



ADVENTURER CONQUEROR KING SYSTEM™

AURAN EMPIRE PRIMER™



Written by **ALEXANDER MACRIS**

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ACKS CAMPAIGN SETTING

AUTARCH LLC

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Welcome to the Auran Empire™ Campaign Primer. In these pages you'll be introduced to a world of adventure, where a once-majestic empire is slipping into oblivion, and bold and ambitious conquerors are rising to forge new realms from the ashes of the old.

OVERVIEW

The world of the Auran Empire is somewhat different in tone and emphasis than many other fantasy settings. By explicitly defining the setting's precepts, we hope to help the Judge quickly grasp how the setting is intended to work.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Auran Empire Campaign Setting* is to be a sandbox for fantasy RPG play. To be suitable for its purpose, the setting needs to justify why wandering heroes travel into the wilderness, fight monsters, and loot their treasure. The realm's towns and castles must exert control only over a local area, leaving the outlying regions under threat of villains and monsters. Mighty empires must have collapsed and lands grown depopulated in order to provide a source of ancient ruins and treasure. An ancient war or wild magic must have created terrible monsters that, in the declining age, can no longer be easily held in check. The *Auran Empire Campaign Setting* was created specifically with these needs in mind.

CULTURE

The world of the Auran Empire features many distinct civilizations. Most of them are inspired by historical civilizations dating to our world's Late Antiquity and Dark Ages. The dominant Imperial culture is closely akin to the Late Roman Empire and Early Byzantine Empire. The Sunset Kingdoms, which lie to the west of the Empire, are inspired by various real-world Indo-Persian, Egyptian, and Phoenician civilizations. The Jutlandic and Rornish kingdoms north of the Empire are based on the Germanic and Brythonic realms of the 4th century Roman Iron Age. The nearby Northern Argollëan culture is inspired by Goidelic Celtic civilization. The menacing Skysos in the west are based on the Hunnic mounted nomads that threatened the Late Roman Empire.

The ancient civilizations that precede the campaign's era have real-world cultural analogues as well. The ancient Argollëan elven civilization resembles a sort of Proto-Helleno-Celtic culture; imagine if the Danaans of Ancient Greece and the Danaans of Ancient Ireland were actually the same people, part of a single, more advanced civilization. The ancient Thrassian civilization is inspired by Sumerian civilization with an Aztec aesthetic, while the subsequent Zaharan civilization is inspired by pre-Hellenistic Akkadian civilization with some Egyptian flavoring. The early Auran "Empyrean era" civilization draws on elements of the Minoans, Mycenaeans, and Sea Peoples, with extensive Heroic Age Greco-Roman (Illiad, Aeneid) inspirations.

RELIGION

The people of the Auran Empire worship a sect of seven syncretic gods collectively known as the Empyreans. The primary Empyrean god is Ammonar, the Lightbringer and Lawgiver, whose worship is similar to the worship of Sol Invictus in the Late Roman Empire. The other Empyrean gods are worshipped in mystery cults that vary in popularity within different factions of society, just as Mithra, Isis, and the other syncretic gods of Late Antiquity once were. Another, darker set of gods, known as the Chthonic pantheon, is worshipped alongside the Empyrean gods in the various city-states of the Sunset Kingdoms.

Under the Chthonic pantheon, mad priest-kings, demonic pacts, and hideous sacrifices are disturbingly common.

COSMOLOGY

The world of the Auran Empire, called Cybele, sits at the center of a great celestial orb made up of all the elements, known as the Celestial Sphere. The Celestial Sphere floats within an infinite silvery sea known as the Cosmos. Above the Celestial Sphere looms the Empyrean Heaven, source of law and light. Beneath the Celestial Sphere lies the Chthonic Darkness, the source of chaos and darkness. Ringing the Celestial Sphere are the four Elemental Spheres of Earth, Air, Water, and Fire. However, these positions are not static, for the spheres are all in motion. Changes in their relative positions can have a profound effect on the world. According to myth, the spheres were set adrift when the Tablet of Destiny, which wrought the fates of men and gods, was shattered at the dawn of time.

MONSTERS

While some creatures, such as dragons and unicorns, are natural to the world, most monsters are not. The giant vermin, undead, and crossbreeds, and all the evil and monstrous humanoids, either invaded Cybele from alien spheres or were created by ancient civilizations as slaves, pets, and soldiers. As such, they are innately unnatural and targeted for destruction by Law. Adventurers need have no moral qualms about killing orcs, undead, and so on.

MAGIC

Magic is as abundant in the Auran Empire as the ancients of our own world believed it to be in theirs. Palace doors are scribed with wards of protection. Kings consult oracles before major undertakings. Prophets and sorcerers perform wondrous deeds, flying through the air, raising the dead, and calling down plagues and storms. However, the inhabitants of the Auran Empire never treat magic in a scientific or industrial manner. Their entire society is pre-scientific and pre-industrial, and they do not technologically exploit magic to create golem factories or street lamps, any more than the Romans capitalized on Hero's steam engine or the Chinese exploited gunpowder. Conversely, the Aurans do not believe that magic is fundamentally incomprehensible, either. Magic is simply part of "natural philosophy," the study of the universe which preceded science. It is a time when physics and metaphysics are not yet distinguished, and an alchemist is both a scientist and a sorcerer.

ANCIENT ARTIFACTS

While the Auran Empire is a highly cultured society, ancient civilizations from time immemorial had advanced in knowledge and power far beyond what is known to even the 21st century. Strange and mysterious artifacts can be found in rare and out of the way places in Cybele. Even the ruins of the elves and Zaharans are comparatively recent (no more than 4,000 years old) compared to these far more ancient artifacts.

LANDS

According to the cartographers of Aura, Cybele has four continents: Aurēpos, Ithea, Ulruk, and Danea. The continent of Aurēpos (“Continent by the Sea” in the Classical tongue), so named because it encircles the great inland sea called the Ammas Aurē (“Sea of Serenity”), lies at the epicenter of the other continents, and enjoys the mildest climate and most fertile soil in the known world. Ulruk lies to the south of Aurēpos, Danea to the north, and Ithea to the west.

The dominant power on Aurēpos is the Auran Empire. Over 21,000,000 souls live within the Empire’s borders, and over 500,000 residents dwell in its majestic capital, Aura (“Dawn”). Founded over 1,300 years ago, the city of Aura encompasses the entirety of a large island just off the northern tip of Tirenea. The city encircles Mt. Audarammas (“Serene Light of the Morning”), the sacred mountain, site of the Golden Temple of the Winged Sun, and extends onto the mainland by means of a great causeway. Mainland Tirenea (“Land of Crowns”) itself is the richest, most populated province of the Auran Empire. Tirenea is a hilly, fertile land with many harbors and cities, the Jewel of the World.

Visible from the shores of Tirenea is Corcano (“Tree Fields”), a black island of palms and olive trees with active volcanoes and rocky slopes. The Corcanoans are predominantly fishermen and merchants, plying the trade routes to and from Aura, though the island itself is most famous for the colossal automaton that stands guard over its shores.

West of Tirenea lies Nicea (“Hill Land”), a rocky province of the Empire with cities nestled at the foothills of the rugged Achaean Mountains. These peaks grow ever fiercer as they run southward, transforming eventually into the great Meniri (“Mountains of Rock”), which explode east and west, forming a barrier between the civilized lands of the Ammas Aurē and the Waste beyond.

Adjoining Nicea in the west is Opelenea (“Majestic Land”), an arid realm of palms and dates with beautiful beaches, high hills, and stark deserts. For centuries, Opelenea has been the gateway between the Sunset Kingdoms of the west and the Empire of the east, its purple-sailed ships and caravans of camels carrying goods across the known world. Though nominally ruled by the Empire, Opelenea’s city-states and nomad tribes retain considerable autonomy, and Auran law often gives way to their ancient customs.

West of Opelenea is Kemesh (“River Land” in Old Kemeshi), last surviving satrapy of the ancient and sinister Kingdom of Zahar. It is a bleak realm where sorcerer-priests build cenotaphs on the backs of thousands, and evil spirits linger in silent tombs of stone. Kemesh’s power has waxed and waned over the millennia, but has never wavered in its malignancy and despotism.

To the south of Kemesh, in Ulruk, are the Ivory Kingdoms of Keita, Munde, and Kushtu, lands rich in salt, copper, gold, dates, slaves, and ivory. Shebatea (“Aromatic Land”) lies west of the Ivory Kingdoms, across the Narrow Sea. From this desert realm, the Sunset Kingdoms import slaves and courtesans, cinnamon and cassia, frankincense and myrrh.

North of Shebatea and north-west of Kemesh lies dusky Somirea (“Land of the Darkening Sky”), the most populous of the Sunset Kingdoms. A proud land with ancient traditions of mysticism, Somirea has fielded armies of war elephants and archers against the

Auran Empire in many wars throughout history. Today Aura and Somirea are allied against the menacing hordes of the Skysos.

The Skysos hail from a vast steppe to the west, called Skysostan in the tongue of the Somireans. The Skysos have always been a dangerous people, but also a divided one, with their various tribes traditionally set against each other by the monarchs of the Sunset Kingdoms. Such fractiousness is now in the past, for the Skysos have united under a great kağan and seek a place for themselves among the great powers of Aurēpos.

North of Somirea and Skysostan lies Celdorea (“Land of the Wealthy”), a decadent land of greed, opulence, and treachery, thick with traders and slavers. Its capital is the great port-city of Zidium, from which it controls access to the rich resources of the Comean Sea. Celdorea was once the dominant power in the Ammas Aurē, but lost its maritime empire three centuries ago to the rising power of Aura.

Celdorea has recently taken advantage of the Empire’s overextension to reclaim its ancient control of the Syrnasos (“Flowering Isles”), an archipelago of islands glittering across the Ammas Aurē. The Syrnasans are famous for their skill with slings and ships, but notorious as pirates and thieves. Their storytellers claim that the ruins of an ancient civilization of winged men can be found on the remote peaks of their islands. Many explorers have sought out these ruins, hoping to learn the secrets of the Day Without Night, but few have returned, and none with answers.

