the aggressors. The other privateer vessel fled to Dormos, with severe fire damage where they reported that "The Ashen Avenger" was crippled in the encounter and would need the services of a master shipwright to affect necessary repairs.

Since then, "The Avenger" has been avoiding contact with other ships but sightings that have been made indicate she is limping westward, possibly on a heading toward Londar's Land. Things are coming to a head as more privateers set sail to hunt the Shark-Lord and his crew and, in Maedori, the First Captain ponders on what to do if "The Avenger" manages to make it to Maedori.

PYGMY POLITICS IN RHENFARA

Rhenfara is currently involved in hostilities with Arimah Pygmy tribes of the Jungles of Po-Ka. The trouble began in 2145R after Rhenfaran settlers occupied territory within the jungle that was sacred to the Arimah. Despite an attempt at reconciliation, both by Brotherhood of the Dead Tree and Esmian missionaries working in the region, a bitter feud has continued.

The isolated western Rhenfaran provinces of Zakal and Nubai have been affected by the debilitating disease known as Ja-Minda's Curse since 2140R and the inhabitants of the region are forbidden to travel beyond their homelands for fear of bringing the disease into the east. In 2142R an Esmian mission was invited into the Zakal-Nubai territories to treat those suffering from the disease and seek a cure for Ja-Minda's Curse. They were successful in treating many of the symptoms of the disease but have so far been unable to determine its cause or find a cure. A permanent hospice was established at Teeba for those afflicted by Ja-Minda's and the Esmians continue to work in the area.

In 2145R, a census of the Zakal-Nubai territories determined that the population had reached over 1,000 people which, by Rhenfaran law, required a *sueligara*, a peculiar local custom demanding a reduction of the local population by migration to vacant neighboring lands and the formal establishment of a new province. The Zakal-Nubai territories bordered the Po-Ka Jungles, having been originally positioned there to take advantage of some limited trade with the Arimah.

Empty lands did exist to the north that had been set aside for this type of expansion but, when it was proposed that the *Sueligara* of the Zakal and Nubai take claim over this region,

there was a protest from the nearby knaidaals of Ko-Ata, Zuufi and Bhiritaan. Their Elders argued that such a Sueligara would bring the threat of Ja-Minda's Curse to the other knaidaals and they could not allow their people to be exposed to such danger.

The dispute was brought before the Dead Tree Council in Hrygashan and it was ruled that the Sueligara should be redirected into the Kareedah Valley, to the east; into Po-Ka. The people of Zakal-Nubai had been on friendly terms with the Arimah for many centuries, so it was perceived that the migration would pose no problem. However, soon after Rhenfaran settlers made their homes in the Kareedah Valley, attacks by Arimah began and have continued ever since. In response, Rhenfaran warriors destroyed several sites sacred to the Arimah and massacred the Pygmies of two villages.

The problem has been compounded by a group of Rhenfarans who sympathize with the Arimah and have been active assassinating leading figures of the knaidaals involved in the affair. The dissidents call themselves the 'Jaguar Claws' and are led by a renegade Druid, Mugarsi Zar. She wants the Dead Tree Elders to rescind their proclamation and allow the Zakal-Nubai Sueligara to relocate into the empty northern zone. With the Clans coming together to celebrate the Tazzanai Games in 2150R, there is concern amongst the knaidaals that the Jaguar Claws may make some grand statement before the gathering of Elders.

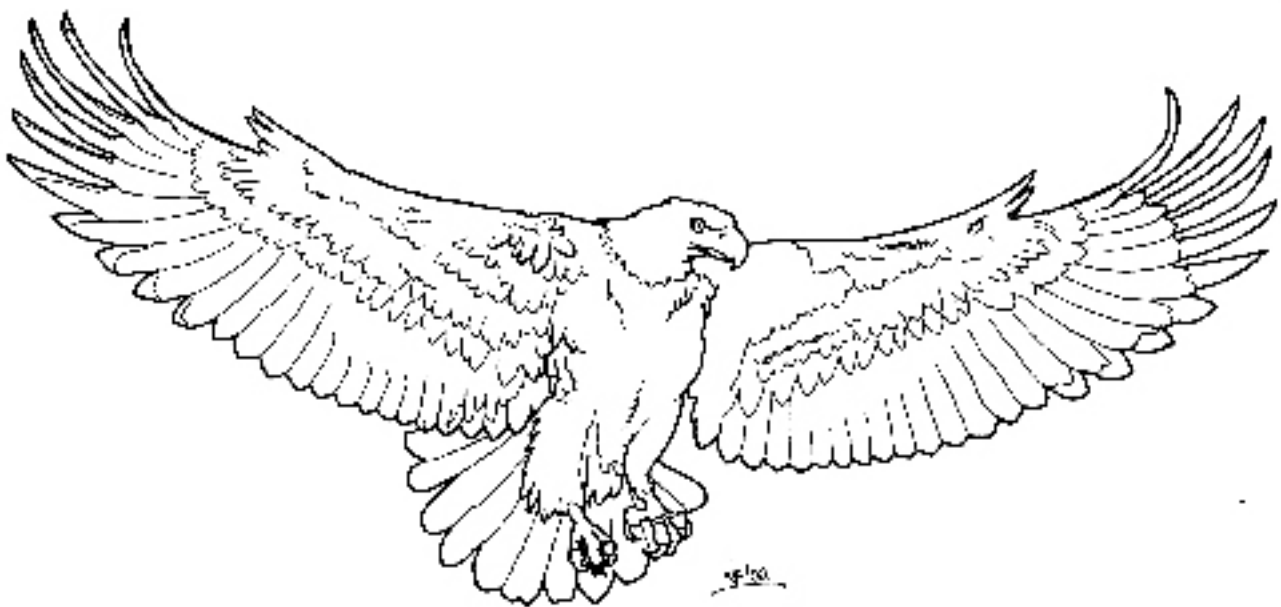
A force of Sharphorn elite have been sent to the Kareedah Valley to protect the settlers there and to root out the leaders of the Jaguar Claws, believed to have secret enclaves in the region and in the nearby Zakal and Nubai territories.

MYSTERIOUS VHERIDANE

Since no news normally comes out of the mysterious land of Vheridane, its current political events have been deliberately left out for Refereess to develop. There is a planned release of information on Vheridane that will be included in "Eldoria Revealed", a supplement booklet for 'Refereess Only' that details the features of Eldorian history and society that are not generally known.

In brief, Vheridane has been visited by a few merchants, mainly from Y'sira, who have established trade settlements in the southern region of Vheridane. They relate stories of a wide, dry land with grassy plains, broken by occasional forests of small, thorny trees. The people are primitive, compared to the rest of Eldoria, living in mud-brick dwellings. They have no beasts of burden, a kind of overgrown goat, called a lapynta being the biggest domesticated animal. The Vheridani have a totally subsistence agrarian economy, with no central authority. The Y'siran trading companies found that there were few items of value, surplus to the Vheridani people that they were genuinely interested in acquiring.

Finding that the Vheridani worship a Deity called Inkuus, not numbered amongst the Divine Twenty-Seven, the Daugron Church began a campaign of converting the villages of southern Vheridane in 1756R and continue to maintain the only colony in that realm.



G E O G R A P H Y

REALMS OF ELDORIA

This section presents a brief but concise overview of each major region in the Eldorian continent. Included are the kingdoms (that occupy large tracts of land) and the great city-states of Tempest and Odressi. There are also references to some specific places of interest, such as the College of Arcane Science.

AHR-GANIZ

Population: 5 Million (50% Goblin/20% Orc/20% Lizardman/10% Other)

Climate: Temperate to Dry

Terrain: Mountainous with many underground labyrinths.

Typical wildlife: Mountain goats, wide selection of monstrous creatures.

Principal exports: None (Ahr-Ganiz is not self sufficient).

Principal imports: None (Ahr-Ganiz raids to obtain food, weapons and slaves).

Government: Dictatorship by whichever group is strongest.

Capitol: Deathhold

Current Leader: King Ukkas (Half-Orc chieftain of the Ironskin Tribe).

Major Religions: Trezkillian, Sadir, Kharic-Ohrm

Minor Religions: Xullia

Ahr-Ganiz encompasses the mountainous terrain in the 'elbow' formed at the eastern extremity of Leezeria. It is a barren, hostile environment, with a great deal of volcanic activity to the north and little arable land to speak of, which suits the nature of most its inhabitants. While the mountains are not the highest in Eldoria, they have an almost unnaturally steep incline, making them exceedingly difficult to navigate, except by established trails and rift valleys.

In the east, the mountains run straight into the Golden Sea for hundreds of miles, at an almost vertical angle, forming towering coastal cliffs, with few places offering safe landing. The western ranges are more accessible and less devoid of vegetation. There are even small pine forests near the coastline around the Emerald Deeps and thorny bushes, called Razorclaws, can be found all over the lower parts of the region. The seedpods that grow on Razorclaws contain an oily secretion that makes them very flammable. Goblinskynd archers often carry supplies of Razorclaw pods so that they can coat their arrows with the oil and use them as incendiary missiles.

The numerous species that make up the Goblinskynd people are essentially hunter-gatherers and are not interested in farming, although some Kobold and Goblin tribes are known to maintain immense mushroom farms below ground, as a food reserve for when times are hard. Most other species of Goblinskynd simply turn to cannibalism during times of prolonged food-shortage.

As many of the Goblinskynd are sensitive to sunlight, there

are not many aboveground structures throughout the mountains and of those that are, most are rudely constructed watch-posts and small keeps, marking the entry to larger underground dwelling places (called Hives), where the Goblinskynd are more at home. Goblinskynd are generally not adept at construction and make use of natural caverns and terrain features; the only real evidence of architectural feats come from the recent construction of the external fortifications of Deathhold, built by Orcs (although there are rumors that they were assisted by Dwarves captured during the Third War of Tears).

For countless generations there has been no real power base in Ahr-Ganiz and the Elves of the west took comfort in the fact that endless internal disputes kept the Goblinskynd from turning their full attention to Leezeria. Each of the Wars of Tears was fought as a direct result of a physically strong and charismatic warrior arising in Ahr-Ganiz and temporarily unifying the many Hives. As soon as that leader was killed in battle, the cohesion of the Hives fell apart and they returned to infighting. It is only recently, with the emergence of the Deathhold Orcs that the Goblinskynd have formed the basis for a sustainable nation.

Most Goblinskynd communities have a core population of goblins or Orcs with smaller mixes of other species such as Hobgoblins, Bugbears and Gnolls. There are a few exceptions, where other species have gained dominance, such as the Kobold colonies of the Silent Valley, the Ogres of Mount Splinter and the Hlissicaari Lizardmen of the Ruby Ranges (however, the latter do not count themselves as belonging to the Goblinskynd nation). With such a diverse group of aggressive creatures trying to share common ground, it is remarkable that they form any kind of social structure at all. Most Hives have a single chieftain who rules only because he or she is the strongest. These chieftains owe fealty to no one and only work with other chieftains for immediate profit and gain; usually raids to seize food, slaves and booty.



King Ukkas, the Half-Orc King of the Ironskins has galvanized the Goblinskynd into a unified nation and threatened to exterminate the entire Leezari race.



Eldoria



For the past 200 years, the Elves have been nervously observing changes in Ahr-Ganiz society. After the Third War, the Tribe known as the Ironskin (because of their skill in making armor) became more stable, the hierarchy being made up of Half-Orcs, rather than full-bloods. Successive Chieftains of the same lineage assumed power and this 'dynasty' devoted itself to the creation of the fortress of Deathhold and the forging of superior arms and armor, making them a force to be reckoned with. They attacked several nearby Hives to acquire a slave labor force to work on the construction of Deathhold. Chieftains in other nearby Hives immediately began offering gestures of fealty to the Ironskins, providing them with a 'willing' workforce rather than having their Hives conquered.

By 2100R, with the completion of Deathhold, ninety percent of the Goblinskynd Hives had pledged oaths of allegiance to the Ironskin Chieftain, Urgadis. A sense of primitive nationhood arrived in Ahr-Ganiz, to the extent that the Ironskins changed their title to the Deathhold Orcs and their Chieftain took on the title of King of the Goblinskynd. Although no major aggressive moves have originated from Ahr-Ganiz, other than the frequent raids of small foraging parties, this has worried the Leezari even more. There is a feeling that a storm is building in the east and it is feared that the Deathhold Orcs are preparing for war, equipping the other allied Hives with superior weapons and armor. It has also been rumored that the Orcs have the services of powerful magic-wielders for the coming campaign, possibly Drow priestesses.

Deathhold has become the 'capitol' of Ahr-Ganiz, albeit only in the last two centuries. There are few other distinguishable areas of note. The underworld of the region is reportedly vast in size with cathedral-like caves and galleries being linked by hundreds of miles of tunnels. There are extensive copper and lead mines in the vicinity of the Mountains of Terror and a small gold mine at Mount Snarving (the Orcs use gold to buy weapons and other manufactured commodities from smugglers in the Crownless Lands).

In the north, the volcanic Ruby Ranges are the home of the fearsome Hlisshicaari, who are allied to the people of Northland and, so far, have defeated all attempts by the Goblinskynd to conquer them or otherwise drive them out of their ancestral lands.

In the south, mention must be made on the vast marshlands known as the Fens of Blood. Ages past, this was the Elven Province of Dalafor, where the Valdari Elves dwelled until they were cut off from Leezeria during the First War of Tears. Many refugees did manage to flee west but the ruling family and their close followers refused to abandon their beloved Fens, fighting a long and bloody campaign against the Goblinskynd. In the last years before the fall of Dalafor's last citadel, the nobles of the Valdari were said to have cursed their western cousins for not aiding them in their plight and renounced the patron Gods of the House of Light, calling upon the demons serving the House of Doom to lend them power to defeat their enemies.

The Goblinskynd were driven out of the Fens by creatures and forces summoned by the Elves of Dalafor but those same creatures finally turned on their summoners and the marshlands became a wilderness, claimed by no one. The Elves of Dalafor

were cursed by their association with the Unholy Trinity of Gods and became Drow, marked as corrupt and unable to stand the light of the Gods they had renounced. They retreated underground and have become a people of legend.

The Goblinskynd of Ahr-Ganiz have a healthy respect for the Fens of Blood and will rarely venture into the region. In addition to the monsters said to haunt the marshes, most species of Goblinskynd also have an innate fear of water and will not cross areas deeper than 6 foot, even in boats.

Cultural Notes

Goblinskynd mainly worship the God of War, Trezkillian, and a few of the 'darker' deities of the Eldorian pantheon. None of their doctrine has come from viewing the Three Books of Law but has been passed on via lines of successive Shamans through the ages. Although the basic domains and concept of each God does resemble something similar to what is worshipped in Human society, there are distinct differences.

For instance, Trezkillian is depicted not as a reptilian creature but more like a giant Orc. He does not have a code of battle that the Trezkillian Churches of Sard preach; rather he demands that his Followers honor him by presenting the heads of their enemies to heaven, following each battle - hence the Goblinskynd practice of decapitating people and spitting their heads on spears and poles.

Most Goblinskynd eat their food raw and have a rudimentary cuisine; their mainstay is meat. They consider cooking or preserving meat spoilage and will only do so if forced to, by lack of game or by famine. The exception to this rule are the Goblins and Kobolds, who prefer their food cooked and like to eat a wide range of roots and fungi in addition to meat. They also use herbs and gravies in their cooking. Goblinskynd consider that there is no difference between Saahn and Nender-Saahn (animals) and happily consume the flesh of all humanoids (although most balk at Troll-meat).

CHAR-ENDL

Population: 2.4 Million (98% Human/2% Other)

Climate: Cold to near-arctic conditions

Terrain: Wide tundra plains with mountainous ranges and glaciers.

Typical wildlife: Arctic fox, polar bear, reindeer, elk.

Principal exports: Whale oil, ambergris, scrimshaw, fur and leather goods.

Principal imports: Grain, arms and armor.

Government: Clan

Capitol: Cetairi

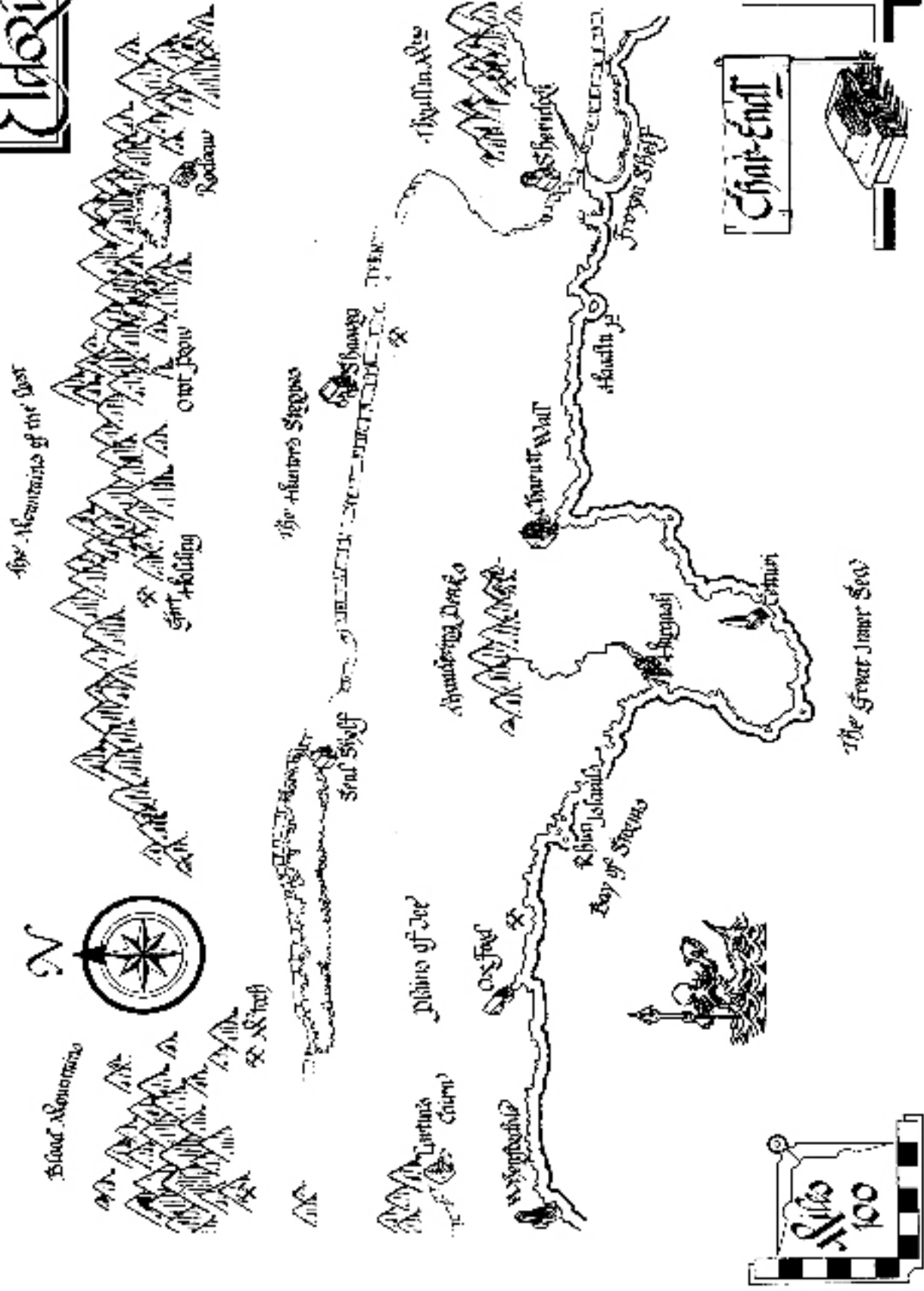
Current Leader: Dragonsayer, Grunnad Darkeyes.

Major Religions: Hirath, Gurthor

Minor Religions: Se, Liraan

Char Endl is one of the few Human realms, within Inner Eldoria, with a society that borders on barbarism. Many warriors amongst its Clans still cling to the old ways of raiding foreign settlements for booty and slaves. Treaties with Llan and Northland have ended attacks on land, but rogue Char-Endless Clansmen continue to make occasional raids by sea, pillaging isolated coastal villages.

Erin



The Mountains of the West



Mountains of the North

Mountains of the East

Mountains of the West

The Hunters Steppes

the Mountains of the North

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Chart-End



The Great Inner Sea

Char-Endl is a harsh country, with scarce arable land. In recent times, sustenance has been supplemented with trade via Cetairi and from the small permanent farming communities bordering Llan and the Snow-Bound Wastes. However most food still is sourced from hunting. The Clans live a largely nomadic existence, roaming the frozen plains in pursuit of game. Wherever they find a region plentiful in deer and bison, they set up a temporary community in makeshift villages, dwelling in large hide tents. At the centre of these villages there is usually a Kyasa, an enormous pavilion that acts as the hall of the Clan leader and his Dragoncarls; his household and place of worship for his attendant priests.

Each Clan has a range of territory that is awarded by the Dragonsayer during the annual Na-Tagwah. This is a coming together of Clans that takes place during mid-winter, at Cetairi, and serves many purposes. It allows the Clans to trade with each other resolve differences and allot new grants of territory that each Clan will be allowed to hunt, following the conclusion of the Na-Tagwah. If a Clan shows that, in the past year, it had been forced to hunt a particularly poor region with little game, a wise Dragonsayer would grant them rights to a territory known to be more plentiful in the new-year. Most times, not all Clans can be satisfied and brawling amongst the Dragoncarls is common, often as a veiled display of power to the Dragonsayer, in a bid to sway his decisions over the allocation of land grants.

Often, it is when Clans receive territory that has insufficient game that they will turn to raiding other lands. Gold is highly prized by the Char-Endlese and can be traded between Clans for food. Likewise, the status of a Dragonlaird is increased by the number of slaves in his household. A member of any of the Clans cannot be a slave, unless found guilty of committing a crime against Clan law, therefore many slaves come from lands outside of Char-Endl. Most of these act as servants to a Chieftain and senior family members related to that Chief. Slaves skilled in cooking, medicine and story-telling are highly prized. In addition to acting as household servants, slaves are also used at the iron mines in the Thrullin Mountains, where life is hard and laborious, although the skills of metallurgy can elevate a slave to a more comfortable life.

The most eastern permanent settlement within Char-Endl is Whenfordale. This is a border trading post, more inhabited by Llanish folk than those of the Clans. It resembles a typical Llanish town, with stone and wooden structures, except that many buildings are circular and have a hide roof, stretched over whalebone staves, a throwback to the Kyasa dwellings of old. It is a walled town and maintains a permanent standing force of warriors due to its location, near to the easterly extremity of the Barren Plateau. The plateau is the domain of the Bloodmane, fierce warriors who share a common ancestry with the Char-Endlese. While the Char-Endl Clans have elevated themselves a certain degree above barbarism; the Bloodmane have remained a primitive and savage people and their presence in the north is a constant threat.

Whenfordale is a place where many native Char-Endlese, who have abandoned the traditional values of their culture, live in harmony with other people. They have given up their nomadic life, learning much of the ways of other Human realms

and passing on some of their own knowledge, especially in the craft of shipbuilding. The town has a thriving shipwright's guild, financed and associated to the Shipwright's Guild of Llan and many Char-Endlese craftsmen work on the building of vessels here for the use by merchant guilds out of Quorull. In addition, Char-Endlese pilots are often sought from Whenfordale, especially for voyages beyond the Greater Inner Sea.

It is well documented that the Char-Endlese sailed the outer regions of Eldoria centuries before the circumnavigation of Eldoria by Sardell in 1275R. In fact, it is said that the famous Captain Thrallin of Sardell used Char-Endlese charts to assist him on his voyage.

West of Whenfordale are the Plains of Ice, so named because of the glacial fields that dominate the region from the Glasstower Shelf, in the north, to the shores of the Greater Inner Sea. It is a treacherous place of hidden crevasses and shifting ice, populated by renegade Clansmen and dangerous wild creatures. Very few people risk traveling this wasteland, taking ship between Whenfordale and Cetairi instead.

Cetairi is the largest population center in Char-Endl and has grown out of continued attempts to negotiate trade by foreign powers; first by Llan, then by the Sardellan Empire, and later, the Tempest Guild of Gold. A small settlement, built along traditional Sardellan architectural lines, Cetairi was established on Midwaine Headland around 1051R, along with a defensive garrison at Tidemark, a small islet off the coast. Midwaine has a better climate than the rest of Char-Endl, the landscape being dominated by numerous pine ridgelines that tend to reduce the intensity of the winter blizzards.

For most of the year, Cetairi is depopulated, a ghost town of locked and boarded up buildings, administered by a small cadre of people who have made this their permanent place of residence. The town's permanent citizens are a blend of Char-Endlese natives, often those who have some disagreement with their Clan leader, and a mixture of other people from all over Eldoria, principally with an interest in trade.

When the snows of winter come, the population can swell to over 5000,000 people, as the Clans hold their Na-Tagwah and every man, woman and child, who are able, travel to Cetairi and assemble a great Kyasa city that encircles the stone and wood buildings at its heart. Such a meeting requires an ample supply of food and drink and this is where great trade and profits are made by the southern guilds who bring shiploads of grain, gold and arms to trade for furs, whale-oil and whale by-products (such as ambergris, that is highly sought after by the perfumers of Byalliz).

Cetairi is surrounded by wooded hilly terrain, typical of the Midwaine Headland area, and there are a series of hot springs throughout the area, fed by underground volcanic activity. The thermal effect of the bedrock adds to the more hospitable temperatures that Cetairi experiences.

To the north-east is Hargash, the famed religious sanctuary of the Druidical Order of the Wyrn, an ancient society of Hirath worshippers, who hold the Dragon in particular reverence. The community of Hargash consists of a small permanent settlement of Kyasa pavilions that occupy a steep rise of land beside the mouth of the Chillwater River. The great hall at Hargash is a

grander affair by contrast, being made of rough cut local stone and wood. It contains a large museum and the most concise collection of records concerning Dragons in Eldoria, detailing their decline and disappearance from the world.

The source of the Chillwater is the Thundering Peaks, a line of volcanic mountains that erupt from time to time. The most active mountain is Kalagas, which becomes vents off excess gasses like clockwork every seven years. East of Midwaine Headland are the Tymather Steppes, a high plain of endless tundra where most of the great herds graze through late spring and summer. In days gone by the hunters of Char-Endl measured their success in the furs and ivory of mammoths that ranged throughout this region; however the great beasts were hunted to extinction by 2050R. Now the Clans follow the migrations of bison that dominate the central steppes and the herds of deer and elk that are found in the more temperate coastal plains.



Char-Endlese Dragoncarls are often sought out as mercenaries by foreign powers. The infamous Thula Hraggin (depicted above) has served the Guilds of Llan for over ten years.

Further east the land is locked into a second area of vast glacial activity that comes down to the sea, creating the Frozen Shelf, a maze-like network of fjords, giving way to pack-ice. During late winter and early spring, many icebergs break off here and the area of sea between Cetairi and Potterville, in Northland, becomes a dangerous place, shrouded in thick fogs that hide the ice-floes. Sheridori is the major settlement of the Char-Endlese along the Fractured Coast. It is a small walled town containing a mishmash of Kyasa and rambling wooden buildings. A great many foundries and smithies are set up throughout the muddy streets of Sheridori, as the town administers the mines in the nearby Thrullin Mountains. A large number of slaves dwell amongst the population, providing the labor force that works the mine in winter and ships ore down the Thrullin River in

summer.

Besides providing Char-Endl with iron, Sheridori exists as a centre for dissidents who continue to launch raids against shipping in the Greater Inner Sea, despite the formal agreement by the Dragonlaird with authorities in Tempest to refrain from such activities. In actual fact, the Dragonlaird is suspected of secretly encouraging these acts of piracy.

The Dragoncarls of the Clans have always maintained a martial lifestyle and grow restless if they have no battles to fight. The Dragonlaird and Clan leaders prefer that their elite warriors 'blow off steam, by engaging with overseas opponents rather than risking the development of an internal conflict. For similar reasons Dragoncarls are often sent as paid mercenaries to serve in battles on foreign shores.

Although Sheridori is located on the borders of Northland, there is little trade with that country. The gentle folk of Northland believe that the Char-Endlese are much too fierce and uncouth to do business with. An icy region called the Snowbound Wastes lies west, across the Thrullin River and the harsh conditions have made it a place that is largely unsettled by any race. This was once the realm of the Snow Queen, a semi-mythic figure in Char-Endlese folklore. She was supposedly a Sorceress of Clan Usak, who tried to bring all the Clans under her domination. When her army was defeated near Sheridori, she escaped during a blizzard that she was said to have summoned magically. Since then, locals say the Snowbound Wastes have been a place of unnaturally perpetual cold weather and that the Snow Queen still lives there to this very day, sheltered in a castle of ice, somewhere in that cold wilderness.

Cultural Notes

The Dragon is the sacred emblem of Char-Endl and is only allowed to be displayed openly by a Druid of the Order of the Wyrn or by someone who has served as a Dragoncarl, an elite fighter sworn to protect one of the Clan Chieftains. The symbol of the dragon is often painted on shields, carved atop helms or represented as the figurehead of raiding ships.

There are ten official Clans within Char-Endl, each tracing its roots to the ancient Khalsian migrations across the north. Seven of the Clans are named as 'true clans,' which infers that they retain the nomadic traditions of their ancestors and are thus part of the annual Na-Tagwah (the Great Gathering). There are three other Clans who have opted for permanent settlement (in Whenfordale, Hargash and Sheridori) and a number of smaller groups who have established small villages here and there across the country. These folk are called the Ghost Clans and they are considered a lesser people by their nomadic cousins. They are forbidden to attend the Na-Tagwah of Cetairi except to bring an annual tribute to the Dragonsayer.

Horses are rarely seen in Char-Endl and domesticated bison are the main beast of burden for carrying heavy loads. Most people travel on foot, using established migratory trails, called 'waylanes'.

Weapons made in Char-Endl are beautifully crafted but the iron in the region is far inferior to metal mined in Sard and other southern countries. Warriors of Char-Endl recognize the superiority of foreign crafted arms and armor and will go out of their way to obtain masterwork items from foreign weapon-

makers by way of negotiation, trade or more brutal forms of persuasion.

Char-Endlese raiders use vessels called Scalavaskeens (which roughly translates as 'wings of the dragon'). They are small, fast ships with a narrow beam and shallow draft. They are highly maneuverable and can transport a force of some fifty to eighty warriors, kitted out for war.

They usually have a single square sail and their captains often decorate this and the prow with images of dragons or other mythic beasts. People that sail the Greater Inner Sea or dwell upon its islands and coasts have come to fear the sighting of 'dragonships' (as they call them). Raids are common, despite the fact that Tempest has had a century long agreement with successive Dragonlairds to end the constant marauding by Char-Endlese warriors. Although the practice is officially forbidden, individuals, jockeying to make their reputation known, will often go on covert raids and lay a sizeable amount of the booty at the feet of their respective Clan Chieftain, in return for being given a position as a Dragoncarl.

ELKIA

Population: 2.8 Million (99% Human/1% other).

Climate: Temperate to warm.

Terrain: Fertile plains, mountainous in the south.

Typical wildlife: Black bear, badger, wild boar, fox.

Principal exports: Pottery, glass, weapons, wheat, dairy products, olives, grapes, wine and salted mutton, weapons.

Principal imports: Spices, oils, timber, beef, taak, base metals.

Government: Theocracy (power is vested with the Church of Siritar).

Capitol: Denhaven.

Current Leader: Lord Protector Candallar the Just.

Major Religions: Siritar, Ormocea, Esmia, Phelltar.

Minor Religions: Faar, Rhioria, Se.

Elkia was once part of the heartlands of the Sardellan Empire and its current regime emerged in the 1600's R after many years of civil war, following the Empire's demise. As such, the people of Elkia share much of the same culture as their kin in Sard, although their politics are radically different.

The Treaty of Four Swords, signed in Karhaven in 1677R, ended hostilities between the rival noble and religious fighting over the remains of the Empire and established the new borders of Elkia. The treaty was orchestrated by the Ormocean Church, which immediately assumed power in Denhaven, the largest city in Elkia. This theocracy was short-lived however; senior priests in the Ormocean Church had acquired obscene amounts of wealth during the height of the Sardellan Empire and had made many questionable decisions, concerning war and colonial expansion. This led to a schism in the Holy Trinity and the alienation of the Churches of Esmia and Siritar.

During a great Congress, held in Odressi in 1679R, the moderate factions in the Ormocean Church decided it was time to purge the Church of its zealots and heal these old rifts. After cutting a deal with the high clerics of the Siritar and Esmian faiths, they voted to transfer governmental control in Elkia over

to the Church of Siritar.

This formally took place in 1681R, with the Ormoceans retaining an administrative hold over the judicial system in the country. The position of Lord Protector was created, the first title-holder being Lannus Thanfor of the Order of the Knights of Glory.



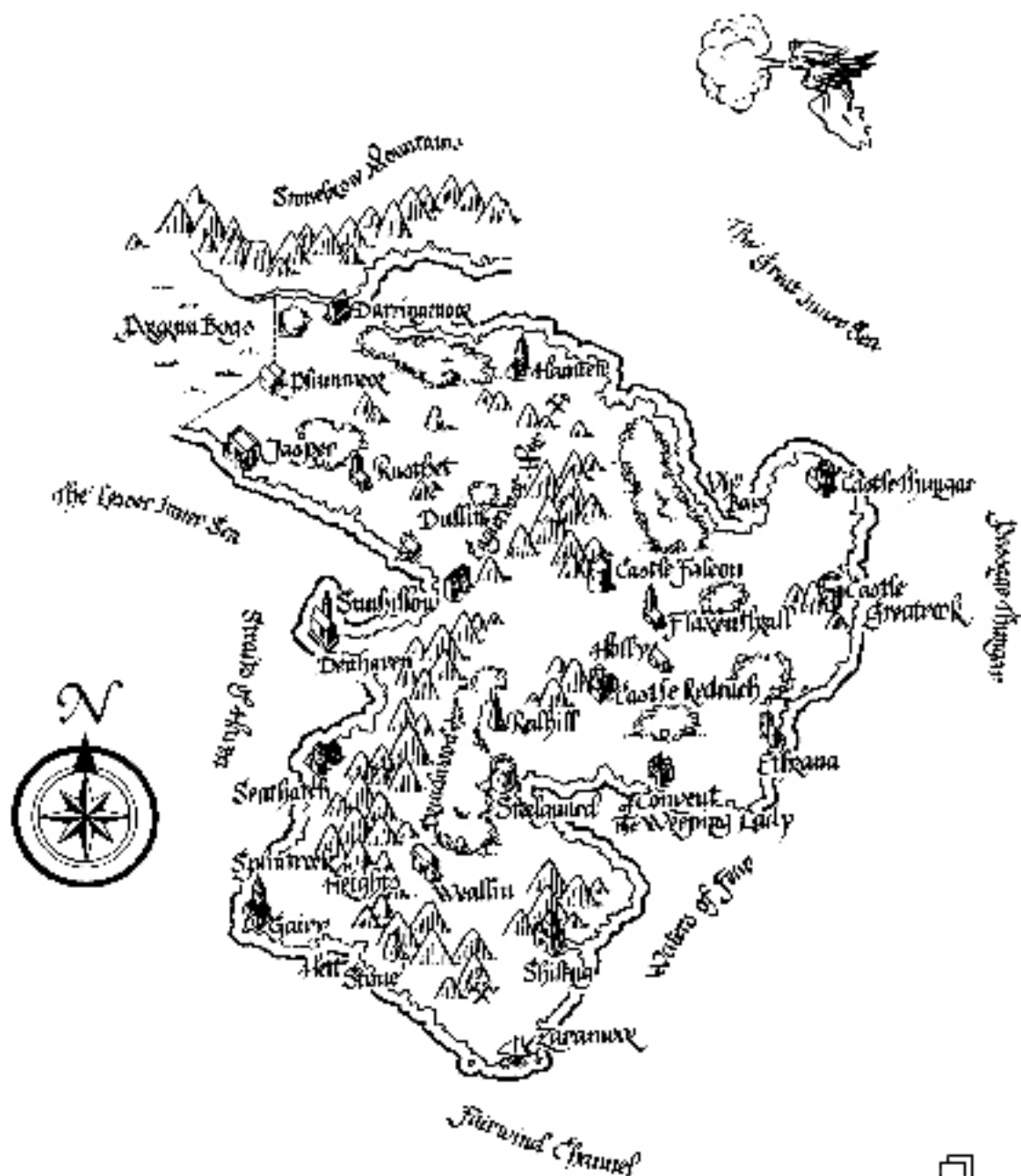
Lannus Thanfor, the first Lord Protector of Elkia, was largely responsible for devising the current system of government in that country

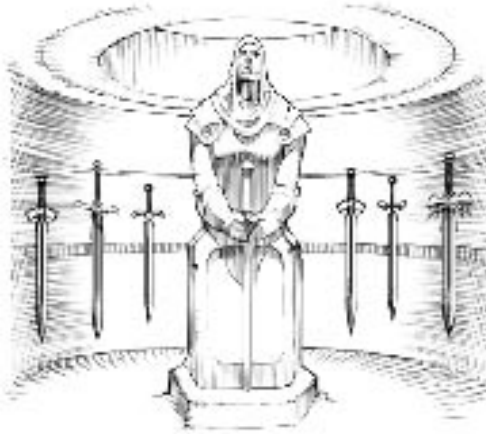
The Lord Protector governed with a council of twelve other knights drawn from Siritar Orders and the country was divided into twelve regions, called Protectorates, overseen by the council members or their delegates. Each Protectorate has its own council of twelve drawn from the leaders of more populous villages and religious dignitaries.

Although most commoners worked the lands of noble houses, it far easier to become a freehold land owner in Elkia than in Sard. If an Elkian commoner provided his lord with at least seven years labor, he became eligible to receive a grant of land equal to one square acre for each year of service in excess of the first five.

This grant also required the applicant to provide their lord with a substitute laborer, in the event that the commoner also sought to withdraw from service and farm their own land exclusively. In most cases, a man will farm his lord's land until his eldest child is of an age to act as the substitute laborer. Commoners in Elkia who own land are entitled to vote in Protectorate elections, appointing candidates to the local Council of Twelve.

ERKIA





The shrine of the Paladin Saviour is a sacred site located at Thungar

The northern and eastern parts of Elkia are a rich agricultural basin; the farm holdings known for their bountiful grain harvests and the quality of their beef and dairy cattle. The countryside in these regions is green and pleasant, with wide pastoral tracts of land broken by meandering rivers or wooded ranges of low hills.

The most important town in the east is Thungar, the seat of the Siritar Order of the Knights of Glory. Thungar is heavily fortified (a legacy from past raids by Char-Endlese dragonships) and guards the strategic straits that give passage into the Greater Inner Sea. Although Thungar has a small port facility, Elkia's major port in this region is Darringmoor. This ancient city has a well-established ship building industry and has access to important trade routes with Tempest and Northland.

Darringmoor was originally a Llanish town until it was annexed by Sardell in 950R and later taken back by Llan during the Kinstrife. Finally it was retaken by Elkian forces shortly after the Treaty of Four Swords and has remained a bone of contention between both powers ever since. The general populace of Darringmoor considers they are Llanish, despite the fact that they are governed by Elkian authorities. They do not plot against their Elkian lords; they genuinely get on very well with them. The common belief is that it is inevitable that the Guilds of Llan will move to regain Darringmoor, one day, and equally inevitable that the Elkians will want to take the town back again. To live in Darringmoor is to live in a state of flux. Most of its citizens jokingly keep banners with the Elkian flag on one side and the Llanish flag on the other, to hang out their windows depending upon whose victory parade is marching through the streets.

There are numerous villages scattered about the coast, the most important being Sunhillow, to the north of Denhaven. Sunhillow is the center of Elkia's glass and pottery industry and the handiwork of its skilled craftsmen is traded across most of Eldoria. The Elkian pottery, known as Varithises, is distinguished by its dark purple glaze. Most glass that is produced here is for use in decorative Church windows. The glass makers of Llan

are far more subtle with their craft and also produce superior glassware for the tables of the wealthy. The southern parts of Elkia are more mountainous and less populated, except for the region of Zaramoor, which enjoys a warmer, almost Mediterranean climate.

Zaramoor is governed by nobles, who have had a long history of association with the Trezkillian Church. Many of the old families opted to abandon their holdings and seek their fortune in Sard, after the Treaty of Four Swords but a few dogged individuals stayed on, swearing fealty to the new Lord Protector of Denhaven. Although the lords of Zaramoor have never spoken against the theocracy, the Ormocean Church remains ever vigilant and suspicious of their allegiances. Diplomatic ties with Sard are currently at an all time low and rumors abound of clandestine meetings between influential personages of Zaramoor and representatives of the Trezkillian Church of Sard. Ormocean spies are abroad in south Elkia, but to date, nothing concrete has been uncovered.

The land holdings of Zaramoor produce a fine range of wines from its terraced vineyards, along with a good crop of oranges, lemons, figs and olives. The area also maintains significant goat-herds and produces a fine wool and delectable cheese (Zaramoor White), popular in Elkia, Sard and Odressi.

The jewel in Elkia's crown is Denhaven, the capitol. Known as the Alabaster City, it features graceful towers and stately buildings, making extensive use of white marble colonnades and terra-cotta tiles. The defensive walls of Denhaven are its most impressive architectural feature and are reputed to be the strongest in Eldoria. They stand some sixty feet in height, with a rampart so wide that four men can easily walk abreast upon it. The city has four major gates and a sheltered harbor that can accommodate up to thirty ocean going vessels at any one time. The city is famous for its street of weapon-smiths, who are housed in the merchant district. Here, master craftsmen of the age-old Order of Caldartha create the best swords in the world (equal to a +2 masterwork weapon). The swords are exquisite works of art, crafted with the finest steel and decorated with precious metals and stones. They sell for a minimum of 2,000 gold trades.

The smiths of the Order of Caldartha keep their weapon-making skills a strict secret and betrayal of their ancient craft to those not part of the order is punishable by death.

Elkia trades freely with most other realms, even Sard, from which it obtains most of its base metals. Constant border disputes, since the division of the Empire, has kept both countries skirmishing with each other, mainly north of the Furlflow River, around the Porgruu Bogs.

Elkia also continues to dispute the sovereignty of the Imperial State, mainly along religious lines. The Imperial Guard, an Order of Siritar, united with Trezkillian factions to defend the city of when Sardell collapsed into civil war. Despite repeated efforts to take Jasper by force in the 17th century R, the Imperial State has remained undefeated and intact, the care-takers of the city declaring that they will hold the throne until a new emperor is found.

The council in Denhaven desires that the Siritar Order in the Imperial State should stand down and hand the territory over

to Elkia but the Imperial Guard continue to refuse to recognize the authority of the regime in Elkia, declaring that they are the only true Order of Siritar faith left untainted and with honor by the Kinstrife. Diplomatic missions by representatives of all the chapters of the Holy Trinity in Odressi, continue to visit the Imperial State to make the Order see reason.

Cultural Notes

Elkians tend to dress in drab brown and ochre clothing. Both men and women favor long hooded cloaks, often embroidered with a family motif. It is unseemly for men to have facial hair and married women wear colorful scarves when in public, to denote their status.

Elkians are the largest consumers of the hot beverage taak, which they import from Rhenfara and Maritaan. The Empress Taranae was introduced to taak by captains returning from negotiations in Rhenfara and became quite fond of the drink,

popularizing it throughout her court. Most Elkians prefer taak sweetened and add honeyberries to the mixture when brewing a pot.

A popular spectacle in Denhaven is the annual Tournament of Steel, where knights of the four Siritar Orders do battle at the joust and grand melee. The competition is held as a week-long festival, on Marteen's Common, south of the city. Besides the knights of Siritar competing, there are twelve positions available for non-denominational warriors of any class to participate. If more than twelve competitors put themselves forward for the tournament, these positions are chosen by lot. The prize is a purse of 50 gold trades and the right to bear the device of the tournament (a winged sword on a green field) for the period of one year.



The Tournament of Steel is an annual festival of martial prowess held in Elkia. The knights of the four Siritar Orders compete for the title of the Champion of Swords. The competition is open to a limited number of fighting men who are not from the Siritar Church.

LEEZERIA

Population: 145,000 (98% Elven/1% Half-Elven and 1% Other).

Climate: Temperate.

Terrain: Heavily forested and mountainous.

Typical wildlife: Lynx, brown bear, unicorn, various sylvan creatures.

Principal exports: Crafted wooden items, fabrics, jewelry (limited trade via Port Lyrie).

Principal imports: Metals (base and precious).

Government: Monarch and advisory council.

Capitol: Tarimthol-Irl.

Current Leader: King Pelentine III.

Major Religions: Tarimth and Pharidor

Minor Religions: Phelhtar, Liraan and Ulliah.

The realm of Leezeria encompasses perhaps the most beautiful landscapes in all of Eldoria. It is a place of vast ancient forests, deep valleys and towering snow-peaked mountains; a quiet, ordered wilder land where you can travel for weeks without any sign of civilization. The low population density of the Leezari, combined with the fact that most of its people dwell in the capitol or in 'nomadic' households, leaves much of Leezeria empty.

The Elves live more in harmony with the land than any of the other major races, their closest rivals being the Rhenfarans. They subsist as a hunter-gatherer society and make little demand upon their natural resources. As a result, much of the territory that they have occupied since the Darktime has remained the way it was, untouched through the millennia. Only in Leezeria's east, is their noticeable impact on the land by the presence of other Saahn and this is due to the unending struggle between the Elves and the Goblinskynd of Ahr-Ganiz.

The Leezari have gradually abandoned their most easterly provinces over the centuries and encouraged the races of Dwarves and Humans to occupy the narrow isthmus that has become known as the Crownless Lands. This is a region where refugees from all over Eldoria have come to stake a claim in the land at the behest of the Elven-king. As a result, there exist a hodge-podge of petty states and settlements nestled on Leezeria's eastern borders, dwelling under the ever present shadow of a threat from Ahr-Ganiz.

