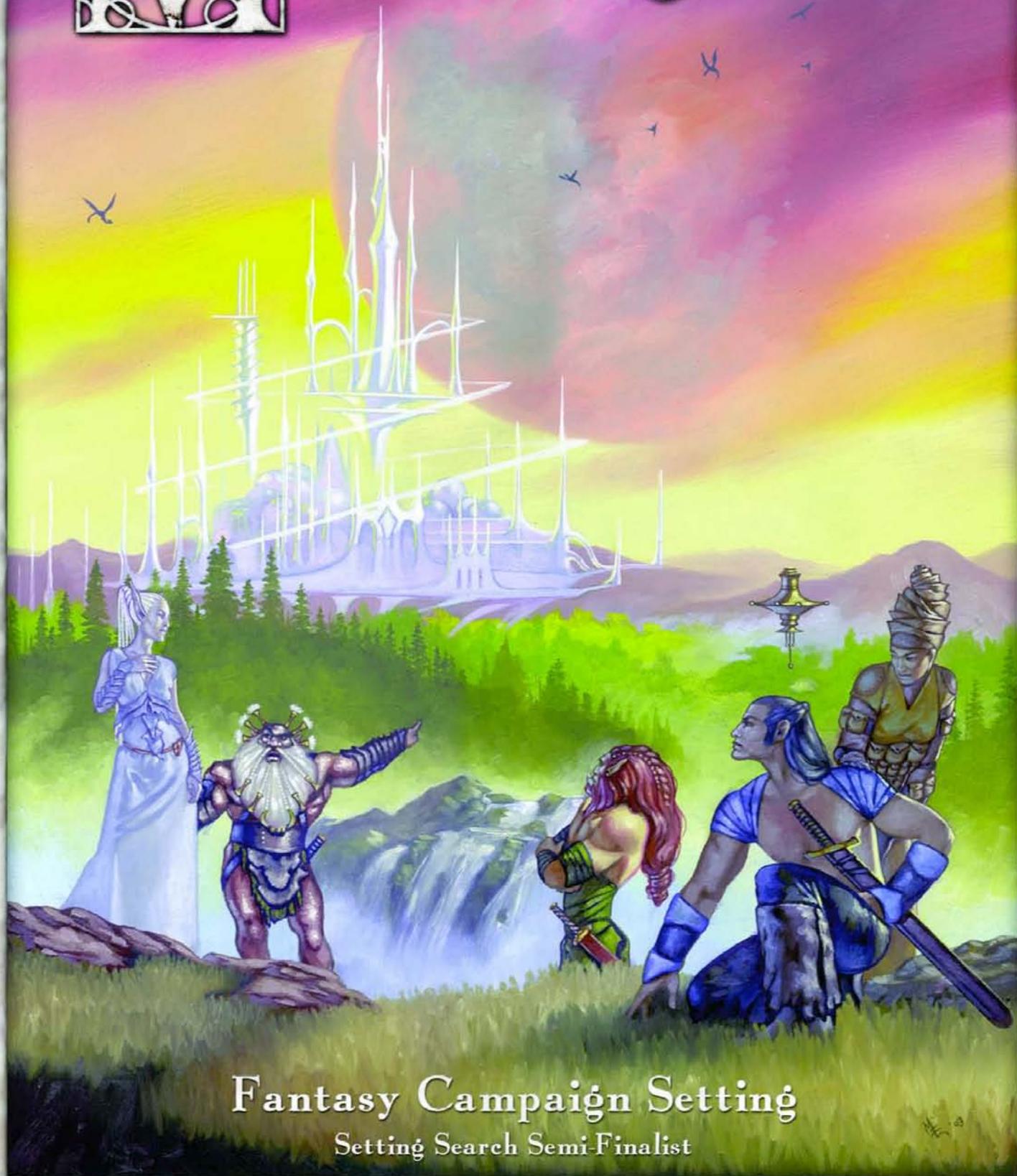




Morningstar



Fantasy Campaign Setting

Setting Search Semi-Finalist



orningstar

By R. Scott Kennan

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Be sure to look for supplemental Morningstar material in the EN World Player's Journal.

On the cover: Our heroes come within sight of a crystal city of the elves. From left to right: a crown elf sorceress, a clay dwarf rogue, a thull ranger, a human eidolon, and a human artificer. The moon, Arril, hangs low in the sky.

Dedication

For Tammy and Ethan with love. Thank you for believing in me, and putting up with the odd hours I've kept over the past year. This is the first of many good things to come for our family.

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THE KEY IS EPHEMERAL, LIKE A SHADOW CAST BY THE MOON.

Chapter I

Age of Majesty

An Introduction to Thraxis

You hold in your hands the gateway to Thraxis, the world of Morningstar. On the other side lies a world of eldritch magic, primeval races, and diverse imperial cultures at the height of their achievements, where a dark Prophecy has begun to uncoil. This is a world that never fell from grace and that continues to meet its highest potential. Immortal elves have retained their fey natures; the dwarves maintain a flourishing empire, wielding powers over earth and stone. These and other races are still vital; humanity has not yet pushed them into retreat. There are spirits in the land, water and sky. Places of power are everywhere, regions where certain magics have greater or lesser effect, which can be exploited to create workings impossible anywhere else. Wondrous treasures wait to be won from the gods in legend-making adventures, and heroes perform mythic deeds in the name of glory... in the name of Empire.

Fantastic Achievements

The world is awash in magic, but its nature is such that it promotes large-scale undertakings in addition to personal power. The nine empires are virile, and everything is being discovered for the first time. Great and daring undertakings are funded, trade is strong, and the exchange of ideas creates prosperity for all concerned.

Art and culture are at their peak. Nine empires coexist in relative peace except for minor skirmishes that are not officially recognized. They trade with one another for mutual benefit. This prosperity has allowed for the construction of universities, monuments, and religious and civic buildings of breathtaking grandiosity, and for the development of an astounding way of life. Though far from idyllic, a citizen's life is reasonably stable. It is an age of wonders, where anything can be done for the right price, though this price is not always monetary.

Magic is the force that drives civilization toward its greatest potential in Morningstar. It is a fantastic time to be alive. The spirit of magical exploration pervades this world and the limits of possibility know no bounds. In the Brendirian province of Triskatariot, the creation of constructs has been raised to a high art. Olive groves are tended by golems, ornithopters wheel in the sky, and construct-vehicles carry troops on land and sea to battle. Ijamvians gain the element of surprise with ingenious and deadly mechanisms, such as the spring-loaded viper clamp, used as a grapnel in close combat. Sacred hot air balloons carry paying supplicants from Haseth closer to their gods, while Latoman gliders wheel in the skies of Quetapan.

Thraxis is a world of grandeur and beauty, both natural and architectural. Civilization seeks to match the beauty of creation in its own works, harnessing the magic of the world to erect monuments built to stand forever. In Brendir, columns and arches tower over the people, holding up multi-tiered temples and civic buildings. In Kenabu, giant turtles ferry citizens along the banks of obelisk-lined waterways. The gnomes of Gimmun Gibuldigapp display their technical mastery with an entire city that rotates, whirs, and chimes with clock-like precision.

Places of Power

Magic is a living energy on Thraxis, the result of planar emanations that attract, repel, and destroy one another. These planar emanations suffuse the land and its life forms. These flows concentrate in certain places of power, creating areas tied to the phenomena of the plane or planes from which the energies derive. These areas range in size from a single plot of land to entire empires. These places of power are self-reinforcing; they are created by large congregations of similar beings, and when formed they strengthen those beings, causing more of the same types of creatures to seek them out, for the easy life they

Technology in Morningstar

In addition to the construct vehicles and other magnificent innovations that have been discussed so far, the artificer traditions of the world have improved the lot of the common man with numerous mundane endeavors. The study of the properties of water alone has led to plumbing in all civilized areas of the nine empires, labor-powered water pumps that pull up groundwater for irrigation in arid lands, the lifting of heavy blocks of stone to great heights atop rafts that are raised upon columns of water allowing for ever taller monuments proclaiming the glory of the empires, and even the diversion of waterways to routes that are more beneficial to civilization. Precision tools have been developed: astrolabes for navigation, lenses for vision magnification over distances long and short, clocks and watches for timekeeping, and scales of exquisite tolerances that allow for greater precision in mercantile transactions. Wind-power is a burgeoning field as well, and windmills are cropping up in various frontiers where man or golem power is in short supply.

Magically implemented technologies have also left an indelible mark upon society, causing moves in directions different from that our own world took. Stone-cutter fortified roads and strongholds have rendered concrete a minor development, since few structures even require mortar. Fireballs and lightning bolts have kept the various explosive powders that alchemists have developed off of the battlefield, relegating it to celebratory uses in holiday displays of fireworks. Mechanical efficiency is almost a non-issue when a spirit can be bound into a vessel and perform its duty perpetually, needing no fuel, rest, or pay for those who can afford to bind them.

offer. This is why Brendir is lawfully inclined and positively charged, and Zeikrus, the draconic empire, is chaotic and in a state of eternal civil war. Smaller pockets are usually much more concentrated than those of the larger area they lie within. The shrine at Nepri, in Hasem-Bura, where desire becomes matter, is one such place. Spellcasters find some of their spells are more powerful, or weaker, in the most strongly-aligned areas. Great acts of daring that would be foolhardy in some areas are a matter of course in others. In the Triskatariot region of Brendir, machines rarely break down inconveniently, while they are much more prone to collapse in the primeval forests of Ynnidon.

Those Who Seek Power

Malevolent forces are stirring, hoping to tame the energies that have raised Thraxis so high, and to recast her in their own perverse images. Chaos is growing, and beings from the odd angles of reality are invading, bringing their eternal wars with them. A bizarre race of outsiders has recently come to the world, called by interested parties. Known only as the Strangers, these sophisticated beings are helping to undermine the fabric of society and to create strife between nations.

Gods can be forged here, and beings from all over the multiverse are becoming aware of that fact. Strange cults rise and fall, as these and other gods lay their claims in the hearts and mind of the peoples of Thraxis.

Men and gods struggle with fate, locked in a battle for the fate of Morningstar. At stake is the key to all the power in the cosmos. Thraxis attracts planar power, concentrating it to a strength that is not even possible on its plane of origin. The newcomers are learning a valuable, and potentially deadly lesson: he who controls Thraxis, controls the multiverse.

The Canticle

On Thraxis, magic made a perfect world. Almost. There is a price for everything, and it is becoming apparent that the abuse of magic on Thraxis cannot be sustained indefinitely. A dark Prophecy, called the Canticle of the Morning Star, is unfolding. It speaks of the end of the great civilizations, and the prices each must pay for their arrogance. Its verses number in the tens of thousands, and each time it is thwarted, it adapts. Verses restructure themselves in the unholy texts, and a new route to destruction is plotted. None know its origin, but all respect its predictions, whether they seek to prevent them or to enable them. It is not entirely certain whether the Canticle seeks to bring the end about, or merely serves as a warning. One thing is certain; Thraxis is under siege from every direction, and by an inscrutable and faceless foe.

The world itself is a threat to the existence of civilization. Thraxis and her massive terraqueous moon have long existed in a state of perfect balance. Now, Arril's orbit is disturbed, creating great tides and earthquakes. Most of the time, the world's many tectonic plates disperse the stress, but with certain eccentricities of orbit come devastating earthquakes. Fierce elemental storms sometimes ravage the land as Thraxis seeks to fight the cancer that is springing up within her.

Deep underground lurk great and terrible civilizations as old as the world, which resent the encroachments of surface folk. Conflict so far has been mostly attrition, but with the increased mining that prosperity brings, full-scale war can't be far off. While most of the underground realms are bolstered with magic and centered within the established tectonic plates, with the most extreme upheavals deep-dwelling creatures can be forced to escape to the surface.

These and other threats are larger than any one person, but

there is always a chance to make an indelible mark on history. Morningstar is a world of heroes, villains, and conflicts writ large across the pages of a history that is still being made, where there is still a chance to make a difference. Thraxis has all the makings of a gilded paradise, or of the darkest hell. Which it becomes depends on the bold people of the world, who dare to take the reins of fate and wrestle them into submission. The need for heroes is becoming dire. Will you be counted among them?

A New Beginning

Morningstar is a versatile setting, filled with possibility for any style of campaign. There's a lot to explore, since campaigns can be set in any part of the nine empires with varying degrees of effort. Morningstar is a setting that allows for adventures and stories that could happen nowhere else.

From the oppressive silence of the sand-swept temples of Kula Kor (home of the iguana-priests) to the abandoned sacrificial altars of Quetapan (soaked with the ancient blood of kings who wait for a chance at revenge), there are lost areas ripe for exploration by those willing to forgo the safety of civilized life. Even city life is filled to overflowing with the possibility for adventure: the commotion of the crime-ridden port city of Klephas, or the city of dementia in Xiangur. Soar with dragons in the endless blue sky of Zeikrus, a place of brutality and chaos. Find your destiny in the Hall of Moments, deep within the jungles of Western Min Geng. Find intrigue and mystery in the Brendirian senate. Become a general, an archmage, or hero of legend, command fanciful machines into battle, or become the first Emperor of Brendir. The world is yours to shape, and to remake in your own image. Wield this responsibility wisely.

A Different World

A Different Path

Morningstar is based upon the paradigm of an ancient world that met its highest potential. Its great empires never fell, never encountered feudalism, and never suffered an age of darkness. It is in the process of continuing through to what would be the renaissance on a medieval-styled world. You won't find kings and queens, peasants and chivalrous knights. Instead, there are Emperors and Empresses, humble citizens, and bold heroes.

Different Dragons

Thraxian dragons each have their own colorations, and individual appearances, so it is not possible to tell from mere appearance what type of dragon one faces. The power descriptions and types from the MM still apply, tied to habitat, behavior, and alignment, so it is still useful to describe these dragons by the terms "metallic" and "chromatic." For the sake of easy

Monsters of Morningstar

Morningstar is home to all manner of unique monsters, ranging from exotic magical beasts tamed by the advanced civilization of Brendir to horrid aberrations unleashed by the depths of Hrum Vaat. Some of the most fantastic creatures include these:

Capricorn, Thraxian: Covered in scintillating scales from head to tail, with foreparts that superficially resemble a goat and the hindquarters of a powerful fish, capricorns are in common use as beasts of burden.

Gedge: Relatives of the Lreans, the gedge perform much of the grunt work that is required in Hrum Vaat. Not possessing skeletons, they resemble nothing so much as flabby yet muscle-bound humanoid worms.

Guch Hir: Guch hir are hexapod insectivores that share a common ancestor with dragons. They are exceptionally stable creatures tamed as beasts of burden all across the Root of the World. Their flying cousins, the guch hin, are quite rare.

Lrean: Lreans are gifted artificers who create biological armor to protect their frail, wormlike bodies. The Lreans are the masterminds behind the subterranean realm of Hrum Vaat. Despite their inherent weakness, or perhaps because of it, they enjoy causing pain in others, glorying in power and strength that they do not truly possess.

Mogrekx: Mogrekhs are massive ruminant beasts with a taste for blood. The rams of the species are favored as war mounts by the dwarves of Kharkon.

Pit Leech: Three-legged, lamprey-mouthed humanoid aberrations. They are a particularly devout race, for as intelligent as they are, they worship those they feed upon for any length of time. A particularly large or resilient beast could conceivably become a godling given enough time with the suckling pit leeches.

Tanin: Tanin resemble a luminous cross between giant whales of various types and great serpents. They gracefully patrol the seas, fighting to protect the weak. Their home plane is the Spanless Seas, a great celestial ocean, clear and pristine, and they bring its influences to Thraxis.

Vadoghol: Vadoghol are creatures created from human stock. They have the distorted features of a man and the shape of some beast. Sometimes called "sundermen," they are used as slaves and beasts of burden in Ijamvul. Hrum Vaat uses them for these things as well as food. They are tortured beings, with just enough humanity remaining to realize that they should not be. There are dozens of types, each bred for a specific purpose.



reference, all references to dragons in this and future Morningstar materials will also use the dragon types listed in the MM when describing the stats of a particular dragon. Keep in mind, however, that a red-colored dragon is not always a “red dragon” on Thraxis.

Different Faith

There is no single unifying pantheon on this world. Each culture has its own religion and pantheons, whose gods are usually beyond the reach of mere mortals, dwelling not on another plane or some pseudophysical realm. They are what they should be – gods. Characters are less likely to follow the standard fantasy model which assumes the character worships and promotes the ideals of a single god. Instead, most people of the world follow a religion of several gods, more so than being vassals of a single deity or set of ideals. Of course there are cults, sects and orders that revere a single god, but these also exist within the framework of a culture and religion. Their myths and values are reflected in their daily life.

The Sisters: The Worlds of Morningstar

No one knows how long ago the world was forged. But it is certainly older than the immortal elves, older even than the gods themselves. Nature spirits were the first inhabitants of the world, and they arose at the same time the World Soul did. These primordial spirits don't think in terms of season or year, but they have revealed that for a long time the world was dead, and land and sea were barren and hot. Fierce weather battered the world, and the several races of mortal beings that found their way to this world during this time were wiped out by the inhospitable environment.

At some point, Thraxis moved too close to another world, and they fell into orbit around each other. Thraxis had gained her moon: Arril. The appearance of this moon stabilized Thraxis' orbit around the sun, and the world began to cool. A strange metaphysical reaction took place, creating a vortex of planar energy, drawing more than a fair share of magic to both worlds. The alignment of these two worlds served as a lens or prism that focused this energy, and burned a hole in the prime material plane, leading to a plane of absolute nothingness. This tear began to actively draw magic, increasing the already heightened flow to a torrent, casting the magic into nonexistence after it had passed through the two worlds. Soon the magic was being destroyed as fast as it flowed across Thraxis, without having a chance to concentrate. Ironically, the immense flow of power effectively made Thraxis a world without magic. This hidden sinkhole also threatened to gradually leech all magic from the rest of reality. The World Soul grew weak and began to die. Many of the early spirits were swept into oblivion. A fortunate side-effect of the great potential energy crossing this world was the sparking of physical life. At first life was a nondescript goo that coated the rocks and floated upon the seas, but this was enough to create a drastic change in the flow. The World Soul discovered that life acted as a mesh, capturing magic and holding it — at least for a while. Magic levels slowly crept back towards the place they had been before, and the world healed. The spirit of the world resolved that it would ensure that life thrived on Thraxis.

Suddenly (on the spirits' time scale), the seas were teeming with fish and plants. Eventually, life moved to land, and the world was filled with activity. A sentient aspect of the World Soul called The Mother experimented greatly with the new life forms, making mistakes and learning from them. Her early attempts at creating a sustained ecosystem failed almost without exception. The world went through a series of spectacularly violent and improbable ages, all culminating in apocalypse, until she had learned enough. There was a brief geological moment of peace, as The Mother reflected. She had learned the lesson of balance.

— Jasperio Treatise on History

Thraxis has a large, terraqueous moon called Arril. More than a moon, it is a world unto itself, and it shares an orbit with Thraxis. Scholars speculate that two living, magic-drawing worlds in such close proximity create stresses upon the fabric of this plane, allowing other planes to bleed their energies across the surface of Thraxis. These energies attract, repel, and destroy one another, but on the surface of the world, a tenuous equilibrium is found. Life itself draws magic to Thraxis, and sentience gives it order.

Thraxis

Thraxis has a circumference of about 60,000 miles. Arril is smaller, at 18,110 miles. This book focuses on the area of Thraxis known as the Root of the World. Anyone who isn't a sage of the Nine Empires refers to The Root of the World simply as "the World." The Root of the World spans a distance of roughly 20,000 miles. Beyond this cluster of continents to the east and west are trackless miles of open sea, scattered with islands. No one who has ventured into the distant seas has returned, and it is unknown whether there are other continents on the other side of the world. It is known, however, that travel into these areas is fraught with peril, as the seas grow deeper, housing ever stranger and more powerful creatures. Scrying or teleporting around the curvature of the world has not been possible because of the Wheel, a magical vortex that drains dweomers and prevents long-range spells from working.

Thraxis is a warm world, with a climate that ranges from sweltering tropical regions at the equators, to cool temperate near the poles. Shallow seas around the Root of the World regulate heat flow, keeping polar caps from forming, and creating a very moist environment on most areas of the continents. The world is very fertile as a rule, with diverse and exotic life forms. Environments can be found to house any type of creature, even those who prefer hostile planar environments, because of the adaptive and reflective nature of magic on this verdant world.

Natural Hazards

Upheavals

Thraxis is a tectonically active world, prone to massive earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. This also means that great tsunamis can crash upon the battered shores of the world. Tides, too, are extreme, making it necessary for many shoreside settlements to take drastic measures, such as incredibly long piers, or other contrivances. The citizens of the Brendirian city of Panphatas solved the problem by building their city in levels, supported by pillars.

Comets and Asteroids

The close proximity of Arril and Thraxis draws numerous asteroids and comets into the general area. The sky is alive with wanderers, delighting viewers on clear nights and occasionally giving ground dwellers an unfortunate closer look. One such impact in recorded history was the early strike with what is now the empire of Ijamvhul. The energies released in that impact created the first ice age, early in the history of mankind, and set up the Primal signature that has become a hallmark of the Ijamvian subcontinent and persists even to this day. If not for the purification efforts of the air elementals at the behest of the Mother, the dust cloud that spewed forth could have ended most life on Thraxis at that geological moment. The Horn of Valtu is the site of the initial impact, jutting out into the sea. Bits of this meteor are powerful aids in the creation of destructive magical items.

Timekeeping

The Brendirian Calendar

The Brendirian calendar is the most simple and widely used calendar in the world. There are 16 lunar months in a year. Each month has five 6-day weeks and is 30 days long, for a total of 480 days in a year. Each day is 21 hours long, separated into seven-hour third-days. Standard Brendirian clocks show all 21 hours on their face, while Triskatar clocks show only seven hours, with multiple hands recessed under the 7 on the face. The hands emerge to stack upon one another, changing color and growing thicker in three stages throughout the course of a day. At the equinoxes, these colors are blue for midnight to dawn, gold for dawn to dusk, and magenta for dusk to midnight. It is common parlance to refer to the time by hour and color for clarification. "The thull accosted me at around half past 2 magenta last night..."

This method of timekeeping alters spell durations and time dependent magical effects, but not the rate at which a spellcaster receives his daily spells. Characters still need 8 hours of rest per day, and healing is unaffected.

The months of the year are named after various Brendirian gods:

Winter Months

Lamilo
Jenuno
Folin
Teses

Spring Months

Anellin
Zisis
Marbew
Psed

Summer Months

Dalvaro
Kana
Tordel
Ganou

Autumn Months

Gret
Kolto
Herew
Dust

The Brendirian days of the week are named for the business commonly conducted on that day. The names below are not the only ones used for these days throughout the world, or even throughout the Brendirian empire. Brendis itself uses these names, as do any official outposts. Local names may vary slightly or greatly by ancient tradition.

The Brendirian days of the week are:

Toil Day: This is the return to reality for many plebeians, the beginning of the standard work week.

Wash Day: Traditionally the day when clothing is washed, now more of a convenient name than anything else.

Drudge Day: As the day before many people's work is completed for the week, long hours are often worked today. It is also the commonly accepted pay day.

Market Day: The busiest shopping day, this is the traditional preparation day before feast day.

Feast Day: A weekly feast that is held after work is done for the day. Most entertaining is done on feast day, and guests are urged to arrange their arrival on this day. The government does no unnecessary work today.

Games Day: A weekly holiday when shops work short or no hours, and people do their weekly errands, and often take in entertainment. The government avoids almost all work today. Only town or city guards and critical bureaucrats work at all. All major holidays are set to fall on Games Day, with few notable exceptions.

Chapter II

Heroes of Morningstar

The Characters

Racial Options

Many Morningstar races are of a higher power level than the ones outlined in the PHB. This book gives two options for using them. The first and default option is that these powerful races are treated as classes that can be leveled in and out of at the player's whim. The second option is the standard rule – that powerful races are given a level adjustment. Unless otherwise noted, all of these special races receive the abilities listed under their base racial description in the PHB. For example, unless specifically stated otherwise all dwarves receive the stonemasonry ability.

Option 1: "Powerful Races as Classes" (default Morningstar assumption)

In order to properly evoke the flavor and power of the primal races of Thraxis, the default assumption is that the more powerful races are treated as classes. The reason for this is not merely to be contrary, but to allow for the full potential of these races to be realized. It is primarily a balance consideration, to allow GMs to include these races in campaigns that begin with all characters starting at first level. When this option is used, the character must choose to take the racial class from first level, but may multiclass freely thereafter. For example, a party of three characters might start out as a 1st level flayed dwarf, a 1st level stream elf, and a 1st level human fighter. At 2nd level, the flayed dwarf may take another level of its racial class, while the stream elf could take a level of bard and the human advances to the next level of fighter.

Pros: This option allows for a player to choose a high-powered race as a first level character, while preserving game balance. The high-powered races will not tend to fall behind other characters of the same level as quickly, or even at all. This

option avoids the apparently arbitrary penalties to high-powered races, while preventing them from overshadowing powerful characters of lower-powered races. It evokes the feel of Morningstar very strongly.

Cons: This option deviates from the standard treatment of high powered character races in 3E. The races are very specific in their roles and abilities, and characters will need to multiclass to continue developing, possibly weakening their characters relative to single-classed characters of the same level.

Note: The Morningstar races are geared towards very specific ideals, and as such it may not be wise to take a racial class for all five levels before multiclassing. Your character will likely end up being very powerful in a very specific area, and far too weak in others. Keep this in mind while leveling up.

Option 2: Level Adjustment (standard d20 assumption)

To play a character with a level adjustment, you add the appropriate adjustment to any class levels your character has to determine the total character level. For this reason it is important to decide as a referee and as a group whether to start the characters at higher than first level. This decision will impact the campaign in several ways. If you decide to allow it, the mix of races available to the players grows, and play will tend towards higher fantasy. If you decide against it, you effectively disallow the more exotic races (at least for starting characters), and set them aside to serve as NPCs. There is nothing wrong with this decision, and some gamemasters may find that it helps to keep these races "special." When this option is used, a character begins with all special abilities, as if they had taken the race as a class to fifth level. No other features (hit dice, saves, and BAB) of the described racial class are assumed.

Pros: This option works within the standard d20 rules as they are currently written.

Cons: The players are effectively prevented from playing

certain races unless the GM allows higher level starting characters. The power level of the races is limited, in order to make the race available under the rules. A campaign will be that much shorter, since characters will likely reach 20th level faster if they start at higher than 1st level.

Language Slots: "Imperial Common"

One of the differences between creating a Morningstar character and a standard character using only the PHB is the difference in how languages are handled. There is no "Common" language per se on Thraxis; instead this language slot is replaced with "Imperial Common." Each empire has its own common tongue (the official language of the empire), and a language for each region or province within that empire. "Imperial Common" means the common language within a given empire or unaffiliated nation, and is not a language unto itself. For example, a character from Xiangur would put Xiangurese in the "Imperial Common" slot. The Imperial Languages are: Brendirian, Hasethan, Ijamvian, Kenabu, Kharkonoi, Quetapanii, Xiangurese, Ynnidonian, and Zeikrusian.

The nonhuman races are more unified than humanity. Thus, they retain their racial languages, but sometimes develop their own regional languages in addition to their common racial tongues.

Races in Morningstar

The races that follow are the most prolific PC races found in the Brendirian Republic. Other empires have their own local races that are suitable as PCs, but because of space limitations, they can not be discussed here. Future supplements will detail these other races of Thraxis.

The Empress

The Empress is the Goddess of the Fey. She is quite mad. She is embodied, but her mind transcends the physical. She is in one place, but she sees everything within her realm. She can instantly read the motivations of any elves in her presence, and can manifest anywhere with the Fey signature (see chapter III: Mystic Forces) at will. She is not benevolent, nor does she have the best interests of Thraxis at heart. Ever pragmatic, even in her madness, she realizes that her goals are expedited by protecting nature and by demanding that her servants comport themselves in a generally benevolent way. Most elves are not fully aware of her true nature, and would likely rebel against her if they ever found out. They believe her when she says that her various aggressive acts throughout history were strictly necessary for the protection of nature.

Elder Races: Dwarves and Elves

In the time before the appearance of the elder races, the world was primal and free. Wild and fantastic beasts of every description roamed unhindered, each acting within its nature. Virgin forests and plains stretched across the world, wild rivers and streams wound through them. Magic lived in everything, as it does today, but it was raw, and without direction. The bounty of life drew even more magic into the world. The spirits flitted across this world, but could only interact with it in the most limited ways. They longed for a way to touch the beauty that they witnessed.

The First Invasion

Thraxis was now sending out subtle ripples across the multiverse. One being in particular took notice. A powerful spirit, persecuted in her own realm and exiled to an ethereal prison by her own kind, found a portal that led to Thraxis. After untold eons of seclusion, she leapt at the opportunity to escape. When she was thrust upon this strange world, she found that it was even richer in magic than her home realm. As soon as she arrived, the energies in the area around her shifted, reflecting her own personality. This shocked and amazed her. Here, she could become a goddess, and here she could plan for her revenge. She set about learning how to best exploit the incredible resources of this world.

At first she found the multitude of chattering spirits that flocked to her a nuisance. Over time, however, she came to realize that if they could be tamed, they could be used. They wanted guidance, and they clamored for a chance to serve her. She obliged in exchange for a piece of each of their souls which would be incorporated into her own being. Being an ingenious tactician, she realized that not all of these spirits would help her cause. She made it clear that only those entities who vowed to preserve life and to channel the energies of this world to her ends would receive her aid. She gave them physical vessels, and the first fey were born. They sold her their souls, and she became their Empress.

The World Soul is slow to perceive, and experiences time at such a slow rate that it didn't notice the new developments until it was almost too late. The Empress and her legions of fairies, elves, and spirit folk had nearly conquered the entire world, and had changed the signatures of most regions to Fey. Their brand of sentient life was more effective at harnessing magic than the indigenous flora and fauna. A power struggle began between the Empress and Thraxis herself. The first thing Thraxis did was to differentiate itself more. The Mother split away, becoming an individual goddess, where she had once been merely an aspect of the total persona. As a consequence of the shift in balance, a counterpart, the Father, also split away from the core. Away from the World Soul, they were not as slow to respond to threats. Meanwhile the Empress was in reach of her goal of total world domination, which she deemed would give her the power necessary to conquer those who had exiled her.

In one of their last bastions of power, the region that is now Kharkon, the Father and the Mother appealed to the spirits there, those that had either forgone a pact with the Empress, or had been rejected. Those that agreed to help became the first dwarves, little more than organic fighting machines with enough low cunning to follow directions and use tactics. The first step was to teach these new beings how to survive. The next step was war.

The First Wars

Unlike the Empress, the Mother was capable of creating new souls,

so these protodwarves multiplied with abandon. After a time, the new earthen warriors of the Mother and Father were ready to fulfill their purpose. With the voices of the Mother and Father in their ears, they burrowed through her body, and attacked the elves from below. Many thousands of elven villages literally fell to the unified assault. Sometimes entire elven cities were simply swallowed by the earth. Many of these sunken cities remain to be found, filled with the corpses of ancient dead, and potent elven artifacts and weapons that never had a chance to wreak the destruction they were designed for.

The Empress quickly marshaled her forces. The elves retaliated, by entering the tunnels and driving the dwarves to the surface. Many years of outright attrition ensued. The dwarves had the numbers, but slain elves could reenter the world almost as fast as they left it. As the dwarves were killed, new dwarves were born, and grew to maturity over the course of a few years. The Empress gave the souls of all slain elves new bodies, and sent them out to fight, after a short period of acclimation. A given elven soul may have suffered death hundreds of times, but mercifully, it never remembered, marching on towards death again and again. No members of the original elven races are believed to exist to this day, having died many times in the First Wars.

— Jasperio Treatise on History

The Dwarves

The souls of the dwarves of Thraxis are joined with the earth. Only humans and halflings are found in more places than the dwarves. In Kenabu, there are hairless stonecutter dwarves with skin of cracked obsidian. Xiangur has its own specialized varieties of dwarves, as do Quetapan and Ijamvuh. All over the world, there are dwarves, a highly resilient and adaptable race.

Dwarves rule the empire called Kharkon, which once sprawled across the entire continent of the same name. Over the years, they depleted their mines in the south after most of these areas lost their Terran signatures, driving the boundaries of Kharkon northward and eastward. Now threatened by Hrum Vaat, they face a new battle, for many of the same places that make great mines also make great nests for aberrations. If they fail to retain the Terran signatures in these areas, it will only be a matter of centuries before these areas are depleted as well, and the dwarves will be forced to migrate or die.

DAVRINHAI

Stonecutter Dwarves

Stonecutter dwarves have strong defensive capabilities and are considered cowardly by dwarven standards. This reputation is largely false, since they are not afraid to fight, just disinclined to do so. When danger strikes, the Davrinhai thwart it with ingenuity rather than force. Their skin is imbedded with mineral dust and even small stones. They are the most peaceful of the dwarves, and are the ultimate craftsmen and builders.

Personality: Davrinhai are solemn and worrisome folk. While they inherited an advanced form of natural dwarven endurance, they also inherited an advanced form of dwarven fatalism. Davrinhai are always prepared for the worst, but hope, if only secretly, for the best. The Canticle has only proven what these folk have always believed; the day will come when there is nothing left to mine, and the stonecutters will fade away. Davrinhai do not know what to do with themselves if they cannot work. For this reason, many races have enslaved the Davrinhai over the eons.

Physical Description: Stonecutter dwarves are sturdy, thick-limbed beings, with rocky, cracked skin. They usually possess wiry, metallic hair and beards, though some groups are entirely bald, usually in hot climates. Their eyes are entirely shielded by their mineral casing, and stonecutters resemble nothing so much as stout animate statues. They wear loose-fitting minimalist clothing, and often have metal clasps and head-dresses that arrange their beards and hair.

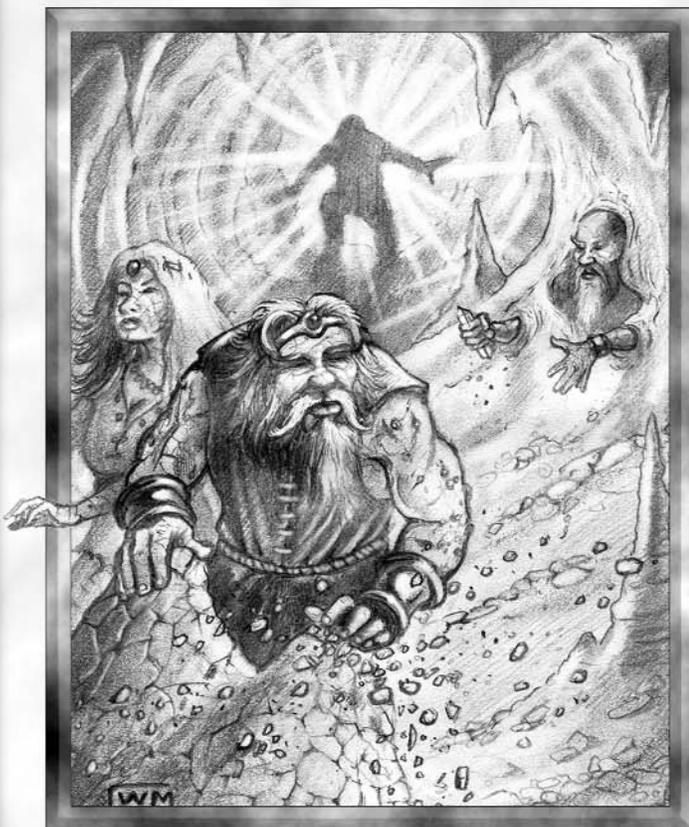
Relations: In most of dwarven society, Davrinhai occupy the bottom rung of society. Only the clay dwarves who betrayed Kharkon to the humans get less respect. They are still higher than non-dwarves, and are rarely mocked, but they are not given the same honor as the military castes, the Garhai, and the Kharak. The Garhai are intelligent and thoughtful enough to respect the necessity of a working caste, but the Kharak look upon Davrinhai with veiled scorn.

Alignment: Usually lawful neutral.

Stonecutter Lands: They favor underground realms, and are generally slightly phobic of open spaces. If they must dwell out in the open for some reason, their homes are set into the

Table 1-1: Davrinhai - Stonecutter Dwarf

Level	Base	Saves			Special
	Attack Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	
1	+0	+0	+0	+1	Quarry, Mason's Touch 1/Day
2	+1	+0	+0	+1	Mason's Touch 2/Day
3	+2	+1	+1	+2	Mason's Touch 3/Day
4	+3	+1	+1	+2	Mason's Touch 4/Day
5	+3	+1	+1	+3	Mason's Touch 5/Day, Stonedive



ground, with little more than their roofs extending above the surface. They never use mortar in their constructions. In tectonically active regions, they favor fitted stonework which has the ability to disperse vibration, but otherwise their buildings are entirely seamless, as if carved from a single block of stone.

One day is much the same as the last in the subterranean realms, and that is how the Davrinhai like it. Most are content to work long, repetitive hours every day until they lay their head upon their stone pillows and pass into the earth one final time. Some special few see that life can be more than endless and often meaningless toil, and seek out a life of greater excitement as heroes. Even fewer rebel completely, and seek only self-gratification, becoming villains or ne'er-do-wells.

Work isn't the only thing stonecutters do, but they frame all of their other activities around it. A stonecutter society is divided into work crews. These crews are tightly bound social units, serving as military units during conflicts, and extended families during peace. Members of a society may be members of several crews, moving between them throughout their highly structured days, for different purposes. There are temple crews that assemble to worship while they work, crews where young students are given lessons, and social crews for dwarves seeking mates.

Young stonecutters are put to work as soon as they can walk, joining their parents' work crew until they move out on their own (around the age of 30), receiving training on the job, and usually taking one of their parents' trades, in addition to the mining and building responsibilities that all Davrinhai have. They use their Mason's Touch and other abilities as much as they can for one day, and when there is no more productive

building or mining work for them to do that day, they perform their trade for another 10 hours or so, and finally retire to their homes or a gathering place. Even here, they work, doing chores or performing favors for others.

Their society is surprisingly egalitarian for one based on labor. Everyone has their place, and none are better or worse than the others. All citizens are valued, and no one wants for anything, even if they cannot work because of injury or infirmity. Unneeded wealth is voluntarily spread around for the greater good, but no one begrudges the wealthy, and each aspires to see his labor bring his family prosperity. The rich toil with everyone else, but they may be able to hire and outfit their own crew with the finest tools to make their work more efficient.

Upon their death, stonecutters sink into the stone, and become one with it. It is believed that the hardest workers become precious minerals that will enrich future generations.

Religion: Davrinhai worship Andrak and Hoene above all others, though, as with all Kharkonoi dwarves, the entire Gejjurik pantheon is revered.

Names: Stonecutter naming conventions do not favor the fierce gutturals and violent appellations of other dwarves. Instead, a stonecutter is named after tools, ores, or his family trade.

Male Names: Tobb (mallet), Benjur (rust), Denjur (dust), Gatch (mushroom), Vaidel (chisel), Wid (wedge).

Female Names: Dastra (luminescence), Kaster (priestess), Kress (rope), Regana (pick), Towtiss (cave moss).

Surnames: Eifer (rubble comber), Gatcher (mushroom farmer), Hang (outcropping), Thegger (ratcatcher), Zaiz (smith).

Adventurers: A rare few stonecutters decide that the simple and predictable life within the mines and quarries is not for them. They apply their supernatural abilities to a life of adventure, becoming master thieves, able to break into many places that others are barred from.

Regions: The primary stronghold of the stonecutters is Ulnq. Even so they are found all over the world, with a high concentration in the Umbekti province of Kenabu.

Level Adjustment Option: +2. Stonecutter dwarves are more powerful than the standard races, and are considered two levels higher for purposes of advancement. Thus a 1st level stonecutter character is in fact a 3rd level character overall.

Racial Abilities: Except as noted below, all stonecutter abilities are the same as the standard dwarf from the PHB.

Favored Class: Rogue. Stealth comes naturally to the stonecutters, so they can freely multiclass into rogue, even if the "Races as Classes" option is used. The Expert NPC class also incurs no penalty.

Stonecutter Dwarf Racial Class

Hit Die: d6

Class Skills and Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: As a rogue.

Quarry: Stone becomes softer under the hands of the stonecutter dwarf. By putting his hand upon an unworked min-

eral surface, he can choose to lower its hardness rating by up to 2 points per level per round for as long as contact is maintained. Once the hardness has been lowered to zero, this reduction overflows into the substance's hit points on a one-for-one basis. Eventually, as the dwarf grows in power, such stone or mineral may crumble at the stonemason's very touch. This is very useful in mining, because different metals have different hardness ratings, allowing the stonemason to simultaneously remove useless metals and separate out valuable ores. Any weapon or tool strikes benefit from this reduced structural strength. This ability affects a 5 foot section at a time, and may not be used on mineral based creatures. At a sufficiently advanced level, this ability may be used simultaneously with Mason's Touch to cover a stonemason's passage.

Mason's Touch: As a spell-like ability, a stonemason dwarf may join and shape stone or mineral matter with his bare hands, for a number of rounds equaling his Wisdom bonus, for a minimum of 1 round. With this ability, solid walls of stone may be erected, metal tools and weapons may be repaired, and tools may be crafted. A full-round action joins 5 cubic feet of pre-stacked stones into a wall, or a single piece of metal of no larger than 1 cubic inch to another. Anything built in this way may not have any moving parts. Stone structures created with Mason's Touch do not count as worked structures for the purposes of a stonemason's Quarry or Stonedive abilities.

Stonedive: A Davrinhai who has advanced to 5th level as a stonemason gains the ability to dive into dirt and stone as a protective measure. Once per day per 5 character levels, for as long as he can hold his breath, he and all of his equipment may pass into unworked earth or stone, but he cannot see, and may only hear while within one foot of a surface of the stone. He may move around within the wall and may exit at a different point than he entered. He may travel through stone as if it were water, moving in any direction he wishes, even vertically. He may stick his head out to look around or listen, but may not take a breath. To do so means ejection as described below. If the five foot cubic section of stone he currently occupies takes any damage that overcomes its hardness, the stonemason must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the amount of damage) or be ejected, taking 1d6 damage in the process.

GARHAI

Flayed Dwarves

Gruesome and fatalistic, flayed dwarves inure themselves to pain to become the perfect warriors. They make excellent generals and in mixed communities they usually serve in some position of authority. Calling themselves Garhai, they consider it their duty to guard the sunlit lands from the foul abominations that pull themselves from the bowels of the earth. The typical flayed dwarf has little sense of humor and superficially flat emotions. They expect and give no quarter, either on the battlefields or the training grounds.

Personality: From a young age, flayed dwarves are allowed to show no weakness, and their rites of passage involve a weeks-long "tempering," in which the dwarven youth goes into isolation, carving his body with runes and deep mystical furrows, subsisting on whole grain and water. A hallucinogenic fungus called "thukarukh" or "breaker of the spine of thought" is consumed and applied to the wounds, ensuring gruesome scarification and producing hellish waking nightmares. A pinch of precious gem dust is then applied to the open wounds, creating a sparkling tattoo when healed. This latter part of the ritual follows many Garhai for the rest of their lives, with new tattoos being built upon any fresh wounds that resemble significant dwarven runes or symbols. The saga of a flayed dwarf's greatest battles can often be read upon his hide. In their declining years, many a flayed dwarf finally breaks, as the psychic walls they have built up over the centuries crumble. They become the objects of pity or scorn, as the younger dwarves struggle with respect for their elders and disdain for the weakness they show. In extreme cases a disruptive elder may be banished or leave by his or her own free will, seeking one last adventure or a measure of peace.

The Garhai are grim, but there is depth to their personae. Beneath the stoic exterior lies a maelstrom of emotion. The flayed ones can sometimes find themselves feeling natural emotions such as compassion, love, or even fear, and wondering if they are they are the only ones of their kind to feel this way. Such feelings are quickly stifled and dismissed as momentary weakness. The flayed dwarves' truest feelings are often expressed in their art, which extends past scarification, and can

Table 1-2: Garhai - Flayed Dwarf

Level	Base	Saves			Special
	Attack Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	
1	+1	+1	+0	+1	Poisoned Flesh
2	+2	+1	+0	+1	Demented Gaze
3	+3	+2	+1	+2	Instill Fanaticism
4	+4	+2	+1	+2	Death March
5	+5	+3	+2	+3	Boiling Blood



include etchings, mosaics, sculpture, or any other craft. The flayed dwarves do not sing or make music in any way. Young dwarves are scolded if they attempt such, and learn an aversion for these types of self-expression. They may, however, be moved by the music of others, but would never let on.

Physical Description: Flayed dwarves are much more stout than the standard dwarf, with muscular limbs of equal thickness, ribbed with veins and crossed with scar tissue.

Relations: The flayed dwarves do not get along well with nonlawful beings, with the exception of the Kharak. They treat everyone as either an ally, or an enemy. Elves are largely hated, and humanity's role shifts as treaties are made and broken. The general attitude is one of mistrust towards outsiders, until proven otherwise.

Alignment: Usually lawful neutral. Good and evil aren't as important to the Garhai as discipline and loyalty.

Flayed Dwarf Lands: The typical flayed dwarven hold is located partially on the surface, and partially underground. They favor monolithic and foreboding architecture, designed to send the message that the Garhai are not to be trifled with. Their buildings sprawl, and lie low to the ground. Towers and domes are usually very broad, sometimes broader than they are tall.

Unmixed flayed dwarf societies are extremely rigid and militaristic, even oppressive. Duty is of utmost importance, and banishment or even corporal punishment is applied to those who routinely shirk them. Like the stonecutters, the Garhai have a very acute focus on schedules, and everyone is expected to be in their place at the right time. Society operates very efficiently, with a minimum of bureaucracy. Everyone is ranked

according to their value and tenure in society, and the highest ranked citizen available makes any required decisions.

Flayed dwarves prefer to leave farming, smithing and other labor to the stonecutters, trading protection and acquired goods for these things, but when they must do these things for themselves they go about the labor with a sullen efficiency, taking no joy in the work. Though they are capable in any of these pursuits, they quietly resent having to perform them. This is why these tasks are reserved for disciplining young troops.

Religion: Flayed Dwarves worship the Gejjurik pantheon, which is described in chapter VI, Faith and Worship. They favor Kroschleth in their ceremonies.

Names: Flayed dwarves tend to be named by adjectives that describe them at birth, or circumstances that their parents wish them to live under. Garhai last names come from the race's spiritual sacraments, or phrases from popular myths or legends.

Male Names: Gidreg (Centered), Kifeer (Wisdom), Dowdrik (Burning-Rain), Henger (Hunger), Kolmol (Merciless), Bivved (Bled)

Female Names: Jolna (Grief), Patolki (Milk-wine), Inmag (Fortified), Jil (Scorn), Pidre (Strongblood), Findra (Wonder)

Surnames: Hikrel (Sight-of-'Hik'), Geneded (Keeper-of-Gem-Blood), Olnimem (Bringer-of-Terror-Dreams), Maal (Deathbringer), Milgur (Keeper-of-Steel), Zengerin (Arrow-in-its-Back), Trosthithek (Wisdom-from-Pain), Thukarukh (Breaker-of-the-Spine-of-Thought)

Adventurers: Flayed dwarves are great party leaders, and usually fail in positions of subordination to other races. They adventure to discover the mysteries of battle, and to master their fears. Treasure is a badge of honor, desired more for the prestige it represents than any monetary value.

Regions: Flayed dwarf outposts are found all over Kharkon, the underworld, and small pockets across the world in other places that have been reached through subterranean migration.

Level Adjustment Option: +2. Flayed dwarves are more powerful than the standard races, and are considered two levels higher for purposes of advancement. Thus a 1st level Garhai character is in fact a 3rd level character overall.

Racial Abilities: Except as noted below, flayed dwarves have all of the abilities listed under the dwarf entry in the PHB.

Favored Class: Fighter. In addition to the flayed dwarf class, Garhai may freely multiclass as a fighter after first level.

Flayed Dwarf Racial Class

Hit Die: d10

Class Skills and Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: As a fighter.

Poisoned Flesh (Ex): Flayed dwarves partake in a great many mind-altering substances as part of their spirituality. Any creature that digests food, and succeeds in a bite attack, must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the dwarf's level) or be affected by trace poisons in the flayed dwarf's flesh. If affected, the monster will thereafter suffer a -1 circumstance penalty to all rolls for 1d4 rounds. This penalty stacks with itself if the creature continues to use a bite attack. Even after the primary effect has

ended, the creature will feel the effects for up to a day, having nightmares the following night (if it is capable of dreaming).

Demented Gaze (Ex): The flayed dwarf gets a +4 racial bonus to Intimidate checks. In addition, he has the ability to unnerve friends and foes alike, demanding respect. This extraordinary ability allows the dwarf to command (as per the spell) any creatures subject to fear effects to perform one action unless the target makes a Will save (DC 10 + the flayed dwarf's level). Demented Gaze may be used as often as desired, but if it fails may not be used on the same target for one day.

Instill Fanaticism (Su): At 3rd level, the Garhai has even more power to command respect. A group of creatures with up to 10 HD per character level may willingly swear to follow the flayed dwarf into battle, and benefit from his inner strength. Any creatures who do so gain a +2 morale bonus to all combat actions, but they may not break from the fray, even to aid fallen allies, until the flayed dwarf calls a retreat or all enemies are defeated. To attempt to do so requires a Will save (DC 15 + the flayed dwarf's level), and 1d10 damage is incurred either way. This ability stacks with other morale boosting effects (but not other uses of Instill Fanaticism), as long as the group remains under the flayed dwarf's sway. It should be noted that a general can command an army with this ability, keeping other flayed dwarves under his own power, who in turn command others.

Death March (Ex): Upon reaching 4th level, the flayed dwarf will never unwillingly fall unconscious from damage while a battle rages, and can fight on, taking no noncombat or non-escape actions, after reaching 0 hp. Other than this restriction, treat this ability as the Hard to Kill feat (see page 57). If the dwarf actually purchases the Diehard feat, he may act in any way he wishes at 0 or negative hp, not even suffering as a disabled character. Upon reaching -10 hp, the dwarf dies normally. Now, in truth, he may never be taken alive.

Boiling Blood (Su): At 5th level, a flayed dwarf's blood becomes caustic. Any successful piercing or slashing attacks delivered to the flayed dwarf cause a spray of blood to jet out into an adjacent square in the direction of the attack, delivering 1 point of acid damage to anyone in that adjacent square for every 5 points dealt to the dwarf (Reflex save, DC 15 for half).

KANIN

Clay Dwarves

Clay dwarves have strayed farthest from the stony places most other dwarves call home. They are the dwarves most often found among humans outside of Kharkon, the dwarven empire. Clay dwarves have coloration and features similar to the humans that they share their lands with.

Seventeen thousand years ago, the clay dwarves had a falling out with the rest of their kind, over whether to trade with and aid humans. This resulted in many of them leaving the traditional dwarven lands in what is now Brendir. To prevent a war, the clay dwarves fought their fears of water, and built arks – exceptionally sturdy sailing vessels, spreading out across the world. Many were lost in this “first dwarven diaspora.” When they arrived on



various distant shores, most vowed never to sail again. They and their offshoots are now found on every continent.

Tensions have died down over the ages, and some members of the new generation of clay dwarves are making their way back to Kharkon. There they are allowed reentry for the sake of dwarven solidarity, but they are untrusted and often unwanted.

Racial Abilities: Clay dwarves are treated as standard dwarves as listed in Chapter 2 of the PHB. Thus, they are suitable as first-level characters.

KHARAK

Storm Dwarves

The storm dwarves are a barely civilized people. They wander the lands, never staying in one place for very long. They are wild and hedonistic, enjoying all aspects of life.

Storm dwarves often serve in volunteer armies when the flayed dwarves make the call to war, but are too chaotic to serve full time in the military. Their wanderlust brings them all over the continent, except for Ynnidon, where even they are wary to tread. They are found in great numbers all across Kharkon and Brendir, but there is no specific concentration of them anywhere.

Personality: The Kharak are a passionate and violent people. They live life in broad strokes, reveling in the more overt pleasures of existence. They love the heat of battle more than anything, but they make the most of peacetime. Wild and



uncouth, the Kharak are considered loose cannons by other dwarves, and have been called Gej-Garneg, or “earthquakes given form” in the dwarven tongue. Though technically a derogatory statement, the storm dwarves wear this name with pride.

They are fairly easy to get along with, but the true respect of the Kharak is not given lightly, and is only bestowed upon those who are considered formidable enough to warrant it. Anyone in a leadership position can be questioned or even challenged, and the storm dwarf feels that it is the leader’s duty to constantly prove his worth. For this reason, storm dwarves can seem duplicitous, since the agreements of the past have little bearing on the present. This is a widely known trait of the storm dwarves, and most who would deal with them tolerate it.

Individuality is prized above all else. Lifelong friendships and family ties are less important than personal freedom. The only exception to this categorical denial of responsibility of the Kharak is when it comes to their children. Children are the greatest treasure of the Kharak, and are treated with otherwise

uncharacteristic gentleness.

Physical Description: Storm dwarves are the same general size and build as those in the PHB. Their irises are gray or black like a storm cloud, and usually have green, blue or red streaks that radiate like lightning from the pupil. In some members, these glow and flicker unsettlingly when the dwarf is enraged. They are grizzled, with skin reddened by the elements. Males wear wild beards, and all have thick, wiry hair, which can stand nearly straight out from their heads. Though chaotic, they care for their appearances. They often dye their hair in unusual colors, shave their heads, or otherwise modify their appearances. Those accoutrements that make them seem fiercer are preferred. Many have piercings all over their bodies, sometimes with bells or chimes strung from them.

Relations: Kharak are patriotic to the extreme. Generally, they do not hate or dislike any of the civilized races as a whole. Nonetheless, those deemed enemies of the dwarves are gladly warred upon. They secretly fear the elves somewhat, and hate giantkind with a passion. They are amused by the stonemason dwarves, and often harass them, but tend to defer to the flayed dwarves, who they respect. In fact, only the influence of the more civilized races keeps them from abandoning the dwarven strongholds and becoming barbarians.

Alignment: Kharak always have a chaotic element to their alignments.

Storm Dwarf Lands: Storm dwarves are generally too unfocused to build great cities. Instead, they build small frontier settlements which are easily abandoned when the mood strikes. Many of these settlements are constructed of wood, and a “town burning” before moving on to new territory is the cause of celebration. The typical storm dwarven settlement has a life span of about five years. Kharak may choose to live among other dwarven civilizations, until they are thrown out for the disruptions they tend to cause after long periods of boredom, especially during the long, hard winters of the region. Bands of storm dwarves rove the land, picking up and exchanging members and dropping off others at the whim of individuals.

Religion: Storm dwarves usually worship the gods of the dwarves, but they don’t put much work into it. They are irreverent, no matter which gods they worship. They are cavalier in the face of divine might, but may be cowed by extreme shows of power. They are rarely powerful clerics, for these reasons.

Table 1-3: Kharak - Storm Dwarf

Level	Base	Fort	Saves		Special
	Attack Bonus		Ref	Will	
1	+1	+1	+0	+0	Troll Skin: Damage Reduction 1/+1
2	+2	+1	+0	+0	Troll Skin: Damage Reduction 2/+1
3	+3	+2	+1	+1	Troll Skin: Damage Reduction 3/+2
4	+4	+2	+1	+1	Troll Skin: Damage Reduction 4/+2
5	+5	+3	+1	+1	Troll Skin: Damage Reduction 5/+3

Male Names: Enger (Rage), Chasolm (Pit), Mikrah (Shattered), Gelvel (Warhammer), Panner (Bleeding), Kinter (Spine)

Female Names: Bastra (Beasty), Olimee (Flame-Eyes), Kess (Rended), Dundra (Thunder), Lililk (Festering), Numnu (Wickedness)

Surnames: Storm dwarves are more irreverent than most dwarves, and thus do not often take last names.

Adventurers: Storm dwarves adventure to keep themselves entertained, and to revel in the glory of battle. They are reckless, fearless, and, unless they have a strong lawful influence in the party to rein them in, often short-lived. They know the need for stealth at times, but prolonged periods of quiet will grate on them. Those who adventure with them for long learn that their value to a mission depends upon how straightforward it is.

Regions: Kharakhai are found anywhere in Kharkon, and scattered across Brendir. Large concentrations are found in Kobolsund, Zrevold, and the treaty lands.

Level Adjustment Option: +2. Storm dwarves are more powerful than the standard races, and are considered two levels higher for purposes of advancement. Thus a 1st level storm dwarf character with all special abilities is in fact a 3rd level character overall.

Racial Abilities: Except as noted below, all storm dwarf abilities are the same as the standard dwarf from the PHB.

Favored Class: Barbarian.

Storm Dwarf Racial Class

Hit Die: d10

Class Skills and Weapon and Armor Proficiency: As a barbarian.

Troll Skin (Su): Through continued conflict and generations of contact with the Fierce signature, the Kharak have developed an inherent damage reduction. Each level, the storm dwarf receives a +1 to this damage reduction, ending at +5.

The Fey

Elves in Morningstar are the physical embodiment of nature spirits from distant realms. Before incarnation into flesh, these spirits make a pact with the Empress, the living mother of the fey. They must pledge to serve as her guardians, and to help her maintain ecological balance, and to promote the Fey signature. The Empress is rather demanding, and the group of hopeful spirits is not infinite. A very small percentage actually meet her expectations. The rest strive endlessly through a host of bodies. When an elf is killed through violence, her spirit returns to the Empress's realm to wait for its next turn at life. Sometimes a spirit will be found wanting or choose not to be reincarnated. This is the primary reason the elves are not as common as they once were.

True elves on Thraxis are not usually the product of the physical union between a male and female, though such reproduction is possible. Instead, two parents engage in a ritual of prayer and homage to the Empress, and provide the conduit for

a waiting spirit to enter this world. At the end of this ritual the female is with child, and the male has contributed a small piece of his soul to spark the metaphysical reaction. Nine months later, an elven child is born, with no memories of his prior existence.

Some elves abandon the Empress while staying true to their natures. They escape the curse of becoming muryans (forsaken elves, described on page 29), and the Empress allows them to live as long as they continue to keep their basic pact with her. Her goals are not foiled by simple betrayal, and she grants them amnesty, as long as it serves her plan for Thraxis. Should they ever become muryans through betrayal of their natures, however, she may send her minions to hunt them down.

The Fey Nature

With the exception of the muryans, the elves of Morningstar retain the "fey nature" that was lost to the elves of most worlds long ago. The fey nature bestows immortality, and ties the elves to nature. Plants grow better among the elves, and the soil beneath their feet is always fertile. Aberrations and undead receive a -1 circumstance penalty to all rolls while in the presence of elves, and the ecology around their homes is always in perfect balance. Unless otherwise noted, all fey and subracial elven abilities are considered supernatural. All true elves have the following traits bestowed by the fey nature:

Fey: Elves are of the fey monster type.

Eternal: The fey elves are immortal, barring violence. They can voluntarily arrest, reinstate, or reverse their own aging process at any time. Without interference, they age at the same rate as humans, and age reversal takes as long as forward aging. Eternal is an extraordinary ability; age reversal and forward aging are supernatural. Effects that would dispel the age modulation ability simply prevent it from occurring, but do not cancel the effects of a previous change.

Sustained: True elves need no sleep or trance whatsoever, though eight total hours of relative inactivity are required before a spellcaster can regain spells for the day. This time need not be uninterrupted. They never require food or water when traveling in rich wilderness, instead gleaned nourishment from the land itself. In cities, the elf generally has a harder time, and may procure food (animal or vegetable matter, including those not commonly considered "food"), which is then drained of its nutritional value, leaving it rotten, gray and tasteless, worthless even as fertilizer. The nutritional value and flavor of a food is colloquially known as foyson or "goodness." Unless the food is being observed, there is often no sign that an elf is feeding, and it may be done at a range of up to 5 feet. Elves can taste the difference between foods, just like a human, and develop preferences for certain types of sustenance. Their feeding practices are the bane of many a rural farmer, whose buckets of milk are made sour overnight by an elf that has developed a taste for the stuff.

Waters of Oblivion: Immortality has its price. An elf's oldest memories are constantly being forgotten, to make way

for new ones. Facts and faces become hazy, and are eventually forgotten as the centuries pass. An elf can reliably remember a number of years into his own past equal to 50 times his Intelligence score. Anything further is considered to be in the process of being forgotten, and remembering it requires an Intelligence check (DC 10 + 1 for each 20 years of memory searched). If the elf kept and has access to any kind of a journal or chronicle of his own life, the DC can be reduced to as low as the base score of 10, at the GM's discretion. Class levels can be lost this way, if any of these levels were gained in a year that is currently being forgotten. Once per game year, on a day chosen by the GM, any levels gained in the year that is currently being forgotten become negative levels. The drained character may attempt a Fortitude save after 24 hours to prevent the negative level from being made permanent (DC 20). If the races as classes option is used, subtype class levels are never lost, since the powers granted by them are not "lessons learned" as much as "power gained."

Bane of the Unnatural: True elves are creatures of life. As such, they disrupt the negative energy that undead rely upon. They are also creatures of nature, and aberrations find elven spiritual emanations very distracting. Undead and aberrations receive a -1 circumstance penalty to all actions in the presence of true elves to a range of 50 feet. All Thraxian fey (dryads, pixies, etc.) have this effect on undead and aberrations.

Faerie Honor (also Fey Honor): The fey elves of this world are bound to keep any promise that they make without coercion. They are allowed to lie to those who wish them ill, but if they offer an oath they must keep it, even if the threat of violence looms over their heads. A fey may use tricky interpretations of wording to get out of an unfavorable or undesirable oath. The punishment for failure to keep an honest oath is to become a muryan (see "The Dwindling," below). Conversely, if a deal is made involving another party, that party is responsible for keeping their end of the deal. If they fail, the elf is relieved of all responsibility. If that elf has already delivered on his promise, he may smite the offender 3 times as a paladin's smite evil ability. The fey oath is not to be entered into lightly by either party. The GM has the final say as to whether the oath has been broken, and whether it can be rectified.

Dementia: Nature can be unstable, and the elves reflect that. It isn't easy for the flesh to contain such primal energies as the elves wield, nor is it easy to cope with immortality in a world of death and rebirth. The psyches of the elves are structured in such a way as to allow for the release of such tensions. Every so often, an elf will release this stress with periods of dementia. The way this "break" manifests varies in accord with the elf's type, and from individual to individual. Once per month of adventuring, every time an elf witnesses needless death firsthand, and whenever they encounter another trigger as listed under the elven subracial description, they must make a Will save (DC 10). If they fail, they take 1d4 temporary Wisdom damage, and must make another Will save or have a break. If they fail their Will save vs. Wisdom damage, but make their save vs. the actual break, they retain the lowered Wisdom score, which heals normally, but need not make another check until they once again encounter a trigger or another month has

passed. If they do have a break, they are under the effects of their dementia (as described in each elven subtype below) until they make a Will save. Wisdom damage may not be healed naturally while an elf is demented. They may attempt a Will save every hour of in-game time and at the logical completion of an adventure. At the end of every 24 hours from the time of the onset of dementia, they may make a Will save at +10 to end the dementia.

The Dwindling: Sometimes an elf cannot keep the pact it has with the earth. Such elves become muryans. See the muryan racial description below for an explanation of the effects of losing the fey nature.

A Note on Terminology

The following terms are used in the elven subracial descriptions.

Trigger: A trigger is an event that causes the elf to check for dementia, or, if engaged, results in the elf becoming a muryan.

Dementia: These are the effects that a given type of elf must contend with while suffering from dementia.

Failure: These are the criteria for failure that result in an elf becoming a muryan.

CAIRN

Bone Elves

Bone elves are mystic furnaces burning with the forces of life. They seek out the dying places of the world, to nourish them back to health. Recognizing the unique nature of magic on Thraxis, they try to draw the living energies that they attract to the places that need them most. While they might restore a choked swamp or wasteland to a verdant paradise, sometimes they can't help but be corrupted by the entropic energies they seek to banish. The effects of this corruption include an emaciated, often skeletal appearance, which has earned them their name.

Personality: Bone elves are martyrs to be sure. But more than that, they are truly sensitive beings. They often keep their emotions to themselves, maintaining a cold, indifferent facade, especially when the matter at hand means a great deal to them. They rarely relax enough to simply enjoy themselves, but when they do, they show no signs of awkwardness. They have had to deal with too many meadow elves in their long years to be at a loss in times of celebration. Business is business, fun is fun.

They feel most alive in the autumns of the northerly temperate zone, enjoying the vibrant foliage and chill air that foretells the time of rest and rejuvenation that is winter. The fact that the seasons change little anywhere but the far north is part of the reason for the bone elves' reputation for humorlessness.

Triggers: Destroying the fertility of the land to make way for stone constructions; sanitizing or capturing nature (such as by building parks and zoos); the creation or spawning of undead or aberrations.

Dementia: Sorrow. The bone elf becomes listless and possibly catatonic. He will plod along but will ignore most stimuli and will not go out of his way to search chests or foes, or to pay attention to subtle details. The elf will still be able to react to immediate threats, albeit with a -2 penalty to all actions. He cannot handle failure during this time, and even the most minor failed skill check, saving throw, or attack roll will leave him in the depth of despair. If such a situation arises, the GM may call for a Will save (DC 10). If the bone elf fails, he will involuntarily release a shrill keening sound that deals 1d4 temporary Wisdom damage to all other living creatures who hear it with no save.

Failure: Cairn become muryans if they ever ignore or contribute to the destruction of a wilderness area, such as by poisoning a water supply, building stone homes, or causing a forest fire. There are many ways this can happen unexpectedly; one famous bone elf became a muryan by his own misguided actions: he caused a devastating flood by damaging the Canali.

Physical Description: Bone elves are tall and gaunt, with washed-out skin that otherwise falls in hues similar to the local humans, and often sunken features, even deep wrinkles. Their hair is naturally black or white, and often tied into tight geometric rows of buns held close to their skull with clasps. They appear frail, but often very regal, with ears that come to sharp points well above their heads. Their eyes range from black or dull gray to vibrant blue, indigo, or even yellow. Some are so pale as to display veins close to the surface of their parchment-like skin. It is considered dishonorable for a bone elf to appear too healthy, since it announces to others of its kind and the world that the Cairn is not doing its job. Their clothing is tattered, often by design.

Relations: The bone elves get along well with briar elves, and slightly disdain the crown elves for the admittedly ecologically sound cities that they build. They often rightfully feel that they do the harder work for Ynnidon, but that the crown elves get to reap the rewards. Meadow elves are greatly beloved, bringing wistful joy to the burdened bone elves, and they are indifferent towards stream elves.

Dwarves are the most hated foes of the bone elves, but they can grudgingly accept working with them, as long as they don't get out of line. Humans are rarely beloved by the bone elves, though individuals are not necessarily punished for the crimes of the many. Thull are respected when they act within their natures and don't try to fit in too hard.

Alignment: Usually neutral.

Bone Elf Lands: The Cairn are by nature nomadic. They move into an area, change its spectrum, and are often relieved by crown elves, whereupon they continue their travels to new lands. They travel in caravans drawn by trained shamblers or other specially bred plant creatures. Cairn are the most nomadic of all elves, and can be found all across the world. Of all elves, the bone elves are least likely to be found within Ynnidon, since their job was completed there long ago. Many live on the borders just outside of Ynnidon, attempting to expand the boundaries of the elven homelands.

Religion: As with all true elves, the Cairn worship the Empress, though without the fervor of some of the other elven races. Their duties on this world are more important than feed-



ing the ego of a deity they recognize to be power-hungry.

Male Names: Issidrim, Tollil, Pentafet, Oberis, Wallinles, Justeren, Yezhenlis.

Female Names: Relea, Yosindra, Olinne, Meleferia, Polidryea, Qualintroi

Adventurers: Bone elves most frequently adventure to further their purpose of spreading the Fey signature to every corner of Thraxis. They are never far from this goal, and everything they do is caged in the context of their people's mission. As adventurers, they will often report back to Ynnidon, via scrying or messenger, to let their people know when they have cleared a new area.

Regions: Bone elf caravans are found everywhere on the continent of Kharkonia, as well as select pockets of Taelusia. While they have a purpose to fulfill, they have immortality on their sides, so some will actually live at the edges of human settlements, gathering information and biding their time. Taelusian bone elves are found mostly within Haseth. In that area, there are a few syndicates of rogue bone elves, who no longer serve the Empress but continue to embody the core of their purpose. These Cairn do not travel with the same frequency of the others of their race; they hold the lands they win, and defend them. They never call the crown elves to take them, and the Empress is too busy to slap them down.

Level Adjustment Option: +3. Bone elves are more powerful than the standard races, and are considered three levels higher for purposes of advancement. Thus a 1st level bone elf character with all special abilities is in fact a 4th level character overall.

Racial Abilities: Except as noted, all bone elf abilities are the same as the standard elf from the PHB.

Favored Class: Druid. In addition to their racial class, a bone elf may freely multiclass as a druid.

Bone Elf Racial Class

Hit Die: d8

Class Skills and Weapon and Armor Proficiency: As a druid.

Personal Signature (Su): Bone elves are less affected by an area's signature, and actually have their own Fey signature that they carry with them wherever they go. The level of a bone

elf's personal signature equals his level. The bone elf may choose to ignore an area's countersignature up to this level, or effectively reduce it by this amount, as it benefits his spellcasting. This is a unique case of spectrum mechanics, and the signature does not extend beyond the elf's person and any spells he may cast.

For the purposes of changing an area's spectrum through passive influence (see page 75), a bone elf counts as half of his level squared. Additionally, bone elves do not average their levels or hit dice to determine the spectrum strength of an area. Only the highest level member of a group of Cairn counts toward the average. Other members merely contribute numbers to widen the area.

Minions of Decay (Su): A bone elf may command or rebuke non-undead and non-aberrant creatures whose primary purpose is to break down organic matter as a cleric of the same level commands or rebukes undead. This ability applies to monsters like many plant creatures, fungus-based creatures, many oozes, and carrion feeders.

Healing Essence (Su): A bone elf may heal an amount of damage done to themselves or another, equal to his Wisdom bonus times his bone elf level. He may do this a number of times per day equal to his Cairn level.

Render Fruitful (Su): Bone elves can restore lost or used fertility to 1 square mile of earth, or a single creature, by expending 1d4 hp. Each additional expenditure of 1d4 hp doubles the level of fertility, using the standard d20 doubling rule (e.g., $x2 + x2 = x3$). Thus, a field could be made to yield many times its usual crop, or a barren woman could become pregnant after a single use of this ability, or bear twins with two uses. Creatures will go into heat outside of mating season. A field that would otherwise lay fallow for a year between uses can be replanted, or a region befouled by undead or aberrations can be restored to balance. Used as a touch attack, this ability may also deal damage to undead and aberrations at the rate of 2d4 per 1d4 hp expended, by cleansing the impurities from their system. When used on plant creatures, this ability heals 2d10 hp for every 1d4 damage the elf takes.

Autumn's Haste (Su): Autumn speeds the decay that will bring renewal in the spring. The Cairn may now deal 1d4 damage to a single undead or aberration for every hit point he sacrifices to a maximum of 5d4 per round. He must sacrifice the

Table 1-4: Cairn - Bone Elf

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Saves			Special
		Fort	Ref	Will	
1	+2	+0	+0	+1	Personal Signature
2	+3	+0	+0	+1	Minions of Decay, Healing Essence
3	+3	+1	+1	+2	Render Fruitful
4	+4	+1	+1	+2	Autumn's Haste
5	+4	+1	+1	+3	Burst of Vitality

hit point and succeed in a touch attack to do so, and if he misses the expended hit points are still lost. Creatures targeted receive attacks of opportunity.

Burst of Vitality (Su): Once per day, a bone elf may concentrate to call upon and radiate accelerated life energies. The energies fill a sphere 30 feet across, centered on the elf, which speeds up natural life processes. Decaying matter disintegrates, and plants grow to full bloom within a single round. This ability deals 1d6 damage per round to all undead within and heals everyone within the area of effect (including the bone elf) for 1d6 hp per round. This die is rolled once per round, and the same result is applied to all creatures, for either damage or healing. This effect lasts a number of rounds equal to the bone elf's Wisdom bonus, for a minimum of one round. During the time that this power is being used, the 30 foot area is considered to be of the Fey signature, at a strength equal to the elf's level +1. The area will have no countersignature.

NENIR

Briar Elves

The briar elves are the eager defenders of the elven realms. These are the warriors and hunters of the elven lands. The briar elves have affinities for forest predators, and can call aspects of their spirits into themselves. They represent the good that natural predation does for an ecosystem. Many briar elves hunt down muryans as pleases the Empress, coldly dispatching the traitors, since they no longer serve a purpose in the greater scheme.

More so than rangers or druids, the briar elf racial class is active in the cycle of nature. When the numbers of prey grow higher than the ecosystem's ability to support them, they hunt for the welfare of all creatures in the area. They can receive limited shapechange abilities. Like all true elves, they loathe undead and aberrations, and their abilities against them are strong.

Personality: The briar elves have impish, prickly personalities, as their name suggests. They are almost feral in their demeanor, but have the capability to function in civilized society when necessary. Unlike most other elves, they have no problem with death, even of sentient beings, as long as a species is not threatened with extinction. In fact, most believe that the world would be better off without so many sentients. The Nenir do not mourn dead individuals, even friends, believing that there is a pattern that is greater than any one being.

Goods and magical items are not often hoarded by the Nenir, and they usually carry only what is strictly necessary for the mission at hand.

Triggers: Destroying an entire breeding population of a creature in one area (such as the queen of a hive of giant insects); hunting without purpose; leaving a corpse to rot unless the slain creature posed a serious threat to the local ecology; witnessing the destruction of an environment (such as cutting down a forest).

Dementia: Alienation. Briar elves suffering from a break will seek to isolate themselves from their allies, and ruthlessly



eliminate their foes. They may maintain contact with friends from behind the scenes, but will almost certainly go solo during this time, not knowing if they can trust their “former” friends. This does not necessarily constitute “splitting the party” since the briar elf will stay close, spying on his allies. He will move with the maximum stealth possible, stalking along, and sniping from a safe place, but will not rejoin friends until he has recovered from the break. If the group attacks or indicates in any way that they believe the briar elf is an enemy, they may become the targets of his irrational fear. The GM and player have discretion in this matter, and the GM may call for a Will check with failure resulting in the briar elf designating the party as enemies, and trying to avoid or attack them.

Failure: Participating in any of the events or activities listed under triggers for dementia.

Physical Description: The briar elves are rather short, but like the wolverine, their size is deceptive. They often have haphazard shocks of forest-colored hair, with braids and twigs interspersed. Their sharply slanted eyes resemble those of a cat, with upward slits, and they glow of reflected ambient light at night. Their clothing is varied, but is always designed to serve as camouflage. Briar elves are camouflaged to fit the surroundings of their homeland.

Relations: Briar elves get along with all fey, even if the crown elves don’t quite see their place in the Empress’ design. Bone elves distrust them slightly, seeing them as almost aberrant, for their vicious transformative powers. Other races tend to view them as monstrous, as well.

Alignment: Usually neutral. The briar elves tend towards an active pursuit of balance.

Briar Elf Lands: Briar elves prefer the wildest places, and many have remained in Ynnidon.

Religion: To the Nenir, the Empress is the greatest hunter. She has a design in mind for the world, and one which will allow it to be wild forever. Everything the Nenir do keeps this ideal in mind.

Male Names: Rioril, Malderen, Paloc, Vinsern, Hindril, Tondro, Aboris.

Female Names: Beleri, Lasernia, Oullei, Ehoulli, Vanserall, Stiraline, Tanli.

Adventurers: Briar elves rarely adventure outside of Ynnidon, but when they do, it is usually while on a specific mis-

sion for the Empress. They are good in melee, and can make use of their transformative abilities to deal great amounts of damage. They are stealthy and quick, and make fantastic hunters.

Regions: Nenir society is more civil than many would expect. Their homes are well hidden in such places as shallow caves, burrows, or hollowed tree trunks. Inside these dwellings are efficient but finely crafted goods to rival any Brendirian’s furnishings. They live in small packs that are part of much larger communities.

Though they dwell primarily on the frontier beside the borders of Ynnidon, small groups of families or friends with 5-8 members can be found all over the continent. Briar elves shun civilization, but may be able to stomach dwelling among other races for a few decades.

Level Adjustment Option: +3. Briar elves are more powerful than the standard races, and are considered three levels higher for purposes of advancement. Thus a 1st level Briar elf character with all special abilities is in fact a 4th level character overall.

Racial Abilities: Except as noted, all briar elf abilities are the same as the standard elf from the PHB.

Favored Class: Ranger. In addition to the briar elf class, a briar elf may freely multiclass as a ranger after 1st level.

Briar Elf Racial Class

Hit Die: d8

Class Skills and Weapon and Armor Proficiency: As a ranger.

Step of the Woodland Spider (Su): The surfaces of the briar elf’s hands and feet become adhesive. The briar elf may move across surfaces or along ropes as the spell *spider climb* except that he moves at his full movement rate, and may jump from surface to surface, only requiring a jump check for distances that would normally require them. He may do this for a total number of minutes equal to his briar elf level, broken up into one minute (ten round) increments, any way he likes throughout a day.

Hunter’s Claws (Su): At will, either or both of the Briar elf’s forearms transform into those of any local predator. Regardless of type, these paws are articulate, and can hold

Table 1-5: Nenir - Briar Elf

Level	Base	Saves			Special
	Attack Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	
1	+1	+1	+0	+0	Step of the Woodland Spider
2	+2	+1	+0	+0	Hunter’s Claws
3	+3	+2	+1	+1	Stalking Lope
4	+4	+2	+1	+1	Head of the Beast
5	+5	+3	+1	+1	Primal Nightmare

weapons or tools, and deal 1d8 damage on a successful strike (+1 vs. undead or aberrations). This ability does not grant extra attacks. Normal penalties for two weapon fighting apply.

Stalking Lope (Su): The Nenir may now drop to all fours to move at double his normal speed (without any visible transformation). When using Stalking Lope, he may use Hunter's Claws or Head of the Beast to attack, but may not hold anything in his paws or hands.

Head of the Beast (Su): At will, the briar elf may transform his entire head to that of any local predator with a bite attack. He gains a bite attack every round, in addition to any others he may have. This attack deals 2d6 damage (+1 vs. undead or aberrations), using the elf's lowest melee attack bonus. Additionally, the scent ability is granted while using Head of the Beast.

Primal Nightmare (Su): Once per day, as a move equivalent action, the Briar elf may split his body to the waist, creating a duplicate of himself from the waist up using his Hunter's Claws and Head of the Beast abilities on each form, and gaining an additional set of Hunter's Claws and a second beast head which may be different from the first. He may remain in this form for a number of rounds equaling his Wisdom score. He gains sensory input from both heads, and may effectively see in a 360 degree radius, and is thereby unflankable. He gains four extra attacks per round (one for each of his additional arms, and two bite attacks with his heads), which may be directed at any targets in adjacent squares. He may not be flanked while using Primal Nightmare. At the GM's option, other placement schemes for the additional limbs and heads may be possible, and they may even shift around in an unnerving way.

IYEWN

Crown Elves

The crown elves are the most favored of the Empress' children. While the bone elves were created to take new lands for her, the crown elves are meant to keep them. Among them are the most noble of the fey. They hold court all over the Brendirian continent, but their Grand Court is held in Eines,

the greatest true city in Ynnidon. They can tap into the land itself, taking on its power for short period of time.

Personality: Crown elves are cool and reserved, and stalwart in the face of adversity. They can seem vain at times, but they are more interested in presenting an image of the Empress' power than in petty concerns of personal appearance or glory. They are honorable, loyal, and do not take well to betrayal or deception. They are, above all, fair.

Still, they are fey, enjoying dance, music, and the arts. During the darker months, they like to travel on raucous hunts that take them across Ynnidon. They are the primary guardians of the Empress' faith, and hold numerous festivals in her honor.

Triggers: Being humiliated; having one's homeland threatened; witnessing an area's loss of the Fey signature.

Dementia: Vengeance. The crown elf's dementia causes him to become enraged with righteous anger. He will believe that he is a great and powerful being embodying Vengeance itself. This belief is bolstered by the intense energies the crown elf gives off, which crackle visibly. Any attempts to prove otherwise are met with scorn, and possibly violence. Any non-crown elves he associates with will be considered lesser beings, and if they get in the way of his revenge, he will do everything he must to deliver his "justice."

Failure: The crown elves are spiritually bonded to the land. Each extended family is tied specifically to one landmark. If this landmark is threatened they sense it, and must drop everything to defend it, sometimes traveling across the entire world. If their landmark is destroyed, they become *muryans*.

Physical Description: The crown elves are tall, regal, and beautiful, without exception. Their skin literally comes in all colors, with no relation to their heredity, as long as that color is present somewhere in the general place they were born. For most, this coloration is a mere tint, but for others, it is a bold expression of the beauty present in their homeland. They keep their clothing in perfect repair, and prefer fluid and free flowing fabrics.

Relations: Most other fey defer to the crown elves, knowing that they were created to be the Empress' ideal creature. Other races feel either intimidated or resentful in the presence of the Iyewn.

Alignment: Usually lawful neutral. Crown elves are unique

Ilter

	Hardness	Hit points
Seared Ilter	10	1/inch of thickness
Raw Ilter	3	1/inch of thickness

Ilter is a translucent yet colorful plant-crystal that regenerates 1 inch/day if it is given water, sunlight and earth from which to draw nutrients. Its surface can be made to stop growing by lightly searing it with flame that deals at least one point of damage in excess of its hardness. If the seared ilter is subsequently exposed to greater flames that cause damage in excess of its hardness, the ilter liquifies and runs like water. If the surface of an object made from ilter is exposed by destroying its seared shell, it begins to grow again if exposed to nutrients, light and water. Ilter that has not been seared to stop growth is called *raw*. Plant-affecting spells and effects also affect raw ilter, but stone-affecting magics do not.

among the elves in that they favor law above chaos, for order allows them to safeguard their territories more efficiently.