North of the Syrnasos, east of Celdorea, is a collection of barbarian realms stretching from the coast to the rugged foothills of the perilous Jutting Mountains. Once the Auran province of Dappakosea, the region was conquered a century ago by a coalition of Danean tribes collectively known as the Jutlanders. These barbarians drove off the Auran legions and enslaved the native Dappakosean populace. Today, the so-called Kingdoms of Jutland are aggressive and expansionist; their dragon-prowed raiding ships are becoming feared throughout the Ammas Aurē. Were the Jutlanders to be united by a high king, they might topple the thrones of Aurēpos.

The Kingdom of Rorn lies east of Jutland. Formerly the Auran province of Ivorea, Rorn became an independent realm when the Auran legions were driven off by the Jutlanders. Rorn might have fallen to the barbarians, too, had a great captain, Arētar Pendaelen, not risen to rally the native Rornish tribes and halt the invaders. Rorn remains under constant threat from its bloody-minded neighbor, but for now its stout people have maintained their freedom. Though never fully assimilated into Auran culture, Rorn still benefits from much of the old Auran infrastructure. Its culture mixes Auran civilization and Rornish folk-ways with the sylvan influence of the elves of Northern Argollē (“Eastern Light”).

Northern Argollē is the last remaining kingdom of the elves. Lying just east of Rorn, it is a beautiful realm of coastal and mountain forests, dotted by sylvan cities hidden amidst the woods. The dawn redwoods that grow on the ocean coast of Northern Argollē are said to be the most magnificent trees in all of Cybele, though few men are ever invited to see them.

The Pillars of Dawn separate Northern Argollē from the rolling hills of Southern Argollē. In ancient days, Southern Argollē was the

forested heartland of the ancient Argollëan Empire, but the elves and the forests have both largely been eliminated. Nowadays, it is the easternmost province of the Auran Empire. Southern Argollë extends eastward to the Tëhonorë (“Deep Ocean”), which expands endlessly outward to the rising sun.

Bordering Southern Argollë to the south-west is Krysea (“Arrow-Land”), a stark, rugged country known for its stout archers and mercenaries. Now a loyal province of the Empire, Krysea resisted Auran dominance for over one hundred years. The remnants of the old border forts of the Krysean Wars still dot the landscape.

South-east of Krysea and Southern Argollë spread the black-faced Zaḡāru Mountains (“Area Raised Above All Others” in Ancient Zaharan). Fiercely sloped in the west, the Zaḡāru descend gently in the east, thereby forming the great plateau which was in ancient days the land of Zahar. Now, that once-fertile highland has been reduced to ruin and become part of the great **Waste** that spans the breadth of the continent. The Waste is a dry and wind-blasted desert dotted here and there by ancient ruins said to date from before the Day Without Night, and populated by monstrous beasts, undead evils, and savage clans of barbarian beastmen who live for plunder and rapine.

Along the border between the Empire and the Waste, two rivers – the **Krysivor** (“Arrow River”) and the **Mirmen** (“Black Rock”) – run

northeast from the Meniri Mountains down to the Tëhonorë. The region between the mountains, the ocean, and the two rivers is known as the **Borderlands**. The Borderlands has been contested throughout recorded history and its landscape is littered with ancient fortresses, blood-soaked battlefields, and dread ruins, all crumbling relics of the empires that once ruled there. The Borderlands is secured by a fortified line of forts, but even when these have been fully manned, it has never been an entirely secure region. With so many Imperial legions sent west to confront the Skysos, the dangers facing the Borderlands are greater than ever.



*And so the Lord of the Dawn struck the
lands of the south with his furious anger.
He destroyed wicked Zahar and made of it a
desolate wasteland, parched like a desert.*

Valerian 9:2, Fourth Scroll of the Empyrean War

Timeline		
Year	Events	
4,000 BE – 1,650 BE	The Argollëan Empire rises to dominate Aurëpos from its heartland in Southern Argollë.	
1,650 BE – 1,075 BE	Thrassians overthrow Argollëan Empire and conquer much of Aurëpos, subjugating the various human tribes in the region. The Cthonic-worshipping Zaharans function as an upper caste of humans that help manage the enslaved populace for the less numerous Thrassians.	
1,075 BE – 660 BE	Zahar stages a coup against their rapidly degenerating Thrassian masters and establishes the Zaharan Empire. The Zaharans breed the beastmen and impose tyrannical rule on mankind.	
660 BE – 650 BE	Crusaders under the prophet Azendor and the war-chief Valerian Bellësareus battle sorcerer-king Sebek and the Zaharan Empire in the Empyrean War. Ultimately, Zahar is sacked, its beastmen armies are routed, and its last sorcerer-king is driven into the Waste.	
650 BE – 245 BE	Aura, founded by Azendor, rises to prominence as a powerful city-state.	
244 BE – 215 BE	The Beastman Wars are fought. Warlord Thrax menaces the civilized lands of Aurëpos until his defeat by Exarch Cincanus of Aura. Auran League unites numerous city-states to fight the beastmen.	
215 BE – 1 BE	Auran League governs Tirenea, Krysea, and Nicea. At the close of a series of wars against Celdorea, it also wins control of Dappakosea (present-day Jutland) and Ivorea (present-day Rorn).	
0 BE – 3 IY	Audarius Valerian reigns as the first Tarkaun of the Auran Empire.	
3 IY – 214 IY	Auran Empire consolidates power, suppresses separatists in Krysea, and wins control of Southern Argollë.	
215 IY – 257 IY	Tarkaun Audarius Ulkyreus wins three major wars, bringing the Auran Empire to its greatest extent. The empire now encompasses Tirenea, Nicea, Krysea, Opeleneia, Dappakosea, Ivorea, Kemesh, and Southern Argollë.	
258 IY – 269 IY	Civil war shatters the Auran Empire. Control of Kemesh is lost to the Somirean Empire during the fighting.	
270 IY - 280 IY	Gaius Tavus emerges the victor of the Civil War. He spends the entirety of his ten-year reign restoring an empire devastated by internal strife.	
281 IY – 283 IY	A terrifying plague known as the Grey Death spreads throughout Aurëpos. The plague kills 10% of the overall population before Empyrean miracle-workers are able to end it. Among those saved by Empyrean magic is Xandrames, ruler of Somirea. After his salvation, Xandrames outlaws worship of Cthonic gods in Somirea and signs a treaty of eternal friendship with Aura.	
284 IY – 377 IY	A century of chaos begins when northern barbarians invade and conquer Dappakosea, establishing the Kingdoms of Jutland. Ivorea becomes the independent Kingdom of Rorn. Kemesh regains its independence and reduces Sabatea and the Ivory Kingdoms to tributaries. Celdorea resumes hostilities with Aura and retakes control of the Syrnasos. A great ka an unites the Skysos, who commence a full-scale invasion of Somirea.	
378 IY – 379 IY	The Somirean Emperor and the Auran Tarkaun ally for a major campaign against the Skysos. Aura’s eastern garrisons are shipped westward to provide manpower for the war effort.	
380 IY	Jutland raiders and Celdorean pirates begin striking directly against the Empire’s coastal settlements. Border forts in Krysea and Southern Argollë begin to fall prey to invading beastmen.	
381 IY	Rumors trickle eastward that the Auran and Somirean forces have been encircled and destroyed by the Skysos. Travel becomes perilous as the power structure of the Empire begins decentralizing to city-states, local warlords, and private armies. The current year.	

The Auran Empire

and its Surrounding Kingdoms





The Auran Empire

Map Legend

	Capital City		Forest		Arable Hills
	City		Forested Hills		Semi-Arid Flatlands (Steppe)
	Realm Boundary		Forested Mountains		Semi-Arid Hills
	Province Boundary		Boreal Forest (Taiga)		Semi-Arid Mountains
	Coastline		Scrubland (Garrigue/Heath)		Snow-Capped Mountains
	Shallow Sea		Scrubby Hills (Moor)		Badlands
	Deep Sea		Scrubby Mountains		Sandy Desert (Erg)
	Lake		Woodland (Maquis)		Rocky Desert (Reg)
	River		Wooded Hills		Sand Dunes
	Grassy Wetlands (Marsh)		Wooded Mountains		Arid Highlands
	Peat Wetlands (Bog)		Arable Flatlands (Farmland)		Cliff

CUSTOMS

LAWS AND GOVERNANCE

Graven in stone in the Temple of Turas in 515 BE, the Code and Laws of Aura vested the governance of the city in its Senate. This deliberative body was drawn from the city's most respected and influential citizens and was empowered to levy taxes, raise armies, wage war, pass laws, and administer justice. During time of war, the Senate would temporarily delegate its executive powers to an Exarch, who served for the duration of the campaign or until removed from office by a vote of the Senate.

By the close of the Second Celdorean War (1 BE), Aura had gained military control of Tirenea, Nicea, Krysea, Dappakosea (present-day Jutland) and Ivorea (present-day Rorn). This vast territory was legally governed by the Senate until the beginning of the imperial era (0 IY). At that time, Exarch Audarius Valerian Tarkaun was awarded with executive power for life in order to re-establish order within Aura's newly-established empire. After Tarkaun was assassinated in 3 IY, a bloody civil war erupted amongst the senate. The victor, Gaius Valerian, adopted the honorific Tarkaun and took the same powers

as his predecessor. In the subsequent centuries since then, Aura has been governed by a Tarkaun.

Since the reign of Ulkyreus (215 – 257 IY), the Tarkaun has held almost absolute power, with the various Exarchs serving as military governors and the Senate limited to a largely advisory capacity. The Tarkaun's will is enforced by the black-cloaked Emperor's Talons, the elite agents of the Empire. Answering directly and only to the Tarkaun, the Emperor's Talons are the eyes, the voice, and when necessary, the iron fist of imperial rule.

COINS AND MONEY

The common coin of the Auran Empire is the copper crown. 10 coppers make up 1 silver eagle, and 10 silver eagles are worth 1 gold sun. 1 gold sun is worth 100 copper crowns. Each coin weighs approximately 0.01 pound.

