

# HEROQUEST

## CHAMPIONS OF THE REACHING MOON



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# CHAMPIONS OF THE REACHING MOON

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SEDENYA BRIGHTENS THE DARK CORNERS, AND THE KNOWLEDGE  
HERE WILL LIGHTEN YOUR SOULS.





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NATHA DARKENS  
THE LIGHT  
CORNERS, AND  
THE KNOWLEDGE  
HERE WILL  
DARKEN YOUR  
SOULS.





# INTRODUCTION

An audacious tomb-raider, still cursed from the time his legendary luck ran out...

Hard-bitten Lunar special forces, teams of men and dogs tracking and bringing down the enemies of the state...

An ambitious merchant prince who would see rival houses fall if they stand in the way of his upward march to power...

Fearless explorers about to venture deep into the bowels of a magical volcano...

An Imperial agent, stranded without support or guidance amongst a barbarian people whom he starts to think of as kin...

A merry-crewed river barge, that becomes something else...

Lunar magistrates, who will stop at nothing to investigate a crime, not even death...

The Lunar Empire is an empire of peoples, leagues, associations, and gatherings. It is shaped by social interactions, from the high politics of Moonson's Court to the day-to-day jokes and negotiations of the bazaar. There are plots aplenty, rivalries and alliances are equally common, and games set within the Empire ought to stress this social dimension. This book provides narrators with a rich array of organizations and individuals with which players can interact. It is also full of story seeds, adventure outlines, and background information to further develop the vibrant and dynamic world of the Empire.

This book is built around an Association, one of the broad alliances that help shape the Empire. This Association, the Immanent Action Liberation, is a particularly active and zealous one, committed to spreading the Lunar Way abroad and also strengthening its political role and religious voice at home. As such, it contains an array of constituent leagues and other bodies, from conspiratorial cabals of schemers to rough-edged military units, from canny merchants to open-handed missionaries. Thirteen of these organizations are detailed here, along with fourteen narrator characters working for, with, or sometimes against the Association.

WE ARE ALL US.  
EXCEPT FOR THE OTHERS.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

These organizations can thus be allies or patrons of player-heroes, or hero bands for them to join. They can also be antagonists, especially for games in which the heroes are opposed to the Empire. Many, after all, have reason to be in Dragon Pass. They also are intended to illustrate something about the complexity of Imperial life and be used as they are or simply for inspiration as part of the backdrop for games in the Empire.

In some cases, secondary characters (contacts, allies, and the like) have been given some abilities and keywords, in others not—on the whole, this is because the former are more likely to interact directly and more competitively with player-heroes.





# THE IMMANENT ACTION LIBERATION

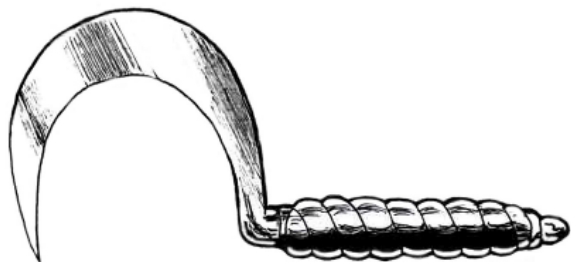
## A LUNAR ASSOCIATION

We are the Immanent Action Liberation, a dominant grouping of several associations and leagues melded together by the philosophy we uphold, the ideology that inspires us and the unceasing need for vigilance and direct action against the many terrors and errors that would destroy or subvert our way of life.

The Way of Natha is our shining light; our defining concepts are the Imperial Doctrines of Bergorthus the Unsullied by Doubt. We were born in the fire of disaster after the Tyranny of Sheng and the Apocalypse Night of Horrors and know that we have served the Empire well against all who would harm or oppose it. Some of the names we are known by are:

- ❶ **House Kortillion**, named after our founding father who selflessly delays divinity on the Moon Herself only so that he may continue to guide us.
- ❷ **The Imminent Liberationist Association**, because without the spreading of our Way and Doctrine to those ignorant of the truth, we shall not increase our strength.
- ❸ **The Fist of Doctrine**, for while we have open hands to give our blessings and largesse, we also have a clenched fist to dispense our justice and truth.
- ❹ **The Unwavering Temple of Imperial Bergorthus in Glamour**, part of the Lunar Nathic Church and thus the Great Moon Radiance, is our place of worship, the core of our faith.
- ❺ **The Restoration of Balance** is a name we are called when matters economical are discussed in high society, for we are foremost in ensuring that the fiscal health of the empire is maintained.

The Hero Band Story Opportunity section provides guidelines whereby a typical player hero band might find employment with the Association, while the Scenario Hooks section gives suggestions as to what they might find themselves called on to do.



## I. HOUSE KORTILLION

We are of House Kortillion, a Seleran-Era House, instrumental in reforming the Empire after the reign of Kazkurtum, the Empty Emperor. As key participants in the great awakening and growth of Lunar power and culture, we have taken responsibility for our role and apply the Doctrines that guide us to all aspects of our activities.

The Kortillion himself is revered beyond all mortals, wise beyond his 150 years of life, powerful beyond question. However, his state of enlightened higher consciousness is such that few visitors can understand the limpid transcendence of his words, instead hearing nothing but slurred mumbles from drooling lips. It is fortunate that there are those who can decipher his communications, chief among whom is Surentaraltara the Inexplicable, First of the House. However, it is her son, Enteroy Ruby-Minded, who is the Elect of the Seven and thus head of the association as a whole.

**Connection:** We control many aspects of power; it is our task to ensure that all of our interests are served by correct actions, guided by our beliefs and the laws of our House. Thus all who obey us are pious in their worship of Natha, educated in the Doctrines of Bergorthus and obedient to the wisdom of Sage Kortillion who oversees us all.

**Components:** We are a great noble family in mighty Glamour, we are the lifeblood of the Empire, its loyal servants and fierce protectors.

- ❶ **Unwavering Temple of Imperial Bergorthus.** The cult of Bergorthus, a militant segment of the Nathic Church, is served by our large Natha temple in Glamour, which also has annexes for the barracks and training grounds for the Doctrinaires, as well as the Lofty Tower of the Sage Council. All offices of House Kortillion have a shrine to Bergorthus, who brings a Doctrine without shades of gray or doubt, one of pure justice to the Way of Natha.
- ❷ **The Seven Servant Society Associations.** The House is served by the families and Leagues that provide the Seven Servant Society with the skills and manpower needed to support a noble Lunar house. These Seven Required Servants were laid down in law by Takenegi and should the inspecting Scale of Nobility find them wanting, the House would be embarrassed or worse. The Seven are Soldiers, Entertainers, Servers, Scribes, Priests, Hunters, and Sailors.





## ENTEROY RUBY-MINDED

Enteroy is a fourth-generation Lunar aristocrat, steeped in the magics and insights of the Lunar Way. Groomed for greatness, his is a calm, quiet, and penetrating strength of character, and he is often likened to an assassin's sliver of moon-forged silver, compared with the showy and earnest vigor of his father, Agganath Maul-of-the-Goddess. Enteroy's knowledge is encyclopedic, his grasp of the politics of court subtle and masterful.

One unusual characteristic of Enteroy's is his interest in, and observance of, Lunar Law—especially given the extent to which the Immanent Action Liberation has shown itself willing to flout local and Imperial laws in pursuit of its higher mission. To some, this demonstrates the ultimate moral nature of the Association, and the extent to which crimes committed by members are the product of their own human failings. These people point to the relief efforts carried out by the Bright Line Outreach, the charitable work of the Ebon Middle Togas of the Three-Fold Drape, even the degree to which the Fist of Doctrine will welcome the orphaned, the destitute and the hopeless, as signs of the essentially benevolent nature of the Association, let down by a few bad apples.

Those of more cynical nature believe that Enteroy well-understands the expediencies of power and expansion. Such events as the Yellow Fantail Massacre and the discovery that bullion from the Induppan Mercantile Trust heist ended up funding the Shaven-Necked Sodality's ill-fated research project into "Regime Change in Dorastor" are, they say, not just due to the indiscretions and over-exuberances of specific individuals. Instead, these small-minded critics believe that Enteroy is simply ensuring his own deniability, preventing any of his and the Association's enemies from being able to make a direct connection between him and any crimes. Instead, he relies on the initiative of his underlings, fuelled and directed by ambiguous parables, cryptic metaphors, and when all else fails, discrete gestures and slightly uncomfortable mime.

## DOCTRINAIRES

*The Doctrinaires are the inner security force of House Kortillion, and thus also act as the secret police of the Association as a whole. They are typically picked at a young age from the junior branches of the family or even trusted sons and daughters of the Seven Servant Leagues and then drilled and trained for 7 years in the Lunar Way and 7 years in subtle and murderous Nathic disciplines. Those who grasp only the former become priests, those who master just the latter, warriors, but those whose bodies and faith are tempered alike, become the fearsome Doctrinaires. Although they are more often deployed covertly, when on formal duty, they wear orange head-sashes and bear distinctive ceremonial glaives. Enemies and members of the House alike tend to over-estimate their numbers, which are typically fewer than 50, but this illusion of ubiquity suits them well.*



**Hero Band Story Opportunity:** Joining the noble house except by birth is unlikely, though great service to the House has led to adoption far more often than one would see in a traditional Dara Happan House. There is scope for hero bands to be adopted into the Seven Servants, perhaps as Soldiers, Entertainers, Priests, Hunters or Sailors. The Doctrinaires often bulk up their local strength with hired Vexillae or use local criminal organizations to aid them.

**Player heroes:** The wondrous city of Glamour is our home but if you are a noble then you will travel far and wide in the service of the House, as will your servants. As an Applicator of Doctrine, both the overt and covert sides of House affairs are yours to observe and affect.

## SCENARIO HOOKS:

**Doctrinaires:** News comes of a lapse in Doctrine; the Hyassos Hinterland League of priests has been swayed in part by the wiles of the White Moon. Aid local resources in combating this scourge, find any traitors, seek out the source of this infection and destroy it.

**Assassination!** A rival Association has targeted our House; a noble is killed using an Entropic weapon that destroys much of the Gerdander Annex. Conduct an investigation; track the source of the weapon and from there, the perpetrators. Expedite their removal.

**Censorship with Extreme Prejudice:** Lop-Eared Geeld, a popular satiric entertainer of Glamour's Baker's Quarter, has caused a loss of face to our House by mocking our noble founder in public performance of his latest play—*The Self-Importance of Being Kortillion*. Against all logic, his seditious efforts have attracted large audiences, including members of our Seven Servant leagues. Observe the performances for traitors to our House, for funding from rivals, and seek a way to silence this insult permanently.

**The Sage Council:** The reclusive and introspective Sage Council of the House has accepted open debate with a rival philosophy. Our beliefs will be tested in many esoteric rituals and competitions. Some involve great journeys, hardships, heroquests and combat, others stretch the mind and spirit beyond breaking. Only the most courageous and pure of our House will be chosen.

**Soldiers:** The House needs defending, enemies need punishment. A Server League has been responsible for organizing vast thefts from our warehouses during the course of their work for us. Though now out of our Association, they require punishment. The House has been given leave for a pogrom to remove this stain from our honor. Burn their city block down, kill those who resist, and enslave the rest. Rumors of their League joining another Association are doubtless false.

**Priests:** The catacombs beneath the House compound are beset with angry city spirits that have passed our wards and terrify or kill our servants. Find the source of these evil manifestations, reinforce the wards and protect our people.

**Hunters:** Horrible deaths have occurred in the districts around our compound, with people slaughtered by some creature of hideous power. Track this creature and attempt to capture it as a gift to the Emperor's Insane Zoo. Use caution, for our sources in the Lunar Synod bring news of Eyzaali interest in the killings. Perhaps one of their creations has escaped its bonds?

**Sailors:** A ship has been chartered for a journey to the magical ice vaults of Birin to purchase a cargo for the next

Imperial Grand Orgy; one of the House nobles is commanding the mission. It needs sailors and marines to defend the coveted commodity against river pirates and rival houses that seek imperial favor.

## 2. THE BRIGHT LINE OUTREACH

We believe that where natives will not seek the Lunar Way, it is time for the Lunar Way to come to them. The Empire has a huge resource – the poor, the devoted, the criminal, the ambitious, the destitute, the curious, all moving outwards like the life-affirming glow of Rufelza. We establish, support and develop Lunar colonies in heathen lands, exploiting resources that can strengthen our Empire, and inching forward the bright line that is the Lunar Way. So far, we have settlements in Talastar and the Redlands, and we are beginning to establish them in Balazar, but there are many more regions we call 'blank lands', ready to be reddened.

**Connection:** We are proudly and openly linked with the Association.

**Components:** Each colony operates essentially autonomously, although the overall outreach program is coordinated from the Provincial Church's Ecclesia Minora in Ulatel's Leap in Vanch.

**Hero Band Story:** Colonization is a dangerous and politically sensitive venture, and one in which there is often need for guards, scouts, emissaries, and local troubleshooters of every kind. Given the far-flung nature of the Outreach, they favor inducting local hero bands committed to the Lunar Way to support their activities.

**Player Hero:** This organization would appeal to idealists and explorers, as well as those who would lead, defend, and support them.

**Resources:** The Bright Line has relatively few resources, but it does have excellent connections with the Provincial Church of the Seven Mothers.

## SCENARIO HOOKS:

**Heading to Griffin Mountain:** The rolling West Plains of Balazar would seem ideally suited to a colony able to bring metal ploughs and modern methods to this primitive land and make the scrubland flourish. The Balazarings have little real sense of modern property rights and even the friendly local chieftain—sorry, 'king'—is unwilling to provide outsiders with the necessary land. There is an embittered warrior of a local clan who would act as our proxy in this, but only if we lay to rest his father's ghost. Apparently this involves finding some mountain and retrieving a sword that was left at its peak, which can then be buried in his funeral cairn. How hard could that be?

**A New Opportunity:** Whereas that provincial mongrel Fazzur would not countenance the idea, we have reason to believe that the current Governor General of Dragon Pass, Tatius the Bright, would be more amenable to the idea of settling Lunar colonists in rich lands cleared of their barbarian squatters. We know Tatius by repute but little more. Escort one of our senior members to him, so that negotiations may be opened.

**Making a Friend:** We need to show Tatius that we are not just some carpet-baggers, or even worse, idealistic do-gooders. A bandit leader has recently carried out some impudent raids on our valiant troops—go and kill this Kallyr

## MURDER AND OTHER MISBEHAVIORS

It is understood that there will be differences of ideology and interest within the Association. Just as with Dart Wars, on one level this is even seen as healthy, because weaker components must strengthen themselves by pressure of competition. However, there is also a distinct etiquette to such conflicts. It is generally considered bad form to kill senior figures within an organization, for example. Hirelings may be fair game—although too much bloodshed within the Empire itself may also attract hostile scrutiny—but even then beatings and kidnappings are more common than killings. It is generally expected that internal competition should be political and economic. Above all, the conflict should not weaken the Association or bring it into disrepute. If, for example, a conflict begins to attract adverse comment in court or else the attentions of local officials, then it is expected that the competitors will move to resolve their disagreements quickly and quietly – or else they can expect the Association to impose a settlement which will generally favor the status quo.

Major internal conflicts do occur, but they are rare because unless carried out quickly and sold to the Association's leadership as being to the Greater Good, they tend to bring down the wrath of governing House Kortillion, in the form of the grim blades of its Doctrinaires. For example, the Moon and Sea was originally just a small sub-division of the Wheel of Balance trading covenant. However, under Turiladevno EelAriash—TurEel—the Moon and Sea prospered, at the very time when the bursting of the East Isles Bubble left many of the magnates of the Wheel turning on each other in a welter of recrimination and calling in debts long since forgotten. TurEel was never one to let an opportunity go past merely for reasons of decency or loyalty, and he struck. Assassins hired from the 'bookkeepers' of the Vanchite Trading Association were let into the Wheel's Oblate Factory while an acrimonious board meeting was underway. Under the guidance of suborned Rufelzan demagogues, a mob of street-toughs, high on free gin and cheap rhetoric, broke into the Deep Spoke Warehouses and smashed and looted, while local levy-men quietly pocketed their silver, 'waiting for orders.' In two days of violence and chaos, the Wheel looked as if it were about to collapse, until suddenly TurEel opened his secret caches of goods, pledged his personal fortune and the mobs mysteriously calmed at his word. Before the Wheel could draw breath, it had been saved and suborned, its assets protected, but at the price of being incorporated into the Moon and Sea. In perhaps the riskiest move of his campaign, TurEel presented himself to the Seven and presented a plan for the revival of the trading arm of the Association. It was a polished, confident performance, with magical graphs hanging in the air and papyri in neat binders. However, the Seven are men and women of cool cunning, who have seen it all before. They recognized TurEel's capabilities, but more to the point, they appreciated that while they could kill him then and there, this would not save the Wheel. More to the point, TurEel was offering a return to order today and an increased profit share tomorrow. Within the Association, efficiency, ruthlessness, order and silver all count for something, and TurEel was offering all four. The Seven approved his hostile take-over, and TurEel lived. Yet unspoken was the "for now"—after all, those who break the rules also surrender their protection.

and bring back her head on a ceremonial Dara Happan damning-bough to show Tatiush that we are both effective and also heedful of his traditions.

**Staking a Claim:** An initial agreement has been reached that a hundred of our colonists will be allowed to settle in Dragon Pass. Decide where they should go—there is some decent land available in an area already cleared, or some prime land currently occupied by a few steads of barbarians, which you would have to clear. Which will you choose?

## 3. THE MOON OVER THE WATERS

We are a commercial venture established to develop a trading route south to the sea through Dragon Pass and Esrolia. If in the process we manage to convince the barbarians of the wealth and opportunity in cooperation with the Empire, so much the better. If we happen to come across information and find friends who may be useful if the Lunar Way needs to be brought to these regions by force, that is good too. Admittedly, some of the goods we sell may not help the locals, and instead leave them addicted, indebted, and debilitated. However, by raising funds for our Association this trade is bringing forward the day when they will be brought into the loving embrace of the Goddess and thus, in the long run, they should thank us for it.

**Connection:** We are a trading venture of the kind known as a 'square covenant' under Darseni law, in which four partners hold equal shares, which cannot be divided or sold to any of the other three. However, all four covenanters are members of our Association, so we retain full control even while having no formal connections to it.

**Components:** Each of the four covenanters has responsibility for a separate part of the venture:

- **The Moon and Sea:** This is our marketing arm, selling trade goods from the empire in the markets of Dragon Pass and Esrolia, and native trinkets and sea-borne goods within the Empire. This used to be part of the Wheel of Balance, but as discussed in 'Murder and Other Misbehaviors,' the Moon and Sea's ambitious and ruthless chief executive, TurEel, launched a hostile take-over that saw the subsidiary take over its principal.
- **The Bell Haven House:** This is our local factor in Nochet, responsible for identifying markets and closing deals. It also gathers whatever other information may be of use to the Association and the Empire.
- **The Long Road:** This is our transportation division, which runs caravans from the Empire to Nochet. Most of its members are guards, both loyal members of the Association and mercenaries.
- **The Smith Hall Manufactory:** This is a commercial venture sourcing quality metal goods for sale in the barbarian lands. It always makes an extremely healthy profit, which may seem surprising given that we found barbarian metalwork not to be as primitive as we had expected. This is because of the fortunate discovery that the sap from dying pine trees that had been killed by the virulent local pouchrot is, when diluted and drunk, an addictive and euphoric drug. This sap, known to us as 'blacksap,' has become a popular narcotic in the backstreets of Nochet and is even now sold to sailors who take it with them on their travels. We deplore the effects of blacksap, which provides immediate energy,



enthusiasm, and sexual potency but ultimately leads to memory loss, twitches, and the ague. Yet we console ourselves with the knowledge that, when the heathen have embraced the Lunar Way, Deezola will be able to soothe their minds and heal their bodies. Traffic in blacksap is also technically illegal within the Empire, but we reassure ourselves with the knowledge that we serve a higher law, that of Lunar Manifest Destiny.

**Hero Band Story Opportunity:** The Moon over the Waters makes extensive use of affiliated and mercenary groups, whether as guards, agents, smugglers, or merchants.

**Player Hero:** This would suit a wide range of player heroes, from canny traders and their doughty guards to unscrupulous drug smugglers and spies.

**Resources:** The Moon over the Waters is rich, but most of its profits go to the rest of the Association; furthermore, it does not wish to attract undue attention by appearing as more than a struggling speculative venture. Even most of its members are not allowed to see through this façade. Nonetheless, it has a wide network of contacts, warehouses, as well as its own guards.

## SCENARIO HOOKS:

**Eastern Promise:** A strangely-crafted ship from distant Kralorela has docked at Nochet. They carry unique and powerful goods, from bolts of six-whisper silk to the distilled essence of sun blossom. Everyone wants to buy their treasures, but they are on a ritual journey and want to trade for goods that epitomize foreign homelands. What can the heroes offer?