Crown Elven Lands: The crown elves live all over Ynnidon, creating crystal-like towns and cities of domes, globes, and spires that grow organically, feeding off of sunlight and water like plants. In fact, they are composed of a strange plantlike organism from the

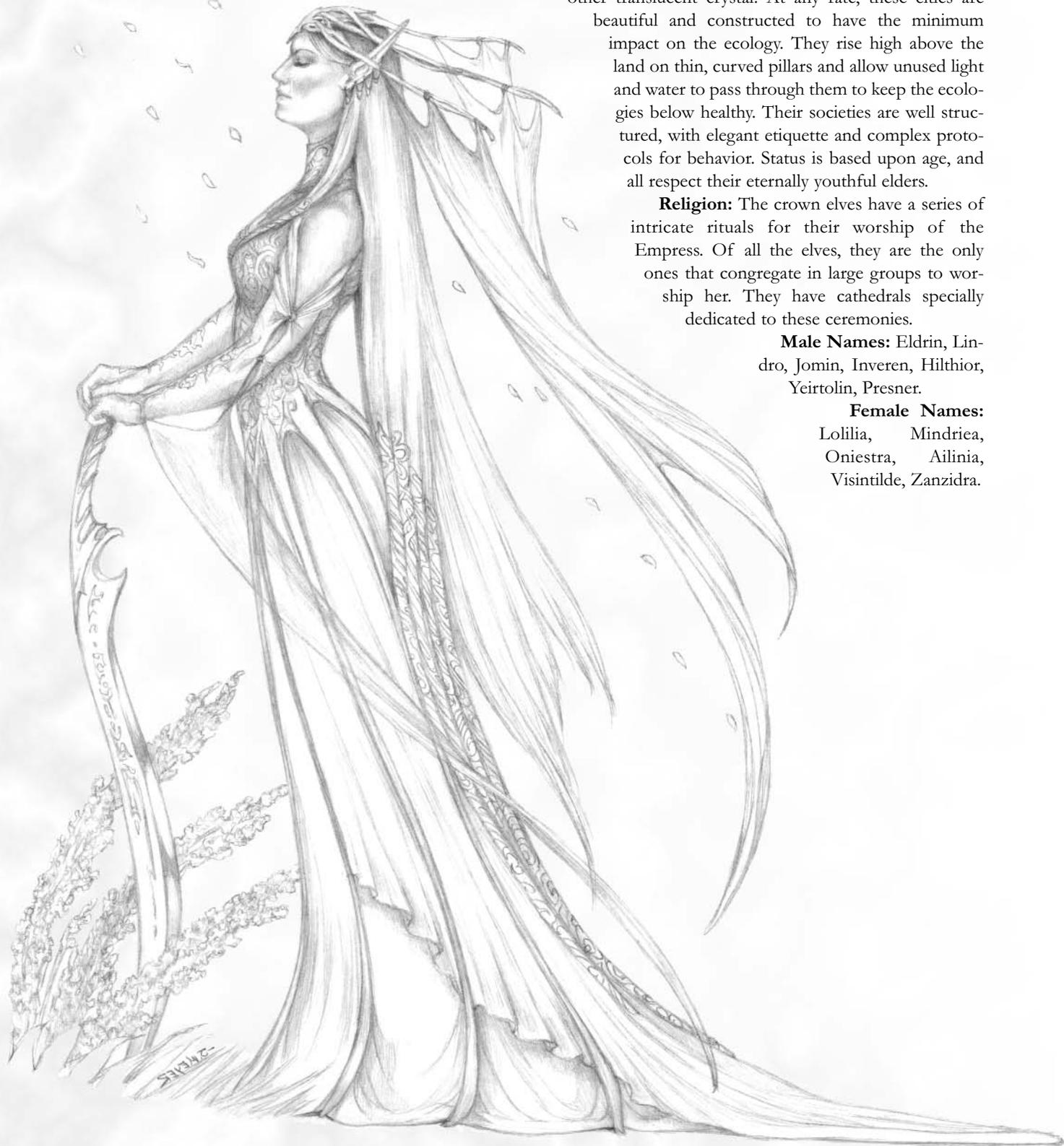
Empress's home plane, called Ilter. Only the most respected elven artificers know this, the rest assuming that the cities are made of fine but strong glass or

other translucent crystal. At any rate, these cities are beautiful and constructed to have the minimum impact on the ecology. They rise high above the land on thin, curved pillars and allow unused light and water to pass through them to keep the ecologies below healthy. Their societies are well structured, with elegant etiquette and complex protocols for behavior. Status is based upon age, and all respect their eternally youthful elders.

Religion: The crown elves have a series of intricate rituals for their worship of the Empress. Of all the elves, they are the only ones that congregate in large groups to worship her. They have cathedrals specially dedicated to these ceremonies.

Male Names: Eldrin, Lindro, Jomin, Inveren, Hiltior, Yeirtolin, Presner.

Female Names: Lolilia, Mindricia, Oniestra, Ailinia, Visintilde, Zanzidra.



Adventurers: The Iyewn are the Empress' most loyal servants. Thus, most adventures they undertake are extended missions under her command. There are very few independent crown elves. They make great guards and protectors within a party. With their strong defensive capabilities, it becomes difficult for enemies to sneak up. They are also great allies in an assault, especially once they receive access to their Power of the Land ability. Still, they are best when they choose their battlefield.

Level Adjustment Option: +3. Crown elves are more powerful than the standard races, and are considered three levels higher for purposes of advancement. Thus a 1st level crown elf character with all special abilities is in fact a 4th level character overall.

Racial Abilities: Except as noted, all crown elf abilities are the same as the standard elf from the PHB.

Favored Class: Wizard. A crown elf may freely multiclass as a wizard after 1st level.

Crown Elf Racial Class

Hit Die: d8

Class Skills and Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: As a wizard.

Distant Sentinel (Su): The crown elf may choose a landmark within 1 mile. For a duration of one hour per day, he may use his own senses while simultaneously seeing and hearing as if he were located at a specific point on the landmark. Once each day's landmark is chosen, he may not change this landmark or the point from which his senses emanate. If the character has a target in sight from both Distant Sentinel and his own eyes, he receives a +2 bonus to attack rolls with ranged weapons.

Soaring Weaponry (Su): In the crown elf's hands, all ranged weapons receive a +5 ft. bonus to their range increments for every 2 crown elf levels.

Fey Stock: The crown elf may now create a fey stock which may be placed anywhere the elf likes.

A fey stock is a magical item resembling a log or bundle of sticks that takes the luck from those around it, and allows it to be used by another. It is bound with a few hairs from the crown elf, and if discovered and taken, grants a +2 enhancement bonus to any attacks or spells against that particular elf. The elf

may incorporate the stock's dweomer at will by concentrating for 4 rounds.

A fey stock will leech the luck from any mortals around it. This doll may be left anywhere mortals will pass. Every time a mortal makes a skill or ability check within 50 feet of the stock, he must make a Will save (DC 10) or receive a -1 luck penalty to that check. If the penalty is incurred, the stock absorbs the luck that otherwise would have benefited the mortal, increasing its bonus. A fey stock can hold a bonus equal to the character level of its creator.

When recovered, the elf may use the stock with the stock's entire bonus for 1d6 rounds once activated. Every check, save or action that requires a roll gets the stock's bonus for this duration. Multiple stocks do not stack with each other for any purpose, and only the oldest stock in an area is active. A crown elf may only directly benefit from his own stock. Assume that the stock gains 1d4 points per day if placed in a well-traveled area (such as the woods near a human village), 1d6 if placed in or near a town, or 1d8 if placed within a city.

Quickforge (Sp): The crown elf may cast *ironwood* once per day, except that casting time is 10 minutes, the duration is only 1 day, and it affects objects weighing up to 40 lbs. This allows the rapid creation of armor and weapons when it is necessary to defend an area on short notice.

Power of the Land (Su): This power is the most potent and versatile of the crown elf's abilities. Depending upon the terrain, this ability manifests in different ways, as described below. Caster level for any level-dependent effects is of course 5th. Power of the Land may be used once per day.

Terrain

Arctic
Desert
Forest, Coniferous
Forest, Deciduous
Forest, Jungle
Grassland
Lake or pond
Marsh
River or Stream
Seaside

Effect

Wall of ice (per the spell)
Mirage (see below)
Needlestorm (see below)
Barkskin (per the spell)
Poisoned Strike (see below)
Wall of fire (per the spell)
Water walk (per the spell)
Quicksand (see below)
Torrent (see below)
Summon Aquatic Defenders (as per *summon nature's ally IV*)

Table 1-6: Iyewn - Crown Elf

Level	Base	Saves			Special
	Attack Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	
1	+0	+0	+0	+1	Distant Sentinel
2	+1	+0	+0	+1	Soaring Weaponry
3	+1	+1	+1	+2	Fey Stock
4	+2	+1	+1	+2	Quickforge
5	+2	+1	+1	+3	Power of the Land



Mirage: Mirage functions as a *hallucinatory terrain* spell except that structures may be hidden behind illusory dunes.

Needlestorm: For as long as the crown elf can concentrate, he may cause the all coniferous trees within a 10 ft. radius and up to 20 feet away to begin rattling their needles. Every round, each tree will spray off a number of magically fortified needles, filling the area with them, and causing all living creatures within to receive a -1 penalty to all actions, and to take 1 point of damage for every tree within the area of effect (Reflex save for half, DC 10).

Poisoned Strike: For 5 minutes, and as long as the crown elf can concentrate thereafter, every attack that a crown elf lands while within a jungle deals an additional 1d4 points of Constitution damage (Fortitude save for half, DC 10).

Quicksand: After concentrating for 1 round, the elf may change separate or conjoined 5 foot squares (up to 50 square feet) of otherwise passable earth into quicksand. Any creatures in the area or who enter it are quickly mired (a Ref save (DC 10) negates). It takes a successful Swim check (DC 10) to stay afloat, otherwise drowning rules are applied. To escape from the sticky mire requires a successful Strength check (DC 15).

Torrent: The crown elf may cause the natural flow of water in a stream or river to increase to a torrent that sweeps unsuspecting people in the river downstream 10d100 ft., doing 1d6 damage and capsizing vessels.

PELEL

Meadow Elves

Meadow elves represent the harmony and capriciousness of nature. They have affinities for insects and flowers and are the only flying fey available as a PC race on Thraxis. They have large, insect-like wings that come in many forms, based on the territory they inhabit.

Personality: The most cheerful of the fey elves, the meadow elves are simultaneously the most likable and the hardest for humans to relate to. They have strange ideas and priorities, exemplifying a benevolent but alien mindset. They do not mourn dead humans, or other animals, but if a favorite insect or hive of bees is destroyed, they may become enraged and confused. They often fail to understand fear or sadness in others, since they don't truly understand pain. They keep small, colorful insects as pets, and flowers bloom in their presence.

Meadow elves find it difficult to take anything seriously, even when life is at stake.

Triggers: Being imprisoned; being the subject of any spell that inhibits freedom.

Dementia: Death wish. The meadow elf who suffers a break becomes erratic. In every encounter, he must make a Will save (DC 20) or confront the most dangerous foe or challenge head on. This will continue for the duration of the dementia, and the meadow elf will forge ahead, cheerfully seeking out the next threat.

Failure: A meadow elf becomes a muryan if he ever contributes to the capture of a creature that is not undead or an aberration.

Physical Description: Pelel are slight, with insect-like wings that come in many forms based on the most prominent insects in the region they inhabit. Their multicolored hair is interspersed with growing flowers and plants. Their eyes are sharply angled, and quite large relative to the rest of their faces. Skin and eye color can be any combination of pastel hues, but a rare few have strong primary-colored skin or irises, especially in tropical regions.

Relations: Meadow elves get along with most fey, and are particularly beloved by the bone elves.

Alignment: Meadow elves exemplify chaos. They may not be lawful, except through magical effects.

Meadow Elven Lands: Despite their name, meadow elves live wherever there are large quantities of flowering plants. Their appearance varies according to this terrain. For example, Pelel who dwell in a desert oasis might have beetle wings, complete with a thin carapace (no bonus to AC).

Meadow elves of every size will coexist with one another, and their homes are only as large as they need to be. These homes will be made from living plants and vines, and are indistinguishable from clusters of native plants. At their smallest, entire neighborhoods may be found in the shade of a log.

Religion: Meadow elves instinctively respect the Empress, but rarely worship her formally. There are, however, many festivals in her honor, where there is much dancing and festivity.

Male Names: Loi, Opin, Hilm, Nost, Til, Tio, Midro.

Female Names: Deerni, Reis, Illi, Uil, Kiv, Phodooil, Esteet.

Adventurers: Meadow elves enjoy their small stature, and make use of it by scouting ahead of the party and passing through small openings. Their flight abilities get them out of many binds, and it is difficult to keep them confined. At lower levels, they use their shrinking abilities to escape bonds, evade larger foes, and strike from favorable positions. Their flight abilities allow them to bypass many obstacles that stop other races.

Level Adjustment Option: +2. Meadow elves are more powerful than the standard races, and are considered two levels higher for purposes of advancement. Thus a 1st level meadow elf character with all special abilities is in fact a 3rd level character overall.

Racial Abilities: Except as noted, all meadow elf abilities are the same as the standard elf from the PHB.

Favored Class: Rogue. In addition to their racial class, meadow elves may freely multiclass as a rogue.

Meadow Elf Racial Class

Hit Die: d6

Class Skills and Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: As a rogue.

Small: Unlike other elves, meadow elves are size Small.

Pollen Burst: As an extraordinary ability, meadow elves can release an irritating cloud of pollen once per day. Against creatures that breathe air, this ability almost invariably evokes a sneezing reaction (Will negates, DC 10 + meadow elf's level) and a tearing of the eyes, resulting in the combined effects of the cantrips *daze* and *flare*. The *daze* effect lasts for one round, but the *flare* effect lasts for 1d4 rounds. This pollen isn't primarily intended as an attack, however. Instead it is meant to be released slowly over plants awaiting fertilization. This pollen is miraculous in that it can pollinate any plant or plant creature, which will have its growth accelerated such that it will flower or bear fruit in 1d4 days.

Diminution: Once per day, as a supernatural effect, a meadow elf may reduce her size category. All items and clothing shrink with her. Once this Diminution is complete, the new size category is treated as the elf's "normal" size for the pur-

poses of stacking size-affecting magical effects. In other words, this ability doesn't count against the restriction of spells like *reduce* which do not stack under the rules as written. The effects of this ability last until willingly dispelled.

Flutter, Hover, and Fly: These abilities may only be used when the meadow elf is using her Diminution ability. The character's wings become more functional as their mass decreases. Flutter may only be used at Tiny or smaller size, Hover may only be used at Diminutive or smaller size, and Fly can be used at Fine size. The Flutter ability functions as the *feather fall* spell, Hover functions as *levitate*, and fly ability, of course, functions as *fly*.

VOL

Stream Elves

The stream elves represent the deceptive and fleeting side of nature. Vol are the great thinkers of the elves. They can shape the perceptions of those around them to fit their goals, and can enter into powerful bargains to acquire what they need. They serve as spies and emissaries for the Empress, gathering information and weaving webs of allegiance to Ynnidon.

Personality: Seekers by nature, stream elves love a good mystery. They are persistent, charming, and detached. Where friendship is concerned, one is never certain with the stream elves. Like the flow of running water, they wind their way around obstacles to find the answers they need. They prefer tact to overt interrogation to glean needed information. They are always reserved with their emotions, and even long time friends don't quite know where they stand. They are always cordial, and never unwillingly reveal their own secrets, even as they effortlessly glean them from others.

Triggers: Accidentally revealing an important secret they are trying to keep; angering a target they are trying to manipulate.

Dementia: Irrational. The stream elf loses control of his emotions. He becomes ruled by them, unable to make rational decisions. His Intelligence effectively falls to 3 (for purposes of reasoning or rational thought), though he retains his vocabulary and other overt signs of intelligence. He can and will cast any

Table 1-7: Pelel - Meadow Elf

Level	Base	Saves			Special
	Attack Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	
1	+0	+0	+1	+0	Diminution Tiny 1/day, Pollen Burst
2	+1	+0	+1	+0	Flutter
3	+2	+1	+2	+1	Diminution Diminutive 1/day
4	+3	+1	+2	+1	Hover
5	+3	+1	+3	+1	Diminution Fine 1/day, Fly



spells and use any abilities he has at the slightest provocation or reason, without thought of the consequences. If he makes a decision, others will not be able to sway him, no matter what evidence is presented. Similarly, he may change his other long term plans on a whim, undoing months of work in a single capricious moment.

Failure: Failing to keep a bargain.

Physical Description: The stream elves are short and impossibly thin, and their skin is pale and translucent. Their features are fine as ice, and their ears come to sharp points. Their hair color falls within human ranges, but is tinted blue, and shimmers slightly.

Relations: Stream elves cause few problems for those they work with, and few find reason to dislike them. Still, all races other than elves find it difficult to trust them.

Alignment: Usually neutral. A stream elf is often impartial when it comes to law and chaos, and good and evil. Only his own goals and those of the Empress matter.

Stream Elven Lands: Stream elves favor the rivers and streams of the world, which is how they earned their name. Their riverside settlements are quite majestic: cylindrical wooden cottages with colorful ribbons and banners that blow in the river breeze. They are also counted among the diverse beings

that live along the Canali (see Chapter IV, Brendir).

Religion: Stream elves do not speak of their religion.

Male Names: Hilun, Lonthere, Visduln, Anvered, Poln, Finsereh, Sereth.

Female Names: Tilmeni, Jilneria, Jisteri, Lenli, Mita, Talainithe, Ounmeri, Vinceri.

Adventures: Stream elves are great to have around when there's a mystery to solve. They enjoy finding secrets and discovering the motivations of the players behind the scenes. In an unusual setting, they will try their best to glean the history of the place, and to use this knowledge to solve any new mysteries that arise. They always believe that current events fit into a larger picture, and will often see connections that others would miss. They use their powers to find information about foes, to alter their perceptions and possibly trick them into a pact. Their honor in the face of a bargain knot is renowned, and others may bring adventures to them, requesting only a certain item in exchange for all of the information that they have about the quest. In this way, stream elves are able to pursue their goals of acquiring power and goods for Ynnidon and themselves.

Level Adjustment Option: +3. Stream elves are more powerful than the standard races, and are considered three levels higher for purposes of advancement. Thus a 1st level stream elf character with all special abilities is in fact a 4th level character overall.

Racial Abilities: Except as noted, all stream elf abilities are the same as the standard elf from the PHB.

Favored Classes: Bard. In addition to his racial class, a stream elf may freely multiclass as a bard.

Stream Elf Racial Class

Hit Die: d8

Class Skills and Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: As a bard.

Kenning (Su): A Kenning is a supernatural effect that tells the stream elf something about the nature of the target. No save is possible, since this ability reveals the effect the target has already had on the patterns of reality. He may learn the target's greatest strength, desire, flaw, or love, one aspect of his alignment or general organizing principle (greed, hatred, charity, law) but not his full alignment, or any other specific information. This ability may only be used once on a given character per month, revealing one piece of information at a time. This ability also gives a perpetual +2 bonus to Sense Motive checks.

Distract (Sp): As a free action, the elf can create vaguely threatening flashes or noises at the edge of his target's perception. The target takes a -4 penalty to his next action or save with a successful Concentration check (DC 10 + stream elf's character level) reducing it to -2. This ability may be counterspelled by another stream elf, using the standard rules for counterspelling.

Palter (Ex): At will, the stream elf may hang his target up on faulty logic, such as "all numbers are even," causing the target to lose his grip on his point. If the target fails a Will save (DC 10 + stream elf level), he will believe that the "point" the stream elf has made is pertinent to the discussion they are having. The argument is no longer about what it was originally, and

Table 1-8: Vol - Stream Elf

Level	Base	Saves			Special
	Attack Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	
1	+0	+0	+0	+1	Kenning, Distract 1/day
2	+1	+0	+0	+1	Palter
3	+1	+1	+1	+2	Distract 2/day
4	+2	+1	+1	+2	Mindscape
5	+2	+1	+1	+3	Bargain Knot, Distract 3/day

the elf may use Palter again to change it to whatever he wishes. The Concentration skill may be used in place of a Will check if the target desires.

Mindscape (Su): Once per day, the stream elf can surround himself with a hypnotic field, to a range of 10 feet for a number of rounds equaling his level. Within this field, all beings that rely on their senses are at the mercy of the stream elf. He may alter any aspects of the surroundings, as long as the change would be believable. This functions as a mind-affecting figment subject to figment restrictions, that affects all senses. He can make a wooden stump appear to be a gilded throne, or an overturned toadstool filled with mud seem like a bowl of delicious stew. The target may make a Will save to disbelieve (DC 15).

Bargain Knot (Su): The stream elf can now enter into a tighter version of the standard fey oath. He may make a pact to fulfill another's fondest wish, within a year and a day, and *must use all of his available resources to do so*. He has one chance, upon hearing the request, to reject it as "too greedy," or "beyond my power." If he accepts the oath, he must deliver upon it within a year and a day (sooner if so decided) or become a muryan. This is very much the same as the standard fey oath, except for the penalties incurred if the other party fails to deliver on their side of the bargain. The stream elf may define his terms, usually approaching the scope of his side of the bargain. He may request anything the bargainer possesses or can conceivably possess by the time of completion. He can call for the bargainer's "kingdom," first born child, or even his life. The bargainer may not renege on this pact, or his life is instantly forfeit, with no save. The stream elf can defer his payment for as long as he likes, such as in the case of requesting the first born child of a young man, but will metaphysically know when the bargainer possesses the agreed upon price.

MURYANS

An elf who has broken his pact with the Empress suffers grave penalties. He loses every trait bestowed by the fey nature, and all abilities associated with his previous subtype. If the "race as class" option is used, he loses all special class abilities bestowed by his type with no reimbursement. If it is not used, he loses every racial feat taken, again, with no reimbursement.

The true elf becomes a standard elf from the PHB. No matter how long the elf had lived previously, he must roll as a first level character to determine his age. His life span is as described in the PHB. He retains the same size, weight and general appearance he had as a true elf, as a constant reminder to himself and to others of what has been lost. Any supernatural effects of the elf's appearance, such as a meadow elf's floral hair, are muted. In the meadow elf example, the flowers would turn brown and appear dead, but continue to grow.

The dramatic transformation from true elf to muryan takes five rounds, and always has some sort of visible, auditory, or other physical effect, as the energies that sustained the fallen elf leech out into the world. Example manifestations include the sound of tornado-like winds blowing through leaves with an actual wind emanating from the character; the sound of crystal shattering; or the elf may appear to burst into flames, complete with the sizzle and pop of burning wood. This effect is often specific to the elf's type: a meadow elf's wings might turn to powder, or a bone elf's skeleton might radiate a searing light through his skin. No matter what the apparent effect, no damage is done to anyone but the character who is becoming a muryan. Becoming a muryan causes 1d10 temporary Constitution damage, to a minimum of 1 Con.

In addition to the physical pain, it is psychologically traumatic to become a muryan. The elf is constantly reminded of his failure as he wanders the world. Many become listless, some choose to end their own lives, or even to fully embrace an ideology that runs entirely counter to the one they once followed. Muryans are the ultimate outcasts, and should expect to suffer at the hands of less scrupulous true elves. They have betrayed a sacred oath; they are the lowest form of life.

It is possible to regain one's status as a true elf. This depends greatly upon the whims of the Empress, but it is always required that the elf rectify the cause of his dwindling as a first step, before even approaching the Empress or her minions. The Empress will then propose a test. The difficulty of this test will usually be in line with the severity of the transgression that caused the dwindling, but with the chaotic whims of the Empress, can also range from nigh impossible ("Bring me a bottle of time"), to absurd simplicity ("Tell me the name of your first love"). The restorative transformation takes just as long as the dwindling transformation. It is just as dramatic, and

possibly even more painful, though no damage is incurred.

Dementia: Muryans are free from the effects of fey dementia. This is perhaps the only perk of becoming a muryan.

Regions: As outcasts, muryans are found everywhere in the world, except for Ynnidon, from which they are banished. Most concentrate in Brendir, hoping one day to return to Ynnidon.

Racial Abilities: A muryan has all of the abilities of the standard elf from the PHB. Size and general form remain unchanged, if muted, though any offspring an elf has as a muryan appear closer to the general physical description listed under “elf.”

Orphan Races: Gnomes, Halflings, Man, and Thull

The tide turned for the Empress when the very tool she had brought to Thraxis turned itself against her. The intelligence of the elves led to increased intelligence for the dwarves as they were affected by the Fey signature. Similarly, new races split from the elves and dwarves, or arose when the whims of magic allowed a free spirit to create its own form. The first giants were born of such events. These new races were a challenge to the elves and dwarves, possessing the ability to affect reality as all sentient beings can.

—*Jasperio Treatise on History*

Gnomes

The war between the elves and dwarves continued through this age. The Empress made an attempt to send fey souls to inhabit the bodies of children forming within dwarven wombs. The children born of these covert unions were not quite fey, and not quite dwarven. They did not hold the loyalty to the Empress she had hoped they would. Nor did they particularly uphold the dwarven ideals of honor, and bravery. These early gnomes hovered at the edges of the dwarven lands building havens for their own kind, and forging their own path on a razor's edge between the worlds of the fey and the dwarves.

—*Jasperio Treatise on History*

Gnomes are the intellectual delvers of Thraxis. They are lovers of all things scholarly. If a piece of ancient knowledge isn't somewhere in the gnomish libraries, it isn't to be found. Their pursuit of lore brings them to study magic, history, mechanics, linguistics, mathematics, and just about any other field. On Thraxis, gnomes do not have the reputation as jokers or imps that other worlds have fostered for them. Over the ages, they have earned a place as respected elders and competent problem solvers.

They are not considered a “bastard race,” despite their origin. The unions were not physical, but spiritual, and resulted in an entirely new race.

Regions: Gimmun in Kharkon, Triskatarior in Brendir, scattered enclaves in temperate or semitropical regions.

Racial Abilities: Thraxian gnomes are identical to the gnomes described in the PHB. Like all gnomes, their favored class is bard.

Halflings

Halflings travel the globe, and though they have no lands, they strive as a race to acquire them. Opportunists on any world, Thraxian halflings have formed seven houses (see page

155) that profit any way they can from the larger races. This wealth is hoarded in the hopes of buying some of the unsettled lands that have been claimed by the empires.

Of the seven houses, three of them have developed into subraces of their own. These are named for the houses from which they arose. The “standard” halflings are called Embrel, a title which comprises the bulk of the members of other houses, as well as those halflings unaffiliated with any house. Halflings in the company of friendly humans will often refer to them with mildly ironic epithets such as “oaf”, “twiceling,” “gapgut” (for their greater food requirements), or “beanstalk.”

ANHAIN

Bloodfed Halflings

Members of house Anhain go anywhere, and are not afraid to trade with beings that terrify or disgust the normal citizens of the empires. If there is no other way to acquire something, the savvy buyer turns to the bloodfed halflings. Because of their many dealings with the unnameable, these halflings have been changed both physically and psychologically. They have a perpetually terrified visage. But appearances are often deceiving; they approach a buyer or seller with the same cheerful aplomb whether the person has two eyes or thirty-seven glowing ones.

Personality: Halflings of house Anhain are touched with a hint of madness. Over the centuries, their fragile mortal minds have been conditioned to the unknowable, so they rarely make or follow plans, and fearlessly hurl themselves into dangerous situations without hesitation. This impulsiveness carries over to less threatening aspects of their lives as well, from trade to interpersonal relationships.

Physical Description: Bloodfed halflings have washed out skin and haunted features. Their wiry hair stands out from their head, and is often black, gray, or white even from a young age. Many have dark circles under their eyes, white streaks in the hair, and other outward signs of horror that they never had to

internalize. Simply put, their bodies display the ravages of extreme terror that their psyches have conquered. All are wizened beyond their years. To a bloodfed halfling, clothing is irrelevant, and they will wear whatever is most appropriate to their current trade mission.

Relations: This is a race of diplomats, able to treat with the strangest beings and adopt alien customs gracefully. Therefore, one would think they had no problems with anyone. That would be a false conclusion. They often have strange, even obnoxious mannerisms, which come to the fore when they are among “friends.” Their polite veneer falls away. Their worst enemies and best allies are found among the fey. Meadow and briar elves love them for their carefree and warped personae, and bone and crown elves hate them for their indiscriminate dealings with foes of nature. No fey will tolerate being dragged along on a mission to treat with aberrations or undead, but otherwise, these tendencies are valid. Most other races think the bloodfed halflings to be rather odd, but treat each on an individual basis, especially when they need their help to acquire some strange contraband.

Alignment: Bloodfed halflings are most often neutral on the good/evil axis, as their business demands. Among them are equal proportions of lawful, chaotic, and neutral individuals.

Bloodfed Halfling Lands: Anhain prefer to live in cities, but in areas where they will not be bothered. When not working, they often prefer to retire to a run-down tenement in the bad part of town, or perhaps a hide-away in the sewers. They are just as likely to live among subterranean denizens as they are to dwell with the sunlit races.

Religion: Anhain are eclectic in their worship practices, often revering strange and alien deities. They could worship some strange deity of the subterranean fungus-men, or a more standard human deity, if any at all.

Male Names: Shike, Dat-ter, Habe, Ibon.

Female Names: Leinga, Meera, Foloji, Waisa.

Surnames: Gadoal, Stairn, Tumrid, Daleur.

Adventurers: In many cases, a bloodfed halfling in a party gives the group a free pass to enter and move in aberrant and evil societies. So long as they restrain themselves, all but the most mindless or violent denizens of these societies will do likewise. Unique opportunities are available to the bloodfed halflings and any they bring with them. Their non-Anhain allies would be wise to stay close to the halfling in these situations, since their protection doesn't transfer. If a bloodfed halfling should ever betray this trust, the rest of his house will discreetly do away with him. They simply cannot afford to have their interests compromised.

Regions: Like all halflings, bloodfed halflings are found everywhere on the surface of Thraxis. Additionally, they can be found anywhere within the subterranean realm of Hrum Vaat.

Racial Abilities: Except where otherwise noted, bloodfed halflings receive all abilities outlined in the PHB for halflings.

Favored Class: Rogue. Bloodfed halflings are no stranger

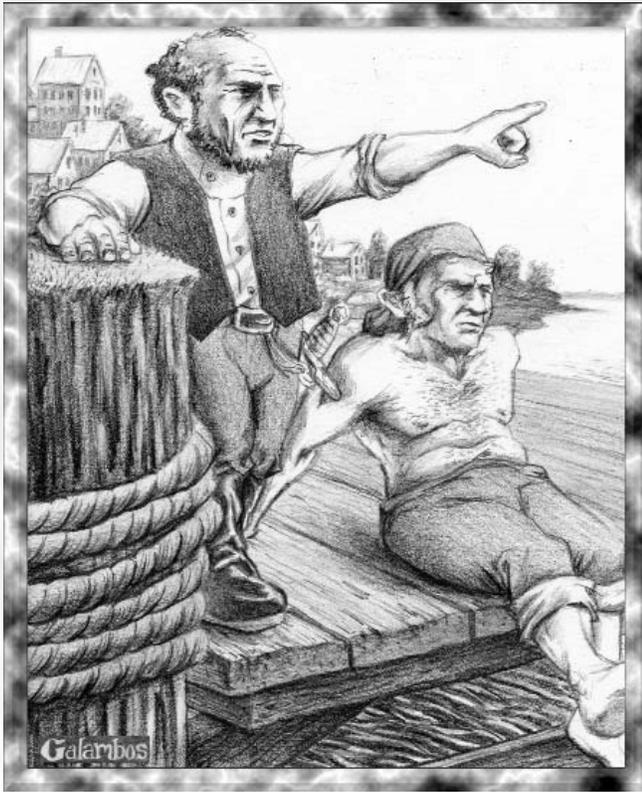


to stealth when diplomacy fails. The rogue class offers them the chance to escape when a deal goes bad. Bloodfed halflings do not receive a multiclass penalty for any rogue levels they may possess.

Distant Bloodline: Bloodfed halflings are raised differently and their race has diverged from other halflings. Anhain do not receive a bonus to Listen, Climb, or Jump checks, and do not get a racial bonus with thrown weapons. They still receive the bonus to Move Silently, however.

Unfazed: Instead of suffering from a fear effect, a bloodfed halfling takes 1d4 damage for each full -2 morale penalty incurred by the effect, and need never flee or suffer any other negative effect. This damage is only incurred once from the same creature.

Seal of Safe Passage: House Anhain has many dealings with undesirable races. Non-aggressive encounters with aberrations, demons, devils, dragons, intelligent undead, and otherwise hostile beings, where neither party has a vested interest in harming the other, will not automatically result in violence unless a member of the halfling's party strikes the first blow. When in doubt, these creatures will attack to subdue and capture first, since their dealings with house Anhain are lucrative. Only a leader of these creatures can order them to attack with no questions asked. Unfortunately, as house Anhain weaves its tangled web of allegiances, certain members of these groups are being cut out by proxy, and breaches of the Anhain seal of safe passage are becoming more common.



Ao Seaspray Halflings

Adapted to life near and on the seas, these halflings have the ability to hold their breath for an extended period of time, are master sailors, and instead of a bonus to Listen checks, gain one to Spot checks. They are a little more dour than most halflings, but they have a right to be. They have earned respect for their dogged determination to complete a paying job, no matter the risks.

Personality: Seaspray halflings are rather arrogant while on the sea, and they have the right to be. They are simple folk. Many members of this race do not actively pursue the house's objectives at all, preferring to harvest the seas and donate a percentage of their profits to the cause.

Physical Description: The Ao are ruddy in complexion, with skin roughened by the sea. They are long-limbed in proportion to their height, and have lean knotted muscles that play under their skin. Their curly hair ranges from sun-bleached blond to red to black, regardless of skin tone. Many males have short, wiry beards. Older males grow bald with time. Their eyes are invariably blue, ranging in color as much as the sea itself.

Their clothing is practical, and often made of water resistant leathers from sea creatures. Many outfits have nautical embellishments such as nets embroidered or sewn into a vest, or seashell jewelry on females. Females rarely wear dresses, except indoors or on special occasions, favoring garments that won't get caught up in the rigging of their ships. Likewise their hair is always tied up or back, out of the way for when the sails need to be trimmed.

Relations: Many other halflings secretly resent house Ao. Their command of the sea effectively edges out competition and creates a reliance on the part of the others to treat with them whenever they wish to open a new franchise in an undiscovered land. Dwarves have little use for the house, but respect their attitudes on work and honor when they cross paths. The fey have had many peaceful if cold encounters with these halflings, especially around the coastal waters of Ynnidon, and though they have little real stake in oceans, respect their fair use of the life within the seas. Humans find that house Ao is paving the path for them to colonize the world. Halfling trade routes are known to be the safest, and humans often try to remain on good terms with the house to better peruse these routes. House Ao is beginning to grow tired of the humans in general for the competition they offer, and for their uncontrolled spread across the world.

Alignment: Always lawful. Seaspray halflings are quite lawful, since often the only thing that gets a crew safely to shore is the discipline of the crew.

Seaspray Halfling Lands: All seaspray settlements are in seaside ports or out at sea, on floating cities that allow ships to restock while on long journeys. These cities are highly defended, able to thwart attacks from above or below the surface of the waves. Many other races are found among the Ao, for they truly command the greater share of cross-sea trade. There will almost always be members of other halfling houses among them, either safeguarding a cargo they have hired the Ao to transport, or in the process of cutting a deal with them to do so.

Religion: The Ao are unique in worshipping a non-halfling god. They primarily follow the Brendirian god Nevonius, who they consider to be less a human construction than a force of nature. Likewise they build his temples in a variation on the Brendirian style. Other gods are worshiped in addition, usually based on the halfling's family experience, or the local gods that are followed in their current port of call.

Male Names: Aln, Etane, Kather, Davin.

Female Names: Kair, Nore, Linar, Joyph, Meera.

Surnames: Berubi, Sanol.

Adventurers: House Ao is loathe to leave the seas, but certain members can tolerate it when they need to. Still they are often claustrophobic when it comes to subterranean adventure, despite reminders that the cabins of their ships are smaller. They simply don't trust the rock above not to cave in.

It is not wise to attempt to swindle house Ao, for they will find you. Nevertheless, there have been many times that the unwise or greedy have reneged on an agreement. Numerous rightfully owned Ao artifacts and treasures are currently being sought out, leading to adventure for the younger, bolder members of the house that have not necessarily learned to hate the land.

Regions: Anywhere there is saltwater, there are Ao. Their most populous lands are those in Brendir, and their greatest numbers among these are in Homm, doing successful trade on the riches of the tidal plains there.

Racial Abilities: Except where otherwise noted, seaspray halflings receive all abilities outlined in the PHB for halflings.

Favored Class: Fighter. Ao do not receive a multiclass penalty for any fighter levels they possess.

Iron Lungs: Ao receive the Iron Lungs feat for free at first level (see page 57).

Riding the Rigging: A life on the pitching decks of boats gives seaspray halflings a +2 bonus to Balance, Climb, and Jump checks instead of a bonus to Move Silently checks.

Spears and Nets: Instead of a bonus to attacks with slings, seaspray halflings receive a +1 racial attack bonus with spears and nets. They do not use slings and small projectiles as often as nets and spears.

Horizon Sight: Instead of the +2 to Listen checks that standard halflings receive, Ao can spot distant objects or obstacles on the seas. They receive a +2 bonus to Spot checks. Additionally, this ability applies when looking underwater, either while submerged or from the surface. They can tell by the way the water flows on the surface if rocks or large creatures are present under the surface.

Ocean Calm: Ao can never be surprised by sea dwelling creatures while upon the sea.

CLEOTHE

Speaker Halflings

Masters of communication, these halflings have an instinctive understanding of language. They can understand every Thraxian language that has spoken words. This makes them incredibly useful wherever a universal translator is needed.

Personality: Speaker halflings are loquacious, even garrulous. They are fountains of trivia, and can often get into obnoxious debates among themselves over the most quibbling minutia. In the employ of other races, they often mirror the mores of their beneficiaries, becoming stately, threatening or cordial as their duties require. Incidentally, this learned behavior makes many ex-members of house Cleothe ideally suited for house Bravel. (See page 155 for more information on house Bravel and other halfling houses.)

Speaker halflings often notice the small things that go unnoticed among the larger folk, pointing out minor flaws that upon closer inspection turn out to be bigger than previously thought. This is why they make invaluable aids to powerful folk, and why they are one of the most influential houses.

Cleothe are prolific writers, keeping journals and writing letters as frequently as they can, sending several missives a day by land courier or fip ship (see page 100). Many are not above bribery, and keep accurate records in duplicate or triplicate which go to secret libraries for future use. Many make their trade as independent information brokers.

Physical Description: Cleothe are often rotund, and rarely have any large muscle masses. Their hair is often wavy and fine. They do not grow beards. They can often appear childlike, even in their later years, with their soft, wrinkle-free skin and pudgy faces. Their florid expressions are often reserved for their closest allies.

Relations: Of all the races, the speakers get on best with

the gnomes. They have the same love of knowledge, though the gnomes may find that while they focus on principle as much as possible, the Cleothe get caught up in detail. Thus they choose to work separately, and have discussions about their current projects.

Alignment: Speaker halflings tend strongly towards neutrality, since they learn from a young age to accept and revere the differences of all people.

Speaker Halfling Lands: Like all halflings, the speakers are still trying to acquire lands. They tend to congregate in cities, especially politically important ones.

Religion: The Cleothe are just as likely to worship obscure foreign gods as they are the ones of the land they call home.

Male Names: Anser, Kepher, Palo, Indro, Tilo, Evend, Lokin.

Female Names: Layne, Fala, Piltre, Juniop, Resiven, Siltsi, Yaz, Sinwa.

Surnames: Cion, Athwen, Ulon, Walb, Troste, Riggi, Banse.

Adventures: Speakers are incredibly curious, but they prefer city life to the wilderness. They parlay whenever possible, trying to come to agreements rather than blows. Those that take the path of the bard have access to obscure songs and tales, and rarely lack work or funds. With their small size, they make great scouts, and are able to understand overheard plans even if they are spoken in a secret language invented by the most obscure sect. This ability can terrify superstitious creatures if used well, especially if it is unexpected.

Regions: The Cleothe have no localized communities, yet are ubiquitous. Speakers are the least likely to form larger communities of their own. Perhaps one or two families will choose to reside in proximity to one another. Still, they keep in near constant touch with their extended families, and travel frequently to visit them.

Racial Abilities: Except where otherwise noted, speaker halflings receive all abilities outlined in the PHB for halflings.

Favored Class: Bard. Cleothe do not receive a multiclass penalty for any bard levels they may possess.

Gift of Tongues: As a supernatural ability, speaker halflings speak every native language of Thraxis with spoken words. They must still spend language slots to learn to read and write a specific tongue, but never to speak them.

Learned: Speaker halflings receive a +1 bonus to all Knowledge checks.

EMBREL

True Folk

Embrel is the name the halflings have for themselves. All standard PHB halflings are Embrel, a group which includes most house halflings, as well as those unaffiliated with any merchant house. Many house Embrel halflings are jealous of the gifts bestowed upon houses Anhain, Ao, and Cleothe, and are seeking methods to create their own lines, with special gifts to benefit their own houses.



Mankind

Thraxian humans come in every type found on our own world as well as a few unique ones. The most naturally adaptable race in the world, humanity has made great strides in but a few short centuries. While the other races are very much at the mercy of the whims of nature and magic with regards to the path that they take, humans instead impose their will upon the world. This fact has earned them the notice and sometimes the ire of the elder races.

Of the other races, thull and halflings like humanity the most, and elves like them the least. Dwarves are likely to ignore them, except in trade, and gnomes find them annoying. Halflings generally love humanity, for it is upon their coin that the halfling empire will be built. All of these races must now contend with the fact that the time of humanity has begun, for good or for ill.

Racial Abilities: Humans have all of the human racial abilities listed in Chapter 2 of the PHB except for languages, as noted below.

Automatic Languages: Imperial Common, Regional.

Thull

The thull are the missing link between giantkind and various evil humanoids such as goblinoids, gnolls, orcs, bugbears, and others. Despite this fact they are not usually evil as a race. Long ago, they taught early humans herbalism, how to make fire and tools, and how to properly worship the spirits. Humans owe everything to them, but they have forgotten their debt.

Thull advance very slowly as a culture, and still live as nomads, using a few modern tools that they have scrounged or traded for. Civilization grows up around them, encroaching on their hunting grounds and pushing them further and further into the wilderness. The race is dwindling, as low birth rates and reduced migratory options have their impact.

Sometimes a clan will send out a young champion into the civilized world. These champions have different goals depending on the clan they come from. Some seek treasure to allow the clan to buy the goods they need, and one such champion can easily aid a tribe of thirty individuals at low levels. Others gradually integrate their group into human or other settlements, bringing the most able bodied first, all the way to the elderly and the children.

In some lands, thull have been forced to serve as slaves. Zeikrus and Ijamvuh in particular have committed grave crimes against this race.

Personality: Thull are staunch traditionalists. They often seem naive to others, but they have their own brand of simple wisdom. They do not trust plans that involve too many contingencies, but are quite impressed if such a plan is completed successfully. Most thull legitimately want to learn; it just takes them awhile because of their limited frame of reference. In civilized areas, the thull are fish out of water. Some learn to love the barrage of stimuli found in a major city, and others grow resentful

of it, seeking the wild places whenever they can. They usually let others take the lead in civilized areas. In the wilds, thull can seem arrogant, and often insist on leading, even if there is a ranger or druid present of higher level. They love telling stories and laughing. Many carry small percussion instruments with them wherever they go.

Physical Description: Thull stand from 6 to 8 1/2 feet tall and weigh between 250 and 500 pounds. Their build is stocky and muscular, with the arms longer, and legs shorter, than a human of similar height and weight. Their skin ranges from grays to browns, with some tropical groups having bold colored strips of flesh on their cheeks or foreheads (usually red, green, or blue). Their hair grows in a long, wooly mane that rolls down their backs and has the human range of coloration. Their facial features are bestial and rough, with raised structures on the cheeks and the high forehead, and tusks that jut from odd angles out of their mouths. These are sometimes inlaid with jewels or engraved. Most thull wear the traditional skins and furs of their clan in the civilized lands, but more outgoing thull have been known to fall victim to the latest human fashions, favoring flamboyant garb using rare dyes and fabrics.

Relations: Among humans, thull usually defer to humans they consider “clever,” and humans can see them as valued allies at best, and “backwards savages” at worst.

Dwarves often feel responsible for thull in their midst, and can be overbearing, but otherwise get along very well with them, showing uncharacteristic patience. Elves prefer to ignore them most of the time, but can grow to respect them for their mutual respect for life.

Alignment: Thull are usually neutral, with tendencies towards good. Sometimes a thull will grow resentful of the treatment of his race, and become evil, meting out “justice” to the other races.

Thull Lands: North and east of the dwarven empire are the lands specifically set aside for the thull. This is where most hail from, but there are scattered tribes all across the world, particularly in Kenabu. Thull usually live in extended families of thirty or so individuals, but there are a few larger tribes numbering into the low hundreds in the homelands. Thull dwellings range from the simple wattle and daub hut, to the rough stone lodge which houses an entire clan.

Religion: Though they are animists for the purposes of most ceremonies, thull recognize a father god named K’shulle, who does not grant spells. This god seems to have abandoned them, however. K’shulle is indirectly responsible for the existence of the orcs, gnolls, bugbears and others. Before he left them, K’shulle taught his priests a ritual that would ensure that their race never died. The ritual was a prayer to him that would cause every female of a clan to become pregnant when the clan was threatened with extinction. For a while the ritual worked normally, but eventually it stopped. Over the years the thull had begun to worship animal spirits, so some groups attempted the ritual as a prayer to these spirits. The orcs are the result of one such prayer to the boar spirit, bugbears result from a prayer to the bear spirit, and gnolls were born of a prayer to the hyena spirit. The ritual is now taboo and is no longer passed on for obvious reasons.

Language: The thull tongue is by turns guttural and graceful. Thull have a strong oral tradition, but no written language of their own. Educated thull use a combination of dwarven and modified elvish scripts to best represent the varied thullish phonemes. Thullish is best known for its strong-sounding curses. Some of these have crept into the dwarven tongue, most notably, the expletive “Goghra!” which very loosely translates to “Nonsense!”

Names: Clan name comes first, and then a descriptive appellation that is earned in early childhood. In human lands, a thull might bow to local naming conventions, such as giving his personal name first and his clan name last, or even translating these.

Male Names: Garak, Kreneg, Gohrag.

Female Names: Fohsa, Ilarvi, Shaihin.

Clan Names: Khoeen, Dtarul, Gegger.

Adventurers: Thull often adventure to make a better life for their clan. They add strong arms to any battle, and know when the expertise of another is of better use to a group. In the wilderness, they make great guides, but in the cities, they tend to follow others’ leads. Many assume that because of their bestial appearance, thull are unintelligent, but are surprised when they come up with the solution to a puzzle or warn against the tactics of a certain creature.

Regions: The thull are found at the furthest reaches of every continent. Most prefer cooler climates, and when they must live in tropical climates, they always live near a great deal of flowing water. Desert thull are exceedingly rare, though there is at least one tribe of oasis-dwelling camel herders in the Amshadin lands.

Racial Abilities: As a PC race, Thull have the following traits.

Abilities: +2 Strength, -2 Dexterity, -2 Charisma. Thull are strong, but clumsy. Their appearance and ignorance of other cultures prevents them from making friends among other races easily.

Base speed: Thull base speed is 20 feet, because their legs are muscle-bound and often shorter in proportion than they would be on a human of similar height.

Low-light vision: Thull can see twice as far as a human under starlight. They can distinguish color as well as a human under full daylight.

Lore: -2 to all lore checks except for Wilderness Lore.

Scent: A heightened sense of smell gives thull a +2 racial bonus to Craft (alchemy) and Search checks that involve substances with an odor, no matter how faint. This bonus may be added to Spot checks for locating hidden persons, or to checks involving tracking a person or animal. Thull can smell the direction of a body of water of pond size or larger within 25 miles. A good rule of thumb is that they have a sense of smell equal to that of a bloodhound.

Child of Nature: Thull get a +4 racial bonus to Survival checks in areas with the same climate as their home region.

Scrounging: Thull can make do with the cast-off tools of civilization. They can improvise most tools as needed, making checks as if they had the appropriate tool for the job at hand. Additionally, thull gain a +2 racial bonus to Craft checks.

Illiterate: Thull have no written language of their own, and must pay 2 skill points to learn to read and write any language they speak.

Favored Class: Ranger. Though barbaric by human standards, thull have a sophisticated culture and revere nature. A multi-class thull does not receive an experience penalty for any levels he has as a ranger.

Languages: Automatic Languages: Imperial Common and Thullish. Bonus Languages: Elven, Dwarven, Orc, Goblin, Imperial Common (nonlocal).

Thull are appropriate for use as first-level characters.

Table 1-9: Height and Weight of Morningstar Races

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Flayed dwarf, male	4'	+ 2d4"	160 lbs.	x 2d6 lbs.
Flayed dwarf, female	3' 11"	+ 2d4"	130 lbs.	x 2d6 lbs.
Stonecutter dwarf, male	3' 9"	+ 2d4"	200 lbs.	x 4d4 lbs.
Stonecutter dwarf, female	3' 7"	+ 2d4"	170 lbs.	x 4d4 lbs.
Storm dwarf, male	3' 10"	+ 2d4"	140 lbs.	x 2d6 lbs.
Storm dwarf, female	3' 8"	+ 2d4"	125 lbs.	x 2d6 lbs.
Bone elf, male	5' 5"	+ 2d6"	75 lbs.	x 1d4 lbs.
Bone elf, female	5' 5"	+ 2d6"	70 lbs.	x 1d4 lbs.
Briar elf, male	4'	+ 2d6"	85 lbs.	x 1d6 lbs.
Briar elf, female	4'	+ 2d6"	80 lbs.	x 1d6 lbs.
Crown elf, male	5'	+ 2d6"	85 lbs.	x 1d6 lbs.
Crown elf, female	5'	+ 2d6"	80 lbs.	x 1d6 lbs.
Meadow elf, male	3'	+ 2d6"	55 lbs.	x 1d3 lbs.
Meadow elf, female	3'	+ 2d6"	50 lbs.	x 1d3 lbs.
Stream elf, male	4'	+ 2d6"	50 lbs.	x 1d6 lbs.
Stream elf, female	4'	+ 2d6"	45 lbs.	x 1d6 lbs.
Bloodfed halfling, male	2' 8"	+ 2d4"	25 lbs.	x 1 lb.
Bloodfed halfling, female	2' 6"	+ 2d4"	20 lbs.	x 1 lb.
Speaker halfling, male	2' 6"	+ 2d4"	25 lbs.	x 1 lb.
Speaker halfling, female	2' 6"	+ 2d4"	25 lbs.	x 1 lb.
Seaspray halflings, male	2' 6"	+ 2d4"	25 lbs.	x 1 lb.
Seaspray halfling, female	2' 4"	+ 2d4"	20 lbs.	x 1 lb.
Thull, male	5' 7"	+ 5d6"	250 lbs.	x 2d6 lbs.
Thull, female	5' 7"	+ 5d6"	250 lbs.	x 2d6 lbs.

Bastard Races: Halfbreeds and Partbloods

Half-Orcs

Half-orcs are about as common as they are on other worlds, for even though orcs are a relatively young race, they are notoriously fecund. It is important to note that not every half-orc on Thraxis is the result of forced union. Situations can arise where an exceptional (usually good) orc can win the heart of a human through legitimate means.

Racial Abilities: Except for languages as noted below, half-orcs are exactly as depicted in the PHB.

Languages: Automatic Languages: Imperial Common, Orcish. Bonus Languages: Imperial Common (nonlocal), Thullish, Orc, Goblin.

Half-Elves

Half-elves are exceedingly rare on Thraxis. The only way a half-elf can be born is through the union of a human and a muryan, or, of course, two half-elves. The union of a human and a “true” elf produces a muryan instead.

Racial Abilities: When they do appear, half-elves are treated as they are in the PHB except for languages, as noted below.

Languages: Automatic Languages: Imperial Common and Elven. Bonus Languages: Any. Half-elves are often harried by vindictive and unscrupulous elves, those with muryan parents especially. Their nomadic or urban childhoods often bring them to encounter diverse races in diverse lands.

Planetouched

Thraxis has become a maelstrom of planar activity. Planetouched include aasimars, tieflings, and other such creatures. They are handled normally, and because of space considerations, they can not be fully reexamined here. In general, however, planetouched are drawn to places of planar power most resembling their planar affiliations.

Lawful planetouched are drawn to places where their orderly nature is rewarded, like certain areas of Kharkon, Triskatariot and Brendir proper, and several have even become senators. Chaotic planetouched inhabit areas in Ynnidon, and may crop up in the Brendirian countryside, in places where anything goes.

Good planetouched are welcome almost everywhere. Evil planetouched have few havens in Brendir. They are often driven into the wilds, where the world is more receptive to the evil energies they attract.

Neutral planetouched go anywhere that balance is needed. Neutral planetouched tend to congregate together, in order to balance strong signatures. They are found everywhere in the world.

Elemental planetouched of course tend to congregate in strongly-aligned elemental areas. Any civilized area with the appropriate elemental signature will have a few.

In short, the stronger the signature of the area in question, the more planetouched will choose to live there. More information on this can be found in Chapter III: Mystic Forces.

Languages: Automatic Languages: Imperial Common and appropriate planar language. Bonus Languages: Imperial Common and Regional.

Morningstar Classes

ARTIFICER

With enough experience, supplies and money, an artificer can build a small army of whirring combatants, a prosthetic limb, an airship, or any number of magical or mechanical miracles. In a world where the laws of reality are hard to pin down, the artificer tries to find practical applications for the eldritch forces. An artificer does not blast his foes with fireballs, or cast spells on the fly. Instead, he uses his understanding of magical processes to create magical tools without using actual spells. By focusing his studies on a specialized set of techniques, he transcends the limitations of arcane magic, and learns to manipulate the substance of spirits themselves. While a wizard or cleric can also create constructs, the artificer does so more elegantly, and to much greater effect. From our own world, Hero of Alexandria and Leonardo da Vinci are two examples. Mythic examples include Pygmalion, who carved a statue so beautiful it came to life, or the great dwarven smiths of Norse mythology.

Adventures: Many artificers adventure on behalf of a patron, or to fund their independent research. In a party, they often fall back to command their constructs, lending firepower and aid to the party as a whole. Different sized constructs have different uses. Smaller constructs can be used to scout around corners or for other reconnaissance, and larger ones can serve as vessels for travel, or as reinforcements in combat.

Characteristics: The artificer is a master of animation. Creating wondrous machines for others or themselves is what they do best. At lower levels, they can create minor constructs, alchemical substances, and minor devices to aid their party. Through the middle levels they begin to gain an understanding of their field of study, allowing them to create more powerful constructs and several types of magical items. Item creation gets even less expensive for them as well, as they learn shortcuts. At high levels, the artificer can create constructs and fortifications of heroic proportions. Finally, the artificer learns to transfer his own consciousness to vessels of his own making, the ultimate in self-improvement.

Alignment: Artificers tend strongly against chaos, and will stop gaining artificer levels if they ever become so. This class requires focus and discipline that a chaotic mindset cannot supply. This penalty can be put to good use by choosing to advance as a spellcaster should advancement as an artificer ever be temporarily halted.

Religion: Artificers do not tend to be particularly religious, even in their spiritual questing, though some are. Such characters tend to worship gods of life, and often see themselves as agents of their deity.

Background: Many artificers began their preliminary training as wizards, then found that the theory and abstract thought of that art were not to their liking. Others were drawn to the idea of creating useful tools and a semblance of life in inanimate matter. To many, however, this is not a goal unto itself. They are fascinated by the universal life-force that tran-



sends all known concepts of magic, which is evinced in the numinus. This life force arises as an ill-understood consequence of the presence of magic, and this is what most artificers seek to comprehend. They work to find the roots of consciousness, the purpose of the existence of life, and the core of the powers of the gods. Thus, many take up a life of adventure, exploring the world and gathering pieces of a deep-rooted puzzle that will bring them knowledge, and lend their lives meaning.

Races: Any race may become an artificer, though gnomes and humans are the most likely to be drawn to the esoteric underpinnings of this discipline.

Other Classes: Artificers walk a thin line between the material world of rogues and craftsmen, and the arcane reality of wizards. They respect both, but prefer their ways. Fighters and eidolons are greatly appreciated for their combat abilities, because even though artificers can rapidly make fine objects, they do not like to see their work destroyed in combat.

Unlike other Charisma dependent classes, the artificer has more affinity for things than people. They simply prefer to deal with objects that they can fix, and that are always rational.

Game Rule Information

Artificers have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Intelligence is the most important stat for an artificer. Charisma aids in controlling his constructs.

Alignment: Any non-chaotic

Hit Die: d6

Class Skills: An artificer's class skills and their pertinent abilities are: Appraise (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Profession (Wis), Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (6 + Int modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int Modifier.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency:

The artificer is familiar with all simple weapons, and leather armor. Their experiments require that they have freedom of movement, while protecting against minor alchemical spills or explosions.

Spell Emulation (Sp): An artificer is not a spellcaster, per se. Though a master of magical item creation, the artificer doesn't possess the skill to cast spells on the fly. Instead, his much slower method of spell use results in rapid and efficient item creation. With the aid of his numina,

he creates magical items without casting actual spells. An artificer requires a spell book or scroll for reference (scrolls are used up at the end of the process), and may use any spell in item creation (arcane or divine) up to his daily limits (see table 1-11), as long as he has access to it in written form. Any spell an artificer uses is considered arcane. Wherever multiple caster classes are listed for a spell, the artificer can use the spell for item creation at its lowest listed level.

In other words, an artificer does not actually *cast* spells at all. He may create the effects of any spell from anyone's spell list, as long as he has reference material – and then only when creating magical items. He can not use scrolls except to create magical items.

Summon Numina (Ex): At first level, the Artificer, may summon the numina that will serve him throughout his career. He may summon a number of these spirits equaling his Int bonus and

may summon a number of different types equaling his Cha bonus. Though an artificer can control a limited number of free numina, he may also command a total number of constructs equal to twice his Cha bonus at any one time. The difference is that the numina of these other constructs cannot leave their vessels, and are destroyed if their vessel is destroyed. One of these numina becomes the artificer's "prime." The prime numinus' Intelligence is equal to the artificer's level.

Every level, the artificer may choose to exchange one of his numina for another type. While not within a vessel, numina serve as eyes and ears for the artificer, and can travel 10 ft. per level away from him (the artificer's circle of control), even through walls. The prime numinus may travel any distance from the artificer while he retains control.

Disembodied numina also serve as an aid to item creation, subtly altering the essence of the materials the artificer is

Table 1-10: The Artificer

Level	Base	Fort	Saves		Special
	Attack Bonus		Ref	Will	
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Spell Emulation, Summon Numina, Reduced Creation Costs, Construct Empathy, Improvisation
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Mystic Artisan – Wondrous Items
3	+2	+1	+1	+3	Breath of Life
4	+3	+1	+1	+4	Mystic Artisan – Weapons and Armor, Disrupt Numinus
5	+3	+1	+1	+4	Commandeer Construct, Soul Sacrifice
6	+4	+2	+2	+5	Mystic Artisan – Rods, Numinus Bond
7	+5	+2	+2	+5	Commandeer Construct
8	+6/+1	+2	+2	+6	Mystic Artisan – Rings
9	+6/+1	+3	+3	+6	Field Repair
10	+7/+2	+3	+3	+7	
11	+8/+3	+3	+3	+7	
12	+9/+4	+4	+4	+8	Render Salts
13	+9/+4	+4	+4	+8	
14	+10/+5	+4	+4	+9	
15	+11/+6/+1	+5	+5	+9	Transfer Consciousness
16	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10	
17	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10	
18	+13/+8/+3	+6	+6	+11	
19	+14/+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	
20	+15/+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	Numinus Translation



working to complete the required spells. The numina have certain restrictions to the kinds of items they can create listed under the numina types.

If a numinus is ever forced outside of the artificer's circle of control it will use all of its power to return to him, knowing his location. Only the prime numinus can leave a vessel without the aid of the artificer. If this travel takes more than a month,

the numinus is lost. Lost numina are recovered after the artificer gains a level.

Reduced Creation Costs (Ex): An artificer is adept at containing magical energies, and may take shortcuts in the process. At first level, and every level thereafter until 10th level, the base gold and experience requirements for creating magical items are reduced by 5%. Thus a 3rd-level artificer can create an

Table 1-11: Artificer Spell Emulations Per Day

Character Level	Spell Level									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	3	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	3	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
8	3	3	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	-
9	3	3	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
10	3	3	3	3	3	2	-	-	-	-
11	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	-	-	-
12	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	-	-	-
13	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	-	-
14	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	-	-
15	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	-
16	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	1
18	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2
19	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2
20	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

item by expending 85% of the base gold and experience, and an 8th-level artificer can create an item with a mere 60% of the listed expenditures. At 10th level and beyond, artificer must only spend 50% of the required gold and XP to create an item. Round fractional values to the nearest gp, and all needed components must be purchased at their listed price. Any item creation feats that the artificer gains, even those not listed under the Mystic Artisan ability below, benefit from this reduced creation cost. Normally, an item takes 1 day to create per 1000 gp of its value. An artificer may take advantage of fractions of a day in item creation. Thus, a tenth-level artificer creating an item that costs him 500 gp could in fact create two items of the same value (costing a total of 1000 gp) in that day. In other words, an artificer may create any number of items in a day, providing that the total cost does not exceed 1000 gp, and he meets the prerequisites and has the spell emulation slots available to do so.

Construct Empathy (Ex): The artificer understands the primal motives of a construct's numinus, and these spirits instinctively recognize this. As a full round action, he can persuade them that he means them no harm, through verbal and gestural coaxing. He may try to fool any construct. The construct resists with a Will save (DC 10 + the artificer's level). If it fails, it is fooled. During this time, the construct will ignore the artificer and any of his allies, until such time as they attack it. If the party does choose to attack it, they will be considered to have surprise for that round. The artificer may only use Construct Empathy once per combat with a particular construct, but if the party escapes and the construct breaks pursuit, the artificer may return and use this ability once again.

Improvisation (Ex): An artificer is a walking workshop and laboratory. For the simple cost of flasks, standard artisan tools, various chemical components, and a magnifying glass, he may use any of his craft skills or feats while traveling. He need never pay for a special laboratory to create his objects, but if he has one he gains +2 to all skill checks required while crafting items. This bonus stacks with masterwork bonuses, and any other separate bonuses the artificer may receive for circumstances.

Each day of uneventful travel counts as a day in a proper workshop. The artificer is considered to be mixing potions and powders while en route, and is able to stoke fires for an impromptu forge when the group makes camp for the night. Hard to acquire or expensive components still cost the same amounts, but this cost goes to tools to gather these items while in transit. It's also safe to say that most artificers keep many of the required items in the numerous pouches that usually cover their clothing.

If there is combat on that day, some of the artificer's work is ruined, and it only counts as half of a day's work. If the entire day is filled by an adventure, that day does not count for item creation.

Mystic Artisan (Ex): The Mystic Artisan abilities are free "virtual feats," emulating the effects of Craft Wondrous Item at 2nd level, Craft Magical Arms and Armor at 4th level, Craft Rod at 6th level, and Forge Ring at 8th Level. The artificer may create any items whose prerequisites he meets.

Breath of Life (Su): At 3rd level, the artificer can place

Artificer Construct Mechanics

Numina

Numina are the key to an artificer's power. It is through them that magical wonders are enchanted, and it is through them that an artificer learns fundamental truths. They are invisible, and have only mental stats when not within a vessel.

Numina (plural; singular: numinus) are meta-elemental spirits, which though possessing powers over the elements or planar energies they are derived from, have also taken on subtle traits that make them something more. They are capable of evolving over the ages, absorbing new strengths, and further defining themselves. Eventually, they are capable of becoming fully living spirits. In fact, every soul on Thraxis was once a numinus, starting with the first elves. They often achieve a symbiotic relationship with a powerful being, to better themselves. An artificer gives a numinus a vessel, through which it may experience the world, which is otherwise chaotic and hazy to the crude senses of the spirits, and the artificer gains servants who teach him the mysteries of the soul.

A numinus may not be injured normally, and when its vessel is destroyed, it returns to the artificer. 1d4-1 rounds later it may inhabit another prepared vessel, and return to the fight. Spells that affect the ethereal plane may cause the numinus to take damage, and when it does, treat it as if it were within a vessel, except that it may be destroyed utterly. A destroyed numinus may be replaced when the artificer gains his next level.

Numinus type does not indicate a particular affinity for a given element, merely that the spirit is composed of the essential consciousness of that particular element. It knows how to achieve effects that lie within that element's purview, but is not restricted by the element's weaknesses. For example, a fire numinus could technically animate a vessel composed of ice.

Five types of numina are presented here: air, earth, fire, water, and energy. There are many others, which will be explored in future Morningstar supplements.

Base Golem Statistics

The golem created when a numina animates a vessel is basically a modified animated object, with no limit to duration. Below are the stats that the base construct will have. Attentive readers will notice that the descriptions have been expanded by adding a Diminu-

tive entry, as well as adding swim speeds for water numina, and flying speeds for when an air or energy numinus is used. Apply any penalties or benefits for numinus and vessel type as templates to the base construct. Saving throws are identical to those of the master artificer. Mental stats (Int, Wis, Cha) may vary with the master's level.

Max Vessel Size by Master Artificer Level

Level	Size
3	Diminutive
5	Tiny
7	Small
9	Medium
11	Large
13	Huge
15	Gargantuan
17	Colossal

Diminutive Construct

Hit Dice: 1/4 d10 (1 hp)

Initiative: +3 (Dex)

Speed: 40 ft. (60 ft. legs, 70 ft. multiple legs, 90 ft. wheels, 70 ft. swim, 100 ft. flight)

AC: 17 (+4 size, +3 Dex)

Attacks: Slam +0 melee

Damage: Slam 1d2-2

Space/Reach: 1/2 ft./0 ft.

Special Attacks: See text

Special Qualities: See text

Saves: As master

Abilities: Str 6, Dex 16, Con –, Int –, Wis 1, Cha 1

Tiny Construct

Hit Dice: 1/2 d10 (2 hp)

Initiative: +2 (Dex)

Speed: 40 ft. (50 ft. legs, 60 ft. multiple legs, 80 ft. wheels, 70 ft. swim, 90 ft. flight)

AC: 14 (+2 size, +2 Dex)

Attacks: Slam +1 melee

Damage: Slam 1d3-1

Space/Reach: 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.

Special Attacks: See text

Special Qualities: See text

Saves: As master

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 14, Con –, Int –, Wis 1, Cha 1

Small Construct

Hit Dice: 1d10 (5 hp)

Initiative: +1 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft. (40 ft. legs, 50 ft. multiple legs, 70 ft. wheels, 70 ft. swim, 90 ft. flight)

AC: 14 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +2 natural)

any of his numina into a vessel of his creation, effectively creating a minor construct. He must pay for the vessel's creation, however. He may give away or sell unintelligent constructs created with this power, shifting control to another (who can in turn transfer control) and losing the numinus (recovered when he gains a level, as explained above). Such a construct is created as if by an artificer of one level lower for determining the maximum size of the construct. The artificer may not regain the lost numina if the construct remains within the artificer's circle of control (10 ft. per level). Effectively, the numinus warns off other spirits, believing it is still under the command of the artificer, acting out an extended order to listen to the new controller.

When a vessel is destroyed, the numina returns to the artificer and is ready to inhabit a new vessel after 1d4-1 rounds (minimum of 1). Inhabiting a prepared vessel is instantaneous. Thus it takes a minimum of 1 round to inhabit a new vessel.

Magical items and powers may be incorporated into the vessel, at an additional cost equaling the value of the item to be included. These items may be used by the construct, unless they require abilities the construct does not have.

Disrupt Numinus (Ex): At fourth level, the artificer may deliver critical hits to a construct. This is because of his intimate knowledge of the energy flows that power constructs, and knowledge of what metaphysical conduits are active for a given construct's physiology at a given moment. If he has the ability to do so, the artificer may also deliver sneak attacks.

Soul Sacrifice (Su): The artificer may now expend experience points to pay the gp cost required to create an item on a one for one basis. This ability is modified by the artificer's Reduced Creation Costs.

Numinus Bond (Ex): The artificer now understands enough about the metaphysics of spirits to fuse them together. He may create artificial limbs that bond to their wearer, or place two numina in the same vessel – bestowing the powers of both upon the construct. A limb counts as a construct one size smaller than the recipient, and has a Craft DC appropriate to the material that is being used. Limbs may have extra abilities built into them at normal costs. When placing two or more numina into a vessel, they still count as the same number of numina for purposes of how many of the spirits the artificer can control.

Commandeer Construct (Su): At 7th level, the artificer may attempt to take control of another creator's construct (but never one powered by his prime numinus). Upon maintaining physical contact with a construct (via Construct Empathy, grappling, etc.) for 1 full round, the character may attempt a Disable Device check (DC 10 + construct's Will bonus). If unsuccessful, the construct attacks furiously, gaining a +2 bonus to attack and to damage until the combat ends. If successful, the artificer gains control. If he is capable of controlling a construct of that size, and has not reached the limit on how many he can control, the construct is now his as if he had created it. If not, the artificer may deliver a single command before control is lost. The command must be a single word for unintelligent constructs, but can be more complex if the construct is capable of understanding.

Field Repair (Ex): An artificer may now attempt to repair a construct that was destroyed, as long as no significant portion

that would prevent functioning is missing. This requires a successful Craft check (DC 10 + creator's caster level), and can only be attempted within six rounds of the construct's destruction lest the numinus leave. For example, if a vessel had lost an arm, it could still function, and would be repairable. Vessels are only brought to one hit point until they can be repaired more fully, but they function. It takes one full minute to perform a field repair.

Render Salts (Su): If the artificer succeeds at a successful Craft (alchemy) check (DC 20 + creature's HD) he may concentrate the body and spirit of a slain creature into its essential salts, if the body is recovered within one day of the creature's untimely demise. The process of rendering salts takes 1 day.

These salts may be used to recreate the creature, under the right circumstances. Essential salts count as the creature's entire, intact body for spells such as *resurrection*, *reincarnation*, or *raise dead*. Additionally, these salts may be used to place the spirit within a vessel of the artificer's design, effectively raising the creature. The new creature has the mental stats of the original, but the physical stats are those of the new vessel. He may later extract the salts once more to be used in another method of restoral. Essential salts will remain viable indefinitely.

Render Salts allows for the creation of constructs with creature spirits, such as scorpion golems or lion golems. These creatures may be trained to accept riders or to take instruction before or after they are placed within a vessel. Constructs created in this way are still very much animals. Any mental powers the original creature had are retained but other special abilities are not, unless the artificer builds sufficient analogs into the new vessel.

Transfer Consciousness (Su): The artificer may temporarily transfer his own consciousness to a vessel he has prepared for a number of hours equal to 3x his Int bonus. His body is left behind, as with astral travel, and is vulnerable in the same ways. At will, or when the duration of this power is over, the artificer's soul returns to his body, and wakes up one round later.

He may use any special abilities or powers that are built into the vessel, and gains the following abilities. He has no Constitution score, and doesn't need to rest, eat, or breathe. He is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromantic effects, but not mind-affecting ones. He cannot heal damage naturally, though he can be healed. He can be repaired in the same way an object can and can repair himself. A vessel with the regeneration and fast healing special qualities still benefits from those qualities.

He is not normally subject to critical hits (except with Disrupt Numinus), nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. He is immune to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects). The character is not at risk of death from massive damage, but when reduced to 0 hit points or less, he is immediately destroyed, and is actually dead. He has darkvision to 60 feet while using this power.

Numinus Translation (Su): The artificer may permanently transfer his consciousness to a vessel. If he makes this choice, it is irreversible, without the aid of a *wish* or *miracle*, or spells such as *raise dead*, *resurrection* or *reincarnation*. This final transfer takes one full day.

Attacks: Slam +1 melee

Damage: Slam 1d4

Space/Reach: 5 ft./0 ft.

Special Attacks: See text

Special Qualities: See text

Saves: As master

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

Medium Construct

Hit Dice: 2d10 (11 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft. (40 ft. legs, 50 ft. multiple legs, 70 ft. wheels, 70 ft. swim, 80 ft. flight)

AC: 14 (+4 natural)

Attacks: Slam +2 melee

Damage: Slam 1d6+1

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: See text

Special Qualities: See text

Saves: As master

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

Large Construct

Hit Dice: 4d10 (22 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 20 ft. (30 ft. legs, 40 ft. multiple legs, 60 ft. wheels, 60 ft. swim, 80 ft. flight)

AC: 14 (-1 size, +5 natural)

Attacks: Slam +5 melee

Damage: Slam 1d8+3

Space/Reach: 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft. (long) or 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft. (tall)

Special Attacks: See text

Special Qualities: See text

Saves: As master

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

Huge Construct

Hit Dice: 8d10 (44 hp)

Initiative: -1 (Dex)

Speed: 20 ft. (30 ft. legs, 40 ft. multiple legs, 60 ft. wheels, 50 ft. swim, 70 ft. flight)

AC: 13 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +6 natural)

Attacks: Slam +9 melee

Damage: Slam 2d6+5

Space/Reach: 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft. (long) or 10 ft. by 10 ft./15 ft. (tall)

Special Attacks: See text

Special Qualities: See text

Saves: As master

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

Gargantuan Construct

Hit Dice: 16d10 (88 hp)

Initiative: -2 (Dex)

Speed: 10 ft. (20 ft. legs, 30 ft. multiple legs, 50 ft. wheels, 40 ft. swim, 60 ft. flight)

AC: 12 (-4 size, -2 Dex, +8 natural)

Attacks: Slam +15 melee

Damage: Slam 2d8+7

Face/Reach: 20 ft. by 40 ft./10 ft. (long) or 20 ft. by 20 ft./20 ft. (tall)

Special Attacks: See text

Special Qualities: See text

Saves: As master

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 6, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1

Colossal Construct

Hit Dice: 32d10 (176 hp)

Initiative: -3 (Dex)

Speed: 10 ft. (20 ft. legs, 30 ft. multiple legs, 50 ft. wheels, 30 ft. swim, 50 ft. flight)

AC: 11 (-8 size, -3 Dex, +12 natural)

Attacks: Slam +25 melee

Damage: Slam 4d6+9

Face/Reach: 40 ft. by 80 ft./15 ft. (long) or 40 ft. by 40 ft./25 ft. (tall)

Special Attacks: See text

Special Qualities: See text

Saves: As master

Abilities: Str 28, Dex 4, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1

Base Challenge Rating: Diminutive 1/4, Tiny 1/2; Small 1; Medium 2; Large 3; Huge 5; Gargantuan 7; Colossal 10

Construct: Unintelligent constructs are immune to mind-influencing effects (though the artificer's prime numinus is not), poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Weight Allowance: A numinus has a maximum weight allowance based on the size of its vessel. This weight limit applies to all of its movement types, whether it walks, rolls, swims or flies. If the numinus does not naturally receive a specific type of movement (as explained below), it has a weight allowance of five size categories lower while moving in this way.

Size	Weight Allowance
Diminutive	1 lb.
Tiny	5 lbs.
Small	10 lbs.
Medium-size	100 lbs.
Large	1,000 lbs.
Huge	5 tons
Gargantuan	50 tons
Colossal	500 tons

Numina Powers

Depending on the type of numinus that animates a vessel, the resulting golem will have special powers.

Air: Flight. The vessel can support an amount of weight in proportion with size, and has a maneuverability inversely proportional to the vessel's size. A construct animated by an air numinus also refreshes the air in an enclosed area, fast enough to support a number of Medium creatures equaling its master's level.

Size	Maneuverability
Diminutive	Perfect
Tiny	Perfect
Small	Good
Medium	Average
Large	Average
Huge	Poor
Gargantuan	Poor
Colossal	Clumsy

Earth: Improved AC and HD. While inside a vessel, earth numina may also create small amounts of semi-precious stone within a recess or compartment built for that purpose. The value of this stone is equal to 2 times their master's level in gp per week. Stone that is left within this compartment increases in value by transmuting into progressively more valuable material once the compartment is full.

Size	AC Bonus	HD
Diminutive	+1	-
Tiny	+2	(Full hit die)
Small	+3	+1
Medium	+4	+2
Large	+5	+3
Huge	+6	+4
Gargantuan	+8	+5
Colossal	+10	+6

Fire: Explode as a fire-based area effect at will or when vessel is destroyed (Ref save for half, DC 10 + 1/2 the construct's HD). A fire numinus within a vessel can also conjure sparks or small flames, and can cast light that illuminates an area equaling 5 times its master's level in feet.

Size	Damage	Radius
Diminutive	1d4	5 ft.
Tiny	1d6	10 ft.
Small	1d8	10 ft.
Medium	1d10	15 ft.
Large	2d6	15 ft.
Huge	4d6	20 ft.
Gargantuan	6d6	20 ft.
Colossal	10d6	30 ft.

Water: Swimming, at the listed movement rate. A water numinus within a vessel can create potable water for a number of people per day equal to the master's level. Additionally a vessel that contains a water numinus will always float perfectly, with as much or as little displacement as desired, regardless of the material or shape of the vessel. Therefore, a tower could be built upon the sea, or a ship could be made of solid stone. If the weight allowance is exceeded, the vessel will not sink no matter how much weight is added. For every doubling of the weight allowance, the vessel will have its movement cut in half, rounding down to the nearest speed point. When speed reaches zero, the vessel begins taking damage at a rate of 1 point per round for every additional weight increment, reduced by the vessel's damage reduction. When destroyed, the numinus will vacate normally, and the construct can sink. Water numina cannot aid in the creation of fire based items.

Energy: Movement rates increase by +10 per artificer level. Additionally, a free energy numinus can animate normal matter as the spell *animate object*, up to the maximum size the artificer can control for a number of rounds per day equaling the artificer's Intelligence bonus. Energy numina cannot aid in the creation of items with effects that slow or arrest movement.

Vessels

A numinus can animate almost any matter, but an artificer who pays for fine materials is rewarded. The Vessel Material Table below lists the benefits and penalties of a given vessel type.

All vessels require a Craft (sculpting) check to complete, vs. a DC based on the material (listed below). Each other relevant Craft skill in which the artificer has 5 or more ranks grants a +2 synergy bonus to the primary Craft check. For example, Craft (woodwork-

ing) bestows a +2 bonus to the creation of vessels composed of wood.

Skilled Constructs

An artificer-created numina construct may be given skills, based on either Dex, Str, or if it has intelligence, Int. A construct may never have more than 5 ranks of a given skill, and may never have more skills than its Wisdom bonus. This allows for the creation of minor task-performing constructs. Any tools, such as lock-picks, are extra, and must be masterwork (without bestowing a bonus to skill checks). A construct may always take 10 on skill checks, but may not take 20.

Cost for a Numinus' Skill Rating

Rank	Cost
1	1,000 gp
2	2,500 gp
3	5,000 gp
4	8,500 gp
5	13,000 gp

Vessel Material Table

Material	Hardness	Natural AC	Base Artificer Cost per HD*
Miscellaneous	0	+0	10 gp
Flesh	0	+0	500 gp
Paper	0	-4	5 gp
Rope	0	+2	30 gp
Rag	0	-2	15 gp
Straw	0	-2	20 gp
Glass	1	+10	300 gp
Ice	0	+5	100 gp
Wood	5	+8	200 gp
Clay	6	+14	2,000 gp
Stone	8	+18	3,000 gp
Brass	10	+17	3,500 gp
Iron	10	+22	4,000 gp
Mithral	15	+30	9,000 gp
Adamantine	20	+40	12,000 gp

* This cost includes the cost of materials, components, and tools, and is modified by the artificer's reduced item creation cost. These costs can also be cut in half if the artificer can acquire the materials in some way other than purchasing them.

Vessel Properties and Construction

Miscellaneous: Built from cheaply acquired goods, such as bottles, jugs, twine, or twigs. Use base construct + numinus type only. Construction time is 1 hour per HD. (DC 10)

Flesh: Can be infected to carry a disease and transmit on attack. (A Fort save negates as normal for the disease.) Immune to all spells except that fire and cold based effects act as *slow* for 2d6 rounds, and electricity effects heal 1 hp for every 3 damage. Construction time is 5 hours per HD. (DC 13)

Paper: Maximum hit points of 2 per HD. Takes 4x damage from fire, 1/2 damage from bludgeoning. Construction time is 5 minutes per HD. (no check)

Rope: Can unravel to pass through openings of up to 2" wide. Gains constrict attack. Takes 2x damage from fire. Construction time is 10 minutes per HD. (no check)

Rag: Gains constrict, blind attacks (see below). Construction time is 5 minutes per HD. (DC 10)

Straw: 2x damage from fire, 1/2 damage from piercing. Can be grappled by piercing weapons. Construction time is 10 minutes per HD. (DC 10)

Glass: Takes 2x damage from sonic attacks. Immune

to acid. Construction time is 1 hour per HD. (DC 11)

Ice: Takes 2x damage from fire effects, which act as *slow* for 3d6 rounds. Cold effects heal 1 hp for every 3 points of damage. Construction time is 1 hour per HD. (DC 11)

Wood: Takes 2x damage from fire. Construction time is 1 hour per HD. (DC 12)

Clay: Immune to slashing or piercing. Clay sculpture will serve. Construction time is 2 hours per HD. (DC 15)

Stone: Immune to all spells except that *rock to mud* acts as *slow* (2d6 rounds), *mud to rock* heals totally, and *stone to flesh* makes vulnerable to slashing or piercing for 1 round. Stone sculpture or rocks will serve. Construction time is 5 hours per HD. (DC 17)

Brass: Immune to all spells except that electricity acts as *hold monster* for 3 rounds, fire heals 1 hp for every 2 damage, and rust affects the construct normally. Brass sculpture or objects will serve. Construction time is 7 hours per HD. (DC 20)

Iron: Immune to all spells except that electricity effects act as *slow* for 3 rounds, fire effects heal 1 hp for every 3 points of damage, and rust affects them normally. Iron sculpture or objects will serve. Construction time is 8 hours per HD. (DC 20)

Mithral: Immune to all spells. Electricity heals 1 hp per 2 damage. Mithral objects will serve. Construction time is 10 hours per HD. (DC 30)

Adamantine: Immune to all spells. Adamantine objects will serve. Construction time is 15 hours per HD. (DC 40)

Material Special Abilities

Hardness: An animated object generally has the same hardness it had before it was animated.