Very large sums of money are generally referenced in gold talents. A talent is derived from a weight equal to the weight of water in an

amphora, roughly 60 pounds, or 6,000 coins. A gold talent is worth 6,000 gold suns, 60,000 silver eagles, or 600,000 copper crowns.

The ancient Zaharans also used platinum and electrum coins as money, and these ancient pieces are sometimes found in treasure hoards. Following with Zaharan tradition, Kemesh, Somirea, and Celdorea also mint platinum and electrum coins, worth around 5 gold suns and 5 silver eagles respectively. These are viewed with some suspicion by Auran merchants.

FASHION AND DRESS

The Auran Empire is a wealthy, opulent, and status-conscious culture, and its fashion reflects the noble and merchant classes' desire to display their power and affluence. While the peasants wear sheepskin and woven wool, the aristocracy enjoys tailored clothes of soft linen, fine cotton, and rich silk, with buttery polished leather used for footwear and structured garments. Embroidery, etching, and ornament are common, with geometric patterns, animals, and religious symbols dominant.

The majority of the Empire is centered in warm, dry climates, so fashions can be quite revealing, and classical beauty of body and face is prized and treasured. This is true for both men and women; status is heavily influenced by lineage and spiritual power, and women are equal in both.

Common women wear loose, sleeveless shifts of knee- to ankle-length with cloth belts and breastbands and low leather sandals. Their hair is traditionally worn long but tied back in simple buns or braids. Aristocratic women wear elaborately-decorated garments draped around their bodies in a variety of alluring configurations, often accompanied by tight girdles of ornamented leather or metal and high strappy sandals. Heeled footwear was developed a few decades ago to instant acclaim by the nobility. Piercings of the ear, nose, and lips are common, as are anklets, armlets, bracelets, chokers, circlets, necklaces, rings, and tiaras. Upper class women wear their hair long and elaborately coiffed, with dramatic colorations in vogue.

Men typically wear knee-length sleeveless or short-sleeved tunics with waist seams, the lower portion of the tunic generally split into two panels for mobility. In formal circumstances, men often add luxurious long-sleeved robes over the tunic, but for travel semicircular or oblong cloaks are more common. In the field, military cloaks are generally worn pinned on one shoulder for ease of movement and access to a sword.

High boots or sandals are popular among noble men, while commoners wear low boots or sandals with leggings in cold weather. Sashes with buckles are common and usually very ornamental. Men's hair is customarily kept short and neat, with faces kept clean shaven or with neatly-groomed facial hair. Armlets, rings, and brooches are common for noble men.

For both sexes, favored colors include cloud white, sunset red, sunrise pink, twilight purple, and sky blue, along with jewel tones of ruby red, topaz yellow, amethyst purple, emerald green, and sapphire blue. Black and gold are considered martial colors, reflecting the coloration of the gold eagle. Grey is considered the color of death and is worn only during mourning.

SLAVERY AND INDENTURE

Slavery, as it is practiced in Celdorea, Somirea, Kemesh, the Ivory Kingdoms, and the Kingdoms of Jutland, does not legally exist

within the Auran Empire. However, foreign nobles mock the Auran pretension that "there is no slavery in Aura," because lifelong indentured servitude is widespread and fulfills a similar economic and cultural role.

Indenturing is the process of selling oneself into servitude, and indenture is the state of being a servant. At any time, any man or woman may sell themselves into indenture; the proceeds of the sale may be assigned to the indentured servant's spouse, parents, or children, to the satisfaction of his creditors, or otherwise as the indenture agreement dictates. Indenture is generally for 1 year, 7 years, or 21 years, though in principle any term may be devised. Lifelong indenture is imposed by the state on violent criminals, with eternal indenture (which gives the master and his heirs the right to the servant's services even after death) reserved for heretics and traitors.

TRAVEL AND VEHICLES

The Empire's paved roads, built over centuries of expansion, are said to be over five thousand miles in total length. The Imperial Cartography Service maintains extensive maps of the countryside, roadways, and even street maps; much of the Empire is correspondingly easy to get around within, or was until recently.

Travel along the roads is commonly by foot or horse. Wealthier citizens may also travel by servant-borne litter or by chariot or covered carriage. Merchants generally rely on large, four- or six-wheeled wagons drawn by teams of horses or oxen. On the searoads, most merchant vessels are square-rigged sailing ships, while warships are generally galleys with multiple sets of oars for increased maneuverability and speed.

ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION

The Auran Empire is the most technologically sophisticated realm in the known world. In architecture, Aura builds with stone, brick, cement, and concrete, with accents of bronze, brass, and alabaster. Common architectural motifs include the dome (symbolizing the sky), the column, the atrium, and the reflecting pool. All four of these motifs appear in the Golden Temple of the Winged Sun on Mt. Audarammas, and in the Imperial Palace on the Palladium. Also noteworthy are the many great amphitheaters and coliseums in the cities of the Empire. Wonders of Auran acoustic engineering, each is able to seat tens of thousands, yet capable of projecting a man's voice from the center of the stage to the farthest back row. The Great Lighthouse of Pireus, with its ever-burning elemental flame visible from leagues away, is representative of the heights of Imperial skill, though many smaller lighthouses exist.

Perhaps most of all, the Empire is known for its marvelous aqueducts, dams, and bridges, which control and traverse the waterways of the Empire. Sewers of mind-numbing complexity run under the Empire's great cities, connecting with the aqueducts and canals. Water wheels and wind mills turn fluid movement into power, and hydraulic pumps and siphons transform power into movement. Because of these sophisticated waterworks, the citizens of Aura enjoy public baths with warm, hot, and cold water as well as bronze indoor plumbing with flush toilets. Fire engines with hydraulic pumps protect its cities against the scourge of fire.

KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING

Since the city's founding, Aura's scholars have created and collected great works on law, rhetoric, ethics, political economy, natural history, natural philosophy, and mathematics. Before it was burned

by Baal the Terrible in 16 BE, the Great Library of Aura contained 700,000 works, with thirteen lecture halls for up to 5,000 students. Only a fraction now survives, but even this leaves Aura as the center of knowledge in the world. Its astronomers know the true length of the year and have maintained accurate calendars for centuries. They track the precession of the heavens and have cataloged the stars and constellations. Auran physicists have working theories of motion, statics, mechanics, and optics. Auran mathematicians have codified arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry, and algebra for use by engineers. They understand both zero and infinity, though they have only barely plumbed the secret of the calculus and the metaphysics of time, space, and reality.

The philosophers and scholars of Aura have also created marvels of mechanics and miniaturization. The Tower of Knowledge is renowned for its great Orrery, a clockwork mechanical device that illustrates the motions of the planets around the Celestial Sphere. Mechanical calculators for astrology have been created that are small enough to fit in a chest. Automated doors that open acoustically are used in royal buildings. Most impressive of all is the colossal automaton that guards the island of Corcano, a unique product of magic and engineering never since duplicated in history.

Auran medicine is as advanced as its mechanics. Physicians practicing dissection and surgery have discovered the existence of the heart, lungs, brain, and other major organs and systems. Forceps, scalpels, scissors, cauterizers, and bandages are all available to the skilled physicker. Herbal remedies are used for pain, as well as recreation, and hallucinogens and stimulants are brewed for chewing, smoking, or ingestion. Sterilization is well understood, and makes the Empire's surgical procedures much safer. Surgical skill, herbal medicine, and divine magic combined mean that the rich of Aura can be healed of almost any injury or illness.

WEAPONS AND WARFARE

For over four hundred years, the Auran Army has been the known world's best fighting force. Its legionary infantry are the unyielding anvil upon which barbarian hordes are broken; its cataphract cavalry are the unstoppable hammer with which the breaking blow is swung.

Often the most heavily-armored infantrymen on the field, Auran legionaries wear banded plate cuirasses and spaulders with steel vambraces, steel greaves, and studded leather aprons. Their primary weapons are 10' ash-wood spears with steel, leaf-shaped heads and bronze butt-spikes. The legionaries' secondary weapons are imperial long swords: 36" double-edged straight blades of Auran steel, used for slashing and thrusting. These weapons are used one-handed in conjunction with curved oval shields, 4' x 2'6" in size, made of leather-wrapped hardwood with bronze bosses. By tradition, legionary shields are painted red and emblazoned with the golden winged sun of Ammonar. Helmets are commonly worn by all legionaries, and are generally open-faced and utilitarian. Subalterns and centurions have more ornate helms featuring horse-hair plumage or metal crests.

Cataphract are even more heavily armored than legionaries, with steel muscle cuirasses over mail on their torsos, studded leather war-skirts over their hips, segmented steel plates over mail on their arms and legs, and steel helms with horse-hair plumage and sculpted face masks on their heads. This armor is typically lacquered gold and supplemented by round, leather-wrapped hardwood shields with bronze bosses. Their horses are equally armored with lamellar barding from head to hoof. The cataphracts' weapons include 12' lances with wooden shafts

and steel spearheads at either end; composite reflex bows featuring unbendable horn grips with reinforced wooden bowstaves slung in reverse of the bows' natural flex; and imperial long swords of similar make to the legionaries', albeit more ornately decorated.

Distinct from the legions, but no less deadly, are the bladedancers of Ianna, goddess of love and war. In single combat or loose formations, bladedancers fight with dual 30" single-edged curved blades designed for cutting and slashing, known as warblades. The best warblades are made of folded steel using secret techniques known only to the master smiths of the Temple of the Blade. Ancient warblades may have been in families for generations. In close-order formation, bladedancers fight with glaives: Long, sleek, single-edged blades with thrusting tips attached to extremely long hilts. Glaives allow for tremendously powerful attacks from horseback or afoot, and are light enough for use both cutting and slashing.

In total, the Auran Army numbers about 370,000 troops, of which about 200,000 are stationed on the frontier, 150,000 are stationed within its borders, and 20,000 are stationed in Aura itself.