**A Murderous Diversion:** The organization's blacksap-trafficking is known to only a small proportion of the whole. Even many of the guards, drivers, and wagon-masters believe that the sealed teak crates contain metal goods. A troublesome Holayan Judex, Xena naKalithos, has apparently heard that something is being smuggled by our caravans. Her death would simply attract more attention, and that compromising pink-heart Provincial Overseer is no friend of the Association. Instead, she must be diverted. Her main specialty is dealing with occult crimes, so maybe it is time for some terrible doom to befall some village or personage. There ought to be red herrings aplenty to occupy her for enough time to arrange her transfer, but no clues leading back to the Association. Above all, ensure that she is kept too busy to compare notes with the Judex Ohenkash (see page 66), who is already suspicious about this new narcotic on the market.

**A Fumbled Pass:** Barbarian brigands in Dragon Pass have raided and seized a wagon bearing blacksap. It could be bandits, or rebels. Find it and get it back, fast, before the locals find out what they have, or, worse yet, Imperial forces recapture it and they work out what is being shipped.

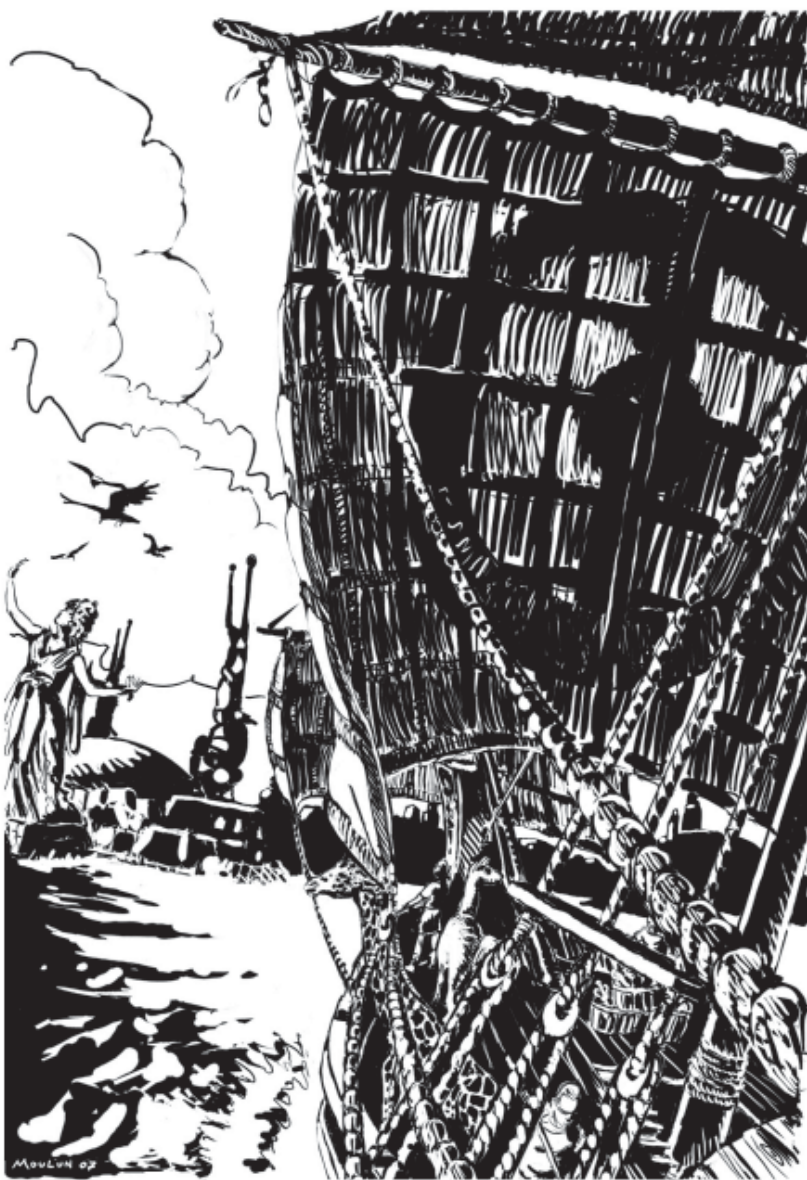
## 4. THE FIST OF DOCTRINE

During the Seleran Wars House Kortillion waged war on the Great Enemy with all its resources. Though the forces used in this struggle were often leagues recruiting mercenaries, barbarians or conscripts, the unifying Doctrines of the House's Tarnils temple created elite, combined arms forces. This concept has continued to this day and our military Association is famed for its ability to field a unit that will get the job done, whatever it may be.

**Connection:** The Fist of Doctrine is the sword and shield of our association. It recruits, trains and organizes combined arms Vexillae that are used to further the aims of our association, aid allies, or serve the Imperial government in lucrative contracts.

## COMPONENTS:

- **The Bannardarch Conservatory:** Situated in the ancient city of Storal in Bindle, the Conservatory is the center of Fist command training and theory. Here the Bannardarchs (Vexilla officers, rated by their function in each unit) of the Fist are schooled in the fine arts of warfare, combined arms and the application of Doctrine through fierce discipline, personal integrity, and military flexibility. Here too, the Vexillae are created, consecrated and trained to operate together in the wide Eseldar War Fields south of the city. All members of the Conservatory were first recruited and served successfully with the Leveler leagues.



- ① **The Levelers:** The Levelers are our training cadre, subordinated to the strategic guidance of the Bannardarch Conservatory. They maintain three main centers of training, each based around a league belonging to the Levelers association. Each league has its own officers and command system; only when formed into Vexilla are they subordinate to a Bannardarch. Their job is to take the very roughest material and provide a smooth, even product at the end of training.

**The Barbari:** The Oath Stone citadel of Arroak in Dobliah is the headquarters for the Barbari infantry of the Fist. All the soldiers in the Barbari are recruited from Anadikki, Broliia, Talastar, or Arir and excel in fighting in broken or forested terrain. They are the light and medium infantry of the Fist.

**The Hall of Red and Black** is the famed fortress of the Fist, located a few miles upriver of Minstinus in Jhor. The Hall is filled with panoply, much of it iron, all of the very best quality. Some suits of armor and sets of weapons are very old and are handed to new members of the regiment so that the souls of their previous owners may encourage them in battle. The Hall teaches the heavy cavalry (Rotalti) and hoplites (Traygoni) of the Fist. Soldiers are recruited from Pelandans and Carmanians alike and are treated the same, as long as they accept the Doctrines of the House.

**The Zaron Arrowcamp** is several miles west of Aldog on the Poralistor River and is the recruiting base for the light cavalry (Vertuazi) of the Fist. Many who train there are Char-Un but any are accepted as long as they have the ability to ride and learn. The Arrowcamp has at its heart a totem of its founder, Vertu the Archer, a hero of the Char-Un and great soldier of the Fist.

- ① **The Willing Hands:** When the Fist needs to move and assemble forces, we rely on the Willing Hands. All the Leveler Leagues are within reach of, or are based on, rivers and the Willing Hands operate a number of barges and pentecontainers, based in Storal, to facilitate that movement. The Willing Hands also serve as the logistical tail of the Fist, providing supplies, equipment, and local resources to the fighting forces of the Fist, wherever they may go.
- ① **The Sapphire Ring:** Though part of the Fist, this League is strongly linked with the Doctrinaires and is based in its monastic perch on mount Hrandor in the southern Brass Mountains. It is a small League that recruits its members mostly through the Levelers. All members wear an iron ring mounted with a sapphire. The Rings, as they are known, are the magical support for the Fist. Usually a small group accompanies any Vexilla in the field to provide combined magics in battle. The Rings also serve an intelligence role and gather information on potential enemies and allies wherever they serve. Their Sapphire Monastery has voluminous libraries on many magical places and entities that the Fist has encountered in its numerous campaigns. See pages 37-39.

**Hero Band Story Opportunity:** The Fist prefers its own forces, as they are properly trained in combined arms and the Doctrines of Bergorthus, however, on occasion the Fist will bolster its forces with local elements or specialists to help it in its goals.

**Player Heroes:** The Fist is mother and father to all recruits. In its service you will see the great sweep of the Empire, serve with some of the finest forces in the world and be equipped, trained and commanded by the very best.

**Resources:** At its peak, during the Sheng wars, the Fist fielded over 3000 troops, but even today it can assemble impressive forces for House Kortillion or for any Imperial, Satrapal, or Provincial agent that contracts them. Typically the House can field 400 Barbari, 300 Hoplites, 100 Heavy and 200 light cavalry at any one time. Usually these forces are split up in various Vexillae in various places. More can also be raised with some notice, usually a year.

## SCENARIO HOOKS:

**Recruited:** From any land in the Empire, recruits come to the Fist and are trained in the ways of battle and the Doctrines of the Association. The players can be from any walk of life, city dweller, rude barbarian, nomad, or hillman. They will undergo a rigorous training regimen and will learn the ways of Tarnils.

**Pre-emptive Raid:** The Fist has been hired by Count Assaldar of Vorlops in Vanstal to raid the Brolians. Reports of a strong tribal confederation deep in the hills have been filtering out and the Count wants any such reports verified or proved false. Should the Brolians be on the verge of creating an aggressive kingdom, the Fist will operate with local elements to destroy or disrupt them. The players are the Bannardarchs of a small Vexilla numbering 100 Barbari and Vertuazi for the operation. More forces will be hired or made available if needed.

**Rebellion:** The city of Riverspeak in Karasal has refused to pay its taxes to the Satrap due to a dispute on river fishing rights. The Satrap has ordered this rebellion stamped out. To that end, he is hiring the Fist to provide special shock troops for a siege and assault of the city. A Vexilla of Traygoni and Barbari will be sent to handle the dispute. Satrapal forces will assist.

**Other possibilities:** The various other components of the Immanent Action Liberation Association all need armed force at times. Players could find themselves in Dragon Pass aiding the Moon Over Waters or in Sylila aiding efforts at putting down the perfidious White Moon rebels. As they grow in skill and their Vexilla in strength, they will be used in ever-greater conflicts.

## 5. THE EBON MIDDLE TOGAS OF THE THREE-FOLD DRAPE

We are closely linked with the Satrap of Sylila, Pardidas Errio-unit, who shares our devotion to Imperial expansion and our exasperation with those who believe that the Lunar Way will triumph naturally, without the need for blood, sweat and tears. He has his own agenda, as do we, but it suits us both to cooperate. However little it is worn back in the Heartlands now, the toga is still a symbol of Imperial loyalty in Sylila, and its length, color, and drape all denote their wearer's rank and role. We are not of the Satrap's own house, but we have his favor, so we are granted the middle-length toga, with the three-fold drape that denotes our Lunar affiliation. We took the color black to contrast with the white under-tunic and thus glory in our Nathic affiliation.

**Connection:** The Satrap of Sylila: he chooses to support us, and in return we provide him what assistance we can and deem fitting.

**Components:** The Ebon Middle Togas of the Three-Fold Drape are a 'word-clan.' This means that the Satrap has given it the status of an ancestral clan, but its members are sworn, not born to it. We maintain a small organization, largely involved in liaison with and lobbying in the Satrap's court.

**Hero Band Story Opportunity:** The Middle Togas are a pressure group in high Sylilan politics. They act directly in the interests of the Association and yet also, from time to time, for the Satrap himself. It thus often has need of allies and agents, both local and foreign. On occasion, it has served the Satrap well in covert dart competitions, such as in arranging the mysterious suicide of the entire Ormoro-eti clan council.

**Player Heroes:** Most of the Ebon Middle Togas are Sylilan-born Lunar zealots, although there are also others who choose to involve themselves in both the overt politics of Sylilian politics and also its murky underside.

**Resources:** The Ebon Middle Togas move in elevated circles and can do and procure favors from powerful people throughout the satrapy.

## SCENARIO HOOKS:

**Putting Words in its Mouth:** The Emin-ooru clan, bitter rivals of the Errio-unit for generations, seem unusually wealth of late and have been using this wealth to embarrass the Satrap with the extravagance of the gifts with which they have been showering him. The Satrap's spies have heard that, for his Naming-Day, they have procured a treasure of ancient Mostali craftmanship, a gold and jade statue of a bird that sings the words from a small plaque placed within it. They plan to present this to him and let it sing elaborately ornate praise to him all day long, in an exquisitely clever piece of deniable mockery. The Satrap would be delighted if someone could infiltrate the manse of the Emin-ooru and replace the plaque with one bearing bawdy satire, so that when the bird is activated it could instead bring shame on the Satrap's rivals and allow him to forgive them with such generosity that they would be further humbled...

**Getting the Satrap's Goat:** The Satrap's own clan has an ancestral right to seasonal tribute from the hill-farmers and petty chieftains of Ulredingland, the Silver Goat. However, for the last three seasons, bandits have seized the Goat while on its way to Jillaro, each time using a different stratagem. The Satrap is disinclined to use official troops, lest he appear weak before his nobles, but the loss of successive Goats is weakening not just his clan treasury but also its ancestral magics, and he suspects this is a political attack, not just banditry. This time, while a caravan of house troops escort a decoy caravan to Jillaro, he wants some heroes with no apparent connection to him to smuggle the Goat to the capital.

**Bearing Goats:** The Bear's Claw is a Sylilan unit of heavy infantrymen dedicated to Odayla the Bear. The Association believes that it would be much more effective in dealing with the unruly barbarians of Dragon Pass than some other units currently deployed there, but it is currently in disfavor following an unfortunate incident at the last Satrapal Name-Day parade. In protest at late payment of their traditional Bear's Portion (a pig or haunch of beef given to each soldier at the start of Dark Season, symbolically rewarding them for not hibernating), the fifty Claws taking part paraded nude but

for their traditional bear-skin head-dresses. Ever since, the 'Bare's Claw' have been drilling, building roads, and clearing irrigation ditches, at the Satrap's orders. Something needs to be done to restore their reputation. What if it could be arranged for them to play a part in bringing the Silver Goat to Jillaro?

**Short and Curlies:** It transpires that the Emin-ooru were behind the thefts of the Silver Goats, which explains their new-found wealth. The Middle Togas have evidence. Are their interests best served by passing this to the Satrap and thus demonstrating their friendship, or by seeing what the Emin-ooru would offer for its destruction? Perhaps they would support the deployment of the Bear's Claws to Dragon Pass? Or maybe they would be prepared to throw their weight behind the Association's attempts to encourage further Imperial expansion in Talastar?

## 6. THE TURZAH HOUNDERS

The Imperial Hunter Corps fields numerous unusual and dangerous forces, of whom the Turzah Hounders are among the finest scouts, trackers and counter-insurgency troops. See pages 43-45.

## 7. THE LOYAL JILLARO PAMPHLETEERS

The present Sylilan Satrap's father, Endoras Errio-unit, alarmed at the rise of the White Moon movement, used his own personal funds to support a group of bards, street-corner orators, wordsmiths, and news-callers dedicated to countering their pernicious lies. He was convinced that "a quiet truth will always drown out the loudest falsehoods." His son, Pardidas, is of more pragmatic bent. Having seen the pamphleteers' efforts go largely unheeded, and mindful of the threat posed by the spread of Fiscal Anarchist sentiment in Jillaro and Kistium, he has opted quietly to reshape the organization. It maintains its formal role of spreading anti-White Moon propaganda through music, stirring public meetings, and wood-block printed pamphlets (mostly ribald and unflattering allegorical caricatures of the White Moonies, to appeal to the illiterate classes). However, its main role is as an instrumentality of mandate, a small secret police force tasked with spying on and undermining the White Moon movement and, by extension, other enemies of the Satrap. Its methods range from infiltrating agents all the way to eliminating especially dangerous agitators. Over time, the Pamphleteers have become increasingly closely linked with the Association, seeing its pure and unquenchable devotion to the Nathic era and doctrinal purity as a powerful counter to the debilitating utopianism of the White Moonies.

**Connection:** The Pamphleteers are sworn to the Satrap, but he and his Master of Eyes have for years seen the advantage of alliance with the Association, and most of the senior figures within the instrumentality are now members.

**Components:** Most of the Pamphleteers are either wandering speakers and bards or else the writers and artists who assemble the pamphlets from the organization's House of Faith and Fealty in Jillaro. They act as scouts, informants and assistants, but the more secret work is carried out by the so-called 'Thirty Three Founders' (the number refers to the original strength when the Pamphleteers were founded, not their actual present strength).



**Hero Band Story Opportunity:** The Pamphleteers are a hero band in and of themselves and are unlikely to accept any separate ones within them. However, they are also happy to accept the right candidate who might also be a member of another hero band, so long as the two do not have incompatible aims and responsibilities.

**Player Hero:** Individuals who have shown a loyalty to the proper teachings of Natha as well as the necessary ability, discretion, and ruthlessness may find this an organization which can make full use of their talents—especially if they do possess some talent for letters, oratory, or street theatre.

**Resources:** The Pamphleteers receive regular, adequate funds from the Satrap. However, their main resource is the secret authority granted them by their Mandate. Through his good offices, they can arrange for criminal charges to be lifted, officials reassigned and the like. However, they are judged by their success—if they call on a major favor, they had better be able to show correspondingly major results, or be castigated, fined, or even expelled.

## SCENARIO HOOKS:

**Find Him:** The Man With No Horse, a wandering Fiscal Anarchist, has been rabble-rousing amongst the Barntari farmers of the southern borderlands. He preaches good-neighborliness, internationalism, tolerance for all, and the importance of personal morality over blind obedience to authority. However, his sermons have been interpreted as attacks on the cult of Rufelza and the Imperial state, and have led to riots, the looting of a tax caravan, and the dunking of an indignant Rufelzan Demagogue in the public slurry-moat. The Man With No Horse seems to pop up unexpectedly and disappear as quickly. Find him, establish whether he is operating independently or as part of a network and listen to his sermons. Is he encouraging this violence, or are others using him as an excuse or cover?

**Hurt Him:** The Man With No Horse is either a cunning schemer or being used by others to cause unrest. Either way, his reputation for honesty, generosity, and simple living must be tarnished, especially as he is also beginning to advocate pacifism, and his name is beginning to be whispered in the garrisons and barracks. It is time to engineer and publicize some scandals. Maybe his supporters can be goaded into an especially brutal riot? Perhaps word will spread of his lewd and carnal conduct? Maybe his closest friends will find him standing above a dead woman, a bloody knife in his hands?

**Kill Him:** The Man With No Horse seems immune to reason or intimidation, blackmail or blandishment, sabotage, and rumor. Furthermore, his pacifist message is spreading to troops scheduled for deployment to Dragon Pass, and his followers have even started the seditious whisper that 'Orlanatus Is Us Too.' In the ancient Sylilian phrase, the Satrap himself has decided that it is time for him 'to take a peace-flag to Alkoth.' In other words, he is to die. But where is he now? Could the rumor that he is heading for Dragon Pass, directly, to talk to our Imperial forces there be true?

## 8. BEST OPPORTUNITY

Part of our efforts and influence are kept open to get the best job available at the time from the Imperial bureaucracy or trade deal. At present, our Association's extra commitment is concentrated upon advancing the cause of House Kortillion itself in the politics of Glamour.

## 9. RITUAL SUPPORT

The Association is closely linked with the cult of Natha, and in particular with efforts to ensure that the purity and rigor of Natha is retained as the core of Imperial spiritual doctrine and not replaced prematurely with the idealistic fancies of Zaytenara. To this end, we provide powerful support for Nathic rituals.

## 10. YOUR STORY HERE

Something of importance to you is going on in your game. This section of the Association is left blank to let you fill in whatever story component may be of interest or use to you.





# THE BLOODSTORM BANDWA

*Brilliant pillars of the Madder Moon, a clan the hardest that received baptism;  
a clan who won fight in every land, Hoar Herons of Sartar for valor.*

There are many gates to the Lunar Way, and that opened by the Hoar Heron Clan of Sartar is but one. With the Hero Wars breaking, they have abandoned the Rebellious Storm and clenched the Fist of Doctrine. Sponsored by the Immanent Action Liberation, beneficent magics of Tarnils the Moon Ram and Fereshor his Warthane have welded and drilled the clan's forces into a powerful and unified vexilla, where the individualistic thane and humble fyrdsmen alike work in cohesion under the Red Moon.

The vexilla is the *bandwa*: an old ceremonial word for 'banner' and the host that forms beneath it, which could be all or just part of the clan's fighting strength. The bandwa is a flexible mix of Old and New ways, embracing Inclusion yet clinging to concepts of a Heortling warrior-nobility, in suitably Sedenyic contradiction. Yet here the strong gird the weak, so they can truly claim "We are all Us!" This is the Bloodstorm Bandwa, which defends the leys and holts from their foes, whether savage beast-men, murderous Orlanthi warbands, or cattle-thieves with bramble-torn faces.

**Common Names:** Hoar Herons, Woodshore Warriors.

**Form:** Military unit.

**Typical Homeland:** Heortling.

**Cultural Context:** An example of the forces of a Lunarized clan, warband, and fyrd alike combined in a magical vexilla.

**Association Relationship:** The bandwa provides a recruiting ground for the Fist of Doctrine, and protects those leagues and members who pass through its lands.