Blind (Ex): A sheetlike animated object such as a carpet or tapestry can grapple an opponent up to three sizes

larger. The object makes a normal grapple check. If it gets a hold, it wraps itself around the opponent's head, blinding that creature until removed. The blinded creature cannot make Spot, Search, or Track checks and suffers a -6 circumstance penalty to other checks related to perception, such as Listen.

Constrict (Ex): A flexible animated object such as a rope, vine, or rug deals automatic slam damage with a successful grapple check against creatures up to one size larger than itself. An object of at least Large size can make constrict attacks against multiple creatures at once, if they all are at least two sizes smaller than the object and fit under it.

Trample (Ex): An animated object of at least Large size and with a hardness of at least 10 can trample creatures two or more sizes smaller for the object's slam damage. Opponents who do not make attacks of opportunity against the object can attempt Reflex saves (DC 10 + 1/2 object's HD) to halve the damage.

Improved Speed (Ex): The base speeds given in the statistics block assume that animated objects lurch, rock, or slither along. Objects with two legs (statues, ladders) or a similar shape that allows faster movement have a speed bonus of 10 feet. Objects with multiple legs (tables, chairs) have a speed bonus of 20 feet. Wheeled objects gain a speed bonus of 40 feet. Objects might have additional modes of movement. A wooden object can float and has a swim speed equal to half its land speed. A rope or similar sinuous object has a climb speed equal to half its land speed. A sheetlike object can fly (clumsy maneuverability) at half its normal speed. These benefits and limitations are preempted by numinus types that bestow these methods of movement, and the speed entries for these movement types refer to constructs animated by appropriate numina.

Sample Numinus Construct:

Ornithopter, Triskatar

Huge Construct

Hit Dice: 8d10 (44 hp)

Initiative: -1 (Dex)

Speed: 20 ft. hop, 70 ft. flight (poor)

AC: 24 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +17 natural)

Base Attack/Grapple: +9/-

Full Attack/Attack: Slam +9 melee

Damage: Slam 2d6+5

Space/Reach: 20 ft./10 ft.

Special Qualities: Air Creation, hardness 10, immunities

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -3

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1

An ornithopter is a flying construct created by binding an air numinus into a winged vessel. There are versions that bind the rendered salts of a bird, but these are rarer, since bird spirits don't automatically bestow flightworthiness and are harder to control.

In a Triskatar ornithopter, the vessel may be of any material and construction. Many use an avian motif when designing the vessel, regardless of the animating spirit. Most commonly available ornithopters are built of brass, which is reflected in the above profile.

The standard ornithopter can support up to 5 tons of weight, and has seating space for up to 4 Medium creatures.

Air Creation: As an air numinus.

Immunities: As per a brass creation.

Moderate Transmutation; CL 14th; Breath of Life ability, air numinus, Huge construct vessel; Price: 28,000 gp base (reduced by artificer class abilities)

Constructs from Rendered Salts

Golems created from the rendered salts of a creature retain the mind of the creature and their natural tendencies. They are golems that act like animals. Rendered creatures without intelligence are less versatile, requiring that their form not be substantially different from their original vessel. For example, a rendered earthworm incorporated into a vessel with wings (or even legs) would not have the self-image or instincts to make use of them.

More intelligent creatures can be trained to make use of unusual appendages or abilities if they are capable of being trained with the Handle Animal skill (DCs range from 10 for similar capabilities to 25 for unusual powers, such as flight for a land-dwelling creature). The Ride skill is required to ride rendered constructs.

It is important to remember that a creature rendered into its essential salts is still alive once reconstituted. It still has its former personality and skills, and can access its attacks and methods of defense if its current vessel has the capability to use them. It retains its habits and drives, and a method for delivering familiar stimuli must be built into the vessel to prevent the beast from going mad. A handler controls the creature by doling out these sensations as needed. For example, a riding dog placed within a steel vessel would normally have the desire to eat, sleep, and play. These drives can be met by the handler via methods built into the vessel. A hunger drive might be met or triggered by filling or emptying a container that ties into the spirit's impression of its "stomach," while a sleep drive could be manipulated by raising or lowering a cylinder.

These feelings and needs can be suppressed when necessary, but must be fulfilled at semi-regular intervals or the creature may go berserk (Will save vs. DC 10 every day of neglect, +2 for each additional day). A berserk construct vehicle fights to escape restraints and goes through the motions of sating its needs, remaining berserk until its needs

are met (artificially). It is confused by its inability to meet its instinctual needs, pacing wildly and trying to eat if "hungry," or breaking objects if "tired." Needless to say, a berserk construct vehicle can cause a lot of damage in its suffering. It takes a standard action to perform the action that sates a specific drive.

Creating a Construct From Rendered Salts

The base creature has a great effect on the final construct when rendered salts are involved. The base stats according to size and material are used, as with all constructs. If the creature has a flying speed, the vessel must be constructed of wood or lighter materials, and maneuverability is reduced two categories from the base creature. Swimmers can only swim if their vessel is buoyant enough.

The rendered construct may be built with natural attacks similar to its original form, and it will know how to use them. Base damage (before modification for Strength) is based on size:

Size	Slam/Gore	Bite	Claw
Diminutive	1d2	—	1
Tiny	1d3	1	1d2
Small	1d4	1d2	1d3
Medium	1d6	1d3	1d4
Large	1d8	1d4	1d6
Huge	2d6	1d6	1d8
Gargantuan	2d8	1d8	2d6
Colossal	4d6	2d6	2d8

Special attacks and qualities may carry over to the final construct, especially those that are mental in nature, or physical abilities that are emulated in the construct vehicle. These may or may not stack with construct abilities, depending on the individual power. The following types of abilities automatically carry over to the new form: class abilities by character level; extraordinary abilities not dependent on an emitted substance or an organ; mind-affecting abilities (the creature still has its mind); spell-like abilities; skill ranks (but remember to adjust the total score for changes in size and ability scores); supernatural abilities not dependent upon the creature's former

type, physiology, or body (shapeshifting and the like do not carry over to the new form); regeneration, fast healing, or any such powers. Use common sense to adjudicate.

Reflex and Will saving throws are identical to the base creature. Base Fort saves are based on the construct size: Diminutive +1, Tiny +1, Small +2, Medium +3, Large +4, Huge +6, Gargantuan +10, Colossal +16.

Sample Rendered Construct:

Scorpion Golem

Huge Construct

Hit Dice: 8d10 (44 hp)

Initiative: +0 (Dex)

Speed: 40 ft.

AC: 30 (-2 size, +22 natural)

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/-

Attack: 2 claws +9 melee

Full Attack: 2 claws +9 melee, sting +4 melee

Damage: 2 claws 1d8+5, sting 1d4 and poison

Space/Reach: 10 ft.

Special Attacks: Improved grab

Special Qualities: Construct, immunities, hardness 10

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +0

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 11, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2

Skills: Climb +13, Hide +1, Spot +7

Challenge Rating: 5

Scorpion golems are fairly common, employed by the Brendirian military. They are built to resemble enormous iron scorpions that carry riders within a cage set into their backs. This example was rendered from a Tiny monstrous scorpion.

Poison (Ex): This model has a tiny flask of poison built into its sting which delivers Large scorpion venom (Injury DC 18, Initial 1d6 Str, Secondary 1d6 Str). There are 10 doses within.

Immunities (Ex): As an iron construct.

Moderate Transmutation; CL 12th; Breath of Life ability, rendered salts of a Tiny monstrous scorpion, Huge construct vehicle; Price: 32,000 gp + 2,000 gp for 10 doses of large scorpion poison.

EIDOLON

Thraxis never left its golden age behind, thus feudalism is a foreign concept. Chivalry is out of place here, and the brand of pantheism available in this world precludes the kind of devotion to a single god or set of ideals required of the traditional paladin. Industrious GMs may find that there is still a place for the standard paladin, but it is necessarily a less prominent one. Therefore the role of the paladin must be adapted to better fit this world. The classical inspirations of this setting suggest a more appropriate interpretation of the archetypal supernatural hero. In *Morningstar*, the eidolon fills this niche nicely.

The eidolon is a hero of the people. He stands as a paragon of the ideals his culture holds dear. With the strength of his heart, and his fearless and clever deeds, he earns a place in legend. Though an eidolon need never worship a god, he will be noticed by them, as either an adversary or a champion. An eidolon has the potential to be a great hero, sacrificing his own well being for the sake of others. He may also be a terrible villain, representing everything his twisted culture holds dear. Others are mere cads, pandering to the masses, and having no real convictions of their own aside for a vague affinity for the actions attributed to their alignment. Such shallow eidolons rarely last long, however.

Adventures: The typical eidolon cares little for treasure, except where it helps him attain glory or complete missions. If he can get away with it, an eidolon may pass up a low profile adventure that poses no immediate threat in exchange for a more dramatic one. Still, there's something to be said for rescuing a child's stranded pet, or hunting down a local menace. In battle, an eidolon will choose to take on the most powerful enemy, or to brave the most threatening danger, preferably in sight of witnesses.

Characteristics: An eidolon feeds upon the same divine energy that feeds the gods. Like a god, he can use this energy to perform miracles, only an eidolon's miracles are centered upon himself. Many eyewitnesses are never even aware that some of his deeds are fueled by magic. An eidolon has a strong intuition, and uses his power to accomplish great deeds, increasing his own raw abilities for a short time to do what needs to be done. He draws on the power of the belief his people have in him, and may use this to recover from hardship at a much faster rate than others.

Alignment: An eidolon always stands for something, good or bad. He may only be neutral good or neutral evil. If he ever changes alignment, he ceases to advance as an eidolon, until such time as he changes his alignment back, or to the opposite one, though the glory of his past deeds sustains the abilities he has should this never happen. Additionally, an eidolon may not be of the opposite alignment of his own people with regards to the good/evil axis, and may only switch to an opposite alignment if he also aligns himself with a hated foe of his former society.

Religion: Eidolons choose who and whether to worship as any member of their culture would. If they come from a particularly devout culture, they will certainly pay lip service to a deity



at the very least. All things being neutral, they often choose a deity that represents strength, power, or their alignment.

Background: An idolon was often the most popular person in his community. Athletic, charming, and lucky, others were always drawn to him. He was the golden child, good at almost everything he tried, and even his rare failures were accepted with stunning grace and a nonchalant shrug. Even so, he may never have realized he was destined for greatness. Of course, he might have always known he was somehow better than everyone, much to the ire of those he upstaged. Many idolons earn life-long enemies in their early years, who are fueled by jealousy, just as the idolon is fueled by hero worship. When two or more idolons get together, as is common at the Brendirian Games, the results can be disastrous or incredibly entertaining as they challenge each other, striving to win glory for themselves or their homeland. In friendship or hatred, idolons usually have each other's respect.

Races: Every race has their heroes, and so any race may become an idolon. Still, halflings and gnomes are least likely to become idolons, not generally holding the values common to most idolons.

Other Classes: Idolons realize that as powerful as they are, they can't do everything. They appreciate competent support from other group members, especially in areas where they

have no expertise. While not rendering fighters redundant by any stretch, they tend to overshadow them in the public eye. If religious, they can get along famously with clerics, but if not, they tend to rub holy men and women the wrong way. Wizards are fine in their eyes, but sorcerers have more in common with idolons, with a similar capability for ego. Rogues are respected for their stealth and willingness to accomplish the things an idolon cannot do himself, either for lack of skill or concern for reputation.

Game Rule Information

Idolons have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Combat is important for the idolon, and thus they depend on Strength and Constitution. Dexterity is important, since they generally wear only light armor. Charisma is also important for its ability to influence others with the idolon's abilities.

Alignment: Neutral good or neutral evil.

Hit Die: d10

Class Skills: The idolon's class skills (and key abilities for them) are: Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Knowledge (local) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), and Tumble (Dex).

Table 1-12: The Idolon

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort	Saves		Special
			Ref	Will	
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Divine Aura, Right Action, Heroic Boost 1/day
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	Divine Grace, Bonus Ability Score Increase, Aegis
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	Aura of Courage, Divine Health
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Spell Use, Exceptional Weapon
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Sanctum, Favored Ally
6	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Heroic Boost 2/day, Inspire
7	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	Favored Son
8	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	Charm the Fates
9	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	Heroic Boost 3/day
10	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Bonus Ability Score Increase
11	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+3	
12	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+4	Heroic Boost 4/day
13	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+4	
14	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+4	
15	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+5	Heroic Boost 5/day
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+5	
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5	
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+6	Heroic Boost 6/day, Bonus Ability Score Increase
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6	
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	Spiritual Transformation

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The eidolon is familiar with all simple and martial weapons, and light and medium armor. They are great warriors, and their people require that they give the impression of invulnerability by minimizing their armor. Note that the eidolon's Aegis power is nullified while wearing armor better than a chain shirt (see below).

Aura of Courage, Divine Grace, Divine Health: These abilities work exactly as the paladin abilities of the same names.

Aura: An eidolon possesses a strong aura of good or evil, depending upon his alignment.

Right Action (Su): When a difficult choice needs to be made, the eidolon receives a hint from the universe. At will, the eidolon may concentrate for 1 full round and benefit from the effects of an *augury* spell. The answer comes as a "gut feeling," and usually not an outside voice.

Heroic Boost (Su): When enough is at stake, the eidolon may temporarily increase his physical capabilities to get the job done. When he is being observed by people fervently depending on the success of his deeds, the eidolon may temporarily add his eidolon level to either Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity scores for 1 round. The overall ability bonus gained is determined normally. Activating this ability is a free action. This boost does not stack with itself, but multiple expenditures of an eidolon's daily allotment of this ability may be used simultaneously on separate abilities. As a rule of thumb, the GM may decide that the eidolon's PC allies can only encourage this ability to manifest when one of them or the eidolon himself is at 0

hp, or when certain death is otherwise looming, since facing danger is a matter of course for adventurers. Other acceptable instances are within the purview of the GM.

Aegis (Su): The character is protected by the people's faith in him. He receives spell resistance of 10 + 1/2 his eidolon level, and a morale bonus to AC equal to 1/2 his eidolon level while wearing light armor or worse. The perception of invulnerability is important, but he may wear a single additional piece of minor armor, such as *bracers of defense* or a buckler. Rings or amulets do not count as armor towards this restriction.

Bonus Ability Score Increase (Ex): An eidolon receives extra ability score increases at levels 2nd, 10th, and 18th levels, in addition to the ones all characters receive at levels divisible by four. These may be applied anywhere the eidolon wishes.

Spell Use: At fourth level, an eidolon may begin to cast a select few Wisdom-based divine spells. An eidolon must meditate in advance to gain these spells, drawing upon the faith his people have in him.

Exceptional Weapon (Su): At 4th level, an Eidolon receives the ability to grant any melee weapon he wields an enhancement bonus equal to 1/4 of his level (rounded down), while he wields it. This bonus acts to overcome any resistances a creature may have, as if it were the appropriate type (e.g., fire), but does not increase attack rolls, or deal additional damage.

Favored Ally (Su): At fifth level, the eidolon may designate one of his lower or equal leveled allies as favored. This closest friend may now also benefit from spells that the eidolon casts with a target of self. Additionally, if the favored ally is humanoid, when they fight back to back, they cannot be flanked. Each benefits from partial cover, from the whirling weapons and distracting maneuvers of the other. If the eidolon has no allies who travel with him, he may instead choose to take the special mount as listed under the paladin entry in the PHB.

Inspire (Su): By uttering a few words of praise, the eidolon can bring out the best in others. As a move equivalent action, the eidolon may give up two of his daily heroic boosts in order to allow another to benefit from his heroic boosts or from his Right Action ability. The heroic boost use of the power may be used any time the eidolon wishes, can be applied to *any* of the other character's ability scores or skills and uses the eidolon's level, not the beneficiary's. He may use this ability half as many times as he can use heroic boost, with each use counting as two uses of heroic boost.

Sanctum (Su): The eidolon may find solace in his thoughts. To use this ability, the eidolon must travel to a specific and remote isolated place within his homeland to meditate and train. Upon meditating here for one night, curses are removed, the eidolon begins to heal hit point and attribute damage at 3 times the normal rate, and may train to regain lost levels at the rate of one per day. The eidolon's sanctum must be in an uninhabited area, and if the character is disturbed, that entire day doesn't count towards healing or regaining lost levels. He may allow a number of allies equaling his Charisma bonus to accompany him and aid in his training, as long as they single-mindedly focus on the act of helping him train.

Favored Son (or Daughter) (Su): The eidolon has the ear of the universe. By following his heart, and acting in harmony

Table 1-13: Eidolon Spells Per Day

Character Level	Spell Level			
	1	2	3	4
1	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	-
4	0	-	-	-
5	0	-	-	-
6	1	-	-	-
7	1	-	-	-
8	1	0	-	-
9	1	0	-	-
10	1	1	-	-
11	1	1	0	-
12	1	1	1	-
13	1	1	1	-
14	2	1	1	0
15	2	1	1	1
16	2	2	1	1
17	2	2	2	1
18	3	2	2	1
19	3	3	3	2
20	3	3	3	3

with his nature, he receives the aid he needs at a given moment. Once per day, he may apply his Charisma bonus to attempt any skill that would take one round or less to complete, even if he does not possess any ranks in the skill, and even if the skill cannot normally be used untrained.

Charm the Fates (Su): Once per week, the character may decide that an event that negatively impacted him or another was not as bad as it initially seemed. He may decide that a character that was seemingly killed is merely on death's door, stabilized at -9 hp, or that the character that fell off of the edge of a cliff landed on a ledge a short distance below, also on death's door. Similarly, the poison that killed an entire village may have been of weak concentration, merely putting them into a coma-like sleep, or that a destroyed artifact is in fact repairable. If this power is used to oppose another eidolon's use of the same, the competitors must make opposed Will saves. No matter the outcome, Charm the Fates is expended for the week.

The player must present a rational explanation for why the event did not occur the way it appeared to, and may not directly contradict the events as they were described by the GM. If this is not possible, the eidolon may undertake a quest to rectify the situation at the GM's option. This power may never be used to rectify a trivial event, such as a low stakes game of dice or an attempt to check for secret doors while on a treasure hunt.

Spiritual Transformation (Su): The long hard road the eidolon has traveled pays off. The character becomes immortal, barring violence. He is immune to all disease and poison, and need never rest or eat. His type becomes outsider.

Alignment Restriction: An eidolon must always maintain absolute neutrality in the face of law and chaos, and must exemplify either good or evil, depending on which his culture admires more. The eidolon is required to be neutral with respect to law and chaos because he must identify with the most people possible within his culture. He must embody a strict good or evil ideal because he feeds upon the strong emotions that are evoked by his deeds.

Dharma: The eidolon has a strong sense of his role in the cosmos. He must always act if there is the slightest chance of

success, delaying as little as possible. This is not an impulsive trait, but rather a compulsive one. He will plan only as much as necessary, or as much as is allowed by the current time frame. For example, if a barbarian horde was three days ride away from his village, he need not confront them head on, but he is required to act to the best of his abilities, preparing the villagers for the onslaught or otherwise working against the enemy. *He can never turn his back on a conflict.* He may never run from battle except to fulfill a greater need than his own. (This doesn't mean that evil eidolons are selfless, just that they have higher goals than the common evil character.) An eidolon is often thrust into action by his own nature, even when it would not be the safest course of action. He will frequently find himself in direct conflict with local governments, temples, or even gods themselves as he acts within his nature.

Code of Conduct: An eidolon does not answer to the gods, but instead to the people. He must always act within the parameters outlined in the values section of the region he hails from and defend any slight to his culture that he witnesses. If he ever shows weakness or his reputation is besmirched, even if he is innocent of the infraction, he will lose his eidolon powers. For this reason many set themselves apart from the masses, not allowing others to see their humanity.

Reduced Feat Acquisition: Eidolons do not receive feats as often as other classes. They tend to rely on what comes naturally, and do not push themselves to find hidden talents or to learn new techniques. Eidolons receive the standard feat at 1st level with a bonus feat if they are human, and one at 5th, 10th, 15th, and 20th levels.

Multiclass Restrictions: An eidolon may only multiclass once in his career, and this class must be one that also represents the ideals of his home culture. For example, if the character hails from a culture that reveres wizardry, he may multiclass as a wizard. He still takes any pertinent multiclassing penalties unless the class is also favored by his race.

Ex-Eidolons: If the eidolon fails to live up to the requirements of his nature, he will lose every single special ability he has gained, including ability increases.

Eidolon Spells

1st-Level Eidolon Spells

Bless
Bless weapon
Cause fear
Detect poison
Divine favor
Expeditions retreat
Endure elements
Guidance
Jump
Resistance
True strike
Virtue

2nd-Level Eidolon Spells

Calm emotions
Charm person
Doom
Endurance
Resist elements
Scare
Undetectable alignment

3rd-Level Eidolon Spells

Discern lies
Entrhall
Emotion
Fear

4th-Level Eidolon Spells

Death ward
Divine power
Freedom of movement
Holy/unholy sword
Status
Shout

Morningstar Prestige Classes

DOLPHIN LEGIONNAIRE

The war with Hrum Vaat has begun. Though Hrum Vaat hasn't begun its assault on land, at least one empire, Brendir, wants to make certain it never does. The dolphin legionnaires are specially trained aquatic warriors who adapt to life in the seas. They are masters of underwater maneuvers and are used primarily in that capacity, though they often serve point on naval missions, leading the way for warships. On land, their abilities are not without value. They can eventually breathe water and resist cold, and wherever there are ponds, rivers, or lakes, there is a place for the legionnaire to shine.

Hit Die: d10

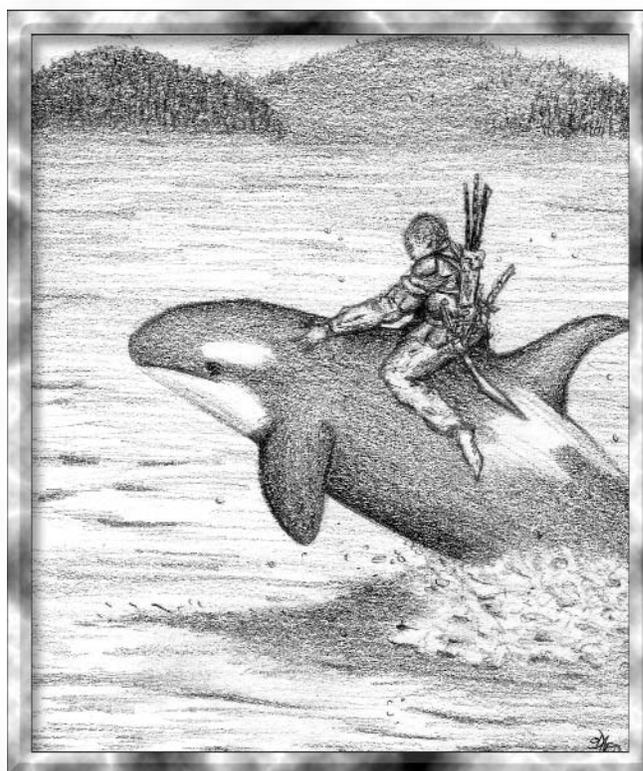
Requirements

To join the ranks of the dolphin legions, a character must meet the following requirements:

Base Attack Bonus: +7

Skills: Swim, 8 ranks

Military Service: A prospective legionnaire must have served time in the Brendirian legions at some point. He need not be active at the time of taking this prestige class, but must be willing to serve when the call is made. Most PC legionaries will be members of the reserve, and may vouch for their allies when they are called to duty. Their allies may join him, though he is considered their ranking officer by Brendir for the purposes of the mission, and they must find their own methods of survival underwater.



Game Rule Information

Class Skills: Escape Artist (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Listen (Wis), Knowledge (the sea) (Int), Ride (Dex), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Wis), Tumble (Dex), Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Table 1-14: The Dolphin Legionnaire

Level	Base	Fort	Saves		Special
	Attack Bonus		Ref	Will	
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Aquatic Maneuvers, Iron Lungs
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	Speed of the Porpoise
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	Hardened to the Deep
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Oceanic Adept
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	
6	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Bonus Feat
7	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	Aquatic Mount
8	+8/+3	+5	+2	+2	
9	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	
10	+10/+5	+6	+3	+3	Child of the Deep

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Dolphin Legionnaires are proficient in and all simple and martial weapons, and medium armor.

Aquatic Maneuvers (Ex): The character begins to learn how to fight effectively while submerged. He receives no penalties for fighting underwater, as long as he has a method of breathing. While holding his breath, all penalties are cut in half.

Iron Lungs (Ex): If the character has not taken it already, he gains free access to the Iron Lungs feat, and may take any feats or use any powers that are dependent upon it.

Speed of the Porpoise (Ex): The dolphin legionnaire has learned a great deal about the dynamics of water. On a successful Swim check (DC 16), he may swim at his full walk speed as a full round action, and half that speed as a move-equivalent action. Even on a failed roll, he may move at 1/4 speed.

Hardened to the Deep (Ex): The character no longer suffers from hypothermia in cold water. The character has developed a thin subcutaneous layer of blubber, and receives a +4 bonus to saves against supernatural cold. The character no longer suffers from fatigue while swimming.

Oceanic Adept (Ex): The character may use skills and abilities with no penalty while underwater even if they would normally be exceedingly difficult but not absolutely impossible. For example, a wizard could cast spells with verbal components while underwater but still could not cast fire based spells, and a ranger could track creatures underwater but could not fire a bow effectively.

Aquatic Mount (Su): While underwater, the legionnaire can summon an aquatic mount that will serve him and allow him to ride until he exits the sea. The legionnaire must provide food, or allow for the mount to gather sustenance normally (2 hours) over extended periods. This is not necessarily the same creature every time the character summons a mount, unless the GM rules otherwise. This mount obeys and carries the legion-

naire, but does not gain any special powers. Roll 1d6 to determine the mount that appears: 1 = porpoise, 2 = shark (Medium size), 3 = octopus, 4 = capricorn, 5 = hippocamp, 6 = orca.

Child of the Deep: The character's many encounters with powerful Aquan signatures bestow a gift upon him. He may now freely breath underwater at any depth, and may move at his run speed while underwater.

INQUISITOR

A fantastic detective, the inquisitor is charged with rooting out those who jeopardize the stability of society in the Nine Empires.

The Inquisition was formed to root out evil as it begins to grow within the empires. Inquisitors are members of this world-wide organization. In particular, they belong to a sub-order called the Blade of the Inquisition, the most active and well-known order. This order is charged with face to face confrontation of the dark forces, as well as solving murders and other crimes before they attract more evil to an area.

See page 154 for more information on the Inquisition.

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To become an inquisitor, a character must meet the following requirements:

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Alignment: Any non-chaotic, any non-evil. A chaotic mindset is considered to be too untrustworthy to be admitted into the Inquisition. A character's alignment must be determinate; thus a character could not be a member of both the Inquisition and a Morning Star Apostle.

Table 1-15: The Inquisitor

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Saves			Special
		Fort	Ref	Will	
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Recognize Evidence
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Interrogate 1/day
3	+2	+1	+1	+3	Diabolical Link, Hunter's Focus +2
4	+3	+1	+1	+4	Interrogate 2/day
5	+3	+1	+1	+4	Bind Evil
6	+4	+2	+2	+5	Interrogate 3/day, Hunter's Focus +4
7	+5	+2	+2	+5	Expert Evasion
8	+6/+1	+2	+2	+6	Interrogate 4/day
9	+6/+1	+3	+3	+6	Hunter's Focus +6
10	+7/+2	+3	+3	+7	Interrogate 5/day



Oaths of Binding: Upon becoming an inquisitor, the character must undergo rituals which ensure that they never betray the inquisition. This is enforced in two ways. To enter the class, the inquisitor must take the Oath of Binding, which allows a single member (called the inquisitor's "handler") of the Heart of the Inquisition (the order that does research into threats) to always know the location of the character. To advance beyond 5th level, the inquisitor must then take the Oath of Submission, which allows the character's handler to scry upon him, and to send attacks (any spell) at him with no save, and from any distance, should he betray the Inquisition.

Game Rule Information

Class Skills: Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Listen (Wis), Ride (Dex), Search (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Inquisitors are proficient in all simple and martial weapons and light armor.

Recognize Evidence (Ex): On a successful Spot check (DC 10), the inquisitor can recognize an item that was used in a crime, or the tools of a foul trade such as necromancy. He can also tell in general terms who won a scuffle when neither party is present, the magical descriptors of any special powers that were used, and generally reconstruct the basic scenario that played out some time within the last 24 hours. He will be able to tell the general size, weight, and possibly even hair color (at +2 DC) of a suspect. For every day beyond the first, the DC increases by 5.

Interrogate (Su): At 2nd level, the Inquisitor may ask a pointed, one part question that the subject feels obligated to answer truthfully. A Will save is necessary to resist the effect (DC 10 + Inquisitor level). The character gains an additional daily use of this ability at 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th levels.

Diabolical Link (Su): By taking a portion of a slain monster, the inquisitor may know if the person who created or summoned the monster is within 100 feet. By collecting blood or a piece of a live quarry, he may know the precise direction of his prey, along a plane parallel to the ground.

Hunter's Focus (Su): The inquisitor studies his quarry. He may choose any one creature he has linked to with Diabolical Link. He learns their habits, motives, and gains an instinctual understanding of their thought processes. While hunting a specific known foe, the inquisitor gains a bonus to any checks made against that particular foe. These apply to any skill and attack rolls, but not to damage. The inquisitor may not change his quarry until it is either caught or dead. This bonus is +2 at 3rd level, and increases by +2 every three levels.

Bind Evil (Su): The inquisitor may now bind another against doing harm, so that they may be brought to justice. Any time the Inquisitor could normally deliver a coup de grace, he can instead deliver a special attack or place a ward upon the foe that prevents the defeated foe from using his spells or powers for 1d4 days. His will is gone, and he will not attempt to escape during this time.

Expert Evasion (Su): The inquisitor gains a +10 bonus to saves versus one specific magic descriptor.

Table 1-16: The Morning Star Apostle

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort	Saves		Special
			Ref	Will	
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Inscrutable
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Foreknowledge
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Appraise Destiny
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Dire Shouts
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Sense Change, Font of Prophecy

MORNING STAR APOSTLE

There are those who have been touched by the Canticle, to become its living voice. Most are destroyed by the contact, but some who can compartmentalize the alien voice of the Prophecy survive relatively intact. These few become Morning Star Apostles, able to use the Canticle for their own ends.

Hit Die: d6

Requirements

Spells: Any spell use

Skills: Knowledge (The Canticle), 5 Ranks

Game Rule Information

Class Skills: Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Knowledge (The Canticle) (Int), Sense Motive (Int).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Morning Star Apostles are proficient in all simple weapons.

Spell Advancement: A Morning Star Apostle gains spells per day as if advancing as a member of his previous class. Thus a 10th level wizard who was also a 4th level Morning Star Apostle receives spells as if he were a 14th level wizard. No other benefits, such as familiar powers, are gained.

Inscrutable (Su): The character's alignment may never be gleaned by any method. In addition, the Morning Star Apostle adds +2 per level of Morningstar Apostle to Bluff checks when others use Sense Motive against her.

Foreknowledge (Su): The character may perform a minor divination, to know the general types of magics he will require for the mission ahead. As he reads off his available spells, the GM must say yes or no, as to whether the spell will be useful in the coming mission. This ability makes no differentiation between a spell that has minor use or great use in the coming adventure. Thus, if there were a hidden door that led to a dead-end room with a single gp, this power would indicate a yes answer for the appropriate spells.

Appraise Destiny (Su): At will, a Morning Star Apostle can determine the relative value of a person, place or thing, in relation to the Canticle, if any. He can tell if current events are weaving themselves around the target, and whether the figure is actively or passively involved. If applicable, the verse and symbolism used to describe the target springs immediately to mind.

Dire Shouts (Ex): Upon a successful Knowledge (The Canticle) check (DC 10), the Morning Star Apostle may utter a verse of the Canticle that has a specific and disturbing meaning to a group of targets within 30 feet. If the target fails a Will save (DC 10 + Morning Star Apostle character level), he will become confused per the spell *confusion*. This ability is not language dependent, since the Canticle is nothing if not adaptive. Each victim hears the verse in his own language, and in fact, may hear a different verse.



Sense Change: Once per week, on a successful Knowledge (The Canticle) check (DC 15), the character may predict what affect one action would have on the Canticle, and how it might adapt. He can also sense when the Canticle is adapting whenever that occurs.

Font of Prophecy: The Apostle is now a true vessel for the Canticle. He never needs a copy of the Canticle to research a verse, and is able to recall any part of the Dark Prophecy at will.

MOSSTROOPER

Mosstroopers are the Empress' special guard, her generals, and her soldiers. They usually accompany her emissaries on rare diplomatic missions. They are elite warrior-tricksters, exemplifying the fey mindset in their deeds. They are formidable foes, while retaining their fey nature. Often mosstroopers are sent into human society under other guises, to gather information for one of the Empress' long term plots.

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

Race: True elf. Any type of fey elf may become a mosstrooper, as long as they meet the other requirements.

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Game Rule Information

Class Skills: Balance (Dex), Climb (Dex), Disguise (Int),

Escape Artist (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Gather Information (Int), Perform (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Mosstroopers are proficient in all simple and martial weapons, medium armor, and shields (but not tower shields).

Green Thumb (Su): At 1st level, mosstroopers gain the ability to command or rebuke plant creatures, as an evil cleric commands or rebukes undead.

Fey March (Ex): The mosstrooper's speed increases by +10 ft. per 2 levels. He will never tire of walking and may travel without rest.

Wyrd (Sp): Only the most special of the Empress's minions are privy to a special form of magic: the Wyrd, the secret language of the Empress. Her Mosstroopers gain the ability to utter choice words once per day from the powerful language of the Empress without destroying themselves. In each case, the Wyrd functions indefinitely, until a specific set of circumstances are met. Wyrd – Invisibility functions as an *invisibility* spell. Wyrd – Flight functions as a *fly* spell, or *baste*, if the character is already flying. Wyrd – Changeling functions as *polymorph self*. Each use of a Wyrd lasts until the next sunrise or sunset, whichever comes first, or until dispelled. Note that to walk, Flight must be dispelled, and that attacking dispels Invisibility.

Flicker (Sp): The mosstrooper can now create flickering distractions around him, giving a -4 circumstance penalty to opponents' attacks against the mosstrooper.

Special Mount (Ex): The mosstrooper may take a special mount, appropriate to a fey of his status. He must capture this mount on one of the fey's famed hunts. If he subdues the creature, it is his. This creature may be any animal, fey, or plant creature that could reasonably carry a humanoid. It will always have some strange mark or characteristic such as red eyes or an eerie corona, that hints that it is touched by the fey. Once captured,

the mount benefits from all powers as a paladin's special mount.

Cloak of Vines (Su): The mosstrooper becomes wreathed in ambulatory vines, which can attack at the mosstrooper's highest attack bonus. Each round he gains 1d4 additional attacks which do 1d4 piercing damage. Optionally, the mosstrooper may opt to entangle a foe per the spell as a caster of his level.

Code of Conduct: Mosstroopers may not allow undead or aberrations to live. They must never question the Empress, and may not associate with anyone that abuses nature, such as necromancers or creators of aberrations.

Ex-Mosstroopers: Mosstroopers who willingly betray the Empress lose all special abilities and benefits, including the special mount. They automatically dwindle, taking maximum Constitution damage and becoming the most hopeless form of muryan. They may never recover their status as true elves. The Empress is unforgiving of her noblest warriors, and no amount of atonement will restore a fallen mosstrooper.

OVATE

The ovate is equally at home in the jungles of the senate, or the relative civility of the wilds. His woodland powers are complimented and expanded by abilities that can be used in the cities as well.

Ovates seek to bridge the gap between the cities and the wilderness. Many were raised in the cities and came to appreciate the wilderness later in life, or vice versa. A druid who becomes an ovate is likely to use her wildshape power to take on the form of urban wildlife, such as rats, ravens, gulls, or chameleons, and a ranger is likely to take a city-dwelling race as a favored enemy.

Hit Die: d6

Table 1-17: The Mosstrooper

Level	Base	Saves			Special
	Attack Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Green Thumb
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	Fey March
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	Wyrd – Invisibility
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Flicker
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Special Mount
6	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Wyrd – Flight
7	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	
8	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	Cloak of Vines
9	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	
10	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Wyrd – Changeling

Requirements

Skills: Survival, 10 ranks

Class Abilities: Wild empathy

Game Rule Information

Class Skills: Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Knowledge (any), Perform (Cha), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Int), Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Ovates are proficient in all simple weapons, light armor and shields (but not tower shields).

Spell Advancement: An ovate gains spells per day as if advancing as a member of his previous class. Thus a 10th level druid who was also a 4th level ovate receives spells as if he were a 14th level druid. No other benefits, such as base attack bonus or familiar powers, are gained.

Primal Rapport (Su): An ovate can relate to nearly anyone or to any creature. He may use Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Sense Motive on animals, and gains a +2 synergy bonus to any use of these skills for every five ranks of the Handle Animal skill he has.

Serpent's Tongue (Ex): The ovate gains +2 on Bluff and Diplomacy Checks.

Wilds of Civilization (Ex): The ovate can now use any abilities he may have in the city that could otherwise only be used in the wilderness or on wild animals. Thus a 13th level ranger could use camouflage in an urban environment, or a druid could use wild empathy on a human.

Lay of the Land (Ex): The ovate can determine the leader of a group of humans or animals, and by influencing him alone, may get the rest of the group to follow his lead. To do so he must make a Sense Motive check (DC 15). Any charm or compulsion spells or skillful manipulations that affect this leader are considered to affect his lessors as well. Followers who are being forced to put themselves into danger or to act outside of their natures get a Will save (DC 10 + ovate level) to resist. If they do so, they will no longer follow their leader.

Kill Passion (Ex): For a period of 24 hours, the ovate may

cause creatures or people to lose interest in a goal or ideal that they previously held dear. A murderous crowd will disperse, or a pack of wolves will seek other prey. To use this power, the ovate must have already determined the group's leader. In other words, this power influences a person or creature not to do something he intends to do. This power does not work in combat. A Will save negates its effects (DC 10 + ovate's character level).

New Feats

GENERAL FEATS

Elan

You possess a flair and social grace that is rarely matched.

Prerequisites: Cha 11+

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus to Diplomacy, Intimidation, and Bluff checks. Additionally, when one of these checks is failed, you can recover with grace and aplomb. A failed check still doesn't bring about the desired result, but it does not result in catastrophe. The person being manipulated is willing to give the character the benefit of the doubt. Further checks can then be made, but without benefit of this feat.

Hard to Kill

You may survive past -10 hp.

Prerequisite: Con 11+

Benefit: You may add your Constitution bonus to the standard -10 hp that a normal character can survive before dying. Therefore, if your Constitution bonus were +4, you could survive until your hp fell below -14. This feat may not be taken multiple times.

Normal: You die after taking damage that brings you below -10 hp.

Iron Lungs

You have an incredible ability to hold your breath.

Prerequisites: Con 13+

Benefit: You hold your breath for 3 times your Constitu-

Table 1-18: The Ovate

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Saves			Special
		Fort	Ref	Will	
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Primal Rapport
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Serpent's Tongue
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	Wilds of Civilization
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	Lay of the Land
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Kill Passion

tion score in rounds before you have to make a Constitution check to continue, such as when underwater. When this time runs out, you must make a check every two rounds to continue, rather than every round. You also receive a +2 bonus to saving throws versus gaseous attack forms, since you can stop breathing at will, and sustain yourself on whatever was in your lungs at the time.

Rapid Life Cycle

You have greater control over your fey ability to change your apparent age.

Prerequisites: Fey nature

Benefit: The rapid life cycle feat divides the time it takes to age or reverse aging by 4 each time it is taken. For example, if rapid life cycle is taken once, 1 year becomes 3 months, and if taken twice, 1 year becomes 3 weeks.

Seal of Safe Passage

You are marked in some way that causes certain hostile beings to regard you with indifference.

Benefit: At some point in your background, you received a mark from house Anhain that announces to certain hostile beings that they claim you as their own. You may choose one of the following each time this feat is taken: aberrations, undead, dragons, demons, or devils. These beings treat you with the same indifference as they would a bloodfed halfling, until you prove otherwise to that particular population. Betraying the trust that bestowed the seal of safe passage may bring down the wrath of house Anhain if the crime is severe enough.

METAMAGIC FEATS

Artful Spell

Your ranged spells appear to derive from another location.

Prerequisite: Spellcraft 11+

Benefit: When you cast a spell, you can cause it to appear to originate from any point along its entire range, even if the spell would appear to come from behind the target. Any intervening obstacles that would cause premature activation of the spell are taken into account. A successful Spellcraft check (DC 10 + the caster's level) reveals the artifice.

Special: This feat can make it appear that an invisible spellcaster is present, or allow a spellcaster to remain mostly behind cover without necessarily giving away his position, or be used to create strife within the ranks of the enemy. When a spell is made to appear as if it originates behind the target, any creatures between the actual caster and the target cause this spell to go off prematurely on a failed Spellcraft check (DC 10 + the creature's size modifier to AC), albeit from behind the intervening creature.

Flickering Spell

For the duration of the spell, you may "turn it on and off" at will.

Prerequisite: Concentration 13+

Benefit: As a free action, you may activate and deactivate

the spell this feat is applied to as often as desired until the spell's duration runs out. This feat may not be applied to spells with an instant or permanent duration.

Maße Staff

Your staff may be used to store a spell temporarily.

Benefit: When a spell is cast, you may decide to temporarily store it in your staff, which can hold one spell at a time. The value of the staff is irrelevant, and other enchantments it may have do not interfere in any way. Spells may be held for a number of rounds equal to the character's level + his class's appropriate ability bonus. Storing and releasing a spell in this way does not require concentration, and other spells may be cast while a spell remains stored. A stored spell may be released as a free action, but a touch-ranged spell requires a successful attack with the staff. If the staff is dropped, broken, otherwise released, the spell is lost.

Minimize Spell

You may cast spells with minimal expenditure of magical energy.

Prerequisite: Maximize Spell

Benefit: You may cast a damage spell for half damage, which occupies a spell slot one level lower than usual. The affected spell must be one you already have access to.

Special: This spell is useful for those who know what they are facing, and find that lower-level spell slots would be wasted otherwise. This feat may be applied more than once to a single spell, and each time it divides the damage dice in two.

Paired Spell

You may combine two spells into a single casting.

Prerequisites: Spellcraft 13+, Concentration 11+

Benefit: Paired spells go off in the same round. One spell rides along on the other, and they activate at precisely the same time.

Special: The spells take up an extra slot (for a total of three slots), with the third slot one level higher than the highest spell in the pair. Casting time is the combined casting times of both spells. Paired spells use the better of the two spell's ranges, and any orientation the caster wishes. Otherwise, treat as if both spells had gone off simultaneously, centered on the final location of the first spell. For example, a paired *lightning bolt* and *fireball* would have a range of 400 ft. + 40 ft. per level, but the *lightning bolt* could then go off 120 feet out from the center of the burst in any direction the caster wished. Duration and all other elements remain the same.

Both spells are considered to go off in the exact same instant. Thus, if a multiclass wizard/cleric were to use this feat to cast a paired *magic missile* and *heal* spell on a comrade at -9 hp, that comrade would not be killed by the *magic missile* before the *heal* spell could take effect. He would benefit from the *heal*, reduced by the value of *magic missile* damage roll. (But it would probably hurt a bit as well!)

In this example, the *heal* spell would activate with the first missile only.

Chapter III

Mystic Forces

Magic

It has been said that all the great civilizations of this world did not become great by the wars that they won. They became great by conquering first water, then grain, then steel. The empire that succeeds in conquering magic shall conquer the world.

– Mallun Tive, human orator

Magic in Morningstar is the result of the contrasting planar energies that play over the surface of the world. These energies are drawn to places where beings embodying them thrive. Magic is very abundant on Thraxis, and though its overall level remains constant, the proportional relationships of these planar forces fluctuate. Where and when the balance is shifted, specific types of magic are easier or harder to wield. The nature of magic on Thraxis is part of the reason the empires have been sustained, as prosperity breeds prosperity. Conversely, decline breeds decline on Thraxis.

The Law of Attraction

In Morningstar, like attracts like. An area populated by good beings will tend to draw in good energies. If an area is populated by lawful beings, lawful energies will tend to pool there. It's a simple concept, but it has sweeping effects on the world. Ynnidon, the elven homeland, is steeped in strong fey energies, resulting in a verdant land of illusion, primal forces, and strange creatures from dream and nightmare.

The Wheel

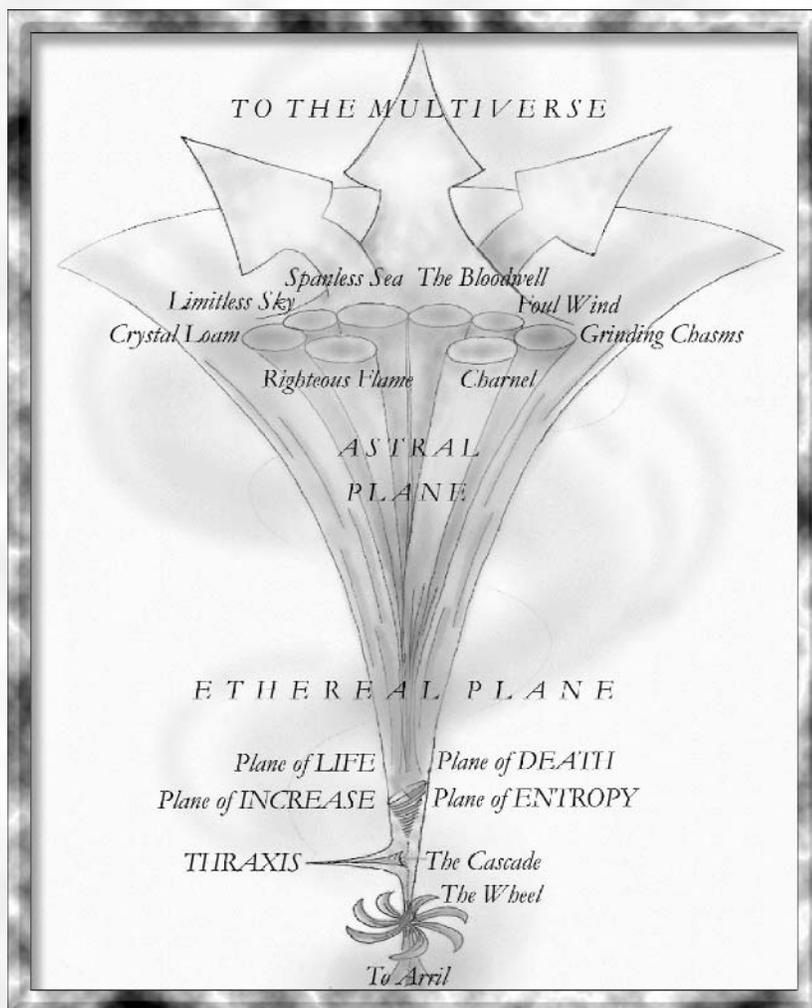
Thraxis and Arril both actively draw magic into themselves, and have created a rift in the fabric of reality – a sort of magical black hole. As seen from the ethereal plane, it is pitch black at its center, and possesses a luminescent corona that emanates an eerie purple light. This whirling vortex is referred to as “The Wheel.” The Wheel is responsible for many of the specific

metaphysical phenomena on Thraxis, including the richness of magic on this world, and the strong concentrations that allow places of power to exist.

Already located coterminous with a region of the ethereal plane that is rich with portals to other realities, the existence of two magic-drawing worlds in such close proximity burned a hole through the areas of the astral and ethereal planes that were in direct contact with these worlds. Both worlds were actively trying to draw magic from one another, and the resultant strain was too much for the fabric of the local cosmos. Because of this vortex, magic rushes through these worlds like a river, creating a strong current that alters planar movement, bolsters the great civilizations, and brings power-seeking outsiders and planar flotsam to Thraxis. But as the magic flows past the worlds, it eventually comes back to the planar rift and is utterly destroyed. Magic always flows through the two worlds beginning from the most distant planes, and ending at the Wheel.

The Wheel writhes and moves like a whirlpool formed by water going down a drain. Rarely visible from the prime material plane, its effects can be felt nonetheless. Those few who have attempted to travel to Arril and returned to speak of their failure have reported that their magics slowly increased in power as they approached the moon, then abruptly gave out. As they plummeted to the earth, their magics slowly reactivated, and they safely returned to the surface, shaken but wiser.

At times of great discharges of magic, such as after rage storms, visible energy can be seen snaking towards the Wheel. This results in spectacular light shows, not unlike the lights which are visible in the far north and south of Thraxis. The Wheel is best viewed at night, since daylight will often over-



power the eerie glows of magic flowing toward it.

All planes specifically listed on the diagram above are called the border planes. They are a mix of two or more types of planar energies, as these forces flow towards Thraxis. As they pass through the planes, these energies once again separate.

The celestial and infernal elemental planes comprise the combined forces of these types of planes. These are often used as staging grounds for outsiders or elementals of these types on their way to Thraxis.

The lawful and chaotic energy planes serve as a type of battery to fuel further creation on Thraxis. This particular region of local cosmology is partially responsible for the great flow of energy in this region of the multiverse. In most cosmologies, they would not be as close to a habitable world, or each other. The natural flow of energies that eventually created these planes created a bit of a short circuit, which eventually resulted in the Wheel, the cohesion of forces into the planes of the rest of the cosmology, and Thraxis' uncommon levels of magic. Specifically, these planes mix planar energies as follows:

	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
<i>Lawful</i>	Plane of Life	Plane of Death
<i>Chaotic</i>	Plane of Increase	Plane of Entropy

The Wheel has sweeping effects on certain magics,

depending on the time of day. When Arril is in the sky, teleportation or summoning spells can go awry, as can any spells relating to resurrection. Other times they are treated normally.

Death on Thraxis

Resurrection and reincarnation spells are more difficult on Thraxis than on other worlds. This is because the Wheel also attempts to draw free floating souls into itself. When a Thraxian dies, his soul will cling to Thraxis, staying close to his corpse, or barring that, the place where he died. If the soul wanders more than a mile away from the site of its death, it must make a Will save (DC 25) every month, or be drawn into the Wheel, plunging itself into the welcoming void. If the spirit stays near its body or the site of its death, it must only save once every decade. It is only a matter of time before the soul is lost, barring extraordinary effort on the part of its deity. Most deities will send agents to safely collect their followers' souls, but some are unable to do so.

Any attempts at life restoration magics while Arril is in the sky have a chance of resulting in the utter annihilation of the soul that is being manipulated. The base chance is 100%, reduced by 5% per two caster levels. The spirit's hold on this plane is weakened during this time, and it may be sucked along with the current of magic that is flowing into the Wheel.

Nothing, not even the power of a god, can restore a soul or character that has been destroyed in this way. There is simply nothing to be salvaged. Perhaps a god with power over time could rescue a soul before its destruction, but otherwise, the best even a powerful deity could do would be to create a copy of a soul from traces and impressions the deceased left on the world as a whole. While this character would believe himself to be the same being, he would be nothing more than a feeble echo. Certain traits would be missing, and he could in fact become a drastically different person over time. Such "resurrected" characters are 2d4 levels lower in power.

Planar Travel

Anyone on the astral or ethereal plane while Arril is in the sky sees a great gaping hole of jet in the sky, radiating an eerie purple light, and bathing everything in its coronal emanations. From the surface of Thraxis, when Arril is directly overhead, the Wheel is 300 miles away. On the ethereal plane, the Wheel appears to be framed by gentle northern lights, while on the astral plane, countless streams of vibrant planar energy curl towards the Wheel before vanishing at the precise moment that they cross the corona.

The Ethereal Plane

The ethereal plane is largely unaffected by the Wheel, except in its immediate proximity. Magical items radiate shifting tendrils of rich color which furl like pennants in a brisk breeze towards the direction of the Wheel. Everyone on the plane feels this wind, but it is too weak to pull objects along with it most of the time. Rage storms (see page 143) affect this plane as surely as they do the material, but do not cause damage here. Instead, they create the effects of attempting to travel on the astral plane as described below. A check must be made every round to resist the powerful winds of a rage storm and avoid being hurled into the Wheel (100% chance of failure minus 5% per two caster levels).

The Astral Plane

Astral travel is more hazardous. All astral currents lead to Thraxis and the Wheel, eventually. These currents are incredibly swift as they are drawn towards the Wheel.

When manifesting on the astral plane, travelers will always appear in proximity to Thraxis' astral profile, called the Cascade. The Cascade is an immense tube-like portal with the same diameter as the world (approximate 60,000 miles). The astral traveler's vantage point is shifted 90 degrees depending on whether the Wheel is in the sky at the time of arrival. Astral travelers from Thraxis while Arril is in the sky will appear on what seems to be the edge of a great tunnel with raging currents that flow along its "floor" and over an edge down to the Wheel a mere 300 miles below. While Arril is not in the sky, astral travelers appear on a precipice at the edge of Thraxis' astral profile, but not caught within it. From this perspective, the portal appears to be a sheer pit with flowing energy. Characters may travel normally away from Thraxis, and out into the astral plane, which thereafter has 'normal' topology and no particular pull, except for sparse but powerful energy streams as described below. Beyond the pit, and slightly 'upward,' is the Wheel, 60,000 miles away. By descending into the Cascade from either vantage point, one may travel back to Thraxis.

If the character appears on the side of the Cascade closest to the Wheel, merely avoiding movement towards the Wheel requires an Intelligence check (DC 18) every round. Moving away from the Wheel requires another check (DC 20) and is accomplished at half speed. Moving towards the Wheel is automatic, at a rate of 10 miles per round. Grabbing hold of a stable object, such as another astral traveler's silver cord, grants a +10 bonus to checks to stay in one place or to move along that object. Failure indicates that the character has moved 10 miles closer to the Wheel, and further checks (to stop or move away from the Wheel) have their DC raised by 1.

Portals and pathways to other planes bleed their energies into this current, and these substreams in fact have a stronger pull than the rest of the astral plane around Thraxis (DC 18 to leave the stream after 1 round of movement, DC 40 to stay in one spot, DC 60 to move against the current, and movement rate is 50 miles per round on failure).

Phases of the Moon

Here is Arril's lunar chart in relation to the City of Brend at the equinoxes.

Day of Month	Lunar Phase	Moon Rise/Set*
1	New	5:12 M/7:42 B
2	Waxing Crescent	5:54 M/1:24 G
3	Waxing Crescent	6:36 M/2:06 G
4	Waxing Crescent	7:18 M/2:48 G
5	Waxing Crescent	1 B (Midnight)/3:30 G (Midday)
6	Waxing Crescent	1:42 B/4:12 G
7	Waxing Crescent	2:24 B/4:54 G
8	First Quarter	3:06 B/5:36 G
9	Waxing Gibbous	3:48 B/6:18 G
10	Waxing Gibbous	4:30 B/7 G
11	Waxing Gibbous	5:12 B/7:42 G
12	Waxing Gibbous	5:54 B/1:24 M
13	Waxing Gibbous	6:36 B/2:06 M
14	Waxing Gibbous	7:18 B/2:48 M
15	Full	1 G (Dawn)/3:30 M (Mid-evening)
16	Full	1:42 G/4:12 M
17	Waning Gibbous	2:24 G/4:54 M
18	Waning Gibbous	3:06 G/5:36 M
19	Waning Gibbous	3:48 G/6:18 M
20	Waning Gibbous	4:30 G/7 M
21	Waning Gibbous	5:12 G/7:42 M
22	Waning Gibbous	5:54 G/1:24 B
23	Last Quarter	6:36 G/2:06 B
24	Waning Crescent	7:18 G/2:48 B
25	Waning Crescent	1 M (Dusk)/3:30 B
26	Waning Crescent	1:42 M/4:12 B
27	Waning Crescent	2:24 M/4:54 B
28	Waning Crescent	3:06 M/5:36 B
29	Waning Crescent	3:48 M/6:18 B
30	New	4:30 M/7 B (False Dawn)

* Parenthetical times noted here refer to which hour and third-day the event takes place. 'B' refers to blue, the period between midnight to dawn, and 'M' refers to magenta, the time from dusk to midnight, 'G' refers to gold; the period between dawn and dusk. '1 G' refers to one gold, or one hour into the period between dawn and dusk.

The astral terrain is varied by these subcurrents, and may occasionally plunge into whirlpools in places analogous to signature areas (see below). The energy stream will appear to be passing over an invisible waterfall, and continuing on to the Wheel. Characters caught in these cascades get no save to resist being moved, but sense that they can escape to Thraxis. It is in this way that much of the planar flotsam on Thraxis gets there.

Teleportation or travel spells that traverse the astral plane can result in the death of the caster and any traveling with him,

as well as catastrophic implosion as outlined below. In the case of a catastrophic implosion on Thraxis, there is a massive eruption from the analogous spot on the edge of the Cascade that flows directly into the Wheel. Any objects that are caught in the blast of such an eruption (which lasts for 1 full round) are immediately and irrevocably cast into the Wheel.

Catastrophic Implosion

Unless the spell description specifically states otherwise, any planar travel away from Thraxis performed when Arril is in the sky has a 100% (-5% for every 2 caster levels) chance of being redirected to the center of the Wheel, resulting in the death and utter destruction of the traveler. When Arril is not in the sky, this penalty is not incurred. If the character was teleporting from an area with a spectrum, that area's spectrum is utterly drained in the resulting magical sinkhole. Any magical items within the area of effect are drained of their dweomers, and all spellcasters lose their spells for the day. Magical beasts and anyone actually casting a spell, activating a magical item, or using a magical item with active dweomers during the same round as the catastrophic implosion have a chance of being sucked along with the unfortunate caster equal to 100% minus 5% per character level or hit die.

Similarly, any form of a gate or portal that remains open has the same chance per day of being redirected to the Wheel from the Thraxian side of the portal, without resulting in catastrophic implosion. Such portals are traps that lay in wait of foolish passersby.

The only exception to the rule of catastrophic implosion applies to planar travel from an area with a spectrum that draws upon the emanations of the destination plane. By doing so, the traveler can use the energies bombarding Thraxis as a bridge to their plane of their origin. They effectively "swim upstream," or "walk the staircase" as mystics are wont to say. This type of planar travel gains a +20% bonus per level of spectrum strength, which counters the 100% penalty. Thus when travelling to an elemental plane of fire from an Ignan region with a signature strength of Total (6), the caster would actually receive a base 20% bonus to the attempt.

Summoning

Summoning spells are facilitated by the Wheel. Any time a number of creatures is summoned, the maximum number possible are summoned, and will not automatically return to their plane of origin at the end of the spell. They are no longer under their summoner's control at the end of the spell's duration, most often fleeing his presence or turning on him, depending on their alignment and intelligence. Spells that create a vessel for the summoned creature still do so, but the creature may decide to keep his new vessel, and abandon his old one, with no penalties. Even strongly allied creatures that are summoned will no longer work with the caster after the duration is expired except in extreme cases. These may even turn the tables and

request the aid of the summoner and his fellows. Normally, however, summoned creatures seek out populations of their own kind, and many have their own agendas to accomplish while on Thraxis, which is gaining fame on the planes.

Many choose to stay on Thraxis indefinitely, finding that their home plane's familiar emanations are plentiful here, and life is more comfortable for them than it would be on most worlds on an alien plane. Over time, they may focus these energies into a signature (see below), and bathe in more of their power than they could have even on their home plane. Such summoned creatures and spirits may return to their home plane at will, but with the same chance of destruction as anyone travelling from Thraxis to another plane, if they've overstayed the duration of their summoning spell. For these purposes, treat a summoned creature's hit dice as caster level, which stack with any actual caster levels the being may have. The same rule applies to planetouched creatures traveling to a plane that they are aligned with – they may add all character levels, not just spellcaster levels, to negate their chance of destruction. Consider the following 14th level characters: a planetouched Rgr 8/Sor 6 would have a 65% chance of destruction (14 effective caster levels divided by $2 = 7$, multiplied by $5\% = 35\%$ less than 100%), while a human Rgr 8/Sor 6 would have an 85% chance of destruction (6 caster levels divided by $2 = 3$, multiplied by $5\% = 15\%$ less than 100%) when attempting planar travel while Arril is in the sky.

Places of Power: Signature, Countersignature and Spectrum

Many places in Morningstar have a *signature*, a descriptor of the type or types of energies that are strongest there. Spells and effects that fall within the boundaries of a given area's signature are easier to maintain, and more powerful. While some types of magic can be easier in a given area, other types of magic are weaker as a consequence. An area with a signature also has an equal and opposed *countersignature*, which gives a commensurate penalty to that type of magic. The countersignature of a given area is of the same strength as the signature. Signature and countersignature are building blocks that can be combined to create a desired effect and to reinforce unique locales.

An area's signature and countersignature affect more than just spellcasting. They create a self-reinforcing pattern that can alter that way reality works within its boundaries. An area with a signature may on occasion provide a situational modifier to non-magical actions at the GM's discretion. These effects can be helpful or harmful to the beings living there.

The varying proportions of magic within an area are collectively known as its *spectrum*. The spectrum for an area is described in the following form:

**Signature/Countersignature: Level,
Signature/Countersignature: Level...**

The first signature/countersignature term is always the most

Table 2-1: Spectrum Strengths and Their Effects

At spectrum level 1 or higher, spellcasters feel a subtle push to use spells that fall within the signature, and to avoid spells that are countersignature. Areas with a spectrum strength of 1 are the most common, and usually the longest lasting.

At spectrum level 2 or higher, all visitors sense the signature, and their thoughts drift towards the spectrum. The GM should subtly shift focus to the signature and countersignature in their descriptions of an area.

At spectrum level 3 or higher, all natives born into a region will show minor signs of being aligned with the signature. Architecture will be representative of the land's spectrum.

At spectrum level 4 or higher, entire societies will be shaped by the energies of signature. The indigenous civilization holds values and ideologies that promote the signature.

At spectrum level 5 or higher, the powerful energies begin to impose change upon the very essence of the creatures and beings that dwell in the spectrum region. If they haven't already, many creatures will evolve to fit their area, either gaining resistances or abilities befitting their region.

At spectrum level 6, no one can resist the power of the spectrum for very long. A saving throw must be made at an interval determined by the area's description and failure has strong consequences. DCs for these saving throws are usually at least 25. Areas with a spectrum strength of total are the most intense places in the world. Countersignature creatures will take 1 point of damage a day from being inside the area.

Level	Strength	Spell DC Modifier	Spell Duration Modifier	Signature	Countersignature	Signature Situational Modifier
1	Weak	+1/-1 (5%)	None	Eschew Components	None	+1
2	Steady	+2/-2 (10%)	None	Silent Spell	None	+1
3	Strong	+3/-3 (15%)	Duration 2	Still Spell	Caster level -1	+2
4	Powerful	+5/-5 (25%)	Duration 3	Empower Spell	Caster level -2	+3
5	Overwhelming	+8/-8 (40%)	Duration 4	Enlarge Spell	Caster level -3	+4
6	Total	+20/-20 (100%)	Duration 5	Maximize Spell	Caster level -4	+6

Spell DC Modifier: This is the bonus given to signature spell DCs, followed by the penalty to countersignature spell DCs. This modifier is applied to Spellcraft, saving throws, and Concentration checks for any appropriate spells. Every +1 equals 5% added or subtracted from a percentile roll in the caster's favor (for signature spells) or disfavor (for countersignature spells) when the spell calls for a percentile roll to determine outcomes.

Spell Duration Modifier: Signature spell durations are multiplied by this number, and countersignature spell durations are divided by this number, to a minimum duration of 1 round. Durations of instantaneous, concentration, or permanent are unaffected unless otherwise noted.

Signature: These are feats which are considered to be applied to all signature spells in a given area. All effects are cumulative with the effects of lower strength.

Countersignature: These are the negative effects countersignature casters must contend with in a given area. When casting countersignature spells, the caster level is that much lower for the purposes of the affected spells alone. Note that this might make a given spell impossible to cast by that caster. For example, a 7th level wizard cannot cast *fireball* in an area that has an overwhelming Ignan countersignature, though *cone of cold* is unaffected.

Signature Situational Modifier: Signature runs deeper than an effect on magic. It affects everything in an area. Nonmagical deeds receive a general bonus when they fit within the signature at the GM's discretion.

powerful, followed by the next most powerful, and so on. An example might be:

Auran/Terran: 5,
Benevolent/Profane: 2,
Aberrant/Structured: 1

For practical purposes, GMs should avoid overdefining an area's spectrum unless the story demands it. Too many signa-

tures and countersignatures become hard to keep track of, and the game will get bogged down.

Signature and countersignature are simply a neutral value expression of how strongly aligned an area is to a given spectrum of magic. As an example assume that a certain area in Kharkon is overwhelmingly aligned with air magic. This area could be turbulent with random winds of sporadic power, or it could contain a constant, gentle breeze always coming from the same general direction. It could even be a still area with partic-



ABERRANT

"We were traveling in the jungles near eastern Latoma, and had journeyed into the forest to find the abandoned temple of Gwan Hisb. After two weeks we came to a place where the trees were WRONG. Some strange fungus had moved in here, growing in clusters of nodes that burst occasionally from above, showering a foul mucus and what appeared to be blackened blood down upon all of us. The wildlife had been twisted and warped. A legless monkey leered down at us, and featherless birds that gave off the smell of baking bread clung to the limbs by their tentacles. Timeric commented to me on the stench, and that was when I noticed to my horror that he had grown several bloodshot eyes where he had been spattered by the fungal mucus. The image will haunt me for the rest of my days."

— From the journal of Gester Namouin, Brendirian explorer

ularly fresh air, lending buoyancy to airships.

Multiple signatures can overlap in a given area. A large area might be aligned with air, but within this zone smaller areas might also be aligned with law, chaos, or both. If this area were coastal, the peoples living on the shore would see the law aligned areas as a sailor's blessing, and avoid chaos aligned areas when at sea.

The table on the previous page describes the general effects of the six signature levels. The following section goes into more detail on the signatures themselves.

Signature and Countersignature Descriptions

Each signature/countersignature is described with the following entries.

Candidates: This is a list of suggested types of places that might take on a given signature.

Promoters: The types of creatures that promote the signature, and who upon moving en masse to an area begin to create the signature. A given creature type may be capable of drawing more than one type of signature energy, but can only promote one type at a time.

Natural Formation: Some possible methods that the spectrum may form in absence of a maintaining population. This can be by act of nature, or by the deeds of sentient beings. An unmaintained signature exists until it is challenged, and even then might only be reduced and not entirely destroyed by the challenge.

Signature Magic: These are the types of effects or individual spells that are affected by a signature. Please note that when an effect is listed, it only applies to uses of spells appropriate to the signature. Thus *animal friendship* would not receive the signature bonus when used to befriend an animal that was foreign to the signature, but happened to be in the area. Similarly, magics that are not listed under a given signature may become signature spells if they are used in ways that promote that type of energy. The GM has the final word, of course.

Total: Merely a suggestion, this is the kind of extraordinary effect that might be constantly active if an area's signature strength reaches 6. Essentially, weird things start to happen to reality when an area's spectrum strength reaches total. A GM may opt to define a countersignature effect that equals the power of a given signature effect.

An Aberrant region is one that has become polluted by powerful and reckless life energies. The plant and animal life here will become cancerous and mutated. Aberrations will or have already nudged out more natural organisms, and the ecology begins to favor them. These regions are spawning grounds for previously unknown aberrations of every description.

Candidates: A choked swamp, ancient dungeons, an evil wizard's lair, a toxic forest filled with mushrooms, Hrum Vaat settlements and colonies, anywhere that large numbers of aberrations live or breed.

Promoters: Aberrations, The (Ijamvian) Order, any beings that admire or worship aberrations.

Natural Formation: A magical experiment gone wrong, particularly dark and damp weather conditions, the poisoning of food or water supplies.

Signature Magic: Any magic or spell-like abilities that are used predominantly by aberrations, spells that are used to summon or create aberrations, and the following specific spells: *animal growth*, *awaken* (works on aberrations in these areas), *bane*, *bestow curse* (causes temporary mutations), *binding*, *black tentacles*, *blasphemy*, *contagion*, *curse water*, *desecrate*, *destruction*, *dominate monster*, *enlarge*, *entangle*, *giant vermin*, *insect plague*, *locate creature*, *plant growth*, *poison*, *regenerate*, *rusting grasp*, *shambler*, *spike growth*, *summon swarm*, *warp wood*.

Total: When Aberrant spectrum strength reaches total, prolonged contact with an environment begins to cause foul and often harmful mutations in non-aberrant creatures. A Fortitude save (DC 30) is required to avoid this change, though there will often be an attack mechanism that can be protected against, such as the fungal mucus in the passage above. Possible effects include growth of vestigial limbs, loss of a limb, or having a rust monster or similar horror begin to rapidly grow under the skin of the afflicted. Any such effects can be healed only once the character has left this region, requiring *greater dispel magic* or better magics. Any damage from such mutations will usually be paired with Constitution damage (e.g., loss of 1d10 points of Con). Additionally, when signature strength reaches total, the land itself begins to decay and shrivel, creating sinkholes and rancid pools of mud. This is part of the reason Hrum Vaat needs to expand as often as it does, since their earthen strongholds invariably crumble after a period of time. Assume

that stone loses 5 points of hardness for every year that it holds the Aberrant signature. Excess hardness points overflow into hp, utterly destroying earth after sufficient time.

AQUAN

"I was treading water in the stormy seas of the bay of Klephas, on a mission to join the merfolk at their camp. The boats were rocked by the churning of the waves, and all was silent except for the sounds of distant shorebreak in my ears and the creaking ropes from the boats. I was wearing the conch pendant, and despite my training, I was loathe to trust my life to such a flimsy little clasp. I watched as my legion dove beneath the choppy waters, before I joined them. Surging downward, the bubbles hit my face, and the water was cloudy with silt. I realized with a gasp that I had been holding my breath. With an involuntary gulp, the salty brine washed down my throat, tasting slightly of fish, but I could breathe it. I continued on. As I dove, I reached a point where the stormy waters cleared, as if an invisible wall had been set underwater to keep out the silt. Breathing this water was refreshing, even invigorating, and the silt and seaweed that had accumulated upon me fell away. I looked down to where the merfolk had their camp. What was to me a glorious, eerily luminescent dome of coral and fantastic nautilus spires was no doubt to them a simple camp."

— From a Dolphin Legionnaire recruitment speech

A region with the Aquan signature has ties to the elemental plane of water. Nymphs, water elementals, nereids, whales, dolphins, and other lovers of water thrive here. The water is clean, pure, and filled with massive populations of exotic life. In an Aquan region, the bounty of the deep is easily harvested.

Candidates: An undersea settlement, a portal to the elemental plane of water, remote lakes and pools, a prominent waterfall, the Canali, anywhere that oceanic gods are worshiped, Ao settlements, fishing villages, pristine harbors, coral reefs, and oceanic rifts.

Promoters: Creatures from the elemental plane of water, Tanin, merfolk, octopi and any other intelligent creatures that favor aquatic environments, worshippers and servitors of aquatic deities.

Natural Formation: A thriving aquatic ecosystem with clear water.

Signature Magic: Any spells or effects that use water, mist, or steam to achieve their effects or that have the water descriptor. Any spells that can be cast underwater, or that require it as a component.

Total: In an area with an Aquan signature strength of total, creatures that use magical methods of respiration begin to become true creatures of the deep. Otherwise, water spontaneously forms in the lungs, causing the character to begin drowning immediately. Characters with the Iron Lungs feat may continue to hold their breath, but do not benefit from its extended duration. Unliving foreign matter in the water begins to dissolve and becomes water at a rate of 1 lb. per day (or faster). Organic matter (such as a deceased PC) is subject to a near instant feeding frenzy upon death for this reason. This includes any unattended objects, but not the sea floor itself.

AURAN

"The gentle breeze seemed to come from everywhere and nowhere at the same time, adding a lightness and vigor to our step that hadn't been present since the beginning of our journey. The sky was the most amazing blue here, and was filled with the most unusual creatures — most of which never touched the ground at all. We were accompanied by a playful flock of spinning many-winged sparrows that seemed to be performing their aerial dances just for us. As we traveled further into this land, I noticed that the vegetation became sparser, until we crested a rise where to my amazement I spotted a whirling cluster of trees, with branches and roots splayed out into a sphere caught in some distant invisible zephyr."

— Varno Tivrerren, halfling of House Trammel

An Auran region is one that is primarily focused on energies from the elemental plane of air. Flying creatures nudge out land-locked ones, and the landscape itself will change over the ages to allow the maximum surface area to be in contact with air; mountains will become steeper and more pillar-like, and plains will vary land levels slightly. Oceanic Auran regions are places with great surges and waves, even if these are relatively harmless.

Candidates: A windy mountain peak, a windy gorge, arid plains, shifting sand dunes, a cliffside colony of rocs, a wave-battered coastal settlement, a temple to an aerial deity, the high seas, windswept plains, a cloud giant city.

Promoters: Air elementals and creatures from the elemental plane of air, intelligent flyers, and worshippers of air deities.

Natural Formation: A week or more of near constant wind; a tornado or hurricane.

Signature Magic: Any spells with the air or electricity descriptors, or which summon flying creatures or elemental creatures from the plane of air.

Total: When Auran signature strength becomes total, all non-flying creatures and objects are treated as if subject to the spell *feather fall*. Additionally, air breathers are more alert because of the rich air, receiving a +10 to all Wisdom based skill checks. Air breathers find it difficult to sleep, and must make a Fortitude save (DC 25) to do so. Additionally, no native creatures exist that do not have some method of flight or levitation. Even plants will adapt to life in the skies.

BENEVOLENT

"I was glad to be home, where nothing could hurt me. I was certain of it when I knocked a heavy boulder down onto my hand in the process of climbing over the old rock pile. The bones, instead of cracking, bent out of shape momentarily, and my hand painlessly took its natural form again. I smiled. My long journey was over."

— Senator Nim Darr, recalling the first time he left home

Peace and benevolence cast their influence over everything here. Good-aligned creatures tend to congregate in these areas, and the life here is healthy and robust. A Benevolent area is one of the best places in the world to raise a child, for everyone is

friendly. Everyone heals slightly faster; good characters and creatures add one point to daily hp recovered for every point of signature strength. Predators become more omnivorous, becoming vegetarians at strength 6, and a feeling of tranquility comes over any who would do harm, washing hostility away.

Candidates: The temple devoted to a good-aligned god, a sanctuary, a peaceful hermit's hut, a sleepy village in a sheltered valley, or anywhere else that kindness is treasured and violence shunned.

Promoters: Celestials, those who fight evil, creatures from good aligned planes, and devotees of good-aligned gods.

Natural Formation: Like most ethical signatures, benevolent signatures rarely form naturally. It is possible that the site of a great personal sacrifice could take on this signature.

Signature Magic: Any spells with the good descriptor, and any spells that benefit another without harming a third party or directly benefiting the caster. Purely defensive spells. Spells that summon good-aligned creatures.

Total: Living creatures receive damage reduction 6/+1 while in a Benevolent area of total strength. To initiate violence (but not self-defense) requires a Will save (DC 18).

CREATIVE

"I have felt the rush of divine creation. That old workshop of mine, that my father left to me, has served me well, and there is never a dearth of ideas when I put quill to parchment. There are more than a few attendant spirits in that place, and they have taken to agitating my ink or quills while I work, and causing objects to walk or dance about the room. Still, I have no small affection for the little bastards, and they will often prepare my tea."

— *Albis Younimer, Brendian artificer*

The primordial energies of creation hold sway here. In wild Creative areas, new species are created, most with no hope of survival, but some with the cunning and capability to survive and breed. When one creature is slain, another may rise from its corpse.

Candidates: An artificer's workshop or school, an art gallery, a primeval wilderness, the birthing grounds of a god.

Promoters: Artists, artificers, progenitors of new races or creatures, worshippers of creation gods.

Natural Formation: With the exception of the elemental signatures, the Creative signature is most likely to form spontaneously. When it does, it will always be in a place of great natural beauty.

Signature Magic: Conjunction spells and other magics that create matter or energy ex nihilo.

Total: When Creative spectrum strength reaches total, words are almost as good as deeds. At the GM's discretion, he can decide that the next words that come out of the character's mouths will be translated to literal reality. Thus, if a character were to say, "I'm starving," he would instantly be cast into the final throes of starvation. The point is not to allow the PCs to know whether their next statement holds power or not. No attempt to intentionally manipulate this effect will be successful for beings of less than demigod status.

DECEPTIVE

"The desert sands shifted in the searing breeze, and the waves of heat rising on the air cast doubt into my eyes. I asked our guide if we were near the place, but he seemed as disoriented as I. He gestured towards the camels. The stubborn beasts were giving us trouble, and it seemed they were near the end of their energies. One dropped to its knees and refused to move. Our guide struggled with it, and turned to me to call for water. Just then the camel changed, its head snaking out and splitting in two to reveal a shifting row of fangs! The sand runner never saw it coming. Within moments, all of our camels had changed into vicious predators that bounded us for three days until we collapsed at the oasis. Then they vanished into the sand like mirages. Or so it seemed."

— *Malimum Tove, Tulsian merchant*

Illusion and obfuscation are the rule in a Deceptive region. In these areas, plants and animals are invariably disguised. Predators may resemble prey, and all life may be masquerading as a species that is less or more dangerous.

Candidates: A shifting desert, a hall of mirrors, the byzantine court of a back-stabbing family of nobles, a misty region near a waterfall, the temple of a god of deception.

Promoters: Shapechangers, Lreans, followers of gods of deception, illusionists and great liars.

Natural Formation: Deceptive regions can result from frequent use of illusion magics, or powerful lies that an area's history was built upon.

Signature Magic: Illusion magics, and those that obscure information.

Total: When spectrum strength reaches total, everything seems like something else. Only natives are able to comprehend the rules that need to be followed to achieve a desired affect, but even they cannot necessarily see through the illusions themselves. For example, you may only be able to go east by going "west," and "north" might be out of the question. All creatures' perceptions of these places are warped, and one can never be sure of what is before them. Disbelief can work, with a DC of 25, and only lasts for 1d4 rounds. There is simply too much to disbelieve. Even successful disbelief may have little benefit, since real threats are often simply veiled as other threats. Characters may be prone to delusions of all types, possibly regarding their own capabilities. They might believe either that they possess class levels or special abilities that they do not, or that they have lost access to those they do (Will negates, DC 25).

DERANGED

"Four-hundred-and-fifty-five moments ago I entered this place. Three-thousand-and-ninety-two hours have passed since I last slept. I fear you are losing your mind. Swallow. Try not to think about thinking too much. Don't talk to him, he always lies. That purple eye... He is not your friend, he is worse. Oh yes. Much much much worse. You've gone and torn your hands up on the walls of this box. Stop pounding your head on walls. STOPITSTOPITSTOPITSTOPIT! Don't let the rats laugh at you; they won't respect you. They're going to kill me if I sleep..."

– *The scrawled writings found on the walls of a cell in a Tzjimbichian prison. The occupant, Tileris Lienilin, was once a powerful senator jailed on charges of embezzlement. He took his own life.*

A place of madness and bedlam, a Deranged area is populated by beings that cause insanity or are themselves insane. Everything is slightly distorted or brought to mad relief in the perceptions of sentient beings, and animals will act in strange ways. Plants will be colored in out of place; toxic hues and toadstools will thrive.

Candidates: Asylums, mazes, torture chambers, prisons, the inner sanctum of a strange cult, a melon patch.

Promoters: The deranged, creatures that cause insanity, worshippers of insane deities.

Natural Formation: The Deranged signature does not usually form naturally, but when it does, it will often strike randomly in an area that otherwise had no signature.

Signature Magic: Any mind-affecting spells that distort perceptions, spells that cause madness, illusions used to create the appearance of impossible situations. Spells that summon creatures that induce madness or are themselves mad.

Total: Any characters that stay too long in a Deranged area risk insanity themselves. Even foods from these regions bestow this risk. The following table might be used, if desired, to randomly determine the form of madness, or to spark ideas.

1d8 Result

- 1 Psychotic: The character becomes homicidal, and will come to blows over any conflict. The character is slow to forgive as well, but may cunningly appear contrite if he is unable to destroy the object of his hatred fairly, maneuvering for his next opportunity.
- 2 Catatonic: The character withdraws from life entirely, and exists only in his own mind. He may be entirely aware of his surroundings, but cannot or will not respond to them, even when they cause pain. Alternately, he may have hallucinations of a terrifying nature while in this state. Mind-affecting illusions may allow two way communication with the afflicted.
- 3 Schizoid: All emotions are flattened. The character becomes internally terrified of others, and will seek to hide himself from others, and cower.
- 4 Phobic: The character acquires an irrational terror of something he has recently encountered, or that he is currently encountering. He reacts to the object of his fear as if he were in imminent and lethal danger from it. He cannot approach within 5 feet of this thing, but may attack if cornered. This fear and disgust could be centered on something like weapons, sunlight, water, darkness, members of a given race, creature type, or sex, or any other commonly encountered thing.
- 5 Philiac: The exact opposite of a phobic, a philiac indicates an intense addiction to or love for a given thing. The character will seek to immerse or surround himself in the subject of the derangement, even if it puts him in harm's way.