RELIGION AND MYTH

The Aurans acknowledge the existence of two pantheons of powerful deities, the Empyrean and the Chthonic. In general, the Empyrean powers are associated with law, light, and creation, while the Chthonic powers are associated with chaos, darkness, and destruction. The Empyrean gods are revered and worshipped while the Chthonic powers are feared and reviled. The situation is reversed in the Sunset Kingdoms, which tend to venerate the Chthonic powers foremost.

The Empyrean faiths teach that after death, the body must be burned so that Calefa can swiftly usher the soul to the afterlife, where its valor is weighed by Türas. Base and sordid souls drink of the waters of sorrow and return again to the realms of man in a new body. Noble, heroic souls pass to the Empyrean Heaven, to dwell in the glory of the halls of Ammonar. The Exalted (as they are called) are venerated by their ancestors and often asked to intercede with the gods on their behalf, and Exalted emperors and heroes may be widely worshipped as demi-gods in their own right.

The Chthonic faithful do not believe in this cycle of life, death, and rebirth. They believe that upon death the soul is consumed and used as fuel in the creation of new life. They see reincarnation of the soul the same way one sees fungus growing in a corpse – new life, yes, but not the same life. They see not a choice between paradisiac afterlife and worldly reincarnation, but between undeath and oblivion. They thus seek to keep their souls and their bodies intact lest their singular identity be destroyed by the cycle of death before the time of the Awakening. The Awakening is a prophesized future when the Chthonic gods shall return to the earth and the faithful shall enjoy a true bodily resurrection. The day of this Awakening is unknown. Some sects claim it can be known by the movements of the stars, others only by the will of the gods.

The Gods and Goddesses table, below, lists the 7 Empyrean and 11 Chthonic powers, along with their titles, spheres of influence, holy symbols, and sacred animals, as they are most commonly known to the Auran Empire. Roughly analogous deities sit in approximately similar roles in other religions of Cybele. Based on these resemblances, some philosophers have asserted the existence of an underlying unity of all religious traditions, in which there are only a small number of great powers, all known by different names in different civilizations. There

are, of course, other lesser deities, demigods, heroes, spirits, and idols worshipped throughout Cybele that are too numerous to name here.

CLERGY AND CHURCHES

Within the Auran Empire, there are seven main religious orders, one for each of the seven Emyprean gods:

- **The Temple of the Winged Sun**, sacred to Ammonar, is the largest and most powerful of the clerical orders. Its clerics are common throughout the Empire, where they proselytize the Emyprean faith, crusade against its foes, and minister to the needs of the faithful.
- **The Temple of Justice**, sacred to Tūras, is feared and respected throughout the realm for its stern justice and inexorable lawfulness. Its clerics, known as templars, are commonly found as exorcists, undead slayers, judges, inquisitors, and executioners.
- **The Keepers of the Hearth Fire**, sacred to Mityara, are perhaps the most revered of the orders. The priestesses of this virgin sisterhood maintain the sacred fires and pure waters of the city, regulate the public morals, oversee marriages and births, and supervise hospitals, orphanages, and almshouses. The Keepers have the power to grant mercy to convicted criminals, which often places them in opposition to the less-merciful Temple of Justice and Brotherhood of the Eclipse.
- **The Temple of the Blade and the Veil**, sacred to Ianna, is actually two orders in one, reflecting Ianna’s dualistic aspects of love and war. The Temple of the Veil employs priestesses as sacred courtesans and advisors to the great noble families. The Temple of the Blade trains bladedancers to serve as an elite fighting force against the chthonic darkness.

- **The Sisterhood of Mourning**, sacred to Calefa, manages funerals, oversees wills and estates, and offers prayers for the dead. Its priestesses are commonly called the Grey Sisters due to their ash-hued robes. A lesser-known sect of Calefa also exists, but is never spoken of publicly: **The Brotherhood of the Eclipse**, a secretive guild of ancient lineage, whose members usher souls to the afterlife under the terms of ritualized religious contracts of retribution.
- **The Tower of Knowledge**, sacred to Istreus, is a monastic order devoted to philosophy and magic. It maintains the remnants of the Great Library in Aura, and trains able young men and women to be priests, mages, or scholars.
- **The Order of Travelers**, sacred to Naurivas, is a mendicant order of wandering clerics who have taken vows to carry the light of the Emyprean faith beyond the borders of the Empire. While its numbers are few, the Order claims many surveyors, scouts, and navigators of the wild regions of Cybele as lay brothers.

The default cleric in the *Adventurer Conqueror King System* belongs to the Temple of the Winged Sun while the default bladedancer belongs to the Temple of the Blade. The default priestess in the *ACKS Player’s Companion* belongs to the Keepers of the Hearth Fire. Updated rules for playing divine casters belonging to the orders will be included in the upcoming *Auran Empire Campaign Setting*.



Gods and Goddesses				
Name	Titles	Spheres	Holy Symbols	Sacred Animals
Ammonar	Lightbringer, Lawgiver, Lord of the Dawn	Light, law, creation	Winged sun, eagle	Eagle, griffin
Calefa	Lady of Fortune, Mother of Mourning	Fortune, wealth, funerary rights	7-spoked wheel, eclipsed sun	Raven, cat
Ianna	Lioness, Queen of Victory	Love, war, victory	9-pointed star, lion	Lion, falcon
Istreus	Master of Secrets, Eyeless Seer	Knowledge, learning, magic	Silver crescent, tower	Owl, ibis
Mityara	Noble Lady, Mother of Mercy	Community, charity, civic virtue	Alabaster statuette, torch	Dove, unicorn
Naurivus	Patron of Explorers, Lord of the Winds	Travel, weather, navigable waters	Galley, astrolabe	Dolphin, horse
Tūras	Marshal of Justice, Judge of Valor	Justice, strength, martial virtue	Hammer, sword and scales	Bull, dog
Iskara	Demon Queen, Mother of Monsters, Empress of That Which Came Before	Chaos, darkness, eternity	Draconic eye, multi-headed serpent, ouroboros	Dragon, hydra, python
Dirgion	Doombringer, Lord of Death and Rebirth	Doom, death, undeath	Fiery eye, skull on a black circle	Vulture, jackal
Kaleth	Dark Watcher, Elder Eye	Madness, knowledge, entropy	Mouth surrounded by eyes, purple circle on black	Oozes, fungus
Bel	Slaughterprince, Lord of War	War, conquest, bloodshed	Black gauntlet holding six arrows, taloned hand	Gargoyle, manticore
Galmorm	Poisoner, Great Trickster	Thievery, treachery, poison	Horned rat, striking scorpion	Rat, scorpion, toad
Nasga	Mistress of Pain and Pleasure, Princess of Roses, Serpent	Beauty, pain, lust	Medusa’s head, thorny rose	Panther, spider, cobra
Ravanor	Bitter Prince, Horned King	Kingship, power, sacrifice	Wavy dagger, antlered crown	Stag, boar
Nargund	Dusk Wolf, Lord of the Hunt	Hunting, predators, night	Spiral maze, bloody teeth	Minotaur, wolf
Ornaron	Godfather of Storms, Thundermaker	Storms, thunder, rage	Crossed thunderbolts, helmet with glowing eyes	Wyvern, elephant
Lammala	Sea Mother, Tentacled One	Primordial waters, tidal waves	Watery spiral, tentacled thing	Kraken, crab
Telith	Great Earth Mother, Egg of Mountains	Earthquakes, volcanoes, wilderness	Fertility statuette, egg in vulva	Basilisk, salamander

PEOPLE

Long before the Day Without Night, each of the great continents was home to a distinct tribe of mankind - Aurëposean, Danean, Ithean, Meniran, and Ulrukan. As the Ammas Aurë lies at the center of the world, all of these ancient tribes eventually came to its serene shores, where in time they battled, befriended, and bred with one another. From these conquests and unions came the many diverse peoples that dwell in Aurëpos today. The most numerous of these peoples are described below, along with the great demihuman peoples that dwell amongst and alongside them.

CELDOREAN

The great Celdorean people once ruled a thalassocracy that extended across all of northern Aurëpos. Though defeated by Aura centuries ago, they remain numerous in their homeland of Celdorea and the islands of Syrnasos, and in all the port cities and trading towns of the continent.

Celdoreans are tall-statured (men averaging 5'9") with athletic body builds characterized by broad shoulders and narrow waists. They have long, oval-shaped faces with upright foreheads and prominent cheekbones. Their noses are long, moderately wide, and either straight or slightly convex. Overall, their facial features are sharp and bony, and often described as hawk-like. Celdorean eyes are deep-set and either almond- or round-shaped, usually colored hazel, brown, or black but sometimes colored a striking green. Their skin color is light brown or olive tanning to dark brown or dark olive. Celdorean hair is straight or wavy, and colored rufous brown, auburn, dark auburn, or brown-black. The men have heavy beard and body hair.

Celdoreans are usually named in Classical Celdorean after a favored relative in the prior generation of the father's or mother's family. Celdorean nobles carry hereditary family names, many formed by appending the suffix -ha or -zadeh to the founding ancestor's name (e.g., Dadarshi, of a noble house founded by Jatar, might be "Dadarshi Jatarzadeh"). Commoners use patronyms instead of hereditary family names, with sons adding -pur and -apur to their father's name (e.g., Dadarshi, son of Farhad, would be "Dadarshi Farhadapur") and women adding -dar or -adar to their father's name (e.g., Barsine, daughter of Imanish, would be "Barsine Imanishadar").

Male Names: Ardumanish, Dadarshi, Farhad, Haxamanish, Imanish, Jatar, Marduniya, Spitamaneh, Taxmaspada, Vishtaspa

Female Names: Ashrafa, Barsine, Darya, Elaheha, Hediye, Iotapa, Karani, Malakeh, Stateira, Uparmiya

DWARVEN (JUTTING AND MENIRI MOUNTAINS)

For centuries the stout and cunning dwarven people delved vast vaults in the Meniri and Jutting Mountains, gathering rich ores and creating enduring works of stone and iron. Today, the dwarves are an embattled race, fighting a never-ending war against the fast-breeding beastmen that have invaded their tunnels. Dwindling in number, barely clinging to the last of their holdings, dwarves are rarely seen by mankind. Those that do mingle with men are almost always adventurers of some sort.