**Ideology:** "O Children of Sedenya, remember hardihood in time of battle: Be stout-hearted, martial, venomous, implacable; Be forceful and stand your ground; Be Inclusive, triumphant, winning the battle against Her enemies."

## THE HOAR HERONS

Aside from over a hundred thralls, the clan numbers 1500 souls of five bloodlines living in eight steads: 695 adults in the prime of life, 130 elderly and wise; and 675 blessed children of the Goddess. Their tula is spread over three hundred hides of good, rich land. A hide is a measure of prospective wealth and resource, typically being one hundred acres among the Hoar Herons, with stead-communities farming anywhere from thirty to seventy hides.

**Look and Feel:** Newborn warrior-sons and daughters of the Goddess, proud in their religion and the Empire's blessings.

**Purpose:** The bandwa defends the clan tula and herds, and aids the Empire and Immanent Action Liberation when called.

**Headquarters:** The steads of the Hoar Heron Clan, centered on the Twilit Wading Hall of the chief.

**Reactions:** To Lunarized clans of Sartar it can be a staunch ally. To other Imperial citizens, a blessed example of Her ways, or a quaint barbaric curio. To rebellious Orlanthi it is an abomination of Shepelkirt!

## RESOURCES

**Leader:** Clan chief Melkolfus Hagggarblight is warlord, though Dyzander of Utheneos (see page 60) currently oversees the bandwa magics.

**Renowned Members:** Bandwacarl Heleric Woadspitter flies into a drooling rage in battle, wielding an ox-carass (Mightily Thewed Madman 1W2); Hallaraxa Wasptongue, storm-spurning clan priestess of Ernalda, plucks the rebel foes from the air with her magic (Harridan of Kadone the Grounder 15W2). Sample characters are listed below.

**Membership:** The bandwa numbers some 15 bandwathanes, 90 bandwacarl (including the chieftain's housecarls) and as many as 150 bandwamen. In a time of great peril, all able-bodied adults are called to the bandwa.

**Other Contacts:** Melkolfus might call upon the aid of the Fist of Doctrine, but more immediate help is provided by the Turzah Hounders (see page 43), who support a pack of raging mastiffs at his hall, and every third Full Moon engage in the joys of alynx-bating. By agreement with the Governor-General, a half-company of the Moonarrow cavalry regiment is currently billeted on his tula.

## ORGANIZATION

Lord of the bandwa is Melkolfus Hagggarblight, judex, siegeholder of the New Moon clan ring and the Tribal Synod. He is guarded by his *comitatus* of 14 housecarls, champions of Yanafal Tarnils clad in brass scale, and named the Red and the Black Bane Egrets for their plumed Pelorian helms.

Melkolfus's Right Hand is his loyal thane and daughter Myara Stardancer, Caller of Challenges and Warden of the Four Sokes. The Left Hand is the *bandwalda*, Dyzander Stiltsride, the foreign war-leader and godi. Beneath them are close to 20 *bandwathanes*, equal to Orlanthi weaponthanes or godar. They reside in outlying steads as reeves, wardens and doomspeakers, driving off half-beasts, escorting strangers, and overseeing their defense.

The core of the bandwa is the seven-strong *hearthring*, who share the warmth of fire when mustered, and rejoice in hymns to the Red Moon and the Twin Stars. By clan law every ten hides of land provides a hearthring of two full-time *bandwacarls* and five part-time *bandwamen*. Each bandwathane will typically have two hearthrings in his care, to inspire, to drill and to train.

The bandwacarls are provided by the prosperous citizens of the clan. It is custom that each thane provide and equip for two such warriors, and each carl one (either himself, freed by his thralls from his obligations in the fields, or a brave kinsman in his place). The chief himself supports the twice-seven Egrets of his *comitatus*. In time of peace, the bandwa may therefore field around 100 trained and equipped warriors.

The bandwamen and bandwawomen are akin to the fyrd, but summoned to their hearthrings every Full Moon to drill and worship. Even when not training, one or more bandwamen do the chief's work on rotation, accompanying officers in their duties, watching the herds, cutting peat or fixing thatch. Any bandwaman on duty is honored in Hoar Heron law as a carl, and due his *wergild*. Many bandwamen are old warriors themselves, with sterling tales and a hale arm.

## MEMBERSHIP KEYWORD

*Membership Requirements:* Men and women join the bandwa as required by Her calling or clan law. All must at least participate in the Adorations of the Moon, but most are Adherents of the Lunar Way. Worship of Orlanth or *any* Thunder Brothers cult is forbidden among the Hoar Herons.

*Skills taught:* Bandwa Mass Combat, Fight Alongside Dog Pack, Sing Sedenyic Paean, Spear and Shield Fighting, Throw Dart, Tarnils' Shout, Watch for Signal.

*Typical Personality Traits:* Despire Rebel, Inclusive.

*Magic:* Specialized warriors possess a variety of religious observances: the Lunarized cults of Doburdun, Natha the Red Woman, Odayla, Rigsdal Polaris, the Seven Mothers, Yanafal Tarnils, even Jagrekriand, are popular. Bandwamen, carls and thanes alike use the Madder Magics, and also benefit from the Rufus Scripts charms and blessings of their preceptors.

## THE BLOODSTORM BANDWA (GUARDIAN)

The Bloodstorm is a violent Lunar lare, a minion of Doburdun the Loyal Storm. It is subject to the Lunar Cycle, and provides the powers of a vexilla lare (see page 60).

*Method:* Archetype.

*Form:* A banner of tattered scarlet rags, hanging from the crossbeam of a Lunar standard surmounted by the symbols of Natha and a three-headed sakkar with a snake for a tail.

*Communication:* Group contact. When active, its shreds of cloth become blood, whipping around the standard in a dire whirlwind. All feel a tempest rising in their veins, the madder dancing upon their skin.

*Guardian Requirements:* Every Black Moon, the bandwa must be polished with the blood of a freshly slaughtered beast or man in a somber ceremony masked in juniper- and briar-smoke.

*Functions:*

✧ **Blessing**—Nexus of Worship 1W.

☐ **Defense**—Ghoulish Guise 20, Flaying Wind 10W, Harridan Wail 5W.

## THE HOAR HERON OF THE FAR WOODSHORE (GUARDIAN)

A clan totem and wyter that has flown to the Moon and embraced the Lunar Way, the Hoar Heron protects its people. At initiation the young are each given one of its feathers as a charm, to mark their girdle or take pride of place among the heron feathers that grace their war-spears. Through the powers of the Bloodstorm lare, the Hoar Heron can aid the bandwa even while it guards the tula.

*Method:* Manifestation.

*Form:* A majestic heron the height of a man, its crested white feathers tinged blue-gray.

*Communication:* Group contact. All hear its bright, melodious cry.

*Guardian Requirements:* On their name-day, each adult must take to the local waters and catch a fish as an offering to the Hoar Heron, to be burned with cherry-bark and six drops of one's own blood.

*Functions:*

✧ **Awareness**—Discern Foe From Afar 20W.

✧ **Blessing**—Fight in Water 12W2.

☐ **Defense**—Cold-Eye Blight 1W2.

## MADDER MAGICS

Orlanthi use woad, a blue dye magically linked with their Storm God. Lunarized Heortlings instead treat the roots of wild madder to produce a striking red dye. Like woad, madder is used in ritual and ceremonial. Its 'color magic' is distinctly different, favored of the Goddess and the source of many Lunar common magic observances, which learn to use and draw upon the power of the perennial and its dye, typically in talents and charms.

*Inherent Abilities:* Astringe Gut 3W, Purify Body and Blood 5W, Soothe Pain 18, Staunch Wound 1W, Strengthen Bone 16.

*Common Magic Abilities:* Armoring Madder, Attract Man, Enflame Emotions, Ignore Hurt, Inspire Confidence, Madder Roar, Madderclad Frenzy, Strengthen Animal.



## NARRATOR NOTES

### BARBARIANS FOR THE EMPIRE!

The Lunar Native Corps raises Sartarite regiments from allied and supplicant clans, each comprising three or more vexillae. These typically contain four score-strong warbands drawn from a different clan in the multi-tribal 'regimental catchment area'—such as an Aldachuring regiment—to promote competition and diminish rebellion. Some associations recruit guards and raiders from the warlike barbarians, valuing their skills. Many units are a mix of public and private enterprise: the Hoar Herons provide the bandwacarl of ten hearthrings to a Native Corps vexilla, albeit officered by the Fist of Doctrine and loyal foremost to the Immanent Action Liberation.

Tribal kings can summon forces by right of Lunarized local law. There are customarily three forms of levy for tribes organized like the Hoar Heron Clan:

*Crescent Levy* or *thaneskara* (no more than a quarter of bandwathanes and hearthrings—often bandwacarl alone—of one or more clans, as an honor guard or punitive force)

*Gibbous Levy* (a Tribal Bandwa comprising of up to three-quarters of the hearthrings of one or more clans)

*Full Levy* (the tribal host, including those bandworthy folk not in hearthrings, if required).

*"I only know the names of three barbarians in Dragon Pass - Jomes Wulf, Jorad Sideburn, and at the head of them all, Fazzur Wideread..."*

attributed to Tatus the Bright, circa 7/43, when the general was supposedly asked of his views on the wars against the barbarians in Dragon Pass.



*The Hero Wars are between... Civilization and Barbarism*

## THE BANDWA IN BATTLE

Keen to demonstrate the benefits of Inclusion and localize the burdens of outlawing Orlanth in Dragon Pass, the Lunar Empire can prove a generous master. The bandwa is flexible, forming an elite horseborne patrol, or a shieldwall ten-score strong and flanked by mounted bandwacarl. All bandwathanes and carls, and 40 bandwamen can be mounted on sturdy Redlands ponies, a gift from an ally of the Immanent Action Liberation in Oraya.

Bandwamen are uniformly equipped with Lunar aid and the *Stormgild*, each bearing spear and shield, a leather jerkin or bronze pectoral, and a sturdy Pelorian helm. Weaned on tales of the glorious Dart Competitions of the Heartlands, children are taught from an early age to throw the weighted dart—a light and portable weapon that requires little training, and of which five are held in the shieldwell.

Each hearthring acts as a file in the shieldwall, with stout, mailed bandwacarl at the fore, and supported by bandwamen, who push and stab, or rain spears and darts onto the foe. Prior to battle, the hearthring is blessed by the Moon Godi preceptors, and cradles its Lunar charms. Challenges are usually accepted, but there is no Warriors' Battle. Instead, the bandwa fights together. It is no professional Daxdarian phalanx, but the shieldwall of the bandwa is proud, drilled and Inclusive, knowing well the Shell Deer Stand and the Crescent Come Array. Moments before the shieldwalls clash, the bandwa looses a pack of mastiffs, maddened with woad-smell, while its mounted forces—aided by the Moonarrows—harry the enemy's flank and rear.

### GOVORAN SKALFARSSON, BLACK BANE EGRET

Like many he has abandoned the Storm Ram for the Moon Ram, dedicating his life (and death) to the defense of his rightful lord. By geas no Egret bears the curved blade, so Govoran wields *Browbiter*, pride of his bloodline.

**Keywords:** Lunarized Heortling Housecarl 10<sup>W</sup>, Maddar Magics 20, Ordinate of Yanafal Tarnils (Combat Spirits 8<sup>W</sup>, Soldier On spells 5<sup>W</sup>, Warlord affinity 20) 10<sup>W</sup>.

**Significant Abilities:** Bandwa Mass Combat 6<sup>W</sup>, Bodyguard Tactics 17<sup>W</sup>, Brave 10<sup>W</sup>, Loyal to Melkolfus 1<sup>W</sup>2, Sword and Shield Fighting 14<sup>W</sup>.

**Equipment:** Black cloak, brass scale hauberk +4, egret-plumed helm +1, Iron sword +6, rune-covered shield +1, spear +3.

### MYARA MELKOLFSDOTTER, CHAMPION AND BANDWATHANE

Champion of the Stardancer, through the blessings of the Star Twins, Myara is learning the lore of the Celestial Captains, the foreign Warlord Way of Rigsdal-called-Polaris, and seeks her True Twin.

**Keywords:** Initiate of Rigsdal Polaris (Dance of Battle, Nightgazer, Vigilance affinities) 16, Lunarized Heortling Champion 8<sup>W</sup>, Maddar Magics 17, Novitiate of Erelia and Verelia (Planet Spirits, Speaker to Barbarians affinity, Twinstar Spirits) 11<sup>W</sup>.

**Significant Abilities:** Bandwa Tactics 7<sup>W</sup>, Charismatic Leader 3<sup>W</sup>2, Daughter of Melkolfus 16<sup>W</sup>, Stardance Sword Fighting 6<sup>W</sup>2, Throw Javelin 20<sup>W</sup>.

**Equipment:** Bronze helm +1, bronze sword +3, Iron mail byrnie +6, mirror-bright shield +2, star-blessed javelins +3.

### JAREENA RED WOMAN, BANDWACARL

Hoar Heron daughters who take the Red Woman vows spurn the petulant child of Orlanth, but instead become Nathic hell-kites, restoring Balance through the rites of the sickle-scythed Seeress of Vengeance.

**Keywords:** Lunarized Heortling Bandwacarl 20, Maddar Magics 8<sup>W</sup>, Novitiate of Natha (Balancer affinity 8<sup>W</sup>, Moon affinity 17, Nathic Combat affinity 6<sup>W</sup>) 5<sup>W</sup>.

**Significant Abilities:** Bandwa Mass Combat 1<sup>W</sup>, Hate Kinslayer 1<sup>W</sup>2, Sickle-Scythe Fighting 2<sup>W</sup>.

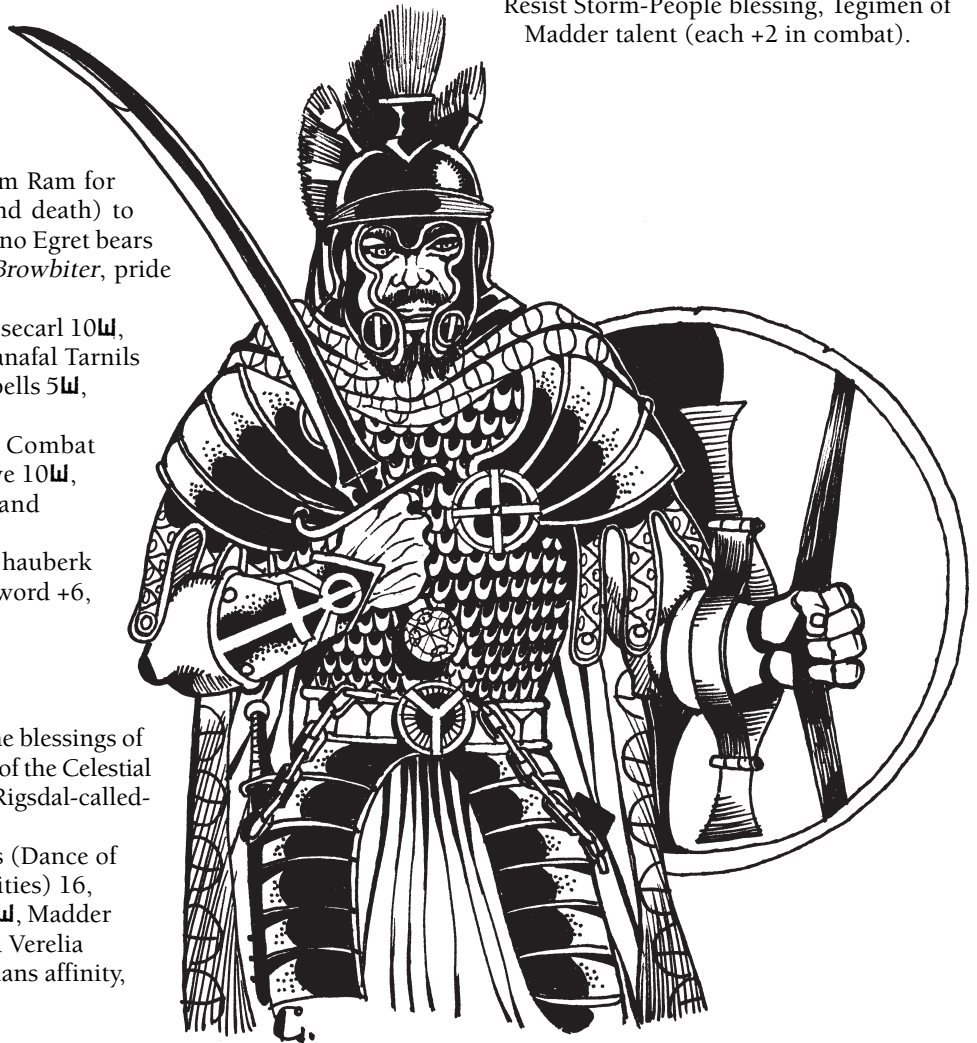
**Equipment:** Bronze mail byrnie +3, shield +1, silver sickle-scythe +3.

### HOAR HERON BANDWAMAN

**Keywords:** Lunarized Heortling Bandwaman 17, Carl or Cottar 20, Initiate/Novitiate of Asyrex, Barntar, Ernalda etc. 17, Maddar Magics 17.

**Equipment:** Ash spear +3, bronze helm +1, fletched darts +1, leather jerkin +1 or bronze pectoral +2, stout shield +1.

**Typical Augments:** Overcome Fear charm, Resist Storm-People blessing, Tegimen of Maddar talent (each +2 in combat).





# THE ERRANDITE APOSTLES

*"Shine, Rufelza, Shine!"*

How better to communicate the work of Inclusion than with Her Radiance itself? This is the task of the Errandite Apostles, the Imperial Army's Cohort of Lunar Signifiers, who operate the magical Rufelzan lunagraphs that Enlighten the Lozenge and transmit messages by reflecting and focusing the rays of the Red Moon. These strange antiquaries are relics from before the birth of Yara Aranis, but the Immanent Action Liberation has revived their mysteries for the New World to come.

In the tumultuous years following the Ascension of the Red Moon, the new religion was divided, and pulled in many directions. In response there arose the Apostolate of Errand, armed Yanafali couriers styled upon the Radiant Emissaries of Yelmgatha, who tried to foster a unity of observance among congregations before the Shining Face moment, when all became One. Early in the Second Wane, these Apostles were gifted the experimental lunagraphs (also known as Rufelzagraphs) and became messengers of a different form, serving the Imperial Army.

Most lunagraphs are now two or more centuries old. With the raising of the Glowline and the development of other communicative magics, their function in the Heartlands has much diminished, with most falling into disuse. The lunagraph in Yukorvikoth acts as a kaleidoscope for the Ninesong Septessential Festival, while another guano-encrusted relict is fought over by the pubescent street-sororities of Graclofont. Yet several retain their use along the Empire's distant marches, whether in a mudbrick Redlands fort or atop a Sartarite tor, acting as valuable beacons for the Lunar forces and administrators beyond the Glowline.

It is no small act to mould and redirect the motes of Her Radiance (for which signifiers repent with the plainsung Twelve and Two Apologiae) and Apostles are highly protective of the purity of their artifacts. Only the purest refined silver, the magical metal of the Moon, is used in the lunagraphs' construction, for other metals destabilize the processes and promote potentially catastrophic fluctuations in the energies harnessed. By Lunar Law the Apostles are permitted to render summary and brutal punishments, such as decapitation and demanipulation, against those who would encroach upon their rites, or bring foreign metals close to their charges. Though these extensive taboos and the lunagraphs' fragility exasperate Warlords, the Cohort retains a great power, as the Immanent Action Liberation at least has come to realize.

*Common Names:* Cohort of Lunar Signifiers, Crimson Beaconeers, Imperial Signalers, Silvered Sentinels.

*Form:* Magical military signals unit.

*Typical Homeland:* Predominantly Heartlands, but also the Provinces.

*Cultural Context:* Military messengers nurturing strange Lunar artifacts.

*Association Relationship:* The Apostles are clients of the Sapphire Ring, who ponder the workings of lunagraphs with interest.

*Ideology:* "Do not be alarmed, Imperial Citizen – the lunagraph is your friend! But please remember that to approach within fourteen yards is punishable by summary execution."

*Look and Feel:* Disconcertingly protective soldiers guarding an even more disconcerting contraption festooned with bale runes: part mysterious relic, part 1950s atomic fear.

*Purpose:* To use the light of the Red Moon to spread the message of Inclusion, and defend their lunagraphs at all costs.

*Headquarters:* The Apostles operate from the Cohort headquarters, in Mirin's Cross.

*Reactions:* For some the Apostles are a quaint holdover from earlier Wanes, hampered by pedantic rites and observances; but to those who witness the power of the lunagraph, or the murderous determination of its guards, they are something altogether more worrying...

## RESOURCES

*Leader:* Tribune-Signifier Lambryas FaalArion, a stern and fastidious officer with a racking cough and seven fingers on each hand (brother to Orondax FaalArion – see page 29).

*Membership:* The Cohort numbers approximately 240 signifiers: thirty centurion-signifiers and 180 septon-signifiers serving in detachments across the Empire, and a staff of 30 officers, scribes, artificers, polishers and lens-grinders in Mirin's Cross.