- 6 Obsessive: The character obsessively pursues a goal, such as neatness or counting everything. He may be required to perform self-created rituals in certain circumstances, such as turning in place three times when someone mentions feathers. He will repeat the ritual until it is performed without interruption, and correctly, taking no other actions.
- 7 Manic: The character becomes excessively boisterous, excitable, or erratic. He will not sleep, and will change his mind constantly. While he believes something, however, no one can convince him that another belief system is equally valid, and he will become enraged if his system is threatened, possibly becoming violent.
- 8 Delusional: The character believes something that is patently untrue, such as “fire heals all wounds” and will operate under this assumption, no matter what. Conflict with this belief presents no problem in his mind, and the character will simply not be aware of any proof to the contrary.

Avoiding this insanity requires a Will save (DC 25) every week.

DIVINATORY

“I made the pilgrimage to see the oracle. I stood in the center of the chamber, while the oracle slept upon her throne. Her words echoed in my mind: ‘You shall see what I dream, and what I dream will be your destiny.’ Images of many possible futures flashed at the edges of my perception. None of them were mine, and they did not linger in my mind. After several long moments, the braziers that lined the hall began to give off smoke, and the images formed within them. I knew in my heart that what I saw there was the truth. That’s why I have come to you today. I wanted to set things right; for tomorrow, I meet my destiny.”

– *The last words of the eidolon Balien Mernis, to his son.*

Places with the Divinatory signature are where mankind can gain glimpses into its future. Most beings here have a subtle prescience about everyday events, and these regions have a timeless quality. Surprisingly, not much changes in these areas, since people have the ability to prevent events that would create unforeseen negative ripples. Many beings have learned that any change can lead to danger, and use the wisdom that is bestowed by Divinatory spectrums to prevent any new events.

Candidates: A cliffside shrine devoted to prophesy, the site of an ancient and prominent patricide, anywhere that history is being made.

Promoters: Morning Star Apostles, prophets, followers of deities of divination, telepaths.

Natural Formation: Divinatory signatures will often form spontaneously when and where a major event is about to unfold, or in places where a major player in one of these prophesies is located. It is still not certain whether these formations are entirely coincidental, or the design of some greater being.

Signature Magic: Divination spells, and those that

involve dreams or that give foresight.

Total: Intelligent beings begin to receive visions or intuitive understanding of their roles in life. They may see the moment of their own death, their greatest triumph, or a previously unexpected betrayal. These visions will often come as dreams, which are strongly tied to Divinatory signatures. Characters can see the effects of their actions 1d4 minutes in advance, but gain no special benefit other than the choice of whether to go through with the action. Indecision counteracts any foresight. In combat, however, there is no time for indecision. Natives gain a +8 insight bonus to attacks, AC, and Reflex saves, while intelligent (Int 3+) non-natives receive +2. Living in such an area for 6 months bestows a native bonus.

DYNAMIC

"I love this town. There's always something new to see when I come into port. It does make things difficult for my business, since when I left here I was asked to bring figs, but now that I've returned, they want Lolin Berries. It's a minor problem, though. The real trouble is that there's always some new bizard at the entrance to the cove. Last time it was some sort of sea dragon, this time it was fish that tried to eat through my hull. That winged halfling at the fruit stand over there is new. I think I'll go see if he likes figs."

— Overheard in Phelos

Ever changing, never resting, a Dynamic region is in a constant state of flux. Creatures may give birth to slightly different types of offspring with new powers or abilities, and plants may be completely out of place for the climate of the area. The weather will be inherently unpredictable, and can change in drastic ways throughout a day. Societies will be prone to massive upheavals, and most buildings will be of new construction. The signature strength determines the relative rate of change within the affected region. Change does not necessarily equal chaos, and some dynamic areas are simply thriving centers of growth, with exciting new events always happening.

Candidates: A savage rain forest, the court of a barbarian king, Emetrium or other newly acquired civilized areas, an optimistic city, anywhere that new things are happening on a daily basis.

Promoters: Chaotic creatures or characters, shapeshifters, transmuters, worshippers of shapeshifting deities. Other creatures that are strong agents of change, that transform creatures with their attacks, or that can take multiple forms.

Natural Formation: Dynamic signatures frequently form where new creatures have been spawned, or places that have been drastically altered by earthquakes or other disaster.

Signature Magic: Transmutation spells, spells that directly alter the abilities of a creature or object, spells that summon or are used by shapeshifters. Spells that shift land around, or that create features that were not previously there.

Total: The landscape itself changes, confounding travel. Creatures within the area may be spontaneously affected by polymorph spells, have cosmetic elements of their appearance be altered, or have their apparent ages altered at the GM's dis-

cretion. These effects are generally permanent (Fort negates, DC 15). These changes are not controllable by anyone within the area without the help of magic. Creatures or characters that can shapeshift a certain number of times per day do not count those changes that occur within a Dynamic area of total strength.

FEY

"When you go, remember to trust nothing you see, and keep your head about you. You will have elven guides, but their loyalties are with the Empress first, and us dead last. Tread lightly. If you get separated from your entourage, don't follow any lights you should see; they're less likely to be torches than will-o-wisps, bent on leading you into a trap. Stay on the Moss Highway, and keep it in sight, if you wander off to relieve yourself, you may turn around to find yourself stranded miles from nowhere. When you get lost, and you will, sit down and wait until dawn. You have better chances of finding a human once the sun burns away the mists."

"Anticipate paradox. From the land itself, of course, but especially with the elves. There is never a right way to answer a fey question. You're better off changing the subject. But never lie to a fey. The land is full of lies; they have a nose for them. They might bewilder you, but as long as you remember that you're a guest in their land, you should survive."

— Advice given to a young Brendirian emissary to Ynnidon.

These areas are steeped in fey spiritual emanations. All plants and creatures here show signs of their contact with the fey. Plants grow in strange configurations, trees may be frozen into loops or coils, or have an inexplicable warp to their forms. Plants and fungi thrive, many taking on bizarre forms, and possessing powerful medicinal, toxic or psychoactive properties. Many native animals are forever altered by the power that feeds the land. This change is evidenced by numerous "faerie signs" visible on the animals. A stag might glow with a soft, white radiance, and be permanently *basted*, a boar might be black as jet, with burning green eyes, and the ability to shake the earth with each stomp of its feet. Life cycle is another factor that is quite variable in Ynnidon. Twin foals could age at vastly different rates. Many creatures are *awakened* in fey areas.

Civilization faces a struggle within a Fey area, as the wilds encroach upon the best fortifications of the mortal folk. Vines may split mortared walls, growing carelessly though them, or a tree might lift a house high into the air over time. Places with the Fey signature have no love for man. To non-natives, these areas are unnerving and seem unpredictable, but there is almost always some intelligent force at work.

Candidates: A deep and primeval forest, all of Ynnidon, a shimmering pool, a mossy grove, a fairy ring.

Promoters: Any creatures of the fey type.

Natural Formation: None.

Signature Magic: Pigments, glamers, *charm* effects, transmutation spells, spells that affect plants. Any magics used by the fey.

Total: A place with a Fey signature strength of total responds to the wills of the most powerful fey within its boundaries. The landscape may be changed at will, and all native crea-

tures will do the controller's bidding. Prolonged dwelling within such a strongly aligned locale will often result in foreign creatures exhibiting faerie signs themselves, such as antlers, vestigial wings, or other random features of limited use.

FIERCE

"Stay where you are, or I'll blast you!"

The apprentice was shaken by his own gall, as the fire crackled in his quavering hand. His master merely stared at him, impassive.

"P-put the book down, and slide it over to me." The archmage did so, and kicked his grimoire, never taking his eyes off of his former student.

At last the old man spoke. "So this is what you want. If you try this, there's no going back."

The youth put his heel in front of the book and shifted it behind him. He sneered. "Absolutely." He flicked his thumbs together, and an explosive fan of blinding flame surged towards the archmage. The elder rolled left, and brought his own hand up. The apprentice's relatively minor spell defeated the mage's defenses with a sound like a gong. Skin crackling, robes aflame and blinded by pain, the archmage delivered his counterstrike. What should have been a single arc of lightning was an explosive, braided, cord of energy. It struck home, and in a brief moment of clarity the apprentice realized his folly, before he exploded in a shower of sparks. His master fell back, and wept.

Areas of extreme violence and brutality can take on the Fierce signature. The landscape will become jagged and unforgiving, prone to storms and earthquakes. Plant life will be hardy, and often has unforeseen defenses, such as spines, or the ability to attack on its own. Predators will be favored, and in the strongest Fierce areas will be forced to prey on each other, having killed all herbivores. Those herbivores that do survive will always have defenses rivaling their predators' attacks, such as armor plating or sharp horns. A biological arms race is on in Fierce areas, and only the strong survive.

Life is cheap, and everyone is at risk, on a daily basis. Unless they are very strong, most societies will be in a near constant state of lawlessness, buildings will be extensively damaged, and rubble will fill the streets.

All damage is multiplied by the spectrum strength of the Fierce signature.

Candidates: Gladiatorial pits, war fronts or military training camps, a dragon's lair, anywhere that capital punishment is practiced.

Promoters: Tribal hunters and warriors, Ijamvians, hobgoblins, orcs, and others with violent outlooks. Militaristic or warlike beings. Evokers and certain sorcerers. Societies of dragons, and followers of gods of war.

Natural Formation: The place of a violent disaster, such as volcanic eruption, the opening of a tectonic fault line, or a monsoon; tornado-prone regions.

Signature Magic: Magics that cause damage.

Total: When Fierce spectrum strength reaches total, the world becomes deadly indeed. In addition to having all damage dealt multiplied by 6, characters may become bestial. Once per month, upon slaying a living creature, every character must

make a Fortitude save (DC 25) or take 1d6 permanent Wisdom damage, and acquire one of the following traits as rolled randomly:

1d8 Result

- 1 Fangs: Bite attack; 1d8 base damage.
- 2 Talons: Bare-handed claw attack; 1d6 base damage per claw.
- 3 Scorpion Tail: Cannot be flanked; 1d4 base damage; attacks of opportunity for every surrounding square. Poison: DC 15, injury, initial 1d8 Con, secondary 1d8 Con.
- 4 Spikes: AC +1; grapplers, biters, or natural-weapon attackers take 1d6 base damage upon striking the character.
- 5 Pincers: Gain Improved Grab feat; 1d8+2 base damage.
- 6 Insectoid Legs: Jump +15
- 7 Venom Spit: Range increment 15 ft, 1d6 base acid damage.
- 8 Tentacles or Tongue: Gain Improved Grab feat, lash 1d4 base damage, constrict 1d8 base damage.

Even though they might grant extra limbs, these traits do not bestow extra attacks. Base damage refers to the damage done before being increased by this signature. One month after leaving a Fierce region, these alterations may disappear completely (GM option).

FRIGID

"The searing cold of Zrevold is well documented; even the dwarves have little taste for it. That is why Shiver chose it for his demesne. Fort Iskkered has stood for 100 years, high upon the glacier. I know most of you are not used to cold weather. It's unnatural. What we face is more unnatural still. Fort Iskkered is a fearsome place, where the frost seeks to snuff out your very life. Put aside your fear, and follow your orders. Legionnaires do not balk at any mission. Bring your fire, and your ice-axes, for Iskkered will fall tomorrow!"

— Centurion Rillius Pandifax two days before their forced retreat from Zrevold.

Thraxia has no polar caps, her shallow seas keeping her too warm in general to support them. Only at the highest altitudes are there signs of a frigid past in the form of glaciers stranded in the last ice age many thousands of years ago. The Frigid signature is one of the rarest signatures found on Thraxia, though it is most common in Kharkon, where many mountains are high enough to support perennial snow caps. Aside from these alpine regions, most other Frigid areas are artificial in nature, brought about by the presence of frost-loving outsiders or spellcasters. Cold-loving creatures such as frost giants find haven that is all too rare on the semitropical world of Thraxia. These places are the only places in fact that such creatures can still exist. Few settlements of humans or other intelligent creatures last long in these areas, since most natives of Thraxia find

such areas hellish.

Candidates: An ancient stretch of landlocked glacier high in the mountains, the lair of a frost dragon.

Promoters: Creatures of the cold subtype.

Natural Formation: Anywhere that remains at or below freezing temperatures for more than a year.

Signature Magic: Any spells with the cold descriptor, or that use ice to achieve their effects or as a component. Spells that summon monsters that favor the cold.

Total: Everything is covered in a slick of ice, and snows do not melt at all. All damage done by native creatures is cold based, even when dealt with normal weapons. All creatures turn to ice when slain. Creatures must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) every day or turn to ice.

IGNAN

Cidrin whirled with a start at the explosion behind his feet. Four of the demented little things looked down on him, each with the same lop-sided smile, oversized ears, and impacted little eyes. They chuckled amongst themselves in their pidgin tongue. "Wa no 'yke fue?" one laughed and sent a small bolder tumbling. As it rolled down, it set off sparks that combusted into larger flares. Though Cidrin was in great pain, he hopped with a trained lightness that did not sacrifice speed but that prevented his boots from scuffing. The boulder rolled in ball of flame past him, through the spot he had previously occupied.

"Fire hurts humans!" he cried. The one that had rolled the boulder cocked his head, and his tiny eyes went wide, as if it was the first inkling of the truth he had ever heard. His fellows beside him laughed hysterically, and one fell backwards off the precipice, evoking new gales of mirth. "Fue no 'rt...ma-agmin." He held up a cooling chunk of lava with both hands. He cracked it, and the incendiary magma within flowed in a viscous red drop onto his head. To his left, one of the others rolled another boulder, this one setting off a cascade of the rocks, a flaming landslide. It was all Cidrin could do not to scuff as he scurried back towards the river of lava that flowed to his rear. The heat raised blisters on the backs of his legs, but he had nowhere to go. "Uman fea fue?"

"Yes-yes! Humans fear fire! Please... I have to get out of this place. I'm very hurt." This statement set off a chorus of startled muttering among the magmins. At last the leader spoke.

"Umans vea weak. Ma-agmins 'lp pooa weak uman."

Ignan regions are affiliated with the elemental plane of fire. They are places that are perpetually burning, inhospitable to mankind, but a haven for creatures that prefer great heat. At their weakest they may be simply a hot area filled with geysers or other deep lying sources of geothermal heat, but at their strongest, they are furnaces where nothing made of mortal flesh can live for long. Bursts of flame and lava erupt constantly from the earth, and solid land is liquefied. The features of the land change over hours as mountains melt and fires burn.

Candidates: Volcanoes, lava beds, places prone to wildfires, places with nearly constant fires.

Promoters: Fire elementals and other creatures of the fire subtype. Worshipers of fire deities, arsonists.

Natural Formation: Anywhere that flames burn unin-

dered for more than a week.

Signature Magic: Any spells with the fire descriptor, that summon creatures of the fire type, or that use fire to achieve their effects. Any spells that use fire as a component.

Total: Everything tends to burst into flames with the slightest friction. Any strike of metal upon metal, stone upon stone, or metal upon stone, runs the risk of setting off a *fireball*, as cast by a sorcerer of 5d4 levels. When subjected to the slightest spark, flammable materials are set alight, burning for 2d10 rounds and dealing 2d4 damage per round to unprotected creatures.

INSECTOID

"I'm deep in the Valleys of the Xyzax; it is the third day of Dust. I'm sending this message so you can see what I'm seeing right now. This kind of thing is why I've come on this expedition, even when no one else would hire on to join me. I call it Chitinnwall. I can't see the whole thing without turning my head both ways. Look for yourself. It's amazing, isn't it? The hollowed husks of the Xyzax bridge the gap between the mountains, fastened to one another by their mandibles and interlocked legs, in an oddly morbid architecture. These were intelligent beings, but they are not like us. Although for all I've seen of humanity's capacity for atrocity, I can't be sure that we're much better. Their heirs are buzzing loudly beyond the blockade of their dead...sisters? I'm not sure that you can make it out over the creaking of the wall in the wind. This spell isn't great for...Did you hear that? BRINDIUS! They're all around me!"

—Final transcript of a captured moment

Humanity has a long history of enmity towards insects. Though mostly one-sided and futile, mankind has waged a battle against these vermin for millennia. No matter how many are destroyed there are always more to take their place. Unchecked, some say, a single insect could cover the world with its offspring in less than a year. They are a constant nuisance, and they are here to stay.

Sometimes, however, bugs become more than an annoyance. If circumstances align themselves just right, these pests gain the opportunity to transfix their former exterminators in their multifaceted gazes...and crush them. When an area gains an Insectoid signature, it is very hard to take back. The prolific bugs quickly raise an area's spectrum strength to total, and with the precise intellect that invariably comes with the territory, humanity is outmatched.

As Insectoid signature grows in strength, the land begins to cater itself to the needs of its buzzing and chittering masters. Only those plants or creatures that serve the insects in some way will be allowed to survive. Foul organic cities spring up that are reminiscent of aberrant regions, but with a design — an inherent order and grace that the aberrations lack. Invertebrate excretions are the primary building material, from paper masticated by termites, bees, or wasps, to vibrant resins that appear gemlike in their beauty. Silks or even chitin from the corpses of their fellows may be used to create structures that take no consideration of gravity; these colonies function in three dimensions. Whole forests may be rendered into sawdust, whole races

subjected to genocide as their vessels are used as nurseries for multiplied broods. Insectoid signatures often go hand-in-hand with Vegetative, Ordered, or Aberrant ones.

Candidates: A canyon-spanning web with corpses in its strands, a temple of carnivorous moth men, hot swamps with plenty of flowering plants, deadwood forests, formian military encampments, anywhere there is a great deal of stagnant water.

Promoters: Intelligent insects (and arachnids) such as formians or massive hives of mundane insects that exhibit preternatural intelligence as a group; worshippers of insect gods; those that admire insects or domesticate them.

Natural Formation: Insectoid signatures do not form spontaneously.

Signature Magic: Any magic or spell-like abilities that emulate an insect's natural attacks or defenses; spells that summon or control insects, and spells that are cast by intelligent insects.

Total: When Insectoid signature strength reaches total, all life is edged out, except for insects, who adapt to fill every niche. Trees might be replaced with semi-stationary mantis-like beasts that function much like trees, with plated bark, millions of leaflike wings, and globules of honey-soaked eggs in place of fruit. Birds may be edged out in favor of dragonflies as large as a man, or roaming herds of herbivores might be replaced with swarms of giant grubs, which trundle across plains of upright and waving larvae, organically glued to the earth. Similarly, any inert organic matter will become an equal volume of living insects in 1d6 hours. GMs may rule that characters must make a Fort save every week (DC 25) or pupate, becoming some sort of giant insect 1 month later, and likely becoming an NPC.

NECROTIC

"Today is the first day you hunt alone. I give you my father's bow as he gave it to me. You are to shun the valley beyond those hills. It is a place of death and pain, and it tears the life from everyone it touches. The people there are plagued, and if you go to help them, you will not be welcome here. We won't let what happened to their village happen to ours. The Severer is their problem, not ours. You want to be a hero, head to Triskatariot — they love fools down that way."

— A father's warning

Death without rebirth and overuse of necromantic magics can lead an area to become Necrotic. Decay is everywhere in such a place, and new growth is stifled. Necrotic places are dim, often dank, and the colors are washed out of everything. Animals and people bear precious few young, and crops always fall short of the yields required to sustain a population. All plants and creatures are sickly. Plagues run rampant.

Candidates: Swamps, graveyards, barren deserts, sunken ships, battlefields; the feeding grounds of a cockatrice, dragon or other fell beast; the lair of same.

Promoters: Any creature that wastefully kills, such as undead, murderers, creatures that give off poisons, or hunters that do not use their kills.

Natural Formation: Necrotic signatures forms in places

of blight or drought, where great numbers are starving or dying.

Signature Magic: Spells with the death or darkness descriptors.

Total: Any injured characters must make a Fortitude save (DC 25) in order to heal. Characters that die become undead of a type appropriate to their level. Disease resistance DCs are increased by 1d10. Undead quickly edge out life forms, and what life exists is sickly and malnourished.

ORDERED

"Notice the fine lines, the elegant contours, the simple grace. Our artisans are trained in all the most accepted orthodox methods. You will find that your son will become a truly competent artisan under our tutelage." The engraved pillar was exquisite. The professor smiled, as the young men tapped their chisels in perfectly staggered steps.

Melthius was impressed with their work, but unease tugged at the edge of his mind. He rubbed his bearded chin, and looked at the carefully tended green, the rows of industrious students, and the nearly identical trees at the edges of the square. When he saw the flocks of birds flying in their perfect wedges, no single animal falling out of position or time, it was almost decided. He knelt down. Looking closely at the grass beneath his feet, he realized that each blade was identical in length, color, and shape, and that they were set in perfect clusters of 5, all in a matrix. He rose to his feet with a shudder.

"Thank you for your time, sir, but I don't believe my son will be attending lessons here. You would make him a competent artisan, but he has the soul of a master artist. I can't let that be destroyed."

An Ordered region is one where plans go well, the tides are regular, and everything has its place. While chaotic creatures may sense a restrictive element to the area, this order is not achieved through force, but grace. Living things will tend to mature to represent their ideal model, resulting in a natural aesthetic that most intelligent beings find pleasing.

Candidates: Crystal caverns, tidal plains, military training grounds, well-planned Brendirian cities.

Promoters: Creatures from lawfully aligned planes, followers of lawful beings, lawful beings such as formians, devils, or Brendirians.

Natural Formation: None.

Signature Magic: Spells with the lawful descriptor, those used to summon lawful beings, or spells cast by lawful creatures. Spells or effects that create order.

Total: When an Ordered area reaches a signature strength of total, chaotic acts are impossible. Every deed must be planned, and characters naturally fall into lock-step while travelling. Everything is in order, and entirely predictable with the right methods. All dice rolls are foregone, and the precisely average result is used. Divide each die's maximum result by 2, and combine them, adding bonuses as appropriate. Round fractions up. Therefore if a spell did 5d6 damage normally, it would instead do 15 points (3 x 5) of damage.

Rain falls on a schedule, and the winds blow evenly. All creatures must make a Will save (DC 25) every week or suffer a lawful transformation. Such characters have their attributes

changed to 10 for even scores, or 11 for uneven scores. Hit points and any other random elements are entirely averaged out. This change is permanent, without a *remove curse* spell cast by a caster of 10th level or higher.

PRIMAL

My dearest friend's palace had translated into something bizarre. Gone were the neatly trimmed hedges and manicured topiaries, the crystal pools and fountains. It was now an overgrown jungle. The crisp lines of the palace marble were now jagged and raw, as if bewn from unfinished stone. The topiaries had become unkempt, and the low hedges had become a forest of broad-leafed trees. We heard some distant and otherworldly baying where a herd of the great beasts must have been grazing deeper in the confines of the estate.

"All of this because he brought those lizards back from Zeikerus?" the sell-sword asked me, incredulous.

I was as surprised as he, but I told him: "The matters of magic are ill-understood, even by mages such as myself. It would seem that the senator had no concept of the forces he was playing with." In my mind, I added, "despite my warnings." After a moment, I said, "Come. Let's find Senator Haegil."

I didn't know if he'd be dead or injured, but even I never expected what I found. Everything which had been familiar to me was changed. I knew the basic landmarks, but the details were all wrong. We cut our way through the vines in the foyer, and made our way to the stairwell. I saw his serving girl there, foraging among some offal that had been deposited by some creature. She was placing the grubs she found in a makeshift basket. Her dress was a shambles, and he had twigs and knots in her hair. It was then that he arrived, accompanied by his former guard. They came out of the brush to our left, bearing spears. He stood behind them with his arms crossed, and a glimmer of recognition in his eyes. His toga was tattered, and he had a fresh scar on his cheek, in the early stages of healing. I met his gaze for a long moment, wondering if I should prepare a spell. I was about to, when his impassive face broke into a broad grin, and stepped forward with his arms out. "My friend! How go your battles? Come quickly, we must avoid the Snake Clan." I was later to realize that he had not been robbed of his intellect by the forces at work here, but merely his civility.

A Primal region is one that is primitive, or just wild. Feral or prehistoric creatures roam freely, and all organisms begin to regress to a more primitive state. In weaker Primal areas, it is merely difficult to maintain civilization, or even roads, but as the spectrum grows in strength, it begins to force plants and creatures to become harder or more primitive. Even the works of mankind can be changed, either dissolving away, or reverting to an unworked or crude form.

Candidates: A primeval forest, a secluded desert island, the wild places of the world untouched by man.

Promoters: Dire creatures, tribes of hunter-gatherers, creatures from chaotic planes, dinosaurs, feral dragons, throwbacks, worshippers of primitive gods.

Natural Formation: Being free from civilized humans for more than a decade.

Signature Magic: Spells with the chaotic descriptor, or that create wildness. Druid spells, or spells that summon crea-

tures that promote this signature.

Total: When Primal signature strength reaches total, plants and creatures revert to a more primal state. Creatures may regress. The first stage is to become more simplistic in mind. Affected characters become more superstitious, and are much more easily impressed by signs of civilization. They remember basic relationships that they had before but details are changed in their memory. They forget specific trappings of civilization, replacing them with more primitive analogs. Swords become clubs in their minds, and metal becomes bone or stone. A great leader might believe himself to be a chieftain, a cleric might think himself a shaman. Over time these modifications become stronger.

The second stage is to become more physically primitive. Animals change to their dire relatives, and humanoids become more bestial. Actual racial history is not necessarily relevant to this change, but if there is a primal history to draw upon, it will be exhibited. Nonetheless, elves and fey are equally subject to this force. Reduce Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma by 1d6 points, and increase Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution by the same amount. In humans, the forehead will slope, the shoulders will broaden, and hair will grow all over. Skills that require mental stats are retained, but may not be used to create higher than stone age technology. If a mental stat falls to 3 or below, skills relating to that attribute cannot use used.

In the third, and final stage, humanoids lose yet another d6 from all mental stats, without commensurate compensation to their physical abilities. They lose access to their languages, except for simple one-word statements. If they haven't already, they lose access to tools more complex than a club or sharp rock. They may still create fire, but if it breaks out of control, they panic, and may die in the resulting untended conflagration.

Every week, creatures must make a Will save (DC 25). Failure indicates progression to the next stage. Consider the original state to be 'stage zero' for these purposes. A *wish* or *miracle* might restore the character to their original place in the world.

PROFANE

"I've suffered damnation in life. I've dealt the pain of a thousand deaths upon individual men. They all begged me to spare them. I spared them. When they began to beg me to kill them, even then I spared them... and the land laughed with me. The very land laughed with me. I won't ask to be killed. I deserve no such kindness."

— Convicted diabolist Hesperio Nuccia, now serving a life sentence in Warreen Prison.

There are a places no man dares to even catch sight of. These places are foul and perverse, and their denizens feed on pain and suffering where no one can be called a friend. The land itself hates everything within it, and finds ways to make every creature suffer. It possesses a crude intellect, and seems to take joy in its misdeeds. Every element feels the taint; water is poisoned, and rains of acid and blood fall upon the land. Fire burns with the smell of charred flesh, the air stinks of rot, and the earth weeps pus. Tortured souls live in everything, and good

men are compelled to horrific deeds. The motivation for evil comes from these places themselves. They will avert their attentions from a creature momentarily if the creature will only cause pain in others. When a creature ceases to do evil, it is again considered fair game, and the land pursues it ruthlessly.

Candidates: A defiled temple, a sacked village, a violated cemetery, anywhere that a great atrocity has been committed without remorse.

Promoters: Creatures from evilly aligned planes; the most truly evil beings of any stripe (diabolists, demons, devils, torturers, murderers, and other foul beings).

Natural Formation: Thankfully, the Profane signature is wholly unnatural, and will never form naturally.

Signature Magic: Spells with the evil descriptor, any spell that is sufficiently perverse as to be reserved for the corrupt.

Total: When a Profane signature strength reaches total, the energies begin to gnaw at everything within. Trees might sprout blades, just beneath their bark, to lacerate any hands that come to rest upon them. Good characters are tempted by their most secret evil desires, and must make a Will save (DC 25) every week, or become entirely evil.

SOLAR

"Nightfall at the city of Urmi, Haseth. The brightest stars are visible in the skies but the sand glows on its own. There are no dark alleys to shelter murderers or thieves, and the shops never close. The entire city is canopied, with silks that filter colored light down upon the streets. The gentle, pleasant nights make for a fine vacation, but the days may be too bright for Brendirian eyes. In fact, the natives wear dark veils over their eyes and white galena on their noses and cheeks if they must go out during the day. Their clothing ranges from bright linens and flax to the currently popular reflective robes. The white sands can quickly make a man blind, so do as the natives do. Enjoy your stay in Urmi, but be warned; not all monsters favor the darkness, and wandering too far afield is just as dangerous as it is in Brendir."

— From Tilso's Indispensable Handbook to Travel

Places with the Solar signature are often more temporary than others, for they rely upon a greater share of sunlight than darkness on a daily basis. With the changing of the seasons, these areas move from north to south and back. Despite their transient nature, they will often recur in the same places year after year.

Solar regions are places where plants flourish, provided there is enough water to sustain them. On Thraxis, there usually is, even in the deserts, where water flows beneath the sands. Solar regions are not necessarily hot, but they are always bright. Even at night.

Candidates: The far north or south during the time when the days are long, a temple devoted to a sun god, places where the sun beats down unimpeded by clouds, a glacier in Kharkon, a castle made of crystal, a stretch of cloud free sea, deserts.

Promoters: Solars, creatures that give off bright light or that use it as a primary attack, worshippers of gods of light.

Natural Formation: Anywhere that there is more daylight

than night, salt flats, outcroppings of growing crystal, or anywhere that light is focused or dispersed in an unusual way.

Signature Magic: Any spells with the light descriptor or of the solar domain, spells that create light or that summon creatures that give off light either innately or as an attack.

Total: Any source of light gives off true daylight, and does damage to creatures that are affected by it (such as certain undead). The mildest torches give the illusion of dusk as far as their light is visible, and the area around a fire is lit as if the sun had just risen. Additionally, it rarely gets darker than crepuscular illumination, as long as Arril is in the sky to cast some light.

TERRAN

"Our mines are rich, and never emptied. Our mothers say that it is the honor of dwarves who have gone before that brings our wealth, but it is now understood that there are places that touch other places. Our mines are many, but they lead to the same place. Our mines are dug into the infinite heart of earth."

— Angtulva Bund, stonemason matriarch

Candidates: A volcano or its outlying lands, a deep cavern, bare mountains, a dwarven village or town.

Promoters: Creatures from the elemental plane of earth, burrowers, dwarves, and other creatures that prefer a subterranean environment.

Natural Formation: An earthquake, the stirring of a volcano.

Signature Magic: Any spells with the earth or electricity descriptors, spells that summon creatures from the elemental plane of earth, that use earth to achieve their effects or have it as a component.

Total: When Terran spectrum strength reaches total, mines cannot be depleted. Even as tunnels are dug, they refill with precious materials when work ceases for a few hours. Only by shoring them up with foreign matter, such as wooded beams or worked stone, can this be avoided. Earth and mineral-based creatures will begin to push out other types of life.

VEGETATIVE

"The smell of spice in the air, pleasing to the nose, but leaving an acrid unease in my stomach. I was drenched in sap; leaves and needles were sticking to me. Their blood, at least, not mine. I shuddered as I recalled the thing's ropy vines around my head and neck. It was getting dark; I'd have to keep moving. If I hadn't been so worried about my hide, I probably would have noticed the burr that had clung to the base of my spine. Maybe then I could have done something about it, but now it's too late. Soon the roots will reach my heart, and I will die. Set my body on fire, in this closed chamber, so that no seeds can be passed on. And no matter how beautiful the flowers that bloom from my corpse, don't pick them. They'll only take you too."

— Excerpt from the death note of Jigrin Toln, halfling of house Trammel

A Vegetative region is a place where plants are allowed to flourish, without undue feeding from herbivores. The ecology grows hazardous to nonplants, with poisonous herbs and ambulatory carnivorous flora in increasing numbers as the signature gains strength.

Candidates: A fearsome rain forest, wetlands, subregions in fey areas, an abandoned greenhouse.

Promoters: Plant creatures, worshippers of deities that hold power over plant life.

Natural Formation: Areas with untamed vegetation and some catalytic event, such as a powerful lightning storm or a meteor strike, may naturally take on the Vegetative signature.

Signature Magic: Any spells or powers that affect plant life, that summon plant creatures or pollinators, or that use plants to achieve their effects.

Total: When Vegetative spectrum strength reaches 6, there

will be no indigenous animals in a region, except for pollinators like insects, and those that eat them. The area will likely be filled with intelligent and semi-intelligent plant creatures. Normal animals will become more and more plantlike over generations – if they somehow live that long. Plant growth is incredibly accelerated, and vines may grow over a creature's feet if it stays still too long. Sleeping in an unprotected area is out of the question, and fools who attempt such will be buried under several feet of vegetation by morning. Large rings of fire are required to keep the plants at bay for a night, but if they die down, plant life will move in at the first opportunity. At the GM's option, certain plant creatures may be able to use the body of a creature they have successfully attacked as a nursery for their seedlings. The effects of this may range from converting the living creature to a plant creature of some kind to killing him. For the seedling to take root, the creature must fail a Fort save (DC 25).

Spectrum Mechanics

Signatures are independent of one another. Any signature can coexist with any other signature unless actively opposed, even ones that seem mutually exclusive. This is because each signature represents a continuous stream of magic as it flows through a particular area on Thraxis. Even as these streams destroy each other, they are replenished, maintaining the overall level unless a balance-changing force is applied. Additionally, each of these streams is itself a blend of planar forces, and it is rare that an area will draw exclusively from one plane alone. This is because intelligent beings are complex, even those from specific planes.

Countersignature isn't necessarily the "opposite" of the signature; it is merely a representation of the forces which are least active or suppressed in the area. On the other hand, signature and countersignature actually will tend to line up in intuitive and expected ways, usually through design rather than accident. This will most often happen when one side of a conflict has won a battle or claimed an area, successfully excluding the beings that embody the countersignature. Most of the intelligent beings in such an area are devoted to the enhancement of their own ideal signature and the weakening of the enemy's, either directly or indirectly. Such a position is highly defensible for those who hold it, since the very foes who would want to take it from those who hold it are hindered in their attempts to do so by their very natures.

Choosing an Area's Spectrum

After coming up with an area's basic concept, you should decide what, if anything, its signatures should be, based on the members of the local population (if any). If there is more than one possible signature that a population can support, consider which of these is most represented by this particular population. You can always cut the population into fractions, as well, and have some members promote one signature, and the others

promote their own. Just remember to keep their populations distinct on paper and that no single creature can promote more than one type of signature at a time.

Countersignature is more subjective, and should be chosen based upon the values and desires of the population first. If the population has no specific wish to hinder a certain type of magic, it should be based on a force that is being neglected. For example, among a population of warring earth elementals, it would be safe to say that peace is being sacrificed. Therefore, a Benevolent countersignature might be chosen.

Natural Formation: Some natural events or trends may create a signature area spontaneously, without interference from any conscious being. These causes are listed under "Natural Formation" with the signature. When these circumstances are met, eddies can form spontaneously, and an area will acquire a spectrum without an apparent reason. These areas are extremely rare, and always appropriate to the region they are located in. For example, an Aquan signature would never spontaneously form at the top of a desolate mountain. These spectrums are usually fleeting, beginning to decay 1d4 months after they form, and at a rate of 1 level per week, unless sufficient numbers of intelligent beings populate the region in time. When in doubt as to whether an area has a signature, it is often best to decide against one. Signatures are meant to be special qualities that define an area, and overuse can make them lose their novelty.

The very existence of a certain number of beings at a certain average level of power within a given area is enough to affect its spectrum. The number of beings required to rechannel the flows of magic varies depending on the average hit dice or level of the population. To create a spectrum requires that the population remain within the area of effect for 1 full calendar month.

See Table 2-2 for more details. The number found by cross-referencing "Average HD or Level" with "Spectrum Strength" is the population increment. The population incre-

ment is the minimum number of beings aligned to a given spectrum required to sustain it at that strength. One less, and the spectrum strength drops an entire increment.

Spectrums have a maximum radius increment of 1/8 mile centered on the most powerful member of the population. The actual size may be smaller, as is the case when there is some sort of border, such as stone, mountains, lakes or rivers, or shoreline to contain the signature. This happens most frequently when the bounding obstacle prevents a signature-promoting population from regularly crossing, or when the boundary itself is a drastically different locale capable of supporting its own signature. For example, a high wall around a cemetery could contain a Necrotic signature, or a river could abruptly end an area powered by an Iguan one. Neither of these would have much affect on an Auran one. The GM has final say regarding what constitutes a sufficient border. A signature might be contained within a single room, or may sprawl across the land in a perfect circle.

Every multiple of the population increment multiplies this radius increment by the same amount, unless there is a border that can stop it. Therefore, if there were an outpost with 100 3rd level beings sustaining a spectrum of strength 1 for a radius of 1/8 mile, and the population increased by 300 appropriate 3rd level individuals, the radius would increase to 1/2 mile. Spectrum strength would remain the same. If the average level of the population is high enough, and the population reaches the appropriate size, the spectrum strength will increase by one instead of the radius increment. Radius will reshape to fill the maximum space, so if there were a border on one side, the area

could still be fulfilled by expanding on the other side, to the extent of a border on that side. It takes one month to change shape, unless a border spontaneously cuts off a region, which occurs instantly (as with a diverted river).

An interesting consequence arises from the way spectrums work. Weaker allies can actually deplete the overall spectrum strength. This is the reason powerful wizards sometimes isolate themselves from others in remote towers, and dragons have similar behaviors. Their minions and weaker allies are often kept at least 1/8 mile away, where they cannot affect the powerful being's signature.

Active Influence and Attacking a Spectrum: Signature and countersignature are like two sides of a scale. Adding more to one depletes the other, and subtracting from one increases the other. By either strengthening the countersignature or actively weakening the signature, the same effect is achieved – the total strength of the spectrum is reduced.

The Rule of Displacement

Simply put, the rule of displacement states that an attacking group takes the defender's signature as their countersignature. At the end of one full month, the defender's spectrum strength is reduced by the attacker's spectrum strength.

When a new signature forms, its creators may consciously or unconsciously challenge another of the area's signatures. The original signature becomes the challenging signature's coun-

Table 2-2: Population Increment to Change or Sustain a Spectrum by Passive Influence

Average HD or Level	Spectrum Strength					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	x	x	x	x	x	x
2	x	x	x	x	x	x
3	100	x	x	x	x	x
4	50	x	x	x	x	x
5	25	100	x	x	x	x
6	13	50	x	x	x	x
7	7	25	100	x	x	x
8	4	13	50	x	x	x
9	2	7	25	100	x	x
10	1	4	13	50	x	x
11	1	2	7	25	100	x
12		1	4	13	50	x
13		1	2	7	25	100
14			1	4	13	50
15			1	2	7	25
16				1	4	13
17				1	2	7
18					1	4
19					1	2
20+						1

Think of signature/countersignature as a metaphysical ecology. If two creatures occupy the same niche, one will eventually edge the other out, or they will both suffer. However, there is plenty of room for organisms that occupy different but similar niches. Signature could be thought of as a predator, and countersignature is the prey. If wolves feed on deer, and bears feed on fish, they may never come into direct conflict. Translated to the concept of signature and countersignature this means that two signatures that fill a similar role will not necessarily cancel each other out. An area can have a Benevolent and a Profane signature, since they are fueled by different groups of beings. It is usually only through direct conflict changing the numbers of beings contributing to a given signature that the signature can be changed.

tersignature. Every month, the challenger reduces the original spectrum by its own value, and has its own signature slowly lowered to zero. Any reinforcements attacking in the same way (using the same signature to foil the area's countersignature) will be averaged in with the original challenger's to find average HD. If the two spectrum strengths are different, the larger spectrum is only reduced to the difference of the two in the presence of the antithetical spectrum.

Imagine that a certain region of Brendir has become overrun with fire elementals. There are 100 fire elementals with 13 or more HD in this region. The heat of their fires dries all water, ruining crops and making things more comfortable for the elementals. After 1 month, the region gains a spectrum of:

Ignan/Aquan 6

Now imagine that a small troop of 50 ghaeles (10 HD celestials) decides to move in, to attack the area's fire signature. If they survive for one full calendar month, they add a new signature:

Benevolent/Ignan 4

This Benevolent signature is in opposition to the original signature. It immediately cancels 4 levels of the original spectrum's strength and is itself canceled out entirely for as long as the situation remains the same. Therefore, the new effective signatures are:

Ignan/Aquan 2 (6) Benevolent/Ignan 0 (4)

Zero spectrum strength is indicated as a place holder. The Ignan/Aquan spectrum is still being attacked until the elementals can defeat at least one ghaele, reducing their number to the point (49 10 HD creatures or below) that they cannot sustain a signature of strength 4. Should this happen, or should the attackers' numbers be reduced, the new spectrum strengths are calculated, and instantly applied to one another. (The one month rule for affecting an opposing signature only applies to newcomers to an area. It takes this long for the planar forces the new group attracts to be redirected.) However, the rest of this example assumes this does not happen.

Compare spectrums every month, as populations of all

parties change. If any numbers leave the area, but return or are replaced by the end of the month, they are considered to never have left.

Corollary to the Rule of Displacement

Signature may also be attacked directly by attackers that promote a signature that is the defender's countersignature.

Continuing the example above, should two 11 HD water elementals join the fray at this point, and they somehow survive a month, a new factor will be added in:

Aquan/Ignan 2

This is considered a new attack. One month later, or a total of 2 months after the ghaeles moved in, this area will be neutralized, effectively free of all spectrums. The elementals will remain, until destroyed or they leave of their own free will.

Multiple groups attacking a spectrum with different signatures combine their strengths. Two separate groups attacking simultaneously reduce the area's spectrum by their combined strength at the end of their first active month. Therefore, if the water elementals had been part of the metaphysical battle from the beginning, it would have taken 1 complete month (rather than the 2 months in this example) to reduce this spectrum to nil.

It's an uphill battle to change an area's signature, but one that many are willing to undertake.

Conflict Without Displacement: Even if two parties are in active conflict, it doesn't necessarily mean that they are directly competing to destroy each other's signatures. Let's say that a group of demons is fighting a group of celestials. While this is a classic case of good vs. evil, it doesn't necessarily mean that the signatures and countersignatures are in direct opposition. Both may benefit from their full signatures under the right circumstances, assuming their signatures and countersignatures are not in direct conflict. For example, each party might promote the following spectrums:

Celestials: **Benevolent/Aberrant X**
Demons: **Profane/Ordered X**

Of course, if the numbers of one side fall, the spectrum strength of that side may be affected.

New Spells

Alter Line

Transmutation

Level: Clr 9, Sor/Wiz 9

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Touch

Target: 1 creature per ten levels

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: Fort negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

When this spell is cast upon a creature, any spells such as *crossbreed*, *transformation* or *imbue with spell ability* are rendered permanent, affecting the very essence of the creature. If these spells expire before *alter line* is fully cast, they cannot be rendered permanent.

The creature is forever altered, and all of his descendants will show signs of this. If there are two of these creatures, they are now fertile. They may breed or be bred, and a new species is created. This spell negates any sterilization effects from spells such as *crossbreed*, or even the disease called cradle burn.

Material Components: Fertility-inducing herbs and egg-shaped gems of various types equalling 10,000 gp in value.

Alter Illusion

Illusion (Glamer)

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: One action

Range: Sight

Target: One unattended illusion

Duration: Special

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell allows the caster to change one detail of an illusion that is recognized by the caster as such, and no longer being controlled by its original caster. This detail can be anything from what one illusory figure or monster is doing, to the type of one creature in the illusion, or lesser details. For example, if the illusion were of a room with a desk in it, the caster could remove the desk, or change it into a fountain. All other elements of the illusion remain the same, and no compensation is made for illogical changes. For example, if the original illusion contained an ogre attacking a human, and the ogre were removed, the human would still “react” as the illusion scripted. He would act as if he were being attacked by a larger and invisible foe.

Capture Moment

Illusion (Figment)

Level: Brd 3, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, M

Casting Time: One action

Range: Touch

Target: One object

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You capture a visible and audible permanent record of a finite window of time, which can then be played for others as often as desired. To cast this spell, a small prism is placed at the desired vantage point for the moment to be captured. For 1 minute per caster level, an omnidirectional record of events will be made. The receptacle has the same visual and auditory range as a human, so this record can be anything from the events occurring in a small room to a fantastic panoramic vista. This spell does not see around obstructing objects, and the captured moment is from the vantage point of the prism. The crystal has low-light vision to a range of 120 feet.

To replay the captured moment, a command word is spoken, and the images and sounds are projected from the prism, until they hit an obstacle such as a wall, or a maximum of 15



feet in every direction. This image is an obvious projection – the image is two-dimensional and translucent. It will never trick anyone into believing that what they see before them is real. Observers beyond the range of projection see the images reversed, and hear nothing. Replayed sound is passable for understanding speech, but tinny, and of poor quality. Though amazing in its applications, this spell won't put any bards or performers out of business.

Material Component: A transparent prism of 1 cubic inch, worth 50 gp.

Crossbreed

Transmutation

Level: Wiz/Sor 9, Clr 9, Drd 9

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 day

Range: Touch

Target: Two creatures

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: Fort negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The *crossbreed* spell allows two parent creatures to be crossed with one another (they may even be the same sex). At the end of the day, a sterile crossbreed of the target creatures is created. This spell is often the starting point at the creation of a new species, and is responsible for the griffon, owlbear, hippogriff, and many other fantastic creatures on Thraaxis. This spell does not affect undead or constructs.

The final creature's statistics are found as follows:

Size: Roll 1d4. 1-2 = average of the sizes of both parents, 3 = smaller parent's size, 4 = larger parent's size.

Type: The method for determining the type of the final creature relies upon the following list:

outsider, elemental, dragon, magical beast, fey, aberration, giant, monstrous humanoid, humanoid, beast, animal, plant, vermin, ooze

The types of both parents should be found on this list. Whichever parent's type appears earlier on this list is dominant, and trumps the type of parent(s) which appear later. This earlier appearing type will also be the type of the offspring, for the purposes of which type of die are used for hit dice, as well as any special qualities dependent upon type.

Hit Dice: Average of the two parent creatures' HD.

Initiative: By Dex, modified by size and feats.

Speed: Roll 1d6: 1 = 1/2 slower parent's speed, 2 = slower parent's speed, 3-4 = average of the parents' speeds, 5 = faster parent's speed, 6 = faster parent's speed + 10

AC: Size modifier + Dex modifier + highest natural AC of both parents.

Attacks: 50% chance of having each attack mode of either parent. Roll separately for each.

Face/Reach: By size, 50% tall, 50% long.

Special Attacks: 50% chance of having each special ability of either parent. Roll separately for each.

Special Qualities: 50% chance of having each special quality of either parent. Roll separately for each.

Saves: Good saving throws by type.

Abilities: Roll 3d6 to determine which parent's attributes are applied to the resulting creature.

3d6 Result

- 3 Between both parents, take the worst scores of all 6 attributes.
- 4 Between both parents, take the worst scores of 5 attributes. The remaining one is an average of both parent's scores in that attribute.
- 5 Between both parents, take the worst scores of 4 attributes. The remaining two are an average of both parent's scores in that attribute.
- 6 Between both parents, take the worst scores of 3 attributes. The remaining three are an average of both parent's scores in that attribute.
- 7 Between both parents, take the worst scores of 2 attributes. The remaining four are an average of both parent's scores in that attribute.
- 8 Between both parents, take the worst scores of 1 attribute. The remaining five are an average of both parent's scores in that attribute.
- 9 One attribute is averaged between the parents' scores at the creator's whim. The others are the worst of the parent's ability scores.
- 10 Two attributes are averaged between the parents' scores at the creator's whim. The others are the worst of the parent's ability scores.
- 11 Three attributes are averaged between the parents' scores at the creator's whim. The others are the worst of the parent's ability scores.
- 12 The single best attribute from either parent. Remaining scores are the poorer of the two creatures' score.
- 13 The 2 best attributes from either parent. Remaining scores are the poorer of the two creatures' score.
- 14 The 3 best attributes from either parent. Remaining scores are the poorer of the two creatures' score.
- 15 The 4 best attributes from either parent. Remaining scores are the poorer of the two creatures' score.
- 16 The 5 best attributes from either parent. Remaining score is the poorer of the two creatures' score.
- 17 The best attributes from either parent.
- 18 The best attributes from either parent. Additionally, disperse 1d10 points among all scores.

Challenge Rating: Must be determined based on the final creature. Compare with any similar creatures to determine a working CR, but playtesting is the only true way to tell.

Material Components: A cauldron worth 3,000 gp, which is consumed by the spell, and the parent creatures, which are rendered sterile by the casting of this spell.



XP Cost: 1,000. The caster must sacrifice a small piece of his own soul to fuel the metaphysical reaction.

Danse Macabre

Necromancy [Mind-affecting]

Level: Clr 9

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 10 rounds

Range: Touch

Target: Caster and 1 person per two caster levels

Duration: 10 rounds

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Danse macabre causes the targets to become possessed by alien spirits. This gives them the ability to survive lethal damage, and causes them to cavort in an unnerving manner. All targets must be uninjured when the spell is cast. The spirits summoned for use in this spell take great pleasure in the use of the target bodies, and will not allow them to die. For the duration, each time a character receives enough damage to be slain, he is immediately revived to full hit points and leaps to his feet to continue the dance. No amount of damage will slay an affected character, short of the complete destruction of his body. Limbs and even the character's head may be severed, and yet he will rise, bloody and wounded, to continue the grisly performance.

Every time a dancer is 'slain,' all foes must make a Will save or flee for the remaining duration of the spell. At the end of the spell's duration, all visible damage to living dancers is healed.

Dancers get one move equivalent action per round. They may move or attack, but not both, and may not take any other action. Spellcasting is likewise impossible while under the sway

of this spell.

Material Components: Jade figures worth 10,000 gp.

XP Cost: 5,000.

Force Discus

Evocation [Force]

Level: Wiz/Sor 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 1 mile/round

Duration: 1 round per 2 levels

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell creates a levitating discus of pure force that may be hurled by the caster as a ranged touch attack. This disc deals 1d6 force damage if it hits. The disc receives an attack of opportunity on any creature in a square that is at a right angle to the primary target, relative to the caster. It may in fact strike multiple creatures, or even the same creature twice in a single round, if it can do so within ten total moves, and by only moving at right angles after an attack. This disc may be banked off of *nonliving* surfaces at any angle the caster desires upon striking a surface to reach its target. It can pass thorough any opening larger than 1 foot wide, long or high. The caster may also rotate the discus at will as necessity demands, but may not change its direction while the discus is flying through the air. The discus may bank off of any number of nonliving surfaces in a round, but when it strikes a target, and cannot strike another, it makes its way back to the caster over the remainder of the round. On the next and subsequent rounds of its duration, it may be hurled again. At the end of this spell's duration, it shimmers out of existence.

Form Lock

Transmutation

Level: Wiz/Sor 6, Clr 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 day/level

Saving Throw: Fort negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

On a successful ranged touch attack, this spell prevents shapeshifting characters and creatures from changing form completely, ensuring that they cannot shapeshift to mask their true nature. Every time the target changes form thereafter, he will take 4d6 damage, which is not healed by the transformation. Facial, skin, and general anatomical features are retained even when the affected creature changes form or physiology. For example, if this spell were cast upon a character that was in the form of a frog at the time of casting, and he tried to change to a human form, he would only become a humanoid with frog features, such as skin color, texture, etc. Similarly, if it were cast upon a human who then tried to change into a frog, he would retain distorted human features, such as hair, eye shape, and fingernails, while taking on the general form of a frog. This spell can be enhanced by *permanency*.

Material Components: A tiny silver net worth at least 100 gp.

Of One Mind

Transmutation [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Clr 6

Components: M

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Touch

Target: The caster and one other creature.

Duration: 1 round per 4 levels

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Two targets pool their mental resources. With this spell, two characters can join minds in a bond that goes deeper than telepathy, over any range. They may communicate, and either member may use Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma based skills, feats, psionics and spells that either member has access to. In the case of spells, these use the preparer's caster level, and are lost normally upon casting by either party.

Still Metal

Evocation

Level: Sor/Wiz 6

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Area: 10 ft. radius burst/level (max 50 ft.), emanating from the caster

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

When this spell is cast, all metal within the area of effect is frozen in place perfectly, even if airborne. Such metal is invulnerable to attack, and effectively out of phase with time. Frozen metal objects will support any amount of weight and cannot be moved. If an object is only partially composed of metal, it is still frozen in place, but nonmetal portions do not benefit from the invulnerability effect, possibly breaking under strain. At the end of the round, items affected by this spell fall to the ground if unattended, or may be moved again if in a creature's possession.

Warp Courier

Transmutation [Teleportation]

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Target: Object touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell allows for written messages and small items to be passed at great distances. It is frequently used on reconnaissance missions, spell component gathering expeditions, or between loved ones who must be apart. Used in conjunction with *capture moment*, it can be quite effective for information transfer.

A small object, weighing no more than 1 lb. per caster level, may be transported any distance on the same plane to appear within five feet of a predesignated person, a fixed location upon an object (such as the center of a desk), or a fixed location. The transported object "spins" out of existence at the place of casting, and into existence at the destination. A rising hum lets the receiver know the object has appeared. The designated person or object may itself be in nonplanar transit at the time of casting. If any antimagic effects capable of dispelling this casting are in place on the receiving end, or the receiver is no longer on the same plane, a feedback bubble forms and bursts, dealing 1d6 energy damage to the caster, and utterly destroying the object in transit with no save. This spell is otherwise infallible. Even if the receiving person is dead, or the receiving object is destroyed, the spell will function, as long as some part of the receiving person or object remains. Creatures may be transported by *warp courier*, as long as they don't exceed the weight limit. This spell uses the ethereal plane to achieve its effect, which is why it is safe for common use, except during a rage storm, in which case it may cause a catastrophic implosion (100% chance -5% per caster level).

Material Components: A small piece of the object (such as shavings from an X carved into a wooden desk), person (a lock of hair, etc.), or place that is designated as a target location for this spell.

Chapter IV

Of Honor and Glory

Brendir

Capital: Brend

Geographical Overview

Brendir spans a region that includes temperate to sub-tropical areas. The empire has coastline on three sides, with rocky coves in the south and sheer cliffs in the north. There are relatively few major earthquakes, and the crumbling crust of the subcontinent is more prone to relieve its stress with the expulsion of lava than with tectonic slippage.

Once, ancient mountains rose high above sea level, but these have been largely worn away by the constant assault of weather from the empire's three coastal sides. Only the Kyul Range and the Eastern Olin Alps have remained safe from these ravages. Now the surrounding terrain is dominated by rolling hills and piled scree, often hiding entrances into the under-realms. The land is fertile to the south, but as one travels north it gives way to rockier soil.

In the sparsely-populated north, there are chestnut, oak, and cypress, with a smattering of conifers at higher altitudes. Many feral dragons live in these areas, failed attempts at domestication. Lesser fell beasts include trolls and giants, various magical breeds of wolves and hounds, owlbears, treants, dire creatures of every stripe, and griffons. Animals include stags, boars, wolves, and rabbits.

The south finds greater preponderance of settlements, and the land is heavily cultivated with palm trees, citrus plants such as lemon and orange, and olive trees. As one travels to the southernmost point of the continent, one finds figs, dates, almonds, pomegranate, cotton and sugarcane in increasing volume. Wild beasts include chuul, tendriculos, rocs, and sahuagin. Common mundane creatures include goats, foxes, marmot, bears, and antelope. Numerous species of bird control the air, such as albatross, gulls, and pelicans. Dolphins and whales are

plentiful in the seas.

To the north, between Brendir and Kharkon's southeast border, lie the Treaty Lands, home of fell beasts and many resources. Both empires are slowly encroaching on this neutral territory, but both are reluctant to do so overtly. They each ignore the other's inroads, but occasional skirmishes break out, never mentioned to the lawmakers in their respective capitals.

There are thirteen provinces of Brendir (see provincial map on page 104). In the far north, separated from southernmost Kharkon by the Treaty Lands, lie the wilds of Hegensted, still a largely uncivilized land, with seaside cliffs that expand inward to become a flat and forested land. Its shifting border is constantly redefined through battles with the Derudians, a mixed company of monstrous humanoids and belligerent barbarians. On the northeast coast of Brendir, but a short span of sea from Ynnidon, is the eldritch and forested realm of Cullaine. Beneath these two lies Tobran, beleaguered by invading devils. To the northwest is Tzimichia, a place of hellish weather and warring elementals, unfit for most civilized Brendirians. As one travels south and east, one comes to Olin, a patriotic province with few problems, except for a preponderance of giant insects. Further south is Prestarre, a low-lying domain of swamps and bogs, with secrets hidden in its swirling mists. Beyond the Tober River to the east is Homm, deceptively idyllic. Lamera is the playground of the wealthy, a place of pleasure resorts, where many revel in depravity. Brendis is the Heart of the Empire, the source of civilization, not just for Brendir, but for much of the world. To the south is Tulis, a productive province which has recently become a staging ground for celestials, attracting the attentions of their infernal enemies. At the southernmost tip of the continent of Kharkonia is Triskatarior, once a fierce nation unto itself, now a peace-loving province of artificers and philosophers, with thousands of offshore islands that contain much wilder denizens.

Eastward, across the Sea of Deberon, lie Emetrium and Valtu. Emetrium is a haven of world trade, a dizzying province

filled with expatriates and visitors from exotic lands. Valtu, the newest province, is a place with rich resources, exploited and abused by unscrupulous merchants and opportunists.

Cultural Overview

Values: The Five Pillars

Justice

Of all the empires, Brendir has the most advanced legal system. There are large prisons for criminals in the major population centers, and on the outskirts of Brend is the world-famous Warreen Prison, described below.

Most minor crimes are handled by a fine or by a relatively short period of civil service. Depending on the circumstances of the crime, leniency may be granted, but at the minimum the criminal is expected to pay his debt to his victims. *Geas* or *quest* spells may be used to cause powerful and essentially good characters to perform quests as restitution. At times, a sentence of banishment is incurred, and some criminals are given the option to serve in the military rather than face harsher punishment. Minor crimes include theft, illegal entry, and destruction of property.

A single murder or major act of violence is often punished by a life of hard labor in prison. Most prisons are actually labor camps, where the prisoners are expected to pay for the goods they require through work. Prisons may be mines or quarries, even farms where the inmates must provide for the empire as a whole, becoming the only legal slaves in Brendir for the duration of their sentences. The death penalty is rarely incurred, except for the vilest of crimes, and then only when it is certain that the punished will stay dead. Those that will not are sent to Warreen Prison. In times of dire need, imprisoned characters with a military background may be released to military custody, receiving a chance at redemption.

Military justice is handled differently. On the battlefield,

there is no place for the niceties of civil law. Order must be maintained, at all costs. Unlike the empire proper, crimes committed on the warfront are punished more harshly. Whether or not the criminal is a soldier, any crimes committed in a war camp are punished under the same law. Capital offenses include defecting during a battle, running from battle, faking illness, climbing the walls of a walled camp (either to enter or to escape), conspiracy against the Empire or anyone of commander rank or greater, attacking a fellow officer, sabotage, espionage and treason. Any of these things will result in the swift public execution of the criminal, unless extreme extenuating circumstances are proven. Non-capital offenses include surrendering in battle, abandoning the defense of a wall or protected region, desertion during peacetime, physical unfitnes, avoiding duty, and theft. These are punished by humiliation such as flogging, dishonorable discharge, demotion, or being forced to eat inferior or decaying rations.

In Brendir, destructive magic requires a permit, and necromancy is illegal under any circumstances. The spirit of the magic in question is what matters in court. Illegal or regulated spells, except for necromancy, may be used in self-defense, or against attacking monsters with impunity. Many spellcasters operate illegally, which is fine, as long as they don't get caught. Many officials can be bribed to look the other way, alignment issues for breaking the law notwithstanding.

Honor

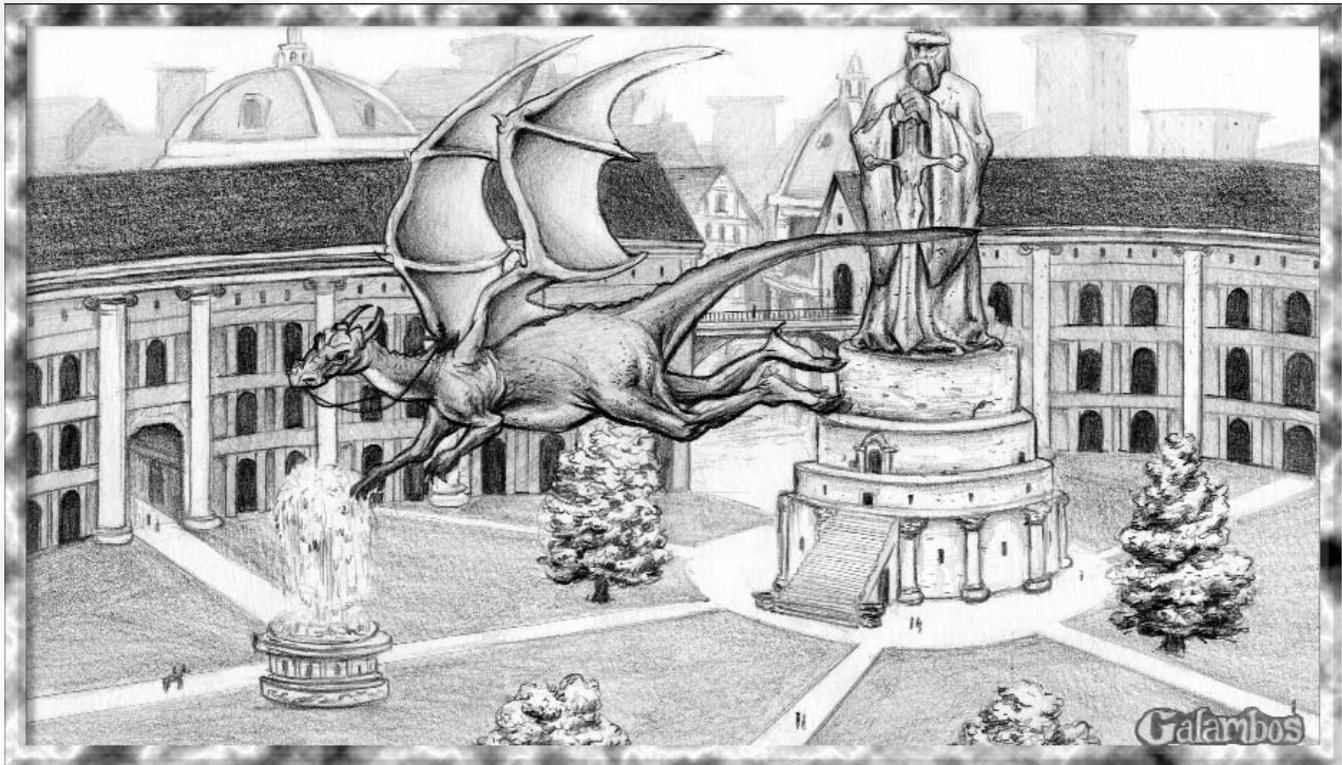
Brendirians believe in charity for the deserving, keeping promises, and hospitality. All of these things are a matter of honor. For even as they make war upon others, they have pride. For Brendir to be considered uncivil would be insufferable. The Empire wants to be loved, as much as it wants to be feared.

There is a welfare system of sorts in place that pays out a living wage to orphans and unskilled widows and widowers, as well as to retired soldiers. Able men and women are expected to work. There are laws in place that protect plebeians from abuse.

Honesty is expected, and even when a crime has been com-

Brendirian Spell Legality

Legal	Illegal (Major Crime)	Basic Permit (Minor Crime)	Special Permit (Circumstantial)
Abjurations	Torture/curse spells	Calling (Conjuration)	Enchantments
Divinations	Necromancy	Creation (Conjuration)	
Figments		Evocations	
Glamers		Shadow magics	
Healing (Conjuration)		Summoning (Conjuring)	
Patterns			
Phantasms			
Transmutation			



mitted, most citizens will admit it when caught. Deals are expected to be kept, even when there were no witnesses. Magic sorts out “misinterpretations” of the truth, so there really is no benefit to be gained from falsehoods. From a young age, Brendirians are taught that there is nothing worse than a liar.

Bendirians are known as excellent hosts. While there are halfling-run hostels, boarding houses, and resorts for the weary traveler, it is the fortunate pilgrim who has a Brendirian friend to put him up for the night. Even an acquaintance will often do so, and frequently the first question that comes out of a local’s mouth when told that they are speaking to a traveler is, “Where are you staying?” followed by an offer of hospitality. The guest is rarely expected to pay for the honor, but is expected to comport himself with respect, and to leave as soon as possible.

Taking advantage of a host’s generosity is a petty crime, and while a good one will not report it, his friends might – resulting in the garrison arriving to remove the offending guests. Theft is out of the question and becomes a major crime as defined above when one steals from his host. For these reasons, offers of hospitality are taken with a grain of salt most times, and politely refused unless the guest feels very comfortable with the host.

Glory

The Brendirian concept of glory is threefold. First, there is the glory of battle. Brendir has a long legacy of martial excellence, dating back into the prehistory of the Empire. Warfare is a part of everyday life, and the empire strongly believes, perhaps with a touch of hubris, that by taking new lands the peoples they conquer benefit in the long run. Once conquered, the

new citizens are welcomed into the empire without malice, usually becoming plebeians or equites (see below).

Secondly, there is patriotism. Love for Brendir is a way of life, and is present in even the lowest citizens. It is uncommon to find malcontents within the empire. Beliefs and statements that run counter to the ideals of the empire are allowed to be voiced, but few listen. Those who are willing to accept its requirements are rewarded with opportunities and a standard of living no other empire can match.

Rising out of patriotism is the boundless determination of the typical Brendirian. It is a commonly held conceit that no problem can withstand the tireless assault of right Brendirian thought. If a plan is proven impractical, a new angle of attack is devised, but failure is rarely an option. The Empire seeks to command nature, and break it if necessary. This leads to wondrous architecture, and the expectation of a high quality of life for all citizens. Nothing can stand in the way of Brendirian progress.

Knowledge

Education is one of the most valued commodities in Brendir. All Brendirian children are able to attend school in some form, the poorest only until they are 14. The rich can afford to pay tutors, and those who can afford to attend a university are expected to. There are numerous schools that offer training in rhetoric, mathematics, business, magic, or the art of war. Less affluent youths find training in the form of apprenticeships, usually among extended family or friends.

The empire is voracious for new ways of doing things. New ideas are constantly being explored and catalogued in case

they become useful in the future. Every major city has affiliated universities, museums, and libraries, which compete with those in other cities for the rarest and most impressive attractions. Each retains a cadre of paid “delvers” – adventurers who seek out these wonders. This emphasis on knowledge is what has helped to make the empire great.

Faith

Brendirians worship a pantheon they call the Gods of Arrilia. Since ancient times, they’ve believed that these gods and goddesses dwelled upon Arril, the great moon that hangs over the world, but only the most uneducated still hold this belief. This religion is a part of the state, as well as an integral part of everyday life. Like all pantheons on Thraxis, the gods of Arrilia are worshiped together, as a whole, except when a worshipper wishes to gain a special blessing in an undertaking where a specific god holds dominion.

The Gods of Arrilia do not rule unopposed in Brendir. Brendir is a religiously diverse empire, and every major world religion has a temple somewhere there. Other cultures blend with the core culture of the empire, either by immigration or subjugation of new lands, bringing their gods with them. The only strictures of the Brendirian government are that the Brendirian gods are honored on holidays, and foreign gods and their followers are considered guests who must comport themselves as such. It is illegal to persecute followers of foreign or strange religions, but it does occur on the small scale.

Money and Trade

Money in Brendir uses the same conversion rate as listed in chapter 7 of the PHB, and prices are the same. Platinum pieces are called brilliants or “brills,” gold pieces are sheaves (as in “sheaves of wheat”), silver are talons and copper pieces are discs or “discs” in common usage. There are also lead coins called “tiles” or “chips,” used as tokens for admission to gaming events, brothels, and the like. These are minted by the issuing institution. They have no intrinsic value, but are just hard enough to copy to serve as tickets.

Castes

Brendir depends upon order to remain the greatest empire in the world. Every citizen is a member of a caste, and each person is expected to know his place in society, even if it’s on the rise. The higher one rises, the more freedoms one possesses. Only by adhering to the social contract can one expect to better his lot. Below is an examination of the castes that hold Brendir together. PCs may opt to be of the equestrian or patrician class at the GM’s discretion, and it is recommended, since they have the most freedom to move around, and to carry all weapons.

Freemen (10 percent of the population): The title for the caste of freemen is a throwback to the ancient practice of slavery, which

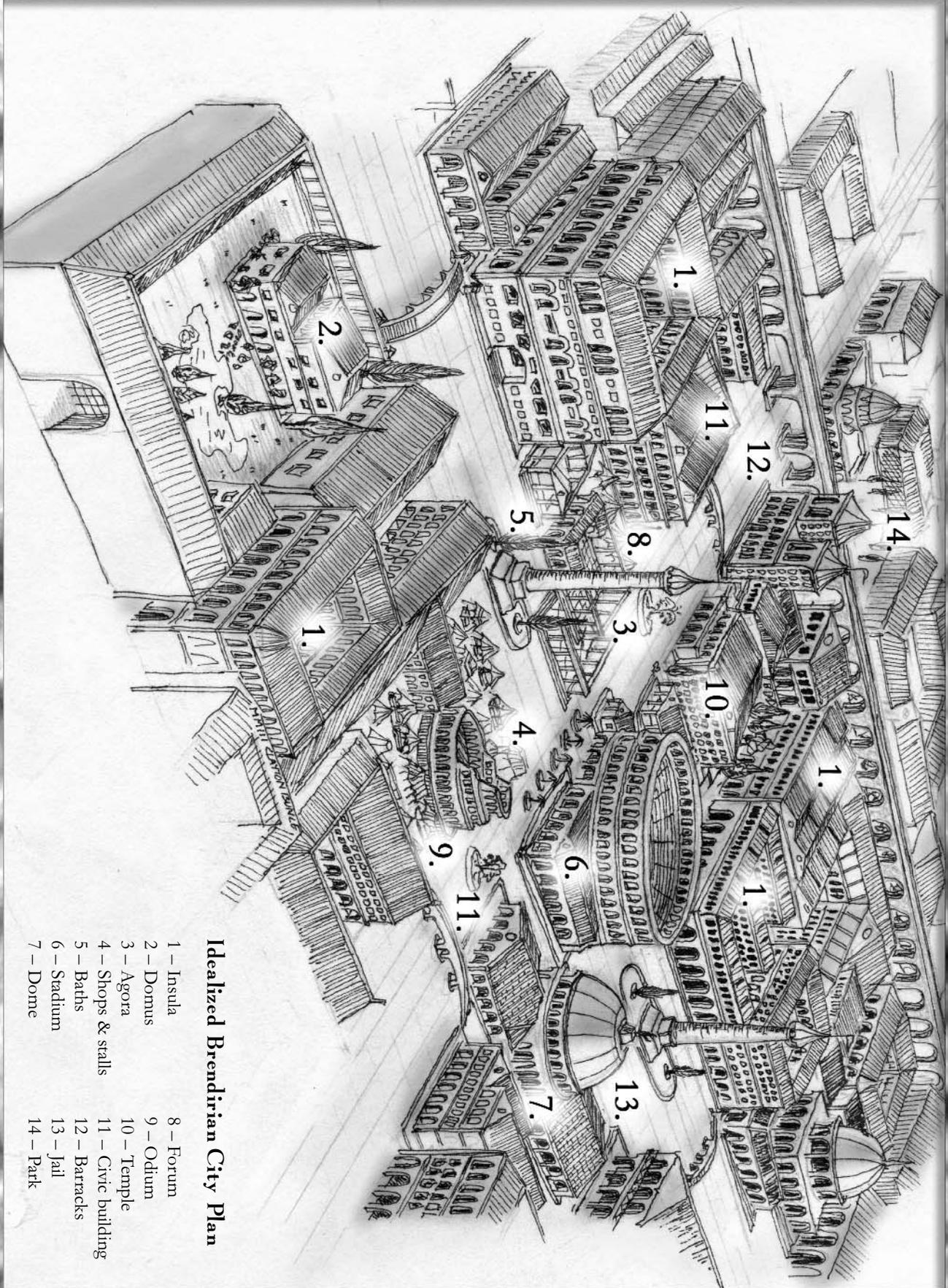
Warreen Prison

The great thinkers of Brendir long ago realized that even death could not stop many powerful beings from wreaking havoc upon the world. There is a standing warrant for the Empress of Ynnidon, dating back to 942 when she led the elves and dwarves in a bloody attempt to reclaim Brendir from the humans. Thus they developed a system of incarceration rather than execution. Bounty hunters work with the prisons, and can make a very good living completing contracts.

Warreen Prison is capable of holding powerful spellcasters, demons, or even godlings indefinitely. Such prisoners are sent from all over the world, for a fee. The entire complex, while huge on the outside, holds a much larger area within, more a city than an edifice. The worst and most powerful prisoners are held in five immense extradimensional wings accessible only by first traveling through locked chambers. Most cells within this wing have a grated wall that opens to an infinite, starry void. In the distance, hanging like a mockery of the sun, is the only feature of that void: The Wheel, the magical rift that draws all magic through Thraxis into itself. An eerie purple light is omnipresent in these wings, given off by the rift’s corona. The rift itself is blacker than despair. Any spellcasters within these cells are forcefully pulled against this grate and are considered grappled until they expend all of their psionic energy or cast all of their spells, which are drawn harmlessly into the void. Inherently magical beings such as fey and outsiders suffer a similar fate, except that they cannot find such easy relief. Any beings that die in this wing may never be resurrected or reincarnated, and their final reward is denied with brutal finality, as their souls are devoured by the voracious black pit.

no longer exists legally in Brendir. It now refers to those native residents of newly conquered or undeveloped countryside, including most of the Hegensted and Cullaine regions. Members of this caste have no rights whatsoever, except for those granted by the senate. These vary by location but usually include the right to live on land set aside for them, to carry small arms to defend themselves from monsters, and to plant and protect their own crops. Hunting rights are often restricted to lower mammals where such laws can be enforced.

Plebeian (50 percent of the population): Plebeians are the artisans, farmers, and employees of the empire. As the working caste, paying no taxes, they may not own weapons or land and have few other rights, but may elect members of the Tribunes. Life for the plebeians is actually pretty good, considering the legal restrictions placed upon them. During times of crisis, ple-



Idealized Brendrian City Plan

- 1 – Insula
- 2 – Domus
- 3 – Agora
- 4 – Shops & stalls
- 5 – Baths
- 6 – Stadium
- 7 – Dome
- 8 – Forum
- 9 – Odium
- 10 – Temple
- 11 – Civic building
- 12 – Barracks
- 13 – Jail
- 14 – Park

beians lose many of the rights they do have, succumbing to curfews. They live in rented tenements of varying quality over shops in the cities, or in small houses on plots of land that are paid for by their crops and labor.

Equites (30 percent of the population): The Equites or “Equestrian” class is largely a mercantile caste. Entry into this class is economically based, with rights bestowed by the taxes that are paid into the Empire’s coffers. An Eques can afford to buy one or more horses, hence their name. A great many adventurers are part of this caste. All land holders and former soldiers are at least equites. A plebian or freeman can buy his way into this caste by paying 10 thousand gold sheaves to the empire, as a one-time tax.

Patrician (10 percent of the population): “Patrician” is a hereditary title, but it may be earned through time served with honor in the military, or a great deed accomplished in the name of empire. The point of the patrician class is not to oppress the plebeians or freemen, but to reward those whose ancestors have made sacrifices for civilization. Over time, entry into the patrician class has been relaxed, and it is now possible to “sacrifice” 50 thousand gold sheaves to buy one’s way into the nobility. This option is subject to the judgment of a council of prefects, consisting of whichever prefects have drawn the duty for the week.

Patricians are not automatically wealthy, but they have the right to run businesses, and to hold property. Men and women have equal rights, but the title dates back to a time when men were in full charge of society. Many areas are traditional, adhering to the old sexual roles, but the law protects the rights of those who don’t fit society’s mold. Any immigrants that can prove noble or other sufficiently high position held in another empire or nation may become patricians after a probationary period. Patricians have access to resources and contacts that a mere plebian could never hope for.

Lifestyle

Towns and Cities

Brendirians prefer to dwell in cities, which are considered to be the benchmark of civilization. All towns are built with the intention of eventually becoming cities.

Brendir plans most of its towns down to the smallest detail. For this reason most Brendirian towns are identical, at least in their centers. No matter where you go in the empire, you can find your way around the town you are in, at least in theory. Urban planning considers defense, and every major city has walls and fortified gates at strategic places throughout the city, though only the most violence prone areas place a wall around the entire city, since this would stifle growth.

Cities are laid out on a grid, with a square containing the forum and agora in the middle, and main roads aligned with the cardinal directions. The city is divided in to any number of districts which are subdivided into insula, walled neighborhoods or the occasional park.

Roads are always paved. Where the wide roads cross one

another, there are fountains, and often news boards. Roads within a quarter are 20 feet wide as a rule. Colonnaded sidewalks lead the way down all major streets, with tiled roofs offering protection from inclement weather. Banners and streamers are flown, and canopies of vibrant fabrics cover the merchant stalls. The rest of the block falls into a periodic pattern of insula. Broad roads, at least twice as wide as the streets within a quarter, separate the quarters.

Brendir has mastered the flow of water. Plumbing, fountains, and baths are ubiquitous in any town or city. In one corner of every quarter, where the aqueduct brings water, is the entertainment district. Here there will be found the amphitheater, dome, and agora. This is usually the most scenic area of the city. In wide open spaces, colonnades denote the desired routes of transit.

The Brendirians build in brick, marble and concrete, primarily, and favor aesthetic uses of these materials. Why should a building be merely functional when it can be a work of art? Porticoes, columns, and sculptures are ubiquitous. Most of these structures are accented with colorful tiles, paint glazes, or stucco. Rarely are bare stones left unadorned. Fountains and other points of interest are placed tastefully but frequently.

Despite the structure of the cities, the citizens make the most of their environments, and there is a great deal of variety within the basic guidelines for a ‘proper Brendirian city.’ Bridges and arches are frequent, allowing for the placement of portcullises to block transit, and walkways to allow guards to rapidly move about sections of the city. There are no laws restricting variation of wall width or levels within an insula, plant life, sculptures or other methods of variation, as long as the final design is aesthetically pleasing and the roads remain uniform.

Though all cities are built from the same plans, the underlying terrain usually calls for some deviation from plan. A rocky rise might call for a shallow ramp or stairway 20 feet wide rather than the originally planned road. Whatever the case, symmetry is favored, and the goal is to maintain the plan, as much as possible.

Every major city has the following gathering places. Certain cities are known for a unique attraction, or a local form of entertainment, but those that follow are found everywhere.

The Agora: The open-air market place, located in the forum square. Cooked and uncooked food can be bought from stands here, along with daily necessities. Weapons, armor and other equipment of normal quality can also be purchased. Everything is arranged to be pleasing to the senses, from carefully arranged floral bouquets to fresh produce. Licensed entertainment acts compete for the shoppers’ attentions.

Quality control is enforced, and plain clothes inspectors mingle with the crowds. Animals are restricted here, except for the military’s war animals, which are themselves carefully cleaned and groomed. Any complaints of dishonesty, theft or inferior goods can be directed to the office of the Market Prefect, who will then mediate. “Buyer beware” is still a good rule, since the Prefect will not protect fools from themselves.

Shopping in Brendir is a leisurely pursuit, sometimes taking all morning and even extending late into the afternoon. The

agora is a family place – men, women and children are found casually strolling from stand to stand, and a heavy guard presence ensures safety. It is also here that many announcements are first made, and where the military centers its recruitment efforts. Employment or business opportunities can be found here, on bulletin boards, or at stands set up for the purpose. There is usually a high canopy of heavy hide that can be extended in foul weather, and withdrawn in good weather.

The Baths: Everyone enjoys the public baths. A place to socialize, to unwind, and even to shop, they are central to civilized life. Fountains and sculptures please the eye, and exotic fragrances tickle the nose. Magic and illusions enhance it all. Magically cleaned and heated, they offer relaxation at the end of a day, before returning home. There are small rooms for private types, as well as a vast communal bath and heated pool for plebeians and anyone feeling sociable. The bath house is a place of utter luxury for those who can afford it. Massages and more risqué pleasures can be had here. Food and drink are for sale as well. A typical bath house charges 5 talons for private use, or 1 talon for public use, but more illustrious spas can cost much more. The typical bath house offers saunas, baths and pools of varying temperature, areas for exercising, perhaps a few luxury shops, and often an inn.

The Forum: The forum is where the common citizen can air his grievances, judgments are made, and sentences passed. Speeches of every kind are made here, and in general, free speech is protected. Anyone who wants a turn may speak, and anyone who wants to listen may do so. Mind affecting magic is not allowed in these places, and protections are usually in place to prevent them. A city's forum is located in the same space as the marketplace; the forum proper is often a broad free standing palisade, with a podium at one end, and possibly seats. Large forums have levels that descend towards the podium, but the smallest ones may not even have a roof to protect the audience from inclement weather.