Prior to the Darktime, the Leezari had already established a kingdom at Tarimthol-Irl, in the heartland of Leezeria. They welcomed the other races of the Saahn to join them and their city became a great multicultural centre of learning. However, a number of centuries after the passing of the Theledai, the Elves became wary that other races did not live as one with natural world around them and were disturbed by a great many practices of the Humans.

Humans were susceptible to great abuses, using magic against each other to resolve disputes and despoiling the land for profit. Conflicts arose and the Elvenking declared Tarimthol-Irl and the territories of Leezeria forbidden to all but the Elves and drove out the other races from its borders, albeit with a minimum of bloodshed. They have maintained this strict policy of isolation ever since and have only recently begun to reestablish ties with the rest of Eldoria, as a result of an alliance with Men who came

to the defense of Tarimthol-Irl in the Third War of Tears.

Tarimthol-Irl is one of three places in modern Leezeria that has undergone any major construction-work (the other locales being Pharidor's Watch and Fairhaven). The capitol encompasses a number of large buildings, within a walled defense but it has little in common with the sprawling, crowded cities typical of Human culture. Its major buildings solely utilize wood and marble in their architecture and appear to have been created long ago using magic; the materials being fused together in places, creating an unusual but beautiful effect.

The walls are carved about with intricate murals and motifs and magnificently life-like statues extend outward from walls and decorative plinths. The buildings are positioned amongst perfectly straight avenues of trees that form the main thoroughfares of Tarimthol-Irl. Many of these trees have wide platforms that extend between them, again formed by the use of magic. Wooden bridges and winding stairs connect them to each other and the ground. These high podiums are used as meeting places of the community, the larger platforms having permanent bowers that provide shelter against the elements.

The most imposing structures in Tarimthol-Irl are the Hall of the Kings and the Moonshadow Temple (devoted to Tarimth).

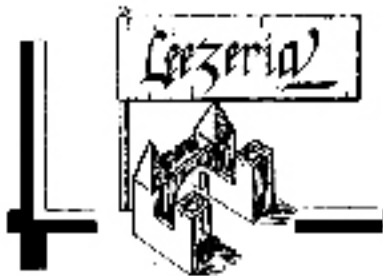


The Elvenking, Diameren Pelentine III. Note the Eldarflower engraving upon his breast-plate, symbol of Leezeria

The former is a grand cathedral-like building, with a base of green marble that has been fused with hundreds of tall saplings. These trees curve upward from the outer walls and mesh together to form the ceiling high above. The floor is made of translucent amber tiles in which flowers have been preserved. The ancient throne that stands at one end of the hall is formed from a great stump of Eldarwood that has been carved to resemble a stylized representation of the rising sun.

The Moonshadow Temple is located to the west of the palace. It is a circular structure with a domed roof that is supported by a circle of living trees. In addition to the central altar and area of worship, the temple houses a large Pre-Redemption telescope,

Eldoria



in its upper dome.

The outer surrounding walls of Tarimthol-Irl are ramparts of earth some thirty feet in height and are constructed over the sites of a number of springs in the area, in a manner that allows the waters to gather in cisterns along the battlements and create small waterfalls both inside and outside of the city.

South of Tarimthol-Irl is the vast expanse of the forest of Eldarwood. This sacred place is the domain of the Shaedarfyn, a druidical order who closely guard the remaining groves of Eldarwood trees that grow deep within the great forest. While Leezeria is 'off-limits' to non-Elves, Eldarwood is off-limits to all but its druidic protectors and has become a haven, not only for the Eldarwood groves but also for many of the Sylvaari, the last remaining natural spirits and creatures of the world. The Shaedarfyn Order were originally given control of Eldarwood at the request of the Elven royal family, following incursions by Goblinskynd, during the successive Wars of Tears. However, following a dispute with King Pelentine III in 2143R, the Shaedarfyn were outlawed and became a law unto themselves. They have retreated to secret holdings deep within Eldarwood and continue to guard the forest, harassing the Elvenking's Guards, whenever they attempt to take any of the timber from the Eldarwood Groves.

To the immediate north of Tarimthol-Irl are the Plains of Eldatronn. This is a picturesque country of wide grasslands, crisscrossed by small waterways that are home to all manner of waterfowl and freshwater fish. This region has always been an abundant source of food for the hunter-gatherer lifestyle that forms the basis of Elven society. Game is plentiful and a wide variety of wild fruit and vegetables grow in the highlands near Mount Orne. The waterways of Eldatronn have their source in the Girdle of the Gods, a circle of tall mountains dominating Leezeria's north. The peaks of the Girdle are impassable in the south and east, except for a number of small trails and secret ways known only to Leezari Rangers familiar with the area. High in the middle of the mountains is an immense lake known as the Mirror of Heaven. Its deep waters are icy cold and a thick fog pervades the valleys and lowlands that surround it. Priests of Tarimth sometimes come here to make offerings to the Lost Goddess and to gaze upon the still waters of the lake by night, for it is claimed that the Mirror of Heaven augments the scrying powers of those gifted with the power of divination.

The mountains that surround the Mirror of Heaven contain many standing stone circles and ruined sites that are of the distinctive architectural style of the ancient Darvinor. It is evident that the Darvinor maintained a large settlement in the area, before they vanished from the world and Elven legends tell of a lost valley located near to the Mirror, where some Darvinor still dwell on in seclusion.

Beyond the Girdle of the Gods is a large area of arable land, bounded by the Greater Inner Sea. These are the Fertile Lands and they are guarded and patrolled by companies of warriors loyal to the Elvenking's cousin, Dasandes, who operates out of three Sunds (forts), evenly spaced along a road running between the borders of Woodnymph Dale and the March of Ofram. It is Dasandes who has most to do with trade and diplomacy with Men. He often visits with Human dignitaries at Port Lyrie

and maintains a villa within the Elven Quarter of the city. He also oversees the croplands and grain tribute that comes out of Taricktown, a small grant of land awarded to Char-Endlese mercenaries who aided Leezeria in the Third War of Tears. They were allowed to establish a colony in northern Leezeria that is devoted to the growing of grain; under the provision that none of the colonists could bear arms and that the Elvenking would receive an annual tax of one tenth of their harvest.

Eastward, beyond the hilly lands of the March of Ofram, lie the Mountains of the War-Watch, the last frontier of eastern Leezeria. Four great Sunds are located here, housing Leezeria's finest warriors. They are the constantly on vigil against any significant intrusion of Goblinskynd forces out of Ahr-Ganiz. Once, Leezeria's territories encompassed a tract of land beyond the Mountains of the War-Watch, as far east as the shores of the Golden Sea. Three major wars between Elves and Goblinskynd have led to the loss of the eastern provinces and, since 1962R Human settlers have been allowed to establish themselves in the contested region between the Elven Sunds in the Mountains of the War-Watch and the Goblinskynd strongholds in the Mountains of Terror.

Moving south and returning to the west you come to the Glades of Peace, a region of gently rolling plains, broken by bands of woodland. Many Tairns are located throughout this region, providing a dwelling place for the nomadic Wyndari Elves. Journeying southward still, you come to Fairhaven, a small port community, close to the mouth of the Silvercrest. This is nothing more than a large Tairn with a permanent settlement of shipwrights and craftsmen associated with shipbuilding. Fairhaven is not a commercial port as such; it builds the Talidori, small but hardy ocean-going sailing ships, which serve to make the spiritual journey in search of the Meridathian Maelstrom and beyond. Fairhaven is physically located out of sight of the sea in a rift valley, with quayside buildings on either side of the Silvercrest. The banks are overhung with willows and tall reeds grow through the backwaters, giving the place an overall feeling of melancholy.

Fairhaven is a religious retreat where Elves contemplate their destiny and choose to remain in the world or try to seek the gateway to the Unending Sea and, ultimately, pass on to the Holy Glade. The Tarimth Church has a temple here and maintains a special order of pilots who are skilled with sailing the Talidori. They have been initiated into the secrets of the Maelstrom and the ways of steering a vessel through the gateway between the worlds. Often, after an Elf has lost a loved one (to Priatharia or an act of violence), they will travel to Fairhaven to lament and consult with the Clerics of Tarimth, in particular, the Oracle of the Last Tower. The Oracle is wise in reading what is in the hearts of the Leezari and helps those who make the journey to Fairhaven, overcome their grief or relinquish their ties to the mortal world.

The only other major fixed settlement of the Leezerian Elves is Pharidor's Watch, in the southwest, near to the Alfarren Highlands.

Originally an ancient tower that guarded the Straits of Pharidor, the Elves established a university here in 1051R and the Watch became a repository of arcane knowledge, the only

center of schooled wizardry for Elvenkind. Following the Third War of Tears, the governing council of the university saw fit to invite prominent Human sages and masters of lore to study there.

The modern university in 2150R consists of the original fortress tower and a number of subsidiary buildings that were built in the succeeding centuries. These occupy a high cliff-face overlooking the sea, the most impressive of these later buildings being the Library of Diamedes. The township that surrounds the university complex is a mishmash of cultural styles, reflective of many great architects from diverse cultures who have studied at Pharidor's Watch and left their own individual mark on the community.

Northward of the Watch, the lands of Leezeria end at the Myentaria River. Beyond this is the Grant of Lyrie, a green strip of coastland devoted mainly to farming, with some logging interests and a major mine at Ironhead. This region, like the Crownless Lands, was ceded to Human realms in 1962R, in recognition of Human assistance in ridding Leezeria of the Goblindynd menace during the Third War of Tears.

Administratively, Leezeria is divided into six distinct districts, called Wards, ruled by a regional governor. Each governor appoints two representatives to the King's Council in Tarimthol-Irl, one of which is usually a family member and the other must be unrelated. The Council proposes policy to the Elvenking but the King has final authority over the Council. The King can only be deposed by the unanimous agreement of the High Priests of the temples of Pharidor, Tarimth and Phelitar.

Families and their histories are of major importance in Leezeria and extended families usually exist as a distinct community. For example, the ruling family of Pelentine has resided in the heartlands of Leezeria for as long as anyone can remember; the Salendia family have always maintained a presence in the Glades of Peace. Through these families the will of the King is exerted, with policies being broadcast out to the governors and then to a lower level gathering of family leaders held every five years.

The society relies on a hunter-gatherer form of society to collect food. There are virtually no farms and little is stored. Game and produce has always been plentiful, even during the Wars of Tears. On the rare occasions when there has been a shortage in areas, the Elves there simply moved on, leaving their old settlements behind and building new settlements. These villages were simple affairs, consisting of hide tents and light wooden structures. They were left so that any nomadic Elves, relocating to the region in later centuries, could move in and refurbish the old villages, called Tairns (meaning 'shared house'). Many Tairns, both occupied and empty, can be found predominantly throughout the Glades of Peace and the south coast of Eldarwood. A scattered number are located in the Girdle of the Gods.

Cultural Notes

The Elven metabolism is unaffected by alcohol. Beverages brewed and distilled in Human realms have little effect upon the average Elf. However, there is a potent drink called Eldarthrell, made from fermented Corshelle Berries, that does act like alcohol upon the Elven physiology. It is served to honored guests and is used in religious ceremonies. Conversely, Eldarthrell has little effect on non-Elves, although it has been known to cause uncontrollable sneezing fits in Dwarves.

When Elves 'die' from natural causes they enter a state called Priatharia, whereby the mind the body remains in perfect condition in a form of stasis. The resting form is entombed within family crypts, along with some of their favorite belongings. The crypts tend to be underground chambers, often in secluded, scenic places, the location known only to a select few of the family who hold the honored position of Alendia-turath-prialandar, the Guardian of the Dreamers. They possess the keys to the family crypt and make regular visits to maintain the inner sanctum.

Should a living Elf wish to forsake their existence in the living world, and choose to seek the Meridathian Maelstrom, they are obliged to convey the bodies of their kinfolk resting in the family crypt. Often, in the March of Fire, when the winds are most favorable, funeral processions wind their way through the



Pharidor's Watch has become one of the principal points of cultural exchange between Elves and Humans in modern day Eldoria. Many practitioners of magic come to learn new spells and techniques from Leezari Sorcerers

forests of Leezeria to Fairhaven and from there, take ship for the voyage to the Unending Sea.



A Rod of Passage, essential for traveling throughout Leezeria if you are not of the Leezari

Unless they bear a Rod of Passage, any Saahn not of the Leezari, will be intercepted by patrols and captured alive (if possible). Prisoners will be kept for a period of fifteen days before they are brought before a local authority, stripped of all belongings and escorted out of Elven territories. Repeat offenders are brought to the attention of the Human authorities in Port Lyrie, who are quick to impose a sentence of 1-5 years forced service with the Lyrian Fleet.

A Rod of Passage is a short cylinder of wood with the relevant travel agreements carved about its circumference. The rod is capped at both ends with a metal fixture (often silver). One cap is recessed and bears a wax stopper, stamped with the seal of the Elven authority granting passage to the bearer through Leezeria. Any misdemeanor, carried out by a Rod Bearer, reflects ill upon the authority that prepared the Rod and honor can only be satisfied by that authority dealing with the Bearer (culminating in the formal breaking of the Rod).

Elves in established settlements wear clothing of light coloring, ranging from white to pale blues and greens, often set off with subtle pieces of silver or gold jewelry, including armbands, circlets. Females adorn themselves with hair-nets made of the finest gossamer and many also favor a long gown held at one shoulder by a pin, bearing the family crest. In colder areas, a short, fleece-lined cape is worn over this, often accompanied by a wide hood. Males wear laced shirts with long tapered sleeves and dark hose. A heavy vest and kilt is often worn with this ensemble, in winter or by Leezari living in mountain regions. Long boots of soft doeskin are popular, their side-panels sewn about with intricate patterns.

When relocating to a new Tairn or adventuring in the wilderness, Elves often wear a jerkin and britches made of Valandia (called leafinen in the Sardellan tongue). This is made from the large, broad leaves of the Valandia-Lily, an extremely tough, water-resistant plant, the leaves of which retain their properties of suppleness, strength and water-resistance many years after they have been removed from the parent plant.

LLAN

Population: 2.1 Million (99% Human/1% Half-Elven and Other)

Climate: Cold to temperate.

Terrain: Heavily forested.

Typical wildlife: Brown bear, wolf, badger, wild boar, rabbit.

Principal exports: Timber, wheat, cloth, copper, tin, glassware.

Principal imports: Fruit, spices, oil, beef, iron, taak

Government: Feudal Kingdom (although the Guilds really control power).

Capitol: Quorull.

Current Leader: King Harad.

Major Religions: Ormocea (nobles), Phelltar (urban commoners), Faar (rural commoners).

Minor Religions: Theydori, Liraan and Tarimth (Elves).

Llan is a feudal kingdom with power invested with the monarch and a parliament consisting of fourteen nobles and three theologians. Or so it would seem. The real power in the country is invested with the merchant Guild Houses based in Quorull, the capitol. They have maintained financial and military control of Llan for over 500 years after they hired mercenaries to drive out the Sardellan forces, occupying the region after the collapse of the Empire.

The Guilds refused to disband the mercenaries after the Sardellans were defeated, citing the need for the maintenance of a standing army in lieu of troubled times. Likewise, they refused to hand over control of the mercenary companies to the King and the ruling houses. They allowed the nobility to continue the role of government but have continually 'leaned' on parliament to pass decrees and legislation that favors the status of the Guilds.

In modern Llan the merchant classes enjoy a status equal to that of the nobility and an uneasy resentment has been building up over the centuries between the Great Houses of Llan and the Guilds, occasionally boiling over into minor skirmishes between guards loyal to the nobility and the hired companies. There have been cases of individual Barons trying to lead rebellions against the power of the Guilds in their own holdings and unsuccessful attempts to incite the population to take up arms against the merchant classes. In all cases the Guilds have triumphed; being expert at keeping the nobles and commoners divided, using the lure of money and a better life to win both classes over.

Trade is of utmost importance in Llan and rival Guild Houses go to great lengths to create monopolies, sign secret deals and otherwise 'screw' each other over in deals with foreign trading companies. A common saying in Eldoria is, "Beware the warrior from Llan, for he fights with a quill as his sword and a ledger as his shield, yet he can defeat us all with one stroke". This best sums up the economic machinations of the Llanish Guilders who use gold coin to destroy their enemies.

Their maintenance of mercenary levies in times of peace and the regular payments to mercenary leaders in other countries has created contacts and networks for the Guilds amongst fighting companies throughout Eldoria. The Guilds can hire and mobilize a significant military force, in most Human lands, with frightening rapidity.

Llan is divided into three districts, the Lowlands of the east, where the majority of the larger towns and cities can be found; the Midlands, a frontier community that has only been gradually opened up over the past 200 years and the Highlands, claimed by barbarian tribes and some scattered communities of Half-Elves. The main export of the country is wood and wooden crafted products. Most of the logging for raw lumber is carried out in the Midlands, while craftsmen involved in the making of such saleable goods as chests, barrels, furniture and cut wood, are still based in the east, where there is easy access to ports.

A lot of traffic in raw materials goes back and forth between the Lowlands and Midlands and, instead of having to use their finances to open up roads across the vast wilderness of Llan, the Guilds tapped into the river and lake systems of the country, linking them with an extensive network of canals and locks. Most travel, requiring the transportation of a significant amount of goods, goes by way of barges pulled by oxen. People traveling light often use barge travel as well or follow the oxen trails beside the river-canal networks. There are a few other major roads and trails but, as you enter the Midlands, these become ill kept and are often the haunts of bandits. The Guilds provide protection to merchants using the barges, in the form of small garrisoned forts, located at regular points along the canals. They usually incorporate an inn, a smithy and a barracks of about a dozen mercenary soldiers, loyal to the Bargemasters' Guild.

Much of the new commercial activity now takes place in the many settlements that are built along the High Lakes in the 'frontier' Midlands. In ages past Llan claimed all the territory between Quorull and north of the Stonebrow Mountains as its own but, although they developed the Lowlands and built townships and roads there, the dense forest country of the west remained unexplored and untouched for centuries. It wasn't until 1833R that Sannath Kreen, the great explorer of the north, traversed the Midlands of Llan and crossed over the Stonebrow Mountains to reach the west coast.

It was no surprise that the Guildhall of Quorull, with a view to discovering what resources existed throughout the wilderness of Llan, sponsored the Kreen Expedition. On his return to Quorull, Kreen revealed that there was indeed a rich bounty to be harvested in the Midlands - from gold and iron deposits throughout the Stonebrow to enormous forests of Balasian Oaks, north of the High Lakes (Balasian Oak being a much sought after timber that was becoming rare in the east).

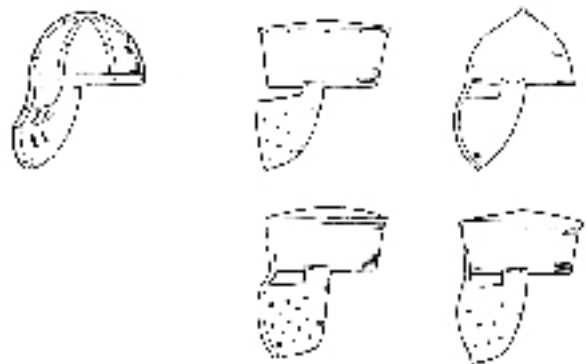
The Guilds immediately wanted to get their greedy hands on the resources but the problem they faced was that the land was unpopulated. What's more, the Bloodmane, a particularly savage barbarian nation to the north, ranged into the Midlands and would have to be bought off or driven off. The Guilds needed to develop the Midlands and shift a great deal of the population in that direction. Once they established thriving settlements, they could easily transport the riches they would reap back to

the east. They made some attempts to have the Midlands opened up for settlement and a small outpost called Kalid's Crossing did get established on Lake Plerrin. But the Guildhall's plans were not well thought out and after the Bloodmane massacred the outpost in 1838R, nobody really wanted to head out west. Other smaller communities did become established after that and many had a profitable existence, but the region remained largely undeveloped until recent times.

The Guildhall did not forget the rich discoveries of Sannath Kreen and thirty-five years ago they made a new, concerted effort to open up the Midlands of Llan. After much deliberation and negotiation with the Noble Houses, the Guildhall convinced three of the great families to relocate their power bases to the Midlands and establish fortified keeps along the High Lakes. It was the Houses with the least lands and influence, and thereby the least to lose, who made the trek west - House Kannigan, House Falcon and House Erswyd. In addition, any family who agreed to swear allegiance to one of these Noble Houses and travel west, would be granted freehold title to 5 acres of land. In concession to the Noble Houses who traveled to the Midlands, the Guildhall agreed to base a permanent mercenary company of 100 men in the region to offer protection.

In 2119R, the Guildhall outlined all this in its Proclamation of Migration, which was announced across all towns and villages of eastern Llan. The offer of land was only good till the year 2125R and this was successful in moving a sizable number of people to the interior and eventually onto the western coast of the country. The Human tide was so immense that the Guildhall repealed the Proclamation in 2122R, earlier than it intended, satisfied that the settlement of the Midlands had been fulfilled. There were at least twenty-six distinct communities existing between Lake Plerrin and Lake Liraan in 2122R, besides the fortified towns of Kannigan, Pinegrove and Jurgenstown. These communities became known as the Laketowns, using the natural watercourse as an easily accessible means of transporting produce and people between the west and the canal systems of the eastern Lowlands.

In three short years, the heart of Llan had been opened up. There were some initial problems with Bloodmane raids but after four years of major skirmishes (culminating in the Battle of Thunder Ridge) a treaty was signed recognizing the Bloodmane as owning all the territory of the Barren Plateau and giving them unmolested passage to enter the Midlands to forage for food in winter.





Master Guilder Tabiath Slyrren is the real power in modern day Llan. He is head of the Guild Council of Quorull

Minor raids of communities continued to be a problem in more outlying communities but the establishment of protective Roundhouses stemmed the loss of life. After Phellttarian missionaries were accepted into key Bloodmane tribes in 2124R, raids declined significantly.

The Midland frontier opens up all kinds of opportunities for adventuring bands. There is talk of the lost treasures of the Druids who once worshipped in the Stonebrow Mountains and it is said that there is a hidden kingdom of Elves somewhere in the Highlands of Llan. There are Guilders wanting to hire able men and women to protect their more precious shipments of gold and silver and political intrigue in the form of a separatist movement called the 'Acorn Rebels', whom are fighting for the Midlands to break away from the rest of Llan.

The capitol of Llan, Quorull, is a small city by comparison with other Llanish and foreign cities. The original Quorull was razed in the Great Civil War of 600R and it stood in ruins for centuries until the Guilds rebuilt it after they came to power in the 16th century R. As most industry had relocated to the southern towns of Slaarn and Tokia over the intervening years, Quorull remained a small metropolis where the Guilds based themselves; a place of wealth and splendor with magnificent architecture, exemplified by its great indoor theater, the Hall of Tiers.

The Guild established a palace for the King of Llan when it rebuilt Quorull but, as a slight to the Guilds, the royal family has never used it and instead set their home and court up at the small town of Talindar, twenty miles to the west. Some have commented that the royal family felt safer in a castle garrisoned by their own loyal troops, rather than in Quorull, as the Guilds maintain a number of mercenary companies stationed close to the city. The King's constable and a small garrison of royal knights occupy Quorull Keep on behalf of the current monarch, King Harad; the King using the palace on his infrequent visits to meet with the Guild Council.

The city itself houses the residences of the wealthy, the premises of the merchant traders who carry out business with them, and the inns, theaters and courtesan houses that they

purvey. The commoners tend to dwell in villages outside the city walls and they are largely employed in the Guild shops and on the docks, which see a considerable amount of trade with the city state of Tempest, the mercantile giant to its east.

Nohlera, north of Quorull was the main port for Llan after Sardell seized Darringmoor during its time of expansion. Nohlera has a greater capacity to handle and warehouse cargo and, once trade negotiations are concluded in Quorull, foreign captains are given documentation allowing them to unload the greater part of their cargoes in Nohlera. Quorull is mainly the place where deals are done and taxes and levies paid.

Slaarn is by far the biggest city in Llan, with a population of 60,000. It is heavily fortified and has seen many sieges and battles; lying close to some of the main passes to the realms of the south. It was considered to be the capitol after Quorull was razed and, even when Quorull was rebuilt, many still thought of Slaarn as the capitol, especially some of the Great Houses who had no love for the Guilds. It is rumored that the Barons of Slaarn have been having secret meetings with allies in Sard, to raise an army to secure the south of Llan and declare Slaarn and the regions around it as an independent state.

Slaarn produces fine quality linen that finds its way to markets as distant as Hrygashan. The city itself is drab and 'functional' except for a large bronze rendering of the Goddess Liraan that dominates the city square. To the north of Slaarn are extensive farmlands dedicated to grazing herds of sheep and goats. A copper mine is located 5 miles to the south at Drisyn Rock.

East of Slaarn is Tokia, a city half its size. Tokia is ruled by Barons with divided loyalties; some loyal to King Harad but most loyal to the gold of the Guilds. The city is a picturesque place built on a steep rise of land with a beautiful cathedral dedicated to Phelltar at its summit. It acts as a place of storage for the extensive grain lands to the east and is famous for the proliferation of its taverns and beer; having over thirty alehouses.

The Guilds of Llan do invest some of their profits back into society; education is provided to all who want it, via Guild sponsored workhouses. Here children are taught to read and write, while being required to spend three hours a day working at Guild-appointed tasks, more appropriate for nimble fingers. Adequate food and shelter is provided to the poor and outcast in return for their free labor. So, if you do not own a business, or are not employed in an official capacity by the Guilds, you can always visit a Guild Hospice and get a meal and a bed in return for work. While some other countries have labeled this a form of covert slavery, the Guildhall in Quorull cites these institutions as a bold program in social stability.

Cultural Notes

Llanish commoners are mistrustful of authority figures. This is because many common folk were slaughtered like cattle in the Great Civil War and grew resentful of the ineffectual nobility who were charged with the duty of providing the populace with some degree of protection. People eagerly embraced the Guilds when they gained power but soon found they had traded their feudal lords for an equally flawed ruling class. The Guilds' continued exploitation of the people through its workhouses

has brought about renewed despair. The old noble families, who have been waiting in the wings, are having renewed success in wooing the peasant workers of Llan to their cause again, promising them a better deal in a Llan restored to the full control of the monarchy.

Although Sardellan is the most widely spoken language in Llan, the nobility cling to old Khalasian tongue and insist that all formal civil and religious ceremonies use the ancient language.

Llan is one of the few realms that did not ban the worship of the Unholy Trinity following the Five Years of Doom. That is not to say that those religions are eagerly accepted; it's a matter of what the Guilds can get out of them. For instance, the cult of Yaarneya operates a small chapter in Quorull, in return for financial gain and the provision of its pleasurable resources to those who can afford to indulge in them.

Because of its efficient barge and canal network, the roads of Llan are usually in a poor condition and are the haunt of highwaymen and bandits.

Most people travel on the numerous small canal boats, stopping at regular waterside way-stations overnight. Llanish law forbids canal traffic from traveling at night, as frequent accidents in the past kept valuable commodities from reaching their destinations on time. The way-stations arose to provide basic food and comfort for the owners of the boats and, as travelers began using the canals on a regular basis these places grew in size, often encompassing a small garrison for local mercenaries.

Many way-stations have gained a reputation for their excellence in food, ale and entertainment. Establishments like "The Three Willows" and "The Green Water Way" are well known across Llan and are frequented by patrons of all classes.

LONDAR'S LAND

Population: 700,000 (99% Human, 1% Other).

Climate: Warm temperate.

Terrain: Fertile hilly countryside with rocky central highlands.

Typical wildlife: Wild boar, stoat, alligator, mountain lion, deer.

Principal exports: Glass, salted fish, marble, Diamondwood, thirrish.

Principal imports: Spices, hand-crafted goods, linen.

Government: Dictatorship.

Capitol: Maedori.

Current Leader: First Captain Harabard Londar.

Major Religions: Gurthor, Phelltar.

Minor Religions: Ormocea, Ulliah, Faar.

The territories that make up Londar's Land consist of a group of three islands located at the juncture of the Sea of Souls and the Sea of Five Winds; they are Southwind, Sharruck and Loakiish. The largest of the group is Southwind, where the capitol of Maedori is located. Maedori has a deep water port facility with a fortified harbor, potentially providing a potential berth for a great many merchant vessels. However, the sailors of Londar's Land care little for trade as most are privateers who prey upon the commercial traffic of the Sea of Souls.

Originally, Southwind Island was a monarchy, although its

territories did not originally include Sharruck Island or Loakiish. For successive generations, the royal family of Southwind had declined into self-absorbed indulgence, lavishing the treasury on palatial dwellings and managing to bring their kingdom into a state of bankruptcy by the late 1700s R. Things reached a head in 1802R when famine gripped many parts of the world and the people of Southwind rose up against King Osrith and his excesses. Civil war erupted and the only military that supported the King were the Royal Guard, who were too few in number to effectively deal with the revolt.

The King found himself under siege in his palace in Maedori, while the streets of Maedori were overrun with the peasant army. However, despite the fact that his treasury was empty, Osrith sent his sergeant-at-arms, a man called Erlis Gryre, across the Deepfin Channel to nearby Sharruck Island, to enlist aid and to raise a mercenary force, using the crown jewels of Southwind as collateral. The sergeant returned with three ships, captained by privateers and commanded by a charismatic buccaneer, Jersal Londar. The pirates landed in Maedori harbor and drove the ill-equipped peasants from the King's palace, taking over the grounds. Grateful King Osrith met with Londar and they drew up plans for the pirate force to break up the rabble and bring their leaders to justice.

Secretly, Osrith planned to hold a celebratory feast after Londar had dispersed the mob. Once the pirates were drunk and unprepared, his Royal Guard would take them by surprise and butcher them. Everything might have gone to plan, except Erlis Gyre was sick of his King's indulgences and tricks and informed Londar of the plot.

Instead of driving the peasants out of Maedori, Londar joined with them and laid open the gates of the palace. Luckily for King Osrith, he was alerted to the double-cross by a loyal captain and managed to escape overseas to Odressi. He unsuccessfully tried to raise an army to retake his kingdom but was unsuccessful; his ancestors continue to make claims on the throne today.

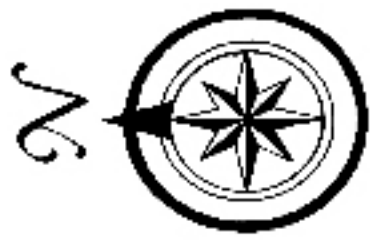
Although it seems clear that Londar's original intentions seemed to have been to seize the crown jewels, divide them between the captains and head off to sea, his plans hit a snag when it was revealed that the King had managed to steal away his heirlooms when he fled. Indeed the coffers of Southwind were bare, so Londar had to come up with some plan to save face and reward the other pirates who had joined him in the venture.

So it was that he came up with the bold idea to take control of the island, govern it and pay his shipmates with gold earned through taxation. There were few who opposed the idea and Londar had become the hero of the revolution in the eyes of the local population.

Thus the position of First Captain was made and the lineage of Londar established on Southwind and later over Sharruck and Loakiish. Londar proved to be a consummate governor and diplomat and managed to reverse the economic hardships that had engulfed Southwind, in a very short span of time.

Little has changed over the physical appearance of Maedori since the time of the rebellion, except for an increase in the strength of fortifications about the harbor, to deter any naval attacks on the privateer city, from the ships of 'law-abiding' nations.

Florida



Sea of Five Winds



Lookish



Diamondwood

Waters of Loncar

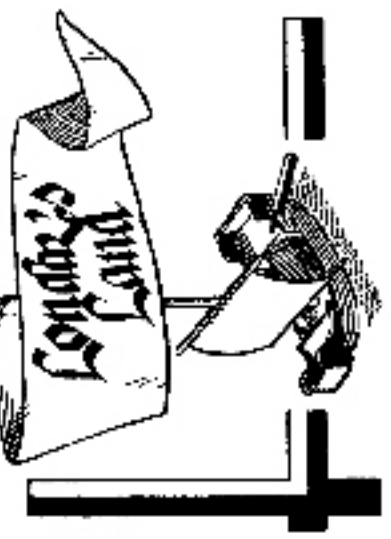


Shurrucke Island

Deepfin Channel

Southwind Isle

Julfans Spire



Loncar's Land



Bay of Coops

The seaward walls of Maedori contain fixed emplacements for scores of catapults, capable of hurling flammable projectiles at approaching vessels. The harbor was provided with a grand gate that allows a single large ship to pass at any one time. The gate can also be closed off to traffic by means of a submerged portcullis, raised by mechanisms contained within two towers that flank it.

Maedori is confined by a large swampland to the immediate south and the Pyre River, to the north. The Pyre is a shallow, fast-flowing river that falls through a number of steep rises in land, which culminate in the Dutminn Mountains. Most of the farmlands of Southwind are situated in the green valleys either side of the Pyre and the Dutminn Mountains.

The region is home to some scattered Goblinynd tribes, who have camps high in the ranges and have been known to raid the farmlands during colder winters. Their numbers are such that they are not considered a threat and most farms are able to defend themselves against isolated attacks.

The lower reaches of the mountains are the site of a number of salt and tin mines. The most famous of these mines is called Glass, which makes glass (of course). Its craftsmen are renown for a product of superior quality, even rivaling the delicate glassware of Elkia. Merchants in Maedori have found markets for Londarian Glass across the Sea of Souls and particularly amongst the temples of Odressi.

West of the Dutminn Mountains there are heavily forested lands that are sacred to the Diamond Druids, a matriarchal society, who have maintained the Diamondwood groves over the centuries. Diamondwood grows solely on Southwind and is the hardest known material on Enshar. The Diamond Druids safeguard the giant Diamondwood trees and negotiate the limited culling of their timber with the First Captain of Londar.



Archdruid Anelle Disander, current matriarch of the Diamond Sisterhood

The Druids (alone) know the secrets of making the wood temporarily malleable so that it can be worked by their craftspeople and shaped into items such as armor, goblets and jewelry. The First Captain of Maedori profits through such sales of Diamondwood and the Druids receive significant compensation and the protection of the pirate-lord, who ensures that the laws

of Londar forbid its citizens to enter the western forests.

To the northeast of Southwind is the small volcanic island of Loakiish, which is largely populated by a tribal community called the Hlajeeri. They maintain a great deal of independence from the authorities in Maedori and worship some primitive aspect of Daugron. The First Captain landed a force on Loakiish in 1805R and, after a brief campaign to subjugate the Hlajeeri proved too costly and ineffective, he made peace with their leaders and established a fortified trading post. This allowed him to barter for a regular supply of thirrish, a rare and valuable fire retardant that grows all over Loakiish. Londar exported this to Odressi and Elkia and utilized it domestically; ensuring that 'fire-breaks' were made in Maedori prior to the March of Fire, by painting major areas of the city with the bright blue mixture.

Relations with the Hlajeeri have always been inconstant, depending upon the competency of the local Londarian official and the mood of the Hlajeeri chieftains. Past disputes have led to the bloodshed on both sides. Loakiish is largely mountainous and densely forested. Its most dangerous form of wildlife is the Mottled Puma, a great cat that is found throughout the islands of the Sea of Souls. It is also home to the Crested Firetail, a form of peacock with brilliant scarlet plumage.

Sharruck Island, to the west of Southwind, is slightly smaller in size than the latter and was acquired in a deal by Londar in 1803R. It is said that the First Captain bought the island for the price of 2000 gold trades and his flagship, "The Silver Flame". Ownership of Sharruck Island had changed hands several times after the collapse of Sardell and the incumbent ruler, at the time that seized Maedori, was all too happy to remove himself oversea to dwell in Zaramoor.

Sharruck Island provides additional food and grain for Maedori, with farmlands being established throughout the fertile interior basin, north of the capitol of Abeltorn. This is a small, but beautiful town. In 2095R surveyors building a road from the capitol to the west coast discovered abundant marble deposits around Tulmir's Spire. Thus, marble became a valuable export commodity for Londar's Land, especially in the respite following the Five Years Doom, when an extensive period of reconstruction took place in many of Eldoria's major cities and towns. As a result, Abeltorn, the main place where trade in marble took place, was itself lavishly decorated with Tulmir marble.

Although most of the political activity in Londar's Land comes out of Maedori, the governorship of Sharruck Island, by a governor who uses the title of the 'First Mate', also holds some prestige. Besides the Captain and Mate, there are ten other officials, mostly powerful privateers, who form the governing council and sit upon the Captain's Table in Maedori. The Table is a vehicle to deliver 'suggestions' and complaints to the First Captain, who is the absolute ruler of Londar's Land.

It must be remembered that the islands of Londar were seized by pirates and made into a sanctuary for any privateer who would swear an oath of allegiance to Jersal's Creed. This was a complex charter that established a code of 'ethics' to any captain who wished to avail themselves of a safe harbor in Maedori. Those taking the oath basically swore to do no harm to the crew and passengers of any ships that they assailed and that

they would leave such ships intact and seaworthy. It also allowed for the safe capture and ransom of members of noble families and included a provision whereby the pirates would only remove half of any cargo that they intercepted on the high seas.

The Sea of Souls had been plagued by bloodthirsty pirates since the time of the Y'naari-Khan. During the friction between the Sardellan and Y'siran Empires, both sides had encouraged privateers to prey upon shipping in the region. The tyrannical cabal known as the Society of the Seahawks emerged after the fall of Sardell and continued to harry ships in the Sea of Souls, operating from hidden coves in the hundreds of uncharted islands.

The merchants of the northern cities were tired of having valuable cargo vessels sent to the bottom of the sea and losing their shipments. While, on one hand, they deplored the existence of a realm that harbored pirates, they recognized that the problem was not going to vanish overnight and that Jersal's Creed and the ruling faction in Londar's Land was a positive move in reducing the cost to merchant traffic in the Sea of Souls. As a result, while various individual's continue to speak out about the 'terrible pirates of Londar's Land', nobody has had resolve enough to put together a sizable force with which to launch an invasion of Maedori

Maedori remains a strange city; a colorful place, where all kinds of people can be found. Rogues and pirates rub shoulders with the wealthy, diplomats negotiate for the release of hostages and captain's meet with spies and plot the interception of ships or the purchase of maps that will lead them to lost treasures throughout the Sea of Souls. Peace is kept by Jersal's Creed and dueling is the common form of settling personal disputes. There are several captains and crews who frequent Maedori and have been traditionally at odds with each other for generations. They are required to drink at specific inns and taverns and to keep their hostilities against each other confined to the open sea.

Cultural Notes

Ships that operate under Jersal's Creed display the insignia of the 'Shark's Maw', a stylized representation of a white circle with triangular points on the inside. This is a message to merchant traffic that they can surrender in safety to the pirate vessel and their lives and ship will be spared.

The vessels also tend to be a bright blue in color, as the abundance of thirrish from Loakiish, allows the crews the luxury of painting their decks and hull with the fire-retardant.

Each year, on the 1st Day of the March of Earth, a great boat race is held, circumnavigating the islands of Londar. It is called Jersal's Chase and a valuable drinking vessel, wrought of gem-encrusted Diamondwood is awarded to the winner.

Crewmen of vessels loyal to Jersal's Creed bear a tattoo of the Sharks Maw upon their left forearm. They display the insignia of their captain upon their right forearm. If a crewman signs on with a new captain, a new tattoo is placed on the right arm, above the tattoo of the prior captain who was served. Identification and lineage of service is an important talking point between crewmen in the many drinking holes of Maedori.

The Deepfin Channel, lying between Southwind and Sharruck Island, is a place of strange denizens if the tales in local taverns are to be believed. Ships often go missing in its

foggy waters, their disappearance being blamed on rumors of enormous octopi that dwell in the depths. Other stories tell of a race of single-eyed humanoids said to kidnap Humans and take them to their city, deep below the waters.

MARITAAN

Population: 3.2 Million (99% Human/1% Other)

Climate: Arid

Terrain: Stony desert with fertile river valleys.

Typical wildlife: Cheetah, bison, jackal, pegasus.

Principal exports: Gold, precious stones, leather, salt, pickled kyaza.

Principal imports: Timber, grain, fruit, base metals

Government: Kingdom with power vested in the Thraade Council.

Capitol: Sinkhole Deep

Current Leader: King Gawthrain IV

Major Religions: Trezkillian

Minor Religions: Ormocea, Yaarneya

The original inhabitants of Maritaan were the Y'naari, a sea-faring race from the eastern oceans who settled the northeastern Outlands of Maritaan during the Darktime. They pillaged the emerging cultures of the Sea of Souls, taking slaves as well as valuables and founded a fabulous wealthy city called Tai-Kaiyan.

A great ruling dynasty (the Kahns) established their throne at Tai-Kaiyan and their military might (at the time) was such, that they may very well have gone on to expand and dominate all of Eldoria. However, the Y'naari-Kahn embraced the religion of Yaarneya around 250R and the capitol fell into a long period of decadence. As social cohesion began to fall apart, many Y'naari commoners left the lands of the Tai-Kayan and settled the arid wastelands of central Maritaan. Here they discovered an ancient abandoned city, built into the cliff-walls of a vast sinkhole.

They explored most of its upper levels, wondering who made this extensive complex and eventually came to dwell in its upper galleries. The people who settled this marvelous city called it Sinkhole Deep and named themselves the Y'naari-Su. They believed the city was once a dwelling place of the Gods themselves. It provided them with abodes that were protected against the extremes of heat in summer, as well as the sandstorms that sometimes came out of the west in the March of Air.

The Y'naari-Su only settled the upper galleries of Sinkhole Deep, such was its size and they established a separate economic power base from old Tai-Kayan, although they still acknowledged the authority of the Kahns; hoping distance would deflect the attention of their overlords from interfering in their affairs.

The Y'naari-Su did manage to live on without much contact with the decadent capitol; they made sure taxes and tribute were sent to the Kahns when they demanded it but otherwise kept to themselves. They resented their rulers but did not dare go against them. This political situation resulted in the Sardellan expeditionary forces meeting only token resistance from the Y'naari when they landed a legion on Maritaan's shores in 1235R.

The Y'naari-Su of Sinkhole Deep were the first to have



The spectacular city of Sinkhole Deep, built around and inside an ancient caldera. Much of the older city, in the depths of the sinkhole was built in the First Age but was later abandoned

contact with the Sardellans and quickly formed an alliance with the invaders, telling them of Tai-Kayan and what they knew of its military disposition. The Sardellans, went on to defeat the Y'naari-Kahn, putting an end to the ancient dynasty and sacking the opulent city of Tai-Kayan. They ousted the cult of Yaarneya during the process, brutally executing all the priests and priestesses they came across.

When the Empire collapsed, most Sardellan lords and their followers who were active in Maritaan chose to remain there. A line of Kings was established to rule in Sinkhole Deep, after a brief civil war in 1785R.

Lord Dawyn Carashal married the Y'naari-Su princess, Kaishaan, unifying the Sardellan and Maritaani cultures.

The royal family still remains as the hereditary line but the monarch in modern Maritaan is largely a figurehead, representing the joining of its people. Government of the realm is left to the Thraade, an old Y'naari term meaning a circle of wise men. The Thraade consists of a thirty-two-member council, appointed every six years. When the existing Thraade disbands, each member nominates their replacement on the next council. All Maritaani people can object to any nomination by declaring their opposition to their district magistrate. If at least 10,000 people object to a nominee, a new candidate is put forward by the King.

Sinkhole Deep is the center of most economic and political activity in Maritaan. It is an exotic location, being a city built around and inside a massive desert sinkhole that plunges into the red rocks for approximately a quarter of a mile. The mercantile section of the city is arrayed mainly on the surface in single-story adobe structures.

It is surrounded by protective walls, set with squat, square guard towers, typical of classic Sardellan keeps and fortifications

of the 1400s R. Most of the common population, dwell here as well, however the middle classes and nobility prefer dwelling in the countless ancient chambers that honeycomb the vertical descent of the sinkhole. This underground complex was built on a vast scale and the decorative motifs and architectural techniques used are indicative of the lost Theledai. There is plenty of room throughout the Theledai city (only about 40% of its known halls are currently in use). The areas close to the surface and ranging around the interior rim are the most inhabited places. They provide majestic views of the great chasm of the sinkhole and have the luxury of natural lighting.

The lower levels remain uninhabited, mainly as a result of Y'naari tales of spirits and fey creatures that haunt the depths of Sinkhole Deep. When the Y'naari-Su first occupied Sinkhole Deep they discovered a great deal of valuables and numerous curious magical artifacts throughout its network of rooms. These were removed but tales of fabulous treasures hidden away in lost crypts still abound.

Numerous expeditions into the uncharted bowels of the Deep during the 19th century R failed to find anything and after two adventuring groups vanished without trace, the authorities of the city sealed the six known entries into the lower levels and forbade any further exploration of the lower galleries. Of course, the legends of the treasures to be found in Sinkhole Deep continue to attract fortune seekers to this very day.

Sinkhole Deep is surrounded by a dry wasteland, where little grows except thorny bushes. However these deserts are known for their great beauty and have moved many bards, who have visited them, to write songs and poems describing the vivid colors of the sands that range from a dark red around the Deep to a wonderful purple hue in the south, across the Plains of Summer. It is in this region that the last of the pegasi are

said to live; an Elkian wine merchant having been the last living person claiming to have seen one of the fabulous winged horses in 2133R. The Y'naari-Su maintain that the pegasi are divine creatures and should not be interfered with in any way.

While most trade revolves around Sinkhole Deep, Maritaan's main food producing areas are the fertile lands of the Iopae and Yenedain river valleys. Here Maritaani farmers supply sufficient grain and meat for the local population's requirements but not of a quantity or quality to export. Maritaan's wealth comes predominantly from trade in precious metals and stones. The purity of gold from mines in the Gurthrock Mountains is sought after by artisans in the west and by alchemists and artificers who require the highest quality materials in their work. Sapphires and emeralds are mined at Carashal's Retreat, in the south of Maritaan and a thriving leather-working industry has also emerged there, using the hides of domesticated jurpahs as their main resource.