*Other Contacts:* The Sapphire Ring is careful to minimize the Apostles' exposure to other enterprises, and contacts are limited to the regional and army commanders whom they serve, and the Ordenviru in Glamour.

## ORGANIZATION

The Errandite Apostles possess 30 active detachments, each known as a *signifex*, under the oversight of the Tribune-Signifier at Mirin's Cross. A signifex musters one lunagraph, a centurion-signifier and six septon-signifiers.



The lunagraph itself is carried in a horse-drawn wagon. These detachments are spread across the Heartlands and Provinces, under the control of local Warlords, Satraps and administrators. The Cohort reports directly to the *Ordenviru*, the Imperial General Staff itself.

Signifiers dress in a manner similar to other Yanafali, but the delicate sanctity of the lunagraph prevents them bearing any metal other than refined silver. Signifiers' scarlet cloaks are bordered by a single broad white stripe; their helmets (white-plumed for centurions) and breastplates are of hardened leather; and all ornamentation, reinforcement, scimitars and daggers are forged of silver.

#### MEMBERSHIP KEYWORD

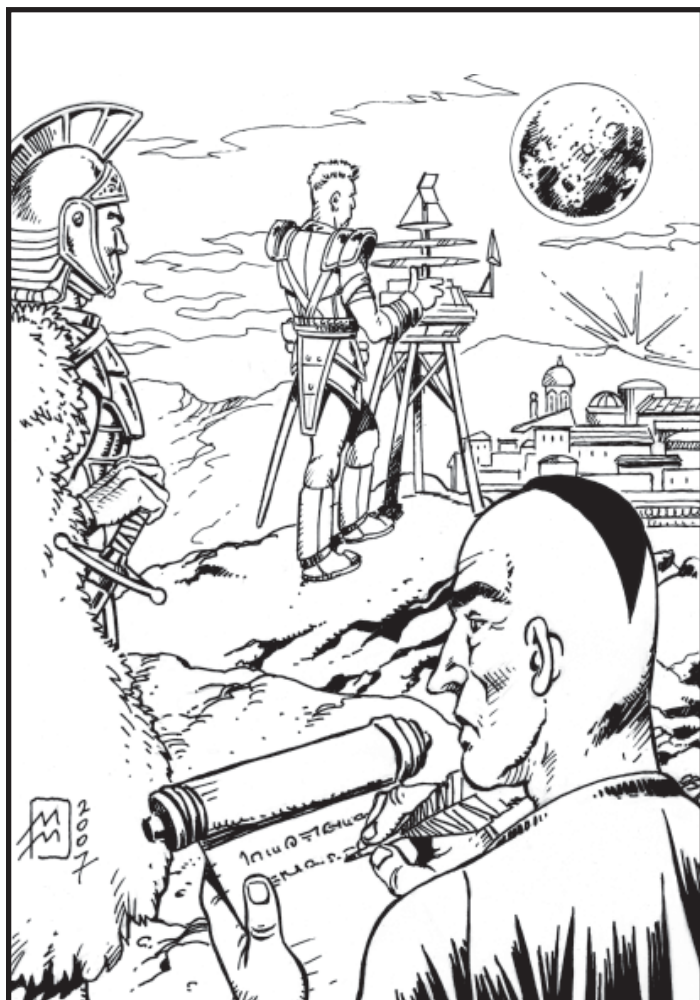
**Membership Requirements:** Candidates must be Imperial Citizens and officers of the Army, of proven piety.

**Skills taught:** Erect Lunagraph, Know EnoDemblan Codes, Know Lunagraph Prohibitions and Protocols, Operate Lunagraph, Plainsing, Polish Lunagraph.

**Typical Personality Traits:** Dedicated, Fastidious, Serious.

**Magic:** Members are mostly novitiates of Yanafal Tarnils, concentrated in Lunar magic but focused on the Lunar common magic of the Innerworld Moon.

- **Lunagraph Common Magic** (Blessed Alignment spell, Entropic Warding spell, Focus Signal Ritual feat, Polish Silver charm, Purify Self spell, Sense Foreign Metal talent)



## THE LUNAGRAPH

A lunagraph is magical artifact rather than an embodied lune guardian, yet adopts a similar format. It consists of a number of highly-polished, refined silver mirrors mounted on a tripod, weighing approximately 300 lbs. Seven small parabolic mirrors and one convex mirror reflect the light of the Red Moon into the entropic integrator. This strange chamber, marked with the runes of Eyzaal and Tafamarulf, intensifies and transmutes the moonlight into a point source, which is reflected from the main parabolic mirror in a great parallel beam. The beam is switched on and off by closing diaphragms that cover the integrator's moonglass lenses, allowing communication in the magical codes designed by Moras EnoDembla.

Anyone in the line of transmission has a chance to witness the pulsating signal, affected by the distance from the lunagraph and any intervening magical effects. The beam cannot pass through objects such as hills and mountains, and the lunagraph must be in sight of the Red Moon to operate. The Narrator rolls once and applies the die result to simple contests at pertinent range intervals; she should always check to see if a major or complete defeat is suffered at the lunagraph itself (i.e. no distance modifier), as this can indicate disaster!

**Form:** When erected, a lunagraph is a contraption of *ul-metal* mirrors and moonglass lenses attached to a rigid frame, twice the height of a man. The attitude, inclination and direction of the mirrors and lenses can be altered by a series of cranks and pulleys.

**Communication:** To normal eyes, the lunagraph's mirrors produce the faintest glint of shimmering silver light, barely perceptible at a distance; but to those concentrated in the Lunar Way and possessing the Mooneye ability, it is a pulsating silvery-red signal that transcends distance and shines through the darkest pall. Those possessing Soul Vision, Spirit Face and Symbolic Sight can sense the magical pulses, though are unable to read them (even if they know the EnoDemblan codes).

**Requirements:** Signifiers must wear gloves and must protect the purity of the lunagraph from impious interlopers and foreign metals. To touch the mirrors or entropic integrator is punishable by immediate death, resurrection, crucifixion, and then eradication of septessence. Approaching within 14 yards of an operational lunagraph unbidden and unpurified is punishable with decapitation. Approaching within 21 yards bearing metals other than refined silver is punishable by confiscation of said items and demanipulation.

**Typical Function:**

- **Lunagraph** 15W2



## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### THE ENTROPIC INTEGRATOR

The earliest lunagraphs relied on the reflections of *ul-metal* mirrors alone, and could transmit over short distances only. It was Thoros Half-Sane of the Imperial Magical University's Department of Applied Theurgy who, in his masterwork thesis *Communication Possibilities of Lunar Entropo-Etheric Entities*, discovered the missing ingredient that would break the resistance of the Inner World to redirected moonlight: the entropic integrator. His theories were highly unstable, and perfected only by Eyzaal the Alchemist himself. The resulting

device uses concentrated entropy (chaos) to infuse and strengthen the moonlight.

Lunagraphs are carefully calibrated, and any impurity, error, or fluctuation in the process can result in damage to the entropic integrator. To help ward against this, the signifiers adopt strict safety protocols and decontamination procedures, and the apparatus is carefully stored in boxes festooned with intricately-carved, silver Protection rune-bands.

On a major defeat in the vicinity of the lunagraph, the artifact secretly loses one rating point per hour, and becomes an entropic source at a level equal to half its remaining rating. On a complete defeat, the lunagraph violently vibrates for one round before exploding. Those within (*the lunagraph's rating*) yards are at risk from shards of silver and moonglass; those within double that distance are struck by a wave of searing moonlight. Both attacks occur at the lunagraph's original rating, as modified by the lunar cycle. Those slain immediately are the lucky ones! The explosion releases the chaotic energies stored in the integrator, producing a spherical zone of entropic fallout. At the center of the explosion, its strength is twice the lunagraph's unmodified rating, and deteriorates by one point per 10 yards' distance thence.

The exact effects of entropy are left to the Narrator's delight, and can take time to manifest. The Sapphire Ring are greatly interested in this item, and not just for the purposes of communication. It is rumored that they are investigating the lunagraphs' potential as sources of moonlight upon which a moonboat could journey, as foci that can empower Lunar heroes, and as weapons...

## CONTEST:

### TRANSMIT MESSAGE RITUAL

*Appropriate Ability:* Lunagraph's rating.

*Typical Modifiers and Augments:* Blessed

Alignment spell (leader), Focus Signal ritual feat (per signifier), Mooneye (recipient) (all affected by Lunar cyclic magic); Operate Lunagraph (leader), properly purified lunagraph (+10), Total Support bonus (+3); each item of foreign metal and/or unpurified person within fourteen yards of the lunagraph (-3 or equipment bonus as a penalty, doubled if iron), distance modifiers (*HeroQuest*, p. 100).

*Resistance:* 14, or highest opposing magical ability (e.g. a magical storm).

*Complete, Major or Minor Victory:* Transmission visible. Recipient(s) with the Mooneye ability may decipher it with Know EnoDemblan Codes (Resistance 14, diminished with higher levels of victory at the Narrator's discretion).

*Marginal Victory or Tie:* Transmission intermittently visible, but no meaning may be deciphered.

*Marginal or Minor Defeat:* Transmission does not reach witness.

*Major Defeat:* Transmission as above. If a Major Defeat is suffered at source the lunagraph has become unstable, and suffers an entropic leak.

*Complete Defeat:* Transmission as above. If a Complete Defeat is suffered at source, the lunagraph has exploded.

## MESSENGERS OF THE MOON

There are many ways to distribute news, proclamations, and correspondence in the Empire—from the cornucopian Kostaddi Hornblowers, Brightcoin Heralds of Lokarnos and Daughter's Road Posts, to the Imperial Quidnuncial Quorum: a shambolic union of stelae-inscribers, *ket*-criers and pamphleteers, whose proclamations (marked 'QQ' in the Dara Happan alphabet) measure the daily pulse of Imperial life and gossip. Many citizens believe that their messages are routinely intercepted and read by the intelligence Instrumentalities of the Empire. They suspect that scrolls are routinely scryed by the Padishah's Lidded Eye in the semblance of combating Spolitism, or analyzed in the abacal chambers of Oskholoveth's signaticians.

Especially popular in First Blessed, Karasal, and Oraya are the carrier-birds that distribute messages via tiny scrolls or birdsong. A Thief-Taker of Elz Ast working for Enzortis Taran-il, Satrap of First Blessed, notably accused the Spoken Word of intercepting his patron's communiqués: subverting the Undrendum cult and its moonfalcons to prey upon his flocks; and employing the infamous Twotongue Deceivers (Oskrascotan apostates debased by fallen love and redeemed in Danfive Xaron) to seduce carrier-pigeons with pernicious whispers. Most Rinliddi Tyrants now find pigeons too slow, and rear the swift, crescent-tailed Dinzizi swallow instead. Carrier-birds are highly augmented with magic to fight off aerial assailants, and such combats provide spectacular displays that light up the sky for cycles on end.

The Imperial Army frequently employs magic in communication, as in the pulsating lunes or Mindlinks summoned by Minor Class mages, or the moonboat flotillas that patrol the highways of Inclusion. Yet traditional means, such as horseborne couriers or the elite Wyvern Riders, remain popular, in no small part through the influence of Warlord Talo Varynen. Following the shocks of Jannisor's Rebellion, Varynen believed that Lunar soldiers had come to rely too greatly upon their special Inclusive magics, and lost the art of fighting. If for whatever reason those magics would fail, or the army must battle beneath the Dead Moon, the Empire would be in great peril. He thus founded the Black Moon School, to which the best captains were sent and encouraged to excel in physical pursuits, apply common magic, and embrace other denominations.

Though in many ways a successful enterprise ('Black Moon Fighting' is still practiced by the Imperial Army on occasion), the military potentates feared this impediment to the Lunarization of the army and the trend of apostasy, and purged Varynen for his ideas. One such concept was the Black Moon Signifiers: battlefield and campaign messengers whose cohort was merged with the similar Apostles of Errand and have since abandoned earlier ways, associating with the Imperial Magical University and frequently deploying new magical items.



# THE GODDESS INDEX

*"They seek her here, they seek her there, they find the Goddess everywhere."*

This collection of pedantic yet imaginative scholars has the task of finding manifestations of the Goddess amongst the heathen pantheons.

Originally they were a small group of scholars attached to the Imperial University of Magic, whose task was to catalogue the many manifestations of the Red Goddess in a book called "The Goddess Index." Their researches into the history of the Goddess found many instances where a local tribe was converted to the Lunar Way by the Goddess proving Herself to be an incarnation of one of their deities. The Index's function officially expanded with the Otherworld campaigns of Emperor Takenegi Artifex during the Sixth Wane. They successfully established many of the lost faces of the Goddess and therefore were instrumental in regaining the Empire's lost unity.

The Goddess Index is part of the Immanent Action Liberation working behind 'enemy lines,' often in close conjunction with missionary groups that use the information the Index uncovers. The Bright Line Outreach thus supports their activities openly; the Sapphire Ring does so more quietly, largely working through agents posing as wealthy patrons, because it values the magical intelligence the Index can gather. Among members of the Ebon Middle Togas of the Three-Fold Drape, it has also become fashionable to support the Index, ever since Infamous Gwerkan, a minor cousin of the satrap, became a member. However, the Loyal Jillaro Pamphleteers worry that in their zeal to discover new forms of Sedenya, the Index might encourage tolerance for White Moonies.

*Actual Name:* The Most Knowledgeable and Exalted Institute of Research into the Forms of Sedenya, Past, Present, and Future.

*Form:* Scholars' hero band

*Typical Homeland:* Any Lunar.

*Cultural Context:* Mythic researchers.

*Association Relationship:* Researchers who provide Immanent Action Liberation's missionary effort with mythic propaganda material.

*Ideology:* "It is our experience that the Goddess is already present in the belief systems of all Gloranthan cultures."

*Look and Feel:* A musty group of scholars, more involved in their researches and academic standing than being connected to everyday life, yet nonetheless committed to fieldwork in often arduous and hostile conditions.

*Purpose:* To prove that the Red Goddess is everywhere.

*Headquarters:* The Board of the Index sits in the Imperial University, while individual groups may temporarily set up a base near the location of their researches.

*Reactions:* Even within the Heartlands, the Index is seen as a collection of pedantic bookworms who state what every Lunar citizen already knows. Beyond the Glowline, they are seen as interfering meddlers at best and Godlearners at worst.

## RESOURCES

*Leader:* The current First Class Distinguished Illuminated All-Knowing and Excellent Keeper of the Goddess Index is Janmis Tranasal, a wizened little old gray tutor of the Imperial University, better known as "He Who is Always Right" to his students. But he is.

*Renowned Members:* Zeron Umkartha, a renowned wandering scholar, has famously tutored the Imperial Family. Santha the Speedreader is as renowned for her razor-sharp wit in the debating fora of Glamour as she is for her voracious appetite for books. Brandig Redfit is an atypical member, a Heortling convert from the Hoar Heron Clan whose learning is a little patchy. Nonetheless, many scholars seek to include him in their Learnings because he is not only a poster-boy for Lunar missionary work, but 6' 6" tall and skilled in sword and spear. Infamous Gwerkan is a minor and, frankly, undistinguished member, but his royal blood ensures that he receives undue attention by outsiders, something that fails to endear him with his colleagues. There are also suspicions that he is a spy planted by the Jillaro Pamphleteers precisely to look out for White Moon sympathies within the Index. Add to that the fact that he comes up with a different reason for his nickname every time he is asked about it, and the surprise is that he is still a member.

*Membership:* The last imperial audit of the departments of the Imperial University totaled the Index at 150. This figure comprises of 7 Board members, 20 members in Heartland Learnings, 50 in Provincial Learnings, and 50 in Learnings beyond the borders of the empire who are seeding future conquests. The other 23 scholars were either on sabbatical or missing at the time of the audit.





*Other Contacts:* All members of the Index are at least associate, if not full, members of the Imperial University. They are also have friendly relations with several of the more scholarly parts of the Lunar College of Magic. That said, their belief that the Goddess already exists within most belief systems, and thus needs only to be revealed, often clashes with those who favor a more traditional approach to conversion.

*Typical Personality Traits:* Dreamer, Inventive, Pedantic, Self-Important.

*Magic:* Most members of the Index are followers of Irippi Ontor with the occasional follower of Oskholoveth, drawn to the band through a love of cataloguing.

## ORGANIZATION

The standard Index unit is a 'Learning,' which consists of one to three scholars. Each Learning will be assigned a mission, a research project with a specific outcome (such as "Find the lost Moon Goddess of the Aniz River Tribe"). They will then single-mindedly pursue this mission. Additional expertise will be hired as needed, from mercenaries and servants to additional scholars. The latter will be outsiders, since members of other Learnings will be too focused on their own mission to be of any help. Sometimes a Learning's mission will take many years to complete and such is the insular nature of their work that it becomes cut off from the rest of the Index. Only when they have their findings will they emerge from the wilderness triumphantly to present their research to the Board.

The Board is the ruling body of the Index and sits at the Imperial University. It is made up of a group of seven senior scholars. They loosely control the Learnings, by allocating missions and appropriate funding. Learnings that go off-mission can have their mission cancelled, their funds withdrawn and even their status at the University revoked.

## MEMBERSHIP KEYWORD

*Membership Requirements:* Must be a Lunar Scholar of at least 10W. Scholars of less than 5W2 ability are Junior Learners who are supervised by Principal Learners. Scholars of 15W2 and higher are Senior Learners and become eligible for membership of the Board.

*Skills taught:* Argue Point Successfully, Find Traces of Past in the Earth, Fuzzy Logic, Read Between the Lines, Read Long and Boring Books and Find Worth In Them.

## THE INSPIRATION OF THE INDEX

The Inspiration is the lair of the actual Index, whose power has waxed as it has grown from a single notebook to the present small library.

*Method:* Archetype.

*Form:* Most people imagine the Index to be a single book, but it has long since outgrown this. Instead, it is a whole collection of volumes, each cunningly written on pages of stiffened Kralori silk in seven different color inks, with the hue indicating different forms of knowledge and surmise.

*Communication:* The guardian speaks to members of the Index as a small voice in the back of their head. Some members describe it as the mental equivalent of drinking cool clear water on a burning Fire season day.

*Guardian Requirements:* Band members must single-mindedly pursue their given mission, to receive the guardian benefits and communications. When members pursue other goals, however temporary, the Guardian totally withdraws its support.

*Functions:*

☞ **Awareness:** Find Form of the Goddess 10W

⚡ **Blessing:** See the Works of the Goddess 10W

☐ **Defense:** Resist Opposing Viewpoint 5W



## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### IN THE SHADOW OF THE TARDY NEWT

Whilst in Glamour, the heroes hanker after the simple ale of their early adventuring days in the Provinces. They are pointed in the direction of the Tardy Newt, a rough and ready place catering to those who have been to the more barbarous parts of the empire. The inn is in the basement of a popular restaurant, 'Prax's Place,' and once down the narrow set of stairs the heroes are greeted by the familiar smell of Sartarite pipeweed and Tarshite Best. A Tarshite bard plays a traditional bawdy tune on his pipes as an athletic man in scholarly robes clashes dual scimitars in time. The scholar is loud and exuberant, offering a seemingly-endless supply of free drinks to anyone within shouting distance. If asked why he is so jubilant, he pats his leather satchel and tells them that he, lampkor the All-knowing, has completed his research and tomorrow, after ten stinking years in the peat bogs of the Holy Country, he is to present it to the Board. He will say no more, offering more drinks before breaking into drunken song.

Suddenly, the lights go out. It is pitch magical darkness. There is a quick sound of footsteps, the cutting of flesh with a blade, a scream and then more running footsteps. Then as quickly the lights come back on. The scholar lies at the heroes' feet, cut in half, his satchel gone.

All eyes fall on the heroes, and the silver whistles of the Glamour Vigilance can be heard nearby.

Who is responsible? An academic rival out to steal his life's work? Mysterious but maligned zealots from the Holy Country, who seek only to avoid their deity being associated with the hated Red Goddess? Or a simple but magically-assisted assassin hired by the jealous husband of the girl the scholar left behind ten years ago but visited to celebrate his triumph the night before...?

### I'M WITH STUPID

Either out of family obligations or as hired hands, the heroes are the protectors of Jeerek Meekamp, a scholar of the Index on a mission into the deepest, darkest 'Barbarian belt' to find the lost Goddess amongst a particularly backward clan. The heroes are employed because they possess talents that Jeerek lacks: muscle and social skills. The clan turns out not to be as backward as first assumed. After a few harmless social and physical contests, the heroes are taken to the clan's hearts. With feasting and merrymaking, the heroes enjoy the fruits of their hard work, until Jeerek starts undoing it. This arrogant geek blunders his way round the clan, insulting the priests and warriors and poking his nose into the secret clan rituals in search of the goddess. Eventually, the heroes are forced to choose between their new friends in the clan or Jeerek. Or perhaps there is a middle way to be found, harnessing the powers of the Secret Goddess of which the Clan never speaks, but who Jeerek is convinced is a form of Sedenya. (He could be right, but it could just as easily be the axe-wielding emasculator Babeester Gor or Malia, Mother of Disease...)