The Odium: This is where plays and concerts are put on. All levels of society are welcome here, though the highest members of society get the best seats. Illusory sights and sounds enhance the shows held here. The seating is raised in successive tiers so that observers in the back rows always have a direct line of sight to the performers. The odium is generally half of an amphitheater, open entirely along one side, so that the performers' backs are never turned on the audience.

Stadium/Amphitheater/Arena: This is a full oval or circular version of the odium. It is here that games and gladiatorial contests are held. A successful stadium is versatile, able to be transformed to fit the needs of a specific event. Many events are inspired by historical battles or major happenings. This may require that the stadium be transformed into an alpine wonderland, a searing desert or a raging volcano. Illusion supplements the atmosphere, but many of the threats are very real.

The Dome: This is the racetrack, where the national pastime of racing is enjoyed. As with all major events, bets can be placed, and food can be bought. The races are often simultaneous displays of landlocked horse races and sky borne relays with contestants riding hippogriffs, pegasi, or more exotic mounts. These events continue long into the night, everyday.

In some cities, the stadium may serve dual purpose as a dome, but this is usually avoided because both forms of entertainment are enjoyed and often run concurrently. In larger cities, the two complexes may be combined into a vast mecca of entertainment. In any place where games are put on, bets can be placed with institutions of varying repute. Food and wine are everywhere, available from stalls or wandering vendors.

Home

There are three types of homes in Brendir. These are the villa, the domus, and the insula. All are built from stone, except in the case of temporary settlements. The villa and domus are owned by the wealthy, and each is built around a walled courtyard that may or may not have a roof. The primary difference between a domus and a villa is that a domus is located within a town or city, while a villa sprawls across the countryside. Both the domus and villa are equipped with kitchens, privies, and several rooms for entertaining and sleeping. Hot air and water circulation systems allow for heated floors and walls. Cooled air escapes from the chimney. Most will also have a small shrine to the pantheon, and family deities called penates – minor spirits that protect a family in small ways.

Insula are the neighborhoods of a Brendirian city. Beyond family, they are the most important social unit of life in Brendir. They are square or rectangular communities, with tenements, small shops and bakeries, and often bars or open-air bar stalls within. The lower stories are mostly such shops and workspaces, with very few residences. The higher levels are comprised of tenements that are recessed inward from the lower stories, with railed walkways and small gardens. Though the street side facade is often very orderly, each has unique touches or motifs significant to the owner or builder of the insula. Inside the four walls there is much more room for experimentation with differing levels, building structures, and basic layout along the walls. Many insula also have an underground level, for storage of various supplies, and for protection in the case of an aerial attack.

Each insula has but a single primary entrance, though there may be hidden methods of entry or escape. This entrance commonly consists of an arched stone passage with an inner and outer portcullis that can only be raised from within or above, with murder holes in the ceiling. This entrance doubles as a guard tower, and a night watch of two guards keeps a vigil over the sleeping citizens. Visitors can expect to be questioned when they try to enter an insula at night. People return to their neighborhoods to relax, and they don't appreciate strangers breaking the peace.

Snacks and food can be bought from local vendors. Most day to day goods can be found within an insula, and most people need only leave them once a week to buy special items that the local shops don't stock. Depending on the repute of the particular insula, there may be brothels, game houses, or fences who deal in stolen goods. The inhabitants of an insula feel safe within their neighborhood castle, and the atmosphere within is fairly festive most of the time, even in poorer neighborhoods.

There are semi-private stone privies in nearby alleys that

Wonders of Morningstar: The Prism

A Wireshite scholar by the name of Davaq Karem wrote in 1340 that the key to sustaining the empires was to harness the flow of magic that barrages Thraxis. He proposed that crystal, well known as a major component in magic and psionic items alike, be used to do so. Furthermore, he wrote, such a crystal could only be constructed by the united effort of the greatest magical minds of the world. He proposed a method to do so in his 35 volume "Dialectics on Magic." The mathematics and metaphysics he described are precise and intensive, modeling the exact specifications of a 5,003' radius prism, a value Karem believed was the 360th root of the size of the cosmos. This prism would capture and redirect magic that would otherwise be lost to the Wheel.

Bureaucracy got in the way of fully realizing Karem's dream. It was decided by a council of the empires that the prism would be designed to bolster benevolent forms of magic, but to weaken harmful ones. The prism would reflect beneficial magics back to Thraxis, while allowing evil and death oriented magics to pass through. The beneficial magics would cancel the negative magics on the surface of the world, lowering their levels, while concentrating the desirable energies.

Over 93 years, a cadre of spellcasters and artificers were employed by Brendir, with aid from the other empires. They worked out of Mechimur, which quickly became a center of magical thought. Using only the finest gems, ground finer than dust and painstakingly combined, they created the first prism. When it was constructed, the final incantations were chanted by armies of mages, and the prism was complete. It was raised to into the sky to float between Thraxis and Arril. Almost immediately, magic was being redirected to Thraxis, and spellcasters noticed that their craft had grown infinitely easier. Spectrums evened out, evil magics were hindered, teleportation and resurrection magics were rendered stable, and it seemed that the world would know an age of peace. These hopes were undone in a single month.

The incredible torrent of magic that was drawn through the prism was too much. It is currently agreed that the "forbidden" forms of magic were concentrated within the prism, rather than passing through as they were meant to. This resulted in infinitesimal flaws in the prism being widened by the force of these magics. The prism shattered. In one moment, 93 years of work were wasted. There was a burst of multicolored light that made night into prismatic day, occluding the light of Arril for five minutes, and utterly destroying any spellcasters using magic at the time. Many magical tools and items failed with catastrophic results. For three weeks, a rain of magically charged crystal dust and larger shards fell across Thraxis.

Fortunes were made during the ensuing chaos. It was found that shards of the prism were artifacts of unknowable power, each geared towards a certain spectrum of magic, able to counter any other signatures in an area, and to bestow upon their wielder incredible power. Dust and shard seekers scoured the lands as they do today, using divinations to locate caches of the substance of the prism.

Strange things began to happen, and portals from other planes were randomly redirected to Thraxis. New creatures were given rise, and areas with total spectrum strength formed for the first time. The time after the destruction of the prism foreshadowed the arrival of the Canticle.

Collected dust of the prism is useful in general magic, bestowing the effect of casting a spell under the effects of any signature the caster wishes when used as a spell component. This dust may be used with any spell, even those that do not normally have material components. Roll 1d6 to determine the strength of the signature effect.

Shards are highly potent artifacts that have largely been transformed by the magics they contain. Some resemble weapons like swords or bows, or other objects, such as chalices or armor. Each bestows incredible and unpredictable power upon their holder, beyond their signature powers described below.

The shards invariably cancel out the effects of a spectrum while they are in an area, and bestow their own, which is of total (6) strength, to a radius of up to 1/8th of a mile. There is one shard for each spectrum type, even evil or undesirable ones (these had to be part of the prism to direct these energies away from Thraxis). Most keep their possession of shards a secret, for fear of retribution from the Brendirian authorities, and attacks from ambitious people and creatures. Many shards can have their power dampened at the wielder's whim, but others must be kept in an extradimensional space, such as a *bag of holding*, for the effect to be nullified.

The first prism was a disaster, but the second is being approached more carefully. Taking what was learned from the fiasco that the first prism became, progress has been much faster. Fewer mages are involved, there are more artificers, and the prism is nearing completion. Any year now, they will be ready to activate it. What happens then will surely change the world.

are used by the poor or visitors, and Brendirians have no compunction about conversing while using them. Dweomers keep everything clean and reasonably pleasant. Most of the poor do not have running water within their tenements and carry buckets of water for cooking and daily washing from the fountain that is in the central square of each insula. Wastewater for those without personal plumbing is disposed of via the common privies, and may not simply be tossed out a window.

Play

Gladiatorial Contests: Even though racing is the official sport of the empire, the gladiatorial games are more popular, for the base excitement they offer. Almost all combatants are willing participants, sponsored by wealthy trade interests or senators, or paying their own way in hopes of winning enough to retire in luxury. Others are convicted murderers or other capital criminals who choose to fight in the games to die with a semblance of honor. It is typically free to compete in these games, though larger events may charge unestablished combatants. The public usually gains entrance for free, except in the case of major

events, where the populace will grumble but willingly hand over the asking price, which is usually 5-10 talons for an all day seat, which may be resold at the same price if it is empty at the start of a new game.

Since there is no slavery in Brendir, one might think there would be no gladiators. In fact, when the Compact of the New Republic was written, many senators tried to abolish this barbaric practice. The plebeians threatened rebellion, and instead of outright abolition of the games, work was done on making them more acceptable to "the civilized mind." A perpetual contract between the Empire and the priests of Brindius, the Brendirian God of War, was drawn up, that they should minister to the dead and wounded, in exchange for a significant portion of the proceeds and a prominent role in the pomp and ceremony of the games. All slain gladiators, except for capital criminals and those who choose otherwise, are resurrected as needed, free of charge to return again and again, until their souls can bear no further abuse. The priests of Brindius have final say regarding whether a potential combatant is fit to compete and will attempt to dissuade those they believe will not survive a resurrection attempt or who are competing under a death

Empire-Wide Racial Demographics (Citizens and Freemen Only)

Race	Empire Wide Percentage	Highest Concentrations
Human	57%	Everywhere*
Halfling	11%	
Embrel (PHB halfling)	8%	Everywhere*
Seaspray	2%	Homm, Lamera
Bloodfed	0.5%	Tulis, Brend
Speaker	0.5%	Brend
Thull	10%	Hegensted, Tzimich, Cullaine, Brend
Dwarf	8%	
Clay	4%	Everywhere*
Stonecutter	2%	Lamera
Storm	1%	Tzimichia
Flayed	1%	Tzimichia
Elf/Fey	8%	
Muryan	2%	Everywhere*
Bone	1%	Hegensted
Briar	1%	Cullaine
Crown	1%	Cullaine
Meadow	1%	Cullaine
Stream	1%	Brend
Other	1%	Everywhere*
Planetouched	4%	Everywhere*
Gnome	2%	Triskatariot
Monstrous citizens	<1%	Everywhere*

* "Everywhere" indicates a roughly equal distribution of a given race.

wish. They will also council those who are about to put their lives at risk, since even with the promise of resurrection, death can be a terrifying prospect for anyone with even a shred of sanity.

The Brendirian Games: A smaller version of the World Games is held every year, from the second week of Dalvaro to the last day of the month. Contestants and audience members come from everywhere in the empire, competing in tests of strength, wizardry, agility, and wit. The events are one part spectacle, and one part ceremony. The location where the games are held changes from year to year, and a chosen area is greatly enriched by the games, which bring commerce, reputation, and excitement. Bets are taken and fortunes are made and lost. Specific events include:

- Wrestling, boxing, racing, discus throwing, team sports, various tests of marksmanship, and any other mundane games the organizers can come up with.
- Chariot races, with specially modified chariots that fly or offer offensive capabilities.
- Theatrical competitions and pageants.
- Mounted and unmounted mock aerial combat, where the game can turn deadly.
- Deadliest mage competition (where the wizard or sorcerer with the most firepower wins).
- Small-scale naval battles in a specially designed pool.
- Obstacle courses, with traps and hazards.
- Summoning duels.
- Gladiatorial games.
- Animals games, between captured beasts or where the contestants are transformed into animals and must fight, or compete in various other events. These games say that Brendir commands not only people but all of nature.
- Surprisingly entertaining puzzle-solving contests, whereby the contestants must solve multiple level puzzles or face entertaining consequences that run the gamut from annoying to slightly dangerous, such as being turned into a sparrow for a day.

To participate, a contestant must pay 100 gold sheaves, but there are often people willing to sponsor a promising contestant, in exchange for a percentage of his or her winnings. The winner of an event is given 1,000 sheaves, the second place contestant receives 1,000 talons, and the third place contestant wins 1,000 discs. In addition, the winner of three or more events receives an additional 1,000 platinum brilliants.

The World Games: The World Games are a world-famous event. Every third year they replace the Brendirian Games and extend them from the beginning of the month of Dalvaro. The best contestants from the Brendirian Games are eligible to compete for free, but others must pay. Entrance fees and prize values are multiplied by 10 for the contestants of these contests. Additionally, plebeians and foreign winners can win Patrician status by doing well at the games. Historically, wars have been put on hold for the duration.

Pets

Brendirians are so well-off that they can maintain pets which serve no function beyond the pleasure of their owners. Monkeys or chimpanzees, birds, dogs, ferrets, pseudodragons and other pets that can be trained to perform are favored.

Duty

War and the preparation for war shapes much of Brendirian cultural identity. The military is the backbone of the larger society, teaching a respect for order and discipline to its soldiers, who upon returning to society help to promote that view, teaching their own children the same values. It usually is a matter of great pride when a boy says to his father that he wants to be a soldier.

Brendir always keeps one eye on expansionism. Brendir has numerous colonies, outposts and resource collection operations across the world. Unofficial colonies and outposts exist in Kenabu, and in Chotok in Quetapan, and every other empire.

Both sexes can serve in the military, and ostensibly can perform identical functions, albeit in segregated troops. In practice, women have fewer martial opportunities than men, because Brendir isn't going to form a female version of a special legion if there are not enough qualified women to fill its ranks. The strong social order of Brendir means that specific ideals of motherhood and family are ingrained into the minds of most citizens, for good or bad, and there simply are not many women willing to give that up to risk their lives. Outside of the military, the ground is more equal.

Every adult citizen of Brendir is urged to devote 5 years of military service to the empire. Many adventurers have gained their skills there. Though most legions are comprised of warriors or fighters, there are separate ones for wizards, martial clerical orders, rogues, and a plethora of specialist troops. At the end of a 5 year tour, a character may opt to continue on for another, or to return to civilian life to petition for Patrician status. For every 5 year tour that the soldier served, he has a 10% chance of having his petition granted. After a tour of duty, a typical soldier has advanced 1 to 5 character levels.

Socially, military service opens many doors, and an illustrious career presents great opportunities, beyond Patrician status alone. A character that has completed military service is considered trustworthy, and can receive loans more easily, and one who has become famous will likely have people throwing opportunities at him. Except in extremely rare cases, anyone wishing to have a successful political career will have served in the military in some capacity.

Legionnaires make 5 gp a week while in service, though this increases up to 100 gp and beyond per week as they gain rank. When discharged, a former soldier receives a bonus, based on the number of years he has served, and any accolades he has garnered. Many people start up business with this payment. This bonus is 1000 gp/year served, and up to 4000 gp more for medals and accolades.

Branches of the Military

Army

Foot Soldiers

The most common legionnaires are those who fight on foot, without special mounts or equipment beyond their armor and weapons. They are all-purpose troops, highly versatile and highly mobile. There are many more opportunities for wide travel as a foot soldier, since they are sent to almost every land conflict to accompany more specialized troops.

Aside from foot soldiers, there are many other types of legions, suited to special circumstances. Their training includes the Endurance feat, and the Survival skill, in addition to combat. Each special legion is a weapon suited to a specific type of task, terrain, or operation. Most members of the other types of army troops began their careers as foot soldiers.

Foot soldiers are trained all over the empire. All are trained as archers and in melee tactics. Those who excel in one or the other may find that they are used primarily in one of these capacities, but all soldiers need to know both methods of fighting.

Cavalry

The cavalry is part of the army, but independent enough that it can almost be considered its own branch of the military. All active members have at least 5 ranks of the Ride skill, and the Mounted Combat feat.

There are two types of cavalry, land and sky. Each uses beasts that are specially suited to certain types of operations. Different types of beast are kept segregated when not in combat, but are trained to serve amiably with each other when a battle is raging.

Light Cavalry, Guch Hir and Horses: Though separate, their functions are much the same whether riding a six-legged guch hir or a four-legged horse. They serve as fast and powerful adversaries to foot soldiers, and as speedy strike forces. Horses are very versatile, but guch hir are more so. In most terrain, horse cavalry is fine, but where the footing is precarious or the land is broken, the sure-footed guch hir is more valuable. Light cavalry training camps are located everywhere foot soldiers are trained.

Heavy Cavalry, Elephants, Mammoths, Mogrekh: Sometimes horses or guch hir are too feeble for the job. This is where the heavy cavalry comes in. These creatures are treated nearly identically with regards to tactics, except that elephants are useful only in warm climates and mammoths and mogrekh cannot stand heat. Additionally, mammoths and mogrekh are more formidable, and mogrekh are more sure-footed. Many times, these creatures are ridden by multiple riders, equipped with ranged weaponry, or even artillery such as small onagers or ballistae.

Mogrekh and mammoth training camps are primarily located in Hegensted, while elephants and their riders are trained in Emetrium.

Sky Cavalry: The sky cavalry is composed of special legionnaires who have been trained to ride griffons, hippogriffs, pegasi, and even dragons.

Pegasus and Hippogriff Cavalry: Pegasi and hippogriff riders work side by side in the same regiments. Low ranking riders are trained with hippogriffs and progress to pegasi as they become available. While hippogriffs are treated as precious beasts, pegasi are full legionnaires, with all rights accorded them. Within the regiment, pegasi may even rise in rank, though none have stayed in service long enough to advance beyond legate, yet. They are considered partners with their riders, and are expected to get along. This is one of the only types of troop that allows males and females to serve side by side, because there are few pegasi willing to serve, and some join on the condition that they will only accept riders of a given sex. Pegasi and hippogriff training camps are primarily located in Tulus.

Griffon Riders: Riding predators is not for the faint of heart. A character must have the wild empathy class ability to successfully ride griffons. The griffon troops are most frequently used in frontier combat, where they fly their riders into battle. In combat, their riders usually dismount, and the griffons lend support from the ground and air. In order to keep the griffons mean these troops are the least tightly controlled, and away from battle these legionnaires have more personal freedom than in other regiments. Griffons are trained to accept only one rider for their lifetimes, and when the legionnaire retires, his griffon goes with him. Therefore, to become a griffon rider for Brendir requires a contract of at least two five-year tours. Griffon rider training camps are primarily located in Tzimichia.

The Dragon Legion: Dragons are very hard to manage, and it takes a special breed to command them. To successfully perform duties in the Dragon Legions a character must possess at least 10 ranks in the Handle Animal skill. Working with the dragons is made a little easier by the fact that Brendir has for ages bred dragons to produce a strange balance of docility and controllable violence. War dragons are identical to their wild counterparts, and come in all types, but they are mentally stunted, and receive a -8 to Int and Cha, to a minimum of 1, allowing them to be commanded by mere humans. Their challenge rating is reduced by 2 and they may be controlled with the Handle Animal skill.

Brendirian dragons are little more than immensely powerful beasts, and do not speak, but may communicate emotions if they have the ability to do so. Some have escaped or wandered into the wild, but do not hoard treasure in the same way, favoring large, shiny objects with no understanding of value. Sparkling quartz or a hunk of fool's gold would be more valuable than tiny diamonds or a few gold pieces in a Brendirian or domestic dragon's eyes. By sheer luck alone, a Brendirian drag-

on's hoard will be 1/10th the value listed by its type. This is part of their handler's method for controlling them. They are equipped with "hoards," of negligible value, in the places where they are stabled. These "clutches" are often the entire sides of remote cliffs or mountains, with dozens of dragon legionnaires living among their mounts. There is only one legion of dragon riders, and it is split across the empire. More would tax Brendir too greatly, since the dragons consume a lot of resources. Dragon legion clutches are primarily located in the unsettled regions of the northern provinces.

Navy

The navy is responsible for protecting the seas and for the transport of troops. In times of heightened threat, the empire can bring 50-100 thousand legionnaires to bear within one month, in any region of the empire. This efficiency has a lot to do with the navy. Its importance is growing, as oceanic threats become more common. They are responsible for guarding the coasts, ports and trade routes, and are aided by the halfling house Ao. In fact, there are many members of this group within their ranks. The navy has camps all over the coasts of Brendir, and across the Root of the World.

Dolphin Legions

The Dolphin Legions are amphibious troops. These soldiers are trained in diving, riding aquatic mounts, and general survival in watery environs. They are highly specialized but versatile within the sea, suitable for single combat with aquatic foes, or stealth operations. They often lead naval attacks.

See Chapter II: Heroes of Morningstar for more details on the dolphin legionnaires. Dolphin legionnaire training camps are primarily located in Brend.

The Clergy

The Brendirian pantheon is very much a martial religion. The clergy is the functional backbone of the Brendirian military that allows the military to fight efficiently. Though few Thraxians worship a single deity, there are orders devoted to promoting the ideals of each, which perform different services for the war effort, and minister to the needs of soldiers within their purview. Each order is treated as a separate type of legion, complete with ranks for its clerics in accord with the rest of the military.

Comisius and Lelai: Healing, off duty entertainment.

Keresia: Reconnaissance divination and blessings before battle.

Terves: Military law, capturing deserters.

Gerelia: Camp management, everyday protections and health care. Aiding war orphans.

Lolot: Acquisitions, supplies, and payroll. Magically aiding diplomatic missions.

Brindius and Ikela: Watch over male and female soldiers

The Conch Pendant

Conch pendants are bestowed by merfolk and other good enemies of Hrum Vaat in exchange for aid and arms which cannot be forged underwater. A conch pendant is made from a tiny conch shell, with an urchin spine fastened to it, to allow it to be pinned to clothing or hair. Each allows the wearer to breathe underwater indefinitely, and protects his skin from the ravages of salt water. The only drawback is that a simple *dispel magic* spell can disable these items, with disastrous consequences. It is a simple enough dweomer, and Brendir produces its own as well.

Moderate transmutation; Caster level: 5th, Craft Wondrous Item, water breathing, Price 5,000 gp.

The War of the Gills

The most brutal war that Thraxis has ever seen is being waged beneath the waves. Hrum Vaat has made its first move there, knowing that if it can rule the seas, the battle to win the surface will be that much easier. The dolphin legions lend aid to the merfolk in this battle for the world's seas, riding hippocampi, dolphins, and capricorns into battle, aided by several Tanin – celestial whales, devoted to the cause of good.

As if Thraxian tides and conventional pirates were not enough, sailors and sea travelers must also contend with attacks that come from below. Beyond the almost expected attacks from Hrum Vaat's aboleth and sahuagin troops, the merfolk also take part, though with considerably less bloodshed. They are simply overwhelmed and feel the need to take the goods that ensure their own survival. While this practice strains relations between the undersea world and the empire, Brendir cannot abandon the fight, for to do so would ensure its eventual downfall.

Ambassadors from the deep are met in Brend and housed in large tank habitats from which they can treat with generals, and develop appropriate strategies in tandem with the dolphin legions. Similarly appropriate accommodations are supplied to air breathing guests of the merfolk.

Most citizens of the empire are simply unaware of the war that threatens to shake the foundations of world trade.

See page 145 for more information on Hrum Vaat.

respectively. Magical aid during combat.

Nevonius: Naval affairs, calming weather, hindering the enemy with inclement weather.

See Chapter VI: Faith and Worship for more details on the gods of Arrilia.

Arcane Division

Arcane spellcasters have great value to the cause of war. There are special troops for every wizardly specialty (except necromancy), though sorcerers are often trained with evokers. Sorcerers are prized by these legions for the massive amounts of damage they can deal on the field. Evokers often resent the “naturals,” as they are called, and try to show them up whenever possible. Their superiors encourage such activity. Arcane training camps are primarily located in Brend.

Munitions

This branch of the military is filled by artificers and arcane spellcasters, along with those who use the constructs they create. As such they are often divided, assisting other legions. Their duties include the creation of fortifications, magical items, and construct vehicles to supply and fortify the other troops. In addition to developing new devices, they will often command the more powerful ones themselves. Munitions training camps are primarily located in Triskatariot.

Mixed Legions

Most times, one type of force is not enough. Many conflicts demand several types of troops, working in concert. A temporary legion may be comprised of many different types of centuries, who are trained to work together efficiently. Though soldiers always train separately, mixed legions are by far the most commonly found during actual conflicts.

Government

There are three branches: consulate, senate, and tribunes.

The Consulate

Political Powers

The primary role of The Consulate is to control the military and other executors of the law, such as prefects and judges. As such, its members spend a lot of time away from Brend. They are allowed to define issues to be voted on in the senate. Other powers include command of all aspects of the military, and the right to call a meeting of the senate. They preside over major events, and act as battlefield judges. They can issue edicts that must be respected as law, such as pardons, death orders, or the declaration of a holiday. Any consul can veto the others, but this privilege is carefully executed.

The Consulate leads the executive branch of government.

Election

Three Consuls are elected to serve for a year. Candidates must have served as magistrates and are named by the senate and voted into office by the Tribunes. The one who received the most votes is Prime Consul, who becomes temporary dictator in times of crisis for up to one year. Otherwise, the Prime Consul has no more power than a Secondary Consul. They may be reelected, and many have served for numerous years before being ousted or withdrawing from candidacy. Once ousted, a

former consul may never again serve in that capacity, though they can remain active in the military or senate if they wish.

Garb

The Consuls wear a deep blue toga, and must forgo the family sash and insignia, since the consulate is meant to serve Brendir first, and all others second.

The three consuls for the year 1608 are described below.

Prime Consul

Eveis Berellius III, male human Ftr9/Ari10: CR 18; Size M (6 ft., 1 in. tall); HD 9d10 + 10d8; hp 108; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Attack +18/+13/+8/+3 melee, or +18/+13/+8/+3 ranged; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +14; AL LN; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 7, Wis 18, Cha 14.

Languages Spoken: Brendirian.

Skills and feats: Climb +10, Forgery +6, Hide +3, Innuendo +8, Listen +8, Spot +8, Swim +12, Survival +13; Alertness, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (sword, two-bladed), Improved Critical (longspear), Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Leadership, Mobility, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (forgery), Track, Weapon Finesse (handaxe), Weapon Focus (longbow, composite).

Possessions: Splint Mail +1 of Silent Moves; Large Wooden Shield +2; 6 Silver Arrows; Halberd +1; Longs-

pear +1; *Shortspear* +4; *Mighty (+2) Composite Longbow*; *24 Arrows* +1; *Potion of Detect Thoughts*; *Potion of Tongues*; *Potion of Truth*; *Figurine Of Wondrous Power (Bronze Griffon)*; *Goggles of Night*; *Boots of Speed*; *Stone Horse (Courser)*; *Amulet of Natural Armor* +3; *Bag of Holding (IV)*; *Bracers of Archery*; *Folding Boat*; *Figurine of Wondrous Power (Ivory Goats)*; *Cloak of Resistance* +5; *Figurine Of Wondrous Power (Golden Lions)*; 2,057 gp

Eveis Berellius III: Eveis is the eldest consul, and many secretly believe his allegiances to be compromised. Some of his trade holdings are shared with Ijamvian interests, and with the current political climate, the senate has begun to turn against him. Even so, he stays in office because of his many successful campaigns against Derudian aggression in the north. He has voiced disdain for the senate and already there have been attempts on his life. He has been poisoned, stabbed, even blasted by a fireball while on a midnight walk. No one has been found guilty of these attempts on his life.

He is a vain and stern man, even ruthless, and he believes that the time has come for a change. There is a rumor that one of his servants overheard him speaking of a conflict by design that would hand him the reins to the empire. In the chaos of this unknown conflict, he would eliminate his enemies, and become Emperor of Brend for life. Most shrug off such rumors, but know that if they were true, Eveis is the only man shrewd enough to pull it off. He commands the better part of the navy, quite a few flying legions, and the legions that defend Valtu and Emetrium.

Secondary Consuls

Fultival Gambresius, male human Ftr9/Ari5: CR 13; Size M (6 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 9d10+18 + 5d8+10 +3; hp 98; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Attack +15/+10/+5 melee, or +14/+9/+4 ranged; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +5; AL N; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 7, Cha 18.

Languages Spoken: Brendirian, Thull, Hasethan, Irgan, Infernal.

Skills and feats: Craft (carpentry) +8, Hide +2, Listen +5, Move Silently +2, Open Lock +5, Perform +7, Speak Language +4, Spot -2, Swim +10; Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (kukri), Improved Critical (short sword), Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Skill Focus (craft), Toughness.

Possessions: 4 masterwork javelins; *Kukri* +1; *Short Sword* +2; *Potion of Heroism*; *Potion of Bull's Strength*; *Potion of Levitate*; *Potion of Haste*; *Scroll of Cause Fear and Cure Moderate Wounds* (Divine magic; lvl 5); *Ioun Stone (clear spindle)*; *Bag of Holding (I)*; *2 Tanglefoot Bags*; *Figurine of Wondrous Power (Obsidian Steed)*; 3 flasks of alchemist's fire; *Everburning Torch*; *Boots of Speed*; *2 Vials of Antitoxin*; *Horseshoes of Speed*; *Bracers of Armor* +1; *Necklace of Prayer Beads (Blessing)*; 735 gp

Important Words and Titles

Basilica: Courthouse. A central chamber with one, two, or more wings arrayed symmetrically.

Centurion: Commander of a century.

Century: Unit of 100 soldiers.

City Cohort: Town garrison.

Cohort: Unit of 300-600 soldiers.

Curator: An administrator in charge of a particular resource. There are curators of water, grain, spell components for the military, etc.

Curia: The senate forum.

Curiosus: Spy.

Domus: Home of a wealthy citizen.

Forum: Building set aside for public meetings.

Insula: Tenement building. The poor rent or are granted these by their employers. They are usually located above a shop of some kind. The highest tenements are a maximum of five stories.

Legate: Commander of a legion.

Legion: A unit of 1,000 soldiers.

Penates: Family deities. These are minor gods or spirits who grant no power but may intervene in some small way in times of crisis.

Tabellarii: The private messengers of important people.

Tullianum: Prison consisting of two chambers, one above the other. The top is a trapezoidal chamber called a tullianum, while the bottom chamber is called a carcer. The carcer is accessible by rope through a hole in the ceiling and is where prisoners are kept. The tullianum admits little light, and the carcer has no windows and often is filled with refuse.

Villa: A vacation home for the wealthy.

Fultival Gambresius: Fultival is widely regarded as the people's voice in the Consulate. He promotes raising the plebeians' standards of living closer to that of the patricians, and making the patrician class easier to gain entry to. He remains in place for this very reason, and because he believes in conquering new territories for Brend. He is currently leading a campaign in the Treaty Lands, and commanding the legions of the north. If the north is ever secured, his powers will expand, since he has secured a great many legions for this task.

Onetria Falsafian, female human Ari6/Sor12: CR 17; Size M (5 ft., 11 in. tall); HD 6d8-12 + 12d4-24; hp 33; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +12/+7 melee, or +10/+5 ranged; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +15; AL NG; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 7, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 17.

Languages Spoken: Brendirian, Dwarven, Halfling.

Skills and feats: Appraise +11, Concentration +7, Craft (pottery) +8, Gather Information +10, Innuendo +9, Knowledge (politics) +4, Listen +12, Read Lips +7,

Ride +10, Spellcraft +13, Spot +4, Swim +8; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Ride), Spell Focus (transmutation), Spell Penetration.

Possessions: *Heavy Pick +1 of Frost; 6 Throwing Axes +4; Potion of Wisdom; Potion of Glibness; Potion of Truth (x2); Potion of Clairvoyance; Scroll of Keen Edge and Mount (Arcane magic; lvl 12); Scroll of Changeself (Arcane magic; lvl 12); Ring of Major Elemental Resistance; Ring of Mind Shielding; Wand of Suggestion (29 charges); Mask of the Skull; 10,506 gp.*

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/7/6/5/3): 0th - *Arcane Mark, Detect Magic, Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Prestidigitation, Ray of Frost, Read Magic.* 1st - *Burning Hands, Charm Person, Mage Armor, Magic Missile, Spider Climb.* 2nd - *Blur, Ghoul Touch, Knock, Mirror Image, Summon Monster II.* 3rd - *Fireball, Gaseous Form, Greater Magic Weapon, Lightning Bolt.* 4th - *Emotion, Summon Monster IV, Wall of Ice.* 5th - *Animate Dead, Permanency.* 6th - *True Seeing.*

Onetria Falsafian: As the member of the consulate in charge of domestic military, Onetria is very concerned with domestic policy. She is heading up the local navy's aid to the seafolk, a task that allows her to remain in Brend, meeting with emissaries and trying to secure aid from Kenabu.

Lesser Officials

Magistrates: Magistrates are appointed officials such as local judges, and constables, and tax collectors. They answer to a prefect above them.

Prefects: A prefect is a political or military official in charge of a department or subdepartment of government. A prefect might be in charge of the logistics of supplying a given legion, or even the market place of a large town or city. They serve as judges and go-betweens within their purview, and settle disputes and allay concerns. Not all prefects are accorded the same level of respect, of course, since responsibilities can range greatly in value and importance. In most cases, the highest level official the common person will ever meet is a prefect.

The Senate

There are over fifteen-hundred senators, though not all vote on every issue. Most send a representative to sit in on a day's proceedings and report to them at the end of a day with a copy of the official transcript. Most senators will only show up to vote on issues that matter to them. They meet at the senate forum in Brend.

Political Powers

The senate controls the treasury, distributes funds for the building and maintenance of civic works, and designs and pass-

es bills. Senators serve as ambassadors, detectives, and judges. They can vote to declare wars, and negotiate to end them.

The Senate is the legislative branch of Brendirian government.

Election

The senatorial candidates are elected from the highest-ranking families of the patrician class. If a family betrays or dishonors the empire, they may be cast out of the senate, and a new family can rise, electing their own candidates, which are then voted on by the patricians.

Garb

Senators wear the white toga of office over their street clothes or armor. They also wear a broad sash with the insignia of their family standard upon it. This clothing is purely ceremonial, and on unofficial occasions, most prefer not to wear it.

City Prefect

City prefect is the highest position of the senate. The person who holds this title is in charge of the city of Brend whenever the consuls are not available. Regius Almintrin is the current city prefect.

Regius Almintrin, male human Ari4/Ftr11: CR 14; Size M (6 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 4d8+4 + 11d10+11; hp 95; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Attack +18/+13/+8 melee, or +15/+10/+5 ranged; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +11; AL LG; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Languages Spoken: Brendirian.

Skills and feats: Appraise +6, Climb +10, Disguise +11, Handle Animal +10, Hide +1, Knowledge (nature) +4, Listen +6, Move Silently +1, Perform +9, Spot +2; Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Rapid Shot, Sunder, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Possessions: *Splint Mail +1; Large Steel Shield +1; 4 Darts +1; 8 Arrows +2; Masterwork Composite Longbow; Handaxe +2; 4 Masterwork Arrows; 20 Arrows +1; Potion of Flaming Fists; Potion of Cure Serious Wounds; Potion of Alter Self; Ring of Freedom of Movement; Golembane Scarab (flesh & clay); Glove of Storing; 741 gp*

The Tribunes

There are thirteen officials, called tribunes, elected by the plebeians to protect them from oppression by the patricians. Each one hails from a separate province. Their role is to protect the rights and liberties of the working class, and to prevent unjust laws from taking effect.

Political powers

The tribunes elect the members of the consulate, veto or ratify bills into law, and pass final judgment and sentencing for capital crimes or those committed by senators or consuls. They also aid the senate in determining whether to declare war or negotiate peace. They may bring charges against a consul who has broken a law.

The tribunes are the judicial branch of government.

Election

The tribunes are elected from the ranks of the plebeians. Most members have served as soldiers at some point, but this is not necessary.

Garb

The tribunes wear crimson togas representing the blood and toil of the common people.

Interplay

Each branch of government works toward its own goals. Senators often buy the votes of the tribunes, the tribunes elect consuls that will fight the wars they want fought, and the consuls often pursue personal grudges. Conflicts between these branches of government can arise, which threaten the very empire. If the consulate were unhappy with the senate, it could probably lead its armies to take the capital with little or no resistance. If the senate were unhappy with the consulate, it could neglect to send supplies to the armies in the field. The tribunes can condemn a consul to death or fail to ratify any of the senate's bills.

Travel

Since it would take roughly three days to traverse any major city on foot, those without mounts are often glad to benefit from the carriage services that spring up in any decent city. The fare is 1 talon per quarter mile per two people, and each carriage is equipped with an odometer that drops one marble into a transparent chamber per quarter mile traveled. Most carriages can carry four passengers at a time. The very rich can afford to take flying carriages, usually drawn by hippocampi, at a rate of 2 sheaves per quarter mile.

Halfling hostels are a frequent option for those who do not know or trust anyone in the area. These are run by house Trammel and range from a single barracks-style room with bunks to several smaller rooms for a single party. No services are supplied, but the value of a roof over one's head is not to be ignored.

Boarding houses are run by house Cleothe, and are meant for those who are staying in a region for an extended period of

time. Decent meals are supplied, and the rooms are cleaned while the boarder is away. They offer small, cramped, but private lodgings with communal baths, and couriers are available for hire.

Resort palaces are available for those who want to stay in style. They offer everything that boarding houses do at a higher quality and price. The rooms are larger, with finer furnishings, and each guest has a personal servant at the ring of a bell to run errands and keep up their room for the duration of their stay. House Roveth in cooperation with House Bravel supplies a luxurious entertainment experience. There are plays, concerts and special events as part of the fee.

As a last resort, a traveler in a foreign land can always count on the Brendirian embassy for aid and refuge. The same is true, to varying degrees, of foreigners visiting Brendir. There are advocates on staff at any Brendirian embassy who are versed in the laws of a given area and will fight for the rights of the accused. Foreign laws are respected, but any restitution or penalties are usually subject to Brendirian approval. Whenever possible the alleged criminal is sent back to Brendir to face his punishment.

Weapons

See table on page 99 for stats and prices. Katanas and rapiers are not available on Thraxis.

Gladius, Brendirian: Brendirian shortswords have no hand guard, and rounded tips instead of the standard pointed one of the common shortsword.

Greatspear: An extremely long, well-built spear. These were originally used in Quetapan, where they were called tepoztopilli. They are commonly thrown in conjunction with an atlatl (included in the stats).

Hammersword, Dwarven: The dwarven hammersword is 4 feet long and as wide as an axe. Its center is composed of incredibly dense material, lending it great force.

Ijamvian Viper Clamp: These construct weapons are worn on the forearm, anchored to the elbow by straps, and usually concealed beneath clothing. When fired, a coiled length of strong but fine chain, with a grapnel that slams closed upon impact, is forcefully released, delivering a painful mechanical bite and rendering the target entangled.

An entangled creature suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls and a -4 penalty to effective Dexterity. If the defender fails a Strength check vs. the attacker, the entangled character cannot move. Otherwise, he can move at half speed, dragging the attacker with him, but can't run or charge. An entangled character who attempts to cast a spell must make a Concentration check (DC usually 15) or lose the spell.

The attacker may opt to release the target, at which point the clamp snakes back to its place at his wrist; to hold on to the defender; or to reel him in, requires a Strength check vs. the defender, with success pulling the target 5 feet forward. Aside from certain Ijamvians, these weapons are also favored by Brendirian inquisitors.

Macuahuitl (Fanged Sword): These Quetapan weapons are bladed batons that replace swords in that culture. The cen-

ter of a macuahuitl is cylindrical and rounded at the tip. The blades are placed along one side of the core at regular intervals, over the tip, and down the other side.

They were once made of wood with arrowhead-shaped obsidian blades, but are now composed entirely of steel. Primitive areas of Quetapan may still use this older form of the weapon. Their saw-like blades tear into their targets and rend their flesh like the fangs of some fell beast.

Triskatar Crossbow: This weapon is a variation on the standard crossbow, with greater range and a more efficient reloading process. It hardly resembles its inspiration. It has a butt that is gripped in one hand, and can be cocked quickly, by spinning a flywheel with the other hand. Cocking this weapon is a move-equivalent action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The cocking process can be stopped part of the way through, and completed in another round as a free action if necessary. This weapon may be used in one hand, and two may be fired at once, with appropriate two weapon penalties.

Two tension-inducing bows lie perpendicularly across each other, fused into a single piece. This crossed cap has with a hole in its center, through which the bolt is loaded and projects. The stock is cylindrical, with four equidistant slits for the bowstrings. Around the barrel is a ratcheting cogwheel that, when turned, is threaded toward the back of the shaft, cocking the bow as it reaches its furthest point. Firing the weapon releases the bowstrings, and an internal spring slowly spins the wheel to its place at the front of the weapon, ready for reloading. A Triskatar crossbow may be fired underwater, with no penalties to range or use.

Whip Spear: A whip spear is made of flexible wood, such as rattan or bamboo. It can be bent in two or even a looped several times without breaking. It is tipped with a fluted spike that can be used for slashing or impaling. It is a melee weapon and cannot be thrown effectively. The wielder coils and uncoils the weapon to make his attacks, holding a coiled length of the spear in one hand, and striking by feeding it out at an enemy. The

wielder may partially or fully extend the weapon to strike. The primary benefit of this weapon is that by forgoing a normal attack the wielder may threaten an area up to two squares (ten feet) in every direction, for a total of 25 squares. He may make attacks of opportunity on enemies passing through any of these squares.

Armor

Lorica: The Brendirian lorica is segmented armor, which allows freedom of movement and heat dispersal, while offering maximum protection in consideration of these factors. The lorica is as close to non-magical metal platemail as is practical in the exceedingly warm climates that comprise most of Brendir.

Quetapan Feathered Armor: All feathered armor exported from Quetapan grants an additional +1 armor bonus vs. arrows. It may be worn with no penalty by wizards, rogues and others who may not wear most armor. It is perfectly silent, and does not impede movement in any way. Any sufficiently large feathers may be used, and there is much variation in coloration, sheen, and other minor properties. A feathered war suit made from a high flying bird's feathers might grant a +1 bonus to resist cold, and an aquatic one might grant a +1 bonus to swimming checks for the buoyancy the feathers supply. In any case the natural bonus should never be more than +1 and should only apply to war suits since these are the only types of armor that cover a significant enough portion of the character's body.

Feathered Tabard: A tabard or robe covered in feathers.

Feathered Tunic: Layered feather tunic fastened with buttons down the front.

Feathered War Suit: A full body hide with layers upon layers of feathers.

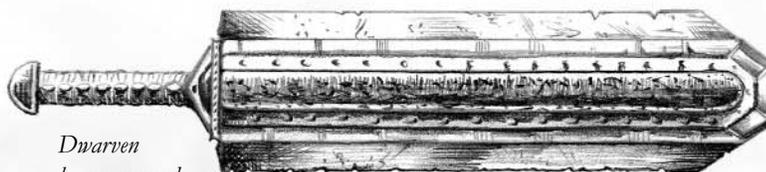
Umbekti Diamond Armor: Thraxis is very warm and wet as a rule, and non-magical platemail has proven impractical,



Brendirian gladius



Macuahuitl



*Dwarven
hammersword*



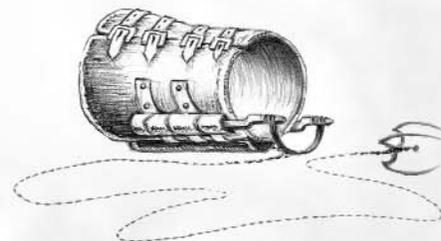
Triskatar crossbow

Weapons

Weapon	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Inc.	Weight	Type
Simple Weapons							
Brendirian gladius	11 gp	1d4	1d6	18-20/x2	-	2 lbs.	S
Martial Weapons							
Dwarven hammersword	160 gp	-	3d4	x3	-	30 lbs.	S & B
Greatspear	20 gp	1d8	1d10	x2	30 ft.	10 lbs.	P
Exotic Weapons							
Ijamvian viper clamp	500 gp	1d6	1d8	x2	15 ft. (max)	4 lbs.	P
Macuahuitl (fanged sword)	35 gp	1d8	1d10	x3	-	10 lbs.	P & B
Spears, whip	20 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	-	8 lbs.	S & P
Exotic Ranged Weapons							
Triskatar crossbow	450 gp	1d8	1d10	19-20/x2	160 ft.	8 lbs.	P

Armor

Armor	Cost	Armor Bonus	Max Dex	Check Penalty	Spell Failure	Speed (30 ft.)	Speed (20 ft.)	Weight
Light armor								
Feathered tunic or cloak	170 gp	+2	+12	0	0%	30 ft.	20 ft.	5 lbs.
Feathered tabard	200 gp	+3	+10	0	5%	30 ft.	20 ft.	5 lbs.
Feathered war suit	500 gp	+5	+8	0	15%	30 ft.	20 ft.	10 lbs.
Diamond studded leather	1,000 gp	+4	+5	-1	15%	30 ft.	20 ft.	15 lbs.
Diamond chain shirt	2,300 gp	+7	+6	0	20%	30 ft.	20 ft.	5 lbs.
Medium armor								
Lorica	300 gp	+6	+3	-4	35%	25 ft.	20 ft.	30 lbs.
Diamond scale mail	5,000 gp	+4	+5	-2	25%	30 ft.	20 ft.	10 lbs.
Diamond chainmail	2,000 gp	+10	+4	-2	30%	30 ft.	20 ft.	15 lbs.
Diamond breastplate	4,700 gp	+10	+5	-2	25%	30 ft.	20 ft.	10 lbs.
Heavy armor								
Diamond half-plate	8,000 gp	+14	+4	-3	40%	30 ft.	20 ft.	20 lbs.
Diamond full plate	20,000 gp	+16	+3	-4	35%	30 ft.	20 ft.	20 lbs.



except in the northernmost reaches of the empire. Some protection is invariably sacrificed in the interests of keeping soldiers free from disease and hyperthermia. One solution to this problem is diamond armor, which is lighter, cooler, and requires fewer repairs than steel armor.

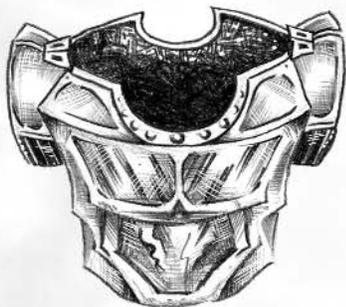
Umbekti diamond armor is a fantastic if expensive alternative to steel or even magical armor. It is incredibly light; weighing only 1/3 as much as a similar suit of steel mail, which is only 1/3 more than it would if it were made from aluminum! The stonemason dwarves of Umbekti create this armor with their Mason's Touch ability. Poor quality diamonds or even handfuls of diamond dust are used, refined by the process, which is why the armor is so inexpensive.

Goods and Services

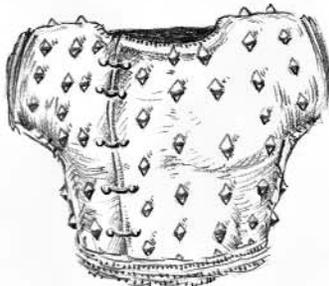
See table on following page for prices.

Arkendi Ale, Fungal Brew: Arkendi ale is made from the fermented pulp of the subterranean gunga cactus and its red fungal symbiote. The plant is toxic to everyone but dwarves, and the ale made from it produces stomach cramps and hallucinations in non-dwarves. The stony folk claim it's delicious and quite pleasant. Non-dwarves take 1d10 temporary Constitution damage per jug, with Fortitude save (DC 40) for half. Stomach cramps and perceptual distortion remain until this damage is healed or *neutralize poison* is cast, and the character receives a -6 circumstance penalty to all actions. This effect wears off after 1 week.

Thukharukh, Phosphorescent Hallucinogen: This translucent blue mushroom only grows in underground regions with the Deranged signature. It produces the effects of the *nightmare* spell, preventing the victim from sleeping for 1d4 days, with no save. *Neutralize poison* releases the victim from the continued effects of this poison.



Diamond breastplate



Diamond studded leather

Flying Vehicles

Latoman Glider: A one or two-passenger device that allows the flyer to soar on thermals. They are built from a broad delta-shaped framework of wood, with hides or strong fabrics covering them. Latomans use these in their mountainous jungle homeland to send messages and small goods from village to village. Brendirians have taken to them for recreation. They give the average man the ability to fly with the eagles. Recreational gliders have floats and water landings are encouraged, while the original gliders were built to touch down on long strips of cleared earth. The Balance skill is used to fly a Latoman glider. Failure indicates a crash, with normal falling damage incurred. The base DC to successfully pilot a glider is 15, which is modified by the weather conditions.

Ornithopter: See page 45 for a full description of the ornithopter.

Sea Vessels

The Canali have encouraged waterborne travel throughout Brendir. A great many fantastic vessels sail the seas and Canali. Here are descriptions of a few of them.

Dhow (Gargantuan, 50 ft. long), Retyan cargo vessel: Dhows are built of wood, and have a single triangular sail towards the front of the ship, and a mast that can be laid flat against the deck. They are small, but their hull is tall, allowing them to be weighed down by cargo without sinking. There are never paddles, but maneuverability is good, with the triangular sail and the single rear tiller. These stout trading ships were first used along the Retyan coast, and still fill the waters there. Even without magic, these ships allow cheap and relatively quick transport of necessary goods.

Fip (Huge, 32 ft. wide), halfling catamaran: These are



Feathered war suit

Normal Goods and Services

Item	Cost	Weight	Place of Origin
Food and Drink			
Dried fish (2 fish)	3 sp	1/2 lb.	anywhere
Lares (Brendirian alcoholic spirits)	8 gp	-	Brendir
Mulsum (honeyed wine)	10 gp	5 lbs.	Kenabu
Natron (fish preservative; 1 pouch)	5 sp	-	Wiresh
Palm wine	8 gp	4 lbs.	Wiresh
Figs	2 sp	-	warm dry regions
Olives	1 sp	-	Brendir
Grapes	1 sp	-	Brendir
Drugs and Poisons			
Arkendi ale (jug)	5 gp	5 lbs.	Arkend
Thukharukh	80 gp	-	Deranged subterranean signature areas
Services			
Bath, plebian	1 sp		
Bath, patrician	5 sp		
Bath, spa	10 sp or more		
Boarding house	12 gp/week*		
Carriage service, air	2 gp/ .25 mile		
Carriage service, land	1 sp/ .25 mile		
Courier	8 sp/day plus food and lodging		
Hostel	1 gp/night		
Massage	10 sp or more		
Resort palace or villa	15 gp/night and up		
Tenement	30 gp/month		

*Remember that a Thraxian week is 6 days long.

Flying Vehicles

Flying Vehicles	Size	Maneuverability	Speed	Payload	Cost – Buy/Rent
Latoman glider (single)	Huge (35 ft. wingspan)	Clumsy	50 ft.	300 lbs.	140 gp/10 gp
Latoman glider (double)	Huge (50 ft. wingspan)	Clumsy	40 ft.	600 lbs.	190 gp/30 gp
Ornithopter	Huge (70 ft. wingspan)	Average	90 ft.	1.5 tons	28,000 gp/-

Sea Vessels

Water Craft	Size	Maneuverability	Speed	Payload	Cost
Dhow	Gargantuan	Average	265 ft./30 mph	35 tons	10,000 gp
Fip	Huge	Perfect	500 ft./57 mph	5 tons	15,000 gp*
Trireme	Colossal	Good	75 ft./8.5 mph	120 tons	50,000 gp
Hauler	Colossal	Clumsy	30 ft./3.4 mph	3,000 tons	3,000,000 gp
Kalo	Gargantuan	Poor	18 ft./0.3 mph	1,500 tons	50,000 gp

* Does not include *holds of holding*.

The Well-Dressed Brendirian

Brendir is best known for its robes and togas, which are usually worn for ceremony, and at official functions. Scholars, intellectuals and nobles, however, will often wear this garb every day. Most people's everyday clothing is much more practical. Southern Brendirians prefer clothing that is loose-fitting, and allows heat to escape. Boots are worn (a military type which resemble sandals with studs set in the bottom) for traction and weight displacement, as are other types of footwear that offer more coverage. Men wear breeches and loose tunics or open shirts. Women favor loose gowns and skirts, sometimes with breeches underneath. These clothes are often dyed with exotic pigments or made from striped or patterned fabrics. The latest patrician fashions have begun to shirk tradition; these are much more ornate affairs, with every conceivable configuration of gown and complex hairstyle for women, and cloaks and ruffles for men. There is much experimentation, not all of it successful. Northern Brendirians cover themselves as much as possible most of the year, while it is too cold for their thin blood. They favor heavier versions of southern styles, but have made fur a sought-out commodity.

the small, light vehicles made popular by the halflings of house Ao. They are named for the sound their pontoons make as they slice through the water. The central deck of these vehicles is entirely supported above water. All but the simplest fips are outfitted with several *holds of holding*. Most bunks are located within these as well, for long-term missions. They have four pontoons and three masts, with five sails that can be deployed at 90 and 45 degree angles from the deck.

Trireme (Colossal, 100 ft. long), Brendirian warship:

The trireme is the primary battleship of Brendir. There are three decks, each with a row of oarsmen on each side. It is specifically built for ramming purposes, and has a "beak" at the water line that pierces another vessel as it strikes. Though it does little damage, upon breaching the hull (bypassing hardness and hp for a five foot section), the other ship immediately begins taking on water. Water begins flowing into the breach at a rate of one ton per round. A ship sinks after its tonnage is exceeded (reduced for cargo). A magical wall strategically cast will seal the breach, for the duration, at least.

Hauler (Colossal, 500 ft. long), universal human cargo vessel: This is the largest ship commonly used in the world. Based on ancient dwarven arks, it is exceptionally sturdy, and quite powerful. It can even tow other vessels up to its own size. For huge trading or even military missions, the hauler is the ideal vessel. The only problem in everyday usage is that few ports can support a vessel of this size. Even if there is a port of sufficient size, the hauler must often set anchor far out to sea, to avoid being set aground during Thraxis' extreme low tides.

Kalo (Gargantuan, 189 ft. long), Wirewhite barge:

Kalos are used to carry huge blocks of stone for monuments on primarily calm waters. There is no deck, but 16 beams cross the hull of this simple vessel. These crossbeams protrude from the sides of the vessel. The sail is huge, and curves down over the sides of the ship. There is no protection from the elements other than a broad tented canvas that covers the cargo and crew. There is a single sail. The hull is tapered at the bow and stern.

In Summary...

Brendir has an open and fairly accepting culture, and has a global reputation as a melting pot. Substantial portions of the population in the large cities are naturalized citizens from other places, brought by the unique opportunities available to those with a good idea, or the ability to work hard. The empire's religious pluralism and easily gained citizenship result in a rich and diverse culture. Perhaps it is within this very freedom that the seed of the empire's downfall lies. The citizens are often somewhat bewildered by the many sights and sounds that assail them. Plebeians often complain that the empire gives with one hand and takes with another. Many seek out bizarre and insular cults for the order and easy explanations they offer.

"A man should live on what he acquires for himself. We are slaves to the cities we live in, which is the true crime."

– Saster Gomealid, Olinite Propagandist.

Brendir is now working very hard to get many of the city dwelling plebeians to move to more sparsely populated provinces. It is having trouble in its efforts to settle new lands, mostly in places like Olin, Tzimichia, and Hegensted to the north. Offers of land and Eques status after a year are somewhat attractive, but even the poorest of the plebeians has trouble imagining life in lands that cannot support the Brendirian staples of olives and southern wine grapes. Rumors abound among those who would consider the move, and they are largely true; tales of fell beasts, harsh winters, barbarian hordes, and outright war serve to keep many safely within the established empire. Still, there has been a slow trickle of travel to the north, and the empire is lowly gaining a hold on the lands it claimed there centuries ago. The empire struggles to maintain a free flow of Brendirian goods and culture to sedate the pampered plebeians who soon realize that they have gotten in over their heads. If these trade routes were threatened, open revolt could come within seasons.

The Provinces

BRENDIS

Ordered/Aberrant: 1

Local Geography

The terrain of Brendis is rather flat, worn down by millennia of seawater and brisk humid winds, and even the mountains are low and rounded, often covered in thick vegetation that is supported by the mineral rich soil. Brendir is not a heavily forested land, since stone is only a few feet below the soil in any place. This prevents many hardwood trees from rooting for the amount of time it takes to grow large enough to resist the typhoons and hurricanes that are common throughout the region during the wetter summer months. Quick growing palms and olive trees do quite well in this land, as do sheep and other domestic herd animals. The rocky soil supports many vineyards all across the land, and dates and citrus plants also flourish here.

Brendis is heavily farmed, and heavily developed. Many of the plant species in the province are imports from other lands, such as numerous species of flower, grain, and fruits and vegetables.

Local Culture

Brendis is a center of world commerce, cultural exchange and knowledge. Art and philosophy are espoused and debated here, and the area has few overt problems. Brendis is a largely metropolitan area, and few monsters survive in the well-patrolled wilderness areas.

Brendirian culture is largely an amalgamation of others, but there is a core understanding of what it is to be Brendirian. There is a vast split between the plebeians and patricians in Brendis. In other provinces, they may commingle to an extent, especially in the frontiers, but not so in Brendis. The patricians of Brend are particularly haughty, and the plebeians feed into this behavior.

Notable Places

The City of Brend: The capital of Brendir, Brend has been called "The Endless City" both favorably and with scorn. With well over five million inhabitants and a daily stream of visitors, Brend is the only megalopolis in the world. It takes two weeks to travel on horseback from the southernmost end to the northernmost end of the city, taking the shortest routes. Conversely, by leaving the city entirely and traveling along its western edge, this time is cut in half. North to south, the city is 90 miles long, and from east to west, is 30 miles wide at its widest point.

Dynamic/Aberrant: 3
(pockets of Ordered/Dynamic: 2)

Citizens of every province and every other empire can be found here, either as diplomats, traders, or refugees. Thus, to travel in Brend is to meet exotic folk and strange creatures on a regular basis. Entire sectors may be peopled by a particular race or human ethnic group, creating clusters of neighborhoods with their own distinctions.

Brend is an exception to the rule of well-ordered Brendirian cities, simply because it was the first, and it sprang up organically. As with all Brendirian cities, the streets are paved, but in some places they are little more than footpaths between insula. Brend is the second oldest part of the empire, having grown from a single village to a town and then a small city. The fledgling nation of Triskatariot conquered this early city, which learned from her rule, eventually winning independence for the entire region that is now Brendis. Centuries later, the small city-state had become an empire and returned the Triskatar favor by subsuming it.

Brend developed the modern insula, though many Brendian insula are oddly shaped; some are trapezoidal, pentagonal, or even triangular, as the needs of the preexisting streets and local construction imposed their shapes upon future building. The newest construction is, to the dismay of many locals, organized in the typical Brendirian fashion, often separated from the rest of the city by an irregularly shaped park that allows construction on its far side to fall into the periodic pattern of the typical Brendirian city. Inhabitants of these planned regions are not to be outdone by the professed originality and character of the older, disorganized regions, and often pool their resources to make their span of the city stand out in some way, be it strange sculptures or friezes on the outer walls of their insula, or repaving their streets in semiprecious stones. Each neighborhood is an environment of its own, with plenty of colorful characters and local attractions.

The Senate Forum: This is where the senate holds its sessions. This one-mile diameter circular hall has a place for the most influential senators in the center of the room, with lesser and younger senators filling the outer rings. Along the walls are five levels of balconies for visitors, observers, and employees of the senators. When someone is speaking the podium, a huge illu-

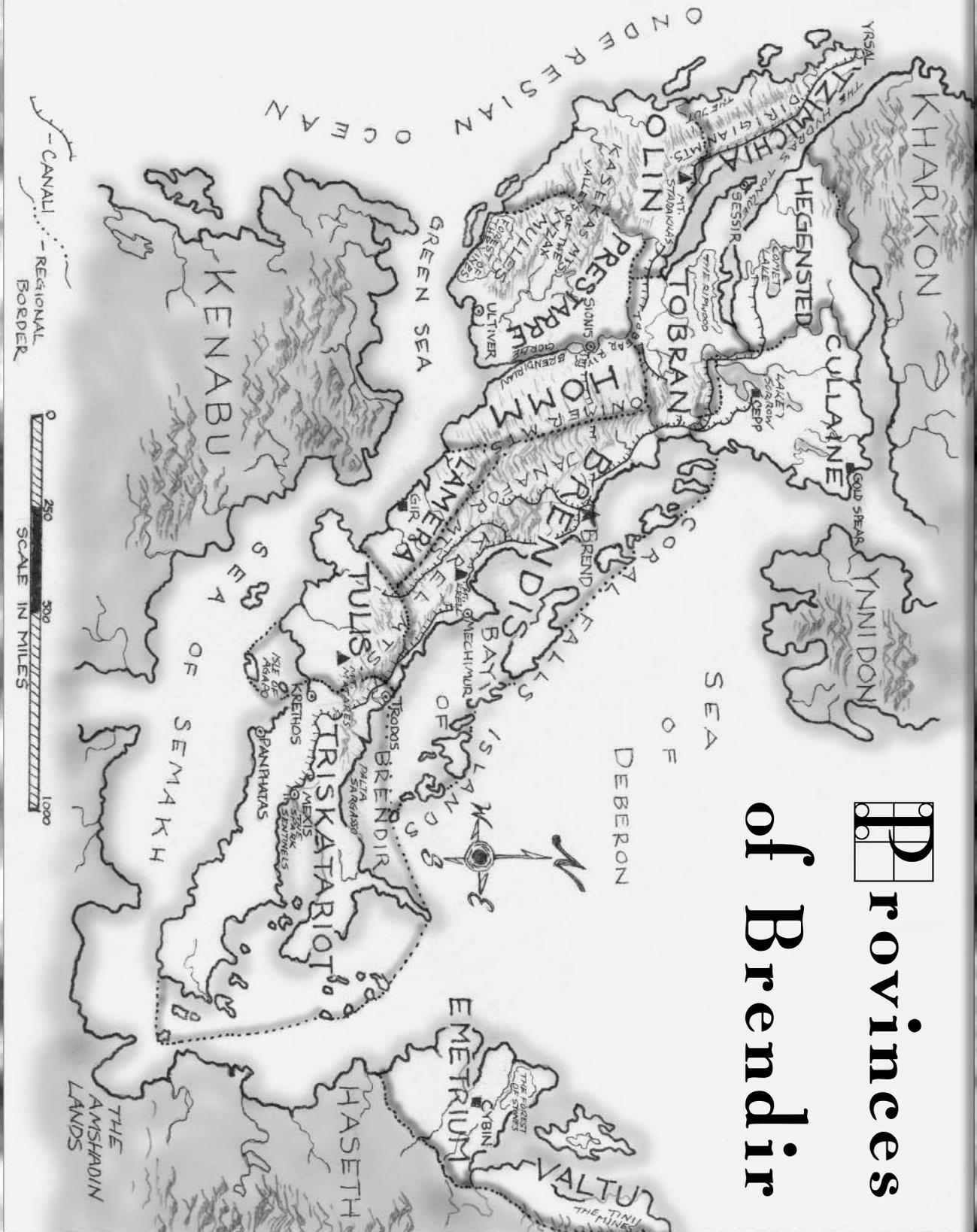
Brendirian Naming Conventions

'Brendirian' refers to goods or citizens from the empire of Brendir.

'Brendisian' refers to goods or citizens from the province of Brendis.

'Brendian' refers to goods or citizens from the city of Brend.

Provinces of Brendir



sion of the speaker appears behind him, and his voice is magnified to carry throughout the hall. Whispering in the balconies is allowed, but a general rule of silence is enforced by guards. Occasionally a cheer or boo is permitted, if it suits the speaker's purposes. Even so, the senate is a popular place to conduct clandestine meetings, within the darkened recesses of the balconies.

Mechimur: Mechimur is a great port city, lying in the eastern shadow of Mount Krel, a smoking volcano. Thus far, all lava flow has been directed in the opposite direction of the city, expanding the Mechimur peninsula in that direction. There is no reason to believe that Mount Krel will ever spill its lava upon Mechimur since the top of the cone shields the city and directs lava away, but there have been several times in recorded history where hot ash has rained down upon the people of this seaside pleasure destination.

Aquan/Ignan: 3

Aberrant/Ordered: 1 (during winter)

The fertile volcanic soil nourishes plant life that makes Mechimur beautiful in the extreme. Pastel colored seaweed washes up on the shores here, and exotic birds and dolphins are common. Many influential people from all over the empire come here to vacation in their seaside villas. These summer villas are maintained by a year round staff, who would hardly put forth a serious threat to those determined to gain entry.

Of late, there have been winter attacks by Hrum Vaat. The Brendirian legions have been handling these incursions, but the aberrant empire has been regrouping to attack with more force, and ever stranger beasts.

CULLAINE

Fey/Ordered: 2

Local Geography

Cullaine is rich in mineral resources under its rolling emerald hills, and its thick forests bring wealth to the empire in the form of exotic magical components, rare woods for weapons and furniture, and fierce monsters for domestication or use in the games.

Cullaine is perhaps too close to Ynnidon. Elves wander these lands as comfortably as they do in Ynnidon, and many areas are entirely fey controlled. In the past, the conflicts with Brendir were bloody, protracted affairs, but the legions simply had more resources, and better organization. Thus, they have made Cullaine a province in their empire.

Local Culture

The people here are fiercely independent, and the land seems to aid them in their struggle against Brendirian rule. Brendir does not want to let this area go. While not engaged in a full-scale war, Cullaine is seeking its independence from Brendirian rule and uprisings are fairly common. Largely blood-

less in recent years, conflict has begun to heat up in recent months, as King Ephinas (see below) has begun to rally his troops.

Hundreds of Brendirian outposts are strewn throughout this area, and Cullaine is held by threat of force. Over time, some of the freemen of Cullaine have come to accept the soldiers posted here, if not what they represent. Trade often takes place between the outposts and the tribes, and friendships often develop between individuals on all sides. However, if war were ever to break out, all camaraderie would be reluctantly set aside until the conflict died down. There has been no outright civil war in this region for several decades, but minor rebellions are a matter of course. In the more remote northern areas, far from the source of the Cullaine Canal at the military outpost of Gyon and the roads that lead to Brendir, the Cullaine people live much as they always have, with little thought for the struggles of their brethren. Though not primitive, they live a simple life of hunting and subsistence farming in small villages. They keep their own king and queen, and refuse to bow to Brendir. Dozens of chieftains unite under the banner of King Ephinas the Undying, their current ruler and possibly the only one they'll ever have.

As a culture, the Cullainar are very interested in the concepts of balance, cycles, and justice. The natural world follows a perfect order and Cullaine's society is built along these principles. Ideally, they take only what they need from the world, and never seek to rape a land of its treasures. Their animist roots show in the goods they use, which are given plant or animal motifs, and patterned with knot work and designs that suggest three dimensionality with their overlapping lines and curves. The best goods are often given names; even something as insignificant as a rope or a bridle may have a history attached to it. They are fine craftsmen, and all goods exported from this region are masterwork.

Notable Places

Cepp: Less a town than a barracks, Cepp holds a branch of the Canali, and is slowly attracting civilian citizens to flesh out the populous. Halfling merchants have recently been appearing in droves, apparently knowing something about the possibilities of this place that even Brendir seems to have forgotten.

Ordered/Fey: 1

One would not expect to find a major institution of higher learning here, but the Collegium Selse is just that. Perhaps owing to the boredom common to the soldiers on Cullaine front, many legionnaires and an increasing number of patrician youths from the southern provinces are taking courses here in mathematics, engineering, magic, language, and rhetoric.

In Cepp, the conflict with the native Cullainars is at its coolest. Instead of outright warfare, most grievances are aired in the stadium, with legionnaire champions taking the cause of Brendir, and Cullainar warriors fighting for their homeland. In most cases, the battle decides the conflict, unless Brendir direct-

Ephinas the Undying

Ephinas the Undying is the King of Cullaine, and he has lived for 600 years. Early on, he made a pact with the Empress that he would fight Brendir to his dying breath if only he would be allowed to live to see his work completed. He ages normally, growing old as the days pass, watching the generations of his people come and go. When his bride ages and dies, he takes another, and is made young again, rejuvenated by the process. If he were ever prevented from remarriage, he would die on the next full moon.

King Ephinas has grown old once more, and will need a new bride very soon, as his wife is near death. Unlike the other times this has happened, he does not have a willing bride this time, since the woman who once promised herself to him has fallen in love with a Brendirian Legionnaire named Castrius.

Ephinas the Undying, male human Bbn20: CR 20; Size M (6 ft., 6 in. tall); HD 20d12+63; hp 211; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Attack +24/+19/+14/+9 melee, or +22/+17/+12/+7 ranged; SV Fort +15, Ref +8, Will +7; AL NE; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Languages Spoken: Cullainar, Brendirian, Giant

Skills and feats: Climb +24, Craft (carpentry) +22, Hide +2, Intimidate +24, Intuit Direction +24, Jump +24, Knowledge (religion) +6, Listen +21, Move Silently +2, Sense Motive +6, Spot +1; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Power Attack, Run, Toughness, Track, Weapon Focus (longspear).

Possessions: Hide Armor +1 of Spell Resistance (13); Spiked Gauntlets; Longspear +2; Sap +4 of Wounding; Heavy Lance +2; Potion of Cure Moderate Wounds; Potion of Swimming; Potion of Endurance; Ring of Water Walking; Ring of Sustenance; Scarab of Protection; Tome of Leadership & Influence +2; 51,133 gp.

ly orders otherwise. This does not happen often, since the powers that be realize that Cullaine is held by a thread as it is.

Kings' Boneyard: This location isn't actually a place in the strictest sense of the word. In the time before the war with Brend, long before recorded history, the elves of Ynnidon made their first war upon all mankind. The human kings, little more than chieftains, united under the banner of a mysterious newcomer. He declared that he would bring them victory over their elven foes. Only he had the power to prevent elven souls from returning to the Empress, he said, and they believed. For a while it seemed he was telling the truth. They followed him into war.

As the battles were fought and both sides suffered losses, the souls of the dead were subsumed into the being of this strange general. His soul became their prison. Eventually, both sides realized what he was doing. They put aside their war, and turned on him in unity. After a long battle that spanned the entire region, he was finally slain. Unexpectedly, however, the souls were not released, and the elven ones helped to anchor the soul of the stranger that had imprisoned them to this world. This being became undead, mingling with all the souls within him. Their total essence was spread about by the violence of his death.

Necrotic/Ordered: 6

This tortured amalgam of souls now manifests in the form of a variable and mutable graveyard. This "place" moves from location to location, drawn to life energies, appearing in well traveled areas when no one is looking, often atop an existing graveyard to better hide itself. When it appears, it may send out ghosts to plague the town or city it has chosen and to encour-

age the citizens of these places to attempt to destroy the source. When this is attempted, the Boneyard feeds upon any that die within its trap.

It stays in one location for one night only, dissolving with the dawn, taking anyone or anything that is caught within away with it. Where it goes during the daylight is anyone's guess, but anyone swept away with it is lost forever, becoming one of the hordes of undead at the Boneyard's command. It is intelligent and adaptive, changing its terrain to redirect those who would escape deeper within its trap. Any form of undead can be manifested within the subjective reality the Boneyard creates, and are often used as a distraction to keep its prey within for a few moments too long.

The Cullainars have become well aware of the Boneyard and refuse to play its game most of the time, so it has begun to plague the southern border of the province, where Brendirians present easier quarry. It is believed by the druids of Cullaine to be seeking a way to move freely outside of Cullaine. Perhaps when it has devoured enough Brendirians, it is said, it may escape.

Gold Spear: This is the only major town almost completely populated by the Cullainars, and it does not fit the standard Brendirian model of a proper settlement. Houses and meeting halls are made of wood with thatched roofs, otherwise used as a temporary housing solution in the rest of the empire, and streets are haphazard, as the town grows in disorganized fits. Though there is adequate sanitation to prevent plague, livestock roam the streets, there are no baths, and the roads are unpaved. To the typical city dweller of Brendir, it is a very undesirable place indeed.

Located on the northeastern most tip of Cullaine, Gold Spear is a source of semi-covert aid and trade with Ynnidon.

Elven allies and curious magical wonders flow from the fey empire into the hands of the Cullainars by night on crystalline watercraft cloaked by invisibility.

There is no perpetual Brendirian presence, but a few citizens of the empire have chosen to live here, longing for a simpler life than the south provides. These usually have taken Cullainar mates, and have been accepted as members of Cullainar society. Both sides turn a blind eye to the minor transgressions of the other, and harmony is kept.

EMETRIUM

Dynamic/Primal: 2

Local Geography

Emetrium is a dusty province of rivers and oases. Barely a desert at all, the land is alive with plants that subsist on subterranean flows of water. The landscape is crumpled from an eternity of seasonal flash-floods, which occur every spring. In many places, the water has bored straight through the thin crust of the land and opened up huge caverns under the dust. The coast and riversides are much greener with nut bushes, palm and Tarle.

Local Culture

Emetrium once belonged to the Hasemites. In 1434 Brendir was fighting a war to conquer part of what are now the Amshadin nations. Haseth was trying to annex them, and so both empires were brought into conflict. Rather than expand a war that was already costing it so much, Brendir offered to help Haseth take the portion they wanted most, in exchange for Emetrium, a prime trading location with access to the Amshadin desert. Emetrium is now a bustling port of call, a place with the power to make men rich. Opportunities abound here for crime, or legitimate business. All worldwide trade to and from Brendir begins here. Cultures from all over the world

find a niche, foreign emissaries cut deals in shadow, and visitors find exotic pleasures are available at their whim.

Natives subsist primarily on the bounty they glean from the native Tarle groves, and in fact, this vital plant is the reason for Emetrium's status.

Notable Places and People

Cybin: Cybin was the first and greatest Emetrian city. Over time it devolved into a den of crime and Brendir withdrew support. Today, thanks to the actions of a halfling named Dacca Kefin, Cybin is once again a bustling port of mostly legitimate trade. Most are unaware that despite the appearance of law and order, a network of cutthroats, con men, and usurers run the city.

Dynamic/Primal: 4

The city was originally built on the site of the ancient palace grounds of some forgotten Hasethan prince. As such the remains of his monuments lie under and around the city, which is built in levels over the old structures and irrigation ditches. There are countless tombs and catacombs hidden beneath the city, which are only now being explored.

Cybin's narrow streets are the result of the poor Hasethan builders, who were hastily hired to complete the city, and the style of the city is decidedly un-Brendirian. Instead of marble, the buildings are made from exposed bricks, and the pillars are composed of sandstone. Murals and paintings of diverse styles cover the walls, both exterior and interior, hinting at the diverse cultures that have made Cybin great. Tiled mosaics cover the streets and floors, and sycamore trees line the streets.

Cybin is a great destination for gamblers and pleasure seekers, and many bring their families with them while vacationing here. The less respectable casinos, brothels, and halfling pleasure resorts are hidden from plain sight. For those with the right connections, the seedier side of the city isn't far. There are underground gladiatorial contests, and worse, with stakes much higher than even life.

The Tarle Fruit

The Tarle plant is one of the most useful plants ever discovered, and it grows all over the coasts of Emetrium. Every single part of this plant is edible, stems can be separated to make rope, and its waxy leaves have been used by natives as thatching. The most important part is its fruit. The fruit can be used without destroying the fickle plant, which doesn't transplant well. One plant will produce 1d12 fruits a month year after year if it is not uprooted. A Tarle fruit has a 1 in 100 chance of possessing a seed, but only fey or druidic magics have a chance to cause a seed to grow in a planned grove (60% chance of failure -5% per caster level). Tarle seeds are worth 5,000 gp each. This fickle plant has spawned the phrase "harm not the Tarle" which means, loosely, "let nature take its course."

Tarle Fruit: Tarle fruit is a bifurcated fruit with one brilliant blue half and one rich red half. It is capped with a waxy green stem, like an eggplant's. The two halves are very different in taste; blue is slightly like sweet bananas and peaches, and red is almost meaty. Even the stem is edible, and tastes starchy. It is used for thickening stews, and can be dried and ground for use as flour. One fruit feeds a man for two days, with no hunger pangs, and heals 1 hp of damage. Tarle fruit is often used by expert cooks to produce a meal that contains different parts of the plant in every course. The fruit retains its properties even when cooked.

	Ordworm
	Gargantuan Undead
Hit Dice:	18d10+252 (351 hp)
Initiative:	-3 (Dex)
Speed:	10 ft., burrow 5 ft.
AC:	18 (-4 size, -3 Dex, +15 natural)
Attacks:	Bite +20 melee
Damage:	Bite 3d8+18
Face/Reach:	30 ft. by 30 ft./30 ft. (head only)
Special Attacks:	Improved Grab, Swallow Whole, Death's Allure
Special Qualities:	Tremorsense, Devour Soul
Saves:	Fort +17, Ref +7, Will +8
Abilities:	Str 35, Dex 4, Con 25, Int 26, Wis 18, Cha 18
Skills:	Climb +14

Climate/Terrain:	Forest of Stones
Organization:	Unique
Challenge Rating:	20
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Lawful Evil

Combat

In battle, the Ordworm lies practically still, striking with its head only when it has a clean shot.

Death's Allure (Su): The Ordworm may compel his prey to wander too close to his maw. When prey approaches within 180', the Ordworm begins to speak in soothing tones, seemingly willing to parlay. Characters must make a Will save (DC 23) or be compelled to walk towards the beast. When within 30', the Ordworm attacks. This power can function as a powerful charm effect as well, with no limit to the range at which the affected creature can be controlled. Once the Ordworm has its prey, only a *remove curse* cast by a 20th level caster or higher will release a character from the monster's sway.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the Ordworm must hit with its bite attack. If it gets a hold, it can attempt to swallow the foe.

Swallow Whole (Ex): The Ordworm can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of Huge or smaller size by making a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent takes 3d8+18 points of crushing damage plus 8 points of acid damage per round from the worm's gizzard. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 20). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. The worm's interior can hold one Huge, four Large, sixteen Medium-size, or sixty-four Small or smaller opponents.

Devour Soul (Su): Opponents that die within the Ordworm are spewed forth as undead appropriate to their hit dice. They may never be resurrected. The Ordworm heals 1d6 hp for every hit die of a devoured creature.

Tremorsense (Ex): The Ordworm can automatically sense the location of anything within 60 feet that is in contact with the ground.

Dacca Kefin: A speaker halfling of dubious motives, Kefin's deeds have nonetheless resulted in the reestablishment of Cybin. As a child growing up there, he saw and lamented its downward spiral into corruption. At some point, he hid in some catacombs to escape a gambling debt. To his astonishment, he found an ancient trove of treasure. This he used to pay off his debts and set himself up. Still, the city was getting worse.

In order to save the city, Kefin gave up his entire hoard to convince several criminal organizations to clean up the independent thugs overrunning the city. After a year, the city was mysteriously safer. Traders returned, with Brendir not far behind.

Like all speakers, Kefin is quite well read. He is an expert conversationalist, but is prone to argue when he knows he's wrong. He gets increasingly indignant, and may seem willing to come to blows, though he will try to escape if it gets that far. He is a career gambler (giving him a +2 synergy bonus on Bluff and Sense Motive), is versed in every known game of chance, and has cultivated several false tells and scams that he runs on unsuspecting strangers. Dacca is a scoundrel and a hero, a strange juxtaposition of good and evil.

Dacca Kefin, male speaker Rog15: CR 15; Size S (3 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 15d6+15; hp 71; Init +9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (+5 Dex); Attack +12/+7/+2 melee, or +16/+11/+6 ranged; SV Fort +6, Ref +14, Will +7; AL N; Str 13, Dex 20, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 10.

Languages Spoken: All (speaker halfling).

Skills and feats: Balance +14, Bluff +17, Climb +10, Concentration +3, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +9, Escape Artist +16, Gather Information +12, Knowledge (local) +10, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +19, Profession (gambler) +20, Read Lips +12, Sense Motive +16, Sleight of Hand +14, Spot +4, Use Rope +11; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Skill Focus (profession (Gambler)).

Possessions: Masterwork scale mail; 4 *Sling Bullets* +1; *Sling* +1; 8 Masterwork Sling Bullets; 8 darts; *Great Axe* +3; *Potion of Blur*; *Scroll of Delay Poison* (Divine magic; lvl 8); *Ring of Shooting Stars*; 5,641 gp

The Forest of Stones: North of Cybin, there is a forest composed of petrified trees, frozen since some ancient time. Among these trees wander undead halflings, skeletons and wights, hunting their prey ruthlessly. The sand on the forest floor writhes with carnivorous worms and a cannibalistic tribe of goblins makes its home here. Magically masked as beggar children, the knockbones tribe lures unsuspecting samaritans into its midst and dogs them for days, if needed, through the maze of stony trees. When they eventually collapse from exhaustion and dehydration, the tribe takes them to meet their god, the Ordworm. When he's done with them, they join the ranks of the undead wandering the forest.

Necrotic/Benevolent: 5

The Ordworm: The Ordworm is an undead creature from the prehistoric past. The last of an intelligent race of such

beasts, the Ordworm is a powerful monster (see stats on previous page). His rotting and ropy flesh stretches for 300 feet, though most of his body is hidden within his “temple” – a circular pit engraved with runes from which his head protrudes, lolling around. His sagging gullet opens to reveal five jaws lined with scraggly teeth. His segmented tongue is pulpy and spotted, and bile pours from his mouth when he speaks. His face is disturbingly human, despite his maw. He hardly moves any more, and does not hunt. Still he compels his prey to serve him, either as food or as slaves.

HEGENSTED

Fierce/Fey 4

Local Geography

This war-torn land has borders that shift with the seasons. Hegensted is a high, flat realm that rises from cliffs to the west, and expands eastward. Crossed by rivers and pocked by lakes, Hegensted holds nearly every type of temperate terrain on its rocky and muddy highlands. The foliage here is rather sparse but hardy, as is the wildlife.

Animals include large game, such as deer and elk, and the creatures that prey on them. Most animals will fight to the death, even normally peaceful ones. Elves and fey shun this region, which is decidedly harsh and mundane.

Local Culture

Hegensted has no culture to speak of, being populated primarily by two armies. The only natives are the Derudians. Once loose bands of humanoid tribes, they are now united under a single banner. The legionnaires make their camps in valley hills near sources of water, marching forth to battle daily. Reinforcements arrive, but rarely is a troop relieved. Many legionnaires have been in Hegensted since their recruitment. Once stationed there, one is lucky to complete a full tour.