For three centuries after the Kings of Sinkhole Deep came to power, most merchants trading in the markets of Maritaan landed their cargoes at New Zaramoor, a port city to the north, then organized an overland caravan to Sinkhole Deep, where the more profitable deals were struck. However, the monarchy on the small island of Tritonia, off the coast of Maritaan was deposed in 2148R, by a mysterious figure reputed to be an adept in sorcery. Several merchant vessels on route to New Zaramoor were boarded by Tritonian ships in late 2149R and their cargoes seized by the authority of their new ruler. The word has spread throughout the major ports of Eldoria that the waters surrounding New Zaramoor are unsafe and foreign captains are now using Carashal's Retreat to berth their vessels.

The current Maritaani regime is angry at the audacity of the Tritonians but does not know enough about their enigmatic leader and the make-up of his military forces to act as yet. At this stage, diplomats (and spies) have been dispatched to pay 'homage' to the new regime. The only other political tensions that occupy the King and Thraade Council in 2150R, have been created by some of the noble families who are descended from the Y'naari-Kahn and are suspected of continuing to secretly promote the worship of Yaarneya in the country. It is rumored that an organized cult is actively corrupting nobles to their cause.

Cultural Notes

Most wealthy Maritaani people wear clothing only in shades of black, white and gray. Long sleeved tunics with stiff, high collars are favored, combined with britches and high boots. Women wear the same clothing as men. This conservative style of uniform dress seems to have stemmed from the rejection of the extravagant lifestyles of the old kingdom of the Y'naari-Kahn. Traditionalists, who still cling to the original culture of the Kahn Dynasty, wear bright colors with ostentatious displays of jewelry. Such gaudy styles are frowned upon in polite society.

Maritaani architecture often features triangular designs, including columns, towers and the general layout of structures.

In the lower levels of Sinkhole Deep even the halls and rooms are triangular in shape. Pegasi, the magnificent flying steeds, are protected by the King's authority. Although nobody of repute has seen one of these legendary beasts in over 700 years, it is believed that a small herd still dwells in the Plains of

Summer, amidst the purple sands. The preserved skeleton of the last captive Pegasus is numbered amongst the treasures of the King, along with three intact Pegasi eggs.



The traditional dress-style of the Maritaani is conservative and formal with clothing often being uniform-like in appearance. Depicted above is a nobleman wearing a 'ma-chai', a three cornered head-dress denoting his rank

Most of the expeditionary force of Sardellans that remained in Maritaan were male and married Y'naari women. The dominant racial features in Sinkhole Deep are a blend of Asian and Caucasian characteristics.

The Y'naari-Su who first unlocked the secrets of Sinkhole Deep learned a great deal of the alchemical and engineering sciences of those who once occupied the city. The Maritaani nation is therefore more advanced in its understanding of these concepts than other cultures in Eldoria.

NORTHLAND

Population: 4 Million (70% Human/25% Halfling and 5% Other).

Climate: Cold to temperate.

Terrain: Pastoral.

Typical wildlife: Deer, wolf, badger, fox, weasel, rabbit.

Principal exports: Wheat, corn, ale, brandy, mutton, wool.

Principal imports: Base metals, taak, spices, silk, salt, oil.

Government: Hereditary monarchy and parliament.

Capitol: Eastport.

Current Leader: Queen Rose (steward).

Major Religions: Faar, Ahridaar and Phelltar.

Minor Religions: Ormocea, Yhancia and Xullia.

Northland is the sleepy backwater of the world, a tranquil agrarian society that has been sheltered from the wars that



Eldoria



have affected the rest of Eldoria. This, at first, appears quite extraordinary when you consider Northland shares a border with the Goblinskynd nation of Ahr-Ganiz. It is a testament to the resourceful nature of its people that the country has remained largely unmolested by their savage neighbors for over 700 years.

During the 14th century R, Northland suffered a number of violent attacks by raiding parties from Ahr-Ganiz. Although they tried to fortify their communities against further hostilities, the inhabitants of southern Northland (mainly Humans) were unskilled in matters of warfare and knew that they had little real chance of combating the threat from the various clans and subspecies of the Goblinskynd, creatures intent on burning pastures and stealing cattle and sheep.

However the more wily observers amongst the beleaguered communities noted that there was no cohesion between these Goblinskynd raiding parties and that they often attacked each other to steal booty, fighting to the death. In particular, it was reported that the fearsome lizard-folk of the Ruby Ranges did not join the other Goblinskynd in their attacks northward; instead they attacked the Goblinskynd heading back south again, stripping them of their booty.



Good Queen Rose, current monarch of the peace-loving Northlanders

In 1311R, in an act of calculated desperation, the people of the south assembled a band of volunteers to undertake a cattle drive into the Ruby Ranges, the volcanic area where the reptilian tribes, known as the Hlissshicaari (Lizardmen) dwelled. Here they offered up the cattle to the Hlissshicaari and, over a number of successive years, opened up a dialogue with them.

Eventually they negotiated the Treaty of the Blue Feather, whereby the Lizardmen agreed to defend Northland from incursions by other Goblinskynd tribes. In return, the Lizardmen received an annual tribute of cattle. The Treaty has been honored ever since and, although there has been the odd raid that has managed to bypass the Hlissshicaari scouting parties, Northland has remained free of total war with the Goblinskynd.

Eastport is the capitol of Northland, a small town in comparison with the cities of the west. It appears as a large sprawling village built around two central hills, by the sea. The

royal palace, called the Castle of the Rising Sun, stands upon the taller of these hills. It is a picturesque keep, built for appearance rather than defense. On the smaller of the two hills stands the Parliament Hall, a large wattle and daub structure with a high peaked thatch roof, resembling a grandiose barn.

The land immediately surrounding Eastport is an idyllic place of lush green fields divided into properties by copes of trees, hedgerows and low stone walls. A great deal of mixed vegetable farming goes on here, supplying the needs of the nearby town. South of the Foamflow River, the land is quite flat and devoted to grain growing, Orchards and the raising of sheep and cattle. West of Eastport, in the heart of Northland, the countryside becomes quite hilly and wooded.

The town of Greenwood is the main settlement in this region. Its folk raise cattle and have the responsibility of supplying cattle to the Hlissshicaari. It is quite common to see Lizardmen warriors in and around Greenwood, during spring and summer, trading goods and arranging for the movement of the cattle tribute. The climate is too cold for them from mid-autumn through the winter and they retire to warmer surrounds, in the volcanic heartland of the Ruby Ranges.

Potterville, on the shores of the Greater Inner Sea, is the main trading town with foreign merchants of the Greater Inner Sea. In 1401R, Sardellan forces landed at Potterville after being invited by King Olondorth and established the large fortress that overlooks the main town. This now functions as a great grain repository and merchants from all over the Greater Inner Sea and from Y'sira bargain for the best prices from the annual wheat and corn harvests.

The land along the Iriss River is particularly good for fruit Orchards and a good crop of apples, pears, strawberries and melons are harvested late in the March of Fire. A number of distilleries located in tranquil backwaters of the Iriss produce an excellent selection of fruit brandies that are a favorite of the K'lud of Y'sira and his royal household. Potterville and the Iriss River Valley are populated by an even mix of Humans and Halflings.



The Halfling folk of Northland are renowned distillers (and drinkers) of a wide selection of fruit brandies

The largest town in the south is Brackendor, a small community that is surrounded by a tall wooden palisade and a moat. It is the population centre that bore the brunt of most of the old attacks by Goblinskynd in days gone by and the people remain wary of the mountains to the east. A band of Lizardmen actually dwells among the people of Brackendor, under the auspices of the Treaty of the Blue Feather, ready to actively defend the region against attack by Goblinskynd. The folk of Brackendor have grown quite used to having the Lizardmen around and, although they have always remained somewhat nervous around their protectors, they still welcome their presence.

Last year, however, the Lizardmen of Brackendor departed, having to lend their spears to their allied tribes in the mountains. This was due to a power struggle going on amongst the Hlisschaari tribes.

The people of Brackendor have always been mindful of the danger in the east and outlying farmsteads in the Shadow Dales have reported sighting large movements of Goblinskynd moving northward toward the Ruby Ranges. Many farmers have abandoned their holdings to seek refuge in Brackendor, fearful that a major raid by Goblinskynd will soon hit the south.



The upper structure of a Halfling Hearthhome resembles a windmill. This conceals the main structure that is underground. The wind-vanes power various mechanisms inside the dwelling.

The most northern settlement in Northland is that of

Hearthvale Home, a predominantly Halfling community nestled in the hilly woodland region known as Galliad's Downs. The folk of Hearthvale trade in fur and have a preoccupation with the Towers of Ice, a distant glacial mountain range, about which many tales are told about the inn fireplace. Legend has it that the old Khalasian Kingdoms originated here and that there are fabulous treasure troves to be found amongst lost ruins hidden in vast ice chambers. Many treasure hunters (including three expeditions commissioned by the Northland monarchy) have made the hazardous trek to the Towers of Ice and very few have returned. Those that survived the ordeal were close-mouthed about their experiences.

Cultural Notes

Halflings live in communal 'burrows' called Hearthhomes. They are wide vertical shafts sunk into the ground, with rooms radiating from a central staircase. The uppermost level, which shows above ground, is conical in shape and usually features a chimney and windmill structure (the windmill being used to operate various mechanisms and water pumps). Entry is via a door set into the side of the stone structure cap, which also usually has a window and a small balcony built onto it.

Over seventy percent of the population (Human and Halfling) are vegetarian or only eat poultry and fish. This trend evolved out of the need to breed most of Northland's beef cattle for the Four Feather's tribute, making beef a rare and expensive commodity.

Wheat and corn are the main exports of Northland and there are a number of large granaries located in the west, throughout the Iriss River valley. Most trade takes place in the busy merchant town of Potterville, where the Guild of Gold has a representative.

Despite their rustic overtones, Northland farmers and merchants (especially Halflings) are shrewd bargainers and love the art of negotiation, often taking an entire day to come to an agreed price and making sure the client pays for all meals and drinks during the process.

Halflings love the snow and in winter they make use of small sleighs pulled by working dogs called kalshees. A typical kalshee stands 3' high at the shoulder and has a thick layer of silver fur. They have a unique, friendly disposition toward Halflings and can be easily tamed and trained by the diminutive folk. However, they treat all other humanoids with restrained caution, at best.

Traditionally, the royal family of Northland has been from Halfling stock and the Parliament of Northland has been dominated by a majority of Human representatives. However, the current Queen of Northland is Human.

Northland law allows for the head of parliament to ascend to the throne in the event that a monarch abdicates or dies and the Halfling heir is not of age to be crowned. In 2149R King Ollin II abdicated due to ill-health. Rose Balorna was the Chief Minister at the time and became the 'Steward Queen', to rule until the Ollin's son, Dralldith, is of age.

The monarch retains the right to approve or disapprove all bills and laws, proposed by the parliament. As part of the process, the monarch may request amendments to such laws and send them back to the Parliament for revision. This can only be done

three times on a single law; otherwise it triggers a parliamentary election and the land is ruled by an interim council, made up of the heads of the Merchant Guilds and Clergy. Parliament has the right to remove the ruling family of Northland by a vote of two-thirds majority of its members.

ODRESSI (A CITY-STATE)

Population: 90,000 (98% Human/2%Other).

Climate: Temperate.

Terrain: Urban.

Typical wildlife: Rats, domesticated pets.

Principal exports: Religious dogma, religious icons.

Principal imports: Everything.

Government: Hereditary Citylord and council that rules in conjunction with the Congress of Odressi (an authority that administers religious affairs).

Capitol: Odressi.

Current Leader: Citylord Narris Larnann.

Major Religions: All, except the churches of the Unholy Trinity (banned in 2105R).

Odressi was founded in 1002R and is a unique city, unlike any other Human center, being created as a sanctuary for all religions, in order to preserve the scriptures and relics of the Pantheon against the ravages of war. It is the great religious hub of Eldoria, a city that most people make a pilgrimage to some time in their life.

Situated on the western coast of the Holy Isle (known as Baladara Island prior to 1002R) Odressi is a place of opulence and power, its buildings meant to impress and inspire the unceasing flow of pilgrims who visit this most holy of places. The city is a showpiece, containing churches and their attendant seminaries, extensive government buildings, hostels and lodging-houses and a myriad collection of shops and businesses that support (and take advantage of) the thousands of travelers who pass through Odressi daily.

The city was the brainchild of Bannin Ortolzo, who was the Lord of Baladara Island during the latter part of the 11th century R. He was renowned as being a well-educated nobleman and a person of deep religious convictions. Ortolzo was also a supporter of the Pantheist Order, a popular religious following amongst intellectuals of the time that promoted the concept of a single fully-united church, encompassing the theology of all twenty-seven deities listed in the Books of Law. Ortolzo worked hard to convince the heads of the dominant religions that had emerged after the Redemption to put aside their differences and join in the creation of a single organization. He offered them land and gold to found a new 'global' church in Baladara and even sponsored a great theological conference in his homeland to try and get the divergent groups talking to each other.

As it turned out, the clerics attending the Baladaran Convocation (as it was called) failed to find common ground but Ortolzo, not to be deterred, managed to sell them on the concept of a religious sanctuary, where all churches would be subject to a common set of laws, protecting them from persecution and attack from each other and from the threat of warfare. Lord Ortolzo figured that, if he could get all the religions to at least co-exist together in the one spot, the Pantheists would be a step closer to their goals. So it was that the Treaty of Odressi was

agreed to and signed (in the first instance) by the churches of the Holy Trinity, Faar, Trezkillian and Gurthor.

Finance for the building of Odressi came principally from Baladara and Sardell, with a treasury being put aside to assist in the construction of individual temples. The Churches that were the original signatories to the Treaty formed a religious Congress that met regularly to sort out any difficulties and to review solicitations to establish new temples from other established Churches and other new emerging religious orders. The Congress operated under a charter developed in conjunction with the Pantheists. Those seeking to join the Treaty had to prove that their following was representative of the majority of existing followers of their chosen faith and that they were in possession of the definitive scriptures and historical icons relating to the religion.

A tithe of 5,000 gold trades was also set that had to be paid by any group wishing to become part of the Treaty. This was to deter opportunists from laying false claims that they were the true followers of an aspiring faith. Any Church wishing to establish its credentials had to have sufficient support to pay the tithe. Between 1100R and 1300R, the Congress was inundated with hundreds of petitions from rival factions vying for political control of regions across Eldoria. They were supported by nobles who stood to gain from an affiliation with various Churches and these nobles were more than happy to foot the bill for them. Having your faction recognized by the Congress of Odressi became a means of receiving 'endorsement' as the true church amongst competing orders.

As a result, the Congress was faced with many successive years of deliberating over which group to accept as being representative of many of the smaller fringe religions. As each claimant had to put forward an irretrievable fee to establish their 'version' of a religion, the authorities amassed a vast fortune in a short space of time. This was used to enrich the architecture of the city.

Lord Ortolzo furnished a standing army to provide protection to Odressi and this was based in Erinost, a port to the north. Also located here were most of the commercial businesses and industries that supported the infrastructure of Odressi. It was consciously decided from the beginning that Odressi should be a 'shining example' to all mortal Saahn and that none of the mundane establishments (such as mills, slaughterhouses, dockyards and warehouses) common in other cities would be permitted to exist in Odressi.

Of course, this meant that day-to-day goods sold in the city had to be freighted overland from Erinost, making them more expensive. But this suited the hierarchy who wished to control the number of pilgrims who began to flock to Odressi from the beginning of the 13th century R; if you made it too expensive, the riff-raff wouldn't stay too long!

Lord Ortolzo died in 1018R and with his passing the Pantheist Movement went into decline. His heirs continued in the role of secular overseers to Odressi, under the title of Warden of the Holy Isle, though they had no real power over the city and its affairs. They simply maintained an economic interest in what Ortolzo had created and ensured the upkeep of a defensive fighting force based in Erinost, to ensure their mandate over

Odressi.

During the 1400's R some of the more belligerent cults managed to gain the right to build temples in the city and, as a result, a number of incidents occurred between opposed religions that almost led to a blood-bath on the streets. Lord Malizar, who was Warden at the time, was in a quandary as to the legalities of intervening in a series of pitched battles between acolytes of various temples, which occurred on an almost daily basis. The purpose of the military forces based in Erinost was to defend the clerics of Odressi from an external threat, not from each other!

When things came to a head, Malizar eventually did commit troops onto the streets of Odressi to maintain the peace. But enforcing law and order was a far more difficult task in Odressi. The military had to deal with some of the more senior and aggressive Seervaati in all of Eldoria, who had no hesitation in using Divine Power to attack the Warden's men or cover the retreat of their acolytes to their temples, where they claimed sanctuary. Malizar did manage to restore order and it became obvious that, with such a mix of volatile religions, there was a need to create and maintain a secular authority to keep order within Odressi – which was no easy feat, considering the more powerful Seervaati were present in the city temples.

The Conclave of Odressi called an emergency meeting once Malizar had control. The subsequent Congress was a heated affair with accusations and counter accusations being made between Churches. After lengthy debate it was agreed to invite Lord Malizar to take on the new position of Citylord of Odressi, creating a secular body to govern local affairs and keep the temples from waging war upon each other. In order to maintain an effective 'police force' in the city, he supplemented the regular soldiery with an elite guard drawn from the League of Light.

The League was a collective of people who had retreated from society and had dwelled on an island off the coast of the Holy Isle for centuries. They were followers of Phelltar but did not deify the Goddess; rather they believed that Phelltar and the other Uushai were enlightened beings, living in a state of grace that anyone could aspire to. Their particular beliefs were at odds with most of the other religions and they had deliberately lived in isolation to avoid persecution.

The Lords of Baladara had been on good terms with the League of Light for generations, respecting the intellectual and martial skills practiced by the order. Malizar invited the League to send a selection of its best fighters to Odressi to mediate in disputes between Churches. Their resilience to mind-based attacks and their ability to apprehend opponents without inflicting serious damage, made them an ideal choice for the task. However, not everyone shared this view.

The Ormocean Church and several other major religions opposed the introduction of the League on the grounds that they were affiliated with the Phelltar faith. This argument was taken up by many other religions in Odressi, despite the contradictory fact that these very same Churches would have disallowed the League the right to establish a temple in Odressi on the grounds they considered the order heretical and not true to the word of Phelltar. After lengthy debate a compromise was reached whereby it was agreed that the League would teach its martial

fighting style to recruits from the regular soldiery of the Citylord under the strict proviso that none of their doctrine would be passed on.

This new order was named the Monks of Light and they have remained as an effective neutral mediating force in Odressi to this day, despite drawing continued accusations of bias from various temples for actions they have taken over the centuries. They act under the authority of the Citylord and his advisory council in maintaining the peace according to the Treaty of Odressi. In doing so, they regularly carry out investigations of crimes by the clergy against other priests and their property, solely for religious reasons.

They arrest and incarcerate clerics under suspicion of committing such trespasses.

By 1453R, most religions had established a permanent presence in Odressi and the city lived up to its claim as a sanctuary for the Churches. When the Kinstrife divided the Sardellan Empire, several major religions, that still based their preeminent temple overseas, moved their senior priests, reliquaries and historical documents to Odressi. During the entire conflict, Odressi was only threatened by an external military force once. This occurred in 1653R, when a dispossessed governor of a Sardellan province landed his personal guard of 500 men-at-arms at Erinost and marched on Odressi. They engaged the Citylord's forces five miles south of Erinost and were defeated; the Citylord never having to consider the possibility of enlisting the support of magical aid from the Seervaati of the temples.

In 2100R, Erlwick Rhull, a petty official of Odressi attempted to usurp power in the city. He was able to solicit the aid of a charismatic but corrupt captain of the Citylord's Guard and, following the assassination of the Citylord, over half of the soldiers were won over and joined the rebellion. Rhull also gained the support of the cults of the House of Doom (although there is some debate about which cults did actually ally with him). Certainly, the immensely powerful Seervaati, Zyanther, of the Sadir Cult used his powers to terrible effect on behalf of Rhull's rebels. Many temples were caught by surprise and their senior clerics and Seervaati killed before they knew what happened. Some religions also seized the moment to carry out heinous acts upon their interminable enemies, using the chaos of the civil dispute to settle old scores.

Erlwick Rhull only managed to maintain control in Odressi for four spans before the Monks of Light and the remaining troops, loyal to the Citylord, combined with local Trezkillian and Siritar Orders to destroy Rhull's forces and restore order.

The real impact made by Rhull was not so obvious, but was widespread and far more damaging. News of what had occurred in Odressi traveled quickly, inspiring a multitude of political factions and religious groups across the Human realms to engage in similar activities and try to wrest power from established authorities. Anarchists figured, if someone can upset the balance of power in the holiest of Eldoria's cities, then why not try to do the same, elsewhere. This was the period called the Five Years Doom, lasting to mid 2105R, a particularly bloody part of recent history.

Sporadic uprisings and brief (but bloody) political skirmishes plagued most realms for several years. In the end,



The Highway of the Gods, a road that traverses the city of Odressi. The major religions all have temples here

the existing power structure remained intact and was quick to deal out retributive justice that dealt with factions that had rebelled. This great purge of society was just as violent as the uprisings themselves. The damage Odressi suffered during the Five Years Doom was repaired over the decade that followed under the direction of the master architect Vorne Traebor and, today, the city is (again) a wonderful testament to the grandeur (and indulgences) of Human society.

There have been some recent 'innovations' since the Five Years Doom. One of these is a new Pilgrim's Tax, designed as both an income generator and a further means of limiting the stay of foreigners to the city. Getting inside the gates of the city proper can be an arduous affair for base-born people and pilgrims, who often have to spend several days queuing outside Commoner's Gate, before being allowed inside. The thieves' guilds that operate in and around Odressi turn a trade by offering to mind a pilgrim's position in the queue at Commoner's Gate, in return for a negotiated fee. Street urchins and young guild apprentices usually take the place in line, leaving pilgrims to wait it out in the many hostels and lodging houses outside of the city.

If granted entrance, foreigners are issued with a tin token stamped with a date of expiry (usually five days from the date of issue). These 'pilgrim badges', as they are called, cost an exorbitant fee of 10 gold trades; pious common-folk use all their savings to make the journey to Odressi, once in their lifetime. It is most important to keep your token on you at all times and have it renewed before it expires, otherwise you face heavy fines and even imprisonment on the island penal colony of Pilgrim's End, south of the Holy Isle.

Another recent command of the Citylord has been to prohibit the entry into Odressi of 'undesirables'. In gaming terms this means anyone of neutral evil or chaotic evil alignments (although clerics of neutral evil alignments are grudgingly accepted). To achieve these ends, the city employs a number of petty Wizards who are graduates of the College of Arcane Science. They are specialized in the School of Divination and can identify alignments both through spells and by an intimate knowledge of body language. Called the Watchers, there is usually one of these young Wizards assigned to the guard detail of each main gate to Odressi.

These daunting restrictions to gaining entry to the city can

be overcome for the right price. The Thieves' Guild in the city smuggles people into Odressi via secret ways, rumored to be tunnels and sewers that run under the city walls. This passage into the city can be very dangerous. There are quite a number of evil religions that have practiced rites in the city over the centuries and quite a few still do. The thieves tell tales of terrible creatures they have come across, that dwell deep below Odressi; nightmare things that were summoned long ago, then freed to lurk in the dark, waiting to be called anew.



In a bid to reduce the stress on the city caused by pilgrimage, the Token System was introduced in 2108R. Tokens must be purchased and openly displayed by all visitors to Odressi

Cultural Notes

The Congress of Odressi (a great theological discussion) is held every four years, unless an extraordinary session is called by the Conclave (the representative council) or by petition to the Conclave by a minimum of ten of the established priesthoods. The Congress is used to introduce new Church policy, canon and law, common to all Churches, and listens to the grievances of its members. The Congress also votes on members to make up a new Conclave, which is made up of three clerics from different religions that are voted into office during the proceedings. Each cleric of the Conclave carries three votes (each) on all matters during the time that the Congress meets. The incumbents are replaced on the final day, a Congress usually scheduled to run over three days.

The Conclave rules all religious affairs and can make alterations to a limited range of theological policy. Essentially, they are there to implement the plans laid out during the Congress that voted them in. In 2150R, the Conclave is made up of representatives of the Churches of Ormocea, Theydori and Xullia.

The Monks of Light use no weapon other than small darts that can be thrown by hand or (for greater distance) fired from a blowgun. They are tipped with Ryll, a toxin that disrupts the aura of an individual, making it difficult to channel Tas energy. This is the main tool employed by the Monks when dealing with rogue Seervaati priests. Ryll is also given in daily doses to prisoners with Seervaati powers.

RHENFARA

Population: 4 Million (90% Human/5%Arimah Halfling/4%Gnome/1%Other).

Climate: Warm to hot.

Terrain: wide savannah and jungle.

Typical wildlife: lion, zebra, elephant, hyena, antelope.

Principal exports: Gold, precious gems, ivory, taak, animal hides, thirrish.

Principal imports: Parchment, manufactured goods.

Government: Figurehead monarch who rules with the Dead Tree Council (appointed representatives of territories).

Capitol: Hrygashan.

Current Leader: King Doi-Chapror.

Major Religions: Ulliah.

Minor Religions: Yaarneya, Liraan, Yhancia (Gnomes).

Rhenfara is one of the more exotic countries of Eldoria, with landscapes ranging from dense tropical jungles in the west, through to the wide grasslands of the Eritaani Plains. It also has some of the most beautiful coastlines of the Sea of Souls, with its white sand beaches and colorful coral reefs.

Rhenfara's people live in extended village communities and, at first glance, it would be easy to assume that they are a primitive culture, similar to the barbarian tribes of the Outlands. However, that is far from the truth; the Rhenfaran civilization is highly sophisticated and advanced. Their antiquated dwellings and technology are a reflection of their choice to live in harmony with the land, under the guidance of the druidical order of the Brotherhood of the Dead Tree. They fully understand advanced concepts such as stone-masonry, engineering and metallurgy but have no need for such things in their way of life. They have developed alternatives that have served them well for generations.

Hrygashan, the capitol, typifies this. It is a small community resembling a rambling village with one or two major buildings, all constructed from wood and mud-brick. It is built in and around a series of tall cliff-sides; the shell of a giant dead banyan tree standing atop the cliffs, dominating the site.

The capitol is located on the Bay of Coral, quite close to the looming bulk of the impenetrable Jungles of Po-Ka. It has a modest port facility that caters for local Rhenfaran skaffir traffic,

flat-bottomed sailing boats able to traverse the shallow reefs of the region.

The only people who dwell in Hrygashan are councilors, government dignitaries and their families. There are no monuments, bustling markets, fortifications and grandiose palaces; cityscapes typical of the northern realms - that is not the Rhenfaran way. Everything has a set function or purpose and should not be impeded with unnecessary resources.

The Rhenfaran economy is controlled by the Dead Tree Council (a collective of Druids) and the representatives of the thirty-three knaidaals; territories governed by clans. The resources of each knaidaal are measured regularly by officials from Hrygashan who allocate surpluses between those who have and those who have not. The knaidaals are kept in balance and peace reigns.

Any food and services that the people of Hrygashan require come from the three nearby knaidaals of Kuna, Nalataza and Lionsgate. They are based in the fertile coastal lands of Sunachi Head where are grown great crops of maize and corn.

To the east of Sunachi Head lies the coastal community of Xioraja. All foreign merchant ships anchor at the deep-water port that is located there. In the typical minimalist style of Rhenfara, Xioraja functions solely as a place of trade. It is larger in scale than Hrygashan but still appears like an oversized village, arranged in a wide semi-circle about the jetties of its harbor. Most of its produce is kept cool and dry beneath the ground, in extensive storage facilities.

Sunaachi Head is also noted for the Juzzai Rainforest region that occupies the highlands behind the coast. Called Gnomewood by northerners, it is one of the few areas that serve as a home territory for the Faarsown, outside of Leezeria and Llan. The Gnome-folk have limited contact with the Rhenfarans, although druidical groups often travel to consult with the Faarsown Grandsire.

Beyond Gnomewood and Sunachi Head are the drier grasslands of the Eritanni Plains, where the majority of the clan knaidaals are based. Although some crops are grown here, the Rhenfarans of the Eritanni make their living from the great herds that roam the region, providing meat, hides, tools and weapons for local consumption and trade.

Urmish is the largest community of Eritaani and is the central defensible position of the plains, designed as a place where the other knaidaals can retreat to if threatened by aggressors. For these purposes, Urmish contains storehouses of extra grain and is surrounded by a broad dry-moat. The moat is filled with a tangled growth of rawani bushes, known for their sharp thorns. One of Rhenfara's only two full-time military forces, the fearsome Scorpionhost is stationed here. Each warrior of the Scorpionhost is picked for his or her physique (they are all over 6'5" in height) and their consummate skill in battle is known all over Eldoria.

Rhenfara has several mines in the south, the richest sites being in the Telmarc Mountains, where large deposits of base metals are extracted, along with platinum and gold. The mines are administered by guildsmen from northern Eldoria, in exchange for grain and foodstuffs, the Rhenfaran people having little interest in metals - their weapons and armor being made

from more organic sources, such as bone, wood and hardened leather.

Rhenfara's highest peak, Farsight, is located in the Telmarc Mountains and is one of the few remaining preserves of the Gryphon. The great winged beasts, hunted to extinction in the north, cling on to survival in and around Farsight. They are held in reverence as sacred animals by the Dead Tree Council and it is sacrilege to kill the Gryphon, under pain of death. The Gryphon hunt the animals of the southern Eritaani Plains at dusk and are not often seen beyond that region.



A member of the elite Scorpionhost, a Rhenfaran warrior band. Note the K'zeer, throwing blade that he holds

The other major mountain range in southern Rhenfara is the Weathered Mountains, an area rich in diamonds and sapphires. The Tiered Falls, situated on the extreme western arm of these mountains is Eldoria's largest waterfall, with an expanse of two miles and a drop of four hundred feet. The Falls feed the River Longrohne that flows beside the eastern perimeter of Po-Ka, all the way down to Hrygashan, on the coast. The waterway is used by most Rhenfarans traveling to the capitol from the central

Eritanni knaidaals and a flotilla of small rafts operates along the Longrohne all year round.

Separated from the eastern knaidaals by the immense jungles of Po-Ka are Rhenfara's isolated territories that share a border with Y'sira, a country that has a long history of war with the Rhenfaran people. This region is often referred to as the Watchful Land. The Rhenfarans who dwell here are largely independent from the rest of the country, although they do have a representative on the Dead Tree Council, who is a member of their ruling council.

During the rule of Virith the Great, of Y'sira, the Watchful lands were overrun by the Keljak Horde. However an alliance was forged with the Sardellan Empire and Imperial troops helped to drive the Y'sirans out of western Rhenfara. When the Sardellan Empire collapsed, many Imperial nobles and their entourages chose to remain in the Watchful Land and, as a consequence, the lifestyle of the Rhenfarans in the west is more in line with the northern realms and this is reflected in their clothing and speech.

The land is used for a number of mixed farming practices and has a bountiful harvest of dates, sugarcane and Taak. The largest community is situated at Bhiritaan at the mouth of the Niblfir River. Here resides Rhenfara's other permanent military force, the Sharporns. Bhiritaan's architecture is mostly Y'siran in style, the area having been seized and held for many centuries by the Keljak. It is a walled city and is well fortified and has often held out against long sieges in the past, the most famous being the Keljak invasion of 1522R, when Bhiritaan held out against a three-year blockade, its inhabitants supplied by Sardellan warships.

The Watchful Land also includes a forlorn quagmire known as the Cursed Swamp. It is a wide marsh of quicksand and bogs, fed by a rank watercourse that crawls from the nearby jungles. It is a place full of treacherous terrain, savage creatures and equally deadly plants. It is thought that some site of magic once existed in the area and that its residual aura has warped and changed many of the native flora and fauna. The swamp remains largely unexplored and rumors abound of an ancient Uushai palace at its heart.

Also known for its dangerous wildlife, strange people and exotic plants is Po-Ka. The vast jungle occupies the very heart of Rhenfara and very few people have ventured under its green canopies and lived to tell the tale. There were a number of expeditions into the depths of the jungle in the 11th and 12th centuries R, the most noted being the one led by Kazuus Malidai. Malidai claimed to have discovered Corithaal, a great lost city of Uushai origin and presented a number of archaeological finds to the Druids. He organized a second, better-equipped and provisioned expedition but it never returned and subsequent forays into Po-Ka, by other groups were prevented from reaching the interior by savage attacks from the local Arimah pygmies, who consider Po-Ka their domain.

The Arimah are descended from a Halfling breed that originally had dwelled in the lands about Sunachi Head and Hrygashan during the Darktime. When the Ziaddan people migrated into Rhenfara from the Outlands, the furtive Arimah retreated into Po-Ka, hiding their communities deep within the

jungle. Usually a gentle folk, they are extremely territorial and, if trespassers into Po-Ka cannot be dissuaded from treks into their land, they will resort to quick and extreme action.

Even the Brotherhood of the Dead Tree has a healthy respect for this jungle and will not explore its depths. They consider that Po-Ka is governed by a wild Malantha spirit; possibly the greatest of all the Malantha of Eldoria and, until that spirit chooses to make contact with the Brotherhood, it should be given a wide-berth.

As previously mentioned the Dead Tree Council administers Rhenfara from Hrygashan. It is made up of four Druids and one chieftain from every knaidaal. The council promotes and enforces a long-standing practice of the conservation of resources in Rhenfara and the sharing of surpluses. There is no currency in the country and all trade carried out with foreign merchants in Xioraja is done so by bartering. At a local level, the knaidaal Chieftains are responsible for ensuring that the basic needs of the people; food, shelter and security are met.

That is not to say that Rhenfara is a classless society. Strength and stamina are traits that are coveted and admired. Every year the Tazzanai games are held outside of Urmish in which the best men and women of rival knaidaals come to compete with each other in combat and feats of athleticism. Therefore, men and women who are selected to represent their territories receive an elevated status in their community.

The knaidaal that scores the most points in the games receives an extra portion of the surpluses of all other territories for that year. In addition, the competitor who scores the most individual points becomes the King of Rhenfara for that year and sits with the Dead Tree Council. This is largely a diplomatic role, the King being seen as a figurehead rather than being active politically.



An Arimah Pygmy. These diminutive, but dangerous, folk dwell in the jungles of Po-Ka. They trace their ancestry back to the Halfling communities that once thrived along the coastline of Rhenfara

Cultural Notes

The territories, known as knaidaals, are administered under a number of peculiar traditions, designed to conserve land and resources. Each knaidaal has its territory size and population determined by the Dead Tree Council. When an annual census indicates that a knaidaal has exceeded its population limitations it undergoes a process known as 'swarming'. When this happens half the population is selected by the Chieftain to leave the knaidaal and set up a new territory as determined by the Council.

The new knaidaal must occupy 'free territory' and its village must be at least one day's walk from any other village. It is provisioned with a gift of surplus food and materials for the period of one year, as allocated by the Dead Tree Council.

The favorite weapon of the Rhenfaran warrior is the k'zeer. This is a long razor-sharp blade of polished bone fixed to a short, light wooden grip. It is used as a stabbing weapon and can also be throw with deadly accuracy up to a distance of 60 feet. Warriors usually carry up to six k'zeer, worn across the back, in a broad bandoleer. They wear a light quilted jacket and knee-length britches sewn with colorful beads and gems into distinctive family motifs. This is the equivalent of studded leather armor.

Although there is a great admiration of physical prowess, Rhenfaran people equally love art and decoration. They produce intricately detailed carvings and their jewelers are said to rival the craft of the Dwarves. This extends into the martial culture, where warriors design and apply detailed body decorations and decorative armor to create a 'persona' for battle (something akin to superheroes of comic book fame or even wrestling 'characters').

This elaborate costuming originated from the Tazzanai Games and each distinctive design is submitted to the knaidaal Chieftain and, in turn, is given over to the safekeeping of the Druids. These markings are the equivalent of a coat-of-arms in northern realms and are treated with historical reverence.

Freedom of movement is restricted in Rhenfaran society in order to maintain the balanced society. Any request to leave a home knaidaal must be approved by the Wayguide, an official of the region. Good cause must be given as to the reasons for wanting to travel and, if successful, the person undertaking a journey is given documentation allowing them to move between territories, although they must visit each Wayguide as they go.

Over the centuries, knaidaals have extended across Rhenfara as part of the 'swarming' process and each territory shares at least one border with another. Outside of the knaidaals are the Preserves, which are free territories. It is a serious crime to enter a Preserve unless ordained to do so and the penalty for transgressing this rule is often death. Therefore travelers usually move through a series of corridors formed by the existing knaidaals and are often called upon to carry messages between territories as they go.

In times of crisis, the Brotherhood of the Dead Tree, will declare the Preserved Lands 'open' to facilitate the rapid movement of warriors.

SARD**Population:** 3.6 Million (99% Human/1%Other)**Climate:** Cold to temperate.**Terrain:** Mountainous.**Typical wildlife:** Mountain lion, deer, wolverine, wolf, brown bear, black bear.**Principal exports:** Base metals, citrus fruit and wine.**Principal imports:** Manufactured goods, grain.**Government:** Feudal (ruled by a council of nobles who appoint a Chancellor).**Capitol:** Gablehead.**Current Leader:** Chancellor Kharichaan.**Major Religions:** Trezkillian and Phelltar.**Minor Religions:** Sirrith, Se and Yhancia.

The country of Sard lies west of Elkia, the two protagonists facing each other across the waters of the Lesser Inner Sea. The two realms share a common border in the north but this is a virtual no-man's land, created by the territories of the Imperial State and the inhospitable terrain of the Porgruu Bogs. The long east-west running chain of the Stonebrow Mountains effectively divides Sard from the forested highlands of Llan; control of the passes through the Stonebrow has always been a source of conflict in the region.

Sard is a temperate land with winter snows falling as far south as the capitol, Gablehead. Its southerly regions, extending into the Malonian Peninsula, have a warmer climate and contain much of the farmlands devoted to the cultivation of crops less resistant to the cold, such as grapes, olives and citrus fruits. Sardinian oranges and limes are known for their quality and are sold in many distant markets.

The most dominant geographical feature of Sard is the immense series of mountain ranges, known collectively as the Grand Escarpment. This massive cordilleran belt effectively divides the Sardinian landmass in half; into a more populated eastern region and a remote western coastline. The Grand Escarpment partitions Sard into a number of administrative areas, called Holdings, the area encompassed by each Holding being detailed as follows;

Ghalastia

The lands surrounding Gablehead and the west coastal plains of the Lesser Inner Sea.

Xharadan

The lands north of the Grand Escarpment and west of Elkia and the Imperial State.

Trazia

The warmer tracts of land south of the Zharran River.

Wylachia

The communities of the Grand Escarpment.

Wystallan

The coastal lands west of the Grand Escarpment

The first four Holdings are ruled by a noble-born governor, who is appointed every four years by the Khazilin Council, a parliament comprised of thirty-two of the senior nobles of Sard and the four Cardinals of the Trezkillian Church. Wystallan is considered far too remote and under-populated, so is administered

by the Governor of Xharadan.

In addition to the Governor, the four chief Holdings are the seat of one of the powerful Cardinals of Sard. They are tasked with the duty of putting forth candidates to the Council for voting on as Chamberlain, the title of the secular leader of Sard.

Gablehead is where most of Sard's political machinations take place. It is a picturesque city, built on steeply rising land, around the shoulders of Mount Pyrred. The mountain is located quite close to the sea and is the source of a multitude of small springs; being one of the reasons that the region was settled early during the Akalastian migrations. In 1028R, a strategic keep was built atop Mount Pyrred to guard the road that brought iron ore from the Grand Escarpment to the wharves at Karhaven. By 1300R, the keep had been expanded into a castle, occupying the entire mountaintop and the town of Gablehead had grown about it.

During the Kinstrife of 1555R - 1677R, much of the original city was razed and Castle Pyrred's outer defenses were destroyed. In the peace that followed the Treaty of Four Swords, Gablehead came under the control of nobles sworn to the Trezkillian Church, who made the city the capitol of the new Sardinian state. The Trezkillians commissioned the great architect, Emaras Falland, to supervise the rebuilding of Gablehead and no expense was spared at creating both a uniquely beautiful, yet defensible city.

Gablehead makes great use of its abundant water supply in creating a series of artificial canals that encircle Mount Pyrred's slopes, dividing the city into four distinct, circular districts. Access between the districts is via a few key bridges, each guarded by fortified towers. Because of the gradient of the slopes that the city is built on, the streets take the form of long, curving thoroughfares or wide series of steps. Such is the incline that it is quite common to look out of your window onto the rooftop of your next-door neighbor.

In addition to the canals, numerous artificial waterfalls, watercourses and fountains were created by Falland, earning Gablehead the name of the "Laughing City". The sound of falling water can be heard all over Gablehead, providing a tranquil background ambiance to its many striking buildings, the most notable of which includes the Temple to Trezkillian, the Khazilin Dome and the Shrine to Taranae.

The land around Gablehead is typical of most of the countryside bordering the Lesser Inner Sea, being predominantly made up of hilly, lightly forested terrain, broken by wide, shallow streams. The soil is suitable for mixed farming but provides a poor yield of grain crops. Sard's grain belt is in the northern Holding of Xharadan. To the east of the capitol is Karhaven, a great shipbuilding port that is Sard's principal mercantile centre. Most of Sard's war-fleet is harbored here and its captains keep a close watch on the movements of Elkian vessels passing through the straits of Haven.

Directly west of Gablehead, the roads take you up into the heart of the Grand Escarpment and the Holding of Wylachia. These highways are well-maintained and small communities, called Watchmeets, can be found along them, every ten to twenty miles.

These are usually small walled forts that house a garrison of ten men-at-arms, an inn and a craftsman's workshop. The garrisons are under the command of a regional Sheriff, whose duties include maintenance of roads in the surrounding area, local law and tax collection.

Many of Sard's principal iron, zinc and copper mines are situated in Wylachia; most of these, such as Ludlin, Deepcleft and Xalakar, are located along the easterly fringe of the Escarpment and are accessible by road, although during winter they can become isolated by heavy snow or avalanches. Elsewhere, there are only a few established trails through Wylachia, the exception being the "Eagle's Way" a highway that crosses the Grand Escarpment from east to west, delved during the reign of Empress Taranae. Ludlin is the regional centre of Wylachia and is home to a great many smiths who work the forges of the foundry, located there.

Most of the Grand Escarpment remains relatively unexplored and is a wilder land. It is riddled with countless ravines, hidden valleys and cave systems that are home to Goblinskynd creatures. Some have actively made their presence known from time to time but their numbers are few and their organization poor. As a result, Goblinskynd activities are usually limited to raids on isolated mountain villages and attacks upon unwary bands of travelers; they rarely approach any of the major settlements or challenge a well-defended merchant caravan.

The extreme northern region of the Escarpment is home to the Vollarði, a race of giant humanoids who have occupied an enormous rift located there, since the Darktime. Called the Canyon of the Stone Giants by Humans, it is a barren place, full of tar pits and thorny trees. There are only a few trails that lead into the region and these are watched by the Vollarði. The Giants have no love of Humans but they do not venture far outside their realm and, thus, have few encounters with the world of Men. Most of what we know about them is as result of risky forays into the Giants' realm by adventurers, seeking gold and glory, lucky enough to come back alive.

The Vollarði are a dying people; their birth rate has been in decline for generations and their population is now less than one hundred. They dwell in caverns and are a highly religious people, observing a number of holy gatherings during the year, the most prominent being an exodus to the site of a tall standing stone called the Ebonshard of Troth.

North of the Canyon of the Stone Giants and the Grand Escarpment lies Sard's grain bowl, Xharadan. The land here is more suitable for growing wheat and barley, and the annual harvest goes a long way to meeting Sard's grain requirements. Yarcia, the regional seat, is a medium-sized town, protected by earthen ramparts and a wooden palisade. It has much of the appearance of the old fortified settlements that existed throughout Akalastia, prior to the establishment of the unified Kingdom of Sardell.

Near to Yarcia is Drynn, a smaller community that is the location of the Monastery of the Pious, a retreat for clerics of the Phelltarian faith, established over 1,000 years ago. The monastery has an extensive collection of religious artifacts and tomes relating to the devotion of Phelltar. Drynn is also noted for its dairy cattle and the fine cheese that it produces.

East of Yarcia and Drynn are Sard's borderlands with the Imperial State and Elkia. There is a high military presence in the region, with numerous garrisons and forts located close to settlements and areas of strategic importance, especially the mountain passes into Llan. The noble families who are most devoted to the Trezkillian faith have their households situated throughout the far eastern lands of Sard and maintain permanent levies of soldiers.

The Holding of Wystallan is the most remote region of Sard, encompassing the narrow strip of coast between the Grand Escarpment and the Sea of Five Winds. It is a lonely land with a low population base, made up of many small fruit and vegetable farms and villages, usually devoted to fishing. Most of the excess agricultural produce of the area ends up in markets in Yarcia and helps sustain a permanent military presence in the northwest. As previously mentioned, Wystallan's coastal communities are actually administered from Yarcia, in Xharadan, in conjunction with a number of subordinate officials based in the three major communities of Raalmoor, Lydenda and Reaver's Landing.

Although the territory of Wystallan is supposed to extend to Point Relentless in the far south, there are few large communities that exist beyond Reaver's Landing, so the formal administration of law and taxes ends there. The rest of the coast is a wild, untamed place, thought to be the home of marauding pirates and malcontents.

In 1605R a large Dwarven community, who had fled from some catastrophe in their island kingdom of Karashar-Zahl, occupied Wystallan. They established a tremendous underground harbor for their fleet of ships, located somewhere along the southwest coast. The harbor city was abandoned centuries ago, after most of the Dwarves sailed east or established mines in the northwest mountains. A few mines are still occupied today and Dwarves sometime can be seen traveling the roads of Wystallan, seeking to trade or to find employment in Human settlements.

Trazia, like the Holding of Wystallan, is mainly an agricultural region but its warmer climate allows for more diversity in its produce. Grapes, citrus fruits and olives grow in abundance and there is also a thriving linen industry based in Coltaxter, the main town in the Holding. Coltaxter is built on a small island in the middle of the fast-flowing Donaar River. Two wooden bridges provide access to the north and south banks. The farmlands surrounding the island town are devoted to the growing of cotton, which in turn supplies Coltaxter's mills.