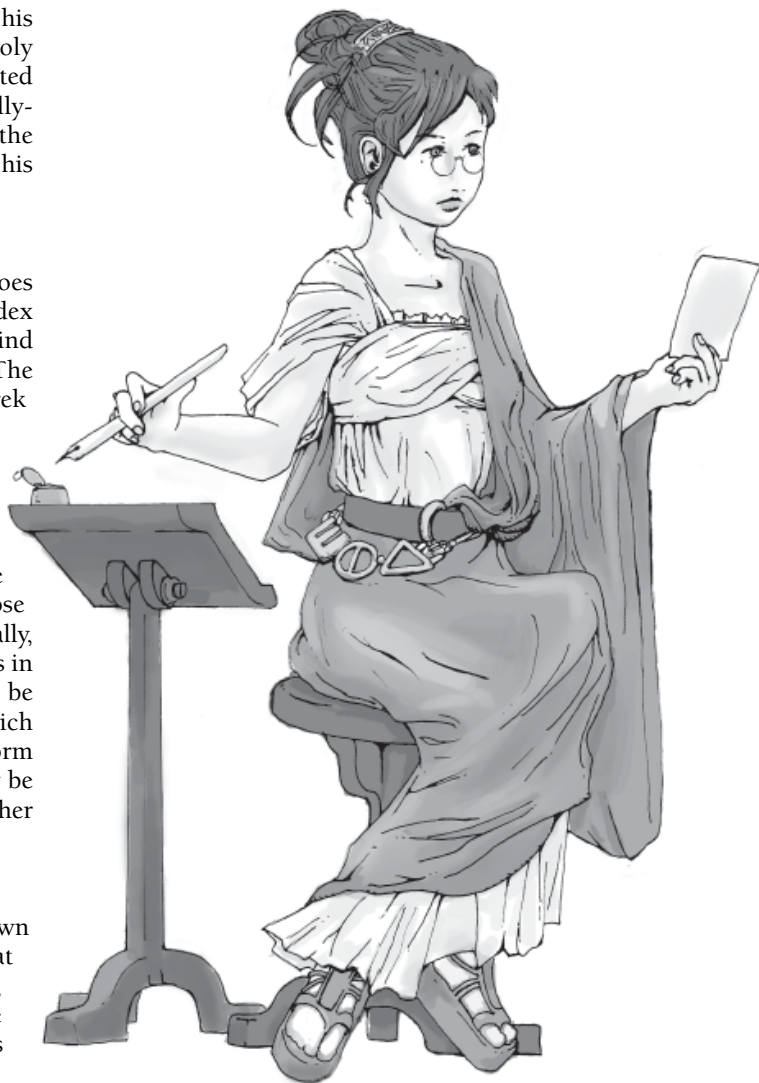
### I'M RIGHT, YOU ARE WRONG

The researches of two Learnings clash in the small dusty town of Twin Daughters. Amrida the Bald's Learning insists that that it is first of the twin deities that the town worships, Hasha Rainsky, who is the form of Sedenya. Nasra the Harsh's Learning insists it is the second, Mumkis

Earthmaiden. Heated words are exchanged in the local tavern and the two Learnings retire to their rented houses on the opposite sides of the town. Over the coming weeks, with the aid of hired muscle, the Learnings become the equivalent of gangs, buying old relics, desecrating sacred sites, and eliminating rivals in search of information to support their case. As the town tears itself apart in inter-gang warfare, the heroes are begged by the town's elders to restore order. Of course, both Learnings have powerful backers in Glamour...

### INSPIRATION IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES

Wana 'Prettybooks' Shanora is a tall and attractive noble scholar of the Index who hires the heroes as aides on a dig into a lost city. The money's good, their employer fair, but what the heroes do not know is that Wana is completely mad. She has spent the last two years cut off from the rest of the Index, in the cave system that houses the city. Her mission is to find relics of the predawn version of Sedenya that inhabitants worshipped. Instead she found a temple to that most hated of all Dara Happan deities, the Empty Emperor, and has been driven insane by the cruel tones of this chaos deity that scrape through her mind and now guide her actions. What awful sights await the heroes as they enter this predawn netherworld? Will they be able to realize that all is not right with their patron before ending up on the sacrificial altar in the Empty Emperor's temple?





# THE HOUNDS OF PENITENCE

*"Human hounds to hunt human wolves!"*

"Unleash the Hounds!" Howling like dogs, the black-clad penitents race towards the rebel camp determined to kill or die. The captain smiles: he has no further use for the Hounds. They have located the rebels. Now they can serve as a distraction, while the men he had positioned earlier infiltrate the rebel camp from behind. The Penitents will probably die, but it will mean fewer casualties among the loyal soldiers of the Fist. A good bargain.

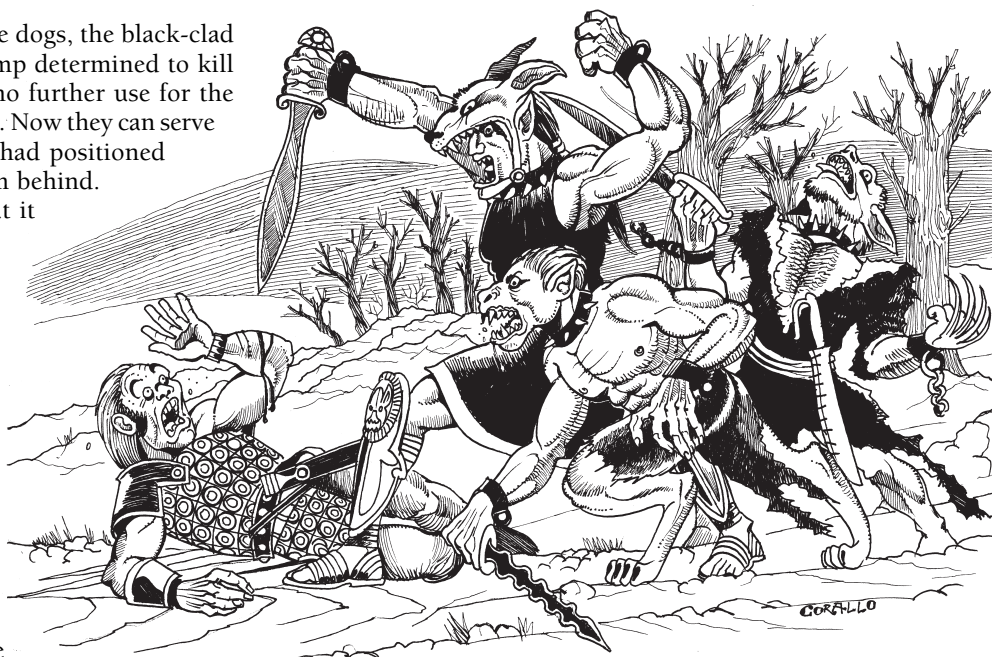
Durg Throat-Biter was a vicious Jajaloring bandit who opposed the spread of the Lunar Empire into Vanch. He was defeated and humiliated by Cwurl Toran. Begging to be accepted as Cwurl Toran's servant, even as a dog, he was told to seek repentance first and sent to the cult of Danfive Xaron. Although he achieved Atonement, it was after Cwurl Toran had become an Immortal, and the nascent cult of Cwurl Toran refused to accept him. Remaining with Danfive Xaron, Durg became a great HeroQuester. He found this previously unexplored part of Danfive Xaron's Hero Path:

*In the Eternal Night of the Underworld Danfive Xaron, once known as the Wolf of the Night, encountered the Nightmare Hound. The Hound was savage and untamed, yet the man was more savage still. Danfive Xaron subdued the Hound and broke it to his will. Staring into the eyes of the defeated Hound, he knew that the Wolf was brother to the dog. It was then that he began to understand that his destiny was to be subdued, to be tamed and to serve.*

From this quest, Durg Throat-Biter gained the aid of the Nightmare Hound and the insights that led him to form the Hounds of Penitence

The Hounds of Penitence are a hero band of Danfive Xaron, used to hunt down bandits, rebels, and other enemies of the Empire. Most are of Jajaloring blood although the Jajaloring people shun the Hounds, naming them the Outcast Pack.

The Hounds are organized into Packs, each led by one or more Hunt Masters. The Hunt Masters are recruited from Redeemed followers of Danfive Xaron who choose to remain with the cult. Hunt Masters are permitted to live as men, and



may bear light weapons and armor. A Hunt Master may be expected to be held to account for the misdoings of any Hound under his command. Hunt Masters are permitted to recruit in the field and are taught the full ritual for binding a man to the Hounds. The Hounds are taught enough to support the ritual.

**Common Names:** Black Dogs, The Outcast Pack, Whipped Curs.

**Form:** Man-hunting penitents.

**Typical Homeland:** Lunar Provinces, especially from the Jajaloring people of Saird (Vanch, Holay and Imther).

**Cultural Context:** A pathway to penitence, combining the Lunar cult of Danfive Xaron with Jajaloring dog lore.

**Association Relationship:** The Hounds sometimes operate with the Turzah Hounders. At times they cooperate in the service of the Empire, but at other times they are rivals. The hero-cult of Durg Throat-Ripper still feels a degree of resentment towards the cult of Cwurl Toran for its treatment of their founder, and the relationship is sometimes strained.

Ultimately, though, the Hounds are more closely dependant upon the Turzah Hounders than they might like to admit.



*Ideology:* Criminals are wolves who must be killed or tamed. We are dogs, tamed wolves, who serve men in hunting down those who are as we were.

*Look and Feel:* Hard-bitten thugs, who live like dogs and deserve no better.

*Purpose:* To kill or capture bandits, rebels, or other law-breakers, especially those who are violent and dangerous.

*Headquarters:* A small Penitentiary near Derfik in Vanch, run by the hero-cult of Durg Throat-Biter.

*Reactions:* Fear, distrust, disgust, and horror. Penitents usually provoke this sort of reaction, but the Hounds are worse than most. This is especially true of those who have something to hide. It is widely believed that the Hounds can detect the guilty by smell.

## RESOURCES

*Leader:* “Ratter” Naran, a former clerk and embezzler, who, despite his slight build, developed a wiry strength as a result of Hound training. Once noted for his ability to slip through narrow entrances, he has put on weight, but still retains the tenacity that contributed to his nickname. One of the better administrators the Hounds have had, he has managed some modest expansion in the Hounds’ holdings.

*Renowned Members:* The Mastiff, a large foreigner of unknown origins, who did not speak of his crimes or even reveal his name before joining. He is vicious in combat, with a liking for biting an opponent’s throat with his filed teeth. Some say that he is Durg Throat-Ripper reborn and expect him to do great things for the cult if he atones. Jarlz the Watchdog, a former Hound who never returned to human ways after achieving Atonement. He now serves as the chief guard dog at the Xaronea in Glamour.

*Membership:* Numbers can fluctuate quite quickly. If the Hounds suffer serious losses and recruiting is difficult, numbers will be significantly lower, with perhaps only a single Pack (or none) in the field. Conversely, if the Hounds are in favor with their superiors or there is great need of their services, numbers may be higher. The numbers given below may be taken as typical.

*Other Contacts:* The Hounds are most frequently employed by the Provincial Overseer’s Office. They are not officially part of the Provincial Government and could be used as a “deniable” resource. They may be deployed because they are needed or as a warning. The Hound’s leadership is attempting to court the cult of Borovich, to improve their chances in undertaking a heroquest to prove that Cwurl Toran did accept the service of Durg Throat-Ripper when they met again as Immortals.

### HERO-CULT: DURG THROAT-BITER

The hero-cult of Durg Throat-Biter exists to administer the Hounds of Penitence and also prove his acceptance by Cwurl Toran, something that would cement Durg’s rise into the ranks of the Lunar gods. He provides Hounds with the feat Throat-Biter and Hunt Masters with Subdue Hound.

## ORGANIZATION

Three retired Hunt Masters work at the HQ near Derfik. Most new Hounds serve there a time as “watchdogs.” Old or maimed Hounds, considered unfit for field-work, are also assigned to this station. If the recruits require training, it is given here, in typically brutal Xaroni style. In normal times about 10-12 Hounds are stationed here. Except in unusual circumstances, the number of Hounds here does not fall below seven or rise above 25. A Pack in the field is assigned 7 to 14 Hounds, but may have lost some to combat. Normally no more than three Packs are active. Each pack includes one or more hunting hounds. The dogs are given preferential treatment and held up as examples to the Hounds. The Hounds are often an all-male organization. When female Hounds are recruited, they are kept as a separate pack (the “Black Bitches”).

## MEMBERSHIP KEYWORD

*Membership Requirements:* Members do not often apply to join. They are usually offered membership by the Hunt Master and may suffer punishment if they refuse. All who join must surrender their human voice, which is replaced by the voice of a dog. Their voice is regained only by the mercy of the Goddess

*Skills Taught:* Bark, Bite, Grapple Prey, Keen Nose, Know My Place in Pack, Run Down Prey, Tracking.

*Typical Personality Traits:* Accept Punishment, Obedient, Vicious.

*Magic:* All members are at least ordinates of Danfive Xaron. Some also follow Cwurl Toran, while all Hunt Masters must join the hero-cult of Durg Throat-Biter (and many ordinary Hounds choose to, as well).

## THE NIGHTMARE HOUND

*Method:* Archetype.

*Communication:* The Nightmare Hound walks in the dreams of the Hounds. Usually it punishes transgressions—forbidden actions, forbidden thoughts, or forbidden dreams.

*Guardian Requirements:* Members (including the Hunt Masters), must always wear the chain collar. Most importantly, Hounds must obey their Hunt Master and serve the Empire as he decrees. Until they Atone, they lose their human voices and must also live like a dog—they never sit at a table, or sleep in a bed. If they are lucky they are thrown scraps and allowed to sleep indoors. They may use neither weapons nor armor. Only the Hunt Masters are permitted weapons. They are required to respect and obey Imperial Law and to ensure that their Hounds do likewise. Hunt Masters are also required to serve the Imperial Authorities in hunting down criminals or other enemies of the Empire, whenever requested to do so. Failure to meet the requirements not only means an inability to take advantage of the Nightmare Hound’s, he will haunt the offender’s dreams to punish them, and also visit the dreams of the nearest Hounds, demanding that they hunt down the offender for more physical punishment.

*Functions:*

☞ **Awareness:** Scent Guilt 10W.

☞ **Blessing:** Like A Hound 15W.

☞ **Defense:** Show Submission 1W

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

The Hounds are not a likely choice for player-character membership. A one-shot game as human dogs might be entertaining, but the limited options for dialog—and the danger of a sore throat—are likely to wear if extended past a single session.

In more typical situations player characters may have to:

*Run with the Hounds:* A band of rebels must be tracked down. The players must support a Pack of Hounds and see that the rebel scum are brought to justice. How will idealistic Lunars deal with the brutal lives of the Hounds?

*Evade the Hounds:* Player characters often seem to be rebels, criminals or other undesirables that might be prey for the Hounds.

*Deal with the Hounds:* The Hounds are not especially corrupt, because their worship of Danfive Xaron limits opportunities. But there are things that they want, notably recognition by the Cult of Cwurl Toran. They might try to influence or cultivate heroes who can help, or directly seek their assistance. For example, a player-hero with knowledge of Yinkin or a specialist in mythic deconstruction may be engaged to help with the Blood-Drinking heroquest, discussed below.

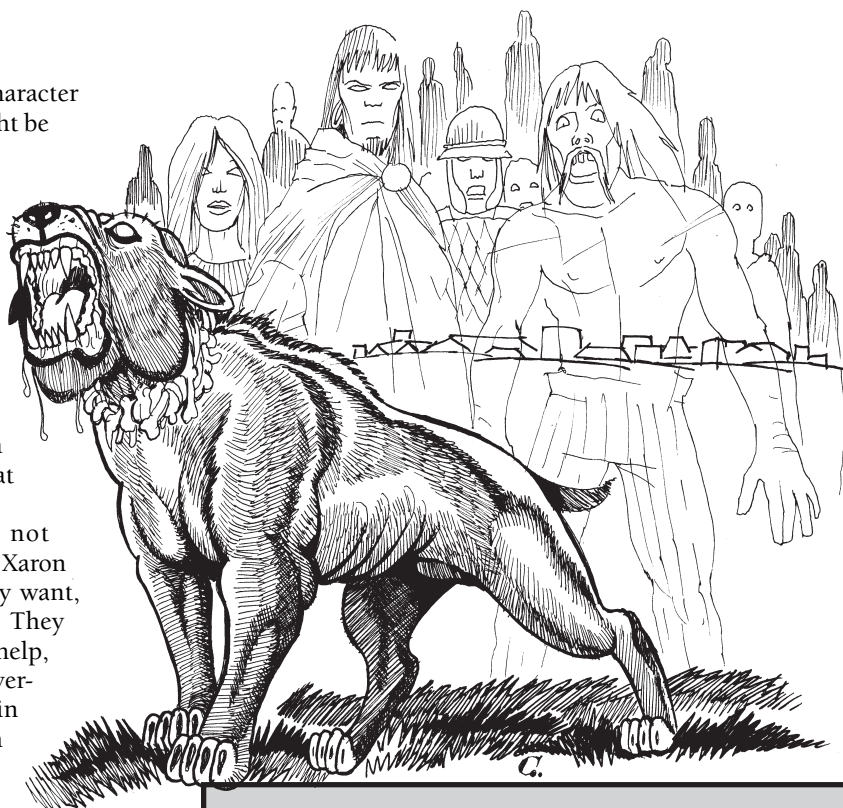
*Ware the Hounds:* The Hounds are sent in because the local Lunar authorities are seen as failing to cope with rebellion and dissent (perhaps in some corner of Dragon Pass or during SorEel's stint as Governor of Pavis). While not direct targets of the Hounds, the characters must still cope with their presence—and the consequences.

Hounds can also present player-heroes with more unusual situations challenges. For instance, given that once a man joins the Hounds he becomes incapable of human speech, what do they do when the suspect they need to interrogate escapes by joining the Hounds? Alternatively, if a noblewoman intended for a politically advantageous but personally distressing marriage becomes one of the "Black Bitches," how can the heroes extricate her without incurring the wrath of both the cults of Durg and Danfive Xaron?

### BLOOD-DRINKING

The followers of Durg Throat-Biter are preparing for a heroquest to bring him into Cwurl Toran's Moonpack. Having failed in their previous attempt to prove directly that Cwurl Toran accepted him, they are instead following up an obscure reference to the Moonpack including one to 'The Dog Who Drained the Cat's Bloodwarmth From its Throat.' This, in turn, has been linked with the so-called 'Bad Dogs' who fought with an obscure barbarian alynx-god called Yinkin down in Sartar and stole its heat.

They are thus gathering in strength in scattered, furtive camps around Yinkin's Rest (see *Dragon Pass*, page 63), a site holy to the Yinkin-cat. On the barbarians' 'Cat Nap Day' (Fire Day/Harmony Week/Fire Season), they will gather to storm this sacred and secret site. There, they will support five carefully-trained and -enhanced heroquesters who will become the 'Bad Dogs.' Proving that Durg was one will be relatively easy, but drawing the connection to the Moonpack will be harder. However, Naran has a secret ally, an out-of-favor priest of Cwurl Toran who is prepared to become his blood brother, as a way of cementing this relationship.



## DOGFATHERS OF SAIRD

Saird, the wide region between Dragon Pass and Dara Happa, has always had a special relationship with canines, kept alive through the peasant's worship of Jajagappa, often in defiance of their overlords. When King Verenemars organized Saird against the dragons, he began great sacrifices to strengthen Jajagappa and raised the dog peoples against the EWF. One of his actions was to raise a prehistoric war banner to rally them, bearing the design of a great warhound.

**Jajagappa** is a death god, shunned by most but worshipped by the Jajalorings of Saird. He is also God of the Lost Rocks. Jajagappa fought against the evil in the sky, wandering about and destroying all foes. He appears on the Gods Wall, dog-headed and carrying the net he uses to catch any souls that go astray after death, or which have no divine protection, or otherwise are prey. They are hunted down and shredded, devoured and reshaped to be another hound in the pack. Since evil beings are, by definition, astray, Jajagappa is also viewed as the enforcer of morality. He is the sire of Rowdril.

**Rowdril** is "Father Dog," Leader of the Pack. He sired loyal **Ensoval**, the god of ordinary dogs who help humankind in domestic duties. However, wild Rowdril also sired many other hunting dogs and the warhounds that appear on the Verenemars' coat of arms.

Lunar heroes may be drawn into either supporting or resisting them. The cult of Cwurl Toran may resent meddling with their myths and seek friendly but 'deniable' agents to interfere with the rite. Alternatively, Orlanthi heroes might stumble across the Durgite camps and thus the plot, or else be forced into the role of Yinkin.