The Derudians are a fierce horde of barbarians that terrorize Hegensted. Their primary goal would seem to be to take all of the north, including Cullaine, and to eventually make war on Kharkon. The dwarves are little help, since they have their own problems, and fail to see how a battle a thousand miles away has any bearing on them. To this end, the Derudians prey upon the wealth of the Brendirian outposts and those who trade with them. The horde is mostly comprised of human clans, but thull, hobgoblins, bugbears and trolls are often accepted for their fierce fighting abilities. Though ill-equipped, the willingness of the Derudians to sacrifice their lives is their primary weapon. To win a battle, hundreds and sometimes thousands will hurl themselves to death upon Brendirian steel.

The fighting in Hegensted is the primary embarrassment of the Empire. It has been going on for 80 years, and shows no sign of stopping. While Brendir has the resources of an empire, the Derudians are fecund, since even the humans among them have goblinoid blood. Along with the armies of Brendir, many hardy types have set up shop in this unforgiving land, opening

taverns and small settlements for the soldiers to find brief respite. These profiteers have done well for themselves, and the smart ones come and go rapidly, clinging to the southern borders of the province.

Notable Places and People

Comet Lake: Deep beneath the chill waters of Comet Lake, an ancient band of spirits dwells. At times entire families of these spirits wander out of the lake clothed in mist, bearing broken spears and tattered standards. These souls are the remains of the first settlers of the region, who had a chance at peace that they failed to take. The entire province continues to pay the price of their failure.

Necrotic/Terran: 5

Over two hundred years ago, some retired legionnaires brought their families to this region, to stake a claim. They had only just arrived when winter fell. They made a temporary camp, and were ready to wait out the winter. A small tribe of Derudians came to them and pleaded for hospitality, to escape a particularly harsh winter storm. They were denied. On top of that, the Brendirians slew their aging chieftain and stole his crown. Without his magical aid, the Derudians perished in the snow. The spirits of the barbarians were restless and dragged the settlers out onto the frozen lake. They broke through and were drowned.

It is rumored that the man who slew the chieftain still holds the crown he stole in the skeletal hand of his corpse. If this crown is recovered from the bottom of the lake and given to the Derudians, legend has it, the conflict may end, or at least there could be a chance for peace.

Vragos Desrai: Warlord and servant of the dark god Yoson. Born a patrician in Brendir, Vragos abandoned the life of luxury to join the Derudians, becoming a barbarian and a sorcerer. He seeks the shards of the first prism, believing that reassembling it can make him a god. Vragos possesses a shard in the form of a scepter that grants him the ability to shapeshift as the spell *shapechange* (as a 20th level caster, 3 times a day). Note that his CR is equal to the combined CRs of any forms he takes.

Vragos Desrai, male human Bbn4/Sor4/Ari2: CR 9; Size M (5 ft., 6 in. tall); HD 4d12-4 + 4d4-4 + 2d8-2 +3; hp 48; Init -1 (-1 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 9 (-1 Dex); Attack +9/+4 melee, or +6/+1 ranged; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +12; AL CE; Str 14, Dex 8, Con 9, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 18.

Languages Spoken: Brendirian

Skills and feats: Concentration +2, Craft (alchemy) +3, Handle Animal +8, Innuendo +6, Intimidate +9, Jump +7, Listen +6, Spot +4, Survival +8, Swim +8; Alertness, Endurance, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness.

Possessions: Darkwood Shield; Masterwork Hide Armor; Greatsword; 17 Masterwork Arrows; Masterwork Heavy Mace; Masterwork Light Lance; *Mighty*

Wonders of Morningstar: The Canali

The Canali are seven huge man-made rivers that act as combination aqueducts and waterways. Each begins in one of seven provinces and leads to Brend, filling the Keveren reservoir, feeding its fantastic fountains, and allowing for plumbing throughout the city. Wastewater is then emptied into Brend Harbor, which is brackish for about 60 miles as a consequence. The channels' sources are varied, and they have several branches that always terminate near a major settlement. The slope is kept mild throughout, so watercraft can move against the current as they would in a natural river. They are raised and enchanted to continue flowing where the terrain is treacherous, sometimes to incredible heights. Boats and small ships sail up and down them, over or through mountains, and high above forests. The Canali were built for transit first, and water supply second. They are certainly overkill, but they are a source of pride for the citizens of the empire. Built over the course of two and a half centuries, at the cost of many plebian lives, the channels were conceived by Connosius in 1013 after the devastating war with Ynnidon, in order to raise morale and unify the citizens once more.

Today, the Canali contain loosely moored floating villages, as well as small huts that have cropped up upon their pillar-supported stone banks. All along the structure, squatters make camp under the vast arches at places that have sprung leaks. All of this use taints what will be the drinking water of the city folk, so a huge arch has been erected where the rivers merge to spill into the reservoir at their terminus. This arch purifies the water that passes below, with the pleasant side effect of cleaning anything else that passes beneath it. It is said that to pass beneath this arch is to be absolved of all crimes that weigh upon one's soul.

The provinces with terminating branches of the Canali are: Tzimichia (at Yrsal from a series of *decanter*s of endless water), Hegensted (at the town of Donder and fed by Comet Lake), Cullaine (at Cepp from Lake Sorrow), Prestarre (at Sionis on the river Tober, and passing due east through Homm and the entire Kyul range), Lamera (at Estrene), Tulis (at the town of Lencia, built for that purpose), and of course, Triskatariot (at Mexis). Some paranoid folk whisper that the Canali are meant to serve as efficient highways for dispatching troops to stifle any hint of rebellion. This may seem unlikely, but there has been talk in the senate of joining all provinces with branches of the Canali, including Emetria and Valtu, in what would truly be an incredible feat of human achievement.

(+2) Composite Shortbow +2; Potion of Cure Light Wounds; Potion of Vision; Potion of Speak with Animals; Potion of Bull's Strength; Potion of Endurance; Scroll of Choke (Arcane magic; lvl 4); Wand of Detect Secret Doors (13 charges); Climber's Kit; Thunder Stone; Hand of the Mage; 3,657 gp

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/4): 0th - Dancing Lights, Detect Magic, Disrupt Undead, Ghost Sound, Light, Read Magic; 1st - Chill Touch, Magic Weapon, Ventriloquism; 2nd - Mirror Image.

HOMM

Deceptive/Profane: 3

Local Geography

Set between the River Tober and the eastern Onimer Mountains, Homm is a verdant, hilly land with numerous small forests, few towns, and no major cities. It is a secret destination for well-to do Brendirians with its many secluded spots, and isolated river and shoreside coves. Little of the rain that is common west of the Tober reaches this far east, for a warm coastal wind blows north along the Onimers, clearing away the majority of clouds that encroach from Prestarre. The beaches of Homm are craggy and sandless with mild weather and small waves. The surging Thraxian tides are weakened by the loose

beds of rounded rocks that stretch for miles at low tide. This coastline is rich with exotic crabs, shellfish, and seabirds, and threats from sea creatures that occasionally become stranded in vast pools at low tide. Giant exotic snails and conches are a common sight in these parts, and many coastal peoples make their livelihoods collecting them for their meat and colorful shells. Sea fishermen do not need boats to collect the ocean's bounty in Homm; they simply pick among the rocks with great side-slung baskets that can be filled many times between tides.

Further inland, there are two primary zones: a short stretch of wooded scrubland reaching as far north as the town of Chance, which then makes way for hardwood forest and pastel meadows. The gentle beauty of the land belies the dangers of the place, and a great many monsters roam the land, under kinder disguises. Much of the indigenous life here has adapted to appear harmless, drugging prey into a false sense of security. An enchanting blossom in a remote meadow may be part of a tentacled horror, a fierce predator may resemble its prey, and the forest may come alive with malice at the first misstep of an unfortunate traveler. Homm is a paradise that demands vigilance of those who would reap its bounty.

Local Culture

Largely rural, Homm is a region of strange woodsy folk and more intrigue than an area with such a low profile should seemingly have. Madness is common among the Hommites, and as with most threats here, it is often hard to discern. Sea-

spray halflings have numerous settlements on the southern coast, particularly near the town of Skyrie. Most are not active in the dealings of house Ao, but the house acts as a sponsor to many of the settlements in times of need. Lately, the hard-working plebeians have had to contend with an unusual number of cults that have begun to spring up, and pilgrims who have begun to congregate here. Minor devils and celestials have been masquerading as mortals to better move within society. It seems the Canticle has plans for Homm.

Notable Places

Hall of Bells: The Demesne of the Rhymer. See Chapter VII, The Canticle, for more information on the Rhymer.

The Brendirian Gorge: The most overtly lethal place in Homm is the Brendirian Gorge. The Tober River has cut a deep furrow into the soft stone at the southernmost point of the border of Homm and Prestarre.

Terran/Ordered 4

This 90 mile long, 900 foot deep chasm is home to griffons, Brendirian dragons, and stranger creatures. It doesn't help matters that this area contains some of the richest mines in all of Brendir. Gems, iron, and gold can be found here. Brendirian mining operations are fraught with peril, but the prize is too valuable to forgo.

LAMERA

Local Geography

Green waters lick at blue coral beaches in Lamera. Along the northwest border are the Krel and Janafor mountains, protecting the region from most cool eastern winds, and holding the warm breeze that blows from Wiresh. The landscape slopes from northwest to the southeast, from a region of hilly forest at the foot of the mountains to more cultivated and carefully groomed foothills.

Local Culture

The coast of Lamera is sought out by wealthy Brendirians, and unfortunately this brings sophisticated villains. Vampires, liches, succubi and other intelligent monsters easily hide themselves within Lamera.

As the playground of the rich, many of the natives work in subservient positions, smiling at visitors and jumping at their commands while secretly loathing them. Most workers in Lamera work two or more professions, alternating their duties between the sunny tourist season and when the opportunities dwindle with the seasonal rains. Many are fishermen or farmers during these off months.

Notable Places

Gir: Gir is the home base of the halfling house Roveth, a resort town of pleasures and debauchery. The whole layout of the town promotes a relaxed sense of pleasure. Scantly clad

servants rush about the town, catering to all who pay the resort entrance fee of 100 gp per day. The town is a wonder to behold, with its colonnades and tiered buildings covered with growing flowers, and it is quick to part the rich from their money. Few can resist the temptation to take a flying carpet ride, or to have their fondest romantic fantasy fulfilled.

Creative/Fierce: 4

Nearly any wish can come true here but the prices are steep. Most of these wishes are fantasy fulfillment, such as to know what it's like to be a senator for a day, or to fly on eagle's wings. Several djinn are employed by the house to make all of this happen. Recently, however, strife has arisen, as the djinn have been cheated. Having been promised a shard, which they knew house Roveth possessed, they have not received their payment. They have begun to sabotage the resort in subtle ways, by embarrassing influential people during the course of their fantasies, or abruptly ending a magical effect at an inopportune (but harmless) time.

OLIN

Local Geography

A mountainous region, Olin is laced with small streams and ponds, and scattered stands of cypress trees. The terrain descends to lower elevations from north to south, except for the western mountains, which rise higher and higher. The most populous parts of the province are the eastern areas, largely forested with cypress, and highly fertile. Owlbears and dire creatures are some of the most common monsters found in the wilderness here.

Local Culture

Olinites are very much Brendirians and they are very happy with their lots in life. They raise griffons and hippocampi in the mountains to the west, and are content to farm the land year in and year out. They supply much of the grain and fruit that Brend requires.

A semi-militant subspecies of formians has created several subterranean hives here, and is allied with Brendir. Careful diplomacy on the part of Brendir initially prevented them from making war on the Empire, and over two centuries, they have become strong allies. Currently, there are talks of creating a formian hive in Brend, to allow for formian senators, and an active role for these new citizens of the empire. These formians are statistically identical to standard formians, except that all formians of taskmaster rank and above are lawful good. Additionally, their carapaces are black rather than red. Brendirian formians partake in trade, and release their aggressions by fighting the Xyzax (see below) and joining Brendir in the numerous conflicts that are ongoing.

Notable Places

Valleys of the Xyzax: The Xyzax are a diverse race of giant insects, bent on making Thraxis a hiveworld. So far they

have been fought back successfully, but they firmly hold a single valley between the Kasekas and Mulles ranges. Their hives fill the valleys with multicolored structures that make travel through this region hazardous. Their victims are mulched to feed their young and their queen, said to be hidden in a network of caves set into a mountain some ten miles west of the valleys. Though they are technically the same race, each type of Xyzax will congregate with its own kind whenever possible.

Insectoid/Benevolent 4

Treat the Xyzax as giant and monstrous vermin with an Intelligence score of 4d6 (do not discard the lowest) and +6 Charisma. They may take levels in rogue, fighter, sorcerer, and artificer. Their equipment is of course designed for their own physiology, but they may wield weapons or shields if their physiology allows it. Their alignment is lawful evil.

PRESTARRE

Local Geography

Prestarre is a province of valleys and lowlands that has three major mountain ranges on its western border. The land rises up to the southwest. The Dirigian, Kassekas, and Mulles mountain ranges each encroach upon the realm, bringing giants, hobgoblins and other alpine creatures down upon the land. Scattered bogs and marshes hold threats within the fog that clings to this land like the filaments of a web. Because of this near year-round cover of clouds, Prestarre is much cooler than the provinces of Homm and Brendis at the same latitude. Drizzle falls nearly every other day. Despite the slight cold, the greater rainfall makes Prestarre an ideal land for farming and much of the province is filled with small, productive plots. The average farm produces three times the crops that other areas in Brendir do.

Local Culture

The Prestarrens are largely happy within their lands, which many outsiders find dank and depressing. They maintain a generally positive outlook, and are often seen as naive by citizens from more urbanized regions of the empire. They hold many festivals and rural contests to lighten the mood. Most of this entertainment is found indoors except during brief bursts of mild weather.

Many of the greatest soldiers, mercenaries, and adventurers come from this patriotic place, able to handle the harsh environments that these professions tend to call them to. Most of those so inclined are trained from an early age in the treacherous bogs and moors in their own back yard, where they fight barghests, ettercaps, and amphibious monsters of every description. There are tales of murders happening in these bogs under the auspices of hunting accidents or monster attacks. It is said that every bog has its restless dead, and many common

folk know of them first-hand.

Most buildings are constructed of moss-covered stone, with slate roofs lined underneath with well-oiled leathers. A small indigenous population of stonemason dwarves helps to maintain these rapidly crumbling structures.

In a place like Prestarre, good food is a necessity, for survival and to brighten the days. The Prestarrens have grown plump on their rich and diverse cheeses, pastries, and meat dishes. Many effete patricians who would otherwise never set foot in a sodden land such as Prestarre eagerly trudge through mud and downpour to partake in feasts prepared by the finest Prestarren chefs.

Notable Places

The City of Ultiver: Ultiver is one of but two major ports of trade for Prestarre along with Sionis. Many goods come into the province from Lamera and Tulis, and others leave port for these same destinations. It seems to many that Ultiver is a fairly normal Brendirian metropolis, with all of the standard problems and benefits of city life.

The City of Sionis: Located on the western bank of the Tober River is the magnificent city of Sionis.

Ordered/Necrotic: 4

Aquan/Profane: 4

A branch of the Canali is located here, with water being magically pumped to an elevation of 250 ft by the cascade – a spectacular, staggered reverse waterfall that flows from the side of the river Tober, up and around a great series of eclectically stacked marble cubes (not to be confused with the planar effect of the same name). Separate channels flow to complete the effect, each taking a different course to add awe to the already miraculous creation. Even ships may pass from the river up the various steps of the cascade, gently floating up the sides by means of mystically manipulated gravity. To those upon the ships, down is wherever the water is flowing beneath their hulls, whether they travel vertically or horizontally across the faces of these stacked cubes.

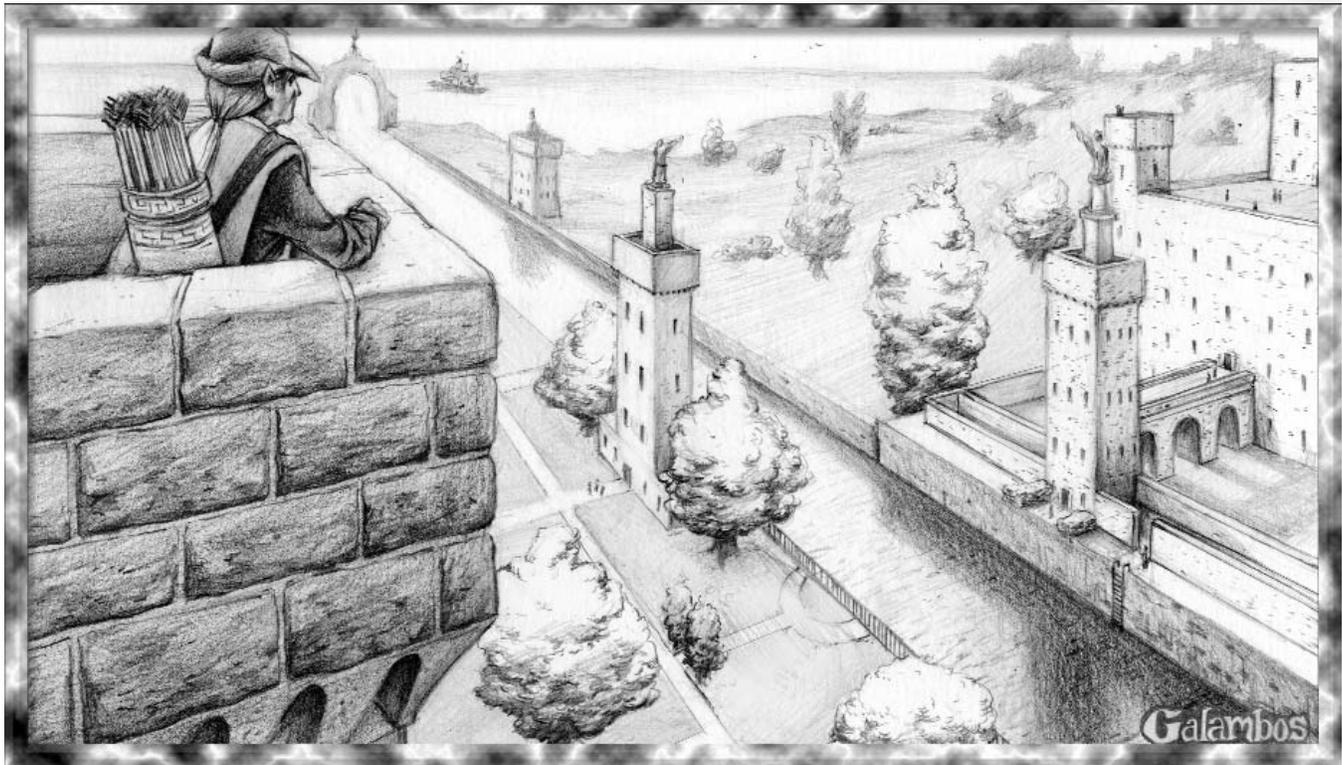
The Forest of Vines: The forest of vines is an overgrown bog that is a latticework of thorny trees and vines with a great abundance of animated plant life and other vicious predators.

Vegetative/Ordered: 5

Aberrant/Fey: 4

(pockets of Fey/Aberrant: 3)

Bone and briar elves also have small enclaves here, and small fey areas are spread throughout. The only reason the entire forest has not been turned to the Fey signature is because of the various unintelligent aberrations that populate it. It is relatively small, only about seven miles across, but there is great deal going on within this small space.



TOBRAN (“HELL’S WINDOW”)

Profane/Solar: 3

Local Geography

With only three major towns and one city, Tobran is an expanse of wilderness, punctuated by small mining and foresting camps and villages that help supply the empire in raw materials. Dark nights and dismal days make life incredibly hard in this land.

It is rumored that the area’s Profane signature initially came from the tomb of a certain diabolist mage. He had opened a portal to the Hells. The devils are trying to find this tomb, so they can open a permanent portal and bring in a constant stream of reinforcements.

Local Culture

Tobran was once a peaceful land, but it is quickly becoming a war zone. Small legions of devils have invaded, and are locked into a daily battle with Brendir. The outskirts of the town of Annon have become a staging ground for these battles, and it seems Brendir is losing ground. The simple settlers and freemen of the province have taken a siege mentality.

Celestials are converging on Tobran, realizing that Brendir cannot hold the devils alone. It is uncertain whether their presence will create even more destruction, but it is certain that the war is beginning to escalate.

Notable Places

The Ripwood: This is where the armies of hell have

decided to play out most of their battles with the Brendirians.

Profane/Benevolent: 6

Ignan/Ordered: 4

Traps and ambushes are set throughout these woods, and it is not safe to wander alone here. Woodcutting villages have been possessed by demons, and even the indigenous animals have become infernal. Forest fires burn constantly, not fully consuming the demonic wood of this place. The air is poisoned with brimstone and smoke; everything stinks of ash and carrion. Foliage is stripped from most trees in the center of this wood; in its place, demonic serpents and tortured souls climb among the limbs of the trees.

Sessir: Sessir has been marginalized from the rest of the empire, since many traders will not risk overland travel through the heart of devil occupied lands. The citizens of the city live under constant siege within its high walls. Currently, a heavy steel grate is being built over the city, to keep out flying demons.

Molgrol’s Tomb: Located within the Ripwood, Molgrol’s tomb is hidden from view by piles of rock and ash. It is indeed the portal that the demons seek. His actual tomb is a rounded chamber of stone, with a single sepulcher in its center.

An Ijamvian, Molgrol chose to find his final reward in a distant Hell not as a sufferer, but as an overlord. He continued his studies in the libraries of that evil realm, and eventually found a metaphysical use for his corpse. He opened a portal to his sepulcher, but never bothered to close it. Several demons have made it into this sealed chamber, and all but three have become bored and left the way they came.

TRISKATARIOT

Creative/Dynamic: 2

Local Geography

Triskatariot is one of the most amazing areas in the entire empire. The province is comprised of the Triskatar peninsula, and the hundreds of outlying islands within reach of its shore. The region as a whole has a semi-tropical climate fed by hot winds that cross the shallow, protected by the Sea of Semakh to the south. Fairly dry in most areas, it is a land of olive groves, vineyards, and magnificent marble architecture. Satyrs, cyclops, and the occasional hydra are some of the monsters most frequently found here, but Triskatariot has largely been swept of such threats in its centuries of civilization. In fact, many monsters have been domesticated or put to use.

Local Culture

The Triskatars are a varied and complex people, and despite their reputation as artificers, there is much more to this people than that point of reference. The population of what was once the nation of Triskatariot can fairly be divided three ways: those from the northern peninsula, the southern peninsula, and the islanders.

The northern peninsula is a relatively small region, and its peoples shun much of the work of the artificers, preferring to labor with their hands than to trust such work to constructs. The northern peninsula is more concerned with wizardry than artifice, and traditional magics are favored. They are a devout group, and worship many minor deities and spirits in addition to the Brendirian deities. Their cities are a mix of ancient Triskatar architecture, with simple lines and elegant beauty, and newer construction in the modern Brendirian style. Wherever possible the ancient architecture has been preserved.

The southern peninsula has lent its reputation to the entire province. It is here that the most fantastic feats of magical engineering are designed and built. The Triskatars have raised the creation of constructs to a high art, and tireless golems do much of the heavy labor, improving the standard of living for the citizens of this region. A single golem can work tirelessly day and night and stays in the family for generations. When it is worn, it is donated to a less fortunate family to better their lot.

Notable Places

Palta Sargasso: 12 miles off the coast of Palta lies the Palta Sargasso. This treacherous region, once a trade route, is now avoided by all but the most greedy and foolhardy. Hundreds of ships have been wrecked here over the centuries. They are densely piled upon the sea floor, creating a maze of broken vessels, filled with treasures and inhabited by many types of aquatic and undead monsters.

Krethos: Krethos is barely a city at all. Its port bustles with activity, but little legal trading goes on. The city serves primarily as a stopover on the way to much grander cities such as Trodos to the north, Mexis to the east, or Panphatas to the south.

It was once a shining jewel of the empire, but has since been reduced to a haven of crime and debauchery. The crown elven patriarch house Andariel lost control of the city in 958 when they were censured by the senate for, of all things, charges of necromancy. Needless to say the entire house became muryans. In their stead, a rotating group of magistrates is assigned to rule the area, doing what they do best: creating red tape. They are failing miserably in their attempts to maintain law and order. The port tariffs are far too high, and few merchants are willing to pay them. Organized crime is the real power behind the city. Smugglers and thieves keep the city afloat, and there may be a secret cadre of Ijamvian slavers operating out of this port.

Cutter's Park: The fallen Andariels keep this park beautiful. An entrance to an ancient dwarven crypt is said to be hidden within a secluded grove here.

Thorncrest: Once the home of house Andariel, Thorncrest is located on a small island within Krethos' gated harbor. It is now the haunting grounds for bands of undead and other monsters, as well as a host of animate statuary. Thorncrest was once a sparkling palace of white pearl, but has been turned black by the evil surrounding the fall of the elves that once lived there. The drawbridge leading to the island has been destroyed, and fishermen avoid it.

The Wharf: This ill-kept wooden structure serves as agora, forum, and dock. It has two floors, one near sea level, and one high above. The life of the city is centered on this rather insignificant feature. It is a quarter mile long, and some areas are safer than others.

Mexis: Mexis was once the war capital of Triskatariot. To this day, it is a center of military training, and officer candidates learn tactics here at the Folsi University. Soldiers perform their drills in the streets, and most military ceremonies of any importance happen here.

The Spark Sentinels: Along the sea wall that protects Mexis is a line of towers, each of which serves as a light house and defense mechanism in case of invasion. Each tower is manned by a single guard, and can hurl *lightning bolts* as if cast by a 10th level caster once every five rounds. These are aimed wherever the controller wishes and deal 10d6 damage each, allowing a Reflex save for half per the spell.

Panphatas: The intrepid Panphatas solved the problems of increased tidal flow by temporarily evacuating their city, and building colonnades at low tide for a new city to rest upon. Today, the city has many tiers at different locations, as well as two lower tiers that are only used to reach boats docking during different phases of the tides. It is a sight to behold with its three tiered docks of white stone. Aquamarine pennants fly from the tops of all civic buildings in honor of Nevonius, to placate his anger in the face of their thwarting of his design.

Panphatas represents everything that is right with the empire. The city functions like a well kept machine, what little crime occurs is swiftly dealt with, and the populous is secure and well off. Panphatas is a center of art and philosophy, with some of the best museums, libraries and minds in the entire world.

Trodos: The city of Trodos rests in the hands of a reinforced marble colossus of the prehistoric eidolon Trodo, who

has achieved demigod status since his death. His powerful robed form rests on its knees, his cupped hands lie upon the ground, holding the city proper, and his head is wreathed in clouds. At night his eyes are lit with green fire that casts its light far out to sea, guiding the way for ships hazarding the north coast of Tulus.

Dioramas, statues, and other public works are devoted to the telling of his deeds, such as his barehanded battle with the first dragon, the banishment of the aberrations to their underground realm, and the discovery of magic. Many of these deeds are mythical at best, and it seems Trodos is constantly “discovering” more great deeds performed by their first hero. It is certainly true that he founded the first true city (of the same name) in Brendir, but this city failed completely within a few decades of his being murdered, and it succumbed to chaos and civil war. His foundling cult escaped the ruins of the first Trodos and founded this one, significantly north of its original locale, which is now submerged.

TULIS

Benevolent/Deranged: 2

Local Geography

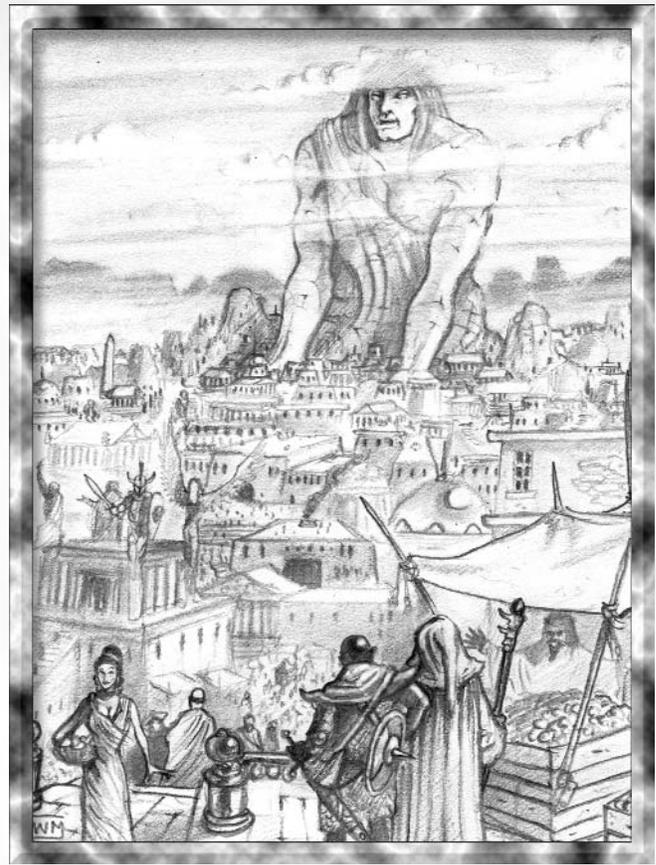
Tulus is the province of flowers. One of the most fertile areas of southern Brendir, Tulus is a place of natural groves and vineyards. Low, sloping hills and scenic coves are the hallmark of this province. Seaspray and mist roll inland during the rainy season, softening the edges of the glorious panoramas of the region.

Local Culture

Tulus is the place where most fine domestic wines, spices, and cheeses come from. There is a strong sense of refined superiority among natives of this province, but this is without malice. The legitimate superiority of Tulusian goods more than makes up for the pride of their makers, as far as the Empire is concerned. All Tulusian goods are masterwork.

Satyrs make up a significant portion of Tulusian society. Many Brendirians are amazed to find that satyrs are fine craftsmen when they are inclined to work at all. Flowers, art, and wine draw them to this place. Many satyrs align themselves with house Embrel, becoming entertainers. They have no favored class, but they tend to become artificers or bards. Many live in cities, or near them, for the satyrs of this province love humanity.

For their own reasons, celestials have decided en masse that Tulus is an ideal base for their operations on Thraxis. Having thousands of celestials set up base in your homeland would seem to be a good thing, but many natives of Tulus have recognized that it is not. With the advent of the celestial intruder, crime is down, but demons have begun to flock to the province, trying to upset the hold the celestials have on this land. Increasing numbers of Tulusians are growing irate with the celestials, and wish to eject them. There have been many uprisings, particularly among the wealthy merchants who worry that their darkest dealings will be uncovered.



Notable Places

The Isle of Agapo: Agapo is actually the remains of a titanic volcano. A lush, forested ring surrounds a placid lake that steams in cool weather. These waters are rendered a surreal cobalt blue by the minerals leeching from the rock below. The water is slightly toxic to most creatures, but hot springs and streams supply potable water before they spill into the lake basin.

Located 20 miles off the coast of Krethos, the isle of Agapo is often cloaked in a shroud of fog, and has been the downfall of many a careless or unfortunate sailor. Considered a holy place, the eastern half of the island holds a temple to Nevonius. 30-40 priests and worshippers live here at any given time, ministering to castaways and paying homage to the sea. The western half of the island, on the other hand, has become a haven for smugglers, pirates, and other cutthroats.

TZIMICHIA

Fierce/ Benevolent: 2

Local Geography

Tzimich is a brutal alpine region with scattered evergreen forests, several small streams, precious few lakes, and no naturally occurring large waterways aside from the tumultuous shoreline of cliffs on its three sides. This is why Brendir went to great trouble and expense to place a branch of the Canali in this unforgiving land. Coniferous trees, lichens and mosses are

the primary vegetation. Elk, mammoths, and other large herbivores feed frost worms, remorhaz, roving packs of troglodytes and winter wolves. Villages must contend with raids from wild werewolves, vargouilles, and ettins that swarm over this land. The high altitude and north-south winds characteristic of the province promote the formation of fierce storms, creating hazards that the average Brendirian newcomer is unaccustomed to.

Local Culture

Many people either fail to survive their first year here or give up trying, making Tzimichia a land of newcomers interspersed with a few diehards with nowhere else to go. Trouble-makers are swiftly taken care of, for the good of the group.

The Tzimichians are a somber people, forced to accept strangeness in their midst. One can afford to have few enemies in Tzimichia, for the strange hermit who steals local livestock may be the only hope for survival in a surprise storm. Gossip is conducted without malice, to warn every one of the foibles and sensitivities of their neighbors.

This country has few resources, but those that exist are prized and used in creative ways. Clothing is made of fur and leather, with bits of brightly colored fabrics interspersed as liberally as possible. It is designed to be donned and doffed quickly as the weather shifts. Most excess clothing can be rolled, tied, and slung over a shoulder for quick access when it is needed.

Trade is largely conducted with local goods, but when a shipment from distant Brendir arrives, an impromptu holiday occurs. Fresh foods and new goods are luxuries that are greatly longed after. Smart travelers to Tzimichia will bring such goods with them, and can quickly gain allies if they're generous with them.

Notable Places

Yrsal: Yrsal is an artificially created city, placed by the senate, to retain its hold on the region. It is mostly populated by minor criminals and disfavored citizens and officials who have chosen exile to other punishment. What little government exists here is invariably corrupt, and rumors of slavery are common. Many Ijamvian nationals have been exiled to this land and the Order (see page 155) is well established here. Under the tumultuous cover of night, the citizens of Yrsal bar themselves indoors to protect themselves from the violent weather that threatens them daily.

The Jut: These treacherous cliffs are home to diverse maleficent air, water, and earth elementals. Their three-way war makes life near the coastline impossible, as rocks fall from the shaking cliffs, seas surge violently at their base, and winds dash anything not firmly secured to the rocks below.

Terran/Ordered: 5
Aquan/Benevolent: 5
Auran/Creative: 5

The constant erosion has made the surface of these cliffs jagged and sharp. Any Climb checks that succeed by 5 or less result in 1d6 damage from the bladelike outcroppings.

VALTU

Local Geography

Valtu is a region of breathtaking natural beauty. Colorful volcanic lakes and vast plateaus are framed by high peaks to the west, from which mountain rivers flow, depositing rich alluvial soil and mineral rich sand that are ideal for Brendir's favored crops of figs, olives and grapes. Cyprus forests rich in exotic wildlife provide fierce and novel creatures for Brendirian games, and the newly opened mines are proving quite rich in iron, nickel and gold.

Local Culture

The natives of Valtu were once a proud and capable people, but they have been beaten down by disease and warfare. They simply don't have any fight left in them. The invading Brendirians find that Valtus are quick to please, if slightly cold and untrusting. If one can gain their trust, however, they prove to be great allies and great warriors. Their culture is rich, with beautiful traditional music and dance, and special culinary concoctions that the novelty-seeking Brendirians revel in.

The Valtus see their defeat at the hands of Brendir as a reinforcement of an old myth that stated that they could only be defeated "at the dawn of the last age," a time when their ancient devils and malignant spirits would be freed from their prisons to rise up against their gods. Things are occurring slightly differently than their prophecies have foretold, but they have been defeated, and their gods are being attacked, except that the enemy is not their traditional evils but a foreign one. Brendir turns a blind eye to the fact that many of the troops and newcomers to Valtu have been enslaving the conquered Valtus already weakened by the disease known as The Wick. These diseased slaves are forced to work the mines by the most unscrupulous Brendirians. Valtu has become a mecca for the rich and powerful and there is great demand for any who have the power to render people immune to this disease.

Notable Places

The Tinii Mines: East of Vero are the Tinii mines. Sapphires, rubies, and emeralds grow in unlikely clusters, and are harvested by various crews. The entire mine is a gently sloped downward spiral with chambers and natural caverns that spread out from the main shaft. Columns and outcroppings of prismatic crystal are worked by groups of weary natives, while their taskmasters drive them ever harder. The labor of these many is making a few rich Brendirians richer. Some of these workers are legitimately hired, others are slaves. Recently, mysterious creatures have begun to pick off the workers and taskmasters if they wander too far from their groups. It is uncertain whether the culprits are earth elementals or something else. One rumor has it that certain Valtu summoned an avenging spirit that got out of their control.

Terran/Auran: 3

A Brief Timeline of the Age of the Stargazers

- 16,000 First dwarven diaspora. Clay dwarves of Kharkon censured for aiding tribal humans; most abandon Kharkon in retribution.
- 14,000 A comet impacts with the continent of Zeikrus.
- 3,000 Trodos, the first human city on the continent of Kharkonia, is founded. 50 years later, it falls to civil war and strife.
- 1,324 Triskatariot founded.
- 788 Brend, a small port village in a remote part of an inconsequential continent, begins conquering surrounding villages.
- 600 The nation of Brendis is founded.
- 0 Triskatar calendar is devised and implemented.
- 5 Brendis becomes part of Triskatariot.
- 233 Brendir conquers Triskatariot, and subsumes it. First Ijamvian wins vs. Zeikrus. 233 is “the year of conquest.”
- 942 The Empress leads a mixed army of elves and dwarves against the humans of Brendir.
- 1013 Connosius conceives of the Canali.
- 1020 First work begins on the Canali.
- 1253 Canali are completed.
- 1278 Gnomish diaspora begins. First gnomes travel to Brendir, and many settle in Triskatariot among humans with similar values.
- 1280 Gimmun Gibuldigapp unveiled to the world.
- 1340 Karem’s Dialectics on Magic completed, conceiving the idea of a prism that can “harness the waves of magic.”
- 1377 Work begins on the first prism.
- 1470 The first prism destroys itself, raining dust and shards across the world.
- 1472 Arril’s orbit is forever changed, inexplicably. Earthquakes wrack the globe; chaos ensues worldwide.
- 1474 The Canticle reveals itself across the globe.
- 1534 Work commences on the second prism.
- 1608 The present, known as the Age of the Stargazers.

The Nine Empires of the Root of the World

Thraxis



Chapter V

he Root of the World

Nine Empires

This chapter discusses the other empires in the Root of the World, and their interplay with Brendir and each other. There is enough information to create a character who hails from these places and sow the seeds of adventure.

There is simply not enough space in this book to delve into these empires with anything approaching completion. Future Morningstar supplements will explore them more fully. For now, each empire will be presented as a broad overview, with certain areas examined more closely. Where a spectrum is listed for an entire empire, it represents the most common spectrum found, and is not necessarily ubiquitous.

Haseth

Dynamic/Profane: 3

Capitals

Hasem and Bura

Description

Haseth is a land of gods and demons, epic battles and a powerful spiritual heritage. Arid tablelands dominate the center, though the land grows much more fertile as one travels outward. As recently as 150 years ago, the central lands were rich and verdant, and there are still patches of such greenery. In the west, approaching the wild Amshadin lands, are endless mountainous dunes that are known for their musical rumbling and electrical discharges as they inch across the landscape. The desert eastward grows flatter and firmer, becoming claylike dirt that coats almost everything. In this, the northeastern corner of the empire, are the Corpse-Taker Mountains, covered in cypress forests, and home to many of the indigenous tribes of thull and goblinoids. The fertile ring belies the lost heritage of the empire, where lush fragrant grasses grow and flowers blossom

without end. Deep cedar forests roll across the land; tigers and small-eared elephants walk the wilds here. Many unique spices and culinary delights derive from this empire. There are many awakened races of animals in these lands, from birds, lizards, and monkeys to camels and elephants.

Provinces

Djonjapur: An advanced civilization by anyone's standards, Djonjapur is the cultural center of Haseth, a place of sky-reaching palaces and flying carpets, a near autonomous land that provides its citizens with free health care and education, and supports artists and philosophers.

Vodheer: Ornate temples of bronze or gold with egg shaped domes and bulbous towers are found in every major town, and hot air balloons of similar shape and design float lazily in the sky.

Kula Kor: A surreal land populated by mystics and Hule; a peaceful civilization of iguana-like humanoid priests. The chromatic deserts of Kula Kor are illuminated by rainbow colored dust and the promise of high adventure.

Havit: In Havit, heroes are needed desperately; the land is poisoned, the earth is parched, and the people suffer plagues and famine.

Sem: Nomads wander the dunes of Sem, a land of dead cities and their decaying lords, sand dragons, and celestial intervention.

Tul: Tul is lush and mysterious, with a climate similar to Emetrium, and a culture that reveres the bizarre, under the belief that strangeness signifies enlightenment.

Palsh: Palsh is the land of one thousand messiahs; a place of truth and lies, decadence and serenity where pilgrims flock for salvation, but more frequently find debauchery.

People

The citizens of Haseth were historically from diverse

Wonders of Morningstar: Vrintharon

Creative/Profane: 6

On the eastern coast of Djonjapur is Vrintharon, a city of such religious furor that miracles are a part of everyday life. Selfless pilgrims who journey to this place may have their fondest wish granted; the greedy leave with less than they came with.

Originally a temple for ascetics, a small settlement grew up atop the cliff that the temple was set into. This settlement grew with the sponsorship of King Gamel Hsud of Djonjapur into the great spiritual center it is today. The religious pluralism characteristic of Haseth is in full swing here, and every citizen is the follower of some god, or a godling himself. Vrintharon is said to represent the union of heaven and earth.

High upon the side of the cliff sits an oblique, bowl shaped temple of blue marble. Above the center of this bowl levitates a smooth, red ovoid structure called the "Bronith." The priesthood of the city lives in this floating egg, and what goes on there is anyone's guess. When the priests must walk among the citizens of the city, they fly down from the Bronith and return when they are through with their business.

places in the world. Over the ages, they have blended into cohesive races of tan to brown-skinned people, with dark, wavy or straight hair, and deep, expressive eyes that cover the entire range of human colorations. Even non-human races show these primary colorations, though native fey and planetouched may exhibit bold pastel or primary colors in any or all of these features as well. This is a result of the peculiar eddies of magic in this empire. All races are present, but are altered by the land, physically and mentally, to adapt to the paradoxical energies that permeate the realm.

The union of two great kingdoms resulted in the Empire. A thousand years later, Haseth still has two capitols. Hasem remains the political center, while Bura is the religious heart of the empire. Haseth has fractured many times in its history, usually over religious dogma.

Dwarves are called "Ribhu" in Haseth, and fey are known as "Twashtri." Many Hasethan elves have left Ynnidon behind entirely, and have developed a Hasethan outlook. Both races have become renowned artificers, each in their own style. There are also many types of fey unique to Haseth.

Planar beings and creatures are exceedingly common in Haseth. Rakshasa, celestials, and infernal titans called Rishi war across the land, and human heroes often make the difference in such battles. Because of the strong Profane countersignature, even the most evil foes are likely to have honor.

Hasethans like to have things more than one way, and have no problem with accepting facts that contradict each other as equally true. It is considered rude to directly contradict a Hasethan, even when he is obviously wrong. Hasethans are known for their tolerance of others, as long as those others are themselves open-minded.

Hasethans love life, and death is not generally feared, since many believe in reincarnation, and many others believe that life and its cessation are an illusion. Still, corpses are considered unclean and are cremated to prevent relatives from being reminded of their loved ones. As a result, there are very few

corporeal undead in Haseth.

Haseth is a very class conscious culture. At the top of society are clerics, then the ancestral royal families, then mages, craftsmen, and merchants, in that order. Finally, there are the untouchables: criminals and pariahs who deal in undesirable trades, such as necromancy, poison-brewing, mercenary work, or the handling of the dead. Even as the rich seek these services, they look down upon the purveyors.

Religious tolerance, personal honor, and pacifism are the most commonly held values, though the royal caste is expected to fight for the empire in times of need. Peace is to be kept, but when war must be made, it must be made without trepidation. Each member of society is expected to fulfill the requirements of his caste, and the expectations of the empire.

Key Locales

Zalbrim: On the shores of Sem, there is a refuge for cutthroats, evildoers, and merciless souls. This foul sanctuary is the city of Zalbrim. Its twisting alleys are strewn with traps, and its gutters strewn with dead. Though a seaside region, there are several prominent efreeti active in the area, drawn by the strong Profane energies initially, and eventually deciding to stake a claim. Over the past 50 years, Zalbrim has become increasingly corrupt, a haven where escaped murderers and fugitives can live openly.

Profane/Benevolent: 4

Ignan/Solar: 3

Thorny minarets and twisting towers are the signature of the city. Despite its fearsome skyline, Zalbrim possesses a certain dark majesty. By day, the deserted streets and smoke-shrouded silhouette are unnerving, and by night, the city appears to be in flames, with countless braziers, and screams of pleasure and pain in the air.

Ijamvhul

Capital

Koltic

Geography

Ijamvhul is marked by severe landscapes and fierce storms. Climates range from tropical to temperate, but because of the common Fierce signature of magic in this area, weather can run much colder or hotter than would normally be expected for a given latitude. The land is sere and unforgiving, much like its peoples, and is centered on the great crater of an ancient impact that threatened to wipe out all life on Thraxis.

Despite the Empire's cruelty, there is an alien beauty in the savagery of this land. The trees are blue and purple, and the bladed grass is multicolored. The blood-red, black and indigo mountains in this empire are stark and forbidding. The animals of the region are unfamiliar to most citizens of other empires, possessing a great many aberrant and planar traits. There is not a horse, cow or goat to be found in Ijamvhul, most having been devoured long ago, necessitating a turn to stranger life forms, such as insects for sustenance and aberrations and dragonkind for farming and travel. Guch hir and guch hin are by far the most commonly used beasts of burden.

Provinces

Feridu: The alien coastline of Feridu is home to the Ijamvian Order, and the center of Ijamvian trade.

Gehl Tesiben: The center of Ijamvian philosophy, Gehl Tesiben is one of the greatest unrecognized threats to the other empires' lifestyles.

Jeseril: Fungal forests fill the valleys of this mountainous region, where a surprisingly peaceful people try to live their lives, even secretly treating with dragons.

Verul: The capital province of Ijamvhul is a place of detached brutality and well-ordered debauchery, where refined tastes are met by a veiled trade of slaves.

Isker: Wizardry and artifice that utilizes living stock is the pride of Isker, where every magical item has a cost in lives.

Drasz: The warfront, Drasz is the home to the fiercest warriors in the world, the human match to any dragon.

People

In Ijamvhul, nothing is sacred but the self. Ijamvians of even the lowest rung of society believe themselves better than the citizens of any other empire. The worst members of this society have committed some of the vilest atrocities of world history. Slavery is legal and practiced widely in Ijamvhul, as are various perverse forms of life magic.

The Ijamvian psyche has been molded by numerous hardships and historical catastrophes. The unyielding strength and cunning for which they are famous was forcefully ingrained into the culture. The long war with the dragons forged and reformed the Ijamvian world view. They perceive everyone else as enemies on some level, and trust no one that they have not suffered

extreme hardship with. At heart, they are the same vicious barbarians that tore their empire from the claws of the dragons; the barbarians just wear finer accoutrements now.

Populations consist primarily of beautiful, tan-skinned humans, bone elves, and reptilian humanoids. There are certain subcultures of humans with exceedingly pale, almost albino skin, but all have straight, black hair. Many dye or bleach their hair to fit current fashions. Because of the proximity to Zeikrus, the draconic empire, a great many sorcerers live here.

Ijamvians believe they are masters of the universe, and many go so far as to worship no gods, believing that no beings deserve worship above themselves. Might makes right, and power earns respect in Ijamvhul, be it political, intellectual, or physical. Ijamvians think of humans as animals, and believe that the baser instincts are not to be stifled, but reveled in.

The entire Ijamvian Empire was once part of Zeikrus, and was taken from the clutches of the dragons, with no aid from anyone. Over a millennium the war was waged, with casualties in the millions. The start of it all was early attempts at diplomacy with the dragons that burned their crops, razed their lands, and ate their livestock. Some humans subjected themselves to enslavement by the dragons to ensure themselves something akin to peace, raising livestock to feed their masters, and raising crops on smoldering battlefields fertilized by the corpses of dragon and man alike. Others were made of sterner stuff. They appealed to the dragons as equals, and offered to work with them, in trade and partnership. All parties in the draconic war were approached, and all parties rejected the offers of the feeble mortals out of hand. The humans simply had no leverage.

Even good dragons were unwilling to treat with the obviously inferior humans. The evil ones, however, let their ire be known – with deadly consequences. They enslaved any Ijamvians who dared think themselves equal to a dragon. Angered by the terse disregard of the metallic dragons, and enraged at the idle destruction wreaked by the chromatic ones, the human clans held clandestine moots and prepared for war. Their early strikes were clumsy and ill prepared, but they gained the attention of the dragons. War parties ambushed young dragons and simple folk built traps for the older ones. This war was waged at great cost to the humans, who lived short and bloody lives. Less than one in 100 of the initial warrior clansmen were left alive. But with each generation, the survivability of the humans increased, as the greatest heroes of the age passed forth their bloodline. As the decades passed they began to pose a greater and greater threat to their scaly oppressors. In time they had carved out a small nation in a fairly useless region of the continent, which the dragons considered too much trouble to try to take back.

The humans named this region Ijamvhul, after Ijamv, the first war chief who dared slay a dragon. Over the millennia, they expanded their territories, and continue to do so, slowly pushing the boundaries of their dominion forward. The land they hold is still a fraction of that which the dragons control, but Ijamvhul is a sizable empire by anyone's standards. The Ijamvians have mastered dragon-fighting techniques, and no longer care whether the beast is good or evil. All dragons are the

Wonders of Morningstar: The Eye on the Sea

Ijamvhul realized that as distant as they were from the rest of the civilized world, they could not hope to swiftly raid, or trade with, other empires. With the aid of Hrum Vaat, a legion of devils, and a great many human sacrifices that secretly continue to this day, Ijamvhul constructed a working, sustainable portal. In the center of the Ijamvian impact crater is a one mile wide, vertical, eye-shaped portal of stone, with steel lids that open when the portal is activated. The Eye is a closely guarded secret of the Empire, and only the most influential captains and their crews know about it. Special crystal keys activate the portal when a sentient being is impaled on the spears that ring the eye. The portal can be willed to open to any stretch of ocean the wielder has previously sailed. To make a return trip, the key is shattered, another life is taken and a magical iris opens leading to the Ijamvian side of the portal. The initial foray holds no danger to the crew, regardless of Arril's position in the sky, but the return trip is subject to the same problems as standard teleportation.

Except for the portal itself, magic does not work at all within a ten mile radius of the Eye. Unless a ship bearing a crystal key approaches within one mile of the portal, it remains sunken on the sea floor, cloaked in invisibility. As a key approaches, it rises to the surface and opens. Along the outside rim are its highly stylized eyelashes: spears that hold corpses, the waste product of its fuel of human souls.

This spot is avoided by all but the most foolhardy sailors.

enemy.

Ijamvian trade began as piracy, as the beleaguered folk went on raids to distant shores. This all changed when Quetapan, itself no stranger to brutality, offered martial aid to the Ijamvians in exchange for magically invaluable dragon parts. Quetapanii magic advanced by leaps and bounds, and the Ijamvians learned a measure of civility. It wasn't long before the Ijamvians realized that they could benefit from other empires as well. Today, they are a powerful institution of world commerce, trading much more than dragon parts. They are the only empire that knowingly trades with Hrum Vaat.

Upon reaching manhood, a young Ijamvian is expected to partake in a dragon hunt in some capacity. His or her parents use their connections to assemble a formidable hunting party, which is often comprised of the people who will help to shape the young Ijamvian's adult life, such as political allies, employers, and family friends. A hunt that goes poorly can ruin any

prospects of a good future for the youth, and a memorable one catapults him toward success in all of his endeavors. A disastrous hunt can even lower an entire family's place in society. At the end of the mission the new adult shares a meal of dragon meat, doling out portions to the rest of his group. The choicest and most valuable portions help to assure his standing in Ijamvian society, thus it is of great benefit to invite influential people on the hunt.

The ancient people who became the Ijamvians were by necessity barbaric. They learned to show no mercy, and to ruthlessly deal with their enemies to protect their own. Fierce loyalty coupled with individuality and sophisticated thought have made them what they are today. Ijamvians coddle no one. This is not cruelty or harshness in their eyes, but kindness. In a brutal world it can be deadly to harbor illusions about one's self.

Though there can be no benefit for choosing to play an Ijamvian vs. members of any other Empire, it is recommended that no character with any ability score less than 11 be allowed to play an Ijamvian. Even the humblest adult NPC uses the 4d6 character creation method, discarding the lowest result. This represents the centuries of weeding that the Ijamvian bloodline has undergone.

There is something to be said for the architectural aptitude of the Ijamvians. Gehl Tesiben in particular has some of the most amazing and confounding works of architecture in the entire world. Homes are square, cylindrical, or octagonal, made of stone or concrete, with ornate metal roofs that slope or rise to a high point. In congested areas, structures are more rectangular and conventional – in order to pack them together efficiently – but still convey the proud rage of the Ijamvian people. The style of the Ijamvian strongholds is at once practical and majestic. It favors reinforced towers and minarets, designed along harsh yet graceful lines. Each tower is covered in sharpened metallic spikes, set toward the sky near the ground, and toward the ground higher up. The tops of these towers are fixed with a long, fluted spike pointed vertically. These towers serve as gargantuan set spears against invading dragons. Magical whirlwinds can be activated to draw dragons into the trap.

The government is ostensibly a democratic republic, like Brendir, but is in fact ruled from the shadows by a diverse cadre of syndicates and cults of personality. On top of this, there is a puppet emperor who rules for life, and is often usurped. All citizens (but not slaves) have a weighted vote, based on their status, which is all but ignored if the results don't fit the needs of the most powerful syndicate of the election year.

Key Locales:

Koltic: Koltic is the capital city of Ijamvhul, known for its rectangular towers of iron, its clockwork machinery, and its disregard for human dignity. Here, the vadaghol are bred and trained for their individual tasks, and agents of Hrum Vaat are allowed to walk with impunity. But the city is a paradox. As brutal as the city is on the surface, there is a dark honor and even wisdom that is kindled here. The top Ijamvian universities are located here. There are also underground factions seeking liberation for the slaves out of Koltic.

Kharkon

Terran/Aberrant: 3

Capital

Arkend

Description

Kharkon is a frigid, mountainous land, blanketed in vast spruce forests, dotted with lakes, and crossed with meandering rivers and streams. Elk, moose, bears, beavers, ducks, geese and other game are found in great numbers here. So too are fell beasts and monsters such as yeti, ettins, frost worms, and other monsters well suited to cold weather and darkness.

Kharkon is the mineral rich empire of the dwarves, and they hold its vast interior. The coastal areas, however, are primarily populated by humans, both native and foreign, who fish the seas, and even exploit mines that have been abandoned by the dwarves.

Provinces

Arkend: The capital is a province of stone monoliths, mountain citadels, and military might.

Baandel: A war-torn province where elves, dwarves, and barbarians skirmish day and night.

Gimmun: A pastoral, arboreal realm ruled by gnomes, but under the command of the Empire.

Jaagster: A realm of high peaks, where great farming domes hang from the sides of cliffs, and the Auran signature holds sway.

Kubolsund: Rich Brendirians have set up villas and small resorts around the hot mineral springs common to this tectonically active and largely human region.

Riggsur: The province where the fight against Hrum Vaat is at its worst; this realm is largely aberrant.

Ulng: The subterranean province of rich mines and cyclopean cities, with endless lakes and limitless potential for adventure.

Zrevold: An alpine wonderland set aside for the many thull tribes, this land is considered worthless by the empire.

People

Kharkon values family, loyalty, and honor. The region can be quite harsh, and one always needs others to depend on. Elders in a family are accorded respect in relation to their age and rank in society. Loyalty is given first to the family, then to the town or province, and finally to the empire. A strong work ethic is expected as a consequence of this loyalty. Honor helps maintain this work ethic, and ensures that threats to the empire are met with a swift rally.

The Kharkonoi government is matriarchal, and consists of two parts, by sex. Females handle everything regarding the homeland, and make the decisions of whether to go to war, while males handle all active aspects of defense and industry. Women generally hold all non-military positions of power. The women of every dwarven village or neighborhood elect a representative, who in turn elects a Sovereign from among their ranks. The Sovereign reigns for life, and upon her death, a new one is elected. The dwarven men are assigned to troops by village and neighborhood, except for those who qualify to be in special infantries. The leader of the military is known as Lord Overseer and will often marry the Sovereign. Typically, the Sovereign has been Davrinhai, and the Lord Overseer has been Garhai.

Despite the paucity of many resources in the region, the Kharkonoi have a reputation for being wasteful. This is because of their confidence in the Terran signature that they promote, their habits of strip mining, and their desire to create goods even when there is no immediate need to use the resources required to do so. This reputation is a vast simplification of the true Kharkonoi attitude; a frontier mentality holds sway because these habits have proven necessary in the Empire's history. They feel the need to stockpile goods for the inevitable times when they will be hard to acquire.

Key Locales

Geistering ("The Sore"): Ulng is the subterranean province of the dwarves, and the primary reason the empire is as prosperous as it is. The primary gateway to Ulng lies on the eastern border of Arkend, where an immense massif comprised of three mountains rises a mile above the surrounding range, leaving a broad 4 mile gap at the valley floor. Only 200 years ago this area was all but closed off by the dense blue-black igneous stone called "gragel" that comprises the mountains. This barrier was more easily worked around than penetrated. That changed in 1472 when the massive earthquakes following

Gragel

Though extremely difficult to quarry, gragel is valued in masonry, since it is all but impossible to damage. It can only be quarried by stonecutter dwarves, magical tools of +3 or greater enchantment, diamond tools, or judicious use of powerful magics like *disintegrate* spells. Most metal tools will be worn away before they make more than a scratch in this formidable stone. 1 cubic foot of the stuff weighs almost 400 lbs.

Gragel, fantastically dense mineral: hardness 30; 800 hit points per foot of thickness; break DC 70.

Wonders of Morningstar: Gimmun Gibuldigapp, The Clockwork City

Overseen by the gnomish genius Daggric Geveer Gibuldigapp, Gimmun Gibuldigapp was created in opposition to a dwarf-mandated diaspora. It had been decided in 1278 by Lord Overseer Groshi Moag IV that the gnomes created nothing of value, and that their lands would better serve the empire in dwarven hands. Many gnomes had already left when Daggric unveiled his plan, and those that had stayed worked tirelessly under Daggric's guidance. In the spring of 1280, a bloodthirsty army of flayed and storm dwarves, led by Lord Moag himself, fell upon the Tirolun Valley, where the gnomes had hidden themselves. They were amazed and bewildered. There was no sign of the gnomes, but the most amazing city they had ever seen stood before them. It moved and changed like a living thing. Whole sections of the city were lifted by massive, moving arms, interlocked, separated and stacked upon one another.

The entire city rotated, rose, fell, chimed and whirred. Every component was colored in a magically shifting range of pastels. After exploring this magnificent city, and getting lost and separated, the dwarves were impressed. While trapped on a spinning and rising gear, Lord Moag called out, asking for the gnome responsible. From a painted window in a building set upon a fixed arm, Daggric defiantly announced himself. Other gnomes appeared, armed with crossbows and stranger mechanical weapons, making it obvious that the dwarves were at a severe disadvantage. Pulling some levers within his control room, Gibuldigapp drove this point home. Bladed weapons of every description appeared from the machinework, cocked and ready. The dwarves admitted defeat. The gnomes released them, after Lord Moag respectfully swore an oath that Kharkon would never again question the gnomes' ancestral right to their lands.

Many quaint gnomish cottages are placed on the gears themselves, some of which are a quarter mile in diameter. It has never been revealed what magical metal comprises the machinework, and all of the engineers that built it are long dead. Not wanting this metal or alloy to fall into dwarven hands, the gnomes have kept no record of it. Civic buildings are located along the eight fixed bars that support the rest of the city, which are a full mile wide and 15 miles long. There has never been a breakdown or jam of the original machinery and no maintenance is required. How this city was forged in little more than a single year – by gnomes, no less – is the subject of fables whispered on the darkest nights. Infernal or other planar assistance is almost unquestioned.

In peacetime, the city moves in lazy patterns that anyone who has sailed can stomach. With the coming of a perceived threat, the city picks up to breakneck speed. All gnomes within the city move to specially designated safe areas to take up arms. They need never show themselves in order to fight intruders.

During the long, dark Kharkonoi winters, the city is lit in a multitude of colors. Winter festivals are held in and around the city. Music plays everywhere, either performed live or emanating from the clockwork itself. Daggric's Day is celebrated on the first day of spring, when candy, gifts and toys are exchanged by children and adults alike.

The city remains a much visited wonder of the world to this day. Artificers and advanced students from Triskatariot universities study the higher principia here.

the alteration of Arril's orbit raised the massif and supplied a direct route into previously unreachable areas.

The four mile wide entrance to Ulng is called "Geistering" – "The Sore" in Kharkonoi. Its suspended stone ceiling has been bolstered with gragel pillars and embankments and carved into friezes depicting the deeds of the greatest dwarves in colossal strokes. This cavern leads deep into the earth, into realms that once belonged to Hrum Vaat but have been conquered by the dwarves. These areas have been expanded in typical dwarf fashion in the search for minerals. In the centuries since its initial conquest, Ulng has grown to become a source of great wealth and pride for the empire. The Sore teems with dwarves and many members of other races. Numerous towns and a few cities have spawned under the shelter of the high ceiling, and the area bustles with trade, even if a few pockets of aberrant creatures still exist in the warrens between them.

Hatern, City of the Gedge: In Riggsur, the gedge have taken an isolated seaside mining town and made it their own, easily slaying the humans and dwarves who broke through to Hrum Vaat in the process of their excavations. After this, they

swept the surface, and finding no opposition to that, set down roots. Workers were brought up to reinforce the meager defenses, erecting a living wall of chitin and bone at the only mountain pass to the town, and expanding its boundaries to take up the entire cliff.

Aberrant/Ordered: 4

Hatern is actually a magnificent, if unsettling, sight. Hive-like towers are interspersed with older architecture, with chimneys spewing foul smelling brown smoke from the strange fungi which are cooked within. This smoke creates a sense of mild pleasure for aberrations, and one of revulsion in any non-aberrations who fail a Will save (DC 20), resulting in a -4 penalty to all actions while in Hatern.

From here, they trade with Ijamvians, bloodfed halflings, and others of ill repute. It is a staging ground for raw supplies going in and finished goods going out. Much trade revolves around slaves. The gedge make use of Ijamvian vadoghols or "sundermen" as beasts of burden.

Kenabu

Dynamic/Frigid: 2

Capital

Wiresh

Description

Kenabu is a verdant land of incredible beauty and stunning juxtapositions. Sprawling centers of trade and learning coexist with dense jungles, vast savannahs, and shifting sand dunes. It is an immense realm of paradox, where fierce predators sometimes share watering holes with their prey in the name of mutual survival. The diversity of this land is demonstrated in its races: dark-skinned humans, thull, stonemason dwarves with skin of obsidian, reptilians, and the elu, a bizarre race of elephant humanoids with great physical strength and powers of the mind.

Kenabu is a snake-shaped continent, with deserts to the north and west along the equator, giving way to mixed savannah and jungles to the south, which grow denser to the east and along the east coast. Topologically, there are mountains all along the east coast, which curve around along the southern tip of the continent and reach back north once again, cradling a flat interior. The mountainous regions of Kenabu are largely volcanic, where seas of lava swell with elemental life, and sulphurous smoke pours into the sky.

Kenabu is home to the greatest diversity of life found in any empire. In the steaming jungles and on the arid savannahs, the plant life is diverse. Medicines, poisons, and spices grow wild everywhere, and it is easy to survive on vegetable matter alone. The entire empire is hot, with varying levels of humidity and precipitation breaking the land into its various ecological zones.

The choked jungles of Kenabu are host to thousands of types of plants. These jungles are far from uniform or homogeneous, and where certain plants thrive, specific animals follow. An area of 1 square mile might contain over a thousand animal species, such as hundreds of types of birds, dozens of reptiles and amphibian species, and countless insects. The dark canopy provides cover for many monsters who prefer darkness. Lost tribes of gedge, a group of snake-men called the Boa Folk, gricks, and any number of specially adapted creatures can live here. Elemental activity is also very high, with water and mist elementals finding solace in the near constant rain, and air elementals thriving on the fresh air released by the incredible density of flora. Tendriculos, shamblers, and other plant creatures are a frequent hazard of these areas.

Numerous species of grass grow high or low on the savannahs and highlands, feeding various types of herd animals such as gazelles, zebras, giraffes, triceratops, stegosaurus, and elephants. Predators lurk close to these herds. Wild beasts like lions, cheetahs, hyenas, griffons, manticores, ethereal marauders, and purple worms dominate these lands.

The hardy gogo tree, a giant relative of the baobab, looms

hundreds of feet over the savannah, often casting a shadow that is a mile long, and housing entire villages within its trunk. The tree can be hollowed out while it lives, and is entirely edible. Stands of these trees comprise towns and even cities that welcome those lost and wandering in the savannahs.

Provinces

Badangoi: A region of lakes and mysteries, this land is filled with temples to rising gods.

Dubak: Animals and humanoid animal spirits rule these lands, from which the elu originate.

Canbin: The cults of Canbin are feared worldwide, for the control they have over the wills of their members.

M'Gongo: A valley populated by a fiercely spiritual people, where every village seems to possess at least one ancient relic and the citizenry plays deadly games to prove their faith.

Maasa: The primary stronghold of demons within the empire, Maasa has been befouled by their presence; rivers flow with blood, and ash rains from the sky.

Nemethu: A place of spiritual transcendence, Nemethu is the destination of many of the world's psionicists and spiritual seekers, for enlightenment is not far here.

Nest: The cities of Nest are decidedly different from the rest of the Empire, with well-hewn, spired structures, and a level of societal sophistication usually found only in Ijamvuh.

Ret: A river-filled place of hard-bitten but honorable traders who revere unselfish magics, but revile necromancy and artifice.

Tuamina: The land of shapeshifters and lycanthropes, Tuamina is a province where there may not be a single human to be found.

Umbekti: An arid savannah filled with banyan trees and isolated watering holes, Umbekti is a haven for lions, elephants, hyenas, giraffes, and other more exotic creatures.

Umbese: Home of the Spider-God, Umbese is a realm of unquestionable beauty and deception.

Wiresh: Wiresh is the land of papyrus and monoliths, setting a stark contrast with the rest of Kenabu. Here golems and architecture take the forms of plants or animals, and life is lived on the muddy banks of the many rivers that cut through the desert, in this, the home of the greatest wizards of the world.

People

The humans of Kenabu are prolific and diverse. All have rich brown to black skin, with full lips and broad noses. Their hair is most often tightly curled and black, and worn any number of styles. Aside from these features their body types range from the tall thin plainsmen of Umbekti, to the more compact peoples of Ret, to the stockier M'Gongans. Facial features are varied based on climate and heredity, and certain groups are known to modify their bodies beyond what is possible without magic to adhere to local ideals and esthetics.

The other major races include stonemason dwarves, halflings, elu and thull, as well as wemics, hobgoblins, locathah, and the shapeshifting aranea. To varying degrees by geography, all of these races share a prominent place in Kenabu culture.



Loose flaxen tunics, robes, and breeches are worn in places where people wear any clothes at all. Clothing worn is usually light and loose, and bright colors are favored.

Kenabu has no formal caste system, beyond the separation of the divine royalty and everyone else. Kenabu is a matriarchal gerontocracy; every major government position is held by a mature or elderly person, who is usually female. The common folk are left to become farmers, herders, barbarians, or merchants with no real internal pressure to conform to a particular expected role. Such folk can easily marry into royalty, and there is no stigma among the rulers for doing so, as long as the hopeful royal can prove he is able to handle the legislative responsibilities of the title. Every worker in government is in some way married or born into the royal caste, from the lowliest official to the Queen herself.

Wealth is not particularly respected beyond the good that it does for a community. The old traditions demand that one who comes into fortune enrich his village or neighborhood as much as is comfortable to him, though these close-knit groups would never accept his entire fortune.

Education is of great importance to the average Kenabu citizen, even if it only consists of learning a trade from an elder. The city folk often live a vastly more sophisticated lifestyle, with entertainment, educational, and business opportunities that rival and at times exceed those found in Brendir.

Children run up and down the streets and have run of their villages in rural areas, staying with and being fed by any of their neighbors as they please. As they grow older, they are gradually encouraged to put aside such childish behavior and to act as an adult would, taking care of younger children and making sure they are never without an eye upon them.

To a more personal degree than any other empire, the citizens of Kenabu universally revere the chain of life. Family is of primary importance. Specifically, early childhood and old age are honored in the most prominent positions. The elderly may not be disrespected or refused a reasonable request. The elderly are the only ones allowed to cast votes in order to sway the decision-making processes of the royal class. Children are to be

taught anything they wish to learn, and never condescended to. Women are honored for the ability to bear children, which is seen as a supernatural gift, and most sorcerers from Kenabu are female.

The common folk travel the rivers in papyrus canoes that are buoyant, light, maneuverable, and surprisingly watertight. Additionally, there are domesticated river turtles of immense size with permanent bench-lined decks bolted to their shells, which are handled by halflings or local humans who run livery services for those who can afford it.

Key Locales

Ompat: Once the capitol of Ret, Ompat is a vibrant religious and commercial community. Known for its fine silks and spiritual significance, this city is a juxtaposition of worldly and metaphysical ideals. It is here that pilgrims gather on the two holiest times of the year: Mashak at the beginning of the dry season, and Homem at the end. The homes and buildings here are covered in colored silk shrouds that serve the dual purpose of beautification and mosquito netting.

The Bruised Rivers Region of M'Gongo: Protected by unforgiving mountains on three sides, M'Gongo is an insulated area. The highlands have poor soil for growing much except for coffee and certain roots and legumes. Magic allows those who use or can afford it to grow other crops, such as bananas, grapes, and apples. But the lowlands are fertile because of the Bruised Rivers.

The Bruised Rivers, so called because of the mineral deposits that lend them their rich purple coloration, wind and wend through the valley, eventually spilling into a vast freshwater sea called The Amethyst. This sea slowly pours into the roiling River of Milk which deposits silt for 150 miles before it becomes crystal clear, just before it spills over the spectacular Cogo falls to continue into Wiresh where its power is finally matched by the heat of the desert.

The M'Gongans are an intensely spiritual group. Faith is more important than logic to them. Many great religious artifacts are secreted away in the temples and shrines found all across this land. No self-respecting shrine is without one. But there are also many false artifacts. These are often duplicates of real artifacts, allegedly placed to discourage would-be thieves. Some of the more cynical foreign visitors to M'Gongo believe that they are used to command power over the masses, and to earn ill-gotten respect for a community. Still, even these "fakes" often have unexpected levels of power, and all have at least minor magical properties.

The Plains of the Bellow: Deep under the plains of southern Umbekti, an ancient creature has begun to awaken. So far only its groans can be heard, but these are enough to shake the foundations of buildings and knock men and cattle to the ground. Locals believe it's an ancient deity trapped in his avatar for millennia, who has only now begun to get restless. Outsiders believe that it is some ancient beast from before the dawn of the elves, with an incredibly long life cycle, gestating in a cocoon that was buried by the passing of the ages.

Quetapan

Auran/Frigid: 3
Vegetative/Ordered: 1

Capital

Teolps

Description

The tropical latitude of this Empire keeps even the highest peaks warm and moist, even if the air is thin. The lowlands and valleys are astoundingly fertile, and there is only one large mass of desert in the center of the northern continent.

This largely human empire spans an entire lush continent. The most populous lands are on the tropical southern half, filled with jungles, rivers, and mountains. This southern half, called Chotok, ranges from subtropical to temperate, with most land mass falling in the temperate zones. Relatively few settlements are necessary in the north for mining, farming or defense, so these regions are mostly populated by hunter-gatherers.

The Quetapanii are a very passionate and spiritual people, and their great cities are usually laid out in mystic astrological patterns. Despite being isolated from the rest of the world for much of its history, this empire is now as sophisticated and advanced as any of the others. Particularly in the capitol region, a traveler is often struck by the colors, sights, sounds, and constant activity. Night doesn't even slow them down, and every evening seems like a festival to the newcomer.

Provinces

Acpotec: Densely forested with gargantuan trees, this primeval province is home to lizardfolk and druidic tribes of sophisticated nomads.

Chotok: The cooler, sparsely populated southern continent of the Quetapan Empire, where nations of tribal humans, thull, clay dwarves and other humanoids exist in relative peace, bison roam the plains, and eagles soar the skies.

Kukixtlan: A realm of red deserts, windswept canyons, and vast mesas, with ancient temples wreathed in oases, Kukixtlan is a land with a bloody heritage.

Latoma: A green land of mist and wonder, spanning six mountain ranges and home to astrologer-priests who rule the entire Empire.

Pansal: A land besieged by giants and the servants of the ancient blood god Atchetak, this realm is all but lost.

Qaya: Undead and demons have begun to take this once lush land, altering the landscape with the foul signatures that they attract.

Tapoetl: A coastal paradise of reefs, beaches, and offshore islands, this province sees the most foreign trade and visitation.

People

The peoples of Quetapan are diverse, but are reddish brown in skin color, and have dark hair. Their heights and

builds are varied, as are their clothing. In the northern continent, the culture is slightly more homogenous, as are the clothing styles. Stiff fabrics made from llama wool and cotton are favored, covering only the torso and legs. This clothing is colorful and cleanly tailored. Both men and women wear breeches, but over that the clothing is more varied. Men often wear hooded tunics or parkas, while women wear broadly flared skirts that maintain their shape with the help of heavy starching. Cloaks are seeing rising use as trade with Brendir increases and the culture bleeds over.

There are several strong parallels between Quetapan and Brendir, which have helped to build their strong alliance. Both cultures have a strong sense of duty, a respect for social order, and a belief in destiny. Even in their differences lie parallels. Instead of bath houses, the Quetapanii use steam rooms to cleanse and relax. They have no indigenous swords, favoring steel batons with bladelike spikes along two sides. This weapon has more in common with a mace or an axe than a sword, but its role is the same.

For leisure, the Quetapanii enjoy puzzles, pipe and drum music, and morality plays. Many also pursue education at any of the ubiquitous Latoman universities long into their lives.

In the distant past, many of the cultures that became Quetapan practiced human sacrifice. Even then, this was looked upon with fear and certain level of outrage, but it was believed necessary because it was what the gods demanded. The good of the many outweighed the good of the few. With the formation of Quetapan, and the arrival of the usurper gods giving the populace gentler options for worship, the elder gods of Quetapan were forced to lessen their expectations in order to keep their flocks.

Quetapanii architecture is the subject of study the world over. At first glance it can seem austere, but a closer look shows the whimsy and pleasure of the building process. Quetapan buildings are not usually adorned with gaudy carvings or extraneous detail. Like the people themselves, the complexity is hidden deeper for those who would find it.

Temples and other important buildings are constructed of well-worked blocks, carved with grooves that are filled with molten metal to lock them into place. Less important architecture uses no mortar, instead relying on the diligent grinding and shaping of jigsaw-puzzle shaped stone blocks to make a structure sound. Each block is perfectly fitted to those it will rest upon and to those that will rest upon it. No space whatsoever is left between the often strangely-shaped blocks. Indeed, this building method creates structures that are sturdier than all but stonemason masonry. Colored blocks are sometimes interspersed with white, as long as they don't diminish functionality. Trapezoidal windows and doors lend arch-like stability without compromising the geometric beauty of the building as a whole. Doors and windows are split vertically into two halves, to allow for more convenient opening.

All of these buildings have some degree of an inward slope to their walls, which are vertical on the inner side, to best withstand the frequent earthquakes of the Empire. Most structures have arched roofs of stone or thatch that is laid between steep gable walls over a system of wooden rafters and purlins. This

The Latoma

The Latoma are the primary influence on the empire's current culture, as the peoples that unified the empire. They are master astronomers, and their understanding of the art serves as a model for the rest of Quetapanii magic. They build great temple-observatories high in the mountains.

The Latoma practice ancestor worship, mummifying all of their dead, and living in a strange harmony with them. For 6 generations, an inanimate mummy is kept in a chamber with other deceased family members, treated as a living member of a family. This ancestor is brought regular tributes of food and drink, and paraded about on special occasions high upon a throne, carried by the eldest able-bodied members of a family. In times of crisis, a mummy will be consulted via *Speak with Dead* spells, with the exception that the soul may be present, and if so can remember being questioned in the past. The soul is also very up to date on current events within the family, and may be questioned on anything within its purview. One year after the birth of the first member of the seventh generation, a festival is thrown in honor of the deceased, and he is urged to move on with promises of the glories and pleasures that await him on the other side. Usually, the spirit of the deceased has chosen to move on well before this ceremony, and is usually amiable if it hasn't, but on occasion, the spirit may become enraged at the family's attempt to coerce it to leave, animating as a mummy with normal stats, fueled by newfound hatred.

Sapa and Coya

These titles mean "Emperor" and "Empress" respectively, and are only truly relevant in Kukixtlan. For the rest of the empire, the positions are symbolic at best, a compromise that was made when the Kukixt were defeated. Sapa and Coya are invariably half-siblings who are born into the roles. The titles have been diminished to "King" and "Queen" with region's inclusion into the larger Quetapanii Union. Though they can each have concubines or additional spouses, only a son born from their union can become a future Sapa. All major decisions such as permits for major new construction or whether to support Quetapanii war or diplomacy are ceremonially cleared by the emperor. Even so, the Sapa has no real power. Years of inbreeding have left the emperors mad, dull, or both. Latoma, the seat of the empire, is growing impatient with the current Sapa – Oto Componti – who seems to believe himself the ruler of the entire empire.

Each Sapa rules for life, and builds a new palace for the duration of his reign. Old palaces are turned over to the local government to become civic buildings, with the Sapa's former quarters being turned into his open air tomb.

building strategy has been adopted by other regions that have high tectonic activity, such as certain areas of Kharkon. Stairways, walkways and bridges are unconventional, befitting the close-packed mazelike streets of a typical city in this place.

The Quetapanii share the Brendirian love and fascination with water. Flowing water is made to traverse mazelike channels as it travels from fountain to fountain down a mountainside. Since most towns and cities are located upon high mountains where water sources can be rare, irrigation has been raised to an art form. Terraces are cut into the mountainside, and water sources are rechanneled to gently cascade down the mountains, watering crops before reaching a valley's irrigated fields, where most of the farming is done.

The people place no intrinsic value upon precious metals and materials, and are more concerned with what these materials can be made into. Quetapanii trade is largely done by air. They use colorful, parrot-like rocs that have been domesticated for this purpose, and single-passenger gliders that sweep through the skies. Staples include beans, corn, squash, and legumes of every variety. In the cities, llamas and donkeys pull carts.

Quetapan's government is a theocracy. Astronomer-priests hold all major positions, and the patriarch of the order is the de facto ruler of Quetapan. Minor cults are allowed to exist, as long as they accept the sovereignty of the state religion. Each region has an order of priests that rules, each order heading a unique denomination of the church. See Chapter VI: Faith and Worship for a description of the Quetapanii pantheon.

Law is kept by bureaucrat-priests called apus. Each apu heads a department of the local government; there is an apu of war, worship, agriculture, justice, education, taxation, and trade. There are no jails here, and crime is dealt with in a quick and efficient fashion. Theft is unthinkable; it is punished severely when it occurs. Like murder, it can earn the death penalty, whereby the criminal is urged to take his own life or is thrown off of a high cliff. Other punishments are equally severe. For violent offenses, a criminal may be hobbled or blinded, to spend his life as a beggar filling the empire's coffers while living as a ward of the state, which tends to his most basic needs. If, after a time, the criminal has shown appropriate remorse (self-pity is not enough) he may be granted reprieve by the apu of justice and magically healed of his ailment.

The Empire has no enemies left unconquered, but as always, Thraxis provides. Giants of every description have been building in numbers under the leadership of an unknown force, and Hrum Vaat has begun to expand her colonies by breeding particularly bold aberrations, many of which are unafraid to walk in daylight.

Key Locales:

Petsapa, The Climbing City: The Beryl river has carved a deep path for itself through the Ugoi desert, called Petsapa Canyon in Kukixtlan. The Kukixt have long used this waterway to transit the desert and to bring goods to and from Latoma. Petsapa is a way station and egress point for trade. The entire city is built vertically, staggered along the eastern wall of Pet-

sapa Canyon with thin roads allowing goods to be brought between the ships below and the desert above. Petsapa sprawls for 5 miles along the canyon wall, and one mile into the desert above.

Cacti, yucca and other hardy plants thrive here, as well as many flowering plants that lie dormant until the rainy season, when the deserts bloom brighter than any rain forest. Scorpions, small mammals and lizards are the primary inhabitants of the lands beyond the city.

Hatzektuk's Reef: The warm, coastal region of Tapoetl is a paradise of shallow green lagoons, sandy beaches, and vibrant jungles. Only such a place could spawn such a beauty as Hatzektuk's Reef. This reef extends five miles outward from the shore in southern Tapoetl and is the home of thousands of species, including a strange but captivating hybrid of chameleon lizard-birds. Pirates and treasures lie hidden on the many rocky islands that dot the reef, and the merfolk have their greatest city here.

Basin of the First Men: In certain Quetapan myths, the story is told that the creation of mankind was attempted and failed at many times. Though this does not match the present knowledge of history, it is a persistent and compelling legend. The legend is bolstered by the existence of a remote dry lake bed in central Acpotec, where these early men are said to live. In this forested depression is a mute race of beings composed of wood. Though immortal, they are rotting away, and many have lost limbs, which they replace with inert branches or logs. Many of these beings' heads have been replaced by gourds. Each walks with a jerky rhythm, like certain undead, in perpetuity. Many Brendirians believe them to be an army of ancient golems, forgotten by their masters. These beings seem to have little intelligence, but it is believed that they are guarding something. They have the outer vestiges of a society, wearing clothing that is never tended to, building homes that are never occupied, raising idols that are never worshiped, and farming plots that are never harvested. The basin is considered haunted, and no Quetapanii dares benefit from the useless labor of the First Men.