The Meniri dwarves are very short-statured (men averaging 4') but exceptionally stout, weighing as much as adult humans, with broad shoulders and hips, thick-boned limbs, and sturdy digits. They have large, round heads with prominent brows and strong chins. Their

noses are long and broad, with straight or convex bridges ending in fleshy tips. Their eyes are large, round, and very deep set, colored either gray, gray-brown, green, hazel, or light brown. Their skin ranges from medium to very dark brown, ocher, or sienna. Their hair is wavy or curly, and colored chestnut, gray, or black. Both the men and women have heavy beard and body hair. The Jutting dwarves are similar, but their nasal bridges tend to be concave rather than convex, their skin is a shade fairer, and their hair color is dark red, rufous brown, auburn, or brown-black.

Dwarves are usually named in Old Dwarven for a close relative, famous ancestor, or vault hero. In addition to their given name, all dwarves carry a hereditary family name. Each dwarven vault will have a small number of surnames associated with the families of that vault. The vault itself is always named after its founder's family. A vault founder's surname carries great prestige among dwarves (e.g., a dwarf named Hurgon Radokh who hails from the vault of Azen Radokh is likely a person of some importance). In addition to their given name and surname, dwarves enjoy collecting sobriquets and nicknames; any dwarf of distinction will carry at least one and sometimes two or three.

Male Names: Arsic, Bombor, Denor, Hurgon, Korten, Morto, Norden, Stahlur, Torrad, Wharto

Female Names: Arsi, Balla, Dara, Efti, Fili, Kliia, Lara, Mora, Shylda, Thora

Surnames: Breth, Domekh, Forkus, Gede, Karodar, Makor, Oengus, Radokh, Talorgen, Uoret

ELVEN (ARGOLLËAN)

Argollëan, or elven, civilization was at an advanced state well before human civilization had progressed past tribal bands. For two thousand years, the Argollëan Empire ruled Aurëpos, until its climactic destruction at the hands of the Thrassians. Today, only a single elven kingdom survives, that of Northern Argollë, though scattered fastnesses can still be found in forests throughout Aurëpos. Elves hailing from Northern Argollë style themselves "high elves" and count themselves as the inheritors of their race's ancient glories. Elves from the outlying fastnesses are generally called "wood elves." What they lack in arrogance, wood elves more than make up for in reclusiveness.

Argollëan elves are short-statured (men averaging 5'6" in height), but have such lithe, well-proportioned bodies that all other races look ungainly in comparison. They have long heads and heart-shaped faces with high cheekbones, finely-chiseled features, and full lips. Their noses are long, narrow, and delicate, with straight or convex bridges. Their eyes are almond-shaped and colored grey, blue, violet, green, or amber. Their hair is straight or wavy, and colored platinum, gold, silver, or blue-black. Their eyebrows are slender and they have neither beard nor body hair growth. Elven skin is pale, almost pure white, but suffers neither burning, browning, nor wrinkling – the Argollëans look ever young and fair to the eyes of men.

Elves are always given names in the lilting Classical Argollëan language. Elven men are traditionally named for their paternal relatives, elven women for their maternal ones. Most Argollëans do not use family names. Their men indicate lineage with the patronymic Mag ("son of") followed by the father's name (e.g., Aodan, son of Seanan, would be "Aodan Mag Seanan"). Their women use the matronymic Ni ("daughter

of”) followed by the mother’s name (e.g., Irial, daughter of Saorla, would be “Irial Ni Saorla”). The identifiers Mag and Ni are sometimes dropped. Elves descended from a famous noble or hero may append the identifier Ua/Ui (“descendant of”) followed by the name of their ancestor (e.g., if Aodan is descended from the great hero Orthanach, he may call himself “Aodan Ua Orthanach”). This practice is most common among the high elven families of Northern Argollë. Ever-suspicious of outsiders, elves who leave Argollë often conceal their lineage and instead use sobriquets in the local tongue (e.g., Aodan might call himself “Aodan Silverhair”).

Male Names: Aodan, Brogan, Caoimhin, Eadan, Fionntan, Mainchin, Orthanach, Rigan, Seanan, Tomman

Female Names: Arial, Ceara Dairinn, Enya, Irial, Mornya, Niamh, Riona, Saorla, Una

JUTLANDIC

Since time immemorial, barbarian tribes have dwelled along the lake-shores and riverways of Danae, making commerce with civilized Aurëpos only at their isolated trading posts on the southern slopes of the Jutting Mountains. A century ago they invaded Dappakosea in great numbers, conquering that land and reducing its once-proud people to thralls. Now barbarian kings and warlords rule a wide swath of the northern shores, called the Kingdoms of Jutland. From there, bold Jutlanders set out to seek their fortune as mercenaries, raiders, and traders throughout the civilized realms.

Jutlanders are tall-statured (men averaging 5’10”) with robust body builds characterized by thick necks, broad shoulders and hips, and large-boned limbs. They have wedge- or square-shaped faces with short, steep foreheads, heavy brow ridges, and broad, strong jaws. Their noses are long, moderately wide, and either straight or concave with slightly upturned tips. Civilized peoples find their facial features blunt and harsh. Their eyes are deep-set and colored either gray, light blue, blue, gray-blue, blue-green, or green. Jutlandic hair is straight or wavy, and colored golden blonde, dark blonde, golden brown, or rufous brown. In some regions of northern Jutland, platinum blonde hair, and eyes of violet or pale, colorless gray are seen. The Jutlandic skin color ranges from pale to fair. The men have heavy beard and body hair.

Jutlanders are typically named in Old Jutlandic for a famous hero, ancestor, or relative. Instead of hereditary family names, Jutlanders use patronyms formed by adding -sson or -dottir to the father’s name (e.g., Gunnar, son of Olf, would be “Gunnar Olfsson”). Chiefs, heroes, and other persons of distinction may take or be given sobriquets based on their appearance, personality, or deeds (e.g., if Gunnar wins renown for slaughtering many foes, he might be called “Gunnar the Bloody-Handed”).

Male Names: Asmund, Brardi, Dagr, Gunnar, Inthorn, Olf, Rannulfr, Sigwulf, Thorfin, Volundr

Female Names: Astrid, Brynhild, Dagny, Eira, Ingrid, Katla, Nessa, Signy, Thyra, Unnhild



KEMESHI

The Kemeshi people claim to have dwelled on the banks of the River Kem since before the Day Without Night. Whether this is true remains unknown, but the great antiquity of the tombs and temples of their land cannot be denied. The Kemeshi people are common only in their own land and the adjoining kingdoms of Kushtu, Opelenea, Somirea, and Shebatea, though they are sometimes found elsewhere working as scholars, sages, and sorcerers.

Kemeshi are medium-statured (men averaging 5'7") with slender body builds, characterized by narrow shoulders and hips, long limbs, and slim digits. They have oval-shaped faces with sloping foreheads, slender jaws, prominent chins, and full lips. Their noses are moderately long and wide with convex bridges. Kemeshi eyes are almond-shaped and colored light brown, dark brown, or black. Their skin color is medium brown to dark brown. Kemeshi hair is curly or wavy, and colored dark brown or black. The men have scant beard and body hair. Around one-tenth of Kemeshi nobility are pure-blooded Zaharans (see below).

Kemeshi typically carry a given name in Old Kemeshi. Names are held to have sacred power and carefully selected for aesthetic, religious, and symbolic value. The Kemeshi people do not use hereditary family names. Commoners typically carry just one name. Noteworthy individuals distinguish themselves by attaching additional names based on their accomplishments, ancestry, or faith. A Kemeshi ruler might have as many as five names – a given name, a throne name, a patronym, a matronym, and a religious name. Nobility often carry Zaharan names alongside or in lieu of Kemeshi ones.

Male Names: Ankhoften, Bukhat, Djeer, Heferu, Khet, Menthu, Nekhep, Rakhapi, Senef, Weptu

Female Names: Ameharu, Beshari, Djerti, Khenia, Matati, Netari, Pahaperi, Raya, Samina, Vibaha

KRYSEAN

The stout and stoic Krysean people originally hailed from the rugged Drakonir Mountains of south-eastern Aurëpos. For over five hundred years their fate has been intertwined with that of the Auran Empire. Today, Kryseans can be found anywhere the Empire is or has been, working as craftsmen, laborers, merchants, and soldiers.

Kryseans are medium-statured (men averaging 5'8"), with athletic to stocky body builds characterized by compact bodies and short, sturdy limbs. They have oval-shaped faces with wide, slightly sloped foreheads and moderately full lips. Their noses are of moderate proportions, somewhat fleshy, with either straight or convex bridges. Krysean eyes are deep-set and round, with hazel, brown, and dark brown color. Their skin color ranges from light to medium brown, but tans to dark brown. Krysean hair is straight, wavy, or curly, and colored rufous brown, auburn, dark auburn, or brown-black. Their eyebrows tend to be thick and darker than their scalp hair. The men have heavy beard and body hair.

Kryseans are generally named in Classical Krysean after a favored ancestor, a mythic hero, or a close relative. Kryseans do not carry hereditary family names, instead indicating paternity simply by appending their father's name after their own (e.g., Mandonio, the son of Terkinos, would be "Mandonio Terkinos"). Kryseans who have left their homes may use a toponymic, formed by adding -tar or -atar to the name of their village, town, or city of origin (e.g., Nesca, from Kavala, may call herself "Nesca Kavalatar"). Kryseans who are

citizens of the Empire may take an Auran name, or may Auranize their existing one.

Male Names: Aibekeres, Bodilkas, Culchas, Hilerno, Indikortes, Mandonio, Pirreso, Sigilo, Terkinos, Uxentio

Female Names: Ausa, Chiomara, Daleninar, Ederata, Isbatara, Kara, Megara, Nesca, Sicounin, Unia

KUSHTU

The Kingdom of Kushtu is the northernmost of the Ivory Kingdoms. For centuries it has had commerce with Kemeshi, Shebatea, and Somirea. Today, Kushtu merchants, shamans, and soldiers can be found in all the great cities of Aurëpos.