# THE IMPERIAL ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY OF DOBLIAN

*"We seek lost treasures for the glory of Us."*

The vast and wealthy Lunar Empire has an equally vast and wealthy aristocracy. Most of these nobles are engaged in serious pursuits such as governing the empire, bringing civilization to the southlands, and attempting to screw their rivals. Others find themselves burdened with full purses and empty hours, which Takenegi Ignifer identified as Kazkurtum's Cradle, the source of great mischief. Fortunately, this energy is often channeled in a positive direction through countless clubs, assemblies, sodalities, federations, fraternities, sororities, societies, and more.

The Imperial Antiquarian Society of Doblian is an organization devoted to the collection and restoration of ancient artifacts. It began in the Fifth Wane as the passion of one man, and over the intervening years has become an influential and well-regarded institution that benefits not only its own members but the Satrapy of Doblian and the empire at large. The Antiquarians are credited with the discovery of several important finds, such as the Panoply of Kumardesh, which was recovered from beneath the very hill where he faced his final Carmanian charge. Takenegi Reclusus honored the Antiquarians by charging them with the location of several important items for the first Icebreaker quest. They succeeded at this and other Imperial commands, earning them great notoriety and respect.

Throughout its history, the Antiquarian Society has been associated with House Kortillion, and eventually the Immanent Action Liberation association. Lord Van-oyera, the First Antiquarian, began his career as a commander in the Fist of Doctrine. Many of the early Antiquarians were comrades-in-arms of Van-oyera, and a distinct preference was shown for a military background among prospective members. The society entered a period of general decline following the Nights of Horror, and became obsessed with imperial nostalgia. The society came to the attention of House Kortillion again in the Seventh Wane, when it was formally chartered by Takenegi Celestinus. Under the guidance of the Immanent Action Liberation association, the Antiquarians reconnected with their martial roots and reawakened their lair—the soul of Van-oyera.

In the Seventh Wane, the Antiquarians have become more active and diverse than ever before in their long history. They emerged from an unpleasant encounter with Takenegi Ignifer's Counting Scholars as a more cohesive and well-organized band. Several members participated in the invasion of Dragon Pass, and added many unique items from the sacking of Boldhome to the Hall of Trophies. The Antiquarians now have dozens of ongoing projects in the imperial Heartlands and beyond. Most of these are private expeditions, but some are initiated at the request of outside organizations—particularly

the Immanent Action Liberation. Several new members have brought a level of professionalism to the society that was previously unknown, and there is a persistent rumor that the Antiquarians may soon be asked to teach at the Imperial University in Glamour.

*Common Names:* The Antiquarians are often referred to as an historical society. The Darjiini rarely make this mistake, and instead the speak of the Plunderers of Doblian (itself often misunderstood) or simply the Grave Robbers.

*Form:* A special interest society for the idle rich.

*Typical Homeland:* Any from within the Lunar Empire or its provinces, especially the Satrapy of Doblian.

*Cultural Context:* Well-heeled dilettantes with a shared interest in the collection of ancient artifacts.

*Association Relationship:* A retired merchant of the Moon over the Waters venture is the current leader of the Antiquarians.

*Ideology:* "The recovery of ancient artifacts helps us better understand our empire, and keeps us strong. Besides, this would look really nice in my foyer."

*Look and Feel:* The Antiquarians are a diverse society united by wealth, status, and a passion for antiques.

*Purpose:* To assist members in mounting expeditions and provide a forum for discussion.

*Headquarters:* The Antiquarians meet in Doblian City once a year to present their findings to Satrap Yan Kor Yan. Regular meetings are held in the city of Ikavros, which is closer to several important excavation sites.

*Reactions:* Respected by the Imperial nobility in Doblian. Despised by many in Darjiin.

## RESOURCES

*Leader:* Henrik Ten-Wheels is the recently appointed Presider of the Imperial Antiquarian Society. He is an unusual office holder for several reasons, the most contentious being his lack of noble blood. A native of Vanch, Henrik's successful merchant career in the Moon over the Waters venture earned him respect and admiration within the Immanent Action Liberation association. When he retired, Henrik's connections with the association persuaded the Antiquarians to accept him as a member. Three years later, Satrap Yan Kor Yan personally intervened in society affairs to appoint him as Presider. Since that time, he has applied his considerable organizational skills to the large scale excavation of historic sites, mostly in Darjiin and Saird.



*Renowned Members:* Lord Belindus is a retired Doctrinaire and veteran of the invasion of Dragon Pass. He is currently in Tarsh laying the groundwork for a new expedition. Polemir of Tawenos is a Lunar Carmanian zealot following in his father's footsteps by investigating the many battlefields of the Mountain War. Envaresh of Virindum is a prominent magician-lecturer from the Imperial University who deciphers ancient scripts as a hobby. He is currently working with Presider Henrik on projects in Darjiin. Prince Kolbyr is the third son of Ulfmath, King of the Anadikki. His wild and unfounded speculations led to fruitless expeditions, but he has the money and political clout to continue.

*Membership:* The Imperial Antiquarian Society is fixed at 54 members by charter. Membership is not inheritable, but preference is given to the descendants of current or former members.

*Other Contacts:* The Antiquarians have close ties with the Immanent Action Liberation and the Lunar aristocracy in Doblian. Envaresh has strong connections within the Imperial University in Glamour. Bellok-yan has often been engaged as an agent.

## ORGANIZATION

The Imperial Antiquarian Society was originally a loose social organization without real central authority. This ended twenty years ago when the society was forced to endure an imperial audit intended to reveal improprieties in the handling of grant money. Now the Antiquarians have a well-organized leadership council primarily in charge of the collection and disbursement of funds, and interacting with other organizations on behalf of the Antiquarians. The council chairman, or Presider, is selected by an open membership vote, and serves a term of seven years. The Satrap of Doblian has the authority to override the result of this vote, but such action has only been taken twice since the Antiquarians were granted their charter. The majority of members act independently using private funds, although the council retains the right to veto any individual project. This typically happens only if a project violates one of the conditions spelled out in the charter first issued by Takenegi Celestinus.

## MEMBERSHIP KEYWORD

*Membership Requirements:* Prospective members must be invited by a current Antiquarian and suffer no objections. Members must have sufficient personal resources to carry out their own projects.

*Skills taught:* Evaluate Find, Methodical Excavation, Pelorian History, Sound Impressive

*Typical Personality Traits:* Acquisitive, Self-important.

## VAN-OYERA

Van-oyera, the First Antiquarian, was a Doctrinaire of great renown who helped Takenegi Magnificus drive the nomads from Peloria. During his illustrious career, Van-oyera assembled an impressive collection of war trophies, and some claimed that his operations were designed more for plunder than strategy. When he retired from active service following the battle of Iron Fences, Van-oyera continued his obsession by returning to old battlefields in Doblian. After a few dramatic successes, Lord Van-oyera was joined in his avocation by an increasing number of friends, relatives, and assorted hangers-on. The usually friendly competition for the best finds soon led to regular meetings held at Van-oyera's mansion in Doblian City.

Van-oyera was an old man when, despite vocal and heartfelt protests, he rode to battle one last time with his beloved Emperor. Van-oyera's soul was rescued from oblivion by Takenegi Artifex almost a decade after the Nights of Horror. Instead of moving on to a hero's reward,



Van-oyera heeded the call of the surviving Antiquarians and became the guardian lare for what became formally recognized as the Antiquarian Society of Doblian.

When the Antiquarians succumbed to idle nostalgia, Van-oyera first berated them for fools, and then fell silent for almost thirty years. He was reawakened by Sestinus the Tall of House Kortillion during the reign of Takenegi Militar. Sestinus was a veteran of the Battle of Penjarl (Grizzly Peak), and helped the Antiquarians to reconnect with their martial past. Since that time, Van-oyera has been well pleased with the Antiquarians, even coming to accept Henrik Ten-Wheels after a fashion.

*Method:* Manifestation.

*Form:* The Natha rune emblazoned upon a large ornate shield hanging in the Lyceum Antiquus in Doblian City.

*Communication:* Van-oyera speaks aloud during society meetings in the Lyceum. When this occurs, his face appears in the shield's Natha emblem. Otherwise, members can speak to him (to request magical aid, report findings, etc) but will not hear a reply.

*Guardian Requirements:* Each member must present findings before Van-oyera in the Lyceum at least once each year.

*Functions:*

- ☞ **Awareness:** Sense the Past 8
- ☞ **Blessing:** Know Treasure 10
- ☞ **Defense:** Defend Against Savage 5

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### TOMB RAIDERS

Henrik Ten-Wheels has been instructed by the Immanent Action Liberation to locate the three Debarkings—mythical places where the first people left Anaxial's Ark after the Flood. Henrik and Envaresh believe that Mt. Gestinus in Doblian is the location of the first Debarking. They have initiated several digs in the area, the most promising of which is the ruined Manimati city of Darokon in the Yolp Mountains. The people of Darjiin, however, are not pleased with the desecration of a site they hold to be sacred.

Lately the dig at Darokon has been troubled by sabotage and, most recently, murder. This might be the work of enraged Darjiini pilgrims, Digijelm (trolls), or some other denizen of the dark mountains. Some of the guards have even begun to whisper the name "Ammas," a terrifying undead lich reputed to haunt the dark mountain ravines. Henrik is desperate to resolve the issue quickly so he can return to his personal project in Saird, but his resources are spread thin. The heroes might be sharp association troubleshooters or a wandering band that happens to be available on short notice.

**ACTS:**

**1. Whodunit?** – The heroes investigate the incidences of sabotage and murder. Despite their best efforts, the heroes find no definitive culprit, be it mortal or monster. Tensions are high, though, and if the heroes push too hard, anything might happen.

**2. Discovery!** – Workers discover part of the ancient city preserved by the landslide that buried it during the Dominion of Shargash. The heroes escort Envaresh into the buried city, fending off restless spirits and other perils, to find a temple

containing a single ornate chest. Envaresh examines the chest with excitement, then places the room under guard. He will say nothing about what it might contain.

**3. Betrayal** – Word of the newly-discovered complex spreads. Soon the entire village, pilgrims and all, arrive and demand that the sacred precincts be sealed and the desecrators depart. Henrik's guards try to keep them at bay, but their numbers appear to increase with each passing hour. Serious conflict seems imminent. At the moment of greatest tension, the sacred chest is found to have vanished.

**4. Denouement** – A quick investigation reveals that several junior members of the Antiquarian Society have vanished along with the men guarding the chest. Henrik has been betrayed! Is this simple greed, a plot to discredit him, or have they been suborned by the dread powers of Ammas? The heroes can remain to help Henrik's men keep control of Darokon or they can attempt to track the traitors to their lair.

## INTO DRAGON PASS

Lord Belindus, a veteran of the siege of Boldhome, is currently in Tarsh assembling a expedition into barbaric Dragon Pass. The retired Doctrinaire is returning to Dragon Pass, hoping to recover artifacts lost with the True Golden Horde during the Dragonkill. This ambitious long-term mission into dangerous territory will require a virtual army of guards, guides, porters, cooks, and assorted support staff and is also a good opportunity to bring heroes into Dragon Pass. The expedition will march through Trader's Valley to Alda-Chur, a friendly city in the region, and begin a survey of the area.

**ACTS:**

**1. The Gathering** – The expedition assembles in Furthest, capital of the frontier kingdom of Tarsh. Furthest has a well-deserved reputation for decadence, a fact that will be exploited by spies attempting to learn details of the expedition. If the heroes prove resistant to these efforts, an attempt will be made to capture one of the heroes, take him into the catacombs beneath the city, and threaten to offer him as a blood sacrifice to the Dark Earth cultists.

**2. The March** – The march from Furthest to Alda-chur takes one week, gradually rising into the high hills beyond the Dragonspine. The journey is one of contrasts. The Tarshite city of Goldedge is in the midst of the 'Architects' War,' and has become a place of breathtaking splendor. The city of Slavewall is a grim, no-nonsense town whose name reflects its primary business. The quiet beauty of the high country is marred by a flood of loathsome Chaos monsters that descend upon the expedition from Snake Pipe Hollow.

**3. The Camp** – The threat of Chaos ends at the fortress of Glasswall. The expedition spends one final day crossing the densely populated Sharl Plains and arrives at Alda-chur well before nightfall. Lord Belindus orders a camp to be constructed near the Field of the Tents of Silver, an outpost of the Lunar Army. From this point on, the story has many possibilities. Will the Tarsh Exiles of the East Bush Range tolerate foreigners poking around their land? How will the Dragonewts of the Wildlands react to the expedition? And finally, what will happen when the winds stop blowing...?

**WANT TO KNOW MORE?**

Locations in this adventure, starting with Slavewall, are described in ***Dragon Pass, A Gazetteer of Kerofinela***.

# THE LORELORDS OF ERSKINTU

*Into the Lozenge's Core!*

"To understand all is to conquer all," was Takenegi Robustus's dictum, and a great Lodronaut expedition is being prepared under the Association's patronage to use secret Mostali magics to plumb the volcanic depths of Caladraland and learn the secrets of its myths and magics.

For the glorious Empire to expand in the most efficacious manner, it is imperative that the philosophers of the Red Emperor's scholarly legions understand the myth-cultures of those mandated for Inclusion. Knowledge of myth is power, and everyone knows that the Imperial Army, and the hordes of proselytizers that accompany it, cannot function properly unless advised by that most elevated primate of society, the academic. With the Empire pushing south into the lands of Kethaela, knowledge of the religious cultures of the former Sixths, particularly Caladraland, is at a premium. Will Caladraland prove a willing ally, or must more strenuous methods be employed? How is it best to inform these volcano-worshipping savages of the paths of the Red Goddess?

To this end, the Imperial University's School of Inclusive Mythology convened a special symposium for learned scholars to present their researches into Caladran myth. Far from a glorious conflation of mythological analyses, it was a disaster, and the congregation dissolved into utter anarchy! No single participant could even agree on the name of the primal entity of Caladraland, still less its gender or mythic nature. Caladra, Aurelion, Lodril, Vestkarthen, Calandra, Aulerio, Caladril: all these were names cast about with invective abandon in the lecture halls.

As Rufelza taught, "Chaos is opportunity," and this is a lesson the Immanent Action Liberation well understands. At their suggestion, Moonson commanded his Lodrilite advisor and noted Professor of Speculative Pantheosynthesis and Creative Mythography, Jakhalonius of the House of Yrior, to lead an expedition to the steaming realm of volcanoes to analyze the myths of the barbaric indigenes first-hand. Professor Jakhalonius is, after all, the man who led the expedition to Firetop in the Far Place, investigating (with relatively few fatalities and blindings) the animistic entity that

is the Sun Hawk; it was he who dived into the depths of Lake Oronin in search of the Mortal World resonances of the ancient Wendarian volcano; and it was he who assessed the syncrese in the various myths of KaCharal, its parents, ViSaruDaran, ViSarta, DiDaraDalan, the Turids, and Lodril.

To accomplish his mission, Jakhalonius has assembled a peerless team of academics, their inquisitive daughters, washed-up, grizzled soldiers, and any number of expendable graduate students. It is currently at Karse, ready to depart for the Vent, the magical Machinosphere they plan to use to plumb the depths of the volcano strapped to the back of a quakebeast.

The Association hopes to be the first to plumb the depths of Caladran myth, but also in the process to evaluate the magical Machinosphere for future subterranean operations. The Doctrinaires have been forced to accept the professor's choice for command of the expedition's security detail, the Gibbous Sapphirine Moon Vexilla. After all, following the fall of the Pharaoh, no one is entirely sure of the bellicosity of the Caladran volcano priesthood, or what horrors might be found in the lava-lit forests. However, the Doctrinaires have ensured that one of their own, Centurion ZeVartu, is second-in-command, with orders to seize control if necessary in the greater interests of the Association.





*Actual Name:* Imperial Parascholastic Vulcano-speleological Mandate.

*Form:* Lunar research expedition.

*Typical Homeland:* Members generally belong to a Heartland or Provincial homeland, but there is always room for the local native princess and bearers that invariably join the Expedition.

*Cultural Context:* A group dedicated to understanding the Lodrilite myths of other lands, to better Include their realms in the magnificence of the Empire.

*Association Relationship:* While notionally an Imperial University expedition, in practice it has been bankrolled by the Immanent Action Liberation.

*Ideology:* To sacrifice all worldly obstacles — life, finance, preconception, graduate students and reason — in the study and documentation of the Caladran myth-culture.

*Look and Feel:* A motley mix of absent-minded academics, truculent bearers, and exasperated soldiers.

*Purpose:* To discover the actual theology of Caladraland, according to the Red Emperor's mandate.

*Headquarters:* The Expedition's depot and research base is currently centered in Karse, but the expedition will soon depart for the Vent.

*Reactions:* Polite incomprehension from most in Karse and the Heartlands. The native Caladran tribes may themselves welcome them in abject superstition of their Lunar powers... or savagely sacrifice them all to the glory of their volcano god.

## RESOURCES

*Leader:* Jakhalonius Ytrior, Professor of Speculative Pantheosynthesis and Creative Mythography at the Imperial Magical University. He is built as all the scions of House Ytrior: big-boned, well-fleshed, mightily-bearded, and mantled in a Pelorian 'farmer's tan.' His approach to his researches is the same as his dealings with anything in life: argue your point long, loud, and hard enough, and the other person or data will always agree with you. He knows no fear (mention of dwarves excepted), nor limit to his curiosity.

*Renowned Members:* The scholars include Professor Orondax FaalArion, a thin, hawk-nosed man with receding hair and fiercely intelligent eyes (but a complete ignorance of social nuance), his consuming interest in legendary fungi transcends his acknowledgement of all except his equally monomaniacal brother Lambryas (see page 16) and his daughter, Grenulia, who is described below. The security team is commanded by the Tarshite adventurer and brevet-tribune Tailar Kurden, the epitome of two-fisted masculine valor and heroic charisma. He tends to refer to Jakhalonius as 'Professor Cratergas,' though whether such an epithet is derived from his studies of noxious caldera depths, or more personal complications, is unknown. Pelandan career-officer Ambos ZeVartu is in charge of the contingent of Blue Dragoons. His chagrin at subordination to a Provincial is tempered by his secret mission from the Association. Valet, scribe, explorer and survivor, Neebi is an educated trollkin accomplice and research-assistant to Professor Ytrior, and a justly lauded spelunker and procurer of ancient artifacts, not least

thanks to his ability to squeeze through the smallest hole and chew his way through obstructions.

*Membership:* There are 12 full research staff and expedition officers, who are taught the mysteries of the Machinosphere. In addition there are some 50+ bearers, and a 135-strong vexilla: 20 House Ytrior Lodrili and Gerendethi guards, a half-century of 38 Blue Dragoons, five tetrans of the Lavic Legion (36 hoplites), and a half-ensivru of 41 Tarsosian Javelineers.

*Other Contacts:* The group is sponsored by the Immanent Action Liberation and the Imperial Lunar University, but is somewhat distanced from both. Baron Malevi of Karse is all pleasantry, but one senses that the overworked lord cannot rid himself of the enquiries and logistical peculiarities of the expedition soon enough.

## ORGANIZATION

There are approximately 12 researchers and heroes on this expedition. They are aided by a bearer party of 6 great trolls, 27 herdmen, and 18 Heortlander thralls, kept in line by a morokanth overseer. There are also 4 giant beetles, 30 hardy Gerendethelian pack-goats, and a quakebeast. The expedition is under the joint control of Professors Ytrior and FaalArion, but field command of the Gibbous Sapphirine Moon Vexilla is in Kurden's hands. Because he is not a *fereshori*, matters of magical coordination are overseen by Centurion ZeVartu.

## MEMBERSHIP KEYWORD

*Membership Requirements:* Technically, academic staff must be vetted by the Imperial University's Review Board of Scholastic Inquiry. However, ancillary personnel may be enrolled by Professors Ytrior and FaalArion, who possess a local Imperial Mandate.

*Skills taught:* Climbing, Creative Mythography, Fieldwork, Pilot Machinosphere, Vulcanospeleology (or Caving or Spelunking).

*Typical Personality Traits:* Energetic, Inquisitive.

*Magic:* Key members are taught the use of the Machinosphere.

## "THE HYPABYSSAL PEREGRINATOR"

Machinospheres are rare and wondrous artifacts, created by the dwarves to allow travel to the more inaccessible areas of the World Machine, beyond the safe reach of their tunnels. These curious spherical objects are made from a variety of carefully integrated, refined metals, and hold the essence of their Mostali creator. They can 'zorb' through the very matter of Glorantha, carrying their inhabitants to lost vistas and realms in the Deep Earth, and entering the Otherworlds themselves. Few are now sure how these mechanical relics actually work; but it is believed that Machinospheres possess the magic to open their own localized portals to the realms of myth, and perhaps travel through the Otherworlds as a medium on their way to Mortal World locations.

Professor Jakhalonius Ytrior claims that he amicably bartered this item from the dwarves of the Jord Mountains. Yet that explanation would seem at odds with his uncharacteristic unease at the mere mention of the Mostali, or the sudden appearance of a large party of Iron Dwarves just before their last zorbing. He assured his companions that the Mostali had merely arrived to provide an honor guard

and bid them safe passage; but they seemed rather well-armed and agitated, waving iron axes.