The distant southern parts of Trazia are unsettled, except for a small following of Druids who follow the God, Ulliah. Known as the Children of Izrach, they are of an ancient order that was outlawed during the reign of Empress Taranae. They are reclusive and jealously guard the borders of the forest of Druidwood against all intruders. It is thought that they also had followers based along the west coast of the Sardian peninsula, as many standing stones bearing similar carvings to those in Druidwood can be found throughout Wystallan.

Sard was once part of the Sardellan Empire and became a separate state after the Treaty of Four Swords. The treaty divided the Imperial Homelands into two regions along religious lines. The noble families allied to the Trezkillian faith were granted the lands that now make up Sard and the families allied to the

Churches of the Holy Trinity (Ormocea, Esmia and Siritar) were granted the existing Elkian territories. Of course, this arrangement did not suit everyone; there were a number of Trezkillian families who chose to remain in their ancestral residences in Elkia and many followers of the Holy Trinity who wished to stay on in their traditional lands in Sard. Various deals were struck and oaths of allegiance made to respective regimes in order to appease ruling factions. In Sard, the largest concentrations of people who do not follow the state-driven religion of Trezkillian dwell in Wystallan, far from any threat of persecution.



Dwarven travellers are often seen in Gablehead, seeking lost mines in the Grand Escarpment

As a result of injustices (real and perceived) that followed the implementation of the Treaty of Four Swords, there has been a continuing rivalry between Sard and Elkia, with constant border disputes in the immediate region surrounding the Porgruu Bogs and naval skirmishes fought in the waters south of the Straits of Haven.

Sardians tend to be aggressive people, which is not surprising considering that the Trezkillian Church has a dominant role to play in the administration of the country. At a village level, district bailiffs encourage the creation and training of an effective levy of fighting men. When regional tax collectors visit the countryside, they are usually accompanied by priests from the Trezkillian Church who assess the martial skills of the locals. Those communities who demonstrate that they have managed to raise and train a reasonably effective force receive a reduction in taxation.

Cultural Notes

Sard is one of the few Eldorian nations that maintain a professional army at all times. The Governor of each Holding is responsible for recruiting, training and equipping a local levy of soldiers that, in times of war, are supplemented by trained peasant militia from rural areas. These forces are organized into units called Legions, which constitute the regular army of Sard. While commanded by secular leaders, each Legion has a senior cleric of the Trezkillian Church attached to it. This position is called the Invigilator and is usually given to a Trezkillian priest who has distinguished himself in battle but can no longer participate in combat due to age or infirmity. They are responsible for the 'spiritual guidance' of a Legion's captains and the morale of the troops.

In addition, an Invigilator awards all commendations for meritorious service and is responsible for ensuring that the mandannan (see below) of each fallen soldier is returned to the village he came from. The Church of Trezkillian also sponsors a number of its own elite Legions, as well as several special units that are attached to the regulars. Naturally, these are better trained and equipped than most regular Legions.

A mandannan is a decorative patch worn by a combatant, embroidered with the heraldic devices of the town or village of their origin. It is the belief of the Trezkillian faith that the soul is transferred to the mandannan, after death, and can then be sent on to Heaven by rites of the Church. The mandannan of fallen warriors are sewn onto tapestries that remember the dead, which hang in Trezkillian temples.

Service in the military is one way that a low-born person can improve their lot in life. Those who join a Legion must serve for a minimum period of three years; those who stay on beyond that time are rewarded with a half an acre of land for every additional year of service. Understandably, many ex-veteran soldiers manage the larger farm holdings in Sard.

Well-heeled Sardian men favor black clothing, set off with silver jewelry. Nobles often adopt a semi-military look, regardless if they actually are part of an established Legion. Men wear their hair shaved close to the skull and any facial hair is trimmed short. A longsword or rapier is a most-common accessory.

By contrast, Sardian women prefer brighter colors; greens and ocean blues are quite fashionable throughout most of the Holdings. Ornate veils of patterned silk, fixed with a circlet or hairpins are favored by noblewomen. Semi-precious stones (worn at the throat) and decorative metallic medallions are popular in the larger towns and cities, like Gablehead.

Duels of honor are common in Sard and even form an important part of the judicial system. Certain civil disputes such as defamation or breach of promise are often settled by dueling, the opponents fighting until one acknowledges the other's claim or is incapacitated.

More serious disputes can be settled by having the two parties agree to put forward champions to represent them in a gladiatorial-style combat to resolve the issue. These ritualistic duels take place under strict supervision of a martial judge (known as the Master of Arms) and take place in judicial arenas located in the larger cities.

TEMPEST (A CITY STATE)**Population:** 80,000 (99% Human/1% Other).**Climate:** Temperate.**Terrain:** City State built on and around three islands.**Typical wildlife:** Seal, dolphin, sharks, domestic pets.**Principal exports:** Crafted goods.**Principal imports:** Most raw materials.**Government:** Military ruler appointed by a mercantile council every four years.**Capitol:** Tempest.**Current Leader:** Citylord Ivarren Blayn.**Major Religions:** Ormocea, Ahridaar, Gurthor, Phelltar.**Minor Religions:** Ulliah, Xullia, Daugron.

The City State of Tempest is by far the economic giant of Eldoria, its merchant houses dominating trade throughout the Human realms, under the auspices of the influential Guild of Gold. Mercantiles from every land have warehouses in Tempest and benefit from the Guild's liberal taxes and duties. The Guild produces its own coinage, the Tempest Trade, which is the preferred tender of all merchants who operate out of Tempest and is the measure against which all other currencies are valued.

Tempest is built on and around the Lonely Isles, an archipelago in the approximate center of the Great Inner Sea. In order of size, the largest of the group is Tallister Island (occupying an area of about half a square mile), next comes Tower Island (about half the size of Tallister) and Foryn's Landing, a small narrow islet, some 200 yards across and 1000 yards long. They have mainly rocky terrain with poor soil and were home to a people called the Naboshians, an offshoot of the Khalasians, who settled Llan.

The Naboshians were primarily fishermen and whale-hunters and early merchant vessels active in the Greater Inner Sea often landed at the Lonely Isles to reprovision and trade for ambergris, oil and ivory. They were ruled by an ancient Druidical Order who worshipped the God, Ulliah and dwelt on Tower Island, the most forested of the three.

In 1222R, Tallister Portan, a merchant from Northland was a visitor to the Lonely Isles and made a gift of three seedlings to the Druids there. For his kindness, he was made an honorary member of their Order and they allowed Portan to establish a permanent warehouse and ale-house (the famous "Barter Inn") on the larger island, so he could store many of his goods there. He began negotiating deals on behalf of the Naboshians with other visiting ships, as well as selling his own wares and soon Portan had a bustling trading-post going.

Eventually, merchant-ships found it easier to simply travel from their home-ports around the shores Greater Inner Sea to the Lonely Isles, carrying their cargoes. Here they could negotiate trade terms with other captains and swap goods and stories, all from the security of the barter Inn, rather than risk a longer voyage, facing the dangers of storms and the ever-present threat of piracy by Char-Endlese dragonships. Merchants stopping at the Lonely Isles began to take notice of Portan's methods and began to imitate his business practices, building their own trading posts there as well.

By the middle of the 14th century R, there were no less than thirty different trading organizations set up in the Lonely Isles, much to the ire of the local Druids. However, they were placated after they were, promised them that Foryn's Isle would remain sacred and a forbidden place to all others, In addition, with the presence of so much merchant traffic, a percentage of income, in the form of a land tax, would be theirs.



The more wealthy merchants of Tempest dwell on the small island of Tallister, where land is at a premium and the Guild of Gold has its headquarters

With land at a premium, many newcomers began to build facilities on extensive jetties, stretching out across the shallow waters of the archipelago. As the next few centuries passed, so

the jetties grew larger, spanning the sheltered waters between the three islands and ultimately connecting them together. The whole affair was a haphazard town; a mish-mash of cultural styles that became known as the Platform District. Richer merchants had bought up the land on the islands and established their premises and dwellings there; buildings of stone with marble facades and roofs of terracotta. Other traders, not so well off, or late in basing themselves on the Lonely Isles, built out over the water, raising lighter structures of hardened wood, with timber imported from Llan. Poorer workers and residents lived on the fringes of the enormous platforms created by the jetties or in hulks beneath their expanse. The whole place was architecturally unsound and waiting for a disaster to happen.

This came in 1567 R, when Char-Endlese raiders attacked, sacking the island of Tallister before being forced to withdraw to sea, repulsed by militia. In departing, the Char-Endlese fired countless burning arrows into the heart of the Platform District, setting it ablaze. The majority of the jetty structures collapsed and hundreds died. In the aftermath it appeared that the Lonely Isles would fade into commercial obscurity, were it not for Kalmor Portan, a descendant of the original Tallister Portan.

Kalmor dwelled in Quorull (Llan) and owned several warehouses and a villa in the Lonely Isles. Hearing of the calamity that had occurred, he traveled east to appraise the damage to his property and ended up staying on to assist in the rebuilding of the settlement. Kalmor unified the disaffected merchants at this time, providing them with interest free loans from his huge personal fortune. His vision was to rebuild the Platform District but this time according to a specific plan. He intended to make the Lonely Isles the center for all trade in Eldoria. No expense was spared and Kalmor was lucky enough to obtain Diamondwood to use in many of the major jetty supports, mainly due to the continuing links his family retained with the Ulliahn Druids.

In 1580R the city of Tempest was formerly founded, taking its name from the inclement weather that dogged the region. Many of the merchants who contributed to the rebuilding of the city, alongside Kalmor Portan, created a new financial institution, called the Guild of Gold, who acted as merchant bankers and investors. The Guild ruled Tempest, creating the position of Citylord, and rapidly began making inroads into the markets of Eldoria during the following 500 years. Treaties were made with the Clan heads of the Char-Endlese, resulting in the payment of an annual tribute for the Dragonlaird to end the raids on Tempest, merchant shipping and the coastal settlements of the region.

In addition, the Guild of Gold was keen to build its own war-fleet to enforce its position, should the treaty with the Clans fail. To build and base such a fleet in Tempest would have instantly had ramifications to the agreement with Char-Endl, so instead, the Merchants of Tempest looked to the region known as Lyrie, in the south, where people fleeing the Kinstrife had settled during the late 1500s. They had occupied the western coastlines of Leezeria, which belonged to the Elves and was officially 'out of bounds' to Humans. The Elves attention was focused on their wars with Ahr-Ganiz in the east and there were few Elven communities in that part of Leezeria, except for Pharidor's Watch, an isolated seat of learning in the far south.

The Guild promised the Lyrian settlers its protection against the Elves and investment in the region. In return, the Lyrians were to build a port facility on their northern coast and create a navy to defend Tempest's interests in the Greater Inner Sea.

Port Lyrie was founded in 1702R and, although it has always presented itself as an independent realm, its politics are tied closely to those of Tempest and the Guild of Gold. When the Elves sought aid from the Human realms in the Third War of Tears, Tempest and Lyrie were amongst the first to lend aid and, after the war, the settlers of Lyrie finally breathed a collective sigh of relief, when the Elvenking rewarded their efforts by granting the western coastline to the Humans for a period of 500 years.

Tempest and the Guild of Gold have gone on to greater things in the 21st and 22nd centuries. A second platform was completed in Tempest in 2127R so that the city now has three levels in addition to its islands:

The Undercity

This is the ocean level, where hulks and derelicts lie at anchor, connected by cables of rope and suspension bridges. It is a place where the poorer commoners live and rogues and pirates abound.

Merchants' Walk

This is the First Platform, a series of well-constructed landings positioned some 40' above the waves and connected, here and there by drawbridges, allowing vessels to be guided into its interior harbor, along enclosed channels. It is a place of frenetic commercial activity.

Artisan's Walk

A smaller Second Platform, raised 40' over the western part of the city. It contains the establishments of many of the craftsmen and artists of the city, as well as the dwellings of some of the more affluent residents.

In addition to the Platform District of Tempest, there are the islands. Tallister is where the Guild of Gold headquarters are located, along with the barracks of the city guard. The island is largely occupied by these two complexes and a number of private houses. Tower Island is where most of the residential homes of the elite families can be found. Even so, these are not large by any standard and tend to make up for the lack of horizontal area by having multiple storeys.

Foryn's Landing has always remained an untouched sanctuary for the Ulliahn Druids who dwell there. It is heavily forested and permission must be gained to land there. They live an idyllic life-style and want for nothing, having a great reserve of wealth that they have accumulated over the centuries from taxation of the nobles who occupy Tower Island.

Of course, in a city like Tempest, fire is an ever-present hazard. After the Great Fire of 1567R, severe restrictions were placed on the use of naked fires in the Platform Districts. Alternate sources of lighting were needed and the problems posed by cooking over a fire had to be addressed. Most of the lighting in the common areas and larger buildings of the Merchant's Walk is provided by magical means, the Guild of Gold investing heavily in devices that have been illuminated with the power of the Tas. These usually take the form of stones lit with spells of

Continual Light, the radiance able to be dimmed by means of a hooded lantern.

The poorer areas use Squid Lights, thick glass globes filled with a phosphorescent liquid called Camathene. The liquid is a distillation of secretions taken from the Grey Mottled Squids that prosper in the vast trenches of the Emerald Deepes. When a few drops of Camathene are put into a cup of fresh water, the water radiates a strong green light for around three-four hours. The process of making Camathene is a secret of the Revered Alchemical Society of Tempest and its cost outside of the city is prohibitive. Inside Tempest, it is subsidized by the Guild of Gold and affordable by most citizens.

Arson is a crime punishable by death and the unique trade of Fire-Keeper is a well-paid profession in the city. Fire-Keepers are the only persons allowed by law to light a fire in the city and they are also given the duty of extinguishing all fires. A tavern owner who wishes to prepare meals for his guests will usually have a Fire-Keeper in his employ or will engage a Fire-Keeper in his district. The Fire-Keeper is charged with lighting the cooking fire and remaining to guard the fire until it is put out. In places where a permanent fire is kept, there may be a shift of Fire-Keepers. Many in the profession pay tribute to the Goddess Daugron and Tempest is one of the few centers of power outside of Y'sira that maintains a temple to Daugron.

As a result of the limitation on fires, the authorities of Tempest maintain public cooking and eating areas for the populace, where the fires are constantly watched by a cadre of Fire-Keepers. As an alternative to heated cooking, Tempest is famous for its raw food cuisine, such as its heavily spiced raw meats and sushi-like sea delicacies, served with pungent sauces and diced vegetables. These meals originated in the hovels of the Undercity and eventually became a favorite of the more wealthy classes.

In 1999R the Guild of Gold introduced the Gold Trade to Eldoria and its merchants refused to deal with any other currency when making deals with foreigners. Gradually the currency has crept into the world and has become a means of exchange that cuts across many realms. Only the merchant houses in Y'sira refuse to deal with the merchants of Tempest. Instead, they trade directly throughout the Sea of Souls and the Greater Inner Sea with the smaller mercantiles of the major cities.

Cultural Notes

A common gift given amongst lower classes is a small bag of soil. This is due to its scarcity in the Platform Districts. Vegetable gardens grown in pots are commonplace, being housed in rooms with intricate means to channel sunlight to them by way of shafts and mirrors. Vegetables, fruit and red meat are sold at exorbitant prices (quadruple the costs in the *Players Handbook*).

The Stevedore's Guild is the one of the more influential institutions in the city and the profession pays high wages. All ships visiting Tempest must anchor at the perimeter jetties but cannot unload any cargo until inspected by customs officials and given approval by the Stevedore's Guild to be brought into the inner harbor of Tempest. The vessel is then towed into the Great Dock, at the heart of the city, where there is a labor-force and derricks to facilitate the removal of goods. The Stevedores use a number of longboats and a massive winch (called Gurthor's

Reel) to maneuver ships into the Great Dock.

All funerals in Odressi take the form of burials at sea, as there is no unused land and crematory fires are banned. The Gurthor Church has a large funeral boat for these purposes. Religious rites are performed in whatever temple that the deceased worshipped at and all corpses are bound in and then the corpse are then given over to the priests of Gurthor who are entrusted with the care of the dead from the cleric administering the individual service.

The Gurthor priests mummify the body in linen strips soaked in keesarda a waterproof resin, which hardens to a rock-like consistency. All bodies are dropped into the sea at a place known (by local fishermen) as the Haunted Trough, some five miles southwest of Tempest.

VHERIDANE

As not a lot is known about Vheridane, the detailed reference to this country is contained in the supplement, "Eldoria Revealed".

Below are a few notes on what is generally told of the region:

Vheridane is a desolate land with subsistence communities existing along its coastal plains. There is one major centre of barter and trade at Ahrgarsden, a small town by the standards of other countries located in the Inner Realms of Eldoria. Most Vheridani communities are autonomous and there is little evidence of centralized government, except for a small military regime at Westimir. This is what remains of an attempt by Sardell to colonize Vheridane in 1422R, but the fleet was wrecked off the coast and the survivors, who included a fair number of Trezkillian legionnaires permanently settled there after the disintegration of the Empire.

In the north there is a proliferation of Dwarven relics that has made many scholars surmise that the Stonekin either once had a large colony in Vheridane or that their original Homelands are somewhere in the massive mountain ranges of Mythran. The region attracts the most intrepid of adventurers who must travel overland from Llan, as few captains will sail the far north waters of the Sea of Five Winds due to the Balelights, an otherworldly phenomenon said to have claimed over three hundred vessels.

Of late, there have been stories of a new power arising in Vheridane; rumors of two Kings and a Queen who are masters of the Tas. The Church of Tarimth has discovered a new star in the west that mysteriously maintains its place in the heavens. All these revelations have fuelled debate about an ancient prophecy concerning the return of the Holy Trinity to the world. A great Congress has been called in Odressi between respected theologians of the Ormocean, Siritar and Esmian faiths in order to formulate a response to these 'signs' and the possibility of sending a delegation west to determine if the Holy Trinity is indeed making its presence known in Vheridane.

Y'SIRA**Population:** 1.75 million (99% Human/1% Other)**Climate:** Hot and dry.**Terrain:** Desert.**Typical wildlife:** Camel, sand-runner, crocodile, jackal.**Principal exports:** Dates, wine, textiles, olives, edible oils, pommeraje, spiceberries.**Principal imports:** Grain, iron, wood, salted meat.**Government:** Theocracy in combination with a secular monarch.**Capitol:** Byalliz**Current Leader:** K'luud Ismal K'ziz**Major Religions:** Daugron**Minor Religions:** Pharidor, Liraan, Phelltar.

The mighty desert land of Y'sira has retained a distinct and vibrant culture, despite its period of occupation by the Sardellan Empire and constant exposure to northern customs through trade. Its people are a mix of Zurandi and Keljak and their ethics and beliefs have been molded by the harsh environment that they dwell in and strict religious dogma of the Daugron faith.

Byalliz is the major city in Y'sira and is recognized as the capitol, however the very nature of the inhospitable desert terrain tends to severely regionalize the country. Many outlying towns govern their own affairs with only token recognition of the authorities in the Byalliz and independent states are always cropping up from time to time. They survive so long as they do not gain the full attention of the K'luud or the temple of Daugron. A common proverb in Y'sira is, "the brave scorpion lives life briefly, challenges his foes, before being crushed underfoot. The cunning scorpion hides beneath the stones, has many sons and grows stronger every year".

Outwardly, Byalliz is a beautiful city, being built atop the Rainbow Heights, a high line of cliffs that forms one side of its large deep-water harbor. From the sea, merchant ships receive the spectacular sight of a waterfall cascading from a large cave opening, partway up the cliffs, falling into the sea below. This is called the Spill of Byalliz and its waters come from the Foaming Gauntlet, a fast-flowing river that runs beneath the city, through a vast maze of tunnels and caverns that have been carved out over past centuries by ancient volcanic activity and erosion. The Foaming Gauntlet has its source in the Mountains of the Hawks and once flowed to the west of the city, its delta emptying in Zuvinar Bay.

The Zurandi tribes who first came to this part of the coast used the extensive cave systems as homes, as they provided good protection against the sandstorms that are prevalent during the March of Air. As Byalliz developed over time, buildings were established above-ground, across the cliff-tops, many of them incorporating the existing caves as basement storage areas. Gradually the community virtually 'rose' out of the ground and, little by little, the old cave systems were abandoned.

In 1256R, the K'luud Ahmat H'cuur II had a massive waterworks constructed south of Byalliz. This formed a great reservoir and the river's course was diverted into the tunnels beneath the city (in an unsuccessful bid to flush out his enemies who were rumored to have secret lairs there).

Byalliz is divided into four main districts. The North District is its commercial heart, with warehouses and mercantile stores occupying most of the land, so as to be close to the docks. The harbor is based at the bottom of the Rainbow Heights and cargo is either transported by dray up the winding cliff road or lifted directly into the city using three great boom cranes built into the north wall of Byalliz.

The East District of the city is inhabited by the lower class and is very cluttered, with many unpaved narrow streets and an intricate network of back alleys. For seven centuries a great wall defended the city along its eastern side but it was badly damaged when the Sardellans took the city in 1534R; subsequently, it was laid waste by a violent sandstorm in 1863R. Parts of the wall remain intact and have been occupied by beggars, squatters and rogues, looking for somewhere to live. The Sandwall (as it is known) can be a very dangerous place and city-guards are loathed to venture into its dark tunnels in pursuit of felons.

The Western District is more opulent. This is where wealthy merchants have expansive villas; with larger grounds and fragrant gardens. Here, the streets are paved and trees provide shade for pedestrian traffic.

The south part of Byalliz is its most majestic, where lie the most distinguished buildings in the city. The K'luud's Palace is located in the south-east and is a romantic-looking building, made of white stone and featuring tall brass domes in its construction. Most of the palace was built after the Sardellan invasion and incorporates some architectural features typical of the northern realms. The palace is surrounded by open gardens, said to contain every flower in the known world (barring the rare Eldarwood bloom of Leezeria). The main building itself is garishly decorated throughout, with intricately patterned hangings and carpets, antique artifacts and tall urns of brass or beaten copper.

Situated a short walk from the K'luud's Palace and fronting the main market square, is the enormous ziggurat that is the temple to Daugron. It is the largest building in all of Y'sira; made of granite transported from the Mountains of the Hawks, it was built during the time of the first Keljak incursion. Construction commenced in 388R and continued for another ten years. A giant brazier stands atop the tiered structure and it is said that the fire that burns there has never been quenched since it was lit in 399R.

Most buildings in Byalliz are made of a mud-brick, treated with a paint, made from jiisha mulch (jiisha being a vegetable with natural sealant properties). They are usually two to three stories in height and have flat open roofs, where the owners usually maintain small potted gardens. Most houses and commercial buildings have some kind of subterranean storage facility or entry to the caves and tunnels below Byalliz. Having a door that gives access to the underworld has its pros and cons. Many thieves and unsavory characters frequent the caves beneath Byalliz, which means that a subterranean door gives them a possible entry point into your abode. However, the history of countless political and religious purges in the city has led to most people wanting a bolt-hole on the premises, so they can escape into the undercity, should they receive a knock on the door in the dead of night.

Real estate with a door to the underworld sells well in Byalliz, as do well-crafted locks and traps!

The history of politics in Byalliz has been dominated by the Daugron Church and, today, the priesthood still rules, although the current regime is not as harsh in the application of its doctrine as previous factions. The K'luud (a term meaning the senior captain) also holds some sway and is a far cry from the puppet rulers of previous centuries. The K'luud's line is hereditary and his family has the loyalty of a secular military force. The K'luud presides over a small advisory council made up of influential nobles, merchants and scholars. This council formulates policy concerning Byalliz and the rest of Y'sira, although they rely heavily upon the infrastructure of the Daugron Church to carry out their administration.

Another unseen political force in the city are the numerous and well-organized Thieves' Guilds. The thieves of Byalliz are organized into fifteen official 'gangs' that have a great influence over the rich trade that flourishes in the markets and waterfront. Each guild works to protect the interests of specific areas of the local economy and the heads of each group are regarded almost as petty nobles in social circles. The Daugron faith does not tolerate thieves and its laws that deal with acts of burglary and extortion are exceedingly harsh, however it is whispered that the K'luud has forged a secret alliance with the Guilds (because of his mistrust of the Daugron Church) and that Bytrim S'maaki, a noble who sits on the K'luud's council, is secretly the head of one of the major Guilds of the city.

Beyond the southern outskirts of Byalliz, a deep gorge rises up into the mountains. These are the Mountains of the Hawks, a spur from the immense range known as the Dunewall, which divides the deserts from the Outlands. The Foaming Gauntlet runs through the gorge, being a small, rapid watercourse that drops through a number of falls, on its way to the coast. A roadway runs along the eastern side of the gorge where several small communities exist, serving the granite quarries and copper and tin mines located there. Higher up in the gorge are numerous deserted forts and keeps that were maintained prior to the Sardellan invasion but have since fell into disrepair.

At the highest southerly point of the Mountains of the Hawks, at the end of the roadway, is a monastery maintained by a group of Monks called the Tor-Gunzar. They are one of the few surviving groups of the Pantheist Order that was popular in the 11th Century R. They are sworn to no one God and worship all in equal reverence. The Tor-Gunzar are renowned for a particular form of sword fighting and, although many skilled fighters seek them out, the Monks rarely allow anyone to train under them.

West of the Mountains of the Hawks are the flat desert pans of the Jeweled Sands that often sparkle like diamonds because of the silica content in their endless wastes. Eventually these hot plains give way to the Dunes of Iskiria, a flowing series of desert sands that are home to an isolated tribe called the B'jin. They are fiercely independent and harry caravans that cross the Jeweled Sands bound for Rhavizor.

Rhavizor, itself, is a small outpost that guards the Wormhole, a fifty mile long natural tunnel that bisects the narrowest part of the Dunewall Mountains. It is a place where Keljak and other barbarian tribes of the Outlands come to barter for goods and

make allegiances with the strange folk of the Inner Realms. Most of the jade that was used to create an enormous memorial statue of Viritath came from mines near Rhavizor, long since depleted.

Northwards, across the Jeweled Sands and on toward the coast, is Tariziach, the second largest city in Y'sira. Tariziach has always been a rival of the powers that have ruled from Byalliz and its leaders have often been at odds with the Daugron Church. It was once part of the ancient Kingdom of Tariz, the earliest site of civilization in the region and its people consider they are the 'true' people of Y'sira.

Tariziach is a picturesque community, situated in a valley some ten miles from the sea on the Zylik River. The banks of the Zylik grow thick with reeds that are used to make a coarse paper, called tzinnda. It does not quite have the quality of northern papers but is cheap to make. The Zylik's fertile course takes in many farms that supply Tariziach and other towns with maize and fruit, such as pommeraje and spiceberries. The source of the river can be traced to the Sandscar Mountains that provide shelter to the Zylik farming communities from the sandstorms that rise in the western deserts.

The area around the Zylik retained a strong following of the heretical God Kavast, following the demise of Viritath and the Keljak. Kavast is not numbered amongst the Divine Twenty-Seven but managed to take root in the region. Since then, the following of Kavast has waxed and waned, depending upon the regime in Byalliz and their military presence in Tariziach. Recently, the supporters of Kavast have gained power in the west again and rebelled, ceding Tariziach from Y'sira. They have managed to repulse an army sent from Byalliz to put an end to the upstart religion and restore order.

East of Byalliz is the Sea of Sand, a great expanse of shifting dunes that cut off the distant towns of the Sacred Triangle; Vallator, Fishaan and Rhiyana. These are ancient holy places of the Zurandi people, who traversed the deserts in the Darktime. Mercantile caravans have long ceased making visits to the Sacred Triangle; the distance is too great, as are the dangers posed by sand-runners (a vicious predatory creature, native to the area) and bandits. The Daugron Church still mounts an annual pilgrimage to the Sacred Triangle, as the region is considered an important part of the evolution of their faith. Many of the Zurandi who went on to found the Kingdom of Tariz settled this area as well and so much of the ancient knowledge of the Daugron religion remained in the Sacred Triangle and is passed on from generation to generation.

At the extreme north of the Sea of Sand, is the strange community of Jade Sands, located at the crossroads of the caravan trail that links Byalliz to Ikle's Head and the Coasts of Za-Kariden. This is the site of the Jade Colossus, once a giant statue of the Keljak leader Viritath the Great. It stood some 200' in height and was constructed of granite, overlaid with tiles of jade. The statue was erected beside a fort, situated beside a large oasis. This was the route that the Keljak followed in their campaign against Rhenfara and the statue was built for the purpose of inspiring Viritath's warriors as they marched off to do battle.

On the day that Viritath died fighting the Sardellans at

the Battle of the Dead Dunes, a whirlwind engulfed the Jade Colossus and the statue came crashing down on the nearby fort. After that time, fortune hunters have always been drawn to the place to find the pieces of jade that had been scattered all over the area. The thriving village of Jade Sands grew up at the oasis, proprietors of goods and services and cashing in on the fortune-seekers drawn to the region. In later years, Jade Sands became a stopover for weary travelers and caravans. There is a famous inn at Jade Sands called "Viritath's Folly" that is partially built from the ruined head of the old Colossus. The mouth of the statue provides an entrance into the establishment, which gives you an idea of the scale of the original monument.

Ikle's Head, north of Jade Sands is a stony, mountainous land that has been home to the Sumari tribesmen since the Darktime. The Sumari are an offshoot of the Ziaddan of Rhenfara and have a long history of subjugation by the regime in Byalliz, their people regularly being taken as slaves for sale in the markets of the capitol. The Songarch range, which dominates the eastern coast of Ikle's Head is rich in copper and has some large veins of platinum. Sumari slaves are often used to extract the precious ore.

The Sumari have never posed a problem to Byalliz, because they have always been a disunited people, divided by clan squabbles. However, since 2025R, a Human following of the Sun God Pharidor has been active in Ikle's Head and has managed to convert a great many of the Sumari leaders. Now they have a unified voice amongst the clergy of Pharidor and they are fighting back. The regional governor of Terl and his garrison have recently been ousted and sent back to Byalliz in fetters and chains.

Due east of Ikle's Head are the Coasts of Za-Kariden, a tranquil tract of land where there are numerous nomadic groups who move from beach to beach, following the schools of soulbreem that spawn in the Waters of Londar. They are descended from the Nalarian people and continually travel between Za-Kariden and Bhiritaan, trading salted fish to Rhenfaran merchants. Like most Nalarians, they are a wistful, secretive folk who avoid authority whenever they encounter it.

Cultural Notes

Water is an important medium in Y'sira due to its scarceness. When visiting the house of another it is common to bring a gift of a small urn of water as a mark of respect. Likewise, a great insult in Y'sira is to spill water on the ground at your enemy's feet. This is the equivalent of throwing the gauntlet in our society.

Most trading nations use the common currency of the Gold Trade, introduced by the mercantile bankers of Tempest, the Guild of Gold. While their merchants deal in Trades with overseas clients, the majority of the population in Y'sira uses the common currency of the tinka, a triangular brass coin that is worth the equivalent of 5 Copper Trades. The coin traces its origins back to the rise of the Keljak and was originally issued during the great drought of 1301R as a token for the rationing of water in Byalliz. One tinka still buys a standard measure of water in Y'sira today.

The ancient Zurandi language used exceedingly long compound words to describe things of importance, principally names and titles. When the Keljak took control, they found that

the language too pretentious and laborious and so began the trend of shortening many of the grandiose honorifics that the clergy and upper class had given themselves.

As an example, the country itself has a name, shortened from its original. In the old Zurandi tongue, Y'sira was Yasanalaarabyn-hepharysmekonda-dausira, which translates as 'the place where the sun dances with fire and leaves its mark'.

The modern Y'siran language contracts many of its words, allowing spoken conversation to flow more easily. When ever a (') appears in a name or title, it means that the word has greater meaning. It is correct etiquette in Y'sira to let another person know your full and correct name (if it has been truncated) as a mark of respect. For example, a person may say, "I am Kezerkanbeneel-zallis-jazdenzeer, but you may know me as K'zeer". On the other hand, drawing on the same example, if you have disdain for a person or consider them of lower rank, you would simply announce yourself as K'zeer.

Slaves can be bought and sold in Y'sira, although the trade has been recently regulated by detailed laws and restrictions introduced in 2106R at the Congress of Odressi. These laws prevented the acquisition of persons Recognized to the Gods of any of the temples based in Odressi. Since the laws of Y'sira strip Recognition from anyone accused of a large number of crimes, slaves can always be procured from those convicted in the courts. However several Eldorian cultures do not embrace the ritual of Recognition. In Y'sira, the Sumari, B'jin and Nalarians do not follow established religions and often targeted by local slavers. Likewise, Byalliz hopes to end the rebellion in the west and, since many of the people involved in the insurrection there are followers of Kavast, there is a great potential slave labor force that could be acquired if the western city-states fall to Byalliz.

The laws give slaves certain rights in Y'sira. They have always been considered valuable property (due to the status they awarded Keljak nobles). A master cannot beat or otherwise harm a slave. If a slave is disobedient or accused of some crime, an avenue does exist for punishment and is administered by a special court that hears cases and administers appropriate discipline.

A slave must also be given adequate shelter by their master. Clothing and food may be paid (at the individual master's discretion). A slave may buy their freedom by amassing an amount of money equal to the value placed on them when purchased. Slaves usually earn money from their masters and from associates of their masters by providing a level of service above and beyond the call of duty.

History

Orlon Argond

The College traces its origins from the 9th century R, to the island of Ghardon, in the Sea of Souls. Ghardon was populated by a primitive community which worshipped the Goddess Se. They were related to the early Akalastians, however, after the island saw a great influx of Sardellans fleeing the devastation of the Rose Plague in the 700s, much of the existing culture was soon absorbed. The island of Ghardon was well-known by scholars even then, due to the fantastic ancient relic that exists there. Ever since anyone could remember, a great architectural structure (about the size of a small keep) has hung in the air,

about 1000 feet above the center of the island. Its design is unlike any of the other races of Eldoria, though it does bear some similarities to old buildings attributed to the lost Darvinor culture.

Since the 'Floating Citadel' (as it became known), was unable to be accessed by mundane means and magical incantations enabling flight and teleportation were largely unknown prior to the 20th century R, nobody knew the purpose of the strange structure or what it may contain, although many theories were put forth. The natives of Ghardon maintained belief that Sé, the Goddess of the Sky, dwelled within the Citadel and they told tales of the building falling to earth, should the Goddess be displeased. Naturally, the Sardellans who came to Ghardon were fascinated by the Floating Citadel too and by 766R, the community of Vharizia (which means 'in the shadow', in the tongue of Ghardon) was established in the central tablelands, beneath the fabulous relic.

A hurch to Ormocea was one of the early buildings erected in Vharizia to look after the spiritual needs of the people. When land was being cleared for the site, a second relic was found; that of a forty-five foot wide circular slab of stone, engraved with Pre-Redemption writings. It was dubbed the Anchorstone, after engineers building roads in Ghardon calculated that it was located at the dead center beneath the Floating Citadel. In later centuries, Wizards of the College of Arcane Science established that there was a direct magical link between the Citadel and the Stone and that the Citadel was somehow 'held in place' by it.

The first Abbot of the Ormocean Church in Vharizia, Esrael Argond, was determined to make his Order as important and influential as the mainland temples. He soon set about the creation of an extensive religious library and a Seercandum to find and grow a cadre of priests able to perform Miracles. By the mid-800s R, Argond had achieved this goal and the order boasted eight Seervaati priests, one of whom was a master of the Third Circle of Secrets. The Lord High Bishop of the Church himself visited Vharizia in 873R and, impressed by the progress of the Order, he elevated Argond to the title of Archbishop and granted the Order funds to construct a cathedral in Vharizia.

Argond's grandson, Orlon entered the Vharizian Order as an acolyte in 878R and was found to have latent talents as a Seervaati. He was able to comprehend and perform the Orisons taught to identify Seervaati potential but, over the next two years of training, he was unable to work any of the Miracles of the First Circle of Secrets. Despairing at his failure, Orlon accepted the role as Apprentice librarian of the Church but was not satisfied and continually sought other ways to learn how to reach the powers of the Tas.

Orlon had access to a number of forbidden texts and documents kept in the library of the Vharizian Order and found references to the magics practiced by Sorcerers. At this time there were no formal means of learning the ways of the Tas other than the mental disciplines known to the Churches.

The other option was Sorcery. In the Darktime, learned men had mastered the Tas using alternate methods to the clergy. This was the craft of the Sorcerer and had led to an age of untold horror, when wielders of magic filled the power vacuum left by rival kings and waged warfare upon each other. The Serpent

Kings had been overthrown but at great cost and those few mages who survived the wrath of the people, fled into the wilderness and continued their craft in isolation, passing on their knowledge from Master to Apprentice.

With the discovery of the Books of Law, the Prophet Samroth, employed a number of Sorcerers as translators, due to their understanding of many ancient languages. Because of this, Sorcerers gradually began to gain limited acceptance by the kingdoms and religious orders that arose following the Redemption but, at the time Vharizia was founded, they were still treated with suspicion and contempt by most people.

Many Sorcerers visited Ghardon, intrigued by the obvious magic nature of the Floating Citadel. Some individuals were accepted into the local society, so long as they kept their spells to themselves and used their talents as educators or as scholarly advisors to the nobility. Other unfortunates were harassed and driven out of Vharizia; on more that one occasion the locals were responsible for stoning magic-users to death. Orlon Argond, obsessed with wanting to manipulate the Tas and fired up by reading magic documents, visited one of the local Sorcerers - a woman called Lanees Dinmurren. She had been accepted and settled in Vharizia to teach mathematics and architecture. Orlon ended up studying magic under her and effectively became her Apprentice, becoming somewhat accomplished at channeling the Tas, using the principles of sorcery.

When Archbishop Esrael eventually discovered his grandson was practicing sorcery there was an initial hue and cry. Lanees was taken into custody and Orlon brought before an Ormocean tribunal (he was, after all, still an ordained member of the Ormocean Church).

However the tribunal didn't go the way of a typical Ormocean witch-hunt and had an unforeseen outcome. Orlon had such devotion, both to his Church and his desire to learn magic, he convinced the clerics in attendance that there was no harm in him continuing his study of sorcery, so long as he was governed by moral guidelines set down by the church.

He argued that the reason the Serpent Kings had turned to evil was that they had forsaken the Gods. A Sorcerer who adhered to the faith of Ormocea would be shielded from any possibility of seduction to dark arts. The tribunal concluded and ruled that Orlon be allowed to continue his research into magic but under the strict supervision of the Church. Lanees Dinmurren was released from captivity but exiled from Ghardon (someone had to take the fall).

Inevitably there was interest in Orlon and his studies and he was eventually allowed to teach magic to other students drawn from acolytes of the Church. A separate magic school grew in size and, when Orlon's pupils had mastered all that they could, the Church found positions for them with noble families and established institutions, such as mercantile guilds and judiciaries. Some of these pupils opted to remain at the school and assist Orlon in his teaching and research activities. By 900R, Orlon had six masters assisting him and the Church had to find lodgings for thirty permanent boarders, all learning magic. The Archbishop arranged for a dedicated facility to be built in close proximity to the Ormocean temple grounds and the College of Arcane Science became a distinct entity in its own right.

Growing Pains

Orlon Argond died in 932R and had a distinguished career. In his later years he worked to give the College greater independence from the Church, after his realization that there was a large amount of ancient lore that was fragmented, known only in bits and pieces by petty Sorcerers still living on the fringes of society. He had a grand vision of attracting such people to the College in Ghardon and building a vast repository of their knowledge. This would never happen while the College was perceived as part of the Church of Ormocea, so despite his stoic belief in Ormocean doctrine, he slowly began to subtly distance the College from its religious origins.

During the next 500 years the legacy of Orlon Argond was taken up by successive Wizards and his vision of an independent school of magic was achieved. With the creation of the holy retreat of Odressi in 1002R and with the Sardellan Empire entering its period of expansion, the eyes of the Ormocean Church were focused on other matters. The College of Arcane Science accepted an increasing number of candidates from outside the confines of the Church and a great many of these were adept Sorcerers who wished to share the dream of Orlon and unite the many different forms of arcane magic that existed.

In 1297R, in recognition of the diversity that the College had achieved, the Archmage Danicus restructured the institution and formed the eight magical orders that are the basis of modern magic. Students who came to study under the Master Magi of the College could now undertake the standard 'general' tutelage in the arcane arts or, if they were especially talented in a specific discipline, they could enter one of the specialist orders and hone their abilities in that field.

As the reputation of the College became known, its graduates were indented with numerous patrons across Eldoria. A network of contacts arose, mainly based in the larger cities, who maintained regular correspondence with the College, finding positions for its students. These contacts usually had some general understanding of the magic arts and would identify local talent and seek sponsorship of individuals to the College. This led to the formation of the Guild of Magi in 1301R, which formalized these links and spread the influence of the College further.

The Guild took on a localized role, mirroring the teachings of the College in areas that the Guild was established. It sought out those who showed promise in understanding the mechanics of magic (much like the Seercandum Orders of the Churches), accepted Apprentices and taught them the basics of the arcane disciplines.

Those who showed a masterful understanding of what they were taught were put forth as prospective students of the College itself. The Guild operated under the same principles of the College and taught the same essential moral lessons that had been established under Orlon, encouraging students to be responsible with their gifts and practice restraint in using the arts in a largely mundane world.

Despite acceptance of the College and Guild by many magic-users who had previously remained 'outcast' from mainstream society, there were those who did not share Orlon's vision and openly criticized everything the College stood for.

During the 14th century R, the distinction began to be made between those Magi who supported the ideals of the College and those who didn't and the first use of the term Wizard came into vogue to describe a 'schooled mage' who had learned his craft from the College or the Guild. The old term of Sorcerer was reserved for the purists who believed that the informal approach of the single Master and his Apprentice was the core dynamic of understanding the Tas.

Although the more aggrieved Sorcerers spoke publicly, condemning the methods of the College, they remained otherwise passive in their objections. The real threat to the College that announced its presence in 1468R were the Cultists devoted to the God Imaar, who had been growing in number since their Order was established in Odressi in 1173R.

Imaar was a small, secretive Cult, who worshipped the mysterious God of Magic. They had interpreted passages in the Books of Law to mean that Imaar had become one with the Tas when he was consumed by the Weirding Stone, his energy forming a separate thread within its weave. The Imaarites practiced a discipline of magic that differed from all conventional known forms. They shaped the wild, destructive forces that are inherent in the Tas, using Averaach (a rare crystal) to draw and release its forces.

As religious zealots, they had no match, and their doctrine preached that the magic of Imaar was the purest form of the Tas. They accepted that Seervaati drew upon the Tas according to the ancient methods laid down by their patron deities and that, as equals to Imaar, that form of magic was ordained, if not primitive and clumsy. But they took affront to all other means to 'steal power from Lord Imaar', hating Sorcerers and Wizards alike. Despite some violence directed at more renowned Sorcerers, it was the College that was to bear the brunt of most of the Cult's disdain over the centuries.

In 1468R, while visiting Odressi in an official capacity, the Archmage Jolian was assassinated by an Imaar cultist. The priests of the Imaar temple in Odressi were punished, according to the dictates of the Treaty of Odressi but remained unrepentant and determined to continue to wreak havoc upon the College and its members at every opportunity.

It was the beginning of a protracted animosity between the two institutions. Over the centuries, Imaar cultists attacked Wizards and destroyed Guild property, whenever the opportunity arose. At the same time the College worked subversively against the Cult, moving to have their status in Odressi repealed and using their influence in many of the great cities to prevent the establishment of any new temples devoted to Imaar.

The Brief Reign of General Xaskan

The next major milestone in the history of the College came during the Kinstrife, following the collapse of the Sardellan Empire. In 1663R, a force of Trezkillian soldiers, led by General Adain Xaskan, landed on Ghardon. Xaskan had been based in Maritaan and was returning to the Sardellan homelands to stake a claim in carving up its rich territories. During the voyage home he changed his mind and settled for capturing the island of Ghardon for his own personal domain. It was defended by a token militia which surrendered as soon as the Trezkillians landed.



Dominating the sky above the city of Vharizia, on Ghardon, is the College of Arcane Science. This fantastic magical citadel was built eons ago and has only been accessible to the Wizards of the College over the past 300 years.

Xaskan was a reasonable warlord, his men were well disciplined and he made it clear to the populace that he was simply replacing the existing authorities with his own governing body. Everything would be business as usual. However, after the Ormocean Church incited an unsuccessful rebellion against General Xaskan, his Trezkillian philosophies took over and he executed the senior members of the Church and banished the remaining clergy overseas. He razed the Cathedral of Vharizia as an example and the Ormocean compound that surrounded it. In its place, the General began the construction of a castle, using the local people as a labor force.

Xaskan and his army remained in Ghardon until 1665R and during that time a covert resistance against the occupying force was organized by the College, using magic to unnerve and cause disunity in the ranks of the Trezkillians. In the winter of 1665R, elements of the General's forces turned on each other, as a direct result of the skills of some of the College's Master Magi. A small company of Ghardon militants, supported by a few of the more powerful Masters seized the General's unfinished castle and took Xaskan prisoner. The General was released after agreeing to depart Ghardon with his men and, being a man of honor, he remained true to his word, continuing his trek to the Sardellan homelands and never returning to the island.

In 1677R, with the Treaty of Four Swords effectively ending the Kinstrife, the Ormocean Church returned to Ghardon to rebuild their order. Because of the bloodshed that had occurred on

the original site of the temple and its grounds, the new Cathedral in Vharizia was required to be built elsewhere. Archmage Salinda (the first female head of the College) suggested that the Ormoceans use the existing buildings of the College and its grounds and that the Wizards should relocate to the still incomplete castle that General Xaskan had attempted to raise on the ruins of the old Ormocean complex. It was agreed, although many of the the College's Masters thought the Archmage mad; it was a major inconvenience to move the College to another site, particularly one that was largely unfinished and inadequate for their needs. Only in later years, after the College was resettled and refurbished did the Archmage's ulterior motives become clear.