The Kushtu people of the Ivory Kingdoms are tall-statured (men averaging 5'10") with slender to athletic body builds, characterized by broad shoulders, narrow hips, and long legs. They have round- or diamond-shaped faces with narrow, steep foreheads, wide cheekbones, round chins, and wide mouths with very large, lush lips. Their noses are short and somewhat broad, with flat roots, moderate bridges and round tips with wide nostrils. Kushtu eyes are large, round, and black. Their glossy skin ranges from coffee-colored to brown-black. Their hair is black, tightly curled, and woolly. The men have little to no beard and body hair.

Kushtu are usually named in Old Kushtun after a totemic animal, a desired personality trait, or a tribal hero. The Kushtu do not carry hereditary surnames. Chiefs, heroes, and shamans may take or be given a sobriquet after their given name (e.g., if Masamba has outfought a lion, he might be "Masamba the Lion-Hearted").

Male Names: Abimbola, Babtunde, Chiumbo, Isingoma, Jengo, Kwame, Masamba, Olabode, Simba, Tifari

Female Names: Ameena, Binta, Denisha, Habika, Kabira, Mandisa, Nakeisha, Rafiya, Safara, Zabia

NICEAN

The people of Nicea have long plied the Ammas Aurë, counting themselves as one of the great maritime peoples of the continent. Much of the Auran Navy is staffed by Niceans, as were many of its colonies. Today, Niceans can be found in every coastal city and settlement of the Empire and Sunset Kingdoms, as well as in their own pastoral homeland.

Niceans are medium-statured (men averaging 5'8"), with athletic to stocky body builds characterized by compact bodies and sturdy limbs. They have oval-shaped faces with wide, slightly sloped foreheads and moderately full lips. Their noses are moderately long and broad, somewhat fleshy, with straight bridges almost parallel to their foreheads, and thick tips. Nicean eyes are deep-set and round, with green, hazel, brown, and dark brown color. Their skin color ranges from light to medium brown, but tans to dark brown. Nicean hair is straight, wavy, or curly, and colored dark blonde, ash brown, dark brown, or black. Their eyebrows tend to be thick and darker than their scalp hair. The men have heavy beard and body hair.

Niceans typically carry a given name in Classical Nicean, often referencing a grandparent, great uncle, or great aunt. In lieu of hereditary family names, they use patronyms formed by adding the suffix -adis, -akis, -atos, -ides, or -poulos to the father's name (e.g., Meteoros, the son of Vason, might be "Meteoros Vasonides"). If a Nicean moves to another place he may replace his patronym with his village,

town, or city of origin (e.g., if Meteros Vasonides is from Trikala, but living in Arganos, he might be called “Meteros Trikala”). Prominent nobles, philosophers, heroes, and other persons of distinction may carry a sobriquet before or after their given name (e.g., if Meteros is a smooth talker, he might be “Meteros Golden-Tongued”). Niceans who are citizens of the Empire may take an Auran name or Auranize their existing one.

Male Names: Apollonis, Basilio, Damanos, Iannis, Klenos, Meteros, Peristo, Spyros, Thales, Vason

Female Names: Acandra, Bassida, Daphyra, Eliona, Iandra, Neoma, Olyma, Selene, Thena, Zene

OPELENEAN

Opelenean has long been the gateway between the Sunset Kingdoms of the West and the Empire of the East, and the Opelenean people are consequently a widespread and well-traveled people. Opelenean merchants trade in every city of Aurēpos; Opelenean sailors crew purple-sailed ships found in every port of the Ammas Aurē; and Opelenean caravaneers traverse the sands of Shebatea, Kemesh, and even the Waste.

Opeleneans are medium-statured (men averaging 5’7”) with stocky body builds characterized by square-built frames and short, sturdy limbs. They have oval- or ellipse-shaped faces with moderately sloped foreheads and full lips. Their noses are long, broad, and fleshy, with high convex bridges and thick, flaring tips. Opelenean eyes are large and almond-shaped, with hazel, brown, or dark brown color. Their skin color ranges from medium to dark brown. Opelenean hair is wavy or curly, and colored dark brown or black, with ash brown or dark blonde occasionally seen. Their eyebrows tend to be thick and darker than their scalp hair. The men have heavy beard and body hair. Years of the slave trade have given many Opeleneans traces of foreign blood, so Danean, Ithean, or Ulrukan hair, eye, and skin coloration and facial features are not uncommon.

Opeleneans are traditionally given names in Old Opelenean, typically taking a grandparent’s, great uncle’s, or great aunt’s name. They do not use family names, instead indicating lineage by attaching the patrynomic Bar (“son of”) or Bat (“daughter of”) to their father’s name (e.g., “Danel Bar Uthman” is Danel, son of Uthman). Since Opeleneans became part of the Auran Empire, however, some families have begun to take Auran names, or to Auranize their given names and patronymics (e.g., “Danel Bar Uthman” might become “Danelus Baruthmanian”).

Male Names: Abedsh, Bodash, Danel, Eshmunazar, Hiram, Juba, Maharbal, Paebel, Shillek, Uthman

Female Names: Ashera, Elissa, Donatiya, Fahima, Hurriya, Padriya, Rasha, Sapphira, Talliya, Zahira

RORNISH

Once as barbaric as the Jutlanders, the Rornish people were gradually subjugated and civilized, first by the Celdorean Thalassocracy and later by the Auran Empire. When Rorn was part of the Empire, Rornish folk could be found throughout its provinces as craftsmen, soldiers, and servants. Some Rornish pockets still linger in eastern and southern lands, but today the Rornish are mostly found in the newly-independent kingdom, fighting in their ongoing war against the Jutlandic invaders to the west.

Rornish people are tall-statured (men averaging 5’10”) and athletically built, with broad shoulders and narrow waists. They have oval- or triangle-shaped faces with broad foreheads, narrow jaws, and moderately thin lips. Their noses are medium to long, with either straight or convex bridges and pinched tips. Rornish eyes are round and deep-set, with coloration of blue, blue-gray, green-gray, green, hazel, or light brown. Their skin color ranges from fair and freckled to light brown. Rornish hair is straight or wavy, and colored golden blonde, strawberry, red, golden brown, rufous brown, auburn, or dark auburn. Their eyebrows tend to be thin and paler than their scalp hair. The men have moderate beard and body hair.

Rornish folk are typically named in the Ivorean language for a famous hero, ancestor, or relative. Rornish commoners do not carry hereditary family names. Men indicate paternity simply by appending their father’s name after their own (e.g., Owain, son of Stuarry, would be “Owain Stuarry”) while women indicate maternity by appending their mother’s name in a like fashion. However, Rornish nobles do carry hereditary



family names; these are indicated by the identifier Ty followed by the name of their noble house (e.g., Urien, of House Caradoc, would be “Urien Ty Caradoc”). Because Rorn was a province of the Auran Empire for centuries, many Rornish people carry Auran or Auranized names (e.g., “Urienus Caradocian”), especially in the cities and coastal settlements where the Auran influence was most strongly felt.

Male Names: Aeron, Braig, Caradoc, Georn, Mard, Owain, Roben, Stuarry, Theon, Urien

Female Names: Anwen, Ceridwen, Deiresa, Eirwen, Katrist, Maranie, Nimue, Rachess, Seren, Vale

SHEBATEAN

According to the cartographers, Shebatea is not part of Aurēpos, lying as it does across the Narrow Sea that separates it from Ulruk. And while few Aurēposans ever see the desert realm, Shebatean merchants, sailors, soldiers, and traders are nevertheless common throughout the Ammas Aurē region, famous for their cargoes of incense, spices, and slaves.

Shebateans are medium-statured (men averaging 5’8”) with slender to athletic body builds characterized by broad shoulders, narrow hips, and long legs. They have oval- or ellipse-shaped faces with large, full lips, slightly turned out. Their noses are short and moderately wide, with straight or concave bridges, round tips, and wide nostrils. Somirean eyes are large, almond-shaped, and of dark brown or black color. Their skin ranges from dark olive to coffee-colored. Shebatean hair is either wavy or curly with wide, open ringlets, and colored dark brown or black. The men have scant to moderate body hair and slight beard hair, usually restricted to moustache and chin.

Shebateans are almost always given names in Old Shebatean, typically for desired personal traits or prominent heroes, clerics, and kings. Shebateans do not use family names, instead indicating lineage with the patronymic Ibn (“son of”) or Bint (“daughter of”) followed by their father’s name (e.g., Suad, son of Rahim, would be “Suad Ibn Rahim”). An aristocratic Shebatean will extend his name as far back as his ancestral records will allow (e.g., “Suad ibn Rahim ibn Wazir ibn Mahmud ibn Rahim”). Some prominent Shebateans will adopt an honorific preceded by Al- (“the”) announcing their deeds or virtue.

Male Names: Abaddon, Baruch, Farouk, Hameed, Jafar, Mahmud, Omar, Rahim, Suad, Wazir

Female Names: Aliyah, Bathsheba, Fatima, Jamila, Kelaya, Magdala, Nahara, Sapphira, Talia, Zerika

SOMIREAN

The proud and populous Somireans must be considered among the great peoples of Aurēpos. Everywhere within the Sunset Kingdoms, Somireans can be found in great numbers. Once they contended with Aura for the dominance of the region; today, the two are allied against the menacing hordes of the Skysos. Noble- and priest-caste Somireans are nowadays not uncommon in the Empire’s armies, academies, and temples.

Somireans are medium-statured (men averaging 5’7”) with athletic to stocky body builds characterized by compact bodies and short, sturdy limbs. They have ellipse-shaped faces with upright foreheads, curved features, and full lips. Their noses are of moderate length and width, featuring straight or slightly concave bridges with rounded tips. Somirean eyes are almond-shaped and dark brown or black in color.



Their skin color ranges from medium ocher and reddish olive in the north to dark ocher and dark olive in the south. Somirean hair is straight or wavy, and colored dark brown, black, or blue-black. The men have moderate beard and body hair.