*Method:* Manifestation.

*Form:* A sphere some fifteen feet in diameter, constructed of an amalgam of refined metals, and with a modified interior decorated with the most comfortable of Dara Happan furniture and mechanical of Mostali artifice.

*Communication:* Group contact. The essence of the Machinosphere speaks in a monotone drone, attended by the clashing of levers, pulsating lanterns and the hiss of steam exhausts.

*Guardian Requirements:* Though the Mostali are dedicated to finding Yrior, and recycling his parts for the betterment of the World Machine, Machinospheres are bound to obey their users. That is the way of Mostal. This particular Machinosphere is inhabited by the essence of Onuphrius, a dry and facetious dwarf who in his career displayed an especial taste for Canned Food Product no. 176 (Bitter-Mild Mix and Pork Scratchings Flavor).

*Functions:*

- ☞ **Awareness**—Sense Destination 15W2
- ☞ **Blessing**—Zorb Through Myth and Space 1W4
- ☞ **Defense**—Impenetrable Hull 17W3

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

THE GODS THAT TIME

MISREMEMBERED AT THE LOZENGE'S CORE!

Among the scholars assembled for the expedition is Professor Orondax FaalArion, accompanied by his daughter, Grenulia, herself a noted artist and philologist. Grenulia is hardly the empty-headed, precious daughter she appears. The heir of the FaalArion dynasty is actually an Illuminated chaos-cultist. Even at her tender age, she is a high-priestess of Nysalor. These cultists are not shallow Sedenyzers and Nathics like the Immanent Action Liberation, who pollute the myths of the Bright God with their own usurpations and obfuscations—no, there are truer cults in the darkness who believe that the parts of the Perfect One have not been found, but lie still ready for the faithful. Why is this mysterious cult so interested in Caladraland?

In their researches, scholars have learned of the Volcano Twins: a peaceful and beneficial cult that sought to pacify the violent energies of Glorantha's volcanoes, and spread harmonious love to all. Tales tell of Moray and Telerio, heroic twin priests who reunited the volcano goddess Caladra with her fertile and earthly twin, Aurelion, a god from across the trackless seas. Now it appears that many in Caladraland have reverted to the propitiation of their god in more savage rites, but the kernels of the Volcano Twins remain.

Moray and Telerio were actually God Learners, sorcerous myth-twisters who perverted Glorantha with their experiments born of hubris. Yet is even this deepest of buried lies the whole truth? Was it not strange that no one in Genertela had heard of this mysterious god from far-flung shores, introduced as a twin to volcanic Caladra? Or that the only monument to his worship in shattered Jrustela is 'Aurelion's Breakwater', probably named by Moray and Telerio themselves?

The etymology of the name 'Aurelion' is clear and resonant, if perplexing: 'Golden One.' Therein lies Illumination. A hundred generations of researches have finally reached consummation, as Grenulia and the cult of Nysalor think they have unraveled the mystery. This is what they believe...

*When Arkat the Destroyer tore asunder the form of the Bright One, he hid his parts in the crucibles of Glorantha. One piece he threw into the very greatest volcano of myth, Caladra's Vent, casting it into the fiery bowels of the Deep Earth below. It was this secret that Moray and Telerio found. They were no mere theomancers, but Illuminated prophets and servants of the Perfect One. They discovered the portion of their god, but knew that the time was not yet right for disclosure. So they tricked the superstitious indigenes into worshipping their 'new' religion, one that deified and incorporated this resonance of Nysalor, held safe in the deep fires beneath the Mythic Vent, and twinned it with the local volcano deity. How simple to hide the presence of the Bright One in the open, to mantle its worship in that of a minor earth god: the aptly named 'Golden One.' Now the time has come for the secret to be revealed.*

To Grenulia, the Volcano Twins cult is but a front, keeping Nysalor alive and entwined with a local religion in Kethaela. Perhaps even the high priests of the Volcano Twins have forgotten this purpose over the long centuries, but the true Nysaloreans have discovered it. And it is time for something greater, more primal, to be unleashed upon the world.

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW?

- ☞ Eventually, Grenulia may find her religious purpose at odds with the mission's official purpose and her father's wishes. What will she do?
- ☞ If he feels that the expedition's purpose is being distorted, or if his jealousy of Kurden reaches fever pitch (especially given his secret lust for Grenulia), ZeVartu may seek to take control of the Machinosphere, stranding other expedition members in the chthonic depths. How will they survive?
- ☞ The Immanent Action Liberation may belatedly discover Grenulia's secret identity and dispatch agents to track or join the expedition and prevent it from being hijacked—or to terminate her with extreme and gratuitous prejudice. How will Kurden react?
- ☞ The Mostali might target the Machinosphere with a Zorbicular Deresonation Ray, preventing it from fleeing the depths. How will the heroes destroy the great glass-lobed Ray Projector and escape?
- ☞ Will Grenulia be forced to choose between a Tarshite soldier and her god?
- ☞ Will the pallid duck-savages who live in the Deepest Caves worship her as a goddess, seek to sacrifice her to the slithering Giant Screaming Lizard, or both?

### TUNE IN TO NEXT MOON'S THRILLING EPISODE!

#### GRENULIA FAALARION

By turns demure, graceful, waspish and pouting, this precocious scion of the FaalArion possesses a great interest in the arts and rough beauty of cultures the lozenge over, and not a little predilection toward the still rougher charms of acting-Tribune Kurden.

*Apparent Keywords and Significant Abilities:* Artist 18, Pelandan 17, Scholar 19; Beautiful 1W2, In Love with Tailar Kurden 14W, Pout 5W, Scream! 1W2.

*Real Keywords and Significant Abilities:* Artist 18, Pelandan 17, Scholar 19W2; Illuminated Gnostic of Nysalor the Bright 1W3; Beautiful 1W2, In Love with Tailar Kurden 14W, Scheme! 1W2.



# THE LUNAR LEGAL LEAGUE

*"Litigation is better than war."*

Just as the Lunar Way is the pinnacle of religious belief, so too Lunar Law is the finest expression of jurisprudence, and by extending and enforcing this law—even over those less advanced forms practiced within the Empire—peace, harmony and progress can be assured.

This is a society of people interested in promoting Imperial lunar law, as opposed to local legal systems, or war, as a means of resolving disputes. It holds conferences to discuss lunar law, disseminates information, and is useful for making contacts in the legal community. Sometimes it sponsors research expeditions, or investigations into the assassinations of judges. It was founded in the Fifth Wane, by Tiresias the Wise, a judex and heroquester noted for his ability to bring communities locked in apparently permanent conflict to peace, through mediation and arbitration.

Unlike most organizations, it is strongly ideological. It holds that Lunar law is fundamentally superior to traditional law, for several reasons. First, traditional legal systems are only valid for the group following that tradition. Pelandan law has nothing to say to Carmanians; what Carmanian law says to Pelandans is not worth hearing. The flexible teachings of Sedenya have something to offer both. Also, it will sometimes happen that the law is an ass. In a system where the law is theoretically unchanging, either derived from a divine order as in Dara Happan law, or derived from some ancestor such as Carmanos Lawgiver, there is no way legitimately to change the law. So once the law is an ass (because it is sacred and thus cannot be changed), the law is committed to remaining an ass. In the approaching time of troubles, where many changes can be expected to occur, the new world will offer plenty of opportunities for the law to be an ass. If the law is not merely an ass, but is committed to remaining an ass, there will be problems. Because Sedenya teaches that change is opportunity, Her law is open to change. Even when it is an ass, it is open to the possibility of transformation into a better animal.

Its relationship with the Immanent Action Liberation flows from both its conviction in the supremacy of Lunar Law—a belief the Association shares—and also Enteroy Ruby-Minded's oft-expressed passion for legality. He has publicly and lavishly gifted the League and on numerous occasions put Association assets at the disposal of its investigations, especially such specialized elements as the Turzah Hounders and signifiers of the Errandite Apostles.

*Common Names:* Legalists.

*Form:* League of judges, lawyers and investigators, with an academic side.

*Typical Homeland:* Generally Silver Shadow or Pelanda, but can be anywhere in the Empire.

*Cultural Context:* Position and role of the hero band within its homeland.

*Association Relationship:* Given that Enteroy's personal donations are increasingly important, Photius in particular will be keen to keep him happy.

*Ideology:* "Laws need to be made and enforced; the light of the Goddess shows us the best way to do so. Where we don't have law, we have war, and no one sane wants that."

*Look and Feel:* Society of Sedenyic philosophers, judges, advocates and investigators.

*Purpose:* To increase the influence and acceptance of Lunar law, to act as a trade association for its members and to advance the academic understanding of the application of Sedenyic Philosophy to law.

*Headquarters:* The founding chapter house and library in Glamour.

*Reactions:* Most people ignore this group, on the theory that you less you have to do with judges and criminal investigations, the better. Carmanians tend to resent its low opinion of their legal traditions.

## RESOURCES

*Leader:* Grotius 'the Godly' (sometimes 'the Gross') is old and fat, but his mind is still sharp. A master of Sedenyic Philosophy and New Pelorian High Culture, he is a senior preceptor at the oldest Irripi Ontor temple in Glamour, and the chief legal adviser to the Emperor.

*Renowned Members:* As General Secretary, Photius really runs the organization. Known more for practical intelligence and good social skills than any legal skills or faith, he is a preceptor in the Lunar Way, on loan to the group from the Great Moon Radiance. He has been "on loan" for at least five years, and shows no signs of wanting to return to the clerical side of the bureaucracy. Other key members include Salman 'the Sophist,' Justina 'the Just,' Talwinos 'the Warrior,' and Axiothea 'the Long-Lived.'

*Membership:* About 120 members, of whom 10 are Sedenyic philosophers, another 30 are either currently serving or retired judexes, and 80 are either assistants to the judexes or retired assistants.



*Other Contacts:* This group is officially associated with the Takenegi House, and has a track record of getting favors from Court. In general, it is well-liked by the Lunar religious establishment, and it contributes to the Great Library of Irripi Ontor in return for access to its collections.

## ORGANIZATION

Policy is established by the league's Central Committee, elected by the judexes amongst the members, although it is the General Secretary who runs day-to-day operations.

## MEMBERSHIP KEYWORD

*Membership Requirements:* Members are either serving or retired Judexes or else their assistants or those vouched for by them. They must be at least notivates in the Lunar Way and believe in the superiority of Lunar law (and are expected to act accordingly). Once a member, this status is as long as he or she wishes. In the case of action unbecoming a member of the Lunar Legal League, membership may be revoked at the discretion of the Central Committee.

*Skills taught:* Administration, Investigation, Know Imperial Decrees and Precedents, New Pelorian High Culture.

*Typical Personality Traits:* Argumentative, Dispassionate, Erudite.

*Magic:* Any Lunar magic, although it is most often associated with Natha, Erana Halfmoon, Irripi Ontor and Our Father. Assistant members have been known to have a wide variety of magical abilities, ranging from Carmanian school sorcery to Arirae totems and fetishes. This group is not too particular about what type of magic you use, as long as you defeat the bad guys.

## TIRESIAS

Tiresias, the founder of the group, is now resident on the Moon as an adviser to Natha. He can be brought back to help members of the group, if and only if the League has exhausted its own resources dealing with a problem of such major importance that 50 members are willing to pray for his appearance. Alternatively, he attends the induction of each new member, who gets to ask him one question. When a member thinks he is being assassinated, he can call upon Tiresias to take his last memories; later divination will allow other members to see what the dying member saw, and hear what the dying member heard, when he thought he was murdered.

*Method:* Manifestation.

*Form:* A white codex with the Natha balance rune on it.

*Communication:* The user formulates a question in his mind, prays for intercession, and opens the book. He or she finds the answer, in written New Pelorian, and/or a picture, therein. Note that when he takes the memories of a dying group member to preserve them, Tiresias does not materialize in book or any other form, but mind links to the spirit of the dying member.

*Guardian Requirements:* None beyond those of the organization.

*Functions:* Unlike most Guardians, Tiresias only offers the guidance described above and, on the expenditure of a hero point, the blessing of a single retry of any of the membership keyword skills, when otherwise this would not be allowed.

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### THE CARMANIAN SUIT

The Lunar Legal League has made little secret of its impatience with Carmanian law in particular. Grotius, for example, has written *Against the Carmanoi* and *The Goddess and the Law*, while Justina is the author of *Against the Camanoi Extended, or Why Zabergan's Defense of Old Carmanian Law Reveals Him as an Idiot*. As a result, a little-known Carmanian warrior-judge hero band, the Fists of Urgent And Disproportionate (Yet Discriminating) Retribution (generally known simply as the "Urgent Fists") decided on a two-pronged response. The first is through the courts, using Lunar Law against the League in a series of suits claiming discrimination and a sustained campaign of vilification of their traditional values. A pair of celebrated Carmanian magistrates, Gandarvanos the Long-Spoken and Karmikonos of Two-Hundred Precedents, have been sent to Glamour to pursue their case.

The second tactic is more direct, mounting assassination attempts against senior members of the League.

Despite the presence of many of its military facilities in the west of the Empire, the Immanent Action Liberation has long nurtured hopes of being able to accelerate the Lunarization of the Carmanians and their use as military and missionary shock troops for expansion westward as the Ban begins to fade. Making the Carmanians look uncivilized in Glamour does their ambitions no harm, so while heroes might be assigned to protect the League, it is possible that more cynical figures within the Association might want to see Carmanian knives dripping with the blood of respected Lunar judexes...

### HE IS THE LAW

Talwinos gained the nickname "the Warrior" for his untraditional approach to jurisprudence. Where most members of the group advocate the belief that "justice must be tempered by the compassion of the Goddess," Talwinos believes that "the Goddess, through her Son, has created a complicated Empire, and it's going to fall apart if we're not firm."

He is thus a forceful and, by the standards of the League, unyielding Judex. Though not strong on mercy, he is incorruptible. His career is unusual in that he was briefly assigned to Alkoth, before the Empire more or less gave up on enforcing Lunar justice there, and he has also spent time chasing bandits and rebels in Aggar and Sartar. Indeed, many a time he has personally swung a scimitar in attacks on bandit hideouts. Anyone meeting Talwinos for the first time would be more likely to think him an army officer than a judex, since he has a stocky build, an air of authority, and is as often to be found in armor as wearing a robe.

If Ohenkash (see page 66) finds himself facing political pressure because his investigations begin to close in on the Immanent Action Liberation or feels he needs a little more legal firepower, he may well contact Talwinos. Their paths have crossed before, and while they have philosophical differences in detail, they both respect the other's commitment to the law.

However, there are those within the Association who also realize that this is a logical alliance and may take steps to try and forestall it. Especially slippery and amoral troubleshooters might be engaged to fabricate evidence that Ohenkash is taking bribes or sheltering dissidents. Indeed, there was an incident a couple of years back in which he instructed his Lion Guard to let some captured White Moonies go, although they were technically in breach of some minor local laws (they were trying to flee beyond the Empire, so he felt they might as well be encouraged). This could be used to try to mobilize the Ebon Middle Togas of the Three-Fold Drape and the Jillaro Pamphleteers against the Good Judge. Talwinos may look like the bluff and simple soldier, but he has a sharp mind and is a good judge of character.

#### CSI YUTHUPPA

Justina “the Just” is an outstanding Judex. She is a Pelandan from Carantes, but her first posting was in Elz Ast, where she worked with the Thief Takers, whose methods and commitments

she has come to admire. She has advocated introducing these methods elsewhere, not least in her scroll *The Thief Takers of Elz Ast, and Why Their Methods Should Be More Widely Applied*. She is currently assigned to Yuthuppa—while reformers have periodically tried to get her reassigned to Glamour, there are too many in the Imperial capital who fear her nose for secrets. Each time this happens, people with secrets work to block the proposal. Her most unusual ability is that she can see, in her own head, events remembered by cooperating witnesses, as if she were there. She has also picked up many of the Thief Takers’ own tricks and skills, and is eager to see them employed. The Yuthuppan Overseer (or city ruler) has refused her request to hire Elz Astian Thief Takers, so instead she is looking to recruit people who possess good character, a commitment to the law, and above all, a useful array of unorthodox skills and a willingness to learn more. From them, she hopes to create a counterpart to the Thief Takers, albeit named the Crimson-Sashed Investigatories, in deference to a local cultural hero, the bandit-hunting Crimson-Sashed Billsman.





# THE MOONBOW BROTHERHOOD

*"Avast, m'dears! 'Tis time to show our true colours!"*

The Moonbow Brotherhood is the crew of the *The Darling*, a riverboat owned by the Seven Rivers League, which is part of the Sailors Servant Society. *The Darling* is a riverboat with a secret: she is actually a moonboat as well, taking the name of *The Moonbow*.

The Immanent Action Liberation acquired *The Moonbow* in the Sheng Seleris Wars. When they took him on, he was badly damaged and needed extensive repairs to be airworthy again. To do this, they needed to get him back to Haranshold, and the only way to do this was to sail her back. A side effect of the damage was the spiritual harm done to *The Moonbow's* guardian spirit, Opal Cloud. The jury-rigged repairs and the trip back to Haranshold compounded this and Opal Cloud broke into two 'personalities': one looks after the boat and crew when sailing; the other when airborne. The statue in which it resides is two-faced: one is of a comely lass—'Darling'—and the other a grim warrior—'Moonbow.' Turning the statue round activates the personality switch.

When the physical damage was repaired, the spiritual injury was discovered. *The Moonbow's* usefulness to the Immanent Action Liberation was severely restricted because it can only operate as a moonboat on Full Moon Day and Empty and Full Half Days, even within the Glowline. It was then passed to the Seven Rivers, who do not find this as restricting. They have reconfigured *The Moonbow* into a riverboat with an airborne capability, although this has meant losing some cargo space.

*The Moonbow* was commissioned during the Conquering Daughter's Campaign in 1347, and looks like any other Darjiini flat-bottomed riverboat, being built of courses of lacquered reed bundles (seven courses in this case), with fixed half-decks fore and aft, and a small mast with a square sail (typical of the smaller moonboats commissioned at that time, designed as fast courier vessels). The central undecked area has low sides to permit the easy loading of cargo, and has removable decking panels to protect cargo from weather damage. This area may also be reconfigured into passenger cabins.

**Common Name:** The Darling's crew.

**Form:** Boat crew.

**Typical Homeland:** Any major river trade route within or just outside the Empire.

**Cultural Context:** Lunarised Darjiini—all must be novitiates of Vargar. The Captain must be an ordinate of Vargar and also a Lunar citizen.

**Association Relationship:** *The Moonbow* belongs to the Immanent Action Liberation, but was passed by them

to their mercantile arm, the Seven Rivers League. It is principally used as a fast cargo carrier and smuggler, but may also called on for specific purposes—piracy has not been unknown.

**Ideology:** None, but must set an example as Lunar citizens in their actions.

**Look and Feel:** The crew look (and act) like typical Darjiini, wearing nothing more than britches or a loincloth and usually going barefoot. Unusually, there is a disciplined attitude to the crew, and this extends to their shore leave.

**Purpose:** To transport cargo for the Seven Rivers League (both legal and illegal) and to serve the Immanent Action Liberation. The typical cargo she carries is small and valuable for its weight, such as finished luxury goods rather than bulk raw materials.

**Headquarters:** Elz Ast, but may be contacted via any Seven Rivers League compound.

**Reactions:** Non-Lunarised Darjiini boat crews distrust the *Darling* crew because of their Lunar associations. Other non-Darjiini boat crews or merchants consider them to be reasonably trustworthy. Lunar crews and merchants will often give *The Darling* preferential treatment and rates.