The Floating Citadel

For centuries the Ormocean Church had housed the ancient Anchorstone within its basements and had prevented any access to the relic by Wizards of the College. This fact seemed to have been forgotten as a result of the deaths of the senior clergy at the hands of Xaskan but it did not escape the Archmage's attention. With the relocation complete, the College gained possession of the Anchorstone and incorporated it into the lower level of a great council hall that they had constructed. From 1680R to 1701R the College poured a significant amount of time and resources into unlocking the secrets of the Anchorstone and their efforts were rewarded by Grandmaster Jasaylin of the Order of the Mutable

Source, who discovered the existence of a magical gateway in the Anchorstone, providing direct access to the Floating Citadel above.

The 18th century R was a time of frenetic activity by the College of Ghardon. A permanent two-way portal was established between the council hall on the College grounds and a chamber deep within the Floating Citadel. The Citadel was painstakingly examined and documented by various adepts of the Eight Orders and many documents and devices were found, located throughout the structure's twenty-three main halls and galleries.

These were removed for examination by the Artificers of the College. The functions of some of these devices were determined over the following centuries; the purpose of others remains a mystery to this very day. Gifted students are often assigned to the study of one or more of these relics in their fourth year at the College, in the hope that fresh minds may shed new light on their functionality.

It was found that the Citadel housed an elaborate mechanism of harmonic crystal arrays in a large spherical chamber, located in the base of the structure. Research proved that the mechanism continually drew energy from the Tas and transferred this into an envelope that encapsulated the entire complex. Although the workings of the crystal arrays have never been fully understood by any Artificers who have studied them, it was theorized that this was what supported the Floating Citadel in mid-air and that the mechanism was somehow 'locked down' by its connection with the Anchorstone.

Besides the Wizards of the College, dignitaries from all over Eldoria visited Ghardon in the 1700s R hoping to be invited on a grand tour of the marvelous Floating Citadel. Indeed many important visitors were given this opportunity, though others balked at passing through the Anchorstone portal and being translocated to the Citadel above. However, in 1761R, the Archmage declared that access to the Floating Citadel would be severely restricted, after a plot was discovered involving an attempt by the Imaar Cult to destroy the harmonic array and bring the Citadel crashing down upon Vharizia.

The College Masters created powerful wards about the passages that gave access to the chamber of the Anchorstone and, for the first time, employed an elite company of guards to provide full-time vigilance over the college grounds and maintain the security of the Floating Citadel. These guards were known as the Knights of Orlon and were well versed in the basics of magic, as well as being consummate warriors. Since their inception in 1783R, they have proven infallible, defeating two direct attempts to cause major damage to the College.

In 1785R, the council that governed College affairs, satisfied that the Citadel had been thoroughly examined and declared a relatively 'safe' environment to work in, decided to base certain aspects of its administration there. One of the larger halls was refurbished as the meeting place for the Wizard Council and the Archmage and members of the council were given the privilege of establishing their private apartments in the Citadel.

The relics and magical devices of the College were housed in a grand museum throughout several galleries of the Citadel and quarters and workshops were set aside for use by Artificers,

who continued the painstaking study of the collection.

Recent Events

Since the occupation of the Floating Citadel, the College of Arcane Science has continued to seek out potential talents and educate them in the diverse aspects of the magical disciplines known to the Eight Orders. It has directed a large deal of funding to its Guild Houses and used its representatives in the great cities to help overcome the old fears of magic, cementing ties with ruling factions and the larger religions. By 2150R, the Guild had established itself in Denhaven, Gablehead, Slaarn, Darringmoor, Quorull, Odressi, Maedori, Byalliz, Port Lyrie and Tempest.

Besides its teaching activities, Guild Houses have been involved in countless investigative activities across Eldoria. Any mysterious events that appeared over the years, seeming to have some basis in magic were usually reported to the local Guild of the Magi and investigated by a Wizard of the Guild or a Master of the College itself.

Although almost exclusively a Human institution, the College has attracted the interest of magic-users from other demi-human races over the past century. The Grandmaster Aedrinna Pelidon, who sits on the Wizard Council, is Half-Elven and the College's most unusual adept, Tolfynn Mistweaver, is a master illusionist of the rare race of Gnomes, native to the southern lands of Leezeria.

The Archmage of the College in 2150R is Elmarren Calusenda, a Human who hales from the island of Dormos. Elmarren studied in the Guild of the Magi in Odressi between the years of 2109R and 2115R and was found to excel in the area of Conjunction. He was referred to the College and went on to become Grandmaster of the Order of Summoners by 2132R. He was elected to the position of Archmage in 2148R in recognition of his years of service to the College and his research into Metamagic that increased the ability of Wizards to draw and control Tas energy, allowing spells to have greater range and duration.

Organization of the College

The College Below and Above

The College of Arcane Science funds its activities from a wide range of sources. Principal amongst these are:

Payments made from patrons for the placement of Journeymen Wizards for a period of four years.

Fees for seeking advice and guidance from the Grandmasters of the College.

The discreet sale of certain artifacts, potions and services to trusted patrons made strictly in accordance within the charter of the College.

There were so many people who travel to Vharizia to consult the Grandmasters that the College found its valuable time taken up by many trivial meetings, the majority being of no benefit to either party. The Wizard Council ended up limiting visits to only the most senior foreign dignitaries and set up mechanisms to establish the necessity and importance of other persons seeking an audience with the Grandmasters.

The College established a circle of 'brokers' in Vharizia, whose task it was to interview those who wanted to meet with a representative of the College and to determine if the reasons for

contact with the College were noteworthy enough to interest any of the Masters. Most brokers in Vharizia were once Wizards of the College who failed, for whatever reason, to complete their studies. The brokers demand a minimum non-refundable fee of 50 gold trades to act for a client seeking to gain the attention of the College; the more influential brokers often demand 150 gold trades. Of course, the College makes sure it benefits from these arrangements and takes a percentage of the broker's fee and charges them 30 gold trades for an annual license to operate. At last count there were forty-six registered brokers in Vharizia.

The main College is a collection of buildings looking like a cross between a monastery and a castle, due to the inclusion of many of the fortifications built by General Xaskan during the Kinstrife. It stands on a high, flat rise of land called Calidora's Table, with the rest of the town spread out below. In contrast to the mishmash of architectural styles, Calidora's Table has a small but beautiful copse of woods to its south where a cold spring of water rises and forms a catch-pool. The pool overflows the steep cliffs of the southern extremity of Calidora's table, cascading down some 80 feet of rocks into the Deeping Pool, a large pond.

Approach to the College is via a single road that rises steeply up the more accessible western spur of the Table. The barracks of the town militia are located at the base of this road

and the guards stationed there, watch all traffic that passes, stopping and questioning any suspicious characters. The real challenge, however, is to get past the Knights of Orlon, who man the portcullis gate and fortress walls of the College. They are a humorless, dedicated band of well-trained guards and woe-betide anyone who approaches the gates without documents approving visitation rights, marked with a seal of a bona fide broker. They are quick to march trespassers to the garrison of the town militia and let them linger in the dungeons for a span week or two.

The most elaborate building in the grounds of the College is the Old Council Hall, now used as a martial training arena for the Knights of Glory, who also watch over the passages to the Chamber of the Anchorstone, located in the network of tunnels below ground level. Guards are posted in the Chamber at all times and there is always a Master on duty with sufficient expertise to invoke spells that will open the magic portal that provides access to the Floating Citadel. There is a similar vigil kept about the corresponding portal within the Citadel itself. This is called the Chamber of Passage and is positioned in the center of the complex.

The long-term strategies and policies of the College are formulated at formal meetings of the Wizard Council within the most impressive of the Citadel's halls - the Theater of Pharoz.



Some of the Grandmasters who sit upon the Wizard Council (from left to right) Elmarren Calusenda, the Archmage; Aedrinnia Pelidon, Half-Elven; Tolfynn Mistweaver, Gnome Illusionist and Kalmoor Trennel of Maritaan

Here, a panorama of tall windows, made from an impenetrable glass, afford a fantastic view of Ghardon and the blue waters of the Sea of Souls. The Council meets on a cycle of every twenty days or if a special hearing is summoned by the Archmage (or any of the Grandmasters of the Eight Orders).

The Wizardly Orders

It is the Orders of Wizardry that form the administrative and educational heart of the College. Each Order is devoted to a specific branch of the arcane arts and occupies its own chapter house on the grounds of Calidora's Table (although the Grandmasters of each Order maintain personal apartments in the Citadel above). A friendly rivalry exists between the students (and Masters) of the Orders and, although some jests between young Apprentices are tolerated, any gross misuse of magic, bringing harm to person or property is dealt with swiftly, usually resulting in expulsion from the College.

The Eight Orders are:

The Revered Order of Summoners (who specialize in Conjuration). Their crest is a gold ring with eight inward pointing arrows arranged around its circumference.

Mystic Order of Eternals (who specialize in Necromancy). Their crest consists of a circular band divided into three equal sections of black, gray and white.

The Noble Order of Guardians (who specialize in Abjuration). Their crest consists of a green portcullis on which an owl is perched.

The Honorable Order of the Masked Eye (who specialize in Illusion). Their crest is an open eye, set against the open palm of a hand.

The Knowledgeable Order of Farseekers (who specialize in Divination). Their crest is a silver crystal ball.

The Distinguished Order of Ancient Glammer (who specialize in Enchantment). Their crest is a golden starburst surrounding a violet Octagon.

The Hallowed Order of Creators (who specialize in Evocation). Their crest depicts a plume of purple smoke rising from an urn.

The Sagely Order of the Mutable Source (who specialize in Transmutation). Their crest shows a flame burning on water.

Students of the Orders are easily recognizable by a poncho-like garment that they wear at all times, emblazoned with the device of their particular Order. Masters and Grandmaster wear similar attire but their rank is identified by color markings on the hem of their clothing. The Archmage and those Wizards who do not belong to a specific Order, display the symbol of the College itself, an octagon made up of the colors and runic devices of each of the Eight Orders.

Progression Through the Ranks

Students who are sent to the College by a Guild of the Magi are usually aged around sixteen years of age and have had about two years of training by a Guild Mage, learning to master all Cantrips. The student enters the College as a Novice and then spends their first two years being taught a general understanding of magic, dabbling in the basic spells of each of the Orders.

During the first two years of study, the Novices are not squirreled away in dormitories, hidden from the mundane world.

The College believes that they need a solid grounding in humility and all Novices are found lodgings about the town of Vharizia. They attend the College during the day and are expected to earn their keep at their lodgings, performing menial chores (without the use of their talents) before and after their formal study hours. Only in their third year do they remove themselves to the grounds of the College and take up residence in the communal hall of their allotted Order.

Most Novices display talents or an affinity for one of the specialized forms of magic and will be formally indoctrinated into a specific Order, where they will concentrate mainly on one type of magic for the next two years. There are a number of other areas that Apprentices are channeled into. Some show an ability to be easily at home with all forms of magic and continue a generalized tutelage in the arts under the direct guidance of the Grandmasters of the Council. On the rare occasion, an Apprentice shows exceptional understanding of some of the relics of the Citadel museum and becomes an Artificer, spending the rest of their years unlocking the secrets of the College's collection, experimenting with the replication of ancient devices and, on the odd occasion, going on expeditions to find lost treasures of Pre-Redemption origin.

A Novice who completes four years of training to the satisfaction of the Masters is called a Maven. Mavens then spend a final two year period refining their art, ultimately having their skills and knowledge tested in order to graduate as Journeyman Wizards.

A Journeyman must complete a four year indenture arranged by through the Guild of the Magi. Once the indenture has been served, the Journeyman returns to the College with documents from their patron, attesting to the quality of their abilities and their conduct; a favorable report elevates the Journeyman to the title of Master Wizard. The Master is free to continue serving the patron of the original indenture (and many do) or they can pursue the magic arts in their own capacity. Of those who do not take up renewed service with their patron, some seek acceptance as teachers in the College or with a Guild House. Others work in some different capacity for the College (as Artificers, Alchemists or Relic-hunters). There are a few who set up practice in their own right and fewer still that succeed.

Masters, working within the College may eventually find themselves attaining the lofty position of Grandmaster of one of the Eight Orders. The Orders each have their own methods of nominating their Grandmaster but the individual is usually someone who has given at least twenty years of service and have contributed to the evolution and advancement of magic in some distinct way. Grandmasters are responsible for the training of the 'more gifted' non-specialist Wizards and have a position on the Wizard Council.

The Archmage, who is the titular head of the College, is elected to a lifetime position by the Wizard Council (although a vote by five of the Grandmasters can strip the incumbent of their position). The Archmage largely articulates the direction the College shall take in its activities, setting the agenda for debate within the Council. The position also requires an individual with refined diplomatic skills, as they are often required to meet with and listen to the requests and grievances of foreign

powerbrokers.

A Code of Honor

Historians have concluded that much of the success of the College of Arcane Science must be owed to the philosophies espoused by its more prominent graduates. This, of course, has been due to the origins of the College in the Church of Ormocea and a need to convince doubters that, those who practiced magic were not all raving mad Sorcerers, bent on destroying the world. Although the College eventually broke away from Church that founded it, the successive Archmages ensured that their institution maintained regular dialogue with many of the established religions and continued to preach a guiding moral code to its Novices, shaping their outlook with regards to the mundane world and the use of magic. The core ethos of this code remains similar, in many ways, to elements of Ormocean law but, with regards to arcane power, it specifically seeks to instill the following ideals:

A Wizard should solve a dilemma using their wits, before resorting to magic. It is a petty Wizard who needs to draw upon the Tas every day of their life.

Magic and war make bad company. A Wizard shall not become involved in the battles of unworthy Kings. They seek to win glory with talents that they do not possess.

The Tas is to be treated with reverence and its powers not invoked for dishonorable purposes. Theft, jealousy, avarice, pride and greed are but a few of the pitfalls that lead the petty Wizard to destruction.

Of course, not all of the Wizards trained by the College have gone on to have exemplary careers. On the rare occasion, troublesome individuals have tried to influence the affairs of countries and usurp power. In these times, the College has always maintained a non-interventionist policy toward directly challenging any 'rogue' Wizard. However, they have lent assistance by empowering the disaffected parties with knowledge and devices to defeat their enemies. In some very rare instances the College has dispatched a Master to coordinate the efforts against certain protagonists but, in all these cases, direct confrontations between magical duelists is avoided.

It has been documented that, in a more than one instance, a renegade Wizard has met their end in extremely strange and brutal circumstances. A popular tale told amongst first year Novices is that of the Nightwalker, a terrible demon said to be interned somewhere in the deep vaults of the College. It is under the command of the Archmage, who sends the beast forth to deal with those Wizards who stray from the ideals of the College and threaten to bring it into disrepute.

Some Facts about the College

There are usually 100-150 Apprentices studying at the College of Arcane Science at any one time. There are currently thirty-two Masters teaching at the College, in addition to the eight Grandmasters.

By the time they graduate (after six years of study) a Journeyman Wizard has reached the lofty heights of Level 1.

Approximately seventy percent of Novices give up their studies in the second year due to the stress and commitment involved in learning magic. Some of these take up positions

within the Guild of Magi; most simply give up on magic and rarely touch the Tas again.

Most Guild Houses test approximately 50 young people a year for their magic potential. Of these, most will turn out to be minor talents with little grasp of manipulating the Tas. They are able to perform a few Cantrips at best. Approximately ten will show talent enough to learn all the Cantrips and will study at the Guild House. Two or three of these will have enough talent to warrant petitioning the Wizards' Council for acceptance into the College.

In 1703R, half of the College buildings on Calidora's Table were seriously damaged by an explosion resulting from the unforeseen activation of a large piece of Red Averaach (named after the unfortunate Wizard who cast a spell into the crystal to determine its properties). Over fifty Apprentices and six Masters were killed. This tragedy led to a great deal of research into this volatile crystal and its relationship to Tas energy. The complex nature of Red Averaach and its kindred crystals are now well documented by the College, who actively search for fragments at the sites of meteor strikes.

In 1841R, to pay homage to the beliefs of the original people of Ghardon, the Wizards' Council erected a shrine, in the Floating Citadel, dedicated to the sky Goddess Sé.

Halmorden Trallis, the only son of the Citylord of Tempest, is currently studying at the College of Arcane Science and is reputed to be a capable Evoker.

In 2102R, Master Gydelle Farnith passed into the portal in the Chamber of Passage and never translocated into the Chamber of the Anchorstone. Gydelle was never seen again. Three Masters have sworn that they have seen ghostly manifestations of Gydelle wandering the halls of the College.

The Archmage is rumored to be putting together an expedition to Jungles of Po-Ka, claiming to have found old documents and charts that provide the location of the Lost City of Corithaal said to be a major settlement of the Uushai.

The Knights of Orlon maintain a company of twenty-five fighting men. They wear leather armor so as not to impede their magical abilities and favor a two-handed fighting style, using a longsword and dagger. Their martial skills are built around speed rather than brute strength.



THE OUTLANDS AND BEYOND

"I am glad to have returned from that drear and base landscape. Its cheerless rains and barren hills left a chill in my soul, an emptiness that is hard to define unless you have touched the Tas and filled your soul with its warmth. In Shylagor I found that I could not channel magic and I was like any other mundane; I was, understandably, mortified".

From a Report to the Wizard's Council by the Mage Falwynn Korrdell, 2147R

The outer coastal regions of the continent of Eldoria are known as the Outlands. They are largely a barren region, with poor soil and erosion problems, caused by constant severe storms and flooding. The monsoonal climate is a result of changes in the world that followed the destruction of Kordass, in the First Age. With no major landmass to break up the movements of the oceans in the equatorial regions, a band of never-ending cyclonic weather encircled the globe, the effects being felt in the north as severe rain depressions and seasonal tornadoes.

This has made life in the Outlands very hard and was a contributing reason that many tribes migrated across the vast mountain ranges that form a natural barrier for the inner lands of Eldoria. These mountains act as a protective barrier, breaking up the cyclonic activity and transforming the outer storms into more gentle rain bearing clouds.

The waters around the Outland Coast are treacherous, to say the least, crisscrossed by hidden reefs and subject to sudden inclement weather and high seas. The famous explorer, Jarl Thrallin, lost two vessels from his fleet of four ships when circumnavigating Eldoria in 1275R. He wrote of the Outer Seas:

"In all my days at sea, I have never seen the like of these deadly waters. It is as if we are an invader to Gurthor's domain and he seeks to hurl us back onto land, from whence we came. I cling to the coast, where I can, only putting out to deeper waters if the shoals prove to be too daunting. Pity the poor captain who seeks to sail the wide oceans and loses sight of land altogether".

Since Captain Thrallin's voyage, a number of Y'siran merchant ships do make claim of sailing southward and westward from Eldoria. Few returned; those that did telling tales of waterspouts and storms that raged unabated. Their ships were badly damaged before they were forced back to land, but in doing so, they visited many of the outer islands of Eldoria and told tales of the abandoned ancient fortresses and ruins that lay there. In the distant south, a small colony was established on the island of Kultuus, by Y'sirans fleeing the fallout following the defeat of the Keljak by the Sardellan Empire. This is the farthest known outpost of any Eldorian culture, although no ship has sailed to Kultuus in over a century.

The only mariners known to still actively sail the great oceans beyond Eldoria are the Leezari. Theirs is a one-way trip to seek the Meridathian Maelstrom, which they say is the gateway to the Unending Sea, and from there they can reach the

Heaven set aside by the House of Light.

Some Pre-Redemption records indicate the existence of another continent, besides lost Kordass. Documents of the time mention Altarren, that lies in the south of Enshar but theologians at the 16th Congress of Odressi dismissed this, ruling that Altarren was one of the names of the Holy Land of Kordass, destroyed as a result of the Breaking of the Great Accord by the Gods.

During the Darktime, there were a number of great migrations of people from the Outlands into the interior of Eldoria. During the final climactic days of the War of Powers, many Humans deserted the ranks of both sides of the conflict, fleeing to the Outlands. In the decades that followed the Last Battle, there was little contact between those who sought the safety of the Outlands and those who survivors who remained in the interior; the former being more concerned with survival against the radical changes to the weather, and the latter concerned with rebuilding their shattered kingdoms.

Then came the Darktime and there was very little difference between the lot of those dwelling in the Outlands or the Inner Realms; both were reduced to barbarism.

As the ages passed and the power of the Tas was rediscovered, there was some stability regained in the heartlands. But, for reasons that still remain unclear today, the Tas remained weak in the lands far from the center of Eldoria. With living conditions became worse in the Outlands and this precipitated a series of large scale migrations into the Inner Realms.

However not all people of the Outlands desired a life within the central lands of Eldoria. Many remained fearful of magic and remained in their ancient homes, living a harsher existence. Some of those who crossed the mountains later came to return, especially during wars of the Serpent Kings.

Today, the Outlands of Eldoria are populated, to a large degree, by tribal and nomadic people, less civilized than the lands that border the Inner Seas. Most live in widespread villages, surrounded by dry moats and palisades, much like the hill forts of Llan and Sardell built during the 5th – 10th centuries R. Other people, who are more migratory, form tent communities and follow the herds, much like the people of Char-Endl.

There are over a hundred different barbarian tribes occupying the Outlands, the most numerous of these being the Keljak, the Zurandi, the Talihyndi and the Arimah.

There are three permanent settlements of greater size, mainly used to barter goods. These are:

AZTRIA

This is the fortress of the Icewalkers, located far in the frigid north. It is an extensive ice-cave network and its people dwell entirely inside its numerous galleries for four Marches each year.

Remarkably, Esmian missionaries maintain a hospice in Azrtria and are highly revered by its inhabitants as 'Gods'.



An Esmian priestess tends to the education of a child in the cold lands surrounding Aztria. Although they do not encourage it, the Esmians are given god-like status by the Ice-Walkers

SHYLAGOR

Located in the south, on the coast, Shylagor is a centre of trade for the Zurandi, the Keljak and the Talihyndi who occupy the wide arid steppes of that region. It is built on a high cliff-top above the sea, as a precaution against tsunami.

Most of Shylagor is made of simple buildings made from the shingle like rocks of the area.

TAL-KAIYAN

This is the old capitol of the Y'naari-Kahn, the once decadent rulers of Maritaan. Tai-Kaiyan was besieged and sacked by the Sardellan Empire but in later years, barbarian tribes moved into the city and integrated with the remaining Y'naari-Kahn.

The tribes occupy the outer districts of the city but will not enter its heart, saying to do so will bring the curse of the Kahn down upon them.

There is some limited trade between the Outlands and the Inner Realms, mainly undertaken by Y'siran merchants looking for more lucrative markets, not exploited by the Guild of Gold. Communication is sometimes difficult, the local Outlanders speaking any one of sixty tribal dialects. However, since the 1800's R a rudimentary sign language has come into vogue, allowing most deals and agreements to be made. This is known as 'handtongue' in the local vernacular and it is best suited to transactions, its sign-forms being somewhat limited and inappropriate for broader communication (e.g. the closest translation of the phrase, "I would like to propose marriage," is "Sell-me-you-slave.")

As touched on, it is well documented that magic is severely weakened or does not work at all in the Outlands and beyond and, since most scholars of Eldoria are also Wizards or Seervaati,

there is not a great amount of learning that is exported to the Outlands, which is reflected in their lower level of development, compared to the Inner Realms. The Esmian and Phelltar faiths have been active in sending missions into the region and the Esmians even have a temple and hospice in Shylagor. They report that the Outlanders tend to worship totemistic deities, based on the Divine Twenty-Seven. For example, the Xigari tribesmen worship the Great Eagle Kazarah, which the Esmians believe is derived from Kezrinn, the winged consort of the Sky Goddess Sé.

The exceptions to this are the Keljak who follow a monotheistic religion, paying homage to Kavast, the Lord of the Four Elements. They introduced Kavast to Y'sira, when the Keljak crossed the Dunewall and ruled there, but since their subsequent retreat back to the Outlands, followers of Kavast in Eldoria are persecuted as heretics (even in the northern realms).

The Outlands are largely unmapped and unexplored and offer great adventure to those brave enough to forgo the luxuries of magic. It is a place where time has stood still, a reflection of the barbaric times of the early Eldorian kingdoms. In many ways life is harder than in the Inner Realms but then again, freedom is greater, the Outlands having none of the controlling influence of the temples, guilds and noble factions. It is a place where the strong prosper and cunning individuals can carve out a kingdom in their own lifetime.

Notes on Using Magic in the Outlands

The further you travel from the heart of Eldoria, it becomes more and more difficult for magic-capable people to draw upon the magic of the Tas and successfully translate spells. The College of Arcane Science has theorized that this was due to the destruction of the Weirding Stone by Sadir, however the Conclave of Odressi disagree, arguing that the Tas existed before the Gods came to Enshar. The Weirding Stone was made to allow them to refine the Tas into a form of energy that existed in Kalidath, the First Heaven, making it unnecessary for the Theledai to undertake the laborious journey back across the Great Shadow, when weakened from their exertions in making the world. The debate continues.

Magic items with 'in-built' powers still function normally as these draw upon the Tas to charge them and 'carry' Tas energy with them into the Outlands. However, it is impossible to recharge a magic item or write a magic scroll.

Creatures able to use magic are a rarity, unless the magical ability is considered an innate ability. Any creature that can cast magic in the same way as a Wizard or Priest is limited in the same way that characters are.

MISCELLANY

"I found myself physically taken by the radiance emanating from the Anchor stone; my spell-weaving had been successful at finally causing a linkage between it and the Tas. I felt as though I was drawn upward at an incredible pace; there was a brief impression of moving through the actual fabric of the College walls, then a dizzying glimpse of the city as if from a great height, followed by silence....blessed darkness.

Although I did not realize it at first, I had crossed the distance between the College and the Citadel above....I was the first to walk those ancient halls for over 5,000 years."

From the "Memoirs of Grandmaster Heliard Jasaylin", 1723R.

This section contains a collection of references to specific races, unique items and cultural quirks pertinent to Eldoria. It is mainly 'gloss' information for the Referee and Players to use when fleshing out backgrounds of the characters and the settings.

THE SAAHN

The Books of Law declare that, collectively sentient beings are called Saahn and that these include Humans, Elves, Dwarves, Halflings, Gnomes and Goblinskynd (a term for the many belligerent humanoid races native to Ahr-Ganiz). Although it is clear that the Gods also created a virtual cornucopia of other intelligent humanoid creatures, the status of these other races are not mentioned in the tomes. The placement of the Merfolk of Emerald Deeps and the Giants of the Grand Escarpment, in the scheme of things, remains a constant subject of debate by theologians.

HUMANS

By far, Humans are the most populous species of Saahn on the Eldorian continent and they dominate affairs in all realms except Leezeria and Ahr-Ganiz. They can adapt to most climates and have settled widely, as the far north as the frozen wastes of Char-Endl and as far south as the hot desert lands of Y'sira. Their average (natural) life span is 70 years. Many Humans of modern day Eldoria are a blend of several races but there are still a number of distinct racial characteristics that are more dominant in certain regions, just like in our own world. These are outlined below:

Akalastians

The Akalastian people occupied Malonia (the southern tip of Sard) for much of the Darktime. When the glaciers retreated they moved north and settled in the fertile country bounded by the Grand Escarpment, the Stonebrow and the Eaglesroost Mountains. They mixed mainly with the Tarkian and Nelendai to produce the Sardian and Elkian races. Pure Akalastian traits are as follows:

Average Height: 5' 10"

Hair Color/Type: Brown/Curly
 Eye Color: Brown/Hazel
 Skin Tone: Caucasian (olive)
 Frame: Medium

Keljak

The Keljak settled the Outland deserts, south of Y'sira and were part of a greater tribe that included the Ziaddan people of Rhenfara. They migrated into Y'sira, as a result of a series of divine revelations given to their shamans and went on to forge a mighty empire. They mixed with the Zurandi to a small degree but have remained racially isolated for the most part, returning to the Outlands after the death of Viritath. Pure Keljak traits include:

Average Height: 6'1"
 Hair Color/Type: Black/Straight
 Eye Color: Brown or Grey
 Skin Tone: Negro (dark brown)
 Frame: Light to Medium

Khalasian

The Khalasians first settled Northland and later crossed Char-Endl and continued on into Llan. The Khalasians who remained in Northland later became mixed with Sardellan colonists, while those who settled Llan integrated with the Llanadan. The folk of Char-Endl retain the more pure traits of the Khalasian people:

Average Height: 6'2"
 Hair Color/Type: Brown or Red/Straight
 Eye Color: Brown/Green
 Skin Tone: Caucasian (pale)
 Frame: Medium to Heavy

Nalarian

The Nalarian people were amongst the first to expand across Eldoria and have always been a close-knit folk, rarely marrying outside their social groups. They have very distinctive traits:

Average Height: 5'8"
 Hair Color/Type: Blonde/Straight
 Eye Color: Blue or Violet
 Skin Tone: Eurasian (pale brown)
 Frame: Light

Nelendai

The Nelendai dwelled in the southern parts of Elkia originally and moved into the far east of that region as the ice-cap retreated. They are one of three main Human tribes (the others being the Akalastians and Tarkians) who formed the racial traits of people in modern Sard and Elkia.

Average Height: 6'0"
 Hair Color/Type: Black or Brown/Straight
 Eye Color: Blue or Gray
 Skin Tone: Arabic (pale brown)
 Frame: Light to Medium

Llanadan

A hardy, mountain folk of Llan who have some common ancestry with the Tarkians. They intermingled with the Khalasians to produce the type of people common in Llan today. The pure traits of a Llanadan are:

Average Height:	5'5"
Hair Color/Type:	Blonde or Red/Curly
Eye Color:	Green
Skin Tone:	Caucasian (dark brown)
Frame:	Heavy



Humans are a hardy and prolific species. Though not as long-lived as the Leezari or Stonekin, they have come to dominate the continent of Eldoria. Depicted here is a typical Khalasian male.

Tarkian

The Tarkians are an aggressive race from northwest Sard and Llan. They shared a common ancestry with the Llanadan and mixed with the Akalastian and Nelendai people to form the common racial traits of most Sardian and Elkian people.

Average Height:	5'6"
Hair Color/Type:	Blonde or Red/Curly
Eye Color:	Brown/Hazel
Skin Tone:	Caucasian (pale brown)
Frame:	Medium to Heavy

Y'naari

A people who came from the Island of Orlon and settled in Maritaan. They intermingled with Sardellan colonists to produce the common traits of Maritaani southerners. Pure Y'naari exist in the northern parts of Maritaan. Their traits are:

Average Height:	5'7"
Hair Color/Type:	Black /Straight
Eye Color:	Green or Hazel
Skin Tone:	Asian (pale olive)
Frame:	Light to Medium

Ziaddan

A people who occupied the Gorrabandi Veldt and later crossed into the lands of Rhenfara. They had some racial mixing with Khalasians and some common origins with the Keljak. Their main traits are:

Average Height:	6'1"
Hair Color/Type:	Black/Straight

Eye Color:	Brown
Skin Tone:	Negro (very light brown)
Frame:	Light to Medium

Zurandi

A people who established themselves on the Y'siran coastline during the Darktime. They invited the Keljak to rule them for political reasons and had some intermingling of culture and race.

Average Height:	5'9"
Hair Color/Type:	Blonde or Brown/Straight
Eye Color:	Brown or Hazel
Skin Tone:	Arab (dark brown)
Frame:	Light to Medium

ELVES

The Elves (or Leezari) are mainly found in Leezeria, a land they closed to other races and have defended against Goblinskynd for generations. They share similar traits to Humans, including height. Their ears are slightly more tapered than a Human's rounded lobes and they all have distinctive eyes that take on a golden hue, when they reflect light from a certain angle. This is associated with their darkvision.

Elves show little sign of the aging process and at their most mature they appear to be the equivalent to a Human in their mid-to-late thirties. However, when they reach somewhere between 300 and 500 years of age, most Elves begin to enter a trance-like state. This occurs fleetingly at first, maybe a few seconds per day, but slowly increases in duration as they continue to age. This trance state is called Priatharia and ultimately ends in an Elf remaining comatose for all time.

When the permanent form of Priatharia takes hold, the body does not wither or corrupt. Instead it remains warm and supple, as though the affected person has been asleep for but a day, however an Elf who has entered Priatharia does not respond to external stimuli in any way at all. Although it is a rarity, some Elves never enter Priatharia and others have been known to awaken from the state, bearing no ill effects.

The bodies of Elves in a state of Priatharia are placed in glass caskets with a few possessions that they may need in case they do awaken in another age. The caskets are placed in secret grottoes or in subterranean crypts called 'Dreaming Halls'. It is the belief of all Elves that the spirit of those who have achieved a state of Priatharia travel (in spirit form) to the Holy Glade, an Elven paradise that lies beyond the confines of the Prime Material Plane. The gateway and path to the Holy Glade was made known to the Elves at the Dawn of Time and, when a living Elf tires of the world and seeks to sail to the Holy Glade, they are charged with the task of taking relatives, who have fallen under the spell of endless sleep, under their care and escorting their resting forms to the Holy Glade.

The bodies of Elves who die through violence or accidental injury are subject to the natural course of decay, the same as Humans. They are usually cremated and their ashes scattered on the wind. Their spirits are said to have followed the Goddess Tarimth in her voyage across the Great Void.

Elves also have a low fertility rate, with females being able to bear children between the average ages of 75 to 200.

Most Elven women only conceive one child, two is a cause for celebration and three or more is a rarity. Over the past two centuries, with the easing of Leezeria's isolationist policy, a growing number of Elven women have departed their homeland to conceive children with Humans; where the chances of bearing offspring are considerably higher.

The low birth rate, their past practice of isolationism and the amount of Elven people lost to their continual struggle against the Goblinskynd, has all contributed to the extremely low population levels in Leezeria. It is estimated that only 50,000 Elves remain throughout the whole realm; they are a race on the edge of extinction.

The different races of Elves that exist include the following:

The Eldari

These are the most common of Elves who tend to dwell throughout the west of Leezeria in places similar to human habitation, though more open in design and utilizing more delicate craftsmanship. They occupy the capitol of Tarimthol-Irl and communities such as Fairhaven and Pharidor's Watch. The royal family has always been of the Eldari.

They are the equivalent of the High Elves and worship Phelltar, Tarimth and Pharidor.



Leezari females have a low fertility rate compared to Humans. Most only have one child during their lifetime

The Wyndari

During the Darktime, much of eastern Leezeria suffered from the ravages of war. The Wyndari Elves decided to devote themselves to the protection of the remaining forests. Since then, they have lived mainly throughout the great woodland belt of the south of Leezeria, in the Glades of Peace and Eldarwood. They live a nomadic life, traveling the forests as hunter-gatherers, moving between Tairns. These are semi-permanent aboveground dwellings, built in trees. The Telekar-Nyssa, of Llan, are of the Wyndari, as are the Druids of the Shaedarfyn.

They are the equivalent of the Wood Elves and worship

Ulliah.

The Vorgadi

These are the Dark Elves, said to have been once numbered amongst the Valdari. When the Province of Dalafor was cut off from the rest of Leezeria and assailed by the Goblinskynd, those Elves who did not flee, fought a long, bitter guerilla war against their enemies. They cursed the Elvenking of the west, believing they had been forsaken and their leader, the Sorceress Deleroth summoned the powers of evil Demons to save her people. Since that time, it is told that the Vorgadi have dwelled beneath the southern extremities of the Mountains of Terror and their once-fair form has been given the mark of the Demons they serve.

They are the equivalent of the Drow and they worship the Unholy Trinity.



The dread Vorgadi Elves, cursed descendants of the Leezari who dwelt once in Dalafor, in the east

The Valdari

These Elves are rare and are more in tune with the wilder elements of nature, preferring windswept moors, tangled forests and wide marshlands to the ordered groves of their Eldari and Wyndari cousins. The Valdari once dwelled in the far eastern province of Dalafor, until it succumbed to the Goblinskynd armies. The bulk of the survivors maintained a small colony in the borderlands, devoting themselves to hunting and slaying Orcs and Goblins. Others traveled across Leezeria, and came to dwell in the southern forests and along its coasts, visiting places where the Sylvaari (spirits of nature) still dwell. They made

oaths to serve and protect these fading creatures from all Saahn, including other Elves.

They are the equivalent of Wild Elves and worship Ulliah, Hirath and Liraan.

The Imaldri

These Elves are mentioned in the legends of the Eldari and it is rumored that they dwell in an undersea citadel, somewhere off the coast of Rhenfara. Ancient Arimah stories tell of "Elves who emerged from the sea and traded with their ancestors prior to the coming of the Y'naari-Kahn pirates. The Y'naari are said to have driven the Arimah into the jungles of Po-Ka and the Elves back to Imaldioth, their sunken city".

They are the equivalent of Aquatic Elves and they worship Gurthor and Pharidor.

HALF-ELVES

Marriage outside the Elven race is frowned on by most Leezari but this hasn't stopped many Elves being attracted to the diversity and resilience shown by Humans and (in some rare tales) other Saahn.

HalfElves lose immortality and do not succumb to Priatharia. Death claims them, as it does Humans and, although they still show little signs of ageing, they grow weaker and eventually die. Their life span is about 200 years and their fertility rate is improved. They can have offspring between the years of 30 and 150 and have an average of two to four children. The telltale golden eyes are less noticeable, although the ear-lobes remain distinctively Elven.

Half-Elves tend to dwell more amongst Human society in small numbers, due to the stigma often associated with their 'mixed blood' if they remain with pure Elves. Port Lyrie, a Human settlement on the western fringes of Leezeria, acts as the main place of interaction between the Elven and Human world and thus has the highest density of Half-Elven population.

DWARVES

Also known as the Stonekin, Dwarves of Eldoria once lived in the west, far beyond the settled lands of Vheridane. Here they are said to have built legendary underground cities during the Darktime, the most famous of which was Dwarvenhold.

Whatever happened to those great ancient cities is not known, however the Dwarves arrived in central Eldoria around the 3rd century R, in a large fleet of ships that sailed across the Sea of Five Winds.

After a brief success at establishing their own Kingdom, a number of unfortunate disasters forced the majority of Dwarves to leave their traditional way of life and integrate themselves into the Human world, where they found work as masons and smiths. The Dwarves are very conscious of the creeping loss of their cultural identity and many a young Stonekin, spurred on by tales told around the hearth, has gone a-questing for the ancient mines of old.

They are a hardy folk with an average lifespan of 500 years and, like the Elves, they have a low birth rate, most Dwarven women conceiving only two or three children in their lifetime. Females have somewhat finer features than their male counterparts and possess a lion-like mane of hair.



Regardless of individual race, the Stonekin all share a passion for gems and precious metals

There are five races of Dwarves, as detailed below:

The Zahlankar

These are the largely the Dwarves of Karashar-Zahl who have integrated into Human society, mainly throughout Sard, Elkia and the Crownless Lands of Leezeria. They are at home in the above-ground residences of the Humans but prefer their buildings to be made from stone. The Zahlankar are the equivalent of Hill Dwarves and tend to worship the prevailing Gods in their adopted community, as well as Yhancia.

The Kazzandar

These are the Dwarves who are said to still dwell largely in the distant west, beyond Vheridane, where they still mine the ancient homes of Zarakandar-Zahl. They do not love the world beneath the open sky and prefer their underground homes. Some Kazzandar did come east and are said to still be on Karashar-Zahl, where they occupy the deep, forgotten galleries of that ruined Kingdom.

The Kazzandar are the equivalent of the Deep Dwarves and only worship Yhancia.

The Darragar

These are a race of Human-Dwarf crossbreeds who evolved sometime during the Darktime and moved from the Outlands into Vheridane and then into the north of Eldoria. There are a few isolated colonies remaining in the mountain regions of Vheridane and in the Barren Plateau, where they are the enemies of the Bloodmane barbarians.

They are the equivalent of the Derro.

The Zurgrash

Some of the Zahlankar ended up in Ahr-Ganiz and swore fealty to the Lords of Death-Hold, allying with the Goblinskynd against the Dwarves. They dwell throughout the Mountains of Terror and maintain a central city called Evernight.

The Zurgrash are the equivalent of the Duegar and only

worship Kharic-Ohrm and Sadir.

The Shazlakar

These are the Dwarves of Western Sard who have maintained a number of underground mansions in the high mountains of the Grand Escarpment, since the 3rd century R. They fear the reprisal of the Kazzandar Dwarves, who bear them ancient grudges. They live apart from the rest of the world and rarely adventure far from their mountain sanctums.

The Shazlakar are the equivalent of the Mountain Dwarves and only worship Yhancia.

HALFLINGS

Also known as the 'Burrowers' in Human realms, due to their fondness for constructing dwelling places just below the ground. In physical form, they resemble small Humans, having an average height of 3' – 4' however their lifespan is greater; with many Halflings remaining active into their early 200's.

Most Halflings originated in the Outlands of the north, occupying the once-fertile regions of the Corscia Tablelands. The War of Power and the Darktime drove them southward into the Towers of Ice, where they hid from the world for many generations, beneath the mountains.

Later, they found passage through the Towers of Ice and passed into the green hills of Northland. They were driven out of their new home, along with Human tribes that had settled there, when the Goblindynd of Ahr-Ganiz conquered all territories as far north as the Chillwater River. Most Halflings fled back into the mountains.

After the Goblindynd horde withdrew from the region to wage war against the Elves of Leezeria, Halflings and Humans returned and have occupied Northland ever since. They are divided into the following breeds:

Glefilyns

These are the most common variety of Halfling, the folk who occupy most of Northland. They prefer a colder climate and are mainly concentrated throughout the area of Hearthvale Home, north of the Chillwater River.

They are light of frame and happily live side-by side with men, preferring to dwell in underground homes. These consist of many comfortable rooms and connecting galleries, radiating from a central vertical shaft, around which runs a spiral stair. The part of the structure that exists above ground resembles a turf-covered cone and is often crowned by a small windmill. Glefilyns tend to have brown or red hair and dress in natural colors - greens, ochres and browns.

They are the equivalent of the Tallfellows.

Arimah

These Halflings are larger than most and did not originate in the north, like most of their kin. The Arimah occupied coastal settlements in Rhenfara for many centuries, following the War of Power. They were driven from the coastland by Y'naari slavers, during the Darktime and the majority later retreated into Po-Ka, to avoid the migrations of the Zurandi people. Some Arimah, taken to the east as slaves by the Y'naari, later discovered the idyllic Halfling society in Northland and also settled there.

The Arimah who hid in Po-Ka became a wild, primitive

folk, adept at existing in the natural environment and living in tree-dwellings, set high in the rainforest canopies. They have finer features than their northern cousins, their skin having a dark brown hue in color and their hair being a uniform black.

The Arimah of Po-Ka are a shy people, who prefer to hide from Humans but they will not hesitate to attack (using hit and run tactics) should their home territories be encroached upon. Their favorite weapon is the blowgun, which they use to fire darts treated with a paralyzing toxin. Arimah are also known as the Pygmies of Po-Ka by Humans and they most resemble the Lightfoots.

Nalkilyns

These rare Halflings remained in the Towers of Ice, when the majority of the Glefilyns moved into Northland. They are stockier and smaller than most others of their race and have much in common with the Dwarves of old, preferring to live permanently in caves and underground mansions.

The Nalkilyns are the equivalent of the Deep Halflings

GNOMES

Gnomes are the rarest of the Saahn. The vast majority of Humans have never seen a Gnome and believe them to be a myth. However Elves and scholars know that they are a furtive folk that have been in decline since the Darktime. They live on the fringes of society, remaining largely hidden from all other Saahn, although they are fascinated by the 'fey folk' (as they call all non-Gnomes) and go to great lengths to observe the customs, art and technology of others.

Sometimes, this interest in other cultures is so overpowering that a Gnome will be brave enough to venture into the fey world and so will be encountered by players in a campaign.

Gnomes are usually around 3' in height and have large brown or hazel eyes and olive skin. Like Halflings, they build underground homes but their abodes are more hidden, with secret entrances blended into a tree trunk or a cairn of rocks.

Faarsown

The Faarsown are the most common kind of Gnome, dwelling mainly at the fringes of Human settlement, in regional areas. The Faarsown have an interest in all things Human but, in particular, they love the delicate work of artisans, such as silver and gold jewelry or items set with bright gems.

Mechanisms also have an attraction for the Faarsown and they often build their homes in close proximity to Human waterwheels and windmills, so they can study the intricate devices of Humans and adopt the designs into their own mechanical creations.

Most Faarsown live throughout the western highlands of Llan and would be the equivalent of Rock Gnomes.

Juzzai

These are the more rustic cousins of the Faarsown, who reputedly traveled to Rhenfara in the company of Izrach, the Archdruid. Comparisons are often drawn between the Halfling Arimah people of Po-Ka and the Juzzai, who also dwell in a rainforest region. However, it is clear that the Juzzai, though more at home in the wild, still retain a lot of the traits of their northern cousins. They dwell in seclusion from the greater Human community that surrounds them and do not share an

interest in mechanisms and precious jewelry. Instead, they prize the beauty of the natural world and are known for their intricate woodcarvings and friendship with animals.

The Juzzai live inside the hollows of the giant banyans that dominate their home range in Sunachi Head. They would be considered the equivalent of Forest Gnomes.

Darklings

This is the least known species of Gnome and few have been seen since the First War of Tears, when the Elves still held their eastern territory of Dalafor.

In those days, there was regular commerce between the Elves of Dalafor and a city of Gnomes, called Deep Delving, which existed beneath Mount Snarving. The Gnomes there became known as Darklings to the Elves, because they rarely left their subterranean halls, preferring the dim light of phosphorescent lichens and magical illumination to the bright sunlit world above.

When the Goblinskynd seized all of Dalafor, contact with the Darklings was lost and it is thought that they were either enslaved or wiped out. Recently tales have come out of the Crownless Lands of a strange folk, who shun the light, usually seen traveling by night. Their description fits the Darklings of old and the Wyndari Elves are keen to reestablish contact with their old allies.

The Darklings are the equivalent of the Svirfneblin.