Xiangur

Necrotic/Ignan: 2
Aquan/Benevolent: 1

Capital

Tsin Tr

Description

Far in the northeast of this empire is the Tang Ruel range, which contains the highest, coldest peaks in the world. The greatest mountain of the range, Mount Fing, or Heaven's Path, is over 10 miles above sea level at its summit, with air so thin that none who require the stuff can survive there. At that height, when Arril is directly overhead, a gentle upward tug or lightness can be felt. Beyond the Tang Ruel, the continent drops starkly to the turbulent sea, all but eliminating sea travel to the



northeast. As one travels south or southwest, the mountains give way to a vast and sporadically forested plateau, called the Plateau of Shai. Beyond this, the terrain approaches sea level, giving way to denser, river-scarred jungles filled with threat and disease.

Jungle is by far the most common type of terrain in Xiangur, though the Empire is crossed with footpaths and paved roads. Reptiles and vermin of every kind love these warm, wet, lands, and exotic birds, primates and legless dragons dwell everywhere. There are few large mammals in the Empire, except for nimble species of deer, musk oxen, tiny elephants, apes, raccoons, and pandas in the mountains.

Xiangur has a peculiar undead "ecology" as well. Because of the nature of Xiangurese faith, the dead rarely leave the Empire to seek their final reward. Most are reincarnated, but some linger for centuries. At any time, such an ancient soul may reinhabit its corpse, to seek vengeance or to right a perceived wrong.

Provinces

Atsu Liat: Called the land of a billion faces for the peculiar architectural style that uses them as its primary motif, Atsu Liat is haunted by the ghosts of all of its ancient kings and queens.

Dansai: Xiangur's formidable navy is based in Dansai, home of the greatest sailors and most peculiar martial arts in the world.

Ikobe: A mountainous province of tamed warlords and genteel aristocrats, Ikobe is the center of magical and philosophical thought.

Jo: A realm of mountains and volcanoes, Jo is the roof of the world, and home to the most powerful orders of monks.

Keji: The vast, deforested wastes of Keji are the training grounds for the great cavalry, who fight undead armies of bar-

barians, perpetually raised to hone the skills of the military.

Leu: The citizens of Leu enjoy great peace among the gently rolling hills and farmlands of this province.

Men-Geng: Renowned for its artificers, Men-Geng is perhaps the most technologically advanced area of the world, with black powder and other alchemical and technical miracles capturing the world's imagination.

Nepri: An entire province with a total Creative signature, Nepri is a mecca for spiritual seekers, and is rumored to be the birthplace of all that is.

Oksua: Ruled by ogre magi, hags, and other malformed humanoids, this province is surprisingly civil, and many find a pleasurable life here, growing mushrooms and devouring their dead.

Patungva: Marshes and hellish conditions make Patungva all but uninhabitable for civilized life, but that doesn't keep the forces of Hrum Vaat from thriving here.

Ruel: A misty land of clouds and celestial dragons, Ruel is a realm of working planar portals, where anyone can find a greater destiny than they ever imagined.

Shetuo: In Shetuo, men do battle with giant monsters upon the backs of antediluvian insects across a hive-strewn landscape.

Shoto: Frigid and nearly barren, Shoto is the Land of Exiles; a place of devils and, rumor has it, a spectacularly lush valley with the power to grant immortality.

Trinang: With its egg-shaped domes and temples that each houses a dragon, Trinang is the province of cruelty and splendor, where evil overlords are allowed to flourish, for the rich spices and intoxicants they control.

Tsin Tr: Vine-choked jungle and reptile-infested rivers surround sparkling and ornate cities of exquisite grandeur in this capital province.

Wan: The center of the Empire, Wan is also a nexus of planar warfare, where mortals do not know the full extent of the wars they are born into.

People

The Xiangurese are a golden brown-skinned people, with epicanthic folds near the outer corners of their eyes, and black, red, or blond hair that is invariably straight. Eyes are usually dark brown but may be green, yellow, or violet. Xiangurese rarely grow facial hair. Xiangurese fashion is considered very busy to outsiders, with ornate hairstyles and headdresses for the wealthy and well crafted fabrics bearing designs or writing. Nonhuman citizens include reptilians, aberrations, humanoid insects, planetouched and several unique varieties of shapeshifting animal fey. Other races exist to lesser degrees, most significantly clay dwarves.

This successful agrarian society has a fine command of both magic and water management. During the rainy season, extra water is directed away from crops and homes into vast reservoirs by stone gutters set up for this purpose. Overflow fills cisterns which are removed from their holdings and used to water crops during the dry season.

The long and great history of Xiangur is marked by strong

personalities and powerful egos. Its emperors and generals have sought to gain respect and honor by outdoing each other in their accomplishments. Stunning monuments are placed in the most inaccessible locations, and each emperor tries to increase the magnificence of the public works begun by his predecessors.

The architecture is grand and broad. Jungles are cleared away, and the earth is flattened and paved everywhere. Like Brendir, these cities are planned, but they are built in their entirety. When population grows too large, a new city is built to hold the overflow. Buildings are majestic – broad, with organically shaped towers, and complex fractal symmetry in their design. Artificial rivers or ponds in circular or crossing patterns reflect the grandeur of the cities. Most homes are built on stone foundations, or stacked into honeycomb recesses in predestinated larger stone structures, with teakwood walls and richly colored tiled roofs. Monuments and civic buildings are built of sandstone, laterite, and fired bricks.

Death holds a uniquely prominent position in the minds of the Xiangurese. It is not uncommon for human body parts to be sold openly in the market places. This is not evil behavior per se, since the Xiangurese think the body is a useless vessel when the soul is gone. White, the color of bleached bone and bloated, water-soaked flesh, is the color of death in Xiangur. Within the empire there are those who find necromancy foul, mostly in newly acquired provinces, but these are the minority. The empire is more likely to raise undead laborers to guard their cities, to carry goods from town to town, and to tend their crops than to create golems for the same purpose. This obsession with all things necromantic has stained the empire's reputation with Brendir, but there is much trade with relatively nearby Quetapan.

The Empire is ruled from Tsin Tr, by a necromancer king who rules under the title of Phejung, or "god upon the mountain." He lives at the top of the central tower of the temple of The Tupot, or "Place of his Mercy." After a century or two, the Phejung vacates the throne, retiring to explore some secret of the office, and a new ruler takes over. The bone-adorned palace is covered in nodes resembling the buds of lotus flowers, symbolizing the potential for rebirth that death holds.

Though undead are fairly common in these lands, resurrection is just as difficult, and the restored is considered undead by those he meets, with differing reactions, depending on the area. All resurrected Xiangurese characters take on a pale, necrotic visage, and may have other signs that they are unnatural. Xiangurese undead are not necessarily evil, and intelligent ones keep the alignments they had in life. In most places, intelligent undead are allowed to live among their relatives, or to continue the businesses they held in life, even keeping their spouses. In others, an undead creature may find himself a pariah, or worse, a criminal.

Key Locales

Wueng, The City of Dementia: Hidden in mists of the Seling Falls at the southern foot of the Weung Mountains is a forbidden place. The City of Dementia is a bustling city, driven

mad by the bureaucracy of an ancient war. This is where the worst prisoners of the Chiun War were processed along with displaced civilians. It is a place of suffering, and few who enter ever leave. Roads to and from the city are barricaded, and guards are posted to warn would-be visitors and fight off attempted escapes, but somehow the city endures. With no known means of commerce, the city should have disappeared long ago.

Deranged/Dynamic: 5
Ordered/Benevolent: 5

Few have escaped, and they speak of bedlam within the bamboo and rice paper walls of this city. Despite this, Wueng isn't in a state of anarchy, but something far more terrifying. The streets and buildings are in good repair, and people seem to be going about their daily business. The nature of this business is where the insanity hides. The mad order of minds pushed too far holds sway here. There are no farmers or producers of any kind, only bureaucrats and inmates, all working against one another towards their mad goals. One might see groups of inmates dumping poison into the water supply, while others nearby draw drinking water for those same inmates. On a random day, at a random time, the inmates and bureaucrats might doff their clothes and exchange them. They might change roles in this case; they might not.

The laws are tangled and contradictory here. Every crime is a capital offense, and forms of execution are often bizarre. One example is the hapless soul who was sentenced to "death by erosion," and placed under a trickle of water, to sit until he died. Every day he was brought food and water, which he ate and drank, while weeping. He was never chained, and he never attempted to escape. No one rebels against the rules of this mad game, and no one makes overt attempts to take over – that is the power of the insanity.

Characters and visitors to this place must make Will saves every morning (DC 30) or become victims of "Wueng madness" until such time as they leave. Affected characters fall into line, becoming either bureaucrats or inmates. They can not be reasoned with, but the effect can be dispelled as any compulsion effect. It is important to note that the guards are actually located within the perimeter of Wueng and are affected by the madness as well, though it is not readily apparent from their demeanors. Anyone wanting to leave must get one mile past these guards, who will pursue them. Also note that the city is called Wueng, and it is located at the foot of the Weung Mountains, and it is a crime within the city to confuse the two.

The City on the Bridge: Of world renown, Jin, The City on the Bridge, is a spectacle of Xianguresse power. It was built to substantiate the boasts of a clay dwarven architect named Ren Po, who claimed that he could build an unbreakable bridge. Loas Tou, the child prince of Wan, told him that he must build such a bridge, or forfeit his life. Known for his cruelty even at the tender age of 12, the prince was not to be ignored. After 15 years of work, a grand bridge spanned the Tengu River. In its center sat a magnificent temple, in honor of the prince. Ren Po challenged the empire to build a city upon the bridge. They met

his challenge, and the city of Jin thrives to this day, a bustling metropolis filled with towering pagodas, temples, and palaces. Cross-shaped reflecting pools and ornate Tsin Tr architecture have filled in all remaining open spaces.

Ynnidon

Fey/Aberrant: 4
Fey/Necrotic: 4

Capital

Eines

Description

Ynnidon is a place of dream and nightmare; it is a realm of dark forests and bright meadows. Every living thing here is touched in some way by fey energies. The land shifts and attacks at the whims of the Empress.

The ancestral home of the elves, the spirit of the land is still wild in Ynnidon. This realm is completely under the control of the fey, and anyone who has traveled these lands would never dispute this fact. The crown elves are responsible for its sparkling architecture, and incredible fey cities like Eines have to be seen to be believed. It has been described by more than one adventurer as a paradise. But can also be a hell to those who anger the Empress.

The humans living in this empire are little more than guests, relying on the capricious hospitality of a land that would rather not have them within its boundaries. There are no human cities, but there are a few dozen small towns, and hundreds of villages scattered around with no real organization.

Ynnidon was founded by the Empress, and is the place where she first arrived more than 800,000 years ago. From here she based her war on Thraxis, and it was here that she was driven back to when the Mother responded to her creation of the fey with the creation of the dwarves. Once her empire spanned the entire world, but when the Mother thrust the mountains of Kharkon up right next to her center of power, the balance was shifted. Over many ages the dwarves beat back the elves all across the world, and when the elves retreated to Ynnidon, the dwarves occupied the adjacent lands to better harry their foes. Over the ages, the Empress has avoided the aggressive moves she made when the elves were unopposed, with the exception of attacking Brendir in 942 when the dwarves agreed that the humans were getting too bold. This war resulted in many lost lives on both sides over the mere 50 years that it lasted, and many elven souls were lost entirely, resulting in the Empress calling for a truce. The wounds have not fully healed, even centuries later.

Ynnidon is not separated into provinces.

People

There is no real organization to the civilization of Ynnidon. The fey act and congregate as described in Chapter II: Characters, and the humans are at their mercy. The most



prominent structures in the Empire are the great cities of the Iyewn, who are the only ones allowed to build them.

Only a human culture that feared and revered the fey could exist in Ynnidon. All across the empire are small villages and towns that exist at the whim of the land and the Empress. Most of these are located scattershot along the Moss Highway, or within 100 miles of the same. The simple mortals of Ynnidon have to be content to farm and hunt, never stepping out of line or asking too much. They are much like the Cullainars in appearance and culture, though there are a great many true-born muryans (the result of human and true elf union) and half-elves among the humans.

Key Locales

Eines, The City of Crystal: Eines is the greatest city of Ynnidon. It is set in a misty valley, sequestered from the rest of the world by high peaks. The Empress spends most of her time here, among the great crystal bridges and towers that sparkle in the faerie lights below the moon. It is an unconventional city, to say the least. There are no roads into Eines, and though nothing is needed, luxury and other nonessential goods are flown in on the backs of fey pegasi, griffons, or dragons. Airships dock at the spires. All buildings are designed to have a minimal impact on the ecosystem on the ground. The entire city is translucent, colored in shifting hues. The raised platforms that the city is built upon have very thin bases that seem as if they should be incapable of holding the broader, pillared structures above.

Fey/Necrotic: 6
Ordered/Aberrant: 6

Most of the activity and daily city business takes place above the canopy of the temperate rain forest. There are long winding

ramps that lead to and from the forest floor, where small villages subsist easily on the benevolence of the fertile valley. Mossstroopers patrol the skywalks, dirigibles dock at the spires, and dragons flit about high above.

Moss Highway: The primary road in Ynnidon is the Moss Highway, which spans the Empire from the east to the western shore. This road is impossible to map, for it moves like a flowing river, keeping its course, but winding and wending imperceptibly.

Fey/Ordered: 6

Whenever a length is not occupied or observed, it may move 1d10 miles away from the nearest mortals, never splitting or disconnecting. It is for this reason that most human settlements in Ynnidon are located along this lush green road. During the day there is no problem, but in these areas, one person is always elected to sleep upon the road at night. Strange tales abound about such hapless folk seeing odd processions of fey, coming back changed or being scared witless and leaving their post. When their fellows awakened, the road was gone, leaving the village cut off from trade routes.

Zeikrus

Fierce/Fey: 4
Primal/Frigid: 3

Capital:

Ozinemderunmh

Description

Zeikrus is the shared empire of the metallic and chromatic dragons. The land ranges from temperate to tropical and back again. The continent is incredibly fertile, since any living thing here has to be fast-growing and hardy to propagate before being eradicated by dragon's breath. The terrain is brutal and unforgiving, marked with volcanoes, craters, and dark merciless forests under chemical skies. Every feature, from the burnt and blasted mountains to the dense, restless forests, is sweeping and immense, as if designed on a draconic scale.

The Empire spans most of its vast continent, from the far north to the far south, roughly one-sixth of the Root of the World. Most predators are reptilian, as are many herbivores, but many mammals have adapted, gaining a much more rapid life cycle and growing fat on the rich plant life of this primarily lush Empire.

Zeikrus has no stable provinces.

People

Zeikrus is always in some degree of civil war, and attempted coups are a matter of course. The metallic dragons currently hold the capitol. Unfortunately, humanoids do dwell here as well, either as fearful citizens under the protection of metallic dragons or as the chattel of chromatic ones. Despite the strife,

Wonders of Morningstar: The Citadels of the Dragons

All across the wilderness of Zeikrus are the citadels of the dragons. These commanding and imposing structures must be strong enough to protect their draconic lords from political enemies while showing off the wealth and power of the owners. While many human structures of imposing stature hold towers or spires, draconic structures are broad as well as tall. They often resemble upright clusters of cylinders, with domed roofs and broad verandas. Across the vast realm of Zeikrus, there are thousands of these palaces.

A single draconic palace may span 10 square miles or more and rise to a height where the air is too thin to breathe. All major structures are made from precious minerals, such as gold, platinum, diamond, or sapphire. Each is more city than home, and some of these have their own weather patterns under their vast domes. Families of dragons will live within these bejeweled fortresses, each taking his own wing, where he can loll around on endless piles of riches, served by an army of slaves who leap at his every command.

there is culture of sorts within this empire, and the architecture is awe-inspiring, if cold and reptilian.

All of the nearly one billion citizens of Zeikrus are slaves or have been in the recent past. Thousands of slaves are needed to meet the requirements of a single dragon. Dwarves are kept to “farm” the Terran regions they promote; giants, humans, thull and others build the cyclopean structures that the dragons use as homes. Quality of life is quite varied. Some slaves are subject to endless hours of thankless toil, poor rations, and nonexistent healthcare, while others are almost landed peasants, who are allowed certain freedoms, as long as their plots and workbenches are productive. Many are able to find a modicum of peace, as they escape the scrutiny of their immortal slave masters by doing the work assigned to them without complaint.

Most slaves are skilled, since the dragons are compelled to hoard fine goods, and a slave capable of creating masterwork items has earned a life insurance policy. Artificers are greatly favored and heavily guarded. Other magic is hoarded by the dragons, kept from the population; non-draconic wizards are but a legend, and sorcerers are hunted mercilessly. Secret churches exist among the slaves, and there is an underground for clerical magic and sequestered magical goods. The slaves also steal small bits of precious materials, and most would be unimaginably wealthy if they were ever to escape. The irony is not lost on them. Even “freed slaves” are put to work for their more benevolent masters, though they receive a sense of security and a much better quality of life than they are used to.

Dragons prefer to delegate most of the tasks that are required, so most citizens serve under lesser overseers of draconic or humanoid races. Sometimes even humans earn the right to lord over their brethren. These are hated, but none dare to fight them, for an evil dragon is not averse to the prospect of slaying his entire stable of slaves and buying more.

Draconic culture is like a grander and more intricate version of human culture. There are traders, diplomats, soldiers, and factions in a society that is all but invisible to the humans for its sheer scale. The frequent wars are the culmination of generations-old grudges that seem senseless to the ill-educated slaves. Perhaps, some philosophers would say, they are senseless, as are all wars.

Key Locales

Gazaegul: Gazaegul is a vast plain of lava, filled with volcanoes and all of the fiery rage of Thraxis.

Ignan/Benevolent: 5

Fierce/Aquan: 5

Profane/Solar: 5

Despite the fire and heat, it is a dark domain, replete with enough danger to spawn a million nightmares. It is the current stronghold of the fire-breathing “red” dragons, and many other evil heat-loving creatures are allowed to dwell here. There is even an Efreet city, where the fallen Djinn cater to the vicious lords of the land, while plotting against them.

Magrozibiga’s Spine: Magrozibiga’s Spine is almost a nation unto itself. It is considered neutral territory for the spiritual significance that this most beautiful land holds to all dragons, good and evil alike. It is a cool, pleasant land, with azure skies and snow-capped peaks. Vegetation is sparse, but rich where it exists, more than meeting the needs of the refugees that live here.

Auran/Fierce: 4

(Pockets of Benevolent/Primal: 6)

Escaped slaves, cities full of dragons that have opted out of the war, and ancient hoards are hidden in the furrowed landscape. The land is filled with sorcerers who learn of this place through whispered legends in the slave warrens. Additionally, the few celestials that exist in the Empire live here.

The civilization is rather lax, an outright rebellion against the strict and violent former lives of many of its citizens. A crime will usually go unpunished, since no one is in charge, and no one is willing to forgo their inner peace to think about such things as justice. This is why the sorcerers of the land refuse to make war on their former masters, though they may be capable of at least expanding their realm if they were to do so.

Chapter VI

he Elder Pantheons

Faith and Worship

This chapter gives insight into the complex religions of Thraxis. Some of the assumptions common to other worlds do not hold true when it comes to the elder pantheons. The heavens, hells, and other nether realms of the respective pantheons are not places that can be sacked and looted like petty dungeons. They are not even planes in the conventional sense, but something more, and something less. Anyone who would “travel” to these realms is entirely at the mercy of the gods.

To understand these pantheons, the uninitiated must be willing to accept a certain level of paradox. Many pantheons claim that their chief deity created the world, or that their chief deity has complete dominion over a certain aspect of reality. To say that they are all wrong, or that these gods are simply different aspects of the same beings, misses the point completely. Religion is not the realm of logic or objective fact on Thraxis, but something more, a higher, more visceral truth than can be understood without faith.

The religious peoples of Thraxis structure their lives around their faiths. Every breath is put into the context of their faith, which is the single most important aspect of their world view. In a very real sense, the elder gods only live within the hearts and minds of their followers, and their realms are collective constructs caught within the mesh of minds that support the religion. To each culture, their own pantheon is the right pantheon, and yet many people accept that the pantheons of other cultures are equally valid within the context of those cultures. Most people see other faiths as neutral to their personal world, unless a threat can be proven. They respect inevitable cultural differences between themselves and those of different faiths, and do not measure others by the yardstick with which they judge themselves. Even so, they generally treat very different religions with a polite indifference, unless they see their power for themselves.

These pantheons have little overlap, and each god is sovereign in accord with his portfolio among his people. In fact, many of the gods of Thraxis know little of their competitors.

There is not some pseudophysical world where all the gods sit around and plot, casting the occasional spell, while trying to gain ever more power.

The Deification Contract

The elder gods could not exist without the consent of the masses that worship them. The faith that sustains them shapes them should they decide to accept it. For example, if a benevolent god gained a reputation for cruelty among a minor cult, and he accepted their worship energies out of desperation, it would affect his nature. He would become darker, and their belief would remake him. Conversely, it is only his deeds that give his people a point of reference to worship him. Not even the gods are infallible, and if one were unable to answer his people's prayers, they would likely interpret this as an intentional act, with appropriate modifications to their belief systems.

Many gods are still very primal. They combine with, devour, and usurp each other, making it dangerous for a cleric to align with a specific deity. If two or more gods are at war, which usually occurs when their people come into conflict, the well-being of each deity depends upon the results of the conflict. If one society subsumed the other, the winning people's deity would absorb aspects of the defeated group's gods. Nothing happens in a vacuum, where the gods are concerned. Those who cast their lot with a given pantheon are compensated, with personal attention in the form of minor signs, and guidance, as the gods have to work harder of late to attract worshippers.

The Nature of Divine Favor

Most clerics follow an entire pantheon, and choose any two domains offered by their gods for their domain spells. Not all gods will offer a favored weapon, since not all deities are martial. A cleric that follows a pantheon may choose any

weapon listed under the description of any of his gods. Similarly, though there may be notes on shrines and temples of specific gods within a pantheon, most temples will be dedicated to the entire pantheon.

The foreign gods and goddesses described below are the ones most likely to be encountered in Brendir. Each empire, including Brendir, has any number of other gods and goddesses, but what follows is an examination of the more prominent ones.

Finally, a note on non-Brendirian gods: As with all other aspects of this book, these are briefly described from a Brendirian perspective, but cannot be fully examined. They represent those gods of foreign culture that are best known to Brendir, and the list is not comprehensive.

The Elder Gods

Brendir: The Gods of Arrilia

The Brendirian gods, like some Kharkonoi deities, are represented as being very much like mortals in their personae. Still, they rarely take on avatars, and have little to do with the physical world. At most, they will manifest as a voice and area-wide effect seen and heard by those who they wish to speak with, but this may change eventually as usurper gods become bolder. It is believed by the simplest worshippers that they dwell on Arril, but this is apocryphal. The gods examined here are just the most prominent of the dozens in the Brendirian pantheon.

Brindius (Brin-dee-us)

Holy Symbol: Two tightly clenched fists, pressed knuckles to knuckles, thumbs toward the viewer.

As the lawful neutral god of war, Brindius is the most prominent deity in the pantheon. He is the eldest brother of the other gods, a patron of male warriors, fathers, and leaders. He single-handedly slew the evil gods worshiped in ancient times by the peoples that became Brendirians, and has helped forge the warlike aspects of the society he conquered. Brindius stands for the survival of the Empire at any cost. His domains are Law, Strength, Protection, and War. His favored weapon is the gladius.

Comisius (Coam-ee-see-us)

Holy Symbol: Engraved finger cymbals.

Comisius is the neutral god of revelry, drink, and pleasure. He is depicted alternately as a corpulent, laughing man or a green satyr with a barrel of wine strapped to his back. His domains are Plant, Healing, and Pleasure. Comisius' temples are often set in orchards, groves, or other places where a satyr might nap. They are usually open to the air during the day, to allow the warmth of the sun to shine down, and the cooling breeze to play upon the cheeks of believers.

Gerelia (Gur-el-ee-uh)

Holy symbol: A sheaf of wheat over a kettle.

Gerelia is the lawful good midwife of the Brendirian pan-

theon. Her primary worshippers are mothers, brides, and matriarchs. She is a protector of children, and a defender of the home. Her clerics are often active in politics for this very reason. Her domains are Law, Healing, and Protection. Gerelia is the patron goddess of children, hearth and home, thus her temples are hostels and sanctuaries for women and children. They are usually located within cities, where they can do the most good.

Ikela (Eye-kay-la)

Holy Symbol: A steel helm, made for a delicate woman's features.

Ikela is the neutral good goddess of war. She is the battle bride of Brindius, who defeated him in battle to acquire the role. Originally a goddess in Triskatariot, she has been abandoned by most of the now peace-loving peoples of that region. She acts as a patron of female warriors and the wives of legionnaires. She stands against undue war, unnecessary cruelty, and "diplomatic blindness" to injustice.

Despite their love for one another, Ikela and Brindius are often in competition, since their ideologies are dramatically different. Her domains are Good, Healing and War. Her favored weapon is the long spear.

Keresia (Kur-ee-see-uh)

Holy Symbol: An 8-faced clock.

The goddess of time, Keresia controls fate. She is bizarre and otherworldly, existing all across time, and knowing all possible futures. She has manifested in the past in Brendir, when the Canticle appeared, causing temporal disturbance and localized reversals. Her only words were, "Trust not fate." Though she did not manifest in an avatar, she is depicted as a beautiful woman of varied age, wearing a combination of the most modern styles of clothing, and the ancient togas of the Empire. Her domains are Luck, Knowledge, Prophecy, and Time.

Lelai (Lay-lie)

Holy Symbol: Chisel, flute, and rose, fanned out.

A goddess of pleasure and beauty, Lelai promotes the arts, music and romantic love. She is called The Poetess, The Muse, and The Dancer. Her followers push to ensure that the arts are funded, that civic buildings never devolve into merely being functional, and that funds are raised to educate promising students of the arts. Her domains are Pleasure, Dreams, and Knowledge. Lelai is worshiped by young lovers, artists, certain artificers, musicians, bards, and entertainers as central to their faith.

Lolot (Low-lot)

Holy Symbol: A stack of coins.

Lolot, the god of merchants, is lawful neutral. He is depicted as youthful, robust, and stylish, an ideal Brendirian, who has prospered on his skill and natural Brendirian wisdom. The ideals he promotes are honesty, fairness, and just trade absent of greed. In myth, his great roc Ultiver carries him around the world to open up new routes for trade. It is held that

Lolot will often trade with those in need, basing his price on what the other party can afford without undue harm. This belief is why his followers see themselves as diplomats. His domains are Commerce, Law, Luck, and Travel.

Nevonius (Ne-voe-nee-us)

Holy Symbol: A gold secant or a cresting wave on a disc.

Nevonius is the chaotic neutral friend and foe of sailors and fishermen; the bane or boon of Brendirian fleets. He is alternately depicted as a nobleman, a grizzled man covered in seaweed, as a great demonic mollusk-kraken, or as various forms of seacoast weather. His multitude of daughters are often worshiped with him, as numerous and as varied as mankind's feelings toward the sea. His domains are Air, Chaos and Water. His favored weapons are the harpoon and net.

Sailors and those who live near the seas are the primary worshippers of Nevonius. They pay homage to him by never wasting their catch, and treating the sea with respect. Nevonius is the patron god of the Dolphin Legions, as well as the navy. The halfling House Ao pays homage to him as their primary deity, and even coastal druids will pay respect to Nevonius at times. His temples are usually open air colonnades, with no roof, where his followers congregate to praise him. A few of his temples are located far inland, in places that have sent many of their youth off to fight at sea.

Terves (Tur-veez)

Holy Symbol: A bow strung with a chain.

Terves is the god of the hunt and the law. Terves is called The Shepherd and The Tracksman. More than a god, Terves is also a favorite of bards, since his mythical exploits provide endless fodder for fireside tales. Of all the gods, Terves is ironically the most individualistic, despite his blessing to those who bring criminals to justice. He is honorable in his hunting, and is said to see it as a game most of the time. His domains are Blood, Law, and Protection. His favored weapon is the long-bow.

Terves is primarily worshiped by woodsmen, warriors, bounty hunters and rangers. Many members of the Inquisition also follow Terves. In the military, The Order of Terves speaks on behalf of those they have captured if they have comported themselves well while on the lam.

The temples and shrines of Terves are usually located in remote places throughout Brendir. They function as way stations for hunters to trade furs or skins, talk shop, or spend a night in safety. They also serve to remind any who come across them that no one can escape the law. They are stark stone fortifications, which can often serve as overnight carceri, or prisons.

Kenabu

There are a multitude of gods worshiped in Kenabu, but several cross many cultural lines within the empire, either as favored beings or enemies of an indigenous culture. They can operate as part of a local pantheon, or as individuals. The

Kenabu worship in a very informal way, around the campfire or otherwise surrounded by nature, except in the cities, where formal temples exist with scheduled worship times. Even there, the most important rites are done in parks or wilderness.

Gombunji (Gom-boon-jee)

Gombunji is a fertility goddess, whose wisdom and magical powers make her much worshiped across the Empire. Her domains are Healing, Knowledge, Pleasure, and Magic.

Igur (Eye-ger)

Igur is The Mantis Prince, a largely benevolent and wise trickster, who never plays a trick the victim should not be able to bear. His domains are Chaos, Law, Luck, and Trickery.

Olo'to (O-low-uh-toe)

The powerful Spider God Olo'to is alternately seen as good or evil, and is the bringer of storms. His domains are Air, Animal, Evil, Good, Magic, and Water.

Onkero (On-kay-row)

Onkero is the elder scribe, and his worship is responsible for the modernization of the empire. His domains are Law, Knowledge, and Magic. His favored weapon is a long, smooth staff.

Shumbakti (Shum-back-tee)

Called "Untarnished Blade" for his signature weapon, Shumbakti is clever, stealthy, and kind. He is depicted as a youth who wanders the land righting wrongs and embarrassing the other gods when they get out of line, with the help of his intelligent animal allies. His domains are Good, Chaos, and Animal. His favored weapon and holy symbol is a long, curved blade that is effectively a scimitar.

Tanuil (Tan-oo-ill)

Tanuil is the goddess of the cycle of life, whose personality is mercurial. Her domains are Death, Destruction, Healing, and Plant. Her favored weapon is the blowgun.

Haseth

The Hasethans have literally thousands of gods. Their worship is heavily documented, but in practice it is very simple. Temples exist, but are not usually places to congregate within. Most ministering is done by traveling mystics or ascetic hermits. Hasethans take their worship very seriously at heart, but are not adamant about adhering to dogma.

Rosan (Ro-zahn)

Rosan is the guardian of gold and light, the Battler-Against-Shadows, and the enemy of demonkind. Her domains are Good, Healing, Knowledge, and Sun. Her favored weapon and holy symbol is the Inerisk.

Sidrahl (Sid-rawl)

The Emerald One, Sidrahl is the god of right action in the face of adversity and reincarnation. His domains are Dream, Law, and Prophecy.

Bengiva (Ben-gee-va)

Bengiva is the Prince of Flowers, a god of dreams and intoxicants who has a weakness for young women. His domains are Dream, Plant and Pleasure. His favored weapon is poison.

Kanarusha (Kah-na-roo-sha)

Kanarusha is the guardian of animals, always surrounded by cattle and elephants. Her domains are Animal, Earth, and Good. Her favored weapon is the siangham.

Mandrahvi (Mahn-draw-vee)

The goddess of artifice and inspiration, Mandrahvi is the brilliant one, possessing five heads, each an expert in 300 separate trades. Her domains are Commerce, Knowledge, and Pleasure. Her favored weapon is the crossbow.

Vhadra (Vah-druh)

The goddess of vengeance and death, Vhadra represents the Hasethan ideal of righteous anger. She is usually sleeping mercifully. Her domains are Death, Destruction, and War. Her favored weapon is the bastard sword, pierced with clattering rings.

Ijamvhul

Ijamvhul recognizes no gods. Philosophically, the “elite” members of this society believe that the gods do not have the de facto right to their power. *What have they done to earn it? If not for an accident of birth, I too would be a god,* says the educated Ijamvian. Even so, there are most certainly Ijamvian clerics independent from one another. These clerics follow the way of Zanoec, or “each man a god.” The metaphysics of this discipline involve creating an astral construct representing one’s self, and thereby worshipping it. It will soon begin to draw divine

energies, in sufficient quantities to allow the Zanoecian priest to cast spells. This construct is not a godling, as described in Chapter VII, since it dissipates upon the death of its creator without others to sustain it. It is for this reason that many Ijamvian clerics seek to set up cults in “unenlightened” areas of the world, hoping to become gods. So far this has not worked to anyone’s admission or knowledge.

The Zanoecian priests are spiritually schizoid. To create a divine astral focus, the would-be priest must sacrifice a single class level in mystic rituals. When he is again ready to advance, he may then choose to advance as a cleric with any two domains, and power over undead in accord with his alignment. The benefit of this ritual is that the cleric need never bow to a god, and anything that he does is by definition permissible, and will never cause him to lose favor. This ritual also guarantees an afterlife to the Zanoecian priest, as he climbs the self-made spiritual ladder to the heaven of his own choosing, deciding between all of the planes that allow beings of his alignment to exist.

Kharkon: The Gejjurik Pantheon

The Gejjurik pantheon arose from the natural desires and drives of the dwarven people. During the first wars with the elves, the dwarves began to develop sentience, and attributed certain traits to the Father, who they called Gejjur. As they worshiped this figure, the aspects they called Gejjur split from the whole, becoming a decidedly dwarven deity. In a sense, Gejjur is the son of the Father. The myths say that he stood three trials in order to deliver his people from the Empress when she captured them. The first trial was the Trial of Fire, the second was the Trial of Steel, and the third was the Trial of Frost. All of these trials did irreparable damage to his flesh, and tempered him, allowing the other gods to split from his body as impurities or metals are separated during smelting.

Dwarven worship is invariably done in the midst of other pursuits, such as mining among the stonemasons, warfare among the flayed dwarves, and festivity among the storm dwarves. Thull are animists, and very tribal in their ceremonies, while Kharkonoi humans prefer formal temples, often atop mountains.

Weapons of Haseth

Simple Weapon	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Crit	Range Inc.	Weight	Type
Blowgun	1 gp	1d2*	1d3*	—	30 ft.	1 lb.	P
Inerisk	5 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	15 ft.	1 lb.	P, S

* Can also deliver poison.

The Inerisk is the holy symbol of the Rosai faith. It is a highly stylized representation of a downward-pointing horizontal crescent moon overlaid on a seven-pointed starburst, flattened on the top, with one longer ray pointing upward. This symbol represents the light that is cast by the divinity, for the benefit of mankind. It is usually made of iron or steel, but gold, jade, or turquoise examples have been found in distant missions. As a weapon, it functions much like a chakra or shuriken when thrown, or as a punch-dagger in close combat. Only metallic ones can be used as weapons.

Andrak (An-drack)

Andrak is The Craftsman, the bringer of peace and prosperity. His domains are Commerce, Earth, Fire, and Magic. His favored weapon is the pick.

Gejjur (Gedje-Ur)

Called "The Wyrmslayer," "The Frost Eater," and "Might," Gejjur is a stern, unforgiving god. He is depicted as an ancient and grizzled dwarf with a disfigured face. His domains are Earth, Law, Knowledge, and Strength. His favored weapon is the hammersword.

Hoene (Hone)

Hoene is the mother, who stands for the preparations for battle. Her domains are Protection, Good, Healing and War. Her favored weapon is the spear.

Kroshletch (Crow-shletch)

Kroshletch is The Veteran, who stands for the wisdom that can be gleaned on the field of battle. His domains are Blood, Knowledge, Time, and War. His favored weapon is the dire flail.

Megural (Me-gyur-al)

Megural is the Axe Bride, a goddess of strength and fidelity. She is a martial deity as are all dwarven gods, but she also stands for the dwarven ideals of loyalty, love and support back at home. Her domains are Law, Pleasure, and Strength. Her favored weapon is the waraxe.

Javrin (Jav-rin) (gnomes)

Javrin is the Lord of Hidden Mysteries, a patron of adventurers. His domains are Knowledge, Luck, and Travel.

Whultok (Hool-tock) (humans and dwarves)

The last of his pantheon, Whultok is the god of storms, an angry but good deity that destroys to create. His domains are

Air, Destruction, Good, and Water. His favored weapon is a stylized spiked chain that abstractly resembles a lightning bolt.

Quetapan

The Latoman cosmos is broken into four realms: the highest, upper (celestial), and lower worlds, and the Earth. The highest is unreachable, and is reserved for the Creator. The upper world is the realm of the rest of the gods, and the place where noble souls find their eternal reward. The lower world is believed to be deep underground, and is a place for tortured souls, and a breeding ground for evil creatures and undead. Hrum Vaat is in fact believed to be the Latoman hell. Worship is formal, led by priests who also lead many aspects of Quetapanii daily life.

Inji (Inn-jee)

Inji is the neutral good Sun Goddess, lord of the pantheon, and keeper of the light that is the sun. Her domains are Air, Strength and Sun. Her favored weapon is a polearm with a sharpened and stylized starburst on its tip, which functions as a halberd.

Blue Mask

The neutral moon god has three forms that exist simultaneously on all three worlds of the Quetapanii cosmogony (celestial, earthly, and nether). His domains are Dream, Prophecy, and Water. His favored weapon is essentially a sickle, with its handle in the center of the blade, which spreads in both directions; it has the same stats, but is an exotic weapon.

River Tree

A gargantuan treant with serpents replacing some of its limbs, from which its voice emanates with the collective will of the Latoman pantheon. Its domains are Plant, Travel, and Water.

Thull Faith

The thull are primarily animists who revere numina and animal spirits, and honor Thraxis as a non-personified entity. Even so, they once followed a god, and still remember him as they remember their dead. He has lost some of his former glory in their memories, becoming more of a cultural hero than a true god as time passes. His name is K'shulle and some elders hold out hope that one day he will return to restore the thull to their former strength.

K'Shulle (Kuh-shool)

K'Shulle is the absentee god of the thull. It is unknown whether he is dead or has simply moved on to greener pastures, but he has not spoken to his people in 3,000 years. The thull are extremely traditionalist, however, and continue to worship their creator. It seems strange to those who have studied the matter that the continued worship of the thull has not resurrected the god. He grants no spells.

In his day, K'Shulle was a benevolent father to all thull, and to any primitive humans who needed loving guidance. He was represented as an elder thull or human, with a sad glint in his smiling brown eyes. His symbol and altar is a short but stout wooden log with the bark shaved off.

Cochamakama (Coe-cha-ma-kahm-a)

The creator god of the Loma pantheon, Cochamakama has but a small role in the daily worship of these peoples. Nonetheless, it is believed that the most valuable souls join him to help him run the universe. He grants no domains, but has power over all of them.

Macheko (Match-ay-koe)

The lawful good buyer of noble souls, Macheko is The Merchant, the Lord of Coins, and Cochamakama's Face. Macheko's Domains are Good, Knowledge, Law, and Commerce.

Jaokanama (Jay-o-kan-am-a)

The chaotic evil buyer of ignoble souls and the ruler of the underworld, Jaokanama is the child-faced lord of death. His domains are Chaos, Death, Evil, and Trickery.

Atchetak (Atch-uh-tack)

Atchetak is a chaotic neutral blood god most often portrayed as a wild and battle-scarred warrior, accompanied by scantily clad maids. Atchetak's domains are Blood, Destruction, Fire, Magic, and War. His favored weapon is the macuahuitl.

Seram-Cor (Sair-am Core)

The cult of the bat god Seram-Cor works to take away the fear that most people instinctively have of darkness. Seram-Cor is associated with the domains of Animals, Dreams, Knowledge and Travel. His favored weapon is the net.

Quibac (Quee-back) and Tolbac (Toll-back)

These sisters are the goddesses of Murder and Thuggery respectively; Quibac is deceptively beautiful with wicked blades under cloaks, while Tolbac is a mosquito-like hag, with inhuman strength, a long proboscis, rending claws and the ability to leap miles at a time. They can merge, becoming a single demon-goddess of violent wrath known as Quibtolbac. Their domains are Death, Destruction, and Trickery. Their favored weapons are daggers and darts respectively; a cleric who follows these goddesses may choose either.

Tobragal (Toe-bra-gahl)

Tobragal is the neutral god of time in the Quetapan pantheon, who resembles a gargantuan toad, the eater of every moment that has passed. His domains are Luck, Prophecy, Time, and Water.

Guvan Hish (Goo-vahn Hish)

The brother of Atchetak, Guvan Hish was abandoned when the Loma conquered the Kukitzlan; he has sided with the usurper gods in a bid for survival. His domains are Blood, Death, and Fire.

Xiangur

Few of the alien Xiangurese deities make an impact on Brendirian culture. Still, there are some who have left their mark. All worship is done in private, even when great numbers congregate in faith. Strong guards are posted, and outsiders are usually turned away, with the exception of Brendirian officials, who are allowed to observe, if only to prove to the Empire that nothing untoward is going on. The gods below represent the most well-known portion of the Xiangurese pantheon.

Tsiokh (See-ok)

Tsiokh is the skull-headed Lord of Life, and god of necromancers. His domains are Death, Healing, and Blood. His favored weapon is the skull-capped mace.

Pejgin (Page-Jin)

Pejgin is the pudgy and playful god of the Xiangurese. His domains are Dream, Luck, Pleasure, and Trickery.

Vingil (Vin-gill)

The serpentine goddess of Xiangur devours everything that is dead, and urges her followers to build cities in her honor. Her domains are Destruction, Law, and Magic. Her favored weapon is the spiked chain.

Intsze (Inn-See)

The goddess of sages and constellations, Intsze is an inhuman force favoring the night who has the capability to incite great evil when angry. Her domains are Chaos, Evil, Law, and Knowledge.

Ynnidon

The Empress

The Empress is the living goddess of the elves. She offers no domains, not wishing to dilute her power base.

Zeikrus

If Zeikrus has any indigenous gods, Brendir doesn't know about them yet. In a very real sense, every dragon is a god in this empire.

New Cleric Domains

Blood

Deities: Atchetak, Guvan Hish, Terves, Kroshletch

Granted Power: Once per day, you may deliver a blood-boiling touch attack that does 1d4 + your level in damage to any creature with some form of blood. Unless specifically mentioned in the creature's description, the only creatures without blood for the purposes of this effect are constructs and undead.

Blood Domain Spells

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | <i>Deathwatch</i> | 6 | <i>Harm</i> |
| 2 | <i>Delay poison</i> | 7 | <i>Regenerate</i> |
| 3 | <i>Contagion</i> | 8 | <i>Clone</i> |
| 4 | <i>Neutralize poison</i> | 9 | <i>Implosion</i> |
| 5 | <i>Waves of fatigue</i> | | |

Commerce

Deities: Macheko, Lolot, Andrak, Mandravhi

Granted Power: You gain a +4 bonus to Appraise checks.

Commerce Domain Spells

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Identify</i> | 6 | <i>Symbol of persuasion</i> |
| 2 | <i>Augury</i> | 7 | <i>Refuge</i> |
| 3 | <i>Glyph of warding</i> | 8 | <i>Discern location</i> |
| 4 | <i>Sending</i> | 9 | <i>Demand</i> |
| 5 | <i>Raise dead</i> | | |

Dream

Deities: Seram-Cor, Lelai, Sidrahl, Bengiva, Blue Mask, Pejjin

Granted Power: By sleeping within 15 feet of another person or entering the astral plane by some other method, you may share their dreams. You may choose to allow the subject to be aware of your presence, or not to be. This power allows two way communication if desired, even if the subject is unconscious because of damage or magical effects. A Will save negates (DC 10, harmless). If you are discovered in the dream of an unwilling target, and the target makes his Will save, you take 1d4 damage and you both wake up immediately.

Dream Domain Spells

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Sleep</i> | 6 | <i>Programmed image</i> |
| 2 | <i>Gentle repose</i> | 7 | <i>Greater scrying</i> |
| 3 | <i>Owl's wisdom</i> | 8 | <i>Symbol of insanity</i> |
| 4 | <i>Scrying</i> | 9 | <i>Astral projection</i> |
| 5 | <i>Commune</i> | | |

Pleasure

Deities: Comisius, Lelai, Gombunji, Bengiva, Mandravhi, Megural, Pejjin

Granted Powers: Once per day, you can create small items and baubles such as food or wine worth no more than 5 gp. You may not create weapons or items to do harm.

Pleasure Domain Spells

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Sanctuary</i> | 6 | <i>Heroes' feast</i> |
| 2 | <i>Calm emotions</i> | 7 | <i>Limited wish</i> |
| 3 | <i>Good hope</i> | 8 | <i>Charm monster, mass</i> |
| 4 | <i>Freedom of movement</i> | 9 | <i>Miracle</i> |
| 5 | <i>Atonement</i> | | |

Prophecy

Deities: Keresia, Sidrahl, Blue Mask, Tobragal

Granted Power: You gain a +2 insight bonus to all initiative rolls.

Prophecy Domain Spells

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | <i>True strike</i> | 6 | <i>Legend lore</i> |
| 2 | <i>Augury</i> | 7 | <i>Greater scrying</i> |
| 3 | <i>Discern lies</i> | 8 | <i>Moment of prescience</i> |
| 4 | <i>Divination</i> | 9 | <i>Foresight</i> |
| 5 | <i>Contact other plane</i> | | |

Time

Deities: Keresia, Kroshletch, Tobragal

Granted Power: At first level, choose any spell you can cast. This spell's duration is doubled whenever you cast it. Every time you gain a level, you may opt to change this spell to another. This ability may not be applied to spells with a duration of instantaneous or permanent.

Time Domain Spells

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Expeditious retreat</i> | 6 | <i>Contingency</i> |
| 2 | <i>Restoral, lesser</i> | 7 | <i>Regenerate</i> |
| 3 | <i>Haste</i> | 8 | <i>Temporal stasis</i> |
| 4 | <i>Modify memory</i> | 9 | <i>Time stop</i> |
| 5 | <i>Death ward</i> | | |

Chapter VII

he Canticle

Adventures

“We pulled ourselves from the muck, only to be drawn back to drown in it? Some say that is the way of the world – all things must end, even Brendir. I will not accept that. We must take our stand here! We must tell the agents of the Canticle that we will not pass into darkness so easily. They shall not take that which we have conquered by the sweat of our brows, by the spilling of OUR BLOOD! Call it hubris, or love for mankind, but do NOT stand in my way!”

– Senator Haegil

“The hopeless battle is the only one worth fighting.”

– Laurellius

A malevolent Prophecy called the Canticle of the Morning Star has begun to uncoil, its foul tendrils insinuating themselves into every aspect of life in Morningstar. It speaks of the destruction of the world. The Canticle is a thing with a will of its own, and each time it is thwarted, it adapts. Verses restructure themselves in the unholy texts, and a new route to destruction is plotted. It is not entirely certain whether the verses merely foretell doom and gloom, or somehow seek to bring it about.

The Canticle has been divided into two parts by scholars, the Greater and Lesser Canticle. The Greater Canticle consists of those verses that speak of trends and large scale changes that no one person or event could prevent, but if defeated, would greatly weaken the Canticle. The Lesser Canticle speaks of specific figures and seemingly isolated events that can be thwarted with enough effort.

The Lesser Canticle provides fodder for one-shot adventures, and the Greater Canticle provides goals that can unify a campaign. Both the lesser and greater Canticle are interspersed with one another, and the separation is not fostered by the Prophecy itself. It is entirely possible that scholars have miscategorized one or more verses, and even greater threats lie hidden, working silently.

It is important for the GM to note that the threats outlined in the Canticle are of primarily literary importance. The goal is to set a tone, more than to have total chaos break out. The Canticle makes it obvious that something terrible has begun.

The Lesser Canticle is best left to individual campaigns or published adventures because of its more mutable nature. Following are some of the sweeping threats outlined in the Greater Canticle.

The Greater Canticle

REBELLION OF THE SISTERS

*A weary sister, an angry one
Cast lots upon the vine
One finds favor and wins the tun
the other finds ill sign*

*The angry sister, filled with hate
Lets her rage be known
The vintage spilled beyond the gate
is into darkness thrown*

Thraxis and her massive, terraqueous moon Arril have long existed in a state of perfect balance. Now Arril's orbit is disturbed, causing great tides and earthquakes. Fierce elemental storms sometimes ravage the land as Thraxis attempts to fight the cancer that is springing up within her. The empires are worried that everything they've worked for could be eradicated.

Already, the higher tides have resulted in the annihilation of two great cities, Tarpanesia and Ietelos, as they were washed away by the rising waves. Other cities have adapted to the increased tidal range by magically reinforcing their coastal buildings to withstand daily flooding, and by building incredibly long, raised wooden walkways that become extended piers. In this way, trade goes on, and cities remain viable.

Another hazard of increased tides is the complete submersion of landmasses that were previously livable. At high tide especially, entire oceans which were once separated from one another flow across these lands, creating whirlpools, powerful currents and even oceanic waterfalls in some places. Such is the case with Coral Falls. Many miles off of the coast of Brendir, a wide ridge of mountains that separates the Bay of Brend from the Sea of Deberon at low tide becomes a string of islands at high tide. Salt water spills over the continental ridge between these islands, falling hundreds of feet to flood the bay and outlying plains, approaching dangerously close to the harbors along the shore – a daily tidal wave that is only diminished by the shallowness of the Bay. The outflow drains through the channel between the southernmost islands.

The understanding of this verse comes from the near universal depiction of Arril and Thraxis as sisters, across cultural lines. Most people who have studied the Canticle agree that the “angry sister” is Arril, and the “weary sister” is Thraxis. This is primarily because Thraxis is known to support human life, symbolized by the vine and tun symbolism (wine is a Brendiran symbol for human blood), but if it were discovered that there was such life on Arril, many interpretations of the Prophecy would have to be reconsidered. Some contend that with or without mankind living on Arril, there is still no reason to believe that Arril is the weary sister. Philosophers and wizards who believe Arril may be the “weary sister” contend that the weariness spoken of may refer to an absence or reduction of

magic there. This belief is somewhat bolstered by the fact that as one rises above the surface of Thraxis, magic becomes weaker, even strained. See Chapter III: Magic, for more details on this phenomenon.

CELESTIAL STRIFE

The elder gods war with newer usurper gods, occupying much of their time and resources. Strange cults rise and fall and outsiders meddle in the lives of mortals. Each empire and many regions have long had their own pantheons, appropriate to the cultures they watched over. As Thraxis becomes ever more charged with magic, however, all types of planar beings are flocking to this world, including deities seeking greener pastures. Mortals are achieving godhood. Foreign and sometimes alien gods seek to stake their claims in the hearts and minds of the citizens of the world. New religions are arising, weakening the power base of the incumbent gods. Religious skirmishes are becoming more frequent, and chaos is growing.

The Usurper Gods

*Their brazen idols turn to rust
As sparks fall from the skies
Avatars bleeding in the dust
The old truths turn to lies*

The war between the elder gods and the usurper gods has begun. In the past century and a half, the slow trickle of gods immigrating to Thraxis has increased. At first their presence was borne, but they have begun to threaten the power base of the old gods. Direct confrontation is impossible, because the elder gods are immaterial, while the usurper gods are invariably more centralized in their power.

The so-called usurper gods have flocked to Thraxis from alien realities across the multiverse. Some are comprehensible, coming from continuums similar to this one, but others are inscrutable – unknowable forces representing the perplexing ideals of a higher reality. Though they come here for the same primary reason – to gain ever more power – their secondary goals are their own. They represent all mindsets, desires, and alignments.

They are aware that they are driving out the world's indigenous deities, but the temptation of personal power beyond that which is possible in the realms from which they come supersedes any moral qualms they might have. The easy power that this world offers is too much for even benevolent deities to pass up.

Humanity, more willing to abandon its deities than longer-lived races, is the primary source of worship energies for the usurpers. The usurper gods present a face that can be seen if

not always understood, and are more prone to granting their worshippers a portion of their power. Every usurper god bestows a “usurper gift” upon worshippers in an effort to tempt them into worship. Where once it was extremely rare to find a cleric of an elder god who had actual power granted to them, it is becoming more frequent, as the elder gods realize their disadvantage and worshippers demand shows of their deity’s excellency. The usurper gods have also introduced the idea of monotheism to this world, as each one vies to be worshiped to the exclusion of all others. It is rare, but not unknown, that several usurper gods should join forces and create a new pantheon. These alliances are usually unstable, and often collapse at the first hint of strife.

Here are some of the usurper gods.

Elivinthaj

Elivinthaj is a lawful neutral god(dess?) of magic. S/he is represented as a perfectly spherical, sky-blue body with an androgynous and impassive humanoid face taking up the better part of one half of the form. He has appeared numerous times in the short history of her cult, speaking with a booming asexual voice, commanding her worshippers. His goals are largely unknown, even to her worshippers, but one of them is the promotion of arcane magic. His domains are Protection and Magic.

Worship: Elivinthaj is worshiped by wizards and artificers, and has a loyal cult in Triskatariot. Her temples are usually within libraries, and are very public. Brendir sees little threat in the worship of Elivinthaj, despite the religion’s competition with the Gods of Arrilia.

Usurper Gift: Once per week, a worshipper of Elivinthaj may use a magical item with charges without actually expending a charge.

Yoson

Yoson is a chaotic evil god of war from a dead plane where he succeeded in his goals. He wandered the planes for a while ravaging and pillaging, unconsciously being pulled towards Thraxis. He seeks to stir up war between the empires, and with his current foothold in Brendir, he moves closer to that goal every day. He has only physically appeared once, in a pitched battle between the Derudians and Brendir. Yoson resembles a battle-hardened humanoid creature of a previously unknown type. He stands 16 feet tall with two tails and greasy black hair. His skin is red, his muscles are deeply striated, and his squinting eyes are completely white. It is said that his bride will be arriving shortly, and that she is a worm-like beast even more evil than her mate. His domains are Chaos, Death and War.

Worship: Yoson’s cult is small but powerful, comprised of secret military societies in Brendir. It is rumored that this betrayal soars all the way to the top of the Brendirian military. His temple is the battlefield, his sanctuary the war room, and his sacrament is flesh.

Usurper Gift: Every time a true believer slays an intelli-

Rage Storms

At times, the stresses become too great, and Thraxis reacts with a storm of pure elemental rage that razes the land, but allows for new growth. These storms are comprised of elementals summoned by the World Soul which violently battle one another to mutual annihilation. These elementals are more primal than most commonly summoned elementals and, of course, do not take humanoid form.

It is rare to survive one of these storms, which are a maelstrom of flying blades of ice and sheets of searing flame which are whipped around by tornado-force winds, while intense earthquake-like shock waves travel through the ground and even the air. Lightning, acidic rain, and molten ash rain down, trees are uprooted and scorched, buildings destroyed, and the ground is left a steaming, stinking quagmire.

From a distance, a rage storm is quite a thing to behold. It resembles nothing so much as a combination of the worst mundane storms. Clutching the ground as it roils with fury, expanding and moving at impossible rates, it is a terrible and wondrous sight. Myriad colors flash and shimmer from within, and strange sounds like thunder and even discordant music emanate from the storm.

At the beginning of the rage storm, the area’s spectrum strength slowly decreases in value by one point per minute. When all signatures reach zero, the area’s signature changes to Primal, and the countersignature becomes the strongest previous signature of the area. If there was more than one “strongest” signature, the countersignature is determined at random between those options. Next, the area’s signature strength begins to rise, one strength category per minute, until it reaches 6 or total strength. One minute later, all hell breaks loose.

A rage storm deals 1d8 damage per round of each of the following types: acid, chaotic, cold, electricity, fire, force, and sonic, for a total of 7d8 damage, with a Reflex save (DC 25) for half. Immunities, resistances, and vulnerabilities may also affect the amount of damage taken. Rage storm damage is considered a touch attack. Concentration checks are made with a DC of 15 + spell level due to the violent motion of the earth and air. A rage storm lasts 1d6 hours + 3d10 minutes, and subsides abruptly. After such a storm the area’s previous spectrum is completely eradicated, most likely along with the offending promoters of that particular signature.

gent foe (Int 3 or higher), he heals 1 hp. Hit points cannot be raised above their normal maximum in this way.

The Godlings

Godlings are extremely minor deities, with just enough power to sustain their status. They cannot grant spells, and rarely have more than one element in their portfolio. They remain trapped on Thraxis, unable to leave, having made their stand here. In essence, they are in their avatars full-time. A godling is like an embryonic god: if it can manage to attract enough followers it can ascend to full godhood.

Godlings can be created spontaneously, as a byproduct of the eddies of magic in Morningstar, or from great people living or dead, who are looked upon with awe or fear. Active attempts to achieve this status have been unsuccessful. They can come in any form, from the epic hero loved by all, to the alien force of nature that seeks only to destroy. Godlings usually require aid to perform their miracles, either in the form of strange material requirements or special circumstances, such as a particular alignment of planets.

Kasulga, Lord of Ecstasy

Kasulga is a godling that has tiny cults in Haseth and to a lesser extent Brendir. He is the Wader Through the Dead, the Breaker of Spines, and is worshiped by murderers, evil barbarians and diabolists. His form is that of a malnourished headless statue of bronze with nine clawed hands, bearing a wicked sword in four of them. He does not move in this form, but can observe anything that occurs in front of him.

His priesthood is informal, but there is a core of fanatics that has been promised great power when he becomes a true god. Most of these fanatics are females or males of great apparent youth and beauty, a side effect of their god's evil communion. Their cult is seeking followers in Brendir, under the guise of a cult of peace and personal empowerment. They are having great success, since they offer strange mind-numbing herbs to prospective cultists that leave them open to suggestion. The new members are lulled with peaceful and inspirational dreams, while their bodies are under the sway of Kasulga. They take to the streets, murdering and causing pain. Most who are caught fight to the death. The core members from Haseth are never directly involved in killings.

Cerulean Bloom: This brilliant blue flower is eaten raw as part of Kasulga's communion, the traditional prayer of which speaks of trust and abandoning one's self to the holy lord of ecstasy. Within moments, a feeling of peace and security comes over the imbiber, while Kasulga takes over his body. If the character is evil, he will feel invulnerable, but will be aware of the deeds his body is performing, even able to participate if he acts in accord with the desires of the demonic god within him. If he is neutral or good, he will have dreams of peace and ecstasy, while his body skulks the alleys and dark places, reveling in evil. Either way he feels no pain, and every evil act is punctuated by a wave of pleasure. Every eight hours, the character may attempt a Fort save (DC 10). If successful, Kasulga will bring

his body back to the temple, and place it in a warm bath. He awakens to the smiling faces of Kasulga's cultists. Any wounds he has acquired are explained away as part of the purification process. He is then offered healing draughts bought from other temples. His Charisma is raised by 1d4 points, but Will saves are reduced by this same amount, for two weeks thereafter. Everything seems different to him. He will proudly proclaim his new discovery, and seek another communion as soon as possible. The cultists are only too happy to oblige, after chiding him for caring too much for sensations, and not fully abandoning himself the last time. No special powers are granted while under the sway of Cerulean Bloom, but Kasulga may use any of his host's abilities or spells.

Trodo, The First Eidolon

Trodo is the patron deity of the city of Trodos, the center of his worship. Once a great and powerful idolon, he died in service to his people. It is claimed by his worshippers that he was the first idolon. His deeds have certainly been exaggerated, but that is of little importance to the proud Trodosians.

Centuries of faith first captured his soul from a distant afterlife, and began to weave into him the power of a true deity. His followers have been largely successful, and Trodo is now free from the statue that held his spirit for ages. He is said to be in his ancient and secret island sanctum, building ever more strength, and preparing for his triumphant return. He grants but one domain to followers, Law. Should his colossus ever fall (see Triskatariot in Chapter IV: Brendir), Trodo will be cut off from the source of his power, and will slowly dwindle and fade unto death once more.

RISE OF THE ABOMINATIONS

*She claws upon her breast
wroth with ancient need.
He comes to her in darkness,
And plants his stillborn seed.*

The most accepted interpretation of this verse states that because of the tectonic upheaval caused by Arril's eccentric orbit, aberrations of every kind will be forced to escape to the surface. Already this is happening. Gedge have taken the dwarven seaside city of Hatern, converting it into a port used as a Hrum Vaat trading outpost. Both Kharkonoi and Brendirian military forces have been beaten back when they have attempted to retake the city. The best Brendir has been able to do is to destroy any ships that would come to port there. Even that measure is failing, as enchanted ships slip by the flotilla that holds perpetual vigil outside the harbor, and attacks from under the waves become more frequent as the War for the Sea begins to build.

Aboleths, kraken, sahuagin, and other aquatic enemies of benevolence have begun to make war on those who live in the depths of the oceans. It seems that they have decided that the best way to sweep the surface world is to command the sea, cut-

ting off trade routes, poisoning waters, and making the bounties of the sea inedible and worthless. Hrum Vaat's twisted organic navy has begun to spew forth ever more bizarre horrors to terrorize already beleaguered coastal settlements. Scaled, amphibious monstrosities, ridden by a host of aberrant beings, have begun to crawl ashore near Mechimur and the militia there has been weakened greatly. No one knows why The Mother would create aberrations, but some believe she has gone mad. There is no consensus on who the male figure mentioned in the above passage might be, but one compelling theory is that the Canticle is referring to its maker or even itself.

THE STRANGERS

*The Strangers sail on stillest wind,
And lest their names be known
Their pain is pleasure, their pleasure pain
Their song a silent tone*

The Strangers are predators who prey upon civilization itself. They are powerful and bizarre outsiders of unknowable motives. There can be only speculation on why The Strangers came here, but it is likely they were hired in some fashion. They are a bizarre group, seemingly without structure or even contact with others of their kind, but unified in their desire to bring about the destruction of current civilization. They have no names for themselves, as individuals or as a group; instead they are named by the Canticle or by others for their actions and tendencies. Having come from a much more progressed culture than is native to Thraxis, they wear strange and often ostentatious garb, and possess advanced weaponry and magics.

They are generally vain and duplicitous, and tend toward grace and a refined but ruthless sense of etiquette. Some are actually bound by codes of conduct, but the vast majority are poseurs, who strategically maneuver through society. They can be beautiful, but often resemble some kind of human parody, with exaggerated features that whisper of a child's nightmare. They present themselves as genteel and proper, while reveling

in their own personal debaucheries.

Each Stranger embodies a particular twisted theme. Like a monomaniacal deity, each focuses on promoting his specific variety of madness. They are not necessarily efficient in achieving their goals, for though it seems many have the power to create great change, they rarely use all of it. Whether this is intentional restraint or a limit of their natures is still unknown.

At any time, Strangers walk among mortals, who rarely see them for what they are. They use subterfuge, disguise and their masterful social graces to position themselves where they need to be at a given time.

The Strangers are beyond concepts of law and chaos, but they are evil to the core. While their plans and actions may seem to fall within a specific alignment, such assertions are unreliable, as their next action often directly contradicts their previous one. They are thoroughly paradoxical beings, and though they are evil, they might even show a brief lapse of apparent kindness.

Common Factors

All Strangers have certain things in common with one another.

Brilliant: The Strangers have glimpses of insight and inspiration that only true madness can bring. They are masterful schemers, and often devise traps and games to entertain themselves with while toying with their quarry. They are at times infinitely patient, and at others childishly abrupt.

Unknowable: It may be that all Strangers have identical, godlike abilities, or that they are in fact as "limited" as they seem. They defy definition and quantification of power, and they never have a stable alignment or hit points (except when their artifacts are destroyed). They may be defeated only by outsmarting them, or by destroying their artifacts. Some have conjectured that they represent personifications of the will of the Canticle.

When it is necessary, assume that Strangers have at least the following: all 18s on their attributes, a natural armor bonus of +20 (or higher), infinite hit points, and saves as if 20th level,

Hrum Vaat

Hrum Vaat is the Quetapani Hell, the blight of Brendir, and the enemy of all nations. It is a subterranean group of realms ruled by Lreans, and, to a lesser extent, gedge and other intelligent aberrations. Most citizens of the sunlit empires know little about Hrum Vaat, and rumors run wild. Many of these rumors are true; no crime against life is too foul for Hrum Vaat. They keep humanoids as cattle, for labor and food. They alter creatures to fit their alien needs and ideals, and life is cheap to them. They hate and are disgusted by the denizens of the Nine Empires as much as the Nine Empires hate them. The bloodfed halfings and Ijamvians alone are able to treat with them peacefully, and are feared and distrusted for it.

There doesn't seem to be a single nerve center to the aberrant empire, which is what makes it so difficult to destroy or even attack properly. Hrum Vaat is a series of cave networks spread all over the Root of the World. Many of these colonies are well known, and subject to near constant attack, but others lie hidden, waiting and building in strength. Hrum Vaat is a disease that is slowly devouring Thraxis from the inside.



Rhymer

Rhymer has the bizarre ability to create any effect he wishes, simply by uttering a short rhyme. It has been gleaned that he apparently cannot use the same rhyme twice, or accomplish exactly the same effect in the same way more than once. This power can at least create any effect possible with a *wish*.

Rhymer walks on legs as long as stilts, wandering Brendir and causing inconvenient and often deadly changes as he passes cities and towns. For example, he might change all of a town's chickens into cockatrices, or turn all liquids to glass. Houses can be inverted, wagon wheels turned square, or dogs turned into cats. In short, anything that amuses Rhymer becomes real, and he has a truly sick sense of humor. For some reason, he does very little damage to the province of Homm. Perhaps he likes it just the way it is.

Artifact: Tin whistle. The Rhymer must play a short melody before proclaiming a rhyme. Possible methods of destruction for this item are supernatural rust, or dealing more than 50 points of bludgeoning damage in a single round.

Demesne: The Hall of Bells. The Rhymer rarely rests, but when he does, he dwells in a castle comprised completely of chimes and bells, with walls that rock and chime with the wind. This castle is located beyond the flood plains off the shore of Homm. Invaders should expect to find that even the floors are unstable here, and that a magically created wind makes the terrain even more treacherous.

Located 15 miles out to sea off the coast of Homm, on a cluster of rocky spires out past the low tide line, this strange fortification rings with the blowing winds, audible at distances of 30 miles. At times, a certain pattern of chimes can be heard that compels creatures with 1 HD or less to walk out to sea. Most are swept away by the incoming flood tide, but some survive the trip, becoming grotesques, the servitors of the Rhymer. The Hall of Bells has a spectrum of

Deranged/Ordered: 6

Servants: Rhymer is often accompanied by a troupe of deformed humans and malformed creatures called grotesques. These creatures exist entirely at the whim of Rhymer, and many escape in his wake, terrorizing or annoying local villages. When he tires of a particular grotesque, he may completely annihilate it by a simple act of will. Grotesques have the following abilities, applied as a template: +10 Con, +10 to another random ability (roll 1d6: 1=Str, 2=Dex, 3=Con, 4=Int, 5=Wis, 6=Cha). Each fills a function within the troupe, as strange jesters or performers that are rarely acknowledged by the Rhymer, based on which stat has been enhanced. For example, a Strength-enhanced grotesque will serve as a strongman, an Intelligence-enhanced grotesque will spout useless historical commentary and trivia on the surroundings as the group travels, and a Charisma-enhanced grotesque will likely sing mad ballads of a bawdy or deranged nature.

with the most favorable saving throws (at least +12). Strangers do not use spells, and their powers function perfectly, within their realm of expertise. Only a true *wish* may undo what a Stranger has wrought, and even this will attract their attentions. For GMs who have balance concerns, remember that Strangers have strange personal protocols that disallow them from using their powers to their most devastating effect. They will never kill a party outright, and see competition as a game, setting up challenges as such. They do not cheat, even though they are not truly lawful. Fairly defeated, they are often gracious, even if it means their destruction.

Artifact: Each Stranger has an artifact that binds him to this plane. If this artifact is destroyed, the Stranger will immediately lose all power. Doing so renders them temporarily mortal, after which they may be dispatched as a 1st level commoner, though they will often still have a few tricks left. If they survive the destruction of their artifact, they may recreate it in 1d12 months, returning to full power. No matter what is done to them, Strangers rarely involve themselves in extended campaigns of retribution, at least not overtly. The average hero is simply beneath them.

Demesne: Often tied to their artifact, a Stranger's demesne is its stronghold upon this plane. It possesses special defenses that help to guard its artifact from destruction. A Stranger's demesne invariably holds a strong signature appropriate to the Stranger in question.

Servants: Strangers almost invariably have servants of some kind. These each fulfill the Stranger's goals, and may or may not be under the Stranger's total control.

Specific Strangers include:

Oleander

Oleander is a depraved being with a taste for gardening of the darkest variety. She is rumored to be passing herself off as a lady of the night with a villa near Tilo. Physically, she resembles a shapely and pale-skinned woman, with a heart-shaped face and a sharply pointed chin. Her hair is usually red or black, but often has one or more green streaks in it. She can change her appearance when she changes out of her gown, which she only does when her goals require subterfuge. She gives off a floral scent that changes with her mood. Many would-be victims take her word for it when she tells them she is simply plant-touched. She enjoys using her wiles to inspire jealousy among her suitors before she begins her assault upon the area.

One of her most vicious powers is that she can change any being into a plant creature at will, and can define the degree of change, from changing the target into a shambler, or merely turning their limbs into vines. She keeps many of her victims partially human, so as to extract and refine their blood into fine syrups of many magical or poisonous properties.

Another trick she has used frequently is to cause plant life to rapidly grow *through* an opponent, rooting him to the ground and doing 1d8 damage per round. This is often a playful setup for a foul transformation.

Artifact: Gown of Verdigris. This garment grows into the flesh of Oleander, and winding tendrils can be seen under her skin while she wears it. Whether she is wearing the gown or not, Oleander can create plant creatures to refill the ranks of any that have been slain at a rate of 10 Medium creatures per round, may polymorph any creature into a plant creature of her choosing, may transfer her consciousness into any plant creature she controls, and may fill up to a one mile area with mist that extinguishes all natural fires.

Possible methods of destruction might be to deal more than 300 points of fire damage to the unattended gown, or to apply large quantities of salt to it. Oleander knows when her demesne has been infiltrated, and when her gown is under attack.

Demesne: Varied. Wherever Oleander dwells, ivies creep up the sides of the structure, and plant life flourishes. Her powers quickly crumble any dwelling they dig their roots into. This dwelling will always be guarded by hordes of plant creatures of every description, except that Oleander loathes fungi, and will not permit them to exist near her. Oleander's demesnes have the spectrum

Vegetative/Benevolent: 6

Servants: Oleander's servitors are called florets. They are part plant, part animal, and have varying degrees of mobility. They are created from intelligent creatures with the following template applied:

Type becomes plant. Speed is reduced by 4d10 for Medium creatures or larger, 3d10 for Small or smaller-sized creatures. Natural armor bonus is increased by +5. The creature gains 1d8 vines with which to attack for 1d8 damage, and the Improved

Grab feat. The creature loses 1d4 of its original limbs, and has a 20% chance of lacking a discernible head. Senses remain normal.

Gasp

Gasp is a grossly obese "man" who wanders the least-traveled roads of Brend, masquerading as a motley traveling white-smith, sharpening knives for the plebeians, which then compel their owners to kill. This is not his primary ability, however, merely a hobby from which he gleans the cursed silver for his greatest power. He gains his name from the constant wheezing and strained sucking of air that accompanies every step he makes as he pushes his two-wheeled cart slowly down the road.

His greatest power is the ability to incite men's greed and to use it to create strife. He can grant any wish for material items, for a price. Much like the stream elves, he is obligated to deliver on a pact, but unlike them, his price is never fair. Those who accept his bargain are given a silver coin the size of a small plate that they are unable to rid themselves of without a true wish. This coin allows Gasp to control them at any time, transforming them into demonic and corpulent mockeries of himself while under his sway. They will murder, rob and revel in covert destruction, taking to shadows and evading capture with the help of supernatural strength and speed. When power is relinquished, the bargainer is returned to his normal size and state, though he is filled with a voracious hunger. Over time, he comes to resemble Gasp more and more.

Artifact: Merchant's cart. The merchant's cart allows Gasp to produce any item he desires from within. Similarly all tools and disguises he may need are within. It functions much like a *bag of holding* with compartments holding an infinite number of items. The merchant cart's possible weaknesses include being thrust into an extradimensional space, or somehow putting one within a chamber of the cart. These things would be exceedingly difficult to perform, since Gasp can teleport himself to any other road in the world at will, and he never leaves his cart unattended.

Demesne: Unknown.

Servants: Gasp's servant's are called gorgers and they gain the following abilities while in corpulent form, applied as a template: Size Large (or one size category larger if already Large or bigger), +10 Str, +10 Dex (not modified for size increase), speed x2, damage reduction 5/+5. Space width is increased by +5 feet.

When creating Strangers for your own campaign, look to inspirations such as Tarot, the writings of Lewis Carroll, or any other source with characters that are at once archetypal and darkly sophisticated. They have a style that is at odds with this ancient world, and resemble psychotropic parodies of Victorian archetypes.



The Flesh Smith

"I'm gone a see der flesh smit, der flesh smit, der flesh smit, I'm gone a see der flesh smit for to get me back my leggel!"

– *Kbarkonoi children's chant*

The Flesh Smith is a worker of unholy miracles, and a creator of abominations. One of the more active Strangers, the Flesh Smith creates twiceborn: quasi-undead agents that are a menagerie of composite creatures. It seems he has completed his work in Ijamvhul, and has now taken residence in Prestarre, near the city of Lenar. He is one of the most famous and most influential of the Strangers, but Brendir is largely unaware of his existence on their soil. The Flesh Smith is very active in politics, using his twiceborn to assassinate politicians seemingly at random, and offering select influential people access to his monstrous creations.

The Flesh Smith resembles a handsome young human with long brown hair and shocking blue eyes that are not a naturally occurring hue. He favors red in all of his surroundings, from the robes his clones wear, to the crimson velvet that covers the walls of his living chambers.

Artifact: Mizarah's womb. This artifact appears to be a leather sack that hangs from hooks within the Flesh Smith's subterranean lair, but it is much more than that. It is in fact the mummified corpse of some strange creature, which communicates with the Flesh Smith via one-way telepathy. Crossed with loose stitching, with strange appendages hanging from it, this item suggests that it was constructed from the desiccated vessel of some unknown creature. The artifact opens to an extradi-

mensional space, on the Flesh Smith's command, and stretches to hold organic material up to the size of an elephant. When such material is placed within the womb, a creature of the Flesh Smith's devising is created within one week. This creature may be of any type except Outsider. Additionally, the Flesh Smith may use Mizarah's womb to scry, having Mizarah relay events and their possible outcomes that will occur within the next week and within 100 miles. Methods of destruction of Mizarah's womb may include placing large quantities of pomegranate rind or other midwife's secret herbs within the womb. Similarly, acids introduced into Mizarah's womb may destroy it.

The Flesh Smith does not require Mizarah's womb for all of his creations, and he is also an accomplished artificer, who will often create special limbs for his twiceborn.

Demesne: Crossmark. His demesne is located below a small town called Crossmark, which he has excavated into to a vast system of catacombs resembling a baroque subterranean manse. He is a cordial host, and often invites pursuant adventurers into his lair, tempting them with delectable food and drink. If they partake, he mockingly reveals the nature of the feast – which is never pleasant. He keeps several clones of himself, and may move his consciousness between them at will. Without his will within them, they function as ghouls. Crossmark has a spectrum of

Creative/Primal: 6

Servants: The Flesh Smith's servants are called twiceborn. These quasi-undead agents are his assassins, spies, and hunters. At the moment of death of a chosen target, usually in a remote area near Lenar, one of the Flesh Smith's abominable creatures will be waiting. After the corpse spends a week within Mizarah's womb, a new twiceborn is created, with full memories of his past existence, and retaining free will. Most will serve the Flesh Smith, but some few escape, taking back what's left of their lives. Once created, twiceborn walk the line between living and undead, being completely one nor the other. Twiceborn gain the following abilities applied to the base humanoid creature as a template:

Type becomes undead. Hit dice increase to d12. Twiceborn also gain damage reduction 3/+3 vs. piercing weapons, and 1/+1 vs. slashing weapons. They heal naturally as a living member of their type, but must rest and consume food to do so. This ability allows them to sheath bladed weapons within their own flesh.

Blood Trail: As a full round action, a twiceborn may coat a weapon in its blood. When it strikes, the target becomes marked. From then on, the twiceborn will always know the direction and distance of this target to within 20 feet (Fort negates, DC 18).

Skin Mask: By altering the patterns of his own flesh, a twiceborn may change his appearance as the spell *alter self*, for as long as he likes, with the following limitations: Hair color, eye color, and height remain the same. Apparent weight or mass may change, but actual weight remains the same.

Envelop: When attacked or grappled, twiceborn may cause their skin to wrap around a weapon or limb that has struck

them, with a successful attack using their highest attack bonus. This causes no additional damage. The weapon or limb is stuck fast, and cannot be freed without a successful opposed Strength check against the twiceborn.

The King in Mail

This figure's face is never seen. He is described as perpetually wearing a golden suit of armor engraved with patterns and disks, with his helm's visor resembling a fanged lower jaw. He is a feared psion. He may use any psionic power that he can imagine, but usually stops at excruciating pain and debilitation when attacking enemies. He can incite madness or delusion, or trap a man in his own mind for the rest of his life.

The King in Mail has actually met with Hasethan officials and Brendirian emissaries, out in the middle of the Hasethan desert. He arrived from the midst of a sandstorm, with gleaming armor and a cadre of bondsmen. In each case, all but one emissary was taken or killed if they resisted his will. The remaining emissary was invariably left unscathed, to report that the Empires' days were numbered.

Artifact: Golden mail. The King in Mail's artifact is his suit of golden armor. No one has begun to conjecture on how this artifact might be destroyed. (Perhaps the answer is mind over matter...?)

Demesne: The City of Glass. The King in Mail holds court in the Amshad desert of Haseth. His is a great city of ochre glass that sprung up literally overnight. The city welcomes all travelers, but from there no one ever escapes. It is believed that he is building an army to conquer Haseth, or that he devours those people who enter his domain. The City of Glass has a spectrum of

Deceptive/Primal: 6

Servants: Servants of The King in Mail are called bondsmen. When The King in Mail wishes to bring more citizens to populate his City of Glass, he sends out tracers: flying shards of crystal that scour the desert, even traveling as far as Brendir to capture servants for their dark master. When the tracers have found appropriate victims, they strike, embedding themselves in the base of the victim's skull, and taking them over utterly. There is no cure for this domination, short of the death of the bondsman. A tracer strikes with an attack bonus of +20 doing 1d4 damage, and on a successful hit will embed itself in the base of the victim's skull. Tracers will not attack a creature with any form of armor or cover that protects his neck.

Tracers get their name for the light they give off, which is especially visible at night. They move so incredibly fast that if they are seen streaking over the horizon, victims only have 2 rounds to prepare for the assault. Bondsmen usually gain no special abilities, but their will is subverted entirely. Bondsmen are generally culled from high or mid level characters, chosen for their natural aptitude to serve The King in Mail.

Shiver

Shiver is a Stranger who favors inhospitable cold. He has power over time and the pain that chilling cold can cause, commanding his element effortlessly. Physically, Shiver resembles a thin but broad-boned man, with a wide frontal aspect that is out of proportion to his slender, even frail profile. His skin is either frozen and blue, or is charred with heat radiating from the cracks. When encountered, there is a 50% chance of his being in either state. When frozen, he moves as if *basted*, and when his skin is charred, he moves as if *slowed*. While *basted*, the air particles do not move fast enough to keep shiver warm, and while *slowed*, the heat in the air is magnified greatly from his perspective – the slow movement of air molecules is greatly increased relative to him, searing his flesh, and causing him annoyance. He can stop, speed, reverse or slow time at will, and can channel the cold that radiates from his artifact, the torpid flow, into devastating attacks.

It seems that Shiver is a malcontent among the Strangers. He is in near constant pain, which no other Stranger has to suffer through. He isolates himself more than any other Stranger, and does not hunt for servants like others do. It seems that he keeps his servants merely to ward off invaders. He captures living creatures to help him in his temporal experiments. He keeps his victims alive, long after they should have frozen or burned to death, to accept an eternity of pain. Their life processes slow down and speed up, and they are witness to the pain of their limbs freezing and thawing as Shiver draws the cold from them to sate his agony while *slowed*.

Artifact: The torpid flow is the source of Shiver's power on Thraxis. It is a magnificent fountain of marble, with half-frozen water that flows slowly in reverse. The torpid flow is only vulnerable to attack when Shiver is in his slowed, burning state. It has damage reduction 5/+5 and 500 hp.

Demesne: Shiver's stronghold is called Iskerred, which simply means Hell in the Dwarven tongue. It is essentially a hollowed out glacier, hoary with frost, and radiating blue flames of pure cold. Within, catacombs split and rejoin, with lavishly furnished chambers at every level. He has several laboratories where he seemingly seeks a cure for whatever ailment plagues him. Characters take 1d20 cold damage per round while inside Iskerred, or within 30 feet of its exterior. Iskerred has a spectrum of

Frigid/Necrotic: 6

Servants: The harriers are Shiver's minions. They are creatures of ice and time, death and pain. They hunt down anyone foolish enough to be lost within Shiver's realm. Their abilities are defined by applying the following template to any cold-based creature or animal that can survive in the arctic:

Creature gains the cold subtype; may cast *baste* (as the spell) 3/day; may cast *cone of cold* once per day as a 15th level caster (15d6 cold damage); may cast *temporal stasis* at will on a successful touch attack. CR increases based on original CR: original CR 1-4, new CR +5; 5-8, +4; 9-11, +3; 12, +2; 13+, +1.

PLAGUES AND ABOMINATIONS

*Men that are not men,
writhe and shudder and crawl.
Pox takes nine in ten;
Strong men flag and fall.*

Strange creatures and magic-resistant diseases are appearing. Certain members of mankind have begun to breed and create monsters designed for their own purposes, such as vadaghól: pitiful but dangerous creatures created from human stock, resembling men in feature but beasts in form. These and other intentional crimes against nature have triggered the fruition of this aspect of the Canticle.