Somireans are given names in Classical Somirean based on the configuration of the planets at their time of birth. The selection process seems random to those ignorant of these ancient astrological traditions. Noble-caste Somireans also carry hereditary surnames, usually ending in -ja (“descendant of”) or -yata (“heir of”) and derived from the names of the heroes and conquerors of Somirean mythology (e.g., “Artashumara Ramaja” means Artashamura, descendant of Rama). Lower-caste Somireans do not carry hereditary family names. They will simply append their profession, their village, or their fathers’ name after their given name (e.g., Kumara, son of Puru would be “Kumara Puru”).

Male Names: Artashumara, Bindusara, Kumara, Mahinda, Narasimha, Puru, Rama, Vardhana, Xandrama, Yashodharman

Female Names: Asmali, Devita, Havati, Kavasha, Nitama, Preena, Skandara, Tadukhepa, Vashi, Yavi

SKYSOS

Hailing from the great steppe-land that extends westward from Aurēpos into Ithea, these dangerous but disorganized nomads have fought, raided, and plundered the lands of Celdorea, Somirea, Shebatea, and Kemesh for centuries. Now the Skysos tribes have united under a great kağan and seek conquest and tribute. Exiles and refugees from tribes defeated by the kağan can be found throughout Aurēpos, often working as adventurers or mercenaries.

The Skysos are short-statured (men averaging 5’5”) with stocky body builds characterized by square-built frames and short, bowed legs. They have round- or oval-shaped faces with broad features, high cheekbones, and small mouths with moderate lips. Their noses are of medium length and width, with low, concave bridges and wide nostrils. Their distinctive eyes are small, slanted, and narrow, with dark brown or black colors common, and blue or grey occasionally seen. Their skin color ranges from light to dark ocher. The hair of the Skysos is very straight, colored dark brown, black, or blue-black. They have bushy eyebrows that often merge in the middle. The men have scant body hair and patchy beard hair. Skysos warriors often practice ritual scarification on their cheeks to make themselves look more fearsome.

Skysos folk are usually named in the Old Skysos tongue. Skysos names are short and simple, typically referencing a totemic animal, a desired personality trait, or a tribal hero. The Skysos do not carry hereditary surnames. Chiefs, heroes, and shamans may carry a sobriquet after their given name (e.g., if Tolga has beheaded many enemies, he might be “Tolga Head-taker”).

Male Names: Attila, Buğra, Doğan, Erkan, Hakan, Mahzun, Ozan, Ruga, Tolga, Uldin

Female Names: Ayla, Beyza, Dilara, Esma, Hale, Mätine, Saba, Tülay, Ulyuna, Zehra

THRASSIAN

The scaly Thrassian race was magically bred from a cross of men and giant lizards long ago by unknown arcanists. Though once

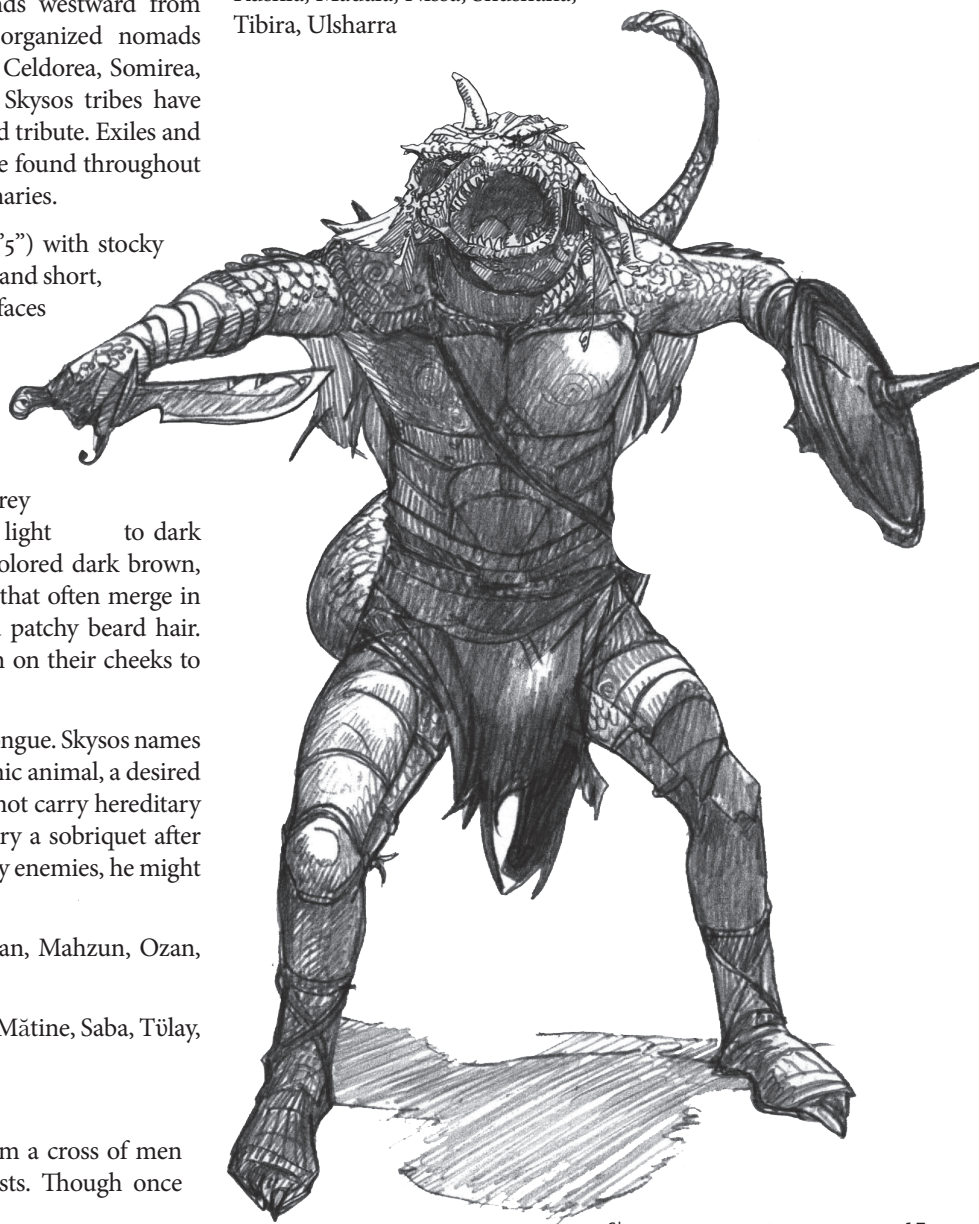
they ruled much of Aurēpos, some taint in the Thrassian bloodline caused them to slowly degenerate into primitive savagery. Today, only in dusky Kemesh, last surviving satrapy of Zahar, do Thrassians of the old stock still appear in significant numbers in Aurēpos. There are legends that a great Thrassian kingdom still exists in the inland jungles of Ulruk, south of the Waste, but reputable sages dismiss such claims as nonsense.

Thrassians are reptilian humanoids of great stature (males averaging 6’6” tall) with the heads and tails of lizards. A true warrior race, Thrassians have strong hands with sharp claws, reptilian mouths filled with fangs, and skin armored with a tough, scaly hide. The scales are typically olive, brown, grey, or black, with cream patches, while their eyes are hazel, yellow, or orange with slitted pupils.

Thrassian slaves are typically given nicknames in whatever language their owner speaks. Freed Thrassians usually abandon this nickname in favor of a new Thrassian name drawn from the ancient myths and history of their people.

Male Names: Akalamdug, Dumuzi, Hadanish, Iltasadum, Lugalmē, Meduranki, Puzur, Shudurul, Untash, Zimudar

Female Names: Asila, Irkalla, Kushla, Madala, Nissa, Shushana, Tibira, Ulsharra



Skysos

TIRENEAN

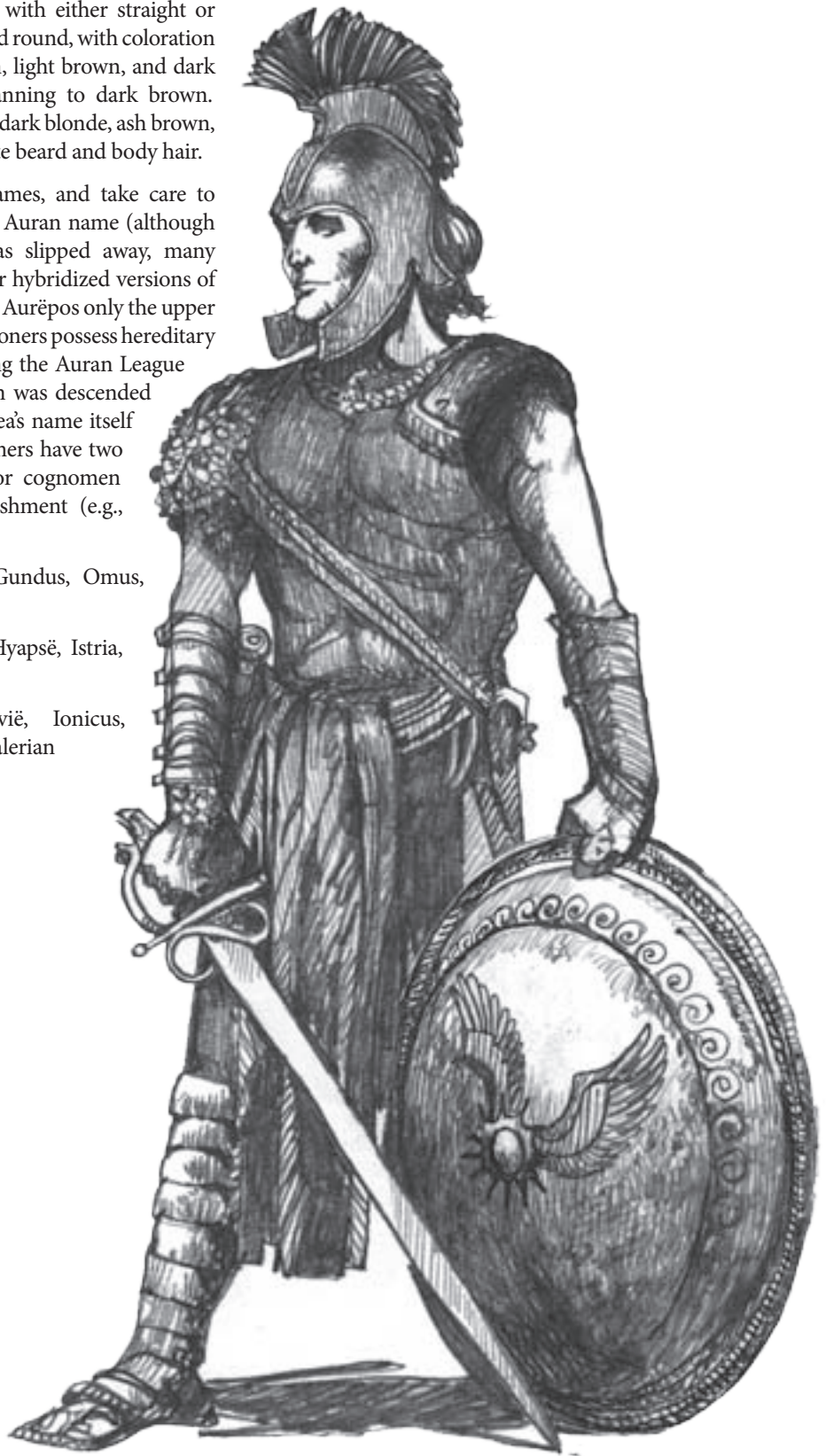
The empire-building Tireneans can be found throughout Aurëpos, though their greatest concentration remains in and around the city of Aura. They are tall-statured (men averaging 5'9") with athletic body builds characterized by broad shoulders and narrow waists. They have long oval-shaped faces with upright foreheads, prominent cheekbones, narrow jaws, and moderately full lips. Their noses are of moderate proportions, somewhat fleshy, with either straight or convex bridges. Tirenean eyes are deep-set and round, with coloration varying between blue-grey, grey, gray-brown, light brown, and dark brown. Their skin color is light brown, tanning to dark brown. Tirenean hair is straight or wavy, and colored dark blonde, ash brown, dark brown, or black. The men have moderate beard and body hair.