HALF-ORC

Playing a Half-Orc in Eldoria would be a difficult task, considering most lands have been civilized to a large degree by Humans. Goblinskynd creatures (monstrous humanoids) are not tolerated in most places so Half-Orcs would find themselves constantly being persecuted.

That is not to say it is impossible to play a Half-Orc, it just depends where and how the Referee runs the campaign. There are wilderness areas such as the Grand Escarpment or the Crownless lands, where a Half-Orc character would find life easier. Alternately, the Referee may allow a player Half-Orc to pass for a brutish-looking Human, creating interesting role-playing elements if the true nature of the player is revealed.

OTHER RACES

It is up to the Referee as to if he or she wants to allow other creatures as player character races. Certainly, other races exist in smaller numbers and in regions that are usually inhospitable to the rest of the Saahn (e.g. Merfolk and similar underwater humanoids).

Most of these would find it difficult to integrate into civilized areas, where they would be the object of continual interest and (possibly) harassment. There are some notable exceptions, the most obvious being the presence of Lizardmen in warmer parts of Northland.

In the end, it's your game and you should run it how you like, so don't feel restricted in how you run your personal campaign.

NOTES ON MAGIC

"To touch the true heart of the Tas and bend its power to create existence, even though it may be

fleeting - this is what it must be like to have been a God"

Lanees Dinmurren, taken from correspondence with Orlon Argond 899R - 903R.

THE COLLEGE OF ARCANES SCIENCE

The College of Arcane Science is Eldoria's largest formal institution teaching the arts of Wizardry and ancient lore. Having been established for over 1000 years, it has shaped the thinking of modern magic-users and helped restore the confidence of the general population in practitioners of the arcane arts.

Most people came to fear and hate magic during the Darktime, due to the tyrannical reign of the Serpent Kings. The College and its associated order, the Guild of the Magi are dedicated to the peaceful and responsible pursuit of a better understanding of the power of the Tas.

The Grandmaster Magi of the College make it their mission in life to identify potential magical talent, organize the training of such individuals and find them positions with worthy patrons or as teachers and researchers within the College and Guild. Besides providing instruction in magic, they also provide a broader education with an emphasis on using powers with restraint and discretion, to benefit the world and avoid returning



Gnomes of Eldoria (from left to right): Faarsown, Juzzai and Darkling

Eldoria to the terror of the Darktime.

Most Wizards taught by the College have led exemplary lives and many have achieved greatness as close advisors to powerful rulers or as renowned sages in their own right.

Of course, there have been those individuals who have turned their knowledge to the dark arts and have sought to use their abilities to gain personal mastery over the mundane world; mages such as Sooraël of the Nine Lives and M'jeer of Byalliz come to mind. None of these despots held power for long, their thralldoms were short-lived and they were soon overthrown by those they enslaved. Perhaps this is because the College has always maintained a policy of quietly opposing any Wizard who abuses the gifts they have been given. Instead of sending a member of the College to directly challenge a rogue Wizard, they prefer to work 'behind-the-scenes', providing a realm dominated by a rogue Wizard with the knowledge and means to overcome their protagonists.

MAGIC ITEMS AND ARTIFACTS

Modern day Eldorian Wizards and Sorcerers are less powerful cousins of those more powerful adepts who practiced magic when the Gods still walked the world. They do not understand the subtle workings of the Tas as much as their ancient predecessors, particularly the manufacture of magical potions, weapons and devices.

Most magic items used in the world are pre-Redemption in origin and have been found at the site of old ruins or kept as family heirlooms for generations. Very few have been created during the modern age. One of the contributing factors to this is a shortage of a special metal called Excellium. Excellium steel resonates well with Tas energy and thus 'holds' magic better.

The mines of Heaven's Reach on the Holy Isle were once the world's principal source of Excellium but were virtually depleted prior to the Darktime. Some small veins have since been discovered in Char-Endl.

To reflect these facts, as Referee, when running a campaign in Eldoria you should consider the following:

Magic is well known but there are few Human wizards who exceed 3rd Level in capability. Similarly, most of the clergy are not spell-capable and, of those who are, few of those also exceed 3rd Level. The senior leading magic-capable personalities, who are serving various institutions, are usually between 10th and 15th level.

Therefore there are quite a few petty practitioners of the arts but not many who are very powerful. These should be reserved for player characters and major NPCs (both friends and villains).

Likewise, it is more difficult to manufacture magical items in Eldoria and adjustments are made to the following Item Creation Feats;

- Craft Magic Arms and Armor
- Craft Rod
- Craft Staff
- Craft Wand
- Craft Wondrous Item

When creating a magic item using any of these Feats, all

base gp prices, base magic supplies and XP cost that are listed in the DMG are increased by a factor of x2. This reflects the rarity of certain materials essential for magic items in Eldoria (e.g. Excellium, Eldarwood) and the gap that exists in the knowledge of their manufacture.

AVERAACH

"As well as a substantial amount of gold, the fallen star has yielded a sizeable piece of crystal that I will probe with my incantations to establish the presence of any magical properties"

Last entry in the recovered remnants of the journal of Tailan Averaach

A Rare and Dangerous Crystal

Averaach is a crystal that occurs throughout Eldoria as a result of periodic strikes by minute meteorites that manifest themselves during the Span of Daukas in the March of Fire. At that time, Enshar passes through a belt of tiny asteroids and gasses and the skies flare with colorful displays and detonations. Occasionally these aerial pyrotechnics result in firestorms, whereby burning ashes are scattered over a wide area or, a rarer occurrence, a meteorite shower is created.

Called "Daugron's Fire" by the followers of the Goddess of Fire, most meteors burn up in the atmosphere but those few that do manage to crash to earth explode and create Averaach crystals in the surrounding rock, as a result of the thermal dynamics involved during the impact. The crystals are exceedingly rare and most are no bigger than a pinhead in size, although larger specimens have been found, ranging from stones the size of pea to shards as big as a plum.

The most common type of Averaach is claret red in color and crystals are often mistaken for rubies. A DC Check of 20 is required by a character possessing the Skill, Profession: Jeweler, in order to differentiate between the two.

Ruby Averaach has the dubious title of "Wizard's Bane" due to its peculiar reaction to strong magical fields, which cause the crystal to react explosively. If a spell is cast

Table EE4

GRAIN Pinhead (common)	NIL (the crystal consumes itself in a short burst of flame. It will inflict 1d6 subdual damage to those in direct unprotected contact with it and it may ignite a larger fire).
GEM Pea-size (uncommon)	1d10 (less 2 points of damage for every 5' the target is from ground zero).
STONE Grape-size (rare)	2d12 (less 2 points of damage for every 5' the target is from ground zero).
SHARD Plum-size (very rare)	3d20 (less 2 points of damage for every 5' the target is from ground zero).

If a spell is cast within 10' of Averaach, the crystal seems to resonate in tune with the spell-form, usually resulting in an explosion. Similarly, magical items may trigger a similar effect

in Averaach.



An Elderwood Staff. This extremely rare magic item is even beyond the craft of the Elves who dwell in Eldoria in 2150R

Game Mechanics

The DC used to determine the detonation of Averaach is 12. If magical spells are cast within 10' of the crystal (or magical items with a GP value of 5000+ come within 10'), roll 1d20 and add/subtract the following modifiers:

- 1 For each level of the spell cast.
- 1 For every 1,000 GP worth of magical items present (round up to the nearest 1,000).
- +2 Averaach is in contact with gold (at least equal to its own size).
- +4 Averaach is totally shielded by gold (e.g. a gold coffer).

Failure to roll the DC of 12 causes an explosion.

Explosion damage is determined by the size of the crystal and the distance of the target from the epicenter of the explosion (refer to Table EE4). Larger pieces of Averaach may be included in a campaign at the Refereess discretion and the appropriate damage assigned according to its size.

A successful REF Save made at DC18 halves damage.

For Averaach to be affected by magical emanations the crystal must be within 10' of the caster of the spell, within the area of effect of a spell or the direct target of a spell.

An example follows:

A Cleric, wearing a +1 suit of plate armor tries to use the 2nd Level Spell Shatter to destroy a Stone of Averaach. He stands 10' away and rolls 1 d20 (adding a penalty of -2 adjustment for the spell level and -2 for the armor).

The number rolled is 14 but when adjusted the final result is 10, so the Averaach detonates. Being stone-sized, the damage is 2d12 and a result of 18 is rolled, The Cleric is able to make a successful REF Check at DC 18 so he only takes 9 points of damage (this is further reduced to 5, as the Cleric is 10' away from the blast).

The 'Science' of Averaach

The College of Arcane Science discovered many of the properties of Averaach in the 18th century R, after the remains of a meteor, the size of a pumpkin, was brought to the grounds of the College for study. It was reported to contain a high amount of gold and the researchers broke open the meteor to find found it had a fist-sized outcrop of ruby crystal at its center.

The College is not exactly clear concerning what happened after that. They have theorized that Tailan Averaach, the young Wizard in charge of analyzing the meteor (and who posthumously gave the crystal its name) may have removed the rock surrounding the inner material and used a spell to identify the properties of what he found. The resulting explosion destroyed more than half of the College and killed over fifty students and masters.

Subsequent research over the next decade ascertained the volatility of Averaach in the presence of magic and hundreds of experiments were performed on smaller quantities of the crystal by Foi-linn Tay, the renowned Maritaani artificer. Tay determined many of the crystal's properties, postulating that Averaach's unique structure 'amplified' the natural energies of the Tas.

Normally the energy level of the Tas is at such a low level that it does not react with Averaach, however, when a Wizard or Seervaati draws upon its energy to channel magic the ambient level of Tas energy rises dramatically, as the spell takes form. If Averaach is in close proximity, the actions of the spell-caster initiate a reaction within the crystal, whereby it also begins to channel Tas energy.

A spell-caster cannot hold Tas indefinitely. They must vocalize sounds and introduce materials that will trigger the desired form of the spell or the unused energy off bleeds off back into the local field. Averaach is a Tas amplifier, with no natural means of bleeding off the energy it channels. Once the latent energy levels are raised, they are continually increased by the crystal's harmonic lattice until its structure is overwhelmed

and it shatters, releasing raw Tas energy with explosive force.

Tay also went on to prove that it was the gold in the meteor that initially prevented the premature detonation of the Averaach at its heart, during Tailan's experiments. The records that survived the blast showed that the meteor was subject to several detection spells prior to the fracturing of its outer layers and displayed no sign of its explosive potential.

Tay discovered that if gold was in close proximity to Averaach, in the ratio of two ounces of gold for one ounce of the crystal, its explosive powers were held in check, the gold interrupting the cycle of amplification of Tas energy in the crystal and then channeling it off in a similar way to a spell-caster. Averaach could be kept safe by keeping it in a gold box or by setting it within a piece of gold jewelry.

The Imaar Cult

The cult of Imaar had known about the properties of Averaach for centuries prior to Foi-Linn Tay's revelations. The cult worshipped the God of True Magic and its adepts claimed to have been the first Saahn to understand the real powers of the Tas, honing their skills in its uses long before the Darktime. They knew of magic before the Gods taught their priests how to bridge the gap to the Tas and weave its energy to another desired shape.

Whereas the Sorcerers and Wizards of the modern world relied on a combination of vocal vibrations, ritual gestures and the presence of organic and inorganic materials to draw Tas energy the Imaar Cult devised a means of utilizing Averaach to tap the Tas field. They had learned far more than Foi-Linn Tay and knew how to balance the exact amounts of gold and crystal to make a device they called a Tassirrin (Tas-Catcher) that was all that was required to connect them to the Tas and allow them to achieve form. What's more, they could use Averaach without consuming or flawing the crystal (although overzealous use of the Tassirrin and ruined the Averaach it contained).

Each Imaar cultist is a Seervaati (although their defined Character Class is that of a Sorcerer). They usually wear a Tassirrin as a holy symbol, taking the form of an Averaach gem set in a piece of gold jewelry, shaped like a lightning bolt (the emblem of Imaar). This allows the cultist to cast spells as a Sorcerer but instead of having access to the standard Wizard/Sorcerer Spells, Imaar Cultists only have access to a specific list of spells, which are mainly destructive in nature. This is because the energy that Averaach generates is unstable and cannot be shaped adequately to achieve anything other than a destructive force.

In addition, cultists who are successfully tested by their Seercandum in Odressi and achieve the rank of Master (Level 5 in game terms) are taught the craft of making a Rod of Power. This is a weapon resembling a short metallic wand (some 3' in length) tipped with an Averaach crystal.

A Rod of Power uses rare materials, including Excellium and Averaach and the Imaar Seercandum will normally only provide materials for a Master to make a single Rod of Power.

The Rod can be used to direct an explosive burst of Tas energy (2d8 damage, REF Save at DC 20 halves this) and has a range of 50'. Using a Rod of Power is one action and requires a successful hit roll (treat as a missile weapon with no range penalty within its 50' limit).

The Tassirrin and the Rod of Power both have a weakness; if overused there is a danger of the Averaach fracturing and consuming its user in a fiery blast, but this seems to be risk Imaar cultists, in their arrogance, are willing to take. When determining if the Averaach in either device is consumed, apply the standard rules for the detonation of the crystal, but treat them as being shielded by gold.

Treat the Tas energy channeled by the Rod of Power as a Level 4 Spell. For each consecutive round that a Rod is used there is a cumulative +1 modifier to the chance of detonation. Tassirrin use grain-sized pieces of Averaach so there is usually no damage applied when the crystal is consumed.

However, Rods of Power use a stone-sized piece of Averaach and can inflict severe damage if they explode, the user being considered at ground zero.

Modern Applications of Ruby Averaach

Ruby Averaach makes an ideal 'magic-detector' when used in small quantities. Simply place a grain of the crystal in close proximity to a magic item and it has a good chance of being harmlessly consumed, its flare-up indicating the presence of significant quantities of Tas energy.

The Church of Theydori actually took this one step further. Rather than just allowing the rare and valuable crystals to be consumed when they were placed near a magical aura, they discovered that, if a grain of Averaach was placed on a lodestone, it caused the magnetic field to become aligned with the strongest source of magic in the area. They were able to get the lodestone to 'point' at magical objects from a distance of up to 100', depending upon the strength of the Tas energy imbued in the object being located.

A more practical use of Averaach came into being following the Five Years Doom, when more lenient authorities needed to incarcerate persons capable of using spells. How do you secure someone who is capable of using spells to Charm your guards? The solution was devised by the Monks of Light in Odressi, who were responsible for the imprisonment of over twelve Seervaati, following the civil disputes that tore through Odressi, during that period. They came up with concept of a metal collar, like a bracelet, worn about the neck. It was hollow and, at the time of its manufacture, a number of grape-sized pieces of Averaach were placed inside.

The prisoners had these collars locked about their necks and were sternly warned about what they contained. They could risk casting spells but the consequence was the possible detonation of the Averaach. Another benefit to the introduction of these 'mage shackles', as they became known, was that they could be constructed without Averaach being placed inside. A number of small pebbles could be substituted and the prisoner would be none the wiser. The risk was all theirs.

Other Varieties of Averaach

Aside from the destructive Ruby form of Averaach, there are other varieties of the crystal that have been found to exist, only recently coming to the attention of the College of Arcane Science. These seem to have formed by their chance binding with certain dominant minerals present at the site of the meteor impacts. Although distinct properties have been identified,

research continues into their powers and the applications that they can be put to. The following varieties have been found so far:

Sapphire Averaach

This form of the crystal seems to drain the life force, once its natural harmonics are overloaded by the presence of elevated levels of Tas energy. It has been theorized that the crystal has a greater link with the Vorg elements that exist within the Tas, an energy source exploited by the Sirth cult over the centuries. The crystal binds with the Tas energy of a spell, as it is summoned to achieve form and then acts as a kind of energy leech, tapping into the Tas contained within the caster's natural aura, effectively acting in the same manner as the temporary ability drain of some Undead.

Treat the Sapphire Averaach the same as Ruby Averaach with regards to determining its volatility. There is no REF Save made with regards to reducing damage; this is replaced with a Fortitude Check at DC18. A successful roll halves the amount of drain to the CON (see below).

Instead of damage resulting, spell-casters suffer a temporary loss of CON equal to the damage result rolled. This is potentially lethal if CON loss exceeds their existing CON points. Temporary CON loss is recovered at the normal rate of 1 point per day. The Pinhead result of nil damage is replaced with a loss of 1 CON point for 1d12 rounds instead of 1 day.

The crystal becomes flawed and loses its properties once its powers are triggered.

Amber Averaach

There has been unconfirmed reports drawn from a few old Y'siran documents that this form of the crystal exists and it would appear that its powers are only triggered during the March of Fire. The Y'siran researchers suggest that Amber Averaach, in sufficient quantities, actually 'attracts' meteor strikes during the March of Fire.

Loresmasters at the College of Arcane Science have been unable to obtain any Amber Averaach samples in order to test these theories. One postulation is that the material in the astral dust cloud (called Daugron's Seeds) could possibly be charged with energy unknown to Eldorian Wizardry and that this is reactive with Amber Averaach. When Enshar passes through Daugron's Seeds, firestorms have a higher likelihood of being formed in areas where Amber Averaach exists.

Emerald Averaach

This form of the crystal has been found in a number of important Pre-Redemption ruins that were uncovered on the Holy Isle in 2149R. They were simply thought to be emeralds but instead of being used extensively in items of jewelry or architectural decoration, they seemed to have been incorporated into mechanisms, of an undetermined use. Some of the 'emeralds' were sent to the College of Arcane Science for investigation and were determined to be a form of Averaach.

The latest tests by the College show that that Emerald Averaach interferes with Tas energy, ruining spells as they are cast and weakening magical items, often for great lengths of time. The following effects occur:

Treat the Emerald Averaach the same as Ruby Averaach

with regards to determining its volatility. However, any damage result is treated as follows:

Spell-Casting

There is no damage as such, but if the DC check is failed, the spell fails. In addition, there is a 'contamination' of caster's Tas aura. Calculate what the damage would have been from an explosion. The number that would have represented damage, instead indicates the number of days the spell-caster's Tas aura remains contaminated and they are unable to use any spells.

The Pinhead result '0' equates to 1d12 hours instead.

Permanent Magic Items

These become totally useless for a number of days equal to the damage result rolled.

The Pinhead result '0' equates to 1d12 hours instead.

Charged Magic Items

Any magic item that uses charges loses an amount of charges equal to the damage result rolled. If this takes the magic item below 0, the item is 'burnt out' and can never be recharged.

The Pinhead result '0' equates to the item being rendered useless for 1d12 days instead.

The College of Arcane Science are sponsoring expeditions to discover new Pre-Redemption sites, in order to obtain more Emerald Averaach samples and to investigate the possible uses of the mechanisms that the crystals were once used in.

Rarity of Averaach

It must be stressed that Averaach, in all its forms, is exceedingly rare in Eldoria and should be represented as such in any campaign. The College of Arcane Science has only known of the Ruby variety for the past 400 years and has only recently become aware of other forms of Averaach. The Imaar Cult know most about the crystal but they hold other spell-casters in contempt as petty meddlers in the magic of the Tas. They will not share their knowledge and their cult is dominated by egocentric and aggressive adepts, who use the power for personal advantage within the order.

You won't get your average peasant dashing off to the site of a meteor strike, during the March of Fire, for the purposes of collecting Averaach—they just don't know about it. The average man-in-the street has heard very little of Averaach and is more interested in the weather and where their next meal is coming from.

Wizards, Seervaati and scholars know more about the crystal but have failed to unlock many of its secrets. They view it as a potentially useful but dangerous material.

They would certainly be interested in investigating the site of a meteor strike but would do this furtively, pretending to be interested in the overall phenomena, rather than what may have resulted from the impact. As has been said, Ruby Averaach is very rare but the other varieties are even more difficult to find and even less is known about their properties.

In addition, the smaller samples are the pieces most commonly found. Larger crystals of Averaach should only be introduced into a campaign sparingly.

EXCELLIUM

Excellium looks like silver to all but those trained in the arts of metallurgy. The first clue is that it is a much harder metal than Silver and cannot be scratched or otherwise marked by mundane means.

When heated, it reveals its true potential; the metal never reaches a state where it becomes hot enough to become elastic and pliable but, instead, emits a dazzling silver radiance. The only way that most smiths can work Excellium is through the use of a magical heat source.

Only the Stonekin guard the secrets of working Excellium, using normal fire, having the knowledge of how to make a natural heat source that rivals that of magically created fire. A Dwarven character must have attained a minimum of 6 ranks in Craft: Smith to have learned the secrets of Excellium. Alternately, any of the Magic Item Craft Feats (not including Scribe Scroll or Brew Potion) allows a character knowledge of working with the rare steel.

Excellium is an essential material in the crafting of most magical weapons and devices. Its basic game characteristics are as follows:

Hardness: 18

Hit Points: 35/inch of thickness

**VURGONMIR**

"This creature did not possess the non-corporeal substance that I had encountered when dealing with Sirrith's minions in the past; it was a thing of bone and desiccated flesh, garbed in a tattered funeral robe.

In its skeletal right hand it bore a long blade of some dark metal, the very sight of which invoked a feeling of distaste. As it moved the weapon from side to side it blended with the shadows and would have been hard to notice, except for a thin keening whine, that marked its otherworldly presence...."

From the memoirs of Saint Farwic Stormwatch, Ormocean Priest 512R.

Known in the common tongue as Shadow Iron, this rare metal originates from Sirrith's realm of Shadowland, where it is often forged into weapons or magical devices. The minions of the Goddess are armed with these when they manifest themselves in the Prime Material Plane.

Vurgonmir is a lusterless black in color, its surface cold and oily to the touch. It is extremely resilient and durable material (Hardness 19/Hit points 38/inch of thickness) and has unique properties of storing and channeling negative energy (in much the same way as a lodestone interacts with magnetic fields).

Vurgonmir's inherent weakness is its susceptibility to sunlight. This can cause the metal to instantly corrode, crumbling away to nothing in seconds. Undead that can walk in sunlight, always keep their Vurgonmir weapons sheathed and swathed in



Red Averaach is often mistaken for a ruby, which can have deadly consequences for unguarded spell-casters

cloaks, when abroad in the daylight hours.

Most items made from Shadow Iron have a Break DC of 35. If ever exposed to sunlight, the Break DC becomes 10 permanently and it immediately undergoes a Break Check as though hit by a force equal to $10+1d10$ STR.

A critical hit delivered by a weapon made from Vurgonmir does not inflict extra damage. Instead it drains an energy level, the saving throw being based on a DC of 15.

DIAMONDWOOD

One of the building materials unique to Eldoria is the timber from the Diamondwood tree, a species unique to Southwind Island, the main land-mass that makes up Londar's Land. Diamondwood is highly prized for its hardness; it is far-stronger than the best steel, yet retains the lightness of most woods. It is a difficult medium to work with and the remaining glades of the Diamondwood Forest, on Southwind Island, are maintained by an Order of Druids, the Diamond Sisterhood, whose duties are two-fold; they protect the Diamondwood from those who would seek to steal it and they regulate the supply of the wood to those able to afford its exorbitant cost.

The Diamond Sisterhood jealously guard rituals that they have practiced for centuries; spells such as Wood mastery (see below) enable them to temporarily alter the inherent structure of Diamondwood to that of a more malleable timber, allowing the Druids to cut the wood and assist craftsmen to work with the material, dressing and shaping it into a desired form. The wood can be cut using normal implements but the task is painstakingly slow and results in constant blunting and damage to the tools used in the process.

The Sisterhood dictates when and how much Diamondwood will be felled each year and who is worthy enough to be its recipient. Payment to their Order often requires political favors in addition to a substantial monetary sum. Only over the last 300 years that the Sisterhood has become more 'commercial' in its dealings with the sale of Diamondwood.

History

Up until the 1800's R, the Order was more closed and insular, opposing intrusion into their sacred groves and fighting against those who thought to remove the precious wood from Southwind Island. Three Kings of Southwind were assassinated by the Druids during the period 1388 – 1775R for their policies of removing large amounts of timber from the Diamondwood Forest. A great deal of the wood went into the construction of the main platforms of Tempest, the Tempest Guild of Gold being one of the few customers who commanded massive financial reserves and could afford to have Diamondwood cut and crafted without relying on the Druids of Southwind to weave their incantations about it. Prior to then, the main customer for Diamondwood had been the Sardellan Empire. At the Empire's height in the 1500's, Diamondwood had been in great demand amongst the nobility in the fashioning of exquisite arms and armour. The Empress Taranae herself is said to have worn a breastplate of shaped Diamondwood when appearing in public to inspire her legions to go to war.

For many centuries before that, the Sisterhood had been

dominated by a fanatical faction that practiced the Old Ways from the Darktime, demanding blood sacrifice to the God Ulliah, Lord of the Forest. The people of Southwind feared to go anywhere near the northern Diamondwood forest, knowing the Druids often secured sacrificial victims by waylaying travelers who were abroad near their demesne. The Druids were said to even have dealings with the Thieves' Guild in Maedori, the capitol. Rumors abounded about kidnappings and people sent north to feed the thirst of Diamondwood. Anyone within the Sisterhood who spoke out against the dogmatic rituals of the hierarchy were cast out or found themselves offered up to Ulliah as well.

The most infamous member of the Diamond Sisterhood was the Archdruid Seriss Greenheart. During the March of Shadows in 1550R she was responsible for the mass-sacrifice of over one hundred souls, purchased from a Y'siran slave trader in exchange for a supply of cut Diamondwood taken from one tree. The outcry from the general populace of Southwind over this atrocity was mirrored by an internal challenge to the power of the Archdruid by the less senior echelons of the Order. A bloody feud raged between the old and new guard, while, at the same time, The King of Southwind asked Sardell to rid his realm of the Diamond Sisterhood forever.

A relatively bloodless campaign ensued, during which the Druids were taken captive by the Sardellans, though Seriss took her own life. The remaining leaders of the Diamond Sisterhood were removed from Southwind and sent north to the Imperial City of Jasper. Here they were made to swear oaths of loyalty to the Empress before being imprisoned in the dungeons of the Ivory Palace.

Five years later, Empress Taranae passed away and left Sardell without an heir. As a result, the Empire began its slow descent into anarchy. The city of Jasper declared itself neutral territory during the struggle for the throne and its custodians freed many of the political prisoners held there during the reign of Taranae; the leaders of the Diamond Sisterhood amongst them. The Druids lived on in Jasper during those turbulent times and were given their own place of worship in the forested lands west of the capitol.

On Southwind, the Diamondwood Forest came under direct control of the royal family who plundered the wood, attempting to sell off as much as they could to those who could afford it. But the market for Diamondwood crashed along with the fall of the Empire. With the secrets of shaping Diamondwood all but lost and nobody being able to afford to cut it by mundane means, there was no profit in selling Diamondwood and a great stockpile just languished upon the borders of the Diamondwood Forest for many years.

The Kings of Southwind had always been an inept lot and their excesses were well documented across the Sea of Souls. King Rathell II's legacy was to have the entire palace in Maedori gilded in gold then, finding he didn't like the end result; he had it removed and tossed into the sea (young lads in still dive for gold in Maedori harbor today). By 1800R the royal family was penniless and Southwind Island was in a state of revolt. Peasant farmers had united under the leadership of a local Phellarian Cleric and were marching upon the capitol.

In an act of desperation, young King Traslinn promised money that he did not have to a privateer, Jersal Londar, to put down the escalating violence across the island. Londar united a number of pirate captains and their crews together (under the guise of a mercenary force) and put down the revolts with minimal violence. This was mainly due to the fact that, as the campaign against the Southwind peasants got underway, King Traslinn's sergeant-of-arms deserted the royal palace and informed Londar that his liege lord was without funds and intended to betray the pirates by having the Southwind Royal Guard turn on them during a victory celebration.

Ever an ambitious man, Londar went over to the cause of the peasants and led his men against Maedori. The battle was brief and the palace stormed with little fighting; they later found King Traslinn had fled by ship to Odressi, where he plotted and planned to reclaim his throne for the rest of his life.

Jersal Londar went on to conquer the nearby islands of Sharruck and Loakiish and formed the republic of Londar's Land which, despite its overtones of democracy, was really a benevolent dictatorship, its constitution loosely based on the covenant of pirates. One thing in his favor, Londar liked wealth as much as the Southwind Kings but he was shrewder and knew how to get it. He understood that Southwind's wealth lay in its Diamondwood – if you got that industry working again everything else would follow. Londar immediately sent emissaries to Jasper to woo the descendants of the Sisterhood back to his island domain.

In 1807R, the Jasper faction of the Sisterhood were reunited with the remnants of the Order still on Southwind Island and since then there has been a curt but harmonious relationship between the Druids and the Captains of Londar's Land. A Diamondwood cull takes place every ten years, during which a single tree is felled and the adepts of the Order assist local artisans who work with the wood.

Facts about Diamondwood

The College of Arcane Science sent a delegation to Southwind during the reign of King Traslinn, gaining permission from the King to study the wood and the abilities of the Druids to render the material malleable. They also removed several seedlings in order to propagate their own Diamondwood groves on Ghardon.

Their research concluded that there was a strange, unexplained variance in the ambient Tas field, centered at the heart of Diamondwood. The aura of this distinctive energy source was also found to be concentrated in the trees, as if they 'drank up' this form of Tas like water. Even after a tree was felled, the magical power that gave the wood its strength still remained intact. Subsequent failure to get seedlings to grow on Ghardon (in fact, anywhere outside the borders of the Diamondwood forest on Southwind) led the College to conclude that the force that gave Diamondwood its properties also gave it life; the trees had become dependant on the localized Tas field over the ages.



The Privateer Jersal Londar

The College investigated the Diamondwood site further, detecting that the variant Tas signature emanated from beneath the ground but the turmoil of the rebellion of 1802R forced them to abandon a series of diggings that they had commenced to try and locate a physical source responsible for the phenomenon. In later years, the College has petitioned the Captains of Londar, asking to be allowed to resume their work but the Sisterhood is opposed to any such move; they remember the callous indifference the Wizards of the College showed for the plight of their Order during Traslinn's reign.

The facts remain that Diamondwood owed its strength to some alteration in the Tas and that it cannot be grown anywhere else in Eldoria. Understandably, it is a scarce material, although it is more available during the March of Earth, on every year tenth year, the next felling of a Diamondwood tree scheduled for the Festival of Earth.

Diamondwood has a Hardness of 22 and Hit points of 50 per inch. Its binding with the Tas also gives it a save against magic with a +7 bonus to all Saves. It is the premium construction material - light-weight, extremely tough and resistant to magic.

New Spell

Wood Mastery

Transmutation

Level: Drd 6

Components: V, S DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: touch

Target: one touched piece of wood or living tree, affects an area equal to 10 cu. Ft. + 1 cu. ft./ per level

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: none

Spell Resistance: yes (object)

Wood Mastery is an improved form of the spell Woodshape. Wood Mastery gives all the abilities listed under Woodshape but provides the caster with the additional ability to cut wood, both living and non-living. The caster simply invokes the spell and uses the edges of their hands like a blade, carving through any wood like a hot knife through butter. In this way, they are able to remove sizeable sections of wood from a tree-trunk and then shape it to their desired design.

As the spell has no saving throw, Wood mastery is also an effective weapon against creatures made of wood, such as a Treant, each successful touch attack inflicting 1d6 points of damage per caster level.

NALARIAN TILES

*"The Crystal....the Rose....and the Skull.
Sire, I counsel you to postpone your campaign
this day. Retire to your most steadfast sanctuary
and wait four full days before you venture
forth."*

Final words spoken by Delerith, soothsayer to General Landas Kedriz, before the Battle of Thunder Ridge.

The Nalarian people have wandered the lands of Eldoria for generations and are the equivalent of our gypsies. They maintain a belief that nobody owns the land, it is there for all to use. As a consequence, they have always moved from place to place, living a hunter-gatherer lifestyle; at times, of their own volition, and at times, under the threat of local authorities.

As regions of Eldoria became more urbanized and it was difficult to find food by traditional methods, the Nalarians bartered their skills with established communities in return for money or supplies. They have always been adept at such crafts

as woodcarving and tapestry work and they have found a market for their creations, wherever they traveled. Whereas gypsies in our culture often are treated with suspicion and hostility, Nalarians are always welcomed by the common-folk, for their craft, their knowledge of ancient medicines and their colorful entertainments. Their only opponents are draconic officials who do not like their 'disrespect' for regional boundaries, taxes and bureaucracy.

Being a superstitious folk, the Nalarians often look for portents and omens to aid them in making decisions or in providing guidance to where their tribes should venture next. Since the Darktime they have used "the Tiles" to predict the future and this part of their culture also proved to be a popular way of earning money and favors from communities that their wagon trains camped near. The image of the Nalarian fortune-teller casting the Tiles became commonplace throughout Eldoria, so much so, that the practice was adopted by the College of Arcane Science and the University of Pharidor's Watch, in teaching the oracular arts to their Diviners.

A set of Tiles always consists of twenty-seven pieces, each representing one of the Gods of the Pantheon. These can be as simple as runic symbols etched onto river pebbles or as intricate as porcelain disks, each painted with a detailed representation of a God. The most expensive set ever made was reputed to be owned by the Empress Taranae and consisted of cards made from wafers of Diamondwood, with images rendered in layered gold, Excellium and jade.

A set of Tiles is kept within a small, decorated coffer, called a Thirrin. It is usually decorated with mystic symbols and contains a tablemat (the Thar) used to lay the Tiles upon, during a reading. It is very important that only the person, who the Tiles were made for, ever touches them, otherwise their prophetic potency is said to be lost.

When performing a prediction of future events, the caster of the Tiles enters a trance-like state, reciting a calming mantra. During this time they stir the Tiles with their left hand, and, upon completion of the ritual, they grasp a fistful and draw them from the Thirrin. The Tiles are then dropped upon the Thar and if there are more than three Tiles upon the tablemat, the excess are discarded with the priority being given to face-up Tiles being cast aside, followed by those closer to the right hand side of the Thar. At the end of this process, only a maximum of three tiles can remain for the reading.

All remaining Tiles are turned face up and the interpretation is made. No specific questions are asked of the Tiles; they simply give a hint of what is to come, unless the individual acts to prevent the course of events. Each Tile has a multiple number of associated meanings and from this events of the next one to three days can be divined. A serious practitioner of Nalarian Tiles will not overuse them. Traditionally, they should only be consulted once between the rising and setting of the sun (darkness clouds the powers of divination).

A Referee can easily include Nalarian Tiles in a campaign as they know the general immediate future that 'might' be in store for players. The Skill required for reading the Tiles is Craft: Fortune-Telling. Use a DC of 15 for a typical reading. Make the DC roll secretly for the NPC or player character divining the Tiles

and also roll 1d3 for the number of Tiles placed upon the Thar. In the case where a player has the Skill and is telling their own fortune or the fortune of someone else (and the roll is successful) the Referee should select Tiles that would be pertinent to the immediate future of the subject. In the case that the DC was failed, the required trance-like state was not achieved or no tiles

fell upon the Thar.

In the case where an NPC is telling the fortune (and makes a successful DC) use the level of success as a guide to how accurate you should be in your interpretation of the Tiles. The twenty-seven Tiles and their common meanings appear in Table EE5:

Table EE5

Symbol	God	Associated Meanings
Scales	Ormocea	Law, prison, father-figure, balance, justice, order, authority
Tear drop	Esmia	Healing, relief, safety, sanctuary, comfort, grief, mourning
Sword	Siritar	Fight, duel, champion, sword, son, hero, courage, guardian
Scroll	Theydori	Teaching, a lesson, education, mystery, puzzle, ancient number
Arch	Gaien	Mother, birth, women, secrecy, marriage, sister, disagreement, fertility
Hourglass	Priath	Sleep, dreams, prophecy, time, priority, warning, prompt action
Harp	Ahridaar	Arts, music, food, drink, dance, travel, color, celebration, Bard,
Sheaves	Faar	Seasons, weather, rural, farm, simplicity, livestock, harvest
Unicorn	Rhioria	Health, vitality, beauty, youth, innocence, love
The Moon	Tarimth	Night, lost, missing, stars, portent, Elves, exploration, inaction
The Circle	Phelltar	Self, other races, of the body, commoner, poverty, rebellion
The Sun	Pharidor	Daytime, snakes, light, revelation, tower, great height, gold
Tree	Ulliah	Forest, wood, nature, sylvan creatures, Druids, growth, wilderness
Mountain	Yhancia	Land, mountains, Dwarves, rock, gems, unwavering, underground
Lion	Hirath	Animals, hunting, meat, Rangers, lion, bear, king
Octopus	Gurthor	Sea, ships, ocean voyages, sea creatures, ports, sailors, pirates
Waterfall	Liraan	Water, bridge, obstacle, purity, a link, swim, border, direction
Eagle	Se	Storm, conflict, quick action, lightning, bird, surprise, sudden change
Mace	Trezkillian	War, Goblinskynd, castle, battle, soldiers, control, domination
Flame	Daugron	Fire, heat, desert, cleansing, uncompromising, total change
Lightning bolt	Imaar	Magic, arcane, power, arrogance, Averaach, unstable, otherworldly
Shadow	Xullia	Fear, monsters, illusion, blindness, cowardice, darkness
Skull	Sirrieth	Death, undead, prison, trap, blood, outcast, ward, constant
Child	Tiea	Deceit, assassin, hidden enemy, broken trust, betrayal, lies
Crystal	Sadir	Apocalypse, disaster, ruin, downfall, impending doom, breakage
The Temptress	Yaarneya	Lust, jealousy, wealth, indulgence, corruption, selfishness
Rose	Kharic-Ohrm	Hurt, harm, pain, pestilence, insect, disease, suffering, malady

DRUGS AND POISONS

"The pallid creatures that lay about those golden halls looked like wraiths, robed in the finest silks and gilded jewelry. They were in the process of starving to death, having abandoned all reason and responsibility. They cared for naught, their dead eyes turned inward, gazing upon illusionary pleasures that consumed them. Their lips and fingers bore a purple stain and everywhere, there was the sweet smell of candied dates."

From the testament of the Paladin Marriden Stormheart, following the storming of Tai-Kayan, 1235R.

This is a collection of information about unique poisons, drugs and potions that are used in Eldoria. Many of these have their origins in religious practices or have been specifically made to enhance magical abilities. Others have a more sinister history and have been concocted as weapons of assassination or a means for illicit groups to profit from the excesses of others.

The following terminology is used (when appropriate) when describing each entry:

Type:

Whether it is mainly viewed as a drug or a poison and the major characteristics such as the source it is derived from (Animal, Plant, Chemical, Magical) and a keyword that denotes its effect (Psychotropic, Asphyxiate, Accelerant, Depressant etc).

Delivery:

Provides the means the substance is introduced to the subject contact, (Ingested, Inhaled or Injected) and the save DC to avoid its initial and secondary effects if not deliberately taken. A character that willingly and knowingly takes a substance automatically fails both saves and cannot choose to fail one but not the other.

Initial:

The initial effects the substance has within seconds of taking it.

Secondary:

Additional effects that begin to take affect a short time after the initial effects, usually after 1 minute. A save versus the secondary effect must be made for unwilling recipients regardless of whether the initial save was made or not.

Side Effect:

The long-term effects or addiction risks, if any, that the substance has.

Description:

A description of the substance's qualities and its effects.

Antidote:

Any means of neutralizing the substance. Most antidotes will just halt the progress of a drug or poison, but in some cases it may actually reverse or remove all existing effects it has had on the character.

Background:

Provides any history of the substance, such as where it originated, who created it and what it was traditionally used for.

Creation:

Describes the ingredients and creation process, along with skills and DCs required to distil, handle or use a substance appropriately. Creating a poison requires a Craft (Poison Making) check against the DC given, with a +2 synergy bonus if the creator has 5 or more ranks in alchemy or Profession (Apothecary).

Handling a poison requires a Craft (Poison Making) or Alchemy check of the given DC to avoid poisoning oneself when attempting to create or use a poison. Failure means the character has possibly exposed themselves to the poison (Refereess discretion), requiring them to save against its effects.

If the handle poison check is failed by a margin of less than 4 however, the save against the poison is made with a +4 circumstance bonus and all effects are at -1 per die due to the trace amounts of exposure.

Market Price: The market value for a single dose of the substance.

ILLIXIA

Type: Drug (Plant); Psychotropic

Delivery: Ingested DC 15

Initial: 1d4 Int damage

Secondary: 1d4 Cha damage +1d4 Wis damage

Side Effect: Exceedingly addictive. After the first dose wears off, the affected creature must make a Will save (DC 16) or become addicted to Illixia. If failed, the addicted character must make a Will save (DC 16) to fight the addiction, each day that they do not take a dose of Illixia. Failure results in 1d2 Wis damage and 1d2 Cha damage. They can overcome the addiction by succeeding in making saving throws for two consecutive days in a row, however they may become addicted again if they ever take another dose of Illixia and fail the addiction save.

Description: Illixia appears as a mauve- colored powder, with a subtle scent reminiscent of dates. It is a psychotropic drug with hallucinogenic qualities and is usually dissolved in liquid for oral consumption. Just about any liquid can be used but red wine is favored due to its ability to mask the drugs strong, sweet flavor.

Some people find the sweet taste of Illixia unpleasant and will dilute the drug over several cups of wine. However, doing so means they tend to become quite drunk by the time they have taken a full dose and are more prone to the detrimental effects of the drug (-2 penalty to the save against the negative aspects of the secondary effect, for every level of intoxication; slightly, moderately, heavily, severely).

Illixia's initial effect is an almost immediate, warm, giddy feeling that gives a heightened sense of well-being and happiness. Characters under this effect of tend to find amusement in everything and have immense pleasure in every sensation, even to the point of the lessening of levels of pain. Persons under this effect may experience some difficulty thinking rationally or recalling facts due to the constant distractions that drug provides.

This is represented by the temporary intelligence damage of the initial effect, the duration of which is 1d4 hours.

The secondary effect of this drug starts to become evident in the person about 10 minutes after taking it (instead of the usual 1 minute for secondary effects). The affected person begins seeing hallucinations that vary in intensity from subtle effects only seen in peripheral vision, to dramatic manifestations indistinguishable from reality. The intensity of the hallucinations depend upon the amount of Wisdom damage the affected creature suffers, the higher the damage, the stronger the hallucination.

The charisma damage represents the effects of the character interacting with hallucinations, varying from a slight distracted edginess, to complete conversations or possibly violent responses with the figments. Most of the time these effects are positive for the affected person, being pleasant and entertaining but sometimes they can turn into paranoia and terrifying delusions, depending upon the disposition of their mind. If the save against the secondary effect fails, or the drug is taken willingly, the character must also make a Will save (DC 10) to avoid having a bad experience during the period of the drug's secondary effect. The secondary effect also lasts for 1d4 hours.

During a bad experience, an affected character will often become violent, attacking anyone around them, believing them to be enemies, monsters etc.

Antidote: There is no antidote for the effects of Illixia except to wait for the drug to run its course. The best option for someone having a bad experience from Illixia is to try and sleep it off, though it may prove difficult to convince an affected person to do this, short of knocking them unconscious.

Background: Illixia is a derivative of a naturally occurring psychotropic substance, which is found in the petals and seeds of the purple Megallion Flower, a species native to Maritaan. The Megallion is most commonly found around oases of the El-Amordia

Yaar (the Desert of Entropy) and is a stubby plant with a single broad petalled flower and a fruit shaped like a droplet. Both flower and fruit are a deep, glossy purple in color. There are rings of poisonous thorns around the stalk of the flower to ward off predators.

The petals of the Megallion Flower are chewed by the Shaera, one of the desert tribes descended from the Y'naari-Kahn. They do this to promote feelings of happiness and well-being, similar, though much weaker, to the effects of concentrated Illixia. The fruit provides similar effects, but will also induce strong hallucinations, that are an integral part of the spiritual rituals performed by the Shiir Ghuls (Shaera Shamans).

Shaera tribal mythology tells of the plant first growing from where the blood of the Goddess Yaarneya was said have been spilled by Siritar the Just, during a great battle with her at the Oasis of Shadows. Because of this, the flower of the plant is considered sacred and it is a crime against Yaarneya for anyone other than a Shiir to pick or eat the fruit of the Megallion. The punishment for being caught with the fruit, by the Shaera tribe, is to be left staked in the desert for the vultures.

The mysticism surrounding the flower is reinforced by the occasional person who is found killed by apparently accidental exposure to its poisonous thorns (Injury DC14; 1d2 Con/1d4

Con+1d4 Wis). This is caused by another defense mechanism of the Megallion. Any person eating the fruit within 60' of a Megallion may be affected by the scent put out by the flower and will be required to make Will save (DC 10) or suffer a hallucination that usually manifests itself as a sexual illusion.



Illixia is often used in the rituals of the Yaarneyan religion. The priestesses use the drug to heighten pleasure and to cause addiction in their clients, ensuring their loyalty to the Church.

Figments of an attractive mate will appear and the scent will lure the victim to the flower where they inevitably come into contact with the poison thorns. The Shiir are fully aware of these properties and ensure that their religious ceremonies are held in a place where the fruit is consumed nowhere near a Megallion plant.

Creation: Black market demands will often overcome the fear of people risking the acquisition of Illixia. There are foreign smugglers who will risk the wrath of the Shaera tribes to steal the fruit of the Megallion for use in the making of Illixia. The petals, fruit and thorns of the plant are all used in the process of making the drug, though the fruit is the major ingredient. Each component needs to be treated separately to extract their active ingredients. This makes Illixia a very difficult drug to make, breaking down and becoming inert within a day if not enough

of the thorn toxins are used or becoming poisonous (Ingested DC11; 1d2 Con/1d4 Con+1d2 Wis) if too much fruit is used.

Once isolated, the separate ingredients must be recombined under heat and pressure, then treated with special salt solutions. They are subsequently left to dry. The end result sees all moisture boil away, forming crystals of Illixia which are scraped from the evaporation dishes and ground into its familiar powder form, resembling purple colored salt.

Success at making a batch of Illixia requires a Craft (Poison Making) or Alchemy check (DC 25). The recipe requires 1 fruit, 1-3 thorns, the petals of several Megallion flowers and 10gp worth of salts and reagents to create 1d4 doses of Illixia.