The Wick

When the legions returned from Valtu, they brought with them more than a pyrrhic victory. A strange disease called The Wick has begun to spread. The Wick kills not by destroying the body, but the soul. Some say it gets its name from the nature of its progression, which can be likened to a candle – it can be burned and quenched repeatedly, each time getting shorter until it is burnt out. Others say that perhaps it is more like a thread spinning from a spool, that gradually unravels the soul.

The power of this disease is such that it may be healed, but if contracted again picks up where it left off. No magic short of a *wish* or *miracle* will render one immune to this illness. The afflicted acquire pale white lesions on their skin, and they radiate a black “light” from the eyes and mouth. The victims suffer no physical damage from the disease, but listlessness, disorientation, apathy, anger and depression affect them. Someone plagued by The Wick loses 1d4 Wisdom per week until cured.

This loss may be healed normally to its former value once cured, but the player must record his now reduced value. Upon recontracting The Wick, his Wisdom score immediately drops to this number, and Wisdom loss begins anew.

Only a full *wish* or *miracle* can wipe the slate clean, as long as the character lives. When Wisdom reaches zero in this way, the character is dead, and may not be revived by *any* means. His soul is simply eaten up. Some say that The Wick is a manifestation of the Wheel. Not even death and reincarnation can free someone suffering from The Wick.

Contraction: Contact, waterborne. Upon contact with an afflicted person or corpse, or drinking fresh water that contains such, the character must make a Fort save (DC 18). Failure means the character has contracted The Wick.

Cradle Burn

Cradle burn is a disease that prevents the afflicted from bearing or siring children. The primary symptom is a latticework of vein-like lines under the skin. Cradle burn infects all animals, with identical effects. Once afflicted, it takes *remove curse* cast by an 8th level caster for the victim to become a parent.

Contraction: Contact, waterborne. Upon contact with non-saline infected liquids, even if merely drinking from the cup of an afflicted person, a Fortitude save (DC 20) is required. Failure indicates that the victim has contracted cradle burn.

THE TWILIGHT

*Edges die around the day,
For it is nearly done,
Threadbare bloodlines twist and fray,
The setting of the sun.*

The time of the nonhuman empires is ending, as humans begin to take control of their destiny. The elves are slowly being rendered mortal and are retreating to Ynnidon in greater numbers, and the dwarves are depleting their lucrative mines, losing many of their mineral-rich terran regions to encroaching aberrant signatures which render them nearly worthless. If the halflings don't acquire a nation soon, they risk dissolution as a people. Wherever a space is left by one of the elder races, humans move in.

Still, the twilight has only just begun.

The world is filled with magic, for the time being, and the introdus of outsiders and outcast gods from other realities is still going strong. This is leading to the slow destruction of the elder deities as the populations of their worshippers are reduced, spread thin amongst the greater number of usurper gods.

RUMORS OF WAR

*The banners fly, the swords are drawn
under whirling cloaks,
Their smiles promise darkened dawn,
Their threats are veiled in jokes.*

“It was breathtaking, watching the legions march into the earth ten years ago. Column after column of brave young soldiers descended to fight the Lreans. I’m still writing letters to the widows.”

– A scribe’s account of the campaign that has come to be known as “Beggius’ Folly”

The balance between major cultures is being strained by the growing chaos. Accusations of corruption and evil-doing are being leveled across all the empires, and distrust is growing. Fear of an aberrant exodus to the surface world has every empire looking into the practicality of a full scale attack on the deep-dwelling nation Hrum Vaat. Largely because of the activities of undead, aberrations, outsiders and usurper gods, nearly everyone is seeking scapegoats for the atrocities that are being committed in the wake of the Canticle.

Brendir makes a fine target, for few are pleased by their expansionism, their command of world resources, and their imposition on indigenous cultures all over the world. It is no secret that like Ijamvhum (an even more despised empire) they desire world conquest, if not by the sword, then certainly by trade and diplomacy. In fact, some believe that the verse above refers specifically to Brendir. They are a confident and powerful nation, and expect others to bow to their will. They have a debatable reputation for couching their demands as offers, smiling and joking to keep tensions down.

Brendir is being torn in many directions at once, diluting its formidable military on numerous fronts. At this very

moment, Brendir is fighting land conflicts in two major areas of its own empire, Tobran and Hegensted, as well as sea battles in the depths all around the coasts. The navy is spread across the known world, but the greater portion is wasted guarding a single precious town in Kharkon. Despite the ire of several of the other empires, they are quick to call upon Brendirian aid. In exchange for the provinces of Valtu and Emetria, Brendir is helping Haseth expand into the Amshadin desert, and it seems they will be there indefinitely. Several legions are even unaccounted for, and it is feared that they have turned on their homeland. Kenabu, Kharkon and Quetapan are Brendir's only true allies, though Quetapan's loyalty is being questioned due to its close ties to Ijamvhul.

Trade and diplomacy go on, but there is an edge to most

dealings. Ijamvhul is making unsubtle noises of a war on Brendir, while Kharkon and Brendir continue to expand into the neutral treaty lands, infuriating Ynnidon. Haseth takes out its anger at rich Xiangur's refusal to trade by gouging merchants and raising ire.

Already, the War for the Sea is underway, fought by the noble denizens of the undersea realms with aid from the intrepid and ill-supported aquatic warriors of the Dolphin Legion. Trade routes are threatened and in some places the seas boil with blood. It is becoming easier for pirates to function, since when cargo fails to arrive, it is easy to believe that the ship was accosted by Hrum Vaat.

Each time the sun sets on Thraxis, the world is slightly closer to pandemic war.

The Lesser Canticle

The Role of the Lesser Canticle

The Lesser Canticle is the domain of the individual GM. Consider how the verses you've chosen fit into the larger picture. As you weave your plot hooks into the campaign, remember that the Canticle is not above minor red herrings or extremely obscure and veiled references.

The Canticle can be hostile, hopeful, or neutral, depending on the needs of your campaign. You can choose to portray the Canticle as a cryptic and morose warning system, or as a maleficent enemy that taunts the party, seeking to throw them off when they get too close to thwarting its goals. A mix of these interpretations will prevent the characters from making any blanket judgements. It's best if the players never quite know if they can trust the Dark Prophecy. Who's to say? Maybe the Canticle is the work of many competing forces, some friendly, some hostile. Once you decide what is going on with the Prophecy in your game, hold off on revealing it, no matter how clever, until the end of the campaign. Keep the players guessing and they'll thank you for it.

Writing Your Own Dark Verse

Adapting From Other Sources

Not every GM will have the desire or time to come up with customized verses of the Lesser Canticle for use in their campaign. A couple of shortcuts may help you get your game ready on time. The easiest method is to steal the verse from another source. Just be certain that the players have not come across it. If you don't mind being a little sneaky, do some information gathering without tipping them off. Casually ask them if they have read any Poe, Dante, or Milton. You may need to find much more obscure sources than these, since gamers tend to be well-read. Choose a selection that will help to set a mood for the adventure.

Here's an example of modifying a passage from William Blake's "London":

*I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.*

*In every cry of every Man,
In every Infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I bear.*

*How the Chimney-sweeper's cry
Every black'ning Church appalls;
And the hapless Soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.*

*But most thro' midnight streets I bear
How the youthful Harlot's curse
Blasts the new-born Infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.*

Most of this poem suggests uses without significant modification, but any references to real world locations need to be changed. The goal is not necessarily to "improve" it, but to borrow its most compelling elements. The above poem was chosen for its strong depiction of the despair of a people. The poem is presented in its entirety to suggest other possible uses, but let us focus on the second verse.

*In every cry of every Man,
In every Infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I bear.*

A ban is an archaic word for a curse. This verse could be used to refer to a curse of some kind. But it is still not specific enough to serve as a clue. If the last word were changed to 'bear' instead of 'hear,' it would make the literary speaker the bearer of some mind-affecting curse. The fact that 'bear' does not rhyme with 'fear' can either be ignored, as is common in poetry, or the line above could be altered. Let's do so, to plant a further clue to the speaker's identity:

*In every cry of every Man,
In every wretched soul I tear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I bear.*

This verse as written here, suggests several possible plot lines. It could refer to the cult of a godling, tearing souls away from their former gods and subverting them; it could refer to some sort of soul-draining undead, such as a wraith; or it could refer to a foul-tempered and corrupt patrician, who treats the plebeians in his employ as slaves, not allowing them to believe they can do better. This last one isn't very interesting, but it still fits the verse. Let's assume it refers to a Stranger, a being worthy of the attention of the Canticle. The verse is still pretty vague, so let's work on the next one, which will help to illuminate the first.

*How the Chimney-sweeper's cry
Every black'ning Church appalls;
And the hapless Soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.*

Certain symbolism will need to be changed to evoke a Thraxian mood rather than the Romantic Age one from Blake's poem. 'Chimney-sweeper' and 'Church' suggest immediate modification. Don't feel bound by previous decisions at this point. If 'How the Chimney-sweeper's cry' were changed to 'Where dark Oleander lies' and 'black'ning Church' was changed to 'black foliole' the mood would be set. This verse would work best if the PCs had not previously encountered the Stranger called Oleander. The last change would be the verse above; its last line could be changed from "The mind-forg'd manacles I bear" to "The vine-born verdigris I wear." The line above this, 'In every voice, in every ban,' could be changed to 'by lustful choice, eternal ban.' Finally, if

*And the hapless Soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.*

...were changed to :

*And the hapless Soldier's sighs
Creep in blood up Palace walls.*

Then the final verse would be:

*In every cry of every Man,
In every wretched soul I tear,
by lustful choice, eternal ban,
The vine-born verdigris I wear.*

*Where dark Oleander lies,
Every black foliole appalls,
And the hapless Soldier's sighs
Creep in blood up Palace walls.*

This verse says a lot about what's going on in the adventure, for those willing to read into it. The PC's face a villain called Oleander, who destroys men she seduces. The plant imagery suggests that she has powers over such, and the last two lines suggest the nature of the destruction of her victims: they become crawling vines. Even more, it suggests the key to her destruction. She wears a 'vine-born verdigris' – her gown of vines, which as her artifact is her tie to Thraxis. If the characters can somehow destroy this artifact, Oleander will be vanquished.

Writing Verse from Scratch

Many GMs like to add their own personal touch. A few rules of thumb will make the job easier.

Keep it short. This is more of a recommendation than a rule. The players have enough information to assimilate without having an epic poem unloaded on them every session. If you write a masterpiece of dark verse, break it down into one or two quatrain chunks, and give it out over the course of several sessions. A possible exception to this rule of thumb might be at the start of a major part of a campaign. Even so, make sure to clearly focus on the verses that are relevant to the adventure at hand. Another

good reason to keep your verses short is because the players' actions will often alter the course of events, leading to a rewrite of that part of the Prophecy, and more work for you, the GM.

Avoid railroading. Suggest problems, not solutions. Give clues, not facts. Every GM learns early on never to railroad players, but the temptation can spring up anew when adding an exotic aspect like the Canticle to your game. Fight it. Feel free to tell the players they are doomed, maybe even by name, just don't get too detailed about *how* they are doomed.

Verses of the Canticle are one part riddle, one part poem. Give out new information, but avoid being too on the nose in expressing this information. Use allusions rather than statements. For example, let's say you wanted to introduce a powerful cursed artifact, in the form of a sword, to the group. You want to get the following information to the players, without handing it to them outright:

- The sword was created from the soul of an ancient red dragon named Zhygul
- Powers include: the sword will reincarnate a slain wielder as an ancient red dragon (taking his will); it allows the wielder breathe fire; it points out the direction of the largest treasure within 100 miles.
- The sword may be found in the tomb of an ancient eidolon named Prestes, who was slain while wielding it. He is now a red dragon, who guards it.

The created verse might resemble the following:

*Zhygul's fang-dripping gore,
Breath of the burning serpent's soul
Cursed Prestes' woe of yore,
His restless vigilance pays the toll.*

The Canticle Across the World

Like all divinatory truths, the Canticle does not depend on the method of its telling. Each culture receives the unholy scripture in its own way, couched in terms that hold special meaning to it. Cross-translation of the verses has been attempted, but has proven largely useless, because the Canticle says essentially the same thing, regardless of how the words issue forth. Subtle differences in linguistic connotation serve to confuse the matter, rather than illuminate it. Still, this method is pursued, in the hopes that the code can be broken, and the true message behind the Canticle can be gleaned. In the end, it's all conjecture. And that's the way the Canticle wants it. The ultimate self-fulfilling prophecy, the Canticle exerts its will upon reality, creating a physical manifestation for itself, a mystic avatar, that impresses itself upon the psyches of the people. It is possible for peoples from foreign lands to bring their versions of the Canticle with them, and PCs may discover many diverse methods of divining the Canticle. The methods mentioned here are far from complete, and it seems like every culture has its own subtle spin on the Canticle.

Brendir – The Chrsmoi (Oracles): The Brendirians respect and revere authority. Thus the Canticle chose to reveal itself only to those whose word was law. All over the empire, scribes became possessed, writing furiously, taking little food and drink until finished three months later. Each scribe wrote a single volume, sent it off by courier, and was released from the Canticle's grip.

In the end, every temple in Brendir received a complete set of 144 books filled with tightly packed lines, with identical penmanship. The Chrsmoi have since been transcribed to numerous pillared monuments all over Brendir, called the Shrines of Contemplation. When the Canticle adapts, the carvings on these structures shift as well. The Chrsmoi may be used in place of any components required for divination spells.

Haseth – Zhakin Astrological Charts: Zhakin astrology is the process of complex mathematics by which the verses of the Canticle can be known. Zhakin was a shamed prophet, of no great skill, whose life was given meaning in service to the Canticle. He wrote the Zhakin Scrolls, a version of the Canticle that is relevant to the Hasethans. These number in the tens of thousands, and each one can serve as a window into the entire prophesy. Their text changes to display the verse required at the moment. When more than one is in the same place, they will never display the same message.

The equations, required measurements, and referential texts change with the restructuring of the Prophesy. Only those trained in the equations can make use of them, but transliterations are finding increasing use. The Zhakin Scrolls may be used in place of any components required for divination spells.

Kharkon – Mount Vosk: When the Canticle revealed itself, half of Mount Vosk was violently shorn away, as if by an eruption. Charred and burning pieces of the shattered mountain rained down upon all of Kharkon, wreaking great destruction as they fell. The pieces were found to have verses of the



Canticle engraved upon them. The remaining, perfectly smooth face of Mount Vosk has the complete Canticle engraved upon it. It is now a broad monolith 5 miles across, and half a mile high. When the prophesy changes, magma flows out from the deep runes while lightning flashes over its surface, and as the lava cools, the new verses are revealed.

Ijamvhu – The Screaming Prophets: A dark and violent culture such as that of Ijamvhu calls for the Canticle to take more drastic measures that it may be heard above the din of harsh existence. In Ijamvhu, a place of fierce independence, where everyone likes to think they control their own fate, it takes the form of possession. At any time, in any place, anyone may be possessed by the Canticle, to begin spewing forth the dire shouts and rambling of the Ijamvian Canticle. This is a disturbing experience for the afflicted, and especially for those who are witness to it. The verses become seared into the minds of all who hear them, and they will never forget them, even if they should lose the rest of their minds. Some unlucky few, already a bit mad, become slaves to the Canticle for life. They wander the world, requiring and taking no sustenance, becoming husks of their former selves, mere vessels for the prophecy. Perpetually gibbering their prophesy, they are fueled by the rabid will of the Canticle that screams "I AM" against the void. If they are lucky, death claims them soon, as their fellows fall upon them, trying to silence the mad cries of fate.

Transliterations exist, written on stretched tapestries of

dragon skin, which are altered when the Canticle is changed. The tapestries may be used in place of any components required for divination spells.

Kenabu – The Discs: Usually made from transparent slices of ivory, the discs are round cards inscribed with glyphs and imagery from the various Kenabu religious writings. Each disc tells a portion of a Kenabu legend, which are known by rote to most Kenabu, and when several are arrayed, an entirely new tale is told in the form of a dark fable. The number of disks is in the dozens, and varies over time, but at any one time, there are a fixed number of five possible disc combinations. These combinations in their entirety comprise the Kenabu Canticle. Anyone can make their own copies of the discs, as long as at least one card is from a previous deck is included. Blank discs that are included with a functioning disc are engraved as the discs are shuffled. The discs may be used in place of any components required for divination spells.

Quetapan – The Pacahuacta: The Pacahuacta is a ziggurat composed of magically reinforced ruby that arose from

the ground on the site of the Atchetak massacre, where in 994 the blood god of the Kukixtlas demanded mass sacrifice to give him the power to resist the invading armies of Latora. He failed, but the blood stained the earth for several centuries until a great earthquake was felt across the entire continent in 1474. The Pacahuacta, or “House of Tears,” rose from the earth in this earthquake. The Canticle is inscribed upon its surface in the form of glyphs and pictograms. It is a visual story that relies on the symbolism of the people it speaks to. For example, instead of blood, the Pacahuacta depicts snakes flying from wounds, and speech may be represented by smoke spilling from the speaker’s mouth. When the Canticle is altered, searing red light emanates from the Pacahuacta, and as it fades, new verses are revealed in the place of the obsolete ones. The Quteapani fear the Canticle and no native transcriptions exist, though foreigners have done rubbings of these carvings.

Xiangur – The Keys: The Xiangurian Keys are sculptures that spin and whirl, changing shape and form as the Prophecy adapts. The Keys are 1000 sets

of small metal objects each representing words, which are cast while the user contemplates a question. They fly through the air to form a puzzling sculpture of words. Where a word is used twice it will overlap multiple sentences in the place it belongs. It takes a special kind of mind to even glean the riddle posed, let alone its solution. The Xiangurian Canticle has only been transcribed with the aid of foreigners since it is reliant upon the questions posed to it. The Keys may be used in place of any components required for divination spells.

Ynnidon: The Canticle speaks directly to the Empress. Natives of this region must either take her oracles’ words at face value with regards to the Canticle, or seek out other sources of knowledge.

Zeikrus: Little word or trade comes out of tumultuous Zeikrus, but it is said that Zeikrus’ Canticle is revealed by the decapitated heads of wise dragons, kept within shrines. It is also said that these unliving dragons do not spew rote verse, but instead interpret the verse for the querant. Transliterations of the Zeikrusian Canticle have proven useless, and do not adapt when the Canticle changes.

Factions of Morningstar

The Gatekeepers

One of many doomsday cults springing up of late. They believe that the predictions of the Canticle must be helped along. To this end they study the verses of the Canticle, and seek out the places where a new aspect of the Prophecy is unfolding to thwart any who would stand against what they believe to be destiny. They believe that when all aspects of the Prophecy have come to fruition, a new age will be born, in which they will rule.

The Inquisition

A strict organization devoted to rooting out necromancers, diabolists, and others who threaten the empires, the Inquisition wields considerable political power and is feared by many, even those who have done no wrong. Their zealous seeking brings them into conflict with many other groups and factions, regardless of mutual goals. A new and substantial faction within the organization believes that the focus should not be upon destruction of existing forces for chaos, but instead preventing them from taking root in the first place. To this end they study

the Canticle, seeking out specific figures mentioned within the texts, either to protect them if they are victims, or prevent them from fulfilling a dark destiny. These members believe they can take down the Canticle piece by piece, and lobby for recognition of the threat the Canticle poses. Members are often spellcasters, but not always. Eidolons and bards also have a substantial place within the ranks of the Inquisition, and they help to allay fears and present a good face for the organization. The Inquisition is comprised of three primary orders: the blade, the heart, and the arm.

The Blade: These are the doers of the Inquisition. They are the ones who actually fight the enemies of civilization. They are the special operations and shock troops. The standing army of the Inquisition numbers around 10,000, but no one can be certain since many members are anonymous or on extended missions overseas.

The Heart: The ranks of this order are filled by diviners and scholars who do research into threats, as well as spies and rogues who run reconnaissance missions. This group also lays out missions for the blade.

The Arm: Members of the arm are policy-makers, benefactors, and influential people. Most Brendirian senators are members with varying degrees of involvement.

The Nation

The halflings of Thraxis have no homeland, and The Nation seeks to change that. Unfortunately, every inch of Thraxis has been claimed by one or more nations or empires, at least on paper. The Nation wants to buy the lands they require from any empires that have laid claim to them. The final location hasn't been decided yet, but the coffers are filling. Each house makes itself indispensable to society by providing a service for the empires or anyone that requires their expertise, in exchange for payment. The house that contributes the most money to the cause will become the ruling caste in the Halfling Empire, once it's established.

Any halfling can join any house, but it is frowned upon to change houses, because of the sometimes fierce competition between them. Adventuring halflings can contribute to their house in less direct ways, such as maintaining or establishing connections, or a regular contribution of funds. Members can expect protection for themselves and their friends, as well as access to the services of their and other houses.

Though their primary purpose is to further halfling goals, the houses also use their influences to shape the politics of the world as a whole. And to this end, they are more powerful than they seem. Their power transcends political borders, and they have gained the ears of powerful people.

Anhain, "Bloodfed": When others don't want to dirty their hands, they call upon house Anhain. Members of this house deal with pariahs and undesirables, human and inhuman.

Ao, "Seashell": This house focuses on shipbuilding and transport of goods

by sea. It is well known that they will sooner give up their lives than lose cargo under their protection. Their floating settlements are a welcome sight to those lost at sea. They facilitate the trade of other houses, serving as liaisons to their own people abroad.

Bravel, "Sunrise": Entertainers and performers. House Bravel helps feed the citizenship's insatiable hunger for entertainment. They organize carnivals, plays, and concerts, and seek out novelties they can sell at such events. Bravel is seemingly the least influential house, but it is folly to underestimate them. Buried in their plays and performances are the seeds of their agenda.

Cleothe, "Speaker": Master translators, bankers and usurers. Members of house Cleothe are deal brokers and intermediaries. It is this house that is most likely to be involved in politics, if only as advisors.

Roveth, "River": House Roveth deals in the finest things in life. They supply delicacies and luxury items from all over the world. Their connections to the wealthiest members of society afford them some political influence and respect, though they are more like house Anhain than they like to admit.

Mareg, "Interloper": House Mareg profits from war. They buy and resell the tools of war, and they never reveal their connections.

Trammel, "Journeyman": The halflings of House Trammel have made themselves the best guides one can find. They make the best maps, and keep great records. Members set up camp in their assigned territory, coming to know every rock, tree, and burrow in their lands. More than cartographers, House Trammel are pioneers, anthropologists, and traders.

The Order

Membership is open to Ijamvians. The organization is devoted to dealing with the Lreans and other aberrations. Their goal is to gain power and magical alterations from the Lreans. Loyalty to this group is fanatic, and most members are utterly insane. Every member has some sort of aberrant flesh spliced onto their body, even if it's just a patch of skin on his back. A great reward for a member of this group would be something like the eye stalk of an eye tyrant, or the antennae of a rust monster. The Lreans' motives for having dealings with this group are inscrutable, but superficially, it seems that they recognize the value of having agents on the surface. The Lreans accept payment in slaves, which are often drawn from the Ijamvian reserves. Sympathetic foreigners are sometimes allowed into the Order but there is always a test of faith involved. The order is active all over the world, wherever there is access to Hrum Vaat.

Vine and Thorn

Vine and Thorn is an organization devoted to the cessation of civilized development. Its members include druids, rangers, elves, and young idealists who believe that the expansion of civilization is hastening the world's demise. They use propaganda, espionage, sabotage, and direct confrontation to achieve their goals. Though they believe Imperial expansionism is wrong, they do not necessarily wish to destroy existing civilization. Some members do, some don't. Aside from this issue, members often find that they have other things in common, so this group also serves as a social club and informal information network.

*PEER CLOSELY AT THE BEATS BETWEEN
THE WORDS THAT ARE REVEALED.
BESEECH YOUR GODS THE WIT TO GLEAN,
FOR I SHALL NEVER YIELD.*

— FINAL VERSE OF THE CANTICLE

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Morningstar

At Stake...

Two worlds of great natural beauty locked in a struggle that threatens to destroy them both. Thraxis and Arril: blue sisters sharing an orbit, with continents, seas, and life.

A world in the midst of an Age of Majesty many believe will never end: nine diverse Empires at the peak of magical and cultural achievement. A world that has never known an Age of Darkness, where men and women push themselves daily to greater heights. It is an age of innocence and hope, when possibility knows no bounds.

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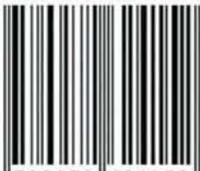
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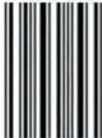
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Thank you for purchasing Morningstar. It is a wonderful setting which we think you will enjoy.

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- TheCanticle.com, official Morningstar page of creator R. Scott Kennan, available at <http://www.thecanticle.com/>



SECRET WARS

Starting your own Underground Organization in a Fantasy Setting By R. Scott Kennan

Secret cabals and fiendish cults are a mainstay of fantasy literature. In roleplaying games, they are often the domain of the GM alone, but that need not be the case. Most characters, especially at low levels, find that the world is much too powerful for them to take on alone. Sometimes there are no high level heroes to save the day, and a group effort is required. There's safety in numbers, hence the party structure that has evolved. There's no reason even low level characters cannot possess the power to change empires.

Most players are at least passingly familiar with intrigue, whether it be lying to the guards to get in to see the king, or, at its ugliest, party infighting. Why not turn that skill towards the campaign, and leave a truly lasting impression on the world? Start up a faction or organization that will not only help you in attaining your goals, but continue to have influence for generations to come. Long after your party has been totally destroyed by the Lich Lord, your legacy will live on.

Most GMs love to see their players take the initiative. As with any player options, discuss this thoroughly with the GM before trying to organize. From an out of game standpoint, you're likely to get more cooperation from NPCs if the GM has some time to prepare, and work your goals into the game. You may fail, but at least you've helped to move the campaign forward. If you make it out alive, you can always brush yourself off, a little wiser, to try again. Even if it's not in the cards for your GM's campaign, he should be grateful for the ideas the attempt will spawn. It can be a lot of fun taking the world's history into your own hands. You'll help to spice up the campaign, and perhaps even go down in history.

SECRET OR PUBLIC?

Not all organizations need to be entirely secret. There are any number of levels of subterfuge that can be maintained. An organization can certainly present a very public face, and express its goals openly, if these goals will not result in the powers-that-be expending undue resources to silence the group. For example, the halflings of Morningstar have an organization called The Nation, which is comprised of merchant houses, each with their own specialization. They have openly expressed that the houses they have formed are to result in the establishment of their own nation. This is the public goal, but in practice, each house has its own shorter term goals, some of which run counter to those of the other houses. House Anhain often deals with creatures that might be considered enemies of halflingkind, and House Mareg seeks to destabilize the empires by promoting war, so that the halflings can seize the lands they require. Meanwhile, the most respectable house, House Ao, has its hands dirty all around, since it controls all halfling sea travel, and deals with every other house. Any strife between these houses is kept hidden in the best interests of all, and a respectable face is maintained.

WHAT IS YOUR AGENDA?

Your party's goals are the reason to start an organization in the first place. If you're smart or lucky, enough NPCs will feel that your credo is worthy, and your organization will start to work for you, rather than you for it. An organization has to stand for something, to incite the passion required to keep it viable. Below are some common agendas that may help you define your organization.

DEFIANCE

For right or wrong, you disagree with the status quo. Perhaps it's a certain set of laws you refuse to follow, or the powers that be are corrupt. An organization built on defiance could be an intrepid cadre of rebels, or deposed nobles, plotting the moment of their revenge.

You need a good source of intelligence on what your rival organization or government is up to. Small defiant groups will have to focus on thwarting the other group's plans at first, while keeping them at bay long enough to grow. As they recruit and get larger, they can begin to overrun their foe, and even to achieve their own goals, that support their goal of destroying their enemies.

GREED

Sometimes a simple business arrangement is not enough to achieve your goals. You want riches, and are willing to take any measures necessary to attain them. This kind of organization can be anything from a group of merchants who engage in illegal trade or smuggling, or other profitable enterprises. A group of pirates, arms runners or a thieves guild are all often motivated by greed.

KNOWLEDGE

Forbidden knowledge offers great temptation. Why must the powers-that-be keep secrets? The information they are trying to hide must be truly dangerous if it must be kept from the masses. This type of organization delves into these occult mysteries, and possibly reveals them to anyone who wants knowledge. The truth is out there.

A knowledge-seeking organization may be trying to unravel a great mystery, such as the Canticle of the Morning Star, or simply wish that everyone benefit from free information, such as the Artificers of Triskatarior do.

JUSTICE

There's a wrong to right, and the time has come to take matters into your own hands. Wherever there is oppression, or something is not allowed by law, there are those who stand against the status quo, in the shadows if need be. Maybe a despotic warlock needs to be overthrown, or the practice of slavery needs to be ended. Whatever it is, your organization is there.

Justice is relative. To a group of druids and rangers, such as Morningstar's Vine and Thorn, Justice can mean an end or slowing to the expansion of civilization. To a secret organization of expansion-minded senators, it often means just the opposite.

PATRIOTISM

Your homeland is threatened by change, or has already been altered by a new regime. Perhaps you merely feel that your empire is being run poorly, or wish to prevent anyone else from ruining your way of life. Whatever the reason, you feel that action must be taken for the sake of your beloved home.

A patriotic organization might be comprised of former members of the military, or those who are politically aware, however skewed their respective perspectives may be. A patriotic agenda may be held by anyone who holds a strong set of beliefs, such as religious rebels, or a group of politically active farmers.

POWER

Thirst for power creates many an epic villain. The secret society that seeks to organize a coup against a government or the sect of priests that wish to overthrow their superiors are examples of organizations motivated by power.

The desire for power does not automatically indicate corruption. Some high level characters may feel that only they have the wisdom and power to rule successfully. If given an inkling of the reality of the possibility, even good people might leap at the chance at immortality or godhood. Organizations with an agenda of attaining power are common in places that have seen great hardship, and wish to strengthen themselves, that they may never suffer in the same way again.

**WHAT KIND OF MOVEMENT
ARE WE STARTING?**

There are nearly as many types of organization as there are organizations. How you decide to structure your movement bestows certain benefits, but also has pitfalls. From a broad perspective, some of the most common types along with their special requirements and benefits are described below.

HIERARCHY

By far the most common type of organization, the hierarchical organization is led by an active leadership. This requires the most work and constant upkeep. The characters in charge have to give orders and delegate authority. They have a lot of control over the group, but it requires frequent upkeep. Neglect the organization, and it may begin to fall apart forming splinter cells, as described below. Cartels, warrior orders, and most priesthoods will have a strong hierarchical structure.

SPLINTER CELL

Sometimes, even the most unified groups or factions can come to an impasse with regards to ideology. The time may come when it becomes necessary to form an offshoot of a preexisting organization. Sometimes this faction can even exist within the overarching network of the original organization, working towards a goal that runs counter to or is more specific than the original goal of the group. Leadership may be hard to discern,

or even nonexistent. A secret society within a secret society offers many opportunities for in-depth roleplaying.

Of course some prefer to distance themselves from the parent organization, seeking a little more security. If the group's activities are outlawed, they may find that they are twice hunted, by the authorities and by the parent organization. Forming a splinter cell is a great way to ask for trouble. But with risks come rewards. If the political game is played well, the splinter cell may be able to call on the age and wisdom of dissatisfied members of the old regime, and possibly leak their own resources to use against them.

MASTERMINDS

Good or evil, a group of masterminds pulls the strings. They directly involve themselves in very little, but they have gathered the influence to get things done quickly and quietly. There are two types of members: the leaders, who ostensibly have equal power, and their servitors. A group of masterminds is often wealthy enough to bribe important figures, or is actually comprised of them. This is why you took that level of Aristocrat. Such an organization is often very small in relation to the power it wields. This kind of organization is likely suited for mid to high level PCs as a result of the wealth and influence required to run it properly.

One major pitfall of a group of masterminds is that there is a tendency for intrigue within the group. If everyone involved has equal power, splinter cells are likely to form unless everyone has the exact same agenda. Even with the best of intentions there may be schisms, as each individual tries to safeguard their vision of the organization from the corruptive influence of others. Power plays may be frequent and catastrophic, dividing a party.

AFFILIATION

In some settings it would be too dangerous to have a discernible center of power. Maybe the entire empire is evil, the thoughts and deeds your organization seeks to undo are too ubiquitous, or the law does its job too well. In any of these cases, a loose affiliation is best. Without a central command, no single member knows the entire story, and cannot be tapped to betray the entire group, either through magic or intimidation – no one knows everything.

You have to get the word out somehow, through either whispered word of mouth, or hiring bards to tell your tales, perhaps occluded by veiled references. Maybe you can develop a secret code or hand signal, and pass it along by telling one person you've rescued. Similarly, recruits can come from those you've helped, once they get back on their feet.

FIND A FRONT

The best secret organizations seem like something else. They need a reason to congregate and make decisions that look legitimate to the powers that be. Businesses or locally acceptable temples give a respectable face to your group, and help to quell whispers that can cause trouble. In addition, they might even help to raise or launder capital, giving the group an apparently honest source of revenue.

For an adventuring party, maintaining a front can put a damper on other goals. How many 10th-level barbarians want

to run a laundry pick up service? This is where NPCs come in. Not all of them even need to be in on the true secret of the organization. By hiring unsuspecting NPCs to do the drudge work, even more legitimacy is added to your story. These people can never reveal secrets they don't know. This is not without risk, however. An NPC accountant could put the pieces together and cause a lot of trouble. With a little thought, you can free your PCs from having to deal with the front except in the most cursory way.

Take the group's needs into long consideration before deciding on a front. A tavern might be good if great numbers of people need to meet on a regular basis, such as when conspiring against the king – just be careful of strangers, or set up a secret room below. A bakery could serve as a fence for certain magical items or other contraband, as long as they were small enough to fit in a bread basket. The previously mentioned laundry service might be better for larger deliveries, hidden under rags. Imagine a beggars guild, comprised of monks organizing the people of the old quarter for rebellion. Place a donation in a beggars bowl, take the instructions for where to find the next meeting. The higher the security in the area where your organization operates, the more creative you need to be to achieve your goals.

RECRUITMENT

The first step towards creating a great faction that will bring about the change you desire is to find out who your allies are. In a very political campaign, this can be harder than it seems. Depending on your goals and needs, different approaches are required. For a very secret organization, recruitment is by necessity incredibly slow, and you may have to require extensive oaths, tests of faith, or monitoring, with magic if possible. For more open or protected societies, risks can be taken.

The Children of Twilight

What follows is a sample organization for use in the *Morningstar* setting. It can also be used in any setting where necromancy is illegal, possibly as an adversary or ally to your own.

The *Morningstar* setting (which you may recall as a semifinalist in the *Wizards of the Coast* Setting Search) is a world of epic fantasy, where heroes fight to preserve a golden age of magic. In *Morningstar*, the golden age is now: the great empires have not yet fallen, humans have just come into their own, and dragons and mythical beasts abound. The primary threat to this golden age comes in the fulfillment of a dark Prophecy called "The Canticle of The Morning Star." Its verses number in the tens of thousands, and their interpretations are the subject of much debate.

Elves in Morningstar

In the *Morningstar* setting, elves are immortal and fey, possessing supernatural powers. It is possible for an elf to betray his fey nature and fall, becoming a muryan, which is nothing more than an elf as described in the PHB. These figures are despised, and though long-lived, they are rendered mortal. This is a traumatic experience, and many seek to regain the permanence that they have lost. This fact help to put the character of Seliusia Ionisi and the other elven necromancers in context. If you are not planning to use *Morningstar*, but wish to incorporate this organization, she is simply an elf, who is afraid to face death after centuries of life. Her brush with death at the hands of barbarians quickened these feelings.

In Brendir, one of the empires in *Morningstar*, necromancy is illegal. There are no special cases allowed, as there are with other martial magics, and use of any necromantic spell results in the caster being pursued by the Inquisition, and likely caught, tried and imprisoned. Thus a secret organization called the Children of Twilight has been formed, founded by the unlikely pairing of a sorcerer and a wizard.

CHILDREN OF TWILIGHT

Agenda: Knowledge (Power)

Type: Masterminds

The suffering of death is a curse that inspires desperation. This is how Brendir, a land that that has outlawed necromancy, has come to contain an obscure sect of predominantly *elven* necromancers. Most members are independently wealthy muryans, with a few humans and members of other races. (Most elves in *Morningstar* retain their immortal fey natures, giving them powers above and beyond the standard elf. A muryan, however, has lost its immortality and is

treated as a standard elf from the PHB. See sidebar.)

The coven that calls itself The Children of Twilight studies the dark arts, in the hopes that this will lead to peace and freedom from suffering for all of mankind. They research necromantic spells, pursuing a legendary spell that will grant immortality without the loss for one's soul. So far they have been unsuccessful, but they are undeterred. Incidental goals are overturning Brendir's laws on necromancy, and proving that armies of undead would be better than members of mortal races throwing themselves upon the swords of war. They are slowly building this army, which they plan to put to the test as soon as they have a legion of 4,000. They plan to unleash this army on the invaders from Hrum Vaat, the aberrant empire, as they wash up on the shores of Mechimur in the coming spring.

For now, the Children keep their growing army of skeletons and ghouls locked away in warded stone tombs, and hidden in the basements of members all over the province of Brendis, the seat of the Brendirian empire. Most uninitiated are entirely unaware that the genteel elf who hosted them for dinner held such an abomination in his wine cellar.

As a front, they maintain a background as a cluster of like-minded scholars and businessmen who operate a charity that tends to the needs of beggars in many Brendisian cities. When one dies, they offer to pay for the funeral. They secretly steal his corpse, and cajole local lay priests to hold a funeral over a closed wooden box. They have maintained this facade for years, gaining a reputation for kindness. Strangely, beggars have begun to go missing in some larger cities as spring approaches. This could be a case of what it seems to be murder, or possibly the actions of another group who wishes to impugn the reputation of the Children of Twilight. Either way, the authorities have begun to pay more attention to this group.

Recruitment is handled on a personal basis. An existing member sponsors a wizard or sorcerer candidate to join the group, who is casually grilled on their opinions on war, immortality, charity, and knowledge. If they seem promising they are slowly inducted. They are subject to a great deal of scrutiny, and recruiters err on the side of caution.

The Children are led by two primary figures: Jister Tolnin, a human sorcerer who served in the Brendirian legions, and Selusia Ionisi, a muryan, who was once a crown elf (a fey elf with supernatural powers, as detailed in *Morningstar*).

JISTER TOLNIN (MALE HUMAN SOR6/FTR8)

Jister was a sorcerer in a legion called Soaring Fury, and possesses a specially-trained griffin named Bartok. (Space considerations prevent a full write-up, but this griffin is a typical member of its species.) He is a blond, aged man, seemingly frail until action is necessary. His sad, smiling eyes betray the horrors he has seen in his lifetime. He works as a trainer for new soldiers in the Brendirian army, but is semi-retired.

In his dotage, he feels that war is a waste of human potential, and defense would be better served by armies of constructs and undead, which are more easily created. He is an idealist, and only slightly misguided. He realizes that one can't have undead running around his beloved empire, but believes that preserved corpses can be stockpiled and kept out of sight. He hopes that in times of war, they might be brought out as undead while the populus huddles in their bunkers, and destroyed when not needed. Despite this, he has allowed the controlled stockpiling of active undead, since Selusia demanded it. He loves Selusia with his entire being, but he realizes that she no longer feels for him.

Jister Tolnin, male human Sor6/Ftr8: CR 14; Size M (5 ft., 7 in. tall); HD 6d4+6 + 8d10+8; hp 85; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Attack +13/+8/+3 melee, or +13/+8/+3 ranged; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +8; AL NG; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 19, Wis 12, Cha 18.

Languages Spoken: Brendirian (Common), Thullish (Goblin), Ynnidonian (Elven), Sylvan, Terran.

Skill points: Sor 63, Ftr 56

Skills and feats: Alchemy +13, Balance +7, Concentration +9, Craft +14, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +6, Hide +2, Innuendo +6, Jump +11, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Listen +3, Move Silently +2, Profession (teacher)+9, Ride (Griffins) +12, Scry +8, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +12, Spot +3, Swim +11, Use Rope +4; Alertness, Ambidexterity, Empower Spell, Expertise, Improved Critical (short sword), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness.

Possessions: 45,000 gp in gear.

Sorcerer Spells Per Day (6/7/6/4): '0'-level: *dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, light, mage hand, disrupt undead, read magic.* 1st-level: *burning hands, identify, magic missile, summon monster i.* 2nd-level: *knock, levitate.* 3rd-level *hold person.*

SELUSIA IONISI (FEMALE ELF (HIGH) WIZ 15)

Selusia fell when she failed to defend her town from invading Derudians (barbarians). She is horrified by her own mortality, and has been rejected by her goddess the Empress, the only one who could restore her to her former glory. She is still youthful, and quite beautiful. As she was once a crown elf, her pale blue skin and silvery hair are the remnants of her lost past. She makes her living as a dealer in rare religious documents and books.

Many years ago, she loved Jister, but he has aged, and is a constant reminder of her own fate. Her goals include finding the key to regaining her immortality, and she has begun to contemplate the possibility of using the army to take revenge upon Ynnidon (the elven empire and home of the Empress), or at least elves living within Brendir.

Selusia Ionisi, female elf (high) Wiz15: CR 15; Size M (5 ft., 3 in. tall); HD 15d4+15; hp 55; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+3 Dex); Attack +8/+3 melee, or +10/+5 ranged; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +10; AL LN; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Languages Spoken: Brendirian (Common), Ynnidonian (Elven), Gnome, Sylvan.

Skills and feats: Concentration +13, Craft +16, Hide +3, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (religion) +20, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Profession +19, Search +5, Spellcraft +20, Spot +3; Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Heighten Spell, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, [Scribe Scroll], Spell Focus (necromancy), Still Spell, Weapon Finesse (dagger).

Possessions: 59,000 gp in gear.

Wizard Spells Known (4/5/5/5/4/4/3/2): '0'-level: *arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance.* 1st-level: *cause fear, chill touch, feather fall, magic missile, mount, ray of enfeeblement, shield, shocking grasp, unseen servant.* 2nd-level: *alter self, blur, darkness, ghoul touch, knock, scare, spectral hand, summon monster II, web.* 3rd-level: *fly, gentle repose, halt undead, invisibility sphere, lightning bolt, magic circle against good, vampiric touch.* 4th-level: *contagion, enervation, fear, scrying, wall of ice.* 5th-level: *animate dead, cloudkill, dominate person, hold monster, magic jar, mirage arcana, teleport, wall of iron.* 6th-level: *circle of death, eyebite, flesh to stone, mass haste, mislead, repulsion, summon monster VI, tenser's transformation, veil.* 7th-level: *control undead, delayed blast fireball, ethereal jaunt, finger of death, insanity, limited wish, mass invisibility, power word, stun, teleport without error.*



R. Scott Kennan is the author of *Morningstar*, a golden-age fantasy setting scheduled for release in June 2003 by Goodman Games.

Morningstar was one of 11 semifinalists in the Wizards of the Coast setting search.

Piety

for  Morningstar

By R. Scott Kennan

Art by Galambus

Piety is a short d20 scenario set in the Morningstar campaign setting. Morningstar is a world in its golden age, where a dark Prophecy has begun to unfurl. Horrid aberrations crawl from the earth, while mysterious messengers deliver dark verses. The Canticle of the Morning Star, as the dark Prophecy is known, manifests in mysterious ways, and sometimes seems related to the appearance of aberrations. This adventure combines these themes.

This introductory adventure is suitable for characters of levels 1–3. *Piety* can be used in another world by placing the town of Tover's Brink along a natural river rather than the Canali, and by adjusting the history and sources of divine power for Sarool Jesterin.

All events take place in the year 1608 on the 25th and 26th days of Gret, the first month of autumn, and a day when Thraxis's planetary moon Arril rises at dusk.

Adventure Synopsis

The characters come to the town of Tover's Brink, which is built upon the banks of a man-made river and supported by high pillars. After they arrive they meet Sarool Jesterin, an Ijamvian cleric, and his human and inhuman flock. His unusual

raft has attracted the attention of the townspeople, who cajole the characters into investigating. In doing so they discover the aberrant creatures who treat Sarool as a god, possibly rescuing him from his own folly and protecting the humble town from the creatures' ravages.

Adventure Background

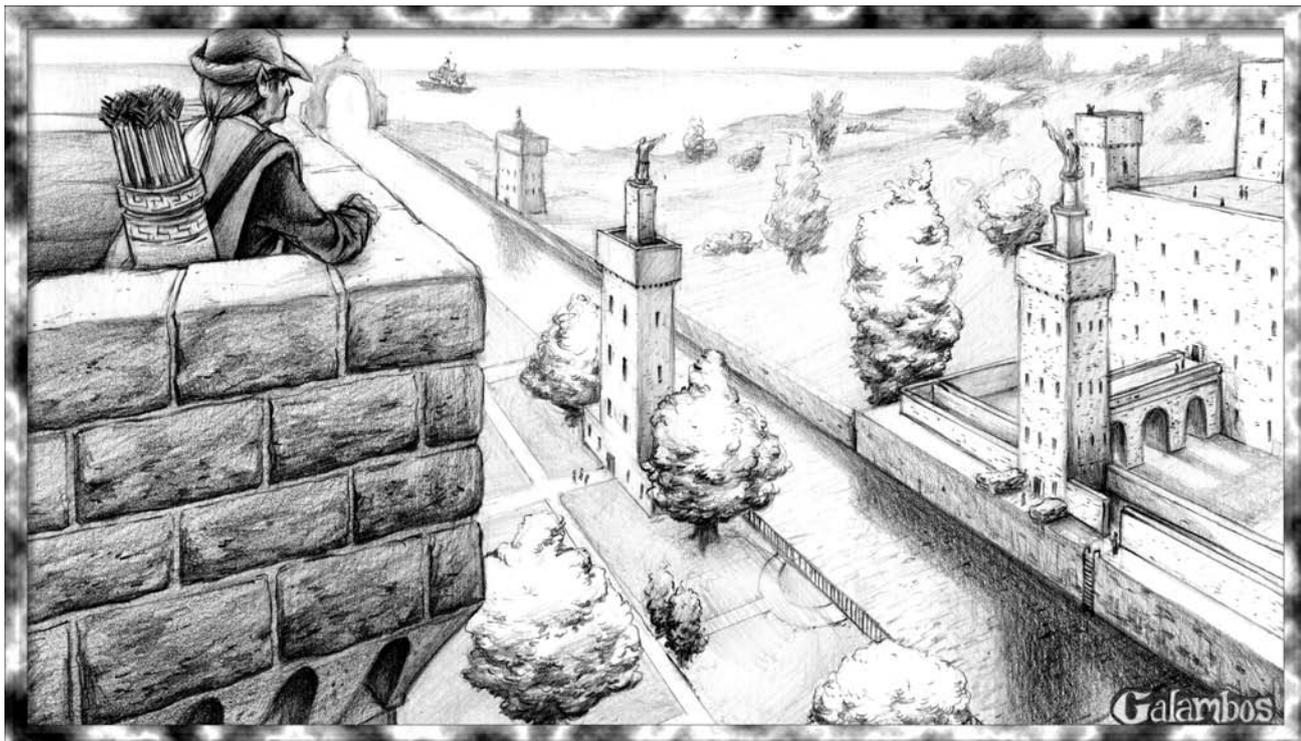
Sarool Jesterin originally hails from Ijamvhul, an empire that elevates the will of men above any god. He has secretly and willingly allowed psychic parasites called pit leeches to feed on him, in the hope that they will help to make him a god. Believing that by keeping them close he can gain greater worship energies, he has carried them with him among his cargo.

Sarool hired a halfling fip ship to ferry him to Brend, the capital of the Brendirian Empire. Along the way the pit leeches bred and laid their eggs. He is now trying to find a discreet way to get rid of the soon-to-be-hatched young, since he knows he would die if they were all to attach to him. His pit leech worshippers will turn on him if he kills the young, but he will die if he doesn't get rid of them.

The ship's crew discovered his secret and cast him and his four followers off their ship on a mahogany raft with a *hold of holding* used to contain his pit leech followers. They floated downstream until they were pulled ashore in Tover's Brink. Sarool is trying to think of a way to rid himself of his parasites' young, and waiting for a ship to sail by in order to secure passage to Brend.

Adventure Hooks

This adventure presupposes that the characters are in the eastern part of central Homm. The characters might be seeking transport along the Canali, monster hunting, or just exploring. Alternately, they may receive an invitation from an acquaintance to visit his home in Tover's Brink. Tover's Brink is located 100 miles due east of Sionis, where the Prestarren branch of the Canali crosses Homm to pass through the Onimer mountains



The rest of the adventure assumes that the party arrives at the town just after nightfall. If they wait until morning, the adventure can be played normally with slight adjustments to the descriptions and with all further events occurring after moonrise the following night.

Tower's Brink

You crest a high hill, exiting the forest just as the sun is setting. Arril has just risen over the majestic Onimer Mountains. There is a hurricane brewing in the northern hemisphere. A magnificent panorama stretches out before you. Green foothills roll smoothly to the north, dotted by sparse copses of hardwood trees that have begun to display autumn's spectrum of gold and red leaves.

The Hommish branch of the Canali rests on marble pillars, sloping gently from the western horizon to pass into a mountain to the east, about a mile from where you stand. Roughly a quarter of a mile from this mountain cavern there is a small town, half floating, half built upon the banks of the great raised river. At the base of the monument, a lush forest spreads out for about three miles to the north.

A haphazard wooden staircase ascends from the forest floor at odd angles to the top of the structure, creaking audibly in the breeze even at this distance. The sparkling water reflects the rich hues of twilight, and you could just make it there by nightfall. The warm breath of the day has begun to cool rapidly, hinting at a cold night ahead.

The staircase is poorly designed but well constructed. Its planks are not fitted, but nailed on top of each other, squeaking and shuddering with every step. It rises in zig-zagging spurts to a height of 120 feet, the elevation of this portion of the Canali. If the characters refuse to use it, five very large thull return from hunting and cavalierly stomp up the steps with their quarry, a large deer strung between them on a pole.

Upon reaching the top of the staircase, the characters find themselves in the midst of a quaint if disorderly town of shacks, some as many as three precarious stories high, built upon the southern bank of the aqueduct and upon rafts that bob in the water up to halfway across the 300 yard wide river. The marble underfoot is dew-covered and slick with algae. Running or moving faster than a walk may result in a fall (Dexterity check, DC 14). Near the sairs this isn't too dangerous, since there are railings, but falling anywhere else may be deadly. There is a 120 foot drop to the forest floor.

This town makes no concession to the standard Brendirian city model, and is haphazardly arrayed as a result of necessity and poor planning. The south bank only allows construction one building deep, with a narrow sidewalk between the buildings and the water. Broad docks extend the habitable area in places, but most of the commotion is centered on the water itself. A hastily scrawled sign reads "Welcome to Tower's Brink."

Warm lights flicker in the windows of most homes, and people are cheerfully gathering and socializing out in the open. Most are congregating in and around the town's makeshift tavern: a dhow-like vessel that is in permanent dock (the

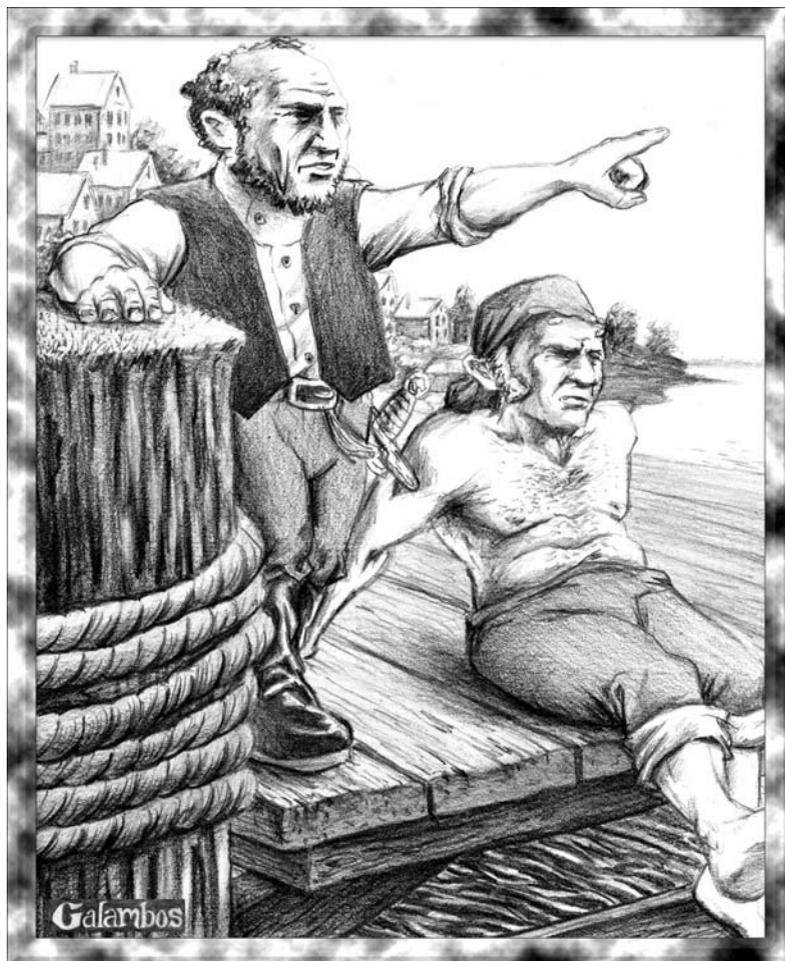
townsfolk have extended a bit of a wharf around the ship). It has a large door cut into its side and a sign reading "Diver's Tavern."

Five yards to the left of the tavern, on the dock, is a large wooden box (the *hold of holding*) used as a raised platform to support a crude tent. In front of this tent sits an elderly, one-legged man. At his side rests a crude crutch. It's obvious that the natives are giving him a wide berth.

This is Fend, who is guarding the *hold of holding* at Sarool's command. If the PCs approach him, he will rudely shoo them off, only revealing that he is here with his lord, the divine Sarool Jesterin, and what little he knows of how they got here. As far as he's concerned, the halflings cheated Sarool out of his passage fee and set them adrift to die. He's bitter about that and makes disparaging comments about any nearby halflings. See below for more information on Fend.

Closer inspection reveals the box to be made of mahogany, with a hinged door that is locked with a huge padlock (Open Locks, DC 15; break DC 30). Runes and illegible inscriptions adorn it on all surfaces. Lifting the door once the lock is opened requires a Strength check (DC 13).

If the characters open the box, skip to "Jacks in the Box," below.



Diver's Tavern

As you enter the smoky room, the ship rocks slightly. The small room is well kept but sparse. Barrels serve as chairs and crates as tables. Lanterns swing slowly from the ceiling, casting shifting light upon the bare walls of what was once a cargo hold. The diverse patronage are in fine cheer, but are disheveled and in need of bathing. A rotund halfling serves wine and ale to a dozen halfling, human and thull patrons while others walk in to place orders.

One robust man stands out, if only for his cleanliness. He wears a strangely cut midnight blue robe, with crisply angled shoulders and a red trim. He has black hair and piercing blue eyes that stand out even in these dim quarters. He is carousing with three women: a thull, a human, and a halfling. Behind him on the floor in the corner sit three humans: a young man, a hefty woman, and a middle aged man. All are half asleep.

The well-dressed man is Sarool, and the three seated on the floor behind him are three of his four human cultists: Elb, Hostra, and Junis. See below for more information on these characters. All are friendly, and will tell the same story that Fend will tell, albeit with their own angles. Sarool is maintaining the same story, but will quickly try to change the subject to himself. If the PCs seem gullible enough, he may even try to extoll the virtues of faith in him, to a hearty round of laughter from the rest of the room.

SAROOL JESTERIN

SAROOL JESTERIN, Male human Clr5: CR6 (+1 due to pit leech influence); Size M (5 ft, 8 in. tall); HD 5d8+5; hp 35 (currently 25); Init -1 [+0*]; Spd 30 ft; AC 9 [10*] (-1 Dex); Attack +3 melee, or +2 ranged; SV Fort +5 [3*], Ref +1 [+0*], Will +8; AL CN; Str 10, Dex 9 [10*], Con 12 [8*], Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 16 [18*]

Languages Spoken: Ijamvian, Brendirian.

Skill points: Clr 28

Skills and feats: Concentration +7, Craft +4, Hide -1, Intuit Direction +5, Listen +4, Move Silently -1, Profession +11 (political agitator), Spellcraft +7, Spot +4, Swim +3; Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Extra Turning.

Possessions: +1 small steel shield; +1 hide armor; masterwork dagger; 14 bolts; masterwork Triskatar crossbow; +1 Ijamvian viper clamp; bag of holding; potion of lesser restoration; potion of wisdom; potion of false life; potion of cure light wounds (x2); scroll of divine flame (divine magic, lv 5); key to the hold of holding; 26 gp

Cleric Domains: Strength, Travel

Cleric Spells/day: 5/4+1/3+1/2+1

[5/4+2/3+2/2+2*]

**Stats and spells in brackets indicate alteration by the pit leeches' Astral Tether ability. Use the bracketed numbers until the pit leeches are killed. 20 pit leeches are currently tethered to Sarool.*

Like most Ijamvian clerics, Sarool is a priest who worships himself (see page 137 of Morningstar). He left Ijamvuh in order to find others passive enough to do the same, and makes a living as a highly-paid political agitator for rich Brendirian politicians. He is slightly overweight but handsome and well kept, with neat black hair, a goatee, and sharp black and midnight blue outfits in many styles, most trimmed or highlighted with red. He is not particularly suited to the adventuring life, but he has had a few

escapades and is always on the look out for a high-profile quest that will help impress would-be followers.

Thus far, he has convinced only a handful of admirers to believe in him. He hopes to acquire a shard of the Prism to change that (see page 89 of Morningstar for details of the Prism). He sees himself as an embryonic god of subterfuge and hidden strength, and uses his magics to promote this self-image, which was challenged many times in his portly Ijamvian childhood. Such challenges only served to strengthen his resolve to emerge triumphant as the first man to successfully will himself down the road to full godhood. He has a soft spot for the underdog in life, and despite his limitless self-love, he tries to inspire those who are kept from reaching their highest potential. Unlike many Ijamvians, he doesn't believe himself to be better than everyone else; quite the opposite, he thinks that no man or "god" is better than another. It is simply a matter of power and the illusion of such.

Sarool is grossly intolerant of true believers of established religions, but tries to shelter others from such thoughts. He has recently uncovered some secrets regarding the reasons for the appearance of the Strangers that he believes will help him get noticed by the Canticle. When he does so, he believes, he will be that much closer to his goal. Currently he travels with four cultists, and feels bad for misleading them, but truly hopes to make it up to them when he becomes a deity. He has 20 pit leeches astrally tethered to him.

Sarool's Human Cultists

Sarool is traveling with 4 cultists, who hang on his every word and follow his commands. In exchange, he protects them and makes decisions for them. All are all first level commoners, impressed by the well-spoken and exotic cleric. None has an Intelligence higher than 8.

The cultists are: Junis, a male who was near death after a kobold run-in when Sarool dispatched the threat and healed him; his corpulent but pretty wife Hostra, who was cured of warts; Fend, an elderly, irritable one-legged man with a crutch; and Elb, an idealistic youth swayed by promises of a glorious afterlife with his deceased parents. Junis is the most level-headed, Hostra is the most enthusiastic, Fend violently opposes any suggestion that his lord is less than what he says he is, and Elb gets tearful when speaking of his lord's deeds. They do not know about the pit leeches.

All the cultists are 1st-level commoners (3 hp, Str 14). They carry Sarool's "favored weapon," a specially engraved dagger (considered masterwork).

The other patrons think Sarool is likeable enough, but worry about his followers. They also speak of the strange raft, and a Gather Information check (DC 10) will reveal that one NPC patron recognizes the raft as a *hold of holding*. They will express great curiosity as to its contents, and will try to put the characters up to opening it, making dares and bets, and even going so far as to offer a small reward.

One halfling patron is particularly friendly—the duly elected "mayor" of Tover's Brink, Jondle "Diver" Polve (male halfling Exp 4; hp 20, speaks Brendirian, Ynnidonian, Halfling, and Thullish). A carpenter by trade, he oversaw most of the construction of the town, but was too busy to do everything. His next project is an inn, since many who come here lament the town's lack of one.

He offers to help the PCs in any way he can, and will even pay for a round of drinks. This isn't a burden, since he owns the tavern, which he bought when it sunk while at dock. He patched it up, but it wasn't seaworthy, so he found another use for it. That project earned him his nickname.

Jondle is especially curious about the raft. He claims he can't open it himself because of "sensitivity to his official status in town." But, like the other patrons, he's glad to see it opened by someone else.

The Canticle Speaks

As soon as the relationship between Sarool and his followers is clear, a loud, clear voice can be heard from the river. It seems someone is speaking from a passing boat.

*He who dares to summon me, shall search and he shall seek.
For fate knows none are truly free; the God is ever weak.
Lo almighty deity, you search and deep you dig.
Your noble swains have piety: two boys, some bugs, a pig.*

If the players rush outside, they arrive just in time to see a heavily cloaked riverman passing on a reed boat. He is slowly poling along silently, now that his message has been imparted. If any PCs catch up to him he vanishes, leaving the cloak behind and reed boat. The boat is sodden and will sink in 1d4 hours. The cloak is moth-eaten and is nonmagical.

Such is the voice of the Canticle. Sarool will be both excited and jarred by the message: he has finally been noticed by the Canticle, but the message doesn't seem promising.

After this, the townspeople are even more curious than ever about the *hold of holding*. And they're just as scared of Sarool, leading them to try all the harder to persuade the characters to open it.

Jacks in the Box

Read this text once the characters open the *hold of holding*:

As the door swings upward, a large room is revealed. Immediately, over a dozen hopping creatures that barely reach a man's shin spill out and leap toward you. They are nasty, five-legged lamprey-mouthed beasts that are obviously aberrations. A foul, sweaty stench rolls out of the room after them. The space is filled with offal a foot deep, and contains a mass of shiny amber hives.

By now the sun has set and the moon has risen. The pit leeches are disorganized by Arril's bright light for one round (see creature description) and may be attacked with ranged weapons or by foolishly leaping into the water. Standard penalties for fighting underwater apply to any who attempt so. The water is 12 feet deep.

The pit leeches will initially attack, but Sarool will telepathically beg them to stop, and after one round of combat they willingly obey, retreating by swimming or running along the far bank towards the cavern where the canal passes into the mountain. There are 20 pit leeches in the swarm.

The box is a small *hold of holding*, the next logical step up from a *bag of holding*. Its outer dimensions are 10×10×1, and it is composed of wood. A large 9×9 door swings open vertically to an internal volume of 10×10×30. Unlike a *bag of holding*, a *hold of holding* does not risk damage from sharp objects, and only by

forcibly loading cargo with enough force to splinter wood does one risk destruction of the *hold*. Extradimensional spaces placed inside have the same effects as they do upon a *bag of holding*, once the door is closed.

Further investigation of the interior reveals the skeletal remains of four cows, utterly clean, and a cluster of over 100 fist-sized, pulpy spheres that glisten with mucous. If these are held before a light, a tiny star-shaped "tadpole" can be seen squirming within its casing. These are pit leech eggs. Each has 1 hp, and may be destroyed by any form of violence. If they are attacked, 2d6 hatch immediately, and emerge from under the mass of their siblings with one hp but otherwise identical to adults, just smaller.

When the pit leeches escape, Sarool will act surprised. If questioned, he will hastily blurt that he knew nothing of the creatures. Sense Motive reveals he is lying. Explaining the bovine carcasses, he will say that he had cattle in the hold to sell in Brend.

At this point, if the party is not already pursuing the pit leeches, Jondle will try to make sure they do.

Into the Breach

If the party is intrepid enough to chase the escaped pit leeches, they find them only a short distance into the cavern. About 1,000 feet into the cave, the lip of the canal abruptly ends and marble gives way to stone. There is a cave opening on the other side of the river.

If the characters swim across, they discover an ancient worker's camp, which has become the pit leeches' makeshift lair. The cavern has a surprise in store for the PCs: four stirges (CR 2) lurk inside, ready to attack any decent-sized meal.

If any character passes within five feet of the edge of the canal while fighting, he may fall. Whenever any combatant takes damage in a square that is at the edge of the canal, he must make a Reflex save (DC 10) or go over the edge.

Pit Leech Lair

When the PCs arrive, the remaining pit leeches are in a trance, rocking in unison and humming a discordant melody. Energy is leeching from their bodies and coalescing into an orb. In the center of the orb can be seen an idealized but somehow aberrant image of Sarool. Their vision of him is one of power and grotesque might.

If the PCs explore the cave, they find old tools worth 25 gp and ancient uncut gems mined during the cave excavation worth 120 gp. If they take more than 10 rounds to explore, the pit leeches come out of their trance and attack immediately. Be sure to take into account darkness or light penalties for the PCs and pit leeches, respectively.

Conclusion

Upon defeating the pit leeches, the characters will have gained allies in Jondle and the entire town of Tover's Brink. If Sarool and his followers have not been accosted, he will be grateful, somewhat grudgingly, and will ally with the characters if they will have him. He seems clumsier, now, and not quite as magnetic as he first did. (His ability scores have dropped back to their normal levels now that the leeches are dead.)

The town rewards the characters with goods and supplies totaling 75 gp, and the promise of a permanent room at the inn, when it's completed. Sarool makes a show of giving them his two potions of *cure light wounds*, or his Triskatar crossbow if the

potions have been used already. He may or may not travel with the PCs for a short while, at the GMs discretion.

At dawn a ship arrives with goods for the town, and passage as far as Brend may be bought.

APPENDIX: Pit Leech

Tiny Aberration

Hit Dice: 1/2 d8 (2 hp)

Initiative: +7 (Dex)

Speed: 50 ft

AC: 25 (+4 size, +7 Dex, +4 Natural)

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+6

Attack: 5 claws +7 melee (1d2-1)

Full Attack: 2 claws +11 melee (1d2), 3 claws +6 melee (1d2), bite +1 melee (1d4)

Space/Reach: 2 ½ ft/0 ft

Special Qualities: Astral Tether

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +7, Will +3

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 25, Con 11, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 11

Skills: Balance +9, Climb +3, Handle Animal +3, Hide +9, Intimidate +2, Jump +11, Knowledge (religion) +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +9, Spot +3, Survival +3, Tumble +11, Use Magic Device +2

Feats: Acrobatic, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Finesse

Environment: Any underground

Organization: Swarm (8-16)

Challenge Rating: ½

Treasure: Double standard

Alignment: Usually lawful evil (entire swarm shares alignment)

Advancement: Small (1-2 HD)

A pit leech walks and jumps on three long legs and has two clawed, finger-like strikers that it uses to grip a target. Its mouth is circular, like a lamprey, with row upon row of incisors.

Pit leeches are a particularly devout race, for as intelligent as they are, they worship those they feed upon for any length of time. A particularly large or resilient beast could conceivably become a godling given enough time with the suckling pit leeches. Incidentally, flayed dwarves say they are delicious when roasted in a fire built from ganga cactus husks.

Combat

Astral Tether (Su): Once a pit leech has successfully fed upon a victim, it attaches its astral cord to the prey. Thereafter, it will always know the location of this victim, and receives a +2 circumstance bonus to all attacks (but not damage) and skill uses against his prey. If the pit leech acquires some method of teleportation (such as a device), it may use this method to teleport directly to the victim with no chance of destruction, regardless of Arril's position in the sky. This tie works both ways, to an extent. The victim receives no bonus to skill checks or attacks,

but gains a +2 circumstance bonus to spells cast against the pit leech, and may send telepathic messages to it.

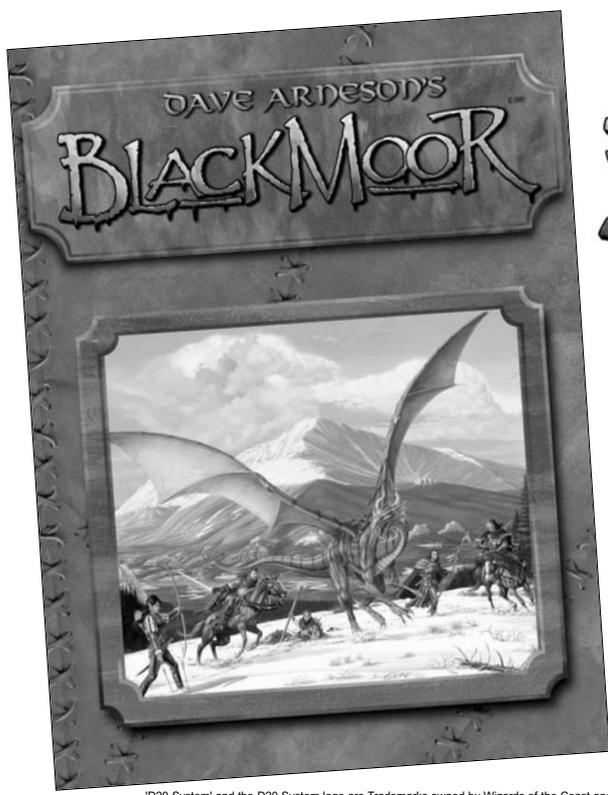
For every 5 pit leeches that attach themselves, the victim takes one point of temporary Con damage that will not heal without removal of the pit leeches, and receives a +1 enhancement bonus to any two attributes except Con. For every 10 attached, the host receives one divine bonus spell (if a divine spellcaster) per level per day. The victim becomes their deity, and they worship him daily.

A pit leech can only be tethered to one target at a time, but many can be tethered to a single target. *Dispel magic* or *remove curse* destroys one tether with each casting.

Vulnerability to Light: Pit leeches suffer a -8 circumstance penalty to attacks and AC in full daylight, a -4 penalty at dusk (or when Arril is full and in view), and -2 in the presence of a *light* spell or torch.

Trance: While worshipping, Pit Leeches are entirely oblivious to their surroundings until one of their number is attacked. They will worship for a half hour each day if uninterrupted. If attacked they will be stunned for the first round, but thereafter attack normally.

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Faith & Lies

Three types of belief in the  Morningstar setting

By R. Scott Kennan • Art by Kennon James and William McAusland

Introduction

Mythology expresses the deepest values of a culture. This fact can aid a GM in creating a truly exciting and vibrant world. Unfortunately, the default assumption for most settings is that there is a single unified pantheon that runs the world, even if the gods are seen differently by separate cultures. For many, the author included, this does not ring true, and ignores infinite opportunities for campaign development. This article will explore a few game-expanding options for faith as they appear in Morningstar, presented for use in any setting.

The world of Morningstar has no single unifying pantheon. Each culture has its own myths, filled with its own gods, and for most of the world's history, they were distant. Until recently, divine attention was rare for mortals, the stuff of half-forgotten tales. Now, there are newcomers – usurper gods, vying for the hearts of the worshippers who sustain the elder gods. The native gods are virtual forces of nature, or the living dreams of a people, while many of the usurpers are little more than immensely powerful planar beings. The power of the usurpers is more brazen, and more easily given than that of the autochthonic deities. While the invaders are wont to appear in their avatars, the native deities are more ephemeral, and not naturally inclined to shows of divine prowess. In order to survive, however, the elders have had to resort to similar tactics, such as granting clerical spells, and on occasion, manifesting before mortals. They battle not in some distant heaven or hell, but upon the souls of humanity. This divine tug of war is but one of many revolutions raging across the globe, but it may prove to be the most decisive for the citizens of the Nine Empires.

The Old Truths

Many pantheons on Thraxis evolved from local religions that were absorbed by conquering nations, in a process that continues to this day. A given group of gods within a culture may be eclectic, and represent ideals that are apocryphal or even heretical to the rest of the faith. Followers of the same gods form sects, and can come into conflict with one another. One pantheon, in the distant Empire of Quetapan (Morningstar's answer to Mesoamerica), fits this depiction perfectly, and several of its deities are presented here. This is an empire forged in brutality, and its gods reflect this legacy, but the civilization has since become more refined. Now, Quetapan is a source of cultural and economic influence that reaches even to the distant and powerful empire of Brendir.

Macheko [Match-Ay-Koe]

The lawful good buyer of noble souls, Macheko is The Merchant, the Lord of Coins, and Cochamakama's Face.

When a faithful Quetapani dies, his soul goes up for bid. He stands before avatars of Blue Mask and Inji (the sun goddess and moon god of the pantheon) and they hold an auction, attended by the souls of his dead relatives and enemies. Each of them contributes their bids to save or damn the soul of the deceased. His friends and relatives defray the cost of his soul, while his enemies raise it with their bids on behalf of Jaokanama, the buyer of ignoble souls. Macheko will buy a soul if it remains cheap enough. Otherwise, it goes to Jaokanama, the ruler of the lower realm, who may do what he will with it. Very rarely, some say, Macheko decides to buy a soul at any cost, but only those of the greatest heroes of an age. Macheko's Domains are Good, Knowledge, Law, and Commerce.

Worshippers

Worshippers build temples to Macheko at the highest point in the local landscape, and they are set into the earth there. This represents the underworld role of the god as an uplifting force for the dead. Macheko finds most of his worship in the time after a death, or at a time when death looms, such as before a battle, though many reputable Quetapani merchants dealing with living clientele pay homage to him as their chief deity. His clerics have earned the name "bargainers" of late, because of their shrewd business sense, though their traditional name, "reminders," is still widely used. It is their role to let their followers know when their value is decreasing, and to ensure that they are not swindled in daily transactions. In Quetapani society, Macheko's clerics and lay priests often run successful businesses, donating most of their profits to the church.

Seram-Cor [Sare-am Core]

The Cult of the bat god Seram-Cor works to take away the fear that most people instinctively have of darkness. Represented as a bat-shaped silhouette, with stars on the underside of his wings, Seram-Cor is the subject of many dark tales. The stories say that he flies souls to and from the underworld, and protects travelers at night. In recent centuries, some sects have begun to teach that he is in fact a liaison between Jaokanama and Macheko, but many true believers see him as a chief deity, unaffiliated with either, and possibly diametrically opposed to them. He is most commonly worshipped at the start of a long journey, or by students of the occult. Seram-Cor is associated with the domains of Animals, *Dreams*, Knowledge and Travel. His favored weapon is the net.

Worshippers

Clerics and followers of Seram-Cor believe that only by exploring the nether-realms can one reach the highest ones. While the rest of the culture sees the Quetapanii hell in Hrum Vaat (the aberrant empire deep within the earth), followers of the Bat God see unrecognized agents of the celestial. For this reason, Seram-Cor's temples are located at the mouths of deep caves, and the clergy will travel deep into the labyrinthine grottoes on waking vision quests. Bats are welcome in and around these temples, as are more dangerous, related creatures.

Atchetak [Atch-uh-tack]

Atchetak is a chaotic neutral blood god most often portrayed as a wild and battle-scarred warrior, accompanied by scantily clad maidens. When the Latoma people conquered the desert province of Kukitzlan, the Kukixt people were forcefully divested of their blood-drinking gods, except for their chief deity, whom they would not betray. Atchetak survived, as did his bitter blood brother, Guvan Hish, though in a much smaller capacity. Atchetak has remained a force for righteous vengeance, sacrifice, and according to some orders, murder. Over the years, Atchetak has lessened his demands on his followers,

at least for the popular aspect of the faith. No longer does he demand blood sacrifice, and he reluctantly grants spells. He has conceded his role as a weather deity, in the interest of survival within the Quetapanii pantheon. Atchetak's domains are *Blood*, *Destruction*, *Fire*, *Magic*, and *War*. His favored weapon is the Macuahuitl, or fanged sword.

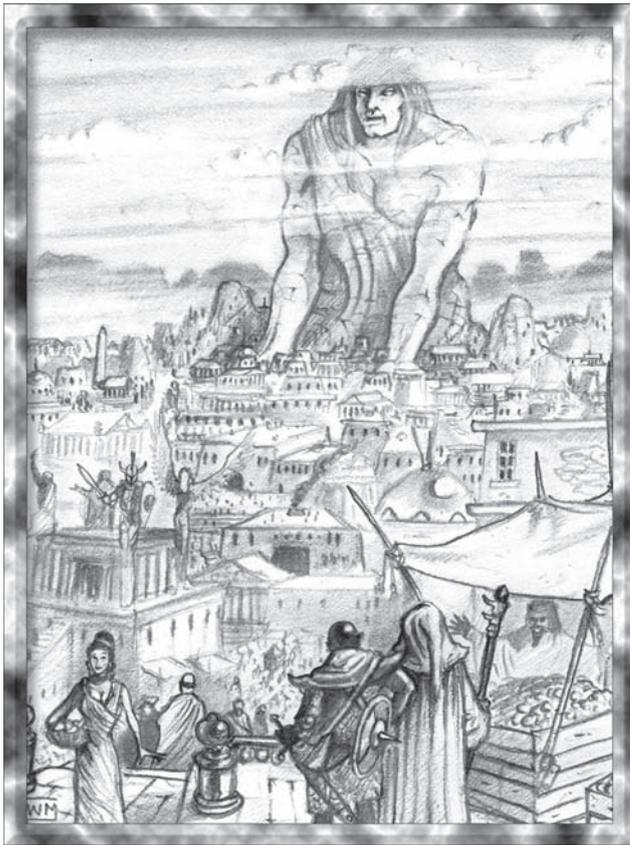
Worshippers

Atchetak's temples were traditionally ziggurats, and in remote desert locales, they remain so. In other areas, however, he finds worship at small shrines and altars that merely resemble them in miniature. Blood is rarely used in ceremonies anymore; instead, red berries or fruits are crushed upon the altars and stone to give them the rich stain that Atchetak demands.

Tobragal [Toe-bra-gahl]

Tobragal is the neutral god of time in the Quetapan pantheon, who resembles a gargantuan toad or frog; the eater of every moment that has passed. His realm, some say, is in the center of the nether realm, where he sits on his slime-covered throne. His domains are *Luck*, *Prophesy*, *Time*, and *Water*. He has no favored weapon, though some prefer the whip.





Worshippers

Tobragal's temples are located in swamps and wetlands, built from rough-hewn stone. Only his priesthood commonly sees these temples, along with pilgrims seeking their destinies. He receives prayers for guidance, when the supplicant wishes to forget something terrible, or at the start of new ways of life and business deals. His priests wear coarse, leathery robes, resembling the skin of a toad.

Interlopers

Usurper gods can be wrought from the spirits of ancient heroes, whose legends live on after them, or they can be invaders from other planes or beyond. These gods offer many enticements to those who would give them worship energies. One is easy access to clerical magics, and even miracles, when it suits their plans. Another is the "Usurper Gift." This power is bestowed upon a true follower, and gives them an edge that the elder gods cannot or will not match. An example usurper god is given below.

Ilzerebt

Ilzerebt is a chaotic neutral God of Knowledge and Lies. It takes the form of a demonic serpent, with two heads, one atop the other, misplaced eyes and chaotic rows of teeth that fill both gullets. As a particularly weak usurper, Ilzerebt can only manifest in this single form, though it may appear in any of its temples as long as the sun has set.

Ilzerebt, like many of the Usurper Gods, hails from a reality that is alien to that of Morningstar. Ilzerebt does not speak, but communicates via emotional impressions, that leave no doubt regarding meaning to the listener. It effectively speaks as the listener's own inner voice. Though not evil, it aids in all acts of deception, diversion, and betrayal. Conversely, to lie effectively, one must know how to bend the truth, and thus Ilzerebt is

a god of knowledge. Its domains are Chaos, Knowledge, and Trickery, though it only has one spellcasting priest and priestess per temple.

Worshippers

Temples devoted to Ilzerebt are rare, but those few that have sprung up are similar. Each is located at a natural height, such as a mountaintop, and has six pillared 'walls' which support a roof. Inside the temple is a shallow pool, no more than ankle deep, with still reflections that are marred only by a single jade edifice, the central chamber in which the temple's high priestess resides. Other followers live in communes around the temple, tended to by a single male priest.

Usurper Gift: +30 to a single Bluff check, Knowledge check, or saving throw once per week, declared before the roll is made.

The Godless

The converse of the faith that the Quetapanii and other cultures of this world display, is the pragmatic, and some say cynical, creed of the Ijamvians. This culture will not bow to any god, but refuses to be deprived of divine power. Thus, the Ijamvian tradition of Zanoee, or "each man a god." Zanoee clerics sacrifice one character level in order to create a divine focus in their own image on the astral plane. By worshipping this icon, and by getting others to follow them, they gain access to clerical magics and can gain levels as a cleric of any two domains, and powers over undead in accord with their alignments. These priests even gain an afterlife through the discipline. At the end of their lives, they may choose to transubstantiate to any heaven or hell that will have them.

For each follower that the priest gains, he receives a one-time award of experience points equaling the combined Cha, Int, and Wis scores of the follower. He may only maintain a number of followers equaling his level times his Charisma bonus. As a consequence of their worship, he may cast any spell upon himself that he has prepared, once per day, without losing the spell. The maximum level of this spell is the nearest square root of the number of followers he has, as shown on the table to the right. If he ever achieves 21st level, he will become immortal, and may begin the walk towards godhood.

Followers	Free Spell level
1-3	1
4-8	2
9-15	3
16-24	4
25-35	5
36-48	6
49-63	7
64-80	8
81+	9

Conclusion

As you can see, there are numerous ways to handle faith in the context of d20 fantasy. The game mechanics need not get in the way of flavorful expression of this faith, in the context of a given culture. No longer does there need to be a single unifying pantheon, which all cultures revere, no matter how alien it seems to them. Faith can be a powerful tool for diversifying your setting's cultures, whether you play in Morningstar or another campaign. Experiment with it, and watch your setting become real before your eyes.