Tireneans are proudly traditional about names, and take care to give every child a carefully-chosen Classical Auran name (although as fluency with Classical's complexities has slipped away, many provincial Tireneans now carry vulgarized or hybridized versions of the old names). Moreover, while elsewhere in Aurëpos only the upper classes have surnames, in Tirenea even commoners possess hereditary family names (e.g., "Syrena Drakon"). During the Auran League era it was often claimed that every Tirenean was descended from nobility, which may account for Tirenea's name itself - "land of crowns." Perhaps *because* commoners have two names, nobles often claim a third name or cognomen based on some characteristic or accomplishment (e.g., "Audarius Valerian Tarkaun").

Male Names: Aurëus, Celictor, Destrio, Gundus, Omus, Quellus, Tavus, Valen, Zelicus

Female Names: Aurëlyn, Celena, Dalefa, Hyapsë, Istria, Nauriva, Riara, Syrena, Valanna, Zeodarë

Surnames: Amadorus, Drakon, Hyatavië, Ionicus, Mennicus, Nuvicerras, Süromus, Tarcalus, Valerian



ZAHARAN

The erstwhile lords of men are today a rare and scattered people. Pure-blood Zaharans dwell openly only amongst the nobility of Kemesh and the tyrannical city-states that dot the eastern coast of Ulruk. Elsewhere they live as exiles, disguising their ancestry and practicing their ancient customs in secret.

Zaharans are tall-statured (men averaging 5'9") with slender body builds characterized by narrow shoulders and hips, long limbs, and slim digits. They have very long heads, sometimes lengthened further by ritual cranial elongation. Their long oval- or diamond-shaped faces have slanted ears, prominent cheekbones, narrow jaws, strong chins, and full lips. Their noses are long, high rooted, and straight. Zaharan eyes are large and almond-shaped, and colored amber, green-brown, grey-brown, or dark brown. Their skin color is reddish-brown, copper, or olive sienna. Their hair can be curly, straight, or wavy, either black or blue-black in color. Their eyebrows are thin and dark, while body and beard hair is scant. Albino Zaharans, with white skin and flaxen hair, are not uncommon and viewed with even more fear than usual.

As Zaharans are looked on with revulsion and fear by their former subjects, most adopt a public name from a local dialect for everyday use. The ancient Zaharan language is always used for a Zaharan's true, secret name, however. Zaharans indicate descent by attaching the patrynomic prefix Bet-, meaning "of the house of," to their father's name. Zaharans of the ancient families might bear names with generations worth of patrynoms (e.g., Ashurdan, of the house of Izdubar, of the house of Merodach, of the house of Zikarsin would be "Ashurdan Bet-Izdubar Bet-Merodach Bet-Zikarsin," thus tracing the line back to the bearer's great-grand-father), or simply use the most ancient known ancestor. A Zaharan who can claim descent from one of the ancient sorcerer-kings is held in the highest esteem.

Male Names: Ashurdan, Didanu, Izdubar, Kadashman, Merodach, Naramsin, Palakinatim, Sarkimuna, Urhammu, Zikarsin

Female Names: Atanah, Belit, Ellat, Itani, Kissare, Ninmarki, Omarosa, Shala, Tabni, Zakiti

The Classical Auran names presented above are based on a constructed language which will be detailed in the *Auran Empire Campaign Setting*. The other names are based on the ancient languages we've used to represent the tongues of Cybele, such as Celtiberian for Krysean - all shown on the table in the next page.

These ancient languages tended to have very complex naming conventions in history; many required that root words be declined into the genitive, genitive plural, or plural case, with prefixes and suffixes that vary depending on

the appropriate declension. Some are still not completely understood even by scholars! The suggestions here are merely offered to give flavor for gaming purposes, and are not intended to be or presented as accurate grammatical presentation of ancient names.

Some sobriquets are presented in English. English is used to represent names given in the contemporary, rather than old or classical, language of that people. Hence, in the name "Metoros Golden-Tongued," "Metoros" is in Classical Nicean, while "Golden-Tongued" is in Common Nicean or maybe even Common Auran.



LANGUAGES

Cybelean Language

Proto-Draconic

- ↳ Draconic
- ↳ Thrassian
- ↳ **Lizardman**

Proto-Danean

- ↳ Eastern Danean
 - ↳ Ancient Argoivorean
 - ↳ Classical Argollëan
 - ↳ **Argollëan**
 - ↳ Ivorean
 - ↳ **Rornish**
- ↳ Ancient Krysean
 - ↳ Classical Krysean
 - ↳ **Krysean**
- ↳ Central Danean
 - ↳ Ancient Tirenean
 - ↳ Classical Auran
 - ↳ **Auran**
- ↳ South-Western Danean
 - ↳ Ancient Dappakosean
 - ↳ Northern Classical Dappakosean
 - ↳ Southern Classical Dappakosean
- ↳ South-Eastern Danean
 - ↳ Ancient Nicean
 - ↳ Classical Nicean
 - ↳ **Nicean**
- ↳ Northern Danean
 - ↳ Ancient Jutlandic
 - ↳ Old Jutlandic
 - ↳ **Jutlandic**
- ↳ Western Danean
 - ↳ Ancient Celdorean
 - ↳ Classical Celdorean
 - ↳ **Celdorean**
 - ↳ Ancient Somirean
 - ↳ Classical Somirean
 - ↳ **Somirean**

Real-World Language

[Archaic Sumerian]

- ↳ [Classical Sumerian]
- ↳ [Neo-Sumerian]
- ↳ [Post-Sumerian]

[Proto-Indo-European]

- ↳ [Proto-Celtic]
- ↳ [Insular]
 - ↳ [Goidelic]
 - ↳ [Old Irish]
 - ↳ [Brythonic]
 - ↳ [Old Breton]
- ↳ [Continental]
 - ↳ [Celtiberian]
 - ↳ [Celtiberian]
- ↳ [Proto-Italic]
 - ↳ [Latino-Faliscan]
 - ↳ [Classical Latin]
 - ↳ [Vulgar Latin]
- ↳ [Proto-Balkan]
 - ↳ [Phrygian]
 - ↳ [Illyrian]
 - ↳ [Thracian]
- ↳ [Proto-Greek]
 - ↳ [Mycenaean Greek]
 - ↳ [Ancient Greek]
 - ↳ [Koine Greek]
- ↳ [Proto-Germanic]
 - ↳ [Proto-Germanic]
 - ↳ [Northwest Germanic/Runic]
 - ↳ [North Germanic]
- ↳ [Proto-Indo-Iranian]
 - ↳ [Proto-Iranian]
 - ↳ [Western Iranian]
 - ↳ [Old Persian]
 - ↳ [Proto-Indic]
 - ↳ [Rigvedic]
 - ↳ [Sanskrit]

Cybelean Language	Real-World Language
Proto-Meniran	[Afro-Asiatic]
↳ Northern Meniran	↳ [Semitic]
↳ Ancient Zaharan	↳ [Akkadian]
↳ Goblin (etc.)	↳ [Assyrian]
↳ Orc (etc.)	↳ [Assyrian]
↳ Old Opelenean	↳ [Canaanite]
↳ Opelenean	↳ [Phoenician]
↳ Old Shebatean	↳ [Epigraphic South Arabian]
↳ Shebatean	↳ [Sabean]
↳ Central Meniran	↳ [Hamitic]
↳ Old Kemeshi	↳ [Old Egyptian]
↳ Kemeshi	↳ [Demotic Egyptian]
↳ Old Besheradi	↳ [Berber]
↳ Besheradi	↳ [Tuareg]
↳ Southern Meniran	↳ [Cushitic]
↳ Old Kushtun	↳ [North Cushitic]
↳ Kushtun	↳ [Beja]
Proto-Ithean	[Altaic]
↳ Ithean	↳ [Proto-Turkic]
↳ Old Skysos	↳ [Hunno-Turkic]
↳ Skysos	↳ [Hunnic]





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