Market Price: 40gp for 4 doses (traditionally sold in small wooden boxes).

LAQUEERA

Type: Drug (Animal/Plant); Aphrodisiac

Delivery: Ingested DC 12

Initial: 0

Secondary: -1d4 Wis penalty; +1d4 Cha bonus

Side Effect: Additional doses of Laqueera taken within 24 hours of the each other may still produce an aphrodisiac effect along with the Wisdom damage it causes but the feelings of well-being and happiness are lessened, no longer providing a Charisma bonus.

Laqueera is also mildly addictive. Starting from the day the first dose is taken, the person must make a Will save (DC 6) or become addicted to Laqueera. If the result is failure, the character must make a Will save (DC 8) to fight the addiction, every day they do not take a dose of Laqueera (or take 1d2 Cha damage). They can successfully overcome the addiction by succeeding addiction saving throws for two consecutive days in a row. However, they may become addicted again if they ever take another dose of Laqueera and fail the addiction save.

Description: Laqueera appears as a pink paste, with a slight citrus smell, and is usually stored in jars or pots. The paste is dotted with the occasional small seed of the same fruit the drug is made from. It tastes sour with a bitter after taste, like grapefruit crossed with persimmon. Most people find the flavor quite unpleasant at first, but it will often grow on them (much like anchovies are sometimes an acquired taste). People that become addicted to Laqueera sometimes do so as much for the flavor as its effects. Laqueera is commonly taken with foodstuffs, often by spreading it on bread and eating it, sometimes combining the Laqueera with a preserve.

Laqueera promotes strong erotic feelings and instills the affected creature with a sense of confidence and well-being. This focused confidence is represented by the charisma bonus but is only effective in the pursuit of intimate contact, as those affected seek to fulfill their carnal desires with a single-minded focus.

People under its effects can become very intense, even to the point of being out of character and sometimes they will do things not normally in their nature. This 'single-minded focus' is represented by the wisdom penalty, demonstrating reduced powers of perception while their attention is obsessed with desire. Furthermore, they suffer a -1 circumstance penalty to any actions preventing them from fulfilling their desires.

The effects of Laqueera last for 1d4 hours and all the effects disappear when the drug wears off, including the wisdom penalty.

Antidote: There is no antidote for Laqueera, except maybe a bucket of cold water.

Background: Laqueera is made from a small grub, which only can be found in Pommeraje, that grows in arid conditions, notably in Y'sira and Maritaan. Pommeraje is very sour and definitely an acquired taste. It is usually sweetened with honey or herbs before consumption.

The grubs that Laqueera is made from are the larvae of a desert moth, which only lays its eggs in Pommeraje. It is thought that, in centuries past, farmers, finding their Orchards ruined by the grubs, used the fruit as food for animals and noted its euphoric effects. Experimentation led to people eating the grubs to experience the aphrodisiac effects; those living in regional communities in Y'sira still do so. However the drug became more popular after it was made into Laqueera (Y'siran for 'happy' worm), presenting it in a more palatable form. Since its discovery it has always been in demand by circles of Y'siran nobility and by the Yaarnayan Cult.

Creation: The creation of Laqueera is quite simple and basically just requires mashing up the grub-infested Pommeraje fruit, adding sugar and spices to taste and boiling the pulp until it achieves a sticky jam-like consistency.

Market Price: 1gp per dose



GARRIDIA (Gray Death)

Type: Poison (Animal); Nerve

Delivery: Injury DC 18

Initial: 1d6 Con damage

Secondary: 2d6 Con damage

Description: Garridia is a dark, green colored liquid with the consistency of treacle and a sharp, acidic odor. It can damage nasal tissue if inhaled carelessly and causes a rash and itchy discomfort if it comes into contact with bare skin. Garridia needs to be introduced to a victim's bloodstream to become truly effective. It should still be handled with care however, as the smallest cut is all that is required to receive a lethal dose.

When successfully administered, Garridia begins to attack the victim's nervous system, starting with the target area. Survivors of Garridia poisoning describe intense feelings of shooting pain and severe cramping, combined with difficulty in breathing as the toxin gradually spreads into the abdomen and chest. Death from Garridia usually occurs from cardiac arrest, when the poison reaches the victim's heart. This is usually within a minute of exposure. The bodies of people killed by Garridia are often found in a fetal position, displaying expressions of extreme agony. There is always a large area of dark bruising

centered on the site where the poisoning occurred.

Antidote: There is currently no known specific antidote other than magic that can help a victim poisoned by Garridia. Standard techniques used by skilled healers for providing first aid to a poison victim may provide the usual benefits however.

Background: Garridia is distilled from the toxin of a particular species of soldier ant, known as the Garridian Gray, a native of the Jungles of Po-Ka. These inch long ants have a light gray carapace with long black legs. Their bite gives similar symptoms to the distilled poison but a single ant bite is just painful, rather than dangerous (DC 10; 1 Con/1d2 Con). Being swarmed by a nest of Garridian Grays is an extremely painful way to die, however, and is sometimes used as a method of ritual execution by the vicious Arimah tribes of Po-Ka.

Arimah witchdoctors were first ones to realize the potential for Garridia as a poison and seeing its effectiveness, they developed a means of extracting it without destroying its active properties. Due to the lengthy time and specialized additives required in creating the poison and the fact that its victims died in an extremely painful manner, Garridia generally only saw use during ritual battles or revenge killings. It was also sometimes used in the past to slay the tribal chiefs or champions of enemy tribes during times of conflict.

Druidical orders in Rhenfara were able to learn the secrets of making Garridia in the 18th century R and since then, its recipe has been acquired by a number of apothecaries and alchemists in Rhenfara, who have found a market for prepared Garridia amongst 'shady' merchants from the northern realms.

Creation: A somewhat dangerous process that involves the capture and crushing of hundreds of Garridian Gray Ants. They are placed into a vat of warm oils and slowly simmered until the dead ants settle on the bottom and their toxins float to the surface, where the oils are collected. The raw toxins are then distilled over several days of further boiling at different temperatures, with alternating mixtures of fresh oil and water until the distilled poison remains.

Garridia requires a Craft (Poison Making) creation check (DC 25) and a handle poison check (DC 20) to avoid accidental exposure to the poison. The basic recipe requires approximately 500 Garridian Gray ants and about 100gp worth of specific oils and reagents to produce 2d4 doses of Garridia poison. The thick treacle-like mixture retains its potency for 50+2d10 days.

Market Price: 1200gp for 1 dose.

BITTERWORT (Bearbane)

Type: Poison (Plant); Nauseant.

Delivery: Ingested DC 15.

Initial: 1d4 Str damage.

Secondary: 1d6 Str damage.

Description: This appears as a watery liquid, a rich red in color, with a slightly soapy consistency. Being a water-based liquid it mixes well with most beverages and absorbs easily into foods. It has a strong strawberry smell that is quite pleasant, but by contrast, it has a bitter taste. Its olfactory and culinary qualities can somewhat limit its usefulness; it works best in sweets or strong-smelling foods that can mask its odor and taste.

After consuming a sufficient quantity of Bitterwort, the

victim almost immediately begins to feel quite ill, as its active ingredient reacts with the victim's digestive fluids. The effects begin with a feeling of nausea and wind, sometimes accompanied by a painful pressure in the chest and back, caused by severe indigestion.

As the toxin progresses, it causes stomach cramps and cold chills. In more severe cases it may also cause vomiting and diarrhea as the victim's body tries to purge itself of the toxin. It has never been known to kill anybody but can leave people of lower constitution, particularly children or elderly victims, incapacitated with nausea and stomach cramps for days.

Antidote: Being a strongly acidic toxin, its effects can be lessened by drinking lots of milk or cream. Doing so immediately reduces the effects by -1 damage per die but only to rolls not yet made. In addition, an increased recovery rate applies of 1 point of strength damage recovered every hour.

Background: Bitterwort is a plant growth, commonly found on shade rocks in the forests of Llan. The wort grows in long pale green clumps, on the base of rocks, close to the moisture of the ground and only during late spring to early summer. The people of Llan have always known that Bitterwort is toxic and causes mild nausea, if the hands are not washed after coming in contact with the growths. However, the actual process of distillation that increases the potency of the wort is not widely known. In fact, if cooked, Bitterwort is still very bitter to taste but loses its toxins and becomes quite safe to eat. It is known that people in the Llanish shire of Hallesta add Bitterwort to their pies and jams. As a poison, it is occasionally made by Rangers, who use it to drive troublesome animals away from human settlements.

Creation: Bitterwort is scraped from rocks and dried; then it is mixed with various herbs, syrups and juices and left to stand and ferment in the sun for a few days. Water is slowly added, and as the level drops, the color turns a darker red. The process continues until the majority of water content has evaporated. At this point, the remaining residue is transferred to an air tight container for storage, where it will retain its effectiveness for about 1-2 years.

Bitterwort requires a Craft (Poison Making) creation check (DC 15), but a relatively low handle poison check (DC 3). The recipe requires 5 handfuls of the wort (the scrapings from about twenty good sized rocks) and about 15gp worth of materials, mainly syrup and fruit juices, to produce 1d4 effective doses of Bitterwort poison.

Market Price: 10 gp per dose.

LIACCA

Type: Drug (Plant); Soporific healing agent DC 15.

Delivery: Imbibed.

Initial: 1d2 restoration of positive hit point damage (Liacca never restores negatives). Drinking multiple doses, within a 24 hour period does not provide any extra healing.

Secondary: Drinking Liacca daily will also restore an additional 1 hit point gained by natural healing.

Side Effect: Drinking Liacca causes immediate drowsiness and characters must make a save versus Con to avoid falling asleep within 10+1d10 minutes of imbibing a Liacca brew. This drowsiness lasts 2+2d6 hours and is not magical; affected characters can be awakened but, if not physically animated, they

must make a new save every 30 minutes during the period that the Liacca is active.

Persons who remain awake, under the influence of Liacca, suffer a -1 modifier to all rolls normally modified by Int or Dex.

Description: Liacca is a russet colored mould that grows on trees in most temperate zones in Eldoria, so long as the conditions are conducive to shade. After it is scraped from a tree, the mould turns pale ochre in color. Mixed with boiling water, the resulting liquor tastes like aniseed and leaves the tongue numb for several hours.

Antidote: The recommended antidote for the soporific effect of Liacca is several strong mugs of Taak.

Background: The properties of Liacca are known to have been documented by Druidical Orders existing centuries prior to the Redemption. The first general use of the mould as a healing medium began in Llan around 1900R, in the isolated forest communities of the western Highlands. It is thought that the farmers living in the Highlands were informed about the benefits of Liacca by Bloodmane tribesmen who hunted in the region in winter. The farmers distilled various health tonics from the mould and sold these to river traders. Eventually these tonics made it to the eastern cities and the Esmian Church became greatly interested in learning of the origins of these rustic medicines.

In modern Eldoria, any character with 3 ranks of Wilderness Survival or Knowledge: Nature will know about Liacca and will actively look for mould growths on trees when adventuring in the wild, in order to brew a pint or two for safe-keeping.

Creation: A dose of Liacca tonic is made by dicing a handful of Liacca moss and boiling it for 5-10 minutes in about a pint of water. The resulting liquor (when cool) can be drunk and starts having an effect within an hour.

Market Price: Generally Liacca is free and easy to make into an effective healing potion but, in cities and non temperate regions, various Liacca based tonics and remedies are available for 1sp for a 2 pint bottle.

RYLL

Type: Drug (Plant); depressant DC15.

Delivery: Imbibed DC20/Injury DC18.

Initial: Inability to channel magic power from the Tas. All attempts to cast spells must make a Wis Save at DC25 or result in complete failure.

Secondary: Micro-hemorrhages of the brain. Every time a spell-caster tries to connect with the Tas while under the effects of Ryll and fails, they suffer 1d4 points of damage and a blinding headache that leaves them in a Stunned condition..

Side Effect: Permanent mental damage. Long-term exposure to Ryll can result in loss of memory and intellect. For every day that a subject has Ryll active in their system, make an additional Wis Save at DC8; failure results in permanent loss of 1 point of Wis.

Description: Ryll is a sticky salve that is red in color. Its formulation is a close-guarded secret of the Monks of Light. It can be dissolved in a hot liquid and given in a drink or applied to a dart or dagger and taken into the bloodstream by a successful hit. Its potency only remains for 1d4 rounds if applied to a

weapon.

Antidote: There is no known antidote to Ryll and the subject needs to wait until it is out of their system before they can cast spells without any penalty. Its effects last 24 hours, less a number of hours equal to the subject's Con Save bonus.

Background: Ryll was introduced by the Monks of Light when that Order was made responsible for the policing of the rival temples in Odressi. The Monks needed an effective means of dealing with opponents capable of casting spells and keeping them in detention for years at a time. To this end, they devised the drug known as Ryll which has served them to this day.

Creation: The recipe for Ryll is a secret of the Monks of Light but it is known that the seeds of the Brindlebush are used in its distillation.

Market Price: Ryll cannot be purchased openly, although it sometimes appears on the black-market at a price of around 100 gold trades for a small vial of four doses.

SARITOL

Type: Drug (Animal); Stimulant DC 20.

Delivery: Imbibed.

Initial: Temporary loss of 2d4 points of Con.

Secondary: Boosting of all magical spells based on sensory input (e.g. Clairvoyance, Clairaudience). All such spells are performed as though the caster was ten levels higher than their current level.

Side Effect: Saritol's use does not come cheap. It has drastic side effects that heighten the user's tactile nerve endings, increasing pain dramatically; a breeze upon the skin is like fire, a touch is agony; an open-handed slap can kill. This is represented as special temporary Con damage that is completely restored every four rounds, however there is a great danger of exceeding total Con and dying from shock. Refer Table EE6 at the end of this section.

Description: Saritol is a clear liquid that smells and tastes like brandy. After imbibing a dose, it immediately causes a series of terrible cramps in the muscles of the arms and legs. This is represented in the initial Con loss. As this pain dies, the user is left with a totally clear mind and their normal senses are heightened (the ability scores of WIS and INT are temporarily increased by a factor of x2). The drug causes a shift in the body's natural energy field that alters the way the Tas works with spells from the School of Divination, augmenting them.

Unfortunately, this change also makes the nervous system hyper-sensitive and receptive to pain. The beneficial brief increase in the ability to cast spells is off-set by the longer period that it takes for the nervous system to return to normal. This is usually 4+1d6 hours.

Antidote: The only thing you can do with someone suffering the side effects of Saritol is to carefully remove their garments and keep them isolated and still, preferably in a cool, shaded environment.



Saritol is taken in a single dose and grants spell-casters extraordinary powers but at a cost...

Background: Saritol was the invention of the Cult of Kharic-Ohrm, who used the drug in rituals, designed to induce such terrible pain on subjects that they entered a divine state where they were said to see and speak to their God. Priests serving in the cult formulated the drug in order to circumvent a directive from the Congress of Odressi that forbade the temples in the city from the “drawing of blood, the bruising of the skin or the breaking of the bones” of any person participating in religious ceremonies. The use of Saritol was later banned and the cult proscribed in 2105R. However secret worshippers of Kharic-Ohrm have maintained the recipe for making Saritol and continue to distil quantities for clandestine gatherings of the cult today.

When the temple of Kharic-Ohrm was seized by authorities in Odressi, following the decision of Congress in 2105R, many of its texts and records found their way into the hands of the College of Arcane Science and the Church of Theydori. Both of these institutions discovered the formulation for Saritol and have actively experimented with the drug.

Creation: There are two main constituents that are the active ingredients of Saritol; the spores of the Greenpod Bush and the sap from the Scrimander Root. Greenpods are known for their small fibrous spheres that explode in response to localized tremors, spraying a fine dust of spores into the air. If a substantial quantity is inhaled by humanoids it has the effect of inflaming the nervous system, causing a burning rash all over the trunk and extremities. It is therefore delicate work to collect sufficient Greenpod spores to make one dose of Saritol, which requires at least 6 ounces of the material.

Scrimanderroot is much easier to collect, growing extensively throughout Sard and Elkia. Pure distillations of the sap obtained from Scrimander actually dull the ability of a person to attune themselves to the Tas. In combination with Greenpod spores and a number of reagents the resulting mixture works to accentuate specific areas of magic, mainly those relating to Divination (ESP, Clairaudience and the like).

The ingredients are heated in a crucible, the ashes ground and heated again, the same process repeated seven times. The final amount of fine ash is added to grain alcohol, simmered for three hours and filtered through crushed limestone to produce a clear, oily liquid.

Market Price: Saritol is very difficult to buy. Some alchemists in Odressi and Tempest have acquired the formula and have

made the drug available on the black market. Prices vary greatly but you can expect to pay at least 1000gp per dose.

Table EE6

Type of Contact	Effect	Con Dmg ☼
Slight Touch	Painful	1d6
Firm touch		
Solid push	Severe Pain	1d12
Slap or punch	Agony	2d8
Weapon	Unbearable	x 4 ☆

☼ Con damage is temporary and restored in the same manner (i.e. 1 point per day).

☆ Weapon damage is multiplied by a factor of x4. The base damage is applied to hit points; however the total amount generated with the multiplier is temporary Con damage (e.g. a Wizard, with 8 Hit Points and an ability score of 10 Con is under the influence of Saritol and is stabbed by an assassin armed with a dagger. The assassin doesn't have sufficient STR to adjust the attack and rolls damage of 3 on a d4. The Wizard takes 3 points of damage, which isn't lethal but, the pain generated by Saritol inflicts 3x 4 temporary Con damage. This is sufficient shock to the system to kill the Wizard).

BLACK DRAGON VENOM

Type: Poison (Unknown); Depressant.

Delivery: Imbided DC 25.

Initial: 1d6 Temporary Con damage.

Secondary: 1d6 Temporary Con damage.

Note that if a person reaches 0 or negative Con in this manner they are not considered dead but comatose. They will remain like this for at least 2d10 hours and after this must make another FORT Save (at their normal Save) otherwise they will never regain consciousness.

Side-Effect: There is a chance of permanent blindness for anyone who takes more than 15 points of temporary Con damage from BDV. A separate FORT Save at DC 15 is made to check this.

Description: A clear, oily liquid that is odorless and tasteless, although it has a burning aftertaste, likened to bile.

Drinking a single measure causes immediate palpitations of the heart and acute dizziness. The person affected finds it hard to maintain balance and their eyesight may be adversely affected.

Antidote: There is currently no known specific antidote other than magic that can help a victim poisoned by Black Dragon's Venom. Standard techniques used by skilled healers for providing first aid to a poison victim may provide the usual benefits however.

Background: While not necessarily 'classified' as a poison, Black Dragon's Venom is a notorious drink that is banned in most cities, although it can usually be sourced from the proprietor of an inn by special arrangement.

Its recipe is a secret, as is the origin of this potent and poisonous spirit. Some authorities believe that the Cult of the

Withered Blade are responsible for its distillation and distribution, however there is some evidence that it originates from a source in the Sea of Five Winds.

The drink is supplied in a half-pint pottery bottle, sealed with wax, with a rather badly drawn image of a dragon printed in black upon its label. There is no wording that indicates its contents or who makes it.

Black Dragon Venom has been in supply since the late 20th century R. It first surfaced in Maedori and it is theorized that the original batch of the drink was purchased by a trader from its unknown suppliers and sold to Kyder Trillip, the flamboyant owner of the notorious Maedori tavern, "The Siren's Garter".

Here, it was responsible for the deaths of several of those who drank it and it is likely that the alcohol had been ineptly made. But Kyder Trillip was always one to make a profit from things that turned out bad. Instead of dumping the stock of Black Dragon Venom, he put its price up to the unheard of price of 10 gold trades for a shot-glass and declared that drinks would be on the house for everyone, if one hardy soul could down three full measures and walk a circuit about the main drinking room.

Black Dragon Venom and the custom introduced by Trillip became known across Human realms over the next decade. Soon, the drink was in demand all over Eldoria and Trillip became the sole supplier (via his unknown contacts) of Black Dragon Venom. He retired a very rich man in the year of 1994R.

Creation: The origin and recipe for Black Dragon Venom remains a closely guarded secret. Some alchemists have tried to copy the mixture but a number of its constituents remain unidentifiable.

Market Price: 150 gold trades a bottle (10 gold trades a shot).

COMMERCE

"The sound of coins clinking together as I count them is all the music that I need in my life."

Londarian merchant Kyder Trillip, responding to a request from the Church of Ahridaar to sponsor its choir, 1991R.

COINAGE

Archaeological finds prove that coinage was used in Pre-Redemption times but, as chaos engulfed the world during the Darktime, the economy reverted largely to the barter system. Even gold lost its value. With the Redemption, civilization returned and subsistence farming gave way to surplus produce; the markets dictated a need for cash again and coinage was reintroduced, principally into the realms of Humans.

By the 1400s R, a multitude of different coinages had emerged, usually minted and used within a specific city or region. Often money from one city was worthless in another and the payment methods in trade agreements were constantly changing, influenced by politics and regional disputes.

However, the expansion of the Sardellan Empire across most parts of Eldoria managed to get rid of a lot of these currencies in favor of the Imperial Crown, which became the preferred medium for transactions by the powerful merchant guilds that

were emerging in the north at this time.

When the Empire collapsed the merchant bankers of Tempest made it known that they would honor the Crown but would gradually replace it with their own coinage, that of the Gold Trade. It remains the foremost currency used throughout most of Eldoria today, the main exceptions being Y'sira, which retained its own Tinka, a triangular coin worth half that of the Trade. Add to this, Rhenfara and Leezeria, whose unique cultures have no need for a monetary system.

Most transactions are paid in gold, silver and copper trades (simply substitute for the same value of gp), although large negotiations are sometimes arranged using promissory notes dealing in the transfer of land and/or property.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

All basic vegetables and meat common on Earth can also be found in Eldoria. In addition, there are a number of foodstuffs and drinks that are unique to the world of Enshar:

Eldarthrell

A drink made by the Leezari. It is intoxicating only to the Elven race, who are otherwise unaffected by alcohol.

Black Dragon Venom

A notorious drink proscribed in most lands, although readily purchased from 'under the bar' in many establishments of ill repute. If a patron can drink three in a row, the custom is that all drinks are on the house for the rest of the evening.

Black Dragon Venom has been known to induce permanent states of coma and even to kill those who drink it. Its origin is unknown but it is thought to be distilled by smugglers who operate in the Sea of Five Winds (see Poison Section for rules governing this drink).

Taak

Taak is a powdered seed, red in color. It is added to boiling water to make a popular beverage that tastes similar to coffee with a mint flavor added. Elkians sweeten their Taak with Honeyberries.

Spiceberries

A fruit native to Y'sira and eastern parts of Rhenfara. They grow on hardy spiked bushes during the March of Earth and are about the size of a gooseberry and bright green in color. Their flesh is juicy and reminiscent of pineapple in flavor but with a distinctive after-burn, like chili.

Corshelle Berries

Large blue skinned fruit of the Corshelle bush that grows throughout Leezeria and parts of Elkia and Sard. The juice is used to make Eldarthrell Wine in Leezeria.

Therge

A grain crop grown in desert lands due to its high yield and its suitability to a drier climate. Loaves made from Therge have a 'nutty' flavor, distinguishing it from northern grains such as wheat and barley.

Honeyberries

Glossy golden berries grown throughout Leezeria and Elkia. Popular as a sweetener and used in the making of wines.

Jeffa Roots

Purple root vegetables shaped like crescents. They combine the texture of a potato with the distinct taste of corn. Grown in most temperate regions.

Sweetgourd

A squash-like vegetable, native to Guardian Island. It has a crisp flesh with a subtle sweet curry taste.

Pommeraje

A sweet fruit, grown in Y'sira and in some islands of the Sea of Souls. It is similar to grapefruit in taste but the size of a rock-melon.

Cuisines

Although there are many unique cultural dishes throughout Eldoria, there are only four cooking styles recognized as distinct cuisines by the master cooks of the Crystal Chamber (Zaramoor's famed culinary center).

Some scholars have tried to claim that the Goblindynd practice of scooping out the brains of their victims, rubbing them with a mixture of salt and bitterwort, then boiling them wrapped in cabbage leaves is indicative of a fifth cuisine.

The master cooks of the Crystal Chamber remain unconvinced.

The recognized cuisines are:**Akalastian**

Originating in the central Sardellan Homelands, Akalastian cooking makes extensive use of dairy products as an accompaniment to beef and poultry dishes. Rich sauces and gravies, flavored with berries, are commonly poured over servings, often in order to offset the taste of salted produce.

Elkia and Sard are known for a selection of fine cheeses produced in their northern regions. Many Akalastian dishes incorporate cheese, either melted over them or grated, with a mixture of onion and peppercorns.

Zaraad

This is a style of cooking practiced in Y'sira, where most foodstuffs are served raw and dipped in a variety of ground spices and sweet sauces before eating.

There is very little meat in the diet except for Nulak. This is usually served in thin strips, briefly seared on both sides on a hotplate. Wafers of therge bread are traditional fare at every meal.

Endlese

A cooking style that is widespread across Char-Endl but has crept into the inns of Northland and Llan since 2100R.

Endlese food is known for its spiciness and pungent, sticky sauces, used in preparing a variety of seafood dishes. Most Endlese cooking leaves a person reaching for ale to wash away the after-burn, which is why the inns of Northland and Llan were so keen to adopt Endlese recipes.

Do-Kahn

The cuisine of Maritaan combines centuries of Y'naari traditions with some of the styles associated with Akalastian cooking.

Maritaani people favor pork and poultry cooked on char-

grills and served atop a mixed pile of finely chopped vegetables and noodles that have been soaked in a salty, cream-based marinade.

A particular favorite is a crisp baked biscuit, flavored with ginger and nutmeg, which they dip in pots of fruit jams and honey.

MASTERWORK ITEMS**Weapons and Armor**

To reflect the longevity and traditions inherent in Elven society, all weapons and armor of Elven make are considered masterwork items.

All Dwarven weapons and armor that were made over 500 years ago are considered masterwork items but, because most Dwarves have put aside their old ways to live amongst Humans, much of their old craft has been diluted by the demands of time and profit. Some smiths still remain who can still make weapons and armor of superior quality but it is up to the Referee to determine if the 'old skills' have been passed on to players and NPCs alike.

There are individual craftsmen amongst the Humans who also produce masterwork weapons and/or armor. The most renowned group is the Order of Caldartha, a guild of weaponsmiths who custom-make swords (and swords only) in the city of Denhaven, Elkia. Such is their skill, that the weapons they create provide a +2 bonus adjustment. The cost of a Caldarthan weapon is three times the value listed in the Player's Handbook™.

The most famous makers of armor in the Human Realms are the Stravik Family, currently based in Port Lyrie. They have kitted out Kings and Generals for seven generations. Their amour provides the standard -1 adjustment and costs 500gp more than the normal cost of the equivalent armor.

HOW STANDARD CHARACTER CLASSES FIT INTO ELDORIA

When constructing the final version of the World of Enshar and, in particular the culture and history of Eldoria, I considered it important that all the basic character classes that existed in the core reference material should have their appropriate place in the world.

On the other hand, I didn't want it to appear that the adventuring classes presented in the game were an artificial creation, just made to give players a selection of choices, suiting different styles of play - the character classes needed to be explained in cultural terms so as to mesh with the background material and enhance the credibility of the setting.

Below, I have listed examples of where the standard character classes would 'fit' in the Eldorian setting, describing specific orders they may belong to, regions they may be from and the likelihood of a character being of a particular race.

Remember, this is a guideline only, based on the designer's vision of the world. There are always exceptions to the rule and, if you want to include characters that do not seem to match the criteria presented here, by all means do so.

In the end, your own personal vision of Eldoria, based upon the contents of this book, is just as important to you and your

players if you are to enjoy yourselves, so feel free to delete and modify what parts of the material you think may not suit your own campaign.

BARBARIAN

The realms of Eldoria are highly civilized but there are, shunned places, fringes of wilderness and unexplored backwaters that exist in most regions. As a nation, the vast majority of warriors from the nomadic tribes of Char-Endl, the sub-arctic lands north of the Greater Inner Sea, would be considered Barbarians. Similarly, the Animal Totem worshippers of Revertoll Island have a Barbarian culture.

Smaller tribes and clans, living on the frontiers of civilized nations would be considered ideal choices to trace the origins of a Barbarian character. These include:

The Bloodmane

These fierce warriors of the Barren Plateau in the Llanish Highlands, have the delightful custom of washing their hair in the blood of their freshly killed enemies. They have peace treaties in place with the Guilds of Llan but, every so often, some young warriors take it upon themselves to raid outlying communities.

The Darakuzi

A hardy plains-loving people of southern Vheridane who are renowned for their skills in horsemanship and their favored weapon, the bolas.

The Po-ka Pygmies

The small but dangerous inhabitants of the impenetrable jungles of Po-Ka. These cunning Halflings live in tree-top dwellings, made from mud and interlaced twigs and branches. They make use of many potions and drugs, distilled from rare plants and are known to coat their blowgun darts with Astriga, a toxin that causes paralysis and, in some cases, death.

The Y'naari-Zin

An offshoot of the Y'naari-Su people of Maritaan. They rejected the integration of their people with the Sardellans and moved south, settling the lands east of Carishal's Retreat. They generally avoid contact with the civilized towns of Maritaan but have been known to attack smaller caravans, along more isolated parts of the Merchant Trail to Sinkhole Deep.

Lastly, there are a great many more primitive cultures spread out across the Outlands of Eldoria. They tend to worship deities based upon the Divine Twenty-Seven, with differing ceremonies being performed by the shamans, basically variations on the more formal practices of their inland cousins. The Outlander tribes do not use magic and often fear those who do. Barbarian characters could easily be Outlanders who have become inquisitive enough to venture into the interior of the Eldorian continent.

Bard

The majority of Bard characters would have been trained at one of the nine Great Conservatories of Eldoria and would belong to one of the five Companies of the Muse, established during the 15th and 16th centuries R. Although Human Bards do not go through the laborious training that is expected of a student Wizard of the College of Arcane Science, the Conservatories have long-established ties with the Guild of the Magi and exchange lore that they acquire from their research for the training of their

more talented prodigies in the magic arts.

Thus a Bard's magical skills come from an association with the less-talented Wizards who maintain the Guild Houses across Eldoria.

The major Bard Conservatories, where the Companies of the Muse base themselves are at:

The Hall of the Falkohnen

This grand establishment is situated in Jasper, in the Imperial State and is one of two Conservatories owned and administered by the Company of Skalds, tellers of epic tales who use no music in their craft, relying solely on their dramatic storytelling abilities.

The Crystal Chamber

The exquisitely decorated theater maintained by the Company of the Golden Voice. The Crystal Chamber was once a well-to-do 'watering hole' located in Zaramoor, Elkia, and was originally called the Crystal Inn. It was renowned for the quality of entertainment its owners provided as well as the culinary and wine-making skills of its proprietors. It rapidly became the haunt of many talented people, most of whom were gifted singers or cooks. When the Inn faced financial ruin following the Kinstrife, several of the more prosperous past artists banded together to buy a major share in premises and keep it afloat. The most influential of these new owners were members of the Company of the Golden Voice.

In 1775R, the Golden Voice started building a Conservatory and theater on the site of the Crystal Inn, receiving generous funding from local wealthy patrons. No expense was spared and the finished building incorporated polished floor tiles of Balasian Oak and artwork by Gustyn Canther and Habalian Trune.

The Golden Voice specialize in vocal talents and its members are amongst the most gifted singers of Eldoria. The famed Dalmecia of the Island of Eriana is an Elven Bard of the Golden Voice and she is known to have the gift of singing at a pitch that can shatter delicate glassware.

The Shrine to Saint Tira

This Conservatory is located in Tempest and is home to the Company of the Master Troubadours. This Company is made up of talented musicians; players of lutes, pipes, tambours and kadizas. The Shrine has the privilege of being located on one of the three main islands of the Tempest group and, in addition to its music halls, features an extensive mausoleum devoted to the memory of Tira Thrule, the cleric of Ahridaar responsible for the foundation of the Companies of the Muse.

The Hall of Tiers

This is the magnificent indoor theater in Quorull, Llan, which houses the Company of the Mask. The Mask is representative of thespians, mummer-troupes and more physical forms of entertainment (juggling, acrobatics, dancing and suchlike). It is perhaps the most diverse of the four companies and caters for many artists who are best described as 'jacks-of-all-trades'.

In addition to these four larger Human Conservatories, there are also five other establishments of note:

The Tellers' Dome

This is located in Port Lyrie and operated by Skalds, it is one of the few Conservatories frequented by Elves.

Songheart Reach

Situated in Rhenfara and operated by the Troubadours. It is a remote retreat for Bards who wish to escape the woes of the world, being an isolated commune near the Tiered Falls.

The Runehall

This Conservatory is mainly a gathering place where Dwarves remember the old songs and tales of their elders and is not governed by any of the Muse Companies, although some Humans study here. The Runehall is located in Karhaven, Sard.

K'tinka's Palace

Another Troubadour Conservatory located in Byalliz. It is famous for a particular style of music, called Hyallah, which begins at a slow pace and gradually builds tempo over repeated passages.

The Circle of Nolamande

This is the only formal institution for Elven Bards, located in Tarimthol-Irl.

Players are quite free to have Bard characters that do not belong to any of these Conservatories or Companies. In those cases, they would be talented individuals who have developed an understanding of the magical side of their abilities through an interest in the ancient sources that they often come across while researching material to use in their art. Elven Bards, as an example, normally belong to no formal institution and learn magic from social interaction with Elven Sorcerers, in exchange for tales of their travels.

Cleric

A character class that easily fits into Eldoria. There are twenty-seven Gods, representing a wide range of domains that players can choose from. It should be noted that not all Clerics are capable of casting spells (called Miracles or Divine Renderings). Magic-capable Clerics are called Seervaati and have an elevated status amongst all religions. Most are free to roam the realms of Eldoria, to pursue their own personal goals. In the Geography Section, each country lists its major and minor religions so a player or Referee can use this to ascertain where a particular Cleric is likely to have originated from.

Druid

There are several Druidical Orders that exist in Eldoria that are either associated with the Deity Hirath (God of the Animals) or Ulliah (God of the Forests). The Human Orders are as follows:

The Order of Mount Sark

Based in the Stonebrow Mountains on the border of Llan, Sard and Elkia, this is perhaps the most ancient of the Human followings of Ulliah. They hold the region surrounding Mount Sark as holy ground and have contested it with local authorities for centuries.

The famous Druid, Izrach, who founded the Dead Tree Council of Rhenfara was originally from this Order.

The Order of the Dragon

A splinter group from the Mount Sark Druids, devoted to the God Hirath and, in particular, dragonlore. They are based in the cold tundra lands of Char-Endl.

The Society of the Lion

An offshoot of the Order of the Dragon that established a temple in Odressi and abandoned the teachings of their northern



The Gold Trade is the preferred currency of the wealthier merchant bankers of Eldoria

kinfolk. There is no love lost between the Dragons and Lions. The Society is recognized as the official Church of Hirath by the Conclave of Odressi.



The famous Dalmezia of Eriana, a Leezari Bard with a voice capable of shattering cut glass. She is often seen at the Crystal Chamber in Zaramoor

The Brotherhood of the Dead Tree

Established by the famous Druid Izrach, when the Mount Sark Order went into exile in Rhenfara, the Brotherhood has and political and theological control of the country for generations. They worship Ulliah.

The Diamond Sisterhood

An all female Ulliahn Order based on Southwind Island. They guard the only known forest of Diamondwood Trees (the hardest substance known to mortals) and know the secrets of making the wood malleable.

The Shaedarfyn

Commonly called the Woodguard. Many centuries ago, they were given the honor of protecting the Eldarwood Groves of southern Leezeria but have recently fallen out of favor with the Elvenking over his policies on allowing the culling of the magical wood once more. They are dedicated to Ulliah.

The Lenadar

An obscure group of Valdari Elves who live a wild, almost animal existence and claim to be shapeshifters. They are followers of Hirath.

Fighter

Another bread-and-butter Character Class. Fighters can draw their backgrounds from just about any region in Eldoria, from the mercenary companies that serve the Guilds of Llan to the martial combatants who compete in the Tazzanai Games of Rhenfara. Fighters also serve as regulars in the Paladin Orders of Ormocea and Siritar (see below).

Monk

Orders of Monks skilled in martial arts originated amongst the Y'naari people of Maritaan and spread throughout the southern realms of Eldoria over the centuries. Contact with the Sardellan Empire eventually led to these martial skills being introduced into the northern lands from the 1300s R.

Players can belong to the mystical brotherhoods such as the Tay-Saika of Sinkhole Deep or the Tor-Gunzar of Y'sira.

The Esmian Church is divided into two distinct religious Orders; one devoted to healing and the other to the protection of the temple. The latter are known as the Monks of the Relenting Hand and are made up of the Monk character class, rather than Clerics.

The best known Order in Eldoria are the Monks of Light who are based in Odressi and are responsible for maintaining peace between rival religious groups.

Paladin

Paladins will usually belong to one of the Knightly Orders serving the God Ormocea or Siritar:

The Swords of Justice

This Ormocean Order has its headquarters in Denhaven, Elkia and sponsors twelve Chapter Houses throughout Elkia and Llan and in the Holy City of Odressi.



A Monk from the esoteric Esmian Order of the Unrelenting Hand, defenders of the Esmian faith

The Knights of the Silver Swan

This Ormocean Order has its headquarters in Denhaven and sponsors four Chapter Houses in Denhaven, Darringmoor, Tempest and (most recently) Brackendor, in Northland.

The White Lance

Only formed recently, following the Five Years Doom, this Ormocean Order has its headquarters in Odressi and sponsors small Chapter Houses throughout a number of major islands in the Sea of Souls.

The Forgiven

This elite and secretive Order of Ormocean Executioners has its only Chapter House in Odressi, although individual members reside in major towns and cities throughout Elkia and in Tempest. The smallest of the Ormocean Orders, it is made up of fourteen Paladins.

The Paladins of the Forgiven are each of Character Levels

7 -10. They are recruited from the ranks of other Ormocean Paladin Orders. Referees should consider only allowing players in higher level campaigns to assume the role of a Paladin of the Forgiven.

The Knights of Glory

This company of Siritar Paladins is the most ancient of the Knightly Orders and has its headquarters in Thungar, in eastern Elkia. It sponsors two Chapter Houses, one in Port Lyrie, across the Straits of Thungar and the other in Denhaven.

The Imperial Guard

Originally the personal guard of the Sardellan Emperors, this Siritar Order continues to defend the independence of the Imperial State and is often at political loggerheads with the rest of the Siritar Orders and the Holy Trinity. They have a single Chapter House in Jasper, the old capitol of the Empire.

The Knights of the Holy Sword

This Siritar Order is based in Odressi and the Conclave recognizes them as representing the dogmas of the whole Siritar faith. The Order sponsors a second Chapter House in Carashal's Retreat, Maritaan.

The Protectors of the Faith

The largest of the Siritar Orders, the Protectors of the Faith have their main headquarters in Denhaven, with sixteen other Chapter Houses situated throughout Elkia.

Daughters of the Silken Sword

A unique, all-female Siritar Order that exists only in Byalliz, capitol of Y'sira. They are not formally recognized by the northern Orders.

Players may wish to portray Paladins associated with other Eldorian religions but they would not be a part of any large organization. Instead, they would be considered a lone warrior, supremely devoted to the God they worship, so much so, that they are capable of performing Miracles in the name of their Deity.

Ranger

The Ranger Character Class in Eldoria is usually drawn from a number of obscure bands of dedicated martial expert, serving some cause that has a long-standing association with an aspect of the natural world. Their ability to 'attune' themselves with nature, to the point of being able to duplicate some of the Divine Renderings usually associated with Druidical and Clerical Orders, differentiates true Rangers from common hunters and trackers.

Rangers can belong to one of the larger organized companies (detailed below) or can be individuals who draw their power and semi-divine abilities from an association with the Malantha, the primal elemental spirits who came into being as a result of the Gods' labors in creating the natural world. Most Malantha have long-since passed into a state of slumber, akin to the Priatharia of the Elves, but there are those spirits that still haunt the more secluded parts of Eldoria and come to empower those mortal beings who would serve them.

The more formal Brotherhoods of Rangers usually have been involved in long-term relationships with Druidical Orders, such as the Children of Izrach, the Brotherhood of the Dead

Tree, the Watchers of the West and the Whitestaves. These are mainly devoted to the God Ulliah (Lord of Forests) or Hirath (King of Beasts).



The Daughters of the Silken Sword are an obscure Siritar Cult made up entirely of women. They are based in Byalliz, Y'sira

There are some other smaller but distinguished groups, such as:

The Quirrath Tairn

An Elven band of Rangers who hate Goblinskynd and endlessly hunt Orcs across the dangerous wastes of the Crownless Lands.

The Suujakyn

The expert deep desert trackers of the Keljak of Y'sira.

The Seawardens

A group of Rangers who are skilled mariners, serving the Church of Gurthor. They are mostly a Human following from Trith but draw much of their knowledge from older Dwarven and Elven seamen.

Rogue

Rogues exist as individuals anywhere in Eldoria. In the larger Human towns and cities they form collective groups, called Thieves' Guilds.

Usually there are no more than two or three Guilds operating in an Eldorian city, going under colorful names like the Red Scarves, the Nightrunners or the Company of the Coin. Byalliz

(the City of Thieves) is the exception, where eleven Guilds form an influential power-base in the city.

Most Thieves' Guilds have territorial arrangements with each other and weaker Guilds often pay tribute money to those who are stronger. Only one organization has a presence in more than one city across Eldoria and that is the Cult of the Withered Blade, an ancient secret cabal of thieves and assassins who are generally feared by mainstream Rogues. They are the Mafia of Eldoria.



Of all the Thieves' Guilds in Eldoria, none is more feared than the Cult of the Withered Blade

Sorcerer

In Eldoria, Sorcerers are mages who learn their arts through a time-honored tradition of passing on their arcane knowledge from Master to Apprentice. They are reclusive and often treated with suspicion by the general populace. They dislike the practices of the College of Arcane Science, who teach magic via a more formal 'school-based' system and call themselves Wizards

Most (not all) Humans who use magic are Wizards. Demi-Human races favor Sorcery.

Wizard

The majority of Human Wizards are introduced to their craft through the Guild of the Magi, learning Cantrips. More talented individuals are identified and sent to the College of Arcane Science where they are considered to have undergone six year's of magical tutelage, achieving 1st Level when they finish their studies.

The College is located in Vharizia on the island of Ghardon. The major Halls of the Guild of the Magi are based in Denhaven, Gablehead, Slaarn, Darringmoor, Quorull, Odressi, Maedori, Byalliz, Port Lyrie and Tempest. Although most Elves are Sorcerers, they do have one formal institution that produces Wizards, the Eldritch University of Pharidor's Watch.

CREATURE CODEX

This section contains a small sample of creatures unique to Eldoria that will be featured in the Creature Codex, an examination of the wildlife and plants peculiar to each region, complete with random encounter generation tables.

SANDRUNNER

Large Aberration

Hit Dice: 4d8+4(22)

Initiative: +8

Speed: 30ft (6 squares)

Armor Class: 19 (-1size, +4 Dex +6 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+12

Attack: Claw +8 (1d8)

Full Attack: 2 Claws +8 melee (1d8) and bite +3 melee (1d4+1) poison

Space/Reach: 10 ft/10 ft

Special Attacks: Pounce, improved grab, poison (paralysis)

Special Qualities: Tremorsense

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +5

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 2

Skills: Hide +11

Feats: Improved initiative, power attack

Environment: Desert

Organization: solitary or pair

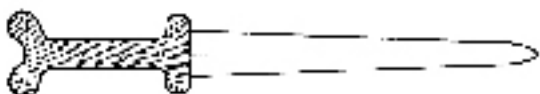
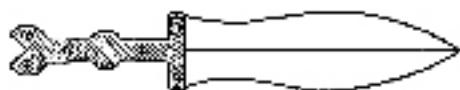
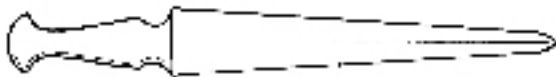
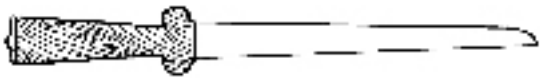
Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: 50% coins and items

Alignment: -

Advancement: 5-6HD (Huge) 7-8HD (Gargantuan)

Level Adjustment: -



A Sandrunner looks like a giant ant, with sharp front claws. It stands about the size of a horse and moves with surprising speed.

Dangerous predators of the deep desert, Sandrunners are truly nightmarish creatures that stalk mammalian prey, both for food and to utilize organs to extend their lifespan. They lack a number of key internal systems necessary to function normally and have adapted a grisly means of survival, paralyzing live animals and storing them in an internal womb-like cavity, where the victim is 'connected up' to the Sandrunner's systems. In this way, the Sandrunner minimizes the impact on its own bodily functions and is able to go for long periods without food or water, drawing upon its paralyzed captive when it needs to, keeping them alive for as long as possible.

A Sandrunner will expel the drained husk of its current 'captive' prior to stalking a replacement. Most captives can be kept alive for up to six months at a time. Without a host, a Sandrunner can live approximately 2-4 weeks without using an external source to run their internal systems.

COMBAT

Sandrunners prefer to attack a solitary creature, using its Hide Skill to conceal itself just beneath the sand, using their antennae to sense the approach of prey. If driven to fight multiple foes (usually due to the exhaustion of a captive), a Sandrunner will attack, rearing up on its four hind legs and use its two front claws to deliver power attacks. It will attempt to dispatch or incapacitate all but one individual, which it will use for a new replacement for its internal organs.

Tremorsense (Ex): The Sandrunner's Tremorsense ability is generated by a set of antennae on its head. Although it has a rudimentary set of eyes, it relies on its antennae to detect prey. It buries itself in the sand and picks up the vibrations of passers-by up to half a mile away, sensing their proximity with pin-point accuracy.

Pounce (Ex): When prey is within 10 ft a Sandrunner will charge from its place of concealment and attempt to attack or grapple with its victim, the Pounce ability allowing them an immediate full round action following the charge.

Improved Grab (Ex): A successful grapple hold using this ability allows the Sandrunner to deliver an automatic bite in the next round.

Poison (Ex): The Sandrunner has a paralyzing venom (Fort Save DC 13) delivered by its bite. The venom immobilizes its victim for 1d4+4 rounds. The venom glands can deliver two doses at full strength, then third and fourth doses at a weakened strength (Fort Save DC 7). After that its venom must build up to full delivery strength again; this takes 36 hours.

THE FATE OF A SANDRUNNER'S PREY

If a Sandrunner is able to immobilize a victim and there is no immediate threat in the area, it will use its razor claws to dismember the body and render it to a size that can easily be fit inside its body cavity. It does this with rapid precision, taking care to keep the new captive alive. The process of preparing the captive takes 2 rounds.

The cavity is located in its underbelly, which is able to split open to accommodate the new captive. Networks of internal tubes instantly connect to the captive's body and begin pumping liquids that rapidly heal the damage inflicted during the dismemberment process. These healing liquids are the equivalent of a Cure Serious Wounds potion and are produced by a set of glands located in the Sandrunner's abdomen.

These glands are highly prized by adventurers and, if removed from the recently dead carcass of a Sandrunner, they can provide the equivalent of four vials of Cure Serious Wound potions.

In addition to the healing liquids, the Sandrunner permanently 'dopes' its captive with its paralyzing venom, maintaining them in a zombie-like state of existence. Naturally, becoming the captive organ bank of a Sandrunner is a horrific experience. There have been cases of people being freed months after being capture but most of these died soon after or had been driven insane by the experience.

EVOLUTION OF THE SANDRUNNER

Most learned scholars believe that the Sandrunner was a species that once lived in a symbiotic relationship with an internal parasitic creature. Over time, the parasite consumed most of the vital systems of the host, the parasite ensuring its survival by taking over those internal processes itself. At some stage, a catastrophic external event caused the parasite within the Sandrunners to die out (possibly the shortage of a certain food source vital to the parasite's survival). The Sandrunners were threatened with extinction and those that survived were the ones that evolved the ability to use other creatures to replace the missing organs that had resulted from eons of symbiosis.

HAUNTING PRESENCE

Medium Undead (Incorporeal)

Hit Dice: 5d12 (32hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 10 ft Fly (clumsy)

Armor Class: 15 (+2 dexterity, +3 deflection), touch 15, flat-footed 13

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/-

Attack: incorporeal touch +4 melee (1d8 plus Wisdom drain)

Full Attack: incorporeal touch +4 melee (1d8 plus Wisdom drain)

Space/Reach: 5ft (1 square)

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft, incorporeal traits, undead traits, sphere of influence

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +7

Abilities: Str -, Dex 15, Con -, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 16

Skills: Listen +11, Spot +11, Knowledge Local +11, Knowledge Arcana +11, Intimidate +11, Hide+10, Spellcraft +11, Sense Motive +11

Feats: Hover, weapon focus: unarmed strike

Environment: Any land or underground

Organization: solitary

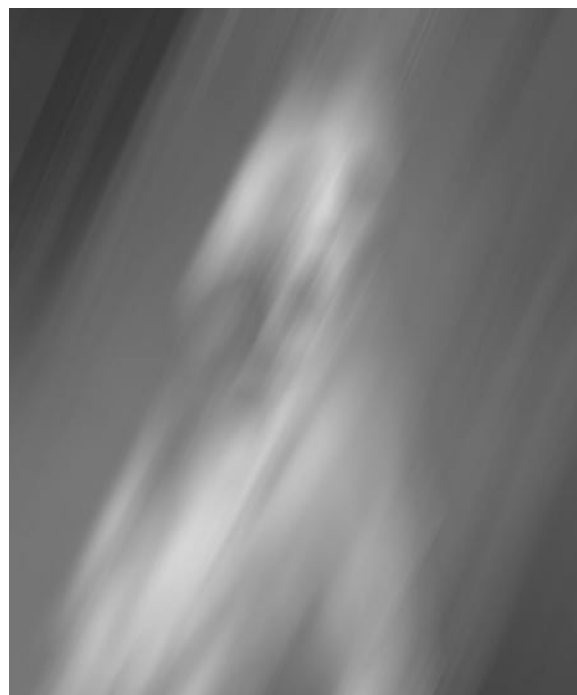
Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: None

Alignment: neutral evil

Advancement: 6-7HD (large) 8-9HD (huge) 10-11HD (gargantuan)

Level Adjustment: -



Rarely ever seen, although their presence is often felt, these undead creatures appear as a dimly perceived humanoid form; a grey blur amongst the darker shadows.

A Haunting Presence is an entity spawned that feeds on death and misery and perpetuates its existence by creating more evil in the same location that it is confined to. It is what lies at the very heart of a haunted house; it is the essence that makes a particular location feel 'bad'.

When a particularly evil event takes place, the release of energy from death and/or extreme emotion, can sometimes remain in the immediate area and create a sentient entity. This is not a ghost as such, as it has no direct association to anyone slain in the vicinity but it does have a 'presence' with a need to perpetuate more evil, feeding off the deaths of sentient beings.

The Haunting Presence is bound to the particular focal point of its creation, known as its Sphere of Influence. The Presence can move anywhere from a distance of 100 ft per HD from its focal point. It is impossible for it to move beyond this point.

The Presence advances in levels by 'feeding' off the energy released by those who die within its Sphere of Influence. It will tend to remain hidden at its focal point, where it is stronger (see below) and use its special abilities to wreak havoc upon the living.

COMBAT

As stated, a Haunting Presence will avoid direct contact with those who enter its sphere of influence. It will use its Unseen Servant ability to create mishap and accidents, tripping people on stairs or locking doors behind them. It will also animate objects or control other undead that dwell within its sphere of influence and use these to attack, usually picking off isolated individuals.

Only if challenged, or if there is a particularly weak opponent, will the Presence come forth from its focal point and attack, using its ability drain power.

Sphere of Influence (su)

This is a defined area that the Presence is limited to, equal to 100 ft radius x HD from a focal point. The Presence cannot step outside this area; to do so would mean its instant destruction. The Presence is aware of anything occurring within its sphere of influence; it can see and here everything, unless prevented by spells.

The focal point of sphere of influence provides the Presence with additional strength. As long as it remains within 10' of the point, the Presence is able to regenerate 2 hit points per round and cannot be Turned.

The sphere of influence of a Haunting Presence binds the spirits of the dead to the region, infecting them with the evil of the place. Therefore there will always be 2d4 other Undead trapped in the sphere and beholden to the Haunting Presence, provided they have HD less than the Presence.

Spell-Like Abilities:

Animate Object

The Presence can animate any object within its sphere of influence, as a 6th level caster, as per the spell. It can use this ability once every 24 hour period.

Unseen Servant

At Will, the Presence can create an unseen servant, as a 5th level caster, anywhere within its sphere of influence. Unlike the

standard spell, the Presence can use the unseen servant to initiate minor attacks such as a push or trip but if it does so, it can no longer use the ability for 24 hours.

Control Undead

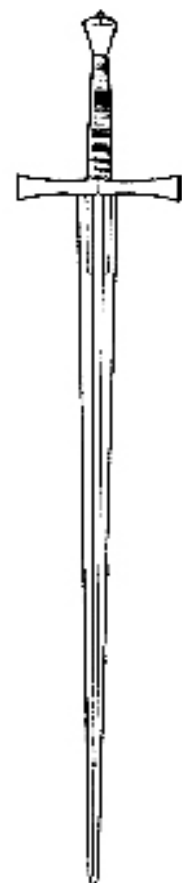
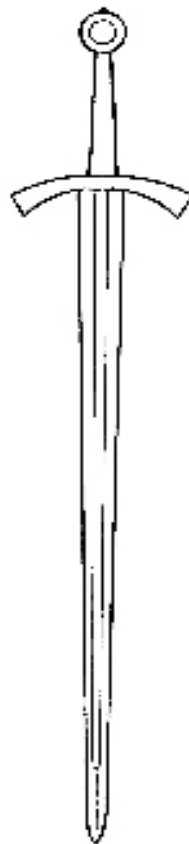
The Presence can control undead, as a 7th Level caster, usually commanding those other undead creatures that have come to be bound to its sphere of influence. It can utilize this ability once every 24 hours.

SETTING THE SCENE

Because of the evil it sets out to perpetuate, there will normally be a number of other undead creatures in the sphere of influence of a Haunting Presence. When using a Haunting Presence the referee should consider the local history of what has happened in the area, noting the personalities who have died and the tales that surround their demise. These personalities can be linked to the other Undead creatures that occupy the sphere of influence of the Presence. Determine how many other Undead there are by rolling 2d4, then choose the type by rolling a d10 on the table below:

- 1-3 Skeleton
- 4-6 Zombie
- 7-8 Shadow
- 9 Allip
- 10 Wraith

This table is for a medium sized Haunting Presence only. Alternately, choose your own undead, as long as their individual HD is less than the Haunting Presence.



FAELINN (AKA LIGHTNING-RIDERS)

Small Fey

Hit Dice: 2d6+3 (10hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 20ft (4 squares) Fly 40 ft (good)

Armor Class: 16 (+5 dexterity, +1 size), touch 16, flat-footed 11

Base Attack/Grapple: +0/-4

Attack: short sword +0 melee (1d4-1/19-20)

Full Attack: short sword +0 melee (1d4-1/19-20)

Space/Reach: 5ft/5ft (1 square)

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: Fey traits, low-light vision

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 15

Skills: Knowledge of nature +5, Hide +8, Escape artist +10, Tumble +10, Move silently +10, Listen +5, Balance +6

Feats: Dodge

Environment: Temperate forests

Organization: Gang (2-4), band (6-11), tribe (20-80)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: No coins, standard items

Alignment: chaotic neutral

Advancement: 2-3 HD (medium)

Level Adjustment: +4



Moving with dazzling grace, these small humanoids have muscular bodies and translucent wings, that crackle with a static charge that they generate as they move together at tremendous speed. They carry small, but sharp, blade weapons and often wear gaudy ornamentation denoting their warrior status.

Also called Lightning-Riders by the Elves, the Faelinn are a savage breed of Fey, related distantly to Sprites. They hate all large folk, including Elves and are mostly found in the secluded parts of forests. They also dislike other faerie folk and only have loyalty to the Dryads, with whom they have ancient ties. Faelinn can often live in close proximity to reclusive Dryads and act as guardians of their sacred groves

They are exceedingly territorial and will not hesitate to take on foes much larger than themselves, relying on their speed, numbers and ability to generate a powerful static-electric charge.

COMBAT

Faelinn will usually attack at speed in a band, flying past an opponent and attempting to deliver their Shocking Grasp Attack, while striking with their sword. If their opponent refuses to be driven away and continues to be a threat to the area they are defending, their chieftains will attempt to deliver their dreaded they will resort to their

Spell-Like Abilities:

Shocking Grasp (3 times per day)

Lightning Bolt (once per day), as a 4th level caster. Note that when this ability is used the lightning bolt also inflicts half the amount of damage to the Faelinn, usually with fatal results.

To the Faelinn, there is no greater honor than to defend their territory by sacrificing themselves in, what is referred to, as going out in a “Blaze of Glory”.

G L O S S A R Y

Aercharn

The Uushai term for the grouping of three Gods with similar purpose. The common term is a House of the Gods.

Ahr-Ganiz

A desolate land of sheer mountains, home to many species of Goblinskynd.

Ahridaar

God of the Arts, Master of the Feast.

Akalastians

A group of Human tribes who settled the northern parts of Sard and Elkia during the Darktime.

Alfarren Highlands

A hidden valley in south-west Leezeria where many Sylvaari are said to live under the protection of a Malantaha.

Alithar

Royal household of the Kingdom of Khalast.

Altarren

A mysterious continent that exists in the southern hemisphere of Enshar.

Anchorstone

A large Pre-Redemption magical stone set into the ground in the city of Vharizia that appears to have a linkage to the ancient citadel that floats above that city. The Council of Wizards postulate that the Anchorstone keeps the citadel in place, like a tether.

Argond, Orlon

Founder of the College of Arcane Science.

Arimah

The deadly pygmy folk of the Jungles of Po-Ka. They are highly territorial and use poison darts to great effect.

Astaran, Orlynn

Ormocean Archbishop and advisor to the Empress Tarane.

Averaach

An crystalline mineral that is found at the site of meteor impacts during the March of Fire. The most common form reacts in a violent explosion in the presence of Tas energy.

Awakening, The

The time when the Gods will arise and begin the voyage home to Kalidath, taking the faithful with them.

Aztria

The fantastic settlement of the Outlanders known as the Ice-Walkers. Their town is underground, carved out of the ice of a glacier.

Baladara

The original name of the Holy Isle prior to the establishment of Odressi.

Balasian Oak

A tree mainly found in the Llanish highlands that provides a beautiful ochre wood favored by carpenters and builders.

Balelights

Mysterious glowing lights that come and go in the Sea of Five Winds. Vessels caught in the Balelights have vanished and never been seen again.

Bhiritaan

A Rhenfaran township, very different from their traditional knaidaal communities of the east. Bhiritaan is fortified and is very similar to northern towns in appearance.

Bitterwort

A purgative potion.

B'jin

Outcasts of the Keljak who established themselves at oases in the Dunes of Iskiria. They raid local caravan traffic.

Bloodmane

Outland barbarians who often raid western Llan in winter. They believe that they gain strength by washing their hair in their enemy's blood.

Bloodwine

An expensive claret made in Y'sira that is popular in the northern realms.

Byalliz

The capitol of Y'sira (also called the City of Thieves). It is built over a network of ancient caverns and lava tubes.

Caldartha

An adept group of weaponsmiths that existed in the Twilight Years. The swordsmiths of Denhaven now use the name.

Camathene

Also known as squid-light. This is a concoction distilled from the Gray-mottled squids of the Emerald Deeps. It provides a bright phosphorescent light when added to fresh water and is mainly used in Tempest where naked flames are a danger to the wooden city.

Cetairi

A settlement in Char-Endl, the closest thing to a capitol that the nomadic Clans have.

Char-Endl

The most northerly realm of Eldoria, inhabited by a nomadic semi-barbarian race.

Citylord

Popular title given to secular, non-regal rulers of Eldorian city-states.

College of Arcane Science

Eldoria's most prominent training facility for practitioners of magic.

Congress of Odressi

A council of the Churches held every four years in Odressi.

Corithaal

A fabulous city of the First Age said to lie in the darkest Jungles of Po-ka.

Crested Firetail

A scarlet feathered peacock native to Loakiish.

Crownless Lands

A no-man's land situated between the Leezari and Goblinskynd territories. The Leezari have encouraged settlement of the Crownless Lands after the Third War of Tears and there are many Human communities spread out across the region.

Dalafor

An ancient Leezari province that once occupied all the land south of the Mountains of Terror.

Darktime, The

A period of chaos when civilizations across Eldoria collapsed into barbarity. Nobody knows how long the Darktime lasted.

Darringmoor

Sea-port on the Greater Inner Sea, constantly swapping hands between Llan and Sardell during the time of the Empire.

Darvinor

An ancient Leezari race that were given custodianship of the world before the Darktime. They were said to be masters of psionic powers.

Daugron

Goddess of Fire, the dominant religion of Y'sira.

Daugron's Seeds

A belt of minute asteroids and cosmic dust that orbits Pharys. When Enshar passes through the belt, there are colorful fiery displays in the skies.

Deathhold

Only city of the Goblinynd and seat of power of the Ironskin Orcs.

Deepfin Channel

Deep trough of water between Southwind and Sharruck Island. Place where the Y'siran fleet was engaged and destroyed by the Sardellans in 1532R.

Denhaven

Capitol of Elkia. Its walls are an architectural wonder, being over 80' in height and 15' in width.

Derelon, Yorith

Sardellan sea captain who circumnavigated Eldoria and made the first complete maps of the outer coasts.

Dhamikohn

A Leezari Sorcerer, demonized by Human cultures as being the one responsible for leading the Saahn away from the Gods.

Diamedes

An Elven hero who is said to have lived in the last days of the First Age.

Diamondwood

A natural wood that grows only on Southwind Island. It has properties that combine the lightness of wood with the hardness of steel. It is almost indestructible.

Dormos

An island in the Sea of Souls with a reputation for high quality crafted goods.

Draelingus I

First King of the Sardellan Kingdom, crowned in 428R.

Dragoncarl

One of a select group of warriors who serve a Dragonlaird in Char-Endl. They receive a greater share of food, drink and wealth.

Dragonlaird

Head of a clan in Char-Endl.

Drydan I

Khalasian King who founded Khalast (that became Llan).

Duelbane, Dasanda

A female warrior. One of the more influential leaders of the Llanish mercenary companies in 2150R.

Dunewall, The

A treacherous mountain barrier that divides Y'sira from the Outlands. It has a maze-like series of narrow passes that constantly change due to regular earth tremors that pervade the region.

Dwarvenhold

Mythical home of the Dwarves, whose location has been lost over the ages.

Dwimorvoren

A fortress built by Sirrith in Ahr-Ganiz. It is thought that its foundations are part of Deathhold.

Ebonshard of Troth

A huge black standing stone and sacred site of the Giants of the Grand Escarpment.

Eldarthrell

A potent wine that only is intoxicating to the Leezari. It is rarely found outside of Leezeria.

Eldarwood

A wood which channels and stores the Tas, much the same way that Excellium does. It only grows in Leezeria and is sacred.

Elinseth

The leader of the mortal factions known as the Faithful, during the War of Power.

Elkia

A peaceful country ruled by Orders of the Siritar Church, a brotherhood of Paladins.

Elvenholme

A beautiful Elven settlement built on high cliffs overlooking the Golden Sea. When the province of Dalafor was cut-off by Goblinynd, Elvenhome fell and now is a grim ruin, the lair of all manner of foul creatures.

Enshar

The world that Eldoria is part of.

Esmia

Goddess of Healing.

Esmia's Tears

The Holy Water of the Esmian Church (also a potent curative, the equivalent of a Cure Light Wounds spell).

Excellium

A metal that easily stores and channels Tas energy. The shortage of Excellium is one factor that limits the construction of magical items in modern day Eldoria.

Faar

Goddess of Agriculture. Faar appears in four cyclic forms, representative the seasons.

Faarsown

The species of Gnomes.

Feyun-Kahn

An Y'naari nobleman who defeated his King's fleet and established his own dynasty in the Outlands of Maritaan in 5R.

Fractured Coast

A part of the Char-Endlese coastline where ice-floes extend southward for miles in winter creating hazards for ships.

Gablehead

Capitol of Sard. The city is known for its steep streets, fountains and waterways.

Gaien

Goddess of Fertility, a strictly female cult.

Gilliard, Lanis

Inventor of the modern calendar, an unwieldy and complicated means of documenting time.

Goblinkynd

Any of the numerous species of humanoid monsters, including goblins, Orcs and Trolls.

Godshome

An island where the Gods have once supposed to have marshaled their armies during the War of Powers.

Grand Escarpment

Vast mountain chain that runs north-south through Sard. It is rich in base metals.

Gray Death

A deadly poison, distilled from the venom of the Garridian Gray ant. Its alchemical name is Garridia.

Grimorden

Legendary Guardians of Shadowland; Demons who sought sanctuary with Sirth in the First Age.

Guild of Gold

Eldoria's most powerful group of merchant bankers.

Gurthor

God of the Sea and a member of the House of Waters.

Gurthor's Token

A green ribbon or cloth, worn around a sailor's leg to gain the favor of the Sea-God.

Halocean Fever

A life-threatening debilitating illness that often leaves the sufferer in a weakened state for many years.

Handtongue

Sign language used to communicate with Outlanders.

Hargash

A small town that is the center for the Hirathian Order of the Wyrn, a Druidical group that influences the Char-Endlese.

Haunted Trough

The deepwater ravine near Tempest where the city buries its dead at sea. The region is shunned by sailors who claim that ships entering the waters here have had the dead call to the living to come and join them.

Hearthhome

A type of dwelling favored by Halfling families. They resemble a large well-shaft crowned by a windmill. Galleries and apartments extend horizontally from the central shaft. The windmill provides power to all manner of mechanical devices.

Hearthvale Home

The largest community of Halflings in Northland.

Heliphera

A mountain in the east of the legendary island of Kordass, where the Gods built their palace.

Hirath

God of the Nender-Saahn, Lord of the Beasts of the Land.

Hive

Term for a Goblinkynd community, usually an underground network of caves with a few strongpoints built on the surface to defend the entrance.

Hlajeeri

A primitive people who dwell on Loakiish. They provide most of the thrirish supply for Eldoria.

Hlissicaari

Lizardmen of the Ruby ranges. They have a unique alliance with the Humans and Halflings of Northland.

Hrygashan

The capitol of Rhenfara, a small settlement built into the cliffs of the coast.

Hyallah

A Y'siran style of music that starts with a slow beat and builds up, each repetition of the melody faster than the last. It ends when the musicians are no longer able to sustain the pace.

Ijanka Mountains

A high mountain range dividing Rhenfara from the Outlands. The Ijanka Mountains are home to all kinds of dangerous denizens left over from the War of Power.

Ikle's Head

A stony, windswept region with a thriving copper industry. Its people are fiercely independent of the authorities in Byalliz.

Illixia

Notorious drug distributed by the Cult of the Withered Blade.

Imaar

The God of the True Magic. Imaar was consumed by the Tas at the Dawn of Time.

Imaldioth

A legendary city beneath the sea where the Imaldri Elves dwelled.

Immaculatist Movement

A group of elitist painters who believed that the only subject worthy of their talents were the Gods. They painted hundreds of famous works during the 1900's R.

Imperial State, The

The last remaining territory of the old Sardellan Empire, garrisoned by the best fighting men in Eldoria. They await the succession of a new Emperor.

Inkuus

A Deity of Vheridane, not numbered amongst the Twenty-Seven. Inkuus is an agricultural spirit and effigies of him appear as scarecrows.

Ironskins

The dominant Orc clan in Ahr-Ganiz. They have mastered the craft of making good quality armor and weapons.

Izrach

A Druidical leader of the old Llanadan people who founded the Brotherhood of the Dead Tree, in Rhenfara.

Ja-Minda's Curse

A painful disease that affects the nervous system causing excruciating skin irritation. Victims are often driven to claw off their skin in order to seek relief. There is no known cure and

even Tas magic fails to work on the disease.

Jarde

A proud warrior race that once built cities along the coast of Za-Kariden. They were most likely a tribe who crossed the Dunewall and settled there in the Darktime. They were conquered and enslaved by the Keljak.

Jasper

Capitol city of the once mighty Sardellan Empire.

Jersal's Creed

A code honored by pirates who use Londar's land as their protectorate.

Jiisha

A sealant used on mud-brick houses in Y'sira, made from the Jiisha plant.

Jurpah

A breed of antelope found in Maritaan. They have a beautifully-patterned hide and spiral horns.

Justicator

An Ormocean priest or one versed in Ormocean Law who makes arbitrary decisions on minor crimes and misdemeanors. Typically a Justicator will be given a district that he or she has authority over.

Juzzai Rainforest

Also called Gnomewood. This forest is situated in a rift valley and is home to a large community of Gnomes.

Kadiza

A hundred stringed harp most often played by two or three musicians together.

Kalagas

An active volcano in the Thundering peaks, that erupts about every seven years.

Kalidath

First Heaven. The realm from whence the Gods came.

Kalshee

A large working dog used by Halflings to pull sleighs.

Karashar-Zahl

A Dwarven Kingdom established on an island in the Sea of Five Winds in 225R. It was later abandoned after some great calamity destroyed most of the island community.

Kavast

A God worshipped by the Keljak, who governs the four elements. Kavast is seen as a false Deity by the Twenty-Seven Churches.

Keesarda

A waterproof resin often used to wrap the dead for burial at sea.

Keljak

Outland barbarian tribe who migrated into Y'sira and ruled there for several centuries.

Kezrinn

Eagle companion of the Goddess Se; one of the Uushai.

Khalasians

Human racial group who settled through Char-Endl, Llan and Northland.

Khalast

The first Kingdom of Llan, incorporating the lowlands of the east.

Kharichaan

The Chancellor of Sard, the current leader of the nation. He is only supported by the Trezkillians because he has promised them a war with Elkia.

Kharic-Ohrm

God of famine, disease and pestilence. A member of the House of Doom, proscribed by most realms in modern Eldoria.

Khazilin Council

Ruling body of Sard.

Kinstrife

Civil war that tore apart the Sardellan Empire after the death of Taranae. It lasted nearly 100 years and was ended by the Treaty of Four Swords.

K'luud

Position of importance in Y'sira. Traditionally the K'luuds have all been puppets of the Daugron Church.

Knaidaal

A Rhenfaran fortified village.

Kordass

A continent that once existed in the equatorial region of Eldoria. The Gods dwelled here at the Dawn of Time. Kordass was destroyed when Sadir broke the Weirding Stone.

Kreen, Sannith

Famous Llanish explorer who is credited with being the first person to cross Llan from east to west, although Y'siran smugglers are said to have covered much of that distance (west to east) 500 years before Kreen.

Kultuus

Small island to the south of Eldoria. One of the great citadels of ancient times lay here.

Kyasa

An immense tent made of bone and hide used as a great hall by Dragonlairds of the Char-Endlese tribes. They are like a circus tent in size.

K'zeer

Favored weapon of Rhenfarans. It is a long bladed spear wit a short haft that can be thrown effectively for 60' and used as short-sword.

Lapynta

A breed of goat found in Vheridane that is as big as an average cow.

Laqueera

An aphrodisiac.

Last Isle

Small island kingdom located off the eastern shores of Eldoria, rich in Dragon culture and lore.

Leaflinen

A Leezari material made from the broad leaves of the Fasalyinn plant. It has an appearance like leather and sheds water.

Leezari

The main Elven people of Leezeria.

Leezeria

The beautiful land of the Elves. Its eastern borders are constantly threatened by the Goblinskynd of Ahr-Ganiz.

Liacca Moss

A moss that grows on trees in northern Eldoria. It has properties that promote rapid healing of wounds.

Liraan

Goddess of Streams, Rivers and Lakes.

Llan

A heavily forested land ruled by Guilds.

Llanadan

Mountain folk who occupied the highlands of Khalast and joined with the Khalasians to found Llan.

Loakiish

The smallest island in the Londar's Land group.

Londar, Jersal

Shrewd and charismatic swashbuckler who managed to usurp the Kingdom of Southwind and carve out his own dynastic realm.

Lyanther

A well-known Elven historian, whose chronicles of the Pre-Redemption years left a marked impression on scholarly thinking.

Lyrrie

A small independent town situated on the north-most tip of the Grant of Lyrrie. It is allied to Tempest and maintains a war-fleet to defend the mighty island city.

Maedori

Capitol of Londar's Land, a picturesque city with a well-equipped harbor.

Malantha

Wild spirits of nature that were created indirectly when the Gods made the world of Enshar.

Mandannen

An embroidered patch worn by soldiers who are of the Trezkillian faith. It is believed that their soul is bound to the badge when they die and released when sewn onto the Mandannen Tapestry housed in a Trezkillian temple.

Maritaan

Arid but beautiful land in Eldoria's south. Its capitol is the unique city of Sinkhole Deep, built around and inside a great chasm..

Merdarrian Accord

A charter between the Churches of Odressi governing interdenominational conduct.

Merdathian Maelstrom

An eternal storm that circles the equatorial waters of Enshar. At its center is said to be a portal to the Unending Sea.

Mirror of Heaven

A remote mountain lake where it is rumored that the Darvinor who survived the Last Battle still dwell.

Monk of Light

One of the specially trained city-guards of Odressi, adept at dealing with criminals who have magic capability.

Mordling, Ormond

Architect of the Treaty of Four Swords that ended the Kinstrife and divided the Sardellan Empire into two regions - Sard and Elkia.

Naboshians

An off-shot of the Khalasians who settled Llan. The Naboshians traveled to the Tempest group of islands and settled there around 3R.

Nalarian Tiles

A popular means of reading the future using tiles engraved with symbols of the Gods.

Nalarians

The Wandering Folk. A race of nomadic people, likened to our Gypsies. They worship Gaien and believe that nobody own the land.

Na-Tagwah

Winter gathering of the ten Clans of Char-Endl at Cetairi.

Nelendai

A Human race tracing its origins to southern Elkia.

Nender-Saahn

The name given in the Uushai language to all living things not beholden to the Gods. This includes most (but not all) animals.

Niblfir River

The border between Y'sira and the isolated western settlements of Rhenfara - a much disputed region.

Nohlera

Second largest city in Llan, known for its tall, narrow buildings and use of domed structures.

Nulak

A species of domestic cattle native to Y'sira. They have a tough outer hide, like a rhinoceros and need little water.

Odressi

A city set up as a sanctuary for all religions.

Ohridane the Seer

A charismatic scholar who disputed the histories contained in the Books of Law and was burnt as a heretic for his beliefs.

Orlon

Island to the east of Eldoria, where the Y'naari originated.

Ormocea

God of Law and part of the House of Wisdom. Ormocea was once lord over all the Gods.

Outlands

Any of the outlying territories of Eldoria where Tas energy is not strong enough to be manipulated. A more primitive and barbaric society dwells in the Outlands.

Paladin Savior

A legendary figure of an immortal knight who always comes to the aid of the weak in their darkest hour.

Pelentine

The royal family of Leezeria, unbroken for 10,000 years.

Pharidor

God of the Sun. A popular Deity of the Elves.

Pharidor's Watch

A center of Elven lore.

Pharys

The single sun of Enshar.

Phelltar

Goddess who made the Rune of Making; a charm that made intelligent beings.

Phelltaria

Legendary city of the Saahn built upon the shoulders of Mount Heliphera

Plains of Ice

A deadly glacial plain of shifting ice and hidden crevasses. The safer passages are known only to a few Char-Endlese rangers.

Plerrin, Lake

The largest of the Llanish high lakes of the north.

Po-Ka

A dense jungle that separates Rhenfara and Y'sira. It is a dangerous region, full of tangled rainforest that shelters savage predatory creatures.

Pommeraje

A fruit native to Y'sira and Maritaan. It is sweet, with an aftertaste like grape-fruit.

Porgruu Bogs

A great fenland between the Stonebrow Mountains and the Imperial State that effectively limits the passage of armies in the region.

Portan, Tallister

A merchant from Northland who first established a trading post on the Tempest group of islands in 1222R.

Priath

God of Dreams and Time.

Priatharia

A state of being unique to the Leezari, who enter a coma as they grow old. They remain so forever, their body incorruptible and intact.

P'tar the Resolute

A religious zealot of the Church of Phelltar who disputed the Khalasian King's claim to Divine Right.

Quinn, Loras

Admiral of the Sardellan fleet during Taranae's reign.

Quorull

Capitol of Llan, a mercantile port city.

Rahjeer

Keljak fundamentalists. They came to Y'sira in the 16th century R and seized control, replacing the Daugron faith with that of Kavast.

Rawani

A thorn bush that grows in Rhenfara. Its spiny branches grow naturally in large coils and rawani is often planted as a fence-line to protect villages and corral herds.

Razorclaws

Thorny bushes that grow with tenacity in Ahr-Ganiz. Their seed pods contain a highly flammable oil.

Rhenfara

A land located in the south with a dry, hot climate. Although they fully understand the technologies of other lands they reject

them for a simpler life-style, more in harmony with nature.

Rhioria

Goddess of Youth and Beauty.

Rose Plague

A deadly plague that has decimated human populations across Eldoria on two occasions.

Roundels

A game of strategy, popular in Sard and the Holy Isle. It is an abstract game of war fought on a round board.

Ryll

A toxin that interferes with the ability to channel the Tas.

Saahn

A collective term for intelligent humanoid races.

Sacred Triangle

A region of historical and spiritual importance to the Zurandi people who settled Y'sira.

Sadir

God of Destruction, one of the Unholy Trinity

Samroth

A prophet who found the Books of Law and helped establish order, ending the Darktime.

Sandrunner

A deadly predator of the deep Y'siran deserts.

Sandwall, The

The derelict east wall of the city of Byalliz. It is covered by sand in many places and inside is a labyrinth of passages and rooms, occupied by the poor, thieves and runaways.

Sard

A militaristic nation that was once part of the Sardellan Imperial Homelands. The Trezkillian Church dominates Sard.

Sardellan Empire

An Empire that ruled most of the continent of Eldoria from 1300R - 1600R.

Saritol

A drug used to enhance powers of Divination. It has dangerous side-effects.

Sark, Mount

Highest peak in the Stonebrow Mountains. A sacred Druidical place.

Sarkoshian Ocean

Equatorial waters of Enshar that are continually plagued by storms and said to be the home of great serpents.

Scalavaskeens

The dragonships of the Char-Endlese. They are small single-sailed vessels often decorated with a dragon head at the prow and wings at the stern.

Scorpionhost

An elite warrior unit in Rhenfara.

Se

Goddess of the Sky, Mistress of Storms.

Sea of Five Winds

A stretch of treacherous water between the Horn of Sard and Vheridane, rumored to contain many areas of dimensional instability

Seercandum

The priests within all Churches who are responsible for keeping the spells and artifacts of their Order and identifying Seervaati amongst the acolytes.

Seervaati

A priest who understands the Tas and has been accepted into the inner circle of their Church and taught its secret incantations.

Serpent Kings

A group of tyrannical Sorcerers who rose to power in the Darktime and engulfed Eldoria in centuries of horrific wars.

Shadowland

The extra-dimensional prison of the Goddess SIRRITH, Queen of Death. The souls of the dead who stray from the path to the Gods are often lured to Shadowland.

Shaedarfyn

Order of Elven Druids who guard the last groves of Eldarwood.

Shaera

Desert people, descended from the survivors of the sack of Tai-Kayan.

Sharphorns

An elite warrior unit in Rhenfara.

Siritar

God of the Just Warrior. Siritar is worshipped by a number of Paladin Orders.

Sirrith

The Goddess of Death. SIRRITH was imprisoned in Shadowland for her acts against the other Gods.

Skaffir

A small flat-bottomed boat with a single triangular sail. They are used by Rhenfarans to navigate their coastline that has numerous coral reefs.

Slaarn

A major agricultural center in the Llanish midlands.

Slynd

Khalasian vessel of distinctive design, having its main mast positioned in the high stern.

Snarving, Mount

Highest peak in the Mountains of Terror, in Ahr-Ganiz. The Goblinkynd mine it for gold that they trade with smugglers and pirates for slaves and crafted goods.

Sorcerer

A practitioner of magic who has learned their craft from a non-schooled adept, the skills passed on by tradition, from master to apprentice.

Soulbreem

A fish with a sweet, oily flesh, much like tuna but with a salty aftertaste. Southwind Island

The major island of the group that make up Londar's Land.

Stonebrow Mountains

Range of peaks dividing Llan from its southern neighbors of Sard and Elkia.

It only has a few strategic passes that have been fought over for centuries.

Stonekin

Human name for the Dwarven folk.

Stormwatch

A secretive Order of the Ormocean Church dedicated to maintaining the status quo at any cost.

Sueligara

A forced migration under Rhenfaran law. When a knaidaal reaches a certain population size, half its people must leave and create a new village at a decreed site.

Sumari

A people related to the Zurandi who settled Ikle's Head in the Darktime. They were used as slaves by the regimes in Byalliz.

Sunachi Head

A barren headland dominated by a thousand dolmens.

Sund

An Elven fort. It takes the form of an underground complex sheltered within a hillock, with three tall towers guarding its approaches. Entry to the Sund is via a hidden door in the hillside. Entry to the towers is from inside the Sund.

Sylvaari

Any one of countless 'faerie' creatures brought into existence by the Malantha.

Taak

A popular beverage amongst Humans. Made from ground Taak seeds boiled in water, the distillation tastes like a strong coffee laced with peppermint.

Tai-Kayan

The old capitol of the Y'naari people. It became a decadent city, under the thrall of the Yaarneyan Cult. It was sacked and destroyed during the Sardellan occupation of Maritaan.

Tairn

An Elven tree dwelling, built in, through and in the branches of trees.

Talidori

Elven sea-going vessels that resemble large trimarans.

Talindar

A well-fortified Keep built on a sharp rise of land northwest of Quorull. It has been the traditional home of the Llanish King for generations.

Tallister Island

Largest island in the Tempest group.

Talyssar

The immense empty void between Kalidath and Enshar.

Taranae

Empress of the Sardellan Empire from 1501 to 1555R. She was its last ruler.

Taricktown

A small trading community established by the Char-Endlese on the northern coast of Leezeria. The land was given to them for their allegiance in the Third War of Tears.

Tarimshar

The moon of Enshar. It is slightly larger than our own moon.

Tarimth

God of the Moon and Stars, said to have become lost in the Great Shadow, thousands of years ago.

Tarimthol-Irl

Capitol of Elven Leezeria.

Tariz

An ancient kingdom of Y'sira.

Tariziach

Second largest city in Y'sira and rival to the capitol, Byalliz.

Tarkians

An aggressive people who may have originated from Vheridane. They invaded the lands north of the Grand Escarpment in the latter years of the Darktime.

Tarrisada

Any one of 25 extra-dimensional realms created as sanctuaries by the Gods. They are the equivalent of Heaven to the Saahn.

Tas

The Tas is an invisible energy source that permeates all things. Those who learn to draw upon the Tas and manipulate it can create effects generally termed as magic.

Tassirrin

A device used by Imaar Cultists to tap Averaach energy and translate it into spell-forms.

Tay, Foi-linn

A Wizard who unlocked the secrets of Averaach.

Tazzanai Games

An annual competition of martial and athletic ability, conducted in Rhenfara. The games determine the King for the year who rules in conjunction with the Druidical Council.

Telekar-Nyssa

A small Elven community that lives in the Llanish highlands.

Tempest

Major city state located in the Lesser Inner Sea. Tempest is the center of power for the Guild of Gold.

Theledai

The name the Gods gave themselves in the tongue of the Uushai.

Therge

A grain grown in Y'sira. It is not as nutritional as wheat or barley but is well-suited to a dry climate.

Theydori

God of Hidden Knowledge. The religion keeps many secrets of Eldoria's past in its secret archives.

Thirrin

A traditional container used when reading Nalarian Tiles.

Thirrish

A fire retardant paste that is painted on buildings to protect them during the firestorm season. It is a bright blue in color.

Thraade Council

Ruling council of Maritaan.

Three Books of Law

Three tomes that document the tales of the Gods and the

laws that the Saahn should live by. They also contained much of the theology, rituals and practices of the entire Pantheon.

Thrulle, Tira

A discontented priestess of the Ahridaar faith who broke away from the Church and established the Companies of the Muse.

Thrullin Mountains

Main source of iron for the Char-Endlese tribes.

Thungar

Region in Elkia where the paladin orders of Siritar were founded.

Thungar, Passage of

Narrow strait of water that is the only way for ships to enter the Greater Inner Sea.

Tiea

Goddess of Thieves and Trickery. The Church of Tiea is suspected of having links with the Cult of the Withered Blade.

Tinka

Y'siran coin.

Tokapans

A primitive people sometimes employed as fighters by the Char-Endlese. They are almost Neanderthal in appearance and have great strength.

Tokia

One of the two major towns of the Llanish midlands.

Tor-Gunzar

A collective of Monks based in Y'sira who are followers of the Pantheist Movement. They are adept in unarmed combat.

Tournament of Steel

An annual festival conducted at Denhaven featuring a week long event of jousting and other martial sports.

T'paan, Suula

Admiral of the Y'siran fleet at the height of Viritath's reign. He was ultimately defeated at the Battle of Deepfin Channel.

Trade

The coinage of the Guild of Gold, accepted as legal tender in all countries except Y'sira.

Trezkillian

God of War, a reptilian humanoid with four arms.

Tulmir's Spire

A mountain on Sharruck Island that is the site of a high quality marble quarry.

Tween-world

See Unending Sea.

Tzinnda

A coarse but cheap paper made in Y'sira.

Ulliah

God of the forests and wilderlands. Ulliah is worshipped by numerous Druidical Orders.

Unending Sea

A 'Tween-world' that exists as a conduit between the Prime Material Plane and other realities.

Uushai

Lesser divine beings created to serve the Gods at the Dawn

of Time.

Valandia

See Leafinen.

Varithses

Fine Elkian pottery that graces the tables of the wealthy in the northern realms of Humans.

Vheridane

A little explored region of Eldoria's west.

Viritath

The greatest leader of the Keljak people who ruled Y'sira from 500R to 1534R.

Vollardi

A race of giants who dwell in the Grand Escarpment.

Vorg

An energy within the Tas that is its negative, the antithesis of life.

Vurgonmir

A lusterless iron found only in Shadowland that can be imbued with necromantic spells and negative energy. Sirrith sometimes forges Vurgonmir weapons for her trusted captains.

War of Power

A climatic struggle between Gods and their mortal followers prior to the Darktime. It culminated in the Gods destroying their only means of remaining in the world and heralded in thousands of years of chaos.

War of Tears

A series of campaigns against Leezeria by the Goblindynd of Ahr-Ganiz, which has greatly diminished the Elven race over the centuries.

Watchmeets

Small forts situated along Sardian roads that house facilities for a small contingent of troops and an inn for travelers. They are the rallying points for Sard's highly organized militia.

Wayguide

A Rhenfaran official who approves the passage of outsiders through a knaidaal's territory.

Weirding Stone

A device created by the God Imaar that maintained a flow of Kalidathian energy allowing the Theledai to remain in the Prime Material Plane.

Westimir

A small fortified town in Vheridane, the only place of any real importance or size.

Whenfordale

A major trading town on the borders of Llan and Char-Endl, noted for its peculiar buildings that combine the traditional architecture of Llan with the kyasa tent dwellings of the Char-Endlese.

Wikkani

Small horses prized in Y'sira due to their ability to cross the desert on minimal water. Also called Wind-Colts.

Withered Blade, Cult of the

The most powerful thieves' and assassins' guild in Eldoria. A feared organization.

Withering, The

A plague that destroyed most of the intelligent non-humanoid creatures during the War of Powers.

Wizard

A practitioner of magic who has learned their craft through one of the two great institutions, the College of Arcane Science and the Leezari University of Pharidor's Watch.

Xarick II

First Emperor of Sardell, a ruthless and ambitious man.

Xioraja

A township where the native Rhenfarans barter goods with foreigners. Most of its storage is underground.

Xullia

God of Darkness. He is served by a small cult in Odressi.

Yaarneya

Goddess of Entropy, Wantonness and Lust.

Yance, Talan

A Sardellan captain who first made contact with the Outlands in 698R.

Yarcia

Largest town in western Sard. It is spread out over a large low hill and surrounded by a man-made watercourse.

Yhancia

Goddess of the Mountains and Underworld, the main Deity worshipped by Dwarves.

Y'naari-Su

A faction of the Y'naari people who allied themselves with the Sardellans who conquered their land.

Y'sira

Land dominated by vast deserts. Most of the population lives along its more fertile coastal regions.

Zar, Mugarisi

Rebel Druid who leads a group called the 'Jaguar Claws'. They are opposed to settlement of Po-Ka in Rhenfara.

Zaramoor

City and region of southern Elkia, the traditional home of nobles allied to the Trezkillian faith.

Zarkanda-Zahl

Legendary first home of the Dwarves. Its location has been lost over the millennia, but it is remembered in song.

Zethain

Subterranean grotto where the Dwarves hid most of their great fleet beneath the Grand Escarpment.

Zuvinar Bay

Large expanse of water off Y'sira, known to be the spawning grounds of a great variety of aquatic life.

Zylik River

An extremely fertile river basin that produces most of Y'sira's crops.

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ENCYCLOPEDIA ELDORIA

From a speech made by the Prophet Samroth, concerning the discovery of the Books of Law.

“It is written that at the Dawn of Time the Gods dwelled in the world and imparted much of their wisdom to the wise amongst the mortal races. Then the Gods left Enshar to walk amongst the stars and they left the Darvinor, ranked highest amongst the Elven folk, as their custodians. But the Darvinor were hungry for knowledge that was kept from mortal races and they led the children of Enshar away from the enlightenment of the Gods and so brought down the Darktime upon them all.”

For an age of unaccounted years, utter chaos engulfed the world and all that was learned was lost. Then hope was rekindled in the form of the legendary Books of Law, three great tomes that contained the lost beliefs and rituals of the twenty-seven religions that had existed before the Darktime. The scattered tribes of the Humans were united in the northern continent of Eldoria and a new enlightened era began, the Age of the Redemption.

Two thousand years have passed since the discovery of the Books of Law and the nations of Men now dominate Eldoria, from the frigid realm of Char-Endl, to the exotic desert lands of the Theocracy of Y'sira. They have unlocked the secrets of steel and stone but their ascendancy has been very different than our own world. For in Eldoria, Man has also learned the secrets of Magic, resulting in a reliance on arcane power that has retarded the emergence of science. Combined with the suspicion and secrecy that the abundance of religious institutions apply to any new discoveries, Man has remained locked in a quasi-medieval level of technology.

Yet Man is not alone in Eldoria. The Dwarven Stonekin once dwelled in mines beneath the great mountain ranges, but for many centuries they have been abandoning their old ways and coming to live amongst the cities of Men (though their elders still tell tales of ancient glory). And in the east, the Leezari Elves have recently emerged from a self-imposed isolation from before the Darktime, seeking allies to help them in their eternal war against the Goblinskynd of Ahr-Ganiz.

Civilisations have arisen, empires have come and gone but the temples of the Gods remain constant, in-

volving everyone in their rivalries and machinations. Political intrigue is almost a sport amongst the clergy and a talented individual can keep their purse full by serving the many and varied clandestine causes of the twenty-seven priesthods.

Yet far from the great cities, there are still places that remain untouched in the modern world, such as the great forests of Llanish Highlands, the impenetrable jungles of Po-Ka or the Outlands, where magic is weak and inconstant. Great fortunes lie in wait for those bold enough to journey there to uncover the relics and treasures of the past.

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