## RESOURCES

**Leader:** Captain TamanUr-Selek. TamanUr-Selek is from Haranshold and is an ordinate of Vargar.

**Renowned Members:** MazkenDolLann the Sailing Master and AkkadVries the Cargo Master.

**Membership:** 7; this includes the Captain, the Sailing and Cargo Masters, along with the cargo and deck hands.

**Other Contacts:** The Seven Rivers League.

## ORGANIZATION

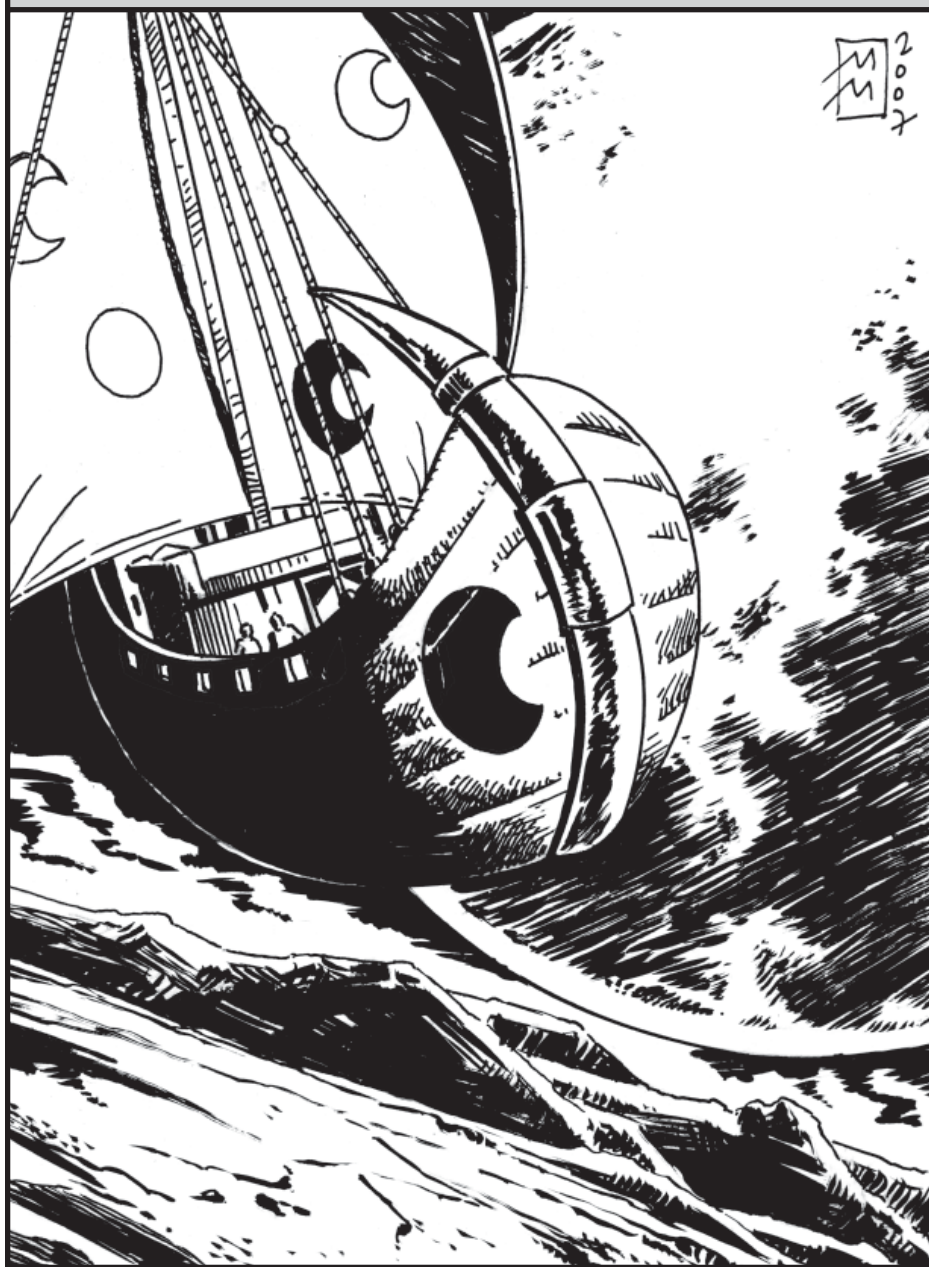
The chain of command is Captain TamanUr-Selek, followed by MazkenDolLann the Sailing Master. AkkadVries is technically the third in command, but it is unlikely that he would hold command as a permanent arrangement. The deck hands rank above the cargo hands, but both positions are to a certain extent interchangeable; both will help the others if necessary. The cargo hands also double as marines. If *The Darling* has passengers aboard, a trusted steward and cabin boy are obtained from the Seven Rivers (outsiders will never be hired).



Each course of reeds is associated with one of the colours of the moonbow, from the red keel to the violet deck, and is associated with one of the seven permanent crew members, who is responsible for caring for that course:

- ① The Keel (lacquered red): Captain
- ① The Lower first and the Lower second (orange and yellow respectively): the two cargo hands
- ① The Middle (green): Cargo Master
- ① The Upper first and the Upper second (blue and indigo respectively): the two deck hands
- ① The Deck (violet), with associated superstructure: Sailing Master.

The colours are not at all obvious to the casual observer when *The Darling* is at rest, being only a faint hint in the lacquer coat. They become brighter and deeper as *The Darling* sails faster, and according to the phase of the moon. The colours are at their most intense when *The Moonbow* is aloft on Full Moon Day.



## MEMBERSHIP KEYWORD

**Membership Requirements:** There is no gender restriction, but all members must worship Vargar and have had previous experience onboard either a Darjiini reed boat or a moonboat as crew or as marines. Mercantile experience is a bonus for the hands and a must for the officers. The Captain must also be a Lunar citizen; it is preferred that the other officers are as well.

**Skills taught:** Archer, Cutlass Fighting, Know [River] (typically the Oslir, Arcos, and Erinflarth Rivers), Predict Weather, Repair Reed Boat, Sail Moonboat, Sail Reed Boat.

**Typical Personality Traits:** Disciplined, Open-Minded.  
**Magic:** None.

## THE MOONBOAT

A small cargo moonboat capable of carrying 5 passengers or around 2,000 lbs of cargo, the *Darling* looks like a small, flat-bottomed Darjiini riverboat. The hull has also been reinforced with wooden rubbing strakes. The modifications to allow it to operate as a sailing boat, along with reed and lacquer storage, have caused it to lose cargo space. When afloat, its draught varies according to the phase of the moon—from 2" on Full Moon day to 8" on Dying Moon day. This means that when afloat, she is rather cranky to handle in anything other than a following wind; she has unusually large leeboards for her size. However, when afloat, she is often worked by sweeps or poled rather than sailed. Permanent Crew: 7.

### AS THE MOONBOW

**Significant Abilities:** Agile 15, Airworthy 10<sup>W</sup>, Cargo Hold 10<sup>W</sup>, Large 15<sup>W</sup>3, Lift 5<sup>W</sup>2, Speed 20<sup>W</sup>

### AS THE DARLING

**Significant Abilities:** Agile 10, Cargo Hold 10<sup>W</sup> Large 15<sup>W</sup>3, Lift 5<sup>W</sup>2, Reinforced Hull 18, Riverworthy 10<sup>W</sup>, Shallow Draught 18, Speed under Oar or Pole 15, Speed under Sail 10<sup>W</sup>

**Flaw:** Cranky to Sail Up-wind 15



## GUARDIAN

Opal Cloud is the boat's Guardian. The damage to *The Moonbow* and the deaths of all her crew in the Sheng Seleris Wars badly damaged Opal Cloud, so that it now has two personalities. Which personality is uppermost depends on whether *The Darling* is sailing or *The Moonbow* is flying.

**Method:** Emanation.

**Form:** The small double-faced statue kept in a shrine on the steering platform. Originally, this was carved into a representation of a moonbow; now the moonbow has a comely lass ('Darling') one side, and a grim warrior ('Moonbow') on the other. Whichever face is looking forward is the current personality.

**Communication:** Leadership contact with the Captain and officers.

**Guardian Requirements:** The Darling aspect has no requirements; the Moonbow aspect requires that there be no live fires on board. Fire-making equipment is allowable, but lit coals in a brazier, or a lit cigar are all forbidden. Any live fire prevents flight.

**Functions:**

**Darling aspect:** Sense changes in weather 19, Blessing:

Don't Sink 10 $\text{W}$ , Defense: Resist Creatures of River 15

**Moonbow aspect:** Sense changes in weather 19,

Blessing: Fly on Moonbeam 10 $\text{W}$ , Defense: Resist

Creatures of Air 15

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### STORY SEEDS

*The Darling/Moonbow* may be encountered anywhere that the Seven Rivers League has links. This would be principally within the Empire, but may be Sartar or Prax. The most likely time to encounter the boat is when it is tied up for the night on the riverbank or in a port, although in uncertain territory it may stay aloft instead.

**Dangerous Running:** Prince Temertain, the puppet ruler of occupied Sartar, and his consort Estal Donge, share an interest in iron Brithini statuary. A new scroll on the subject has been published in Mirin's Cross, and they want it fast! *The Darling* has been contracted to take it to Boldhome. Normally, *The Moonbow* would just fly over Sartar, but by the time it leaves the Glowline, the moon will be Dark, and the prince cannot be kept waiting. *The Darling* have to sail part of the way, through dangerous and hardly-pacified lands.

**The Enchanted Wood:** Captain Taman is uncertain about the deal, but he heard of some enchanted wood that will allow the keel and leeboards to act in a moonbeam the way they do in water, thus allowing the use of the sails while flying to grant an increase in speed. The problem is that this wood is still part of a tree in an Elf forest in Balazar, so he'll need allies able to talk, trade, or fight for it.

**An Awkward Customer:** A VIP passenger is expected. His snooty Dara Happan steward Putzalnazesh has arrived early to make sure the accommodations are up to his master's standards and considers the passenger quarters completely unsuitable. This is a lucrative contract, so the crew and their friends have only an afternoon to find the requirements on Putzalnazesh's list (poppyseed and Holayan honey sweetmeats, Frangolin incense, Kralori silk cushions, a sweetly-singing minah bird in a silver cage...) in the thronging local markets of whichever major city they are at now.

## THE SEVEN RIVERS LEAGUE

*"Trade is the lifeblood of the Empire. The Seven Rivers are its arteries."* The Seven Rivers League was originally the Arcos River Society, a merchant venture based in Elz Ast. All but destroyed and bankrupt at the end of the Fourth Wane, the Society and its remaining assets were purchased by House Kortillion, and merged with several other trading ventures to form the Seven Rivers League, part of the Sailors Servant Society. It acts as the umbrella for several smaller trading operations run by the Immanent Action Liberation, although the Moon and Sea now want to take them over, too.

The League is headquartered in Elz Ast, where it also owns a small shipyard. Other major compounds are in Yuthuppa, Melsorkoth, Goodshore, Raibanth, Dorkath, Jillaro, Bostok, Mirins Cross, and Furthest on the Oslir; Birin City, Diavizzi and Dorid on the Arcos; and Thukeros and Vukorvikoth on the Dikoria. Outside the Empire, there are offices in Furthest, Boldhome, Nochet, Pavis, Corflu, Eastpoint, and Riverjoin.

The League exists to provide income and information for the Immanent Action Liberation. Player hero bands may interact with it in several ways:

- ① Guards or crew. A merchant venture is recruiting. This could be a caravan or a trading voyage.
- ① Entertainment. A band of traveling players would be welcomed as part of a caravan or could use it to travel to their next engagement.
- ① Trouble-shooters. If there are problems to be solved, they're at the sharp end—not to mention expendable.
- ① Spies. What better cover than a trading venture—especially into new territory?

The League does not as a rule provide magical resources to individual hero bands, instead providing guardian lares for trading ventures, warehouses and local offices. The guardians of trading ventures commonly provide the following functions: *Awareness* – Sense Thieves (this would include bandits and pirates), *Blessing* – either That's a Deal! or Safe Journey, and *Defense* – We're All Together (occasionally Don't Sink). The blessing provided depends on whether the venture is traveling a known path within the Empire or not. The guardians provided for warehouses and offices would usually provide Sense Thieves, Locks & Bolts, and Douse Fire. They are invariably emanations, which are usually embodied as a banner or other portable object for caravans, a figurehead for a ship, or a statue or permanent architectural feature for a building. The membership requirement is 'always wear the league's badge,' which is granted after a brief ceremony swearing an oath to the association or venture, then placing a drop of the new member's blood on the badge and on the guardian's embodiment. There are four forms of the badge—one allows for group contact, the other allows leadership contact, and permanent and temporary badges. For example, a trading caravan could allow group contact for the merchants, and leadership contact for all others.

The League allows for permanent and temporary staff. Temporary staff are either probationers or personnel hired for a specific task, such as caravan guards, etc. The permanent badge is made of enameled bronze; the temporary may be either an embroidered cloth patch or a carved and painted piece of wood.

The Seven Rivers are, of course, the Oslir, the Arcos, the Dikoria, the caravan route across Pent to Kralorela, the trade route to Esrolia, and the Moonbow. Most people within the Association think that the Seventh River is the newly opened sea routes; however, only the leaders of the Association know what the Seventh River actually is.



# THE SAPPHIRE RING

*Knowledge is Power.*

When the Immanent Action Liberation wants magical support, it is the Sapphire Ring that answers the call. Whether fighting foreign foes, truculent rebels or hideous demonic incursions from the other worlds of our enemies, the sorcerers of the Ring match their wits, skills, knowledge, and ultimately magical combat powers against them. The Sapphire Ring is a league with a long association to the Fist of Doctrine, formed by a soldier-mage of the Fist during the Selerian Wars.

Formed in 4/23, 1432 ST by Rozarl Runebreaker, the Ring owes its traditions to the schools of sorcery imported into Pelanda and Carmania from the West but always seen as outsiders, interlopers, and heretics by the Church-bound folk of the region. Rozarl was a member of a splinter Logician school that specialized in combat magics before he sought his own path. The Ring was a product of the desperate need to find any and all means to defeat the dreaded Selerian horde, and any groups who would fight against Seleris were sponsored by the Emperor. During his service with the Fist of Doctrine during those bloody wars, Rozarl gathered around him a handful of like-minded mages. Forged at the Battle of Kitor in 4/51 1460 ST, where they achieved fame for destroying a dreaded Horde Star of Sheng Seleris, the Ring was officially accepted as part of the Fist of Doctrine and thus achieved a measure of the stability and acceptance it sought. The decades that followed have seen a slow but steady increase in the size and strength of the Ring, as its wealth and position have grown along with the fortunes of the Immanent Action Liberation.

**Common Names:** Ring Men (as sign of respect among the Fist soldiers), Spell Rapers (a derogatory term used by the Carmanian Church).

**Form:** Individualistic league of sorcerers whose primary goal is combating the Fist's or Doctrinaires' chosen foes via a pragmatic and highly flexible approach to sorcery.

**Typical Homeland:** Any. Most are recruited through the levelers of the Fist, though others have been inducted.

**Cultural Context:** Pariahs, a necessary evil tolerated because of their reclusiveness and connections to the political weight of the Immanent Action Liberation.

**Association Relationship:** This League associates to the Immanent Action Liberation via its link with the Fist of Doctrine and, in a lesser and certainly less overt way, to the Doctrinaires. Though the Sapphire Ring is part of the Liberation, it is not considered an overt part of it; indeed, its relationship with most of the association is unknown among even some of the best-informed members.

**Ideology:** "Take what we need, use what we must, but get the job done."

**Look and Feel:** Ruthless pragmatists, sorcerers whose community is achievement, measured against success in the field and against each other. There is also an underlying desire for knowledge, a search for weapons to aid in that quest that sometimes overwhelms caution and common sense, but ultimately encourages the individual Ring Man to greater efforts. Failure is a learning process towards eventual victory.

**Purpose:** To support the Fist, much of their revenue, political and religious survivability, as well as access to new materials, comes from this association. Their ultimate goal is to craft themselves to be such formidable sorcerers as to be unbeatable in magical conflict.

**Headquarters:** The Sapphire Monastery on Mount Hrandor in the southern Brass Mountains of Carmania.

**Reactions:** Adepts are unassuming in appearance, their manner taciturn, stern, and businesslike, their clothing functional to the point of severity. Their only adornment is the Ring. When attached to the Fist on campaign, they are reserved and respected, but seldom loved. To those in the many Churches of the Empire, they are frightening pagans—soulless men who worship nothing but the accumulation of power and the ability to wield it. In that assessment, they are absolutely correct.

## RESOURCES

**Leader:** Rozarl Runebreaker is both founder and current leader of the Ring, though he is so imbued with his quest for knowledge that he rarely leaves the Clarity Ring, a sorcerous fortress unreachable from the physical world but accessed through the Sapphire Monastery. There, the great leader and greatest secrets of the Ring are kept secure. Secular affairs in the monastery and day-to-day business of the Ring are left to the Council of Masters, for Rozarl cares little for such mundane concerns. He is said to be immortal, in league with demonic influences, possessed of knowledge and wisdom to challenge the gods and an ill temper for ignorance that has left even the most hardened of adepts stricken with fear.



*Renowned Members:* Tagril Mindbender seeks all spells that control, destroy, or otherwise assault the mind. So large is his collection of grimoire fragments and so eclectic its origin that it emits groans and magical energies into the rooms around his library. Bask Allis the Turgid is a solemn man who is famed for his imperturbable demeanor and array of defensive spells. As an observer attached to the Carmanian contingent at the Nights of Horror, his spells kept him alive while whole regiments died around him.

*Membership:* There are some 30-40 full Adepts of the Ring at any one time, with another 50 or so in various stages of novitiation. The leading seven of the Ring are its Masters and form the council that decides most policy and contracts.

*Other Contacts:* The Doctrinaires often use the Sorcerers of the Sapphire Ring as magical heavies. These are point men against any breach of Doctrine that might be magical or demonically inclined. Though they do not appreciate the amoral atheism that the Ring extols, they are nevertheless always impressed by professionalism and ruthlessness. There is an alliance of like minds, if not like souls.

## ORGANIZATION

Novices are strictly controlled and disciplined by the Adepts who concern themselves with training the next generation of Ring members. Though they all have teaching obligations, the rules of Rozarl dictate that each Adept must maintain at least one apprentice. In practice, the Adepts “trade” apprenticeships to those interested in the task in return for favours in other areas. This kind of thinking is encouraged among the Adepts because it reflects one of the key tenets of the Ring—individuality through obligation. Length of service as a novice is based on nothing but ability. It is possible to progress from novice to Adept in mere seasons, but this is rare and usually only occurs when an established sorcerer or

wizard joins the Ring. Upon completion of the apprenticeship, the Adept is awarded a Sapphire Ring—a talisman attuned only to them, but linked to the Ring as a whole. Adepts are paid an annual and have no home except the Sapphire Monastery.

## MEMBERSHIP KEYWORD

*Membership Requirements:* To renounce worship of any entity, to accept the standards of discipline of the Ring, and to give an oath that is sealed upon the very magical energies of the novice. A strong magical ability is a must, but this is often tested for at the Leveler schools of the Fist.

*Skills taught:* Scribing, Analytical Thought, Mental Toughness, Understanding of Obligation.

*Typical Personality Traits:* Phlegmatic Demeanor, Honourable, Objective.

*Magic:* Each Adept is encouraged to collect their own grimoire and have access to the massive libraries of the Ring. However, through the Sapphire Ring they wear, they all have a link to the communal knowledge stored in the Clarity Ring under the watchful eyes of Rozarl. This can be accessed anywhere and allows them an “instant” grimoire that is always being added to. Spells in the Clarity Ring are mostly combat-oriented, but that is a wide definition. Commonly used spells are Distant Fist, Burn Foe, Direct Fire, Repulse Blade, Battle Sense, Pinion Spirit, Demonize Entity, Bind Demon, etc.

## THE PRIME RING

The First Sapphire Ring is known as the Prime, from which all others are copied and bound to. This was an artifact discovered by Rozarl in his adventurous youth. He is the only one who knows its origin but some Adepts have suspected it to be an Arkati artifact, though God Learner



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influence has not been ruled out. Some speculate that it is a combination of Dwarfish knowledge and some other wisdom, the marriage between the solidity of iron and the clarity of sapphire. Regardless, it is the power of the Prime that gives all Adepts their immortality while linked to it. It is the tool of ultimate sanction for Rozarl, for should he withdraw its benefits, the age held at bay by its power comes back to the Adept in an instant. Often this can be a death penalty. The Prime provides the foundations for the Clarity Ring and the node of the hero band.

*Method:* Emanation.

*Form:* A ring of iron with a large, perfect sapphire mounted upon it.

*Communication:* The Prime does not communicate in any recognizable way, but it improves the clarity of one's thought, as well as the potency of the Adept's spirit. It is said by the Adepts that the Prime opens the doors of the mind and thus communicates its intentions by deed. Each Adept receives a +10 to all thinking skills while wearing the ring and +5 to any checks against willpower or attacks on the mind.

*Guardian Requirements:* Be reserved, Be Objective, Ignore the Superficial.

*Functions:*

- ☞ **Awareness:** Sense Enemy 10
- ☞ **Blessing:** Immortality 15
- ☞ **Defense:** Defend against Magic 5

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### STORY SEEDS

**Into the Sewers.** The rebellious underworld of Glamour has spewed forth spirits hostile to the City God. Track down the source of this uprising among the squalid slums of the lower city. Fist soldiers will provide an escort as Ring sorcerers find and defeat the foe. Should the hostile entity be discovered, consider containment and capture for further study. Bring it back the Clarity Ring if possible. This foe is Efcue-Querick, a bitter shaman of Derthorum, angry spirit of the ancient city Orlei that occupied the land that Sedenya ripped from the earth to form the Moon. He is now a gross and heaving mass of rage and malice, engorged by the foetid essences of the Glamour sewers. He calls, empowers, and releases all variety of slime-spirit, unquiet ghost, malicious poltergeist, and grudging shade. To unleash madness on the city, he hopes to channel the soul of Takashkan of Orlei—the last, doomed, and thoroughly insane Overseer of Orlei. Narrators might wish to consider the movie “Ghostbusters” for further ideas in this vein.

**Bodyguards.** In Kitor, a visiting High priest of the Seven Mothers is facing potential assassination from the radical Perstoi Viziers, an obscure and hostile branch of the Carmanian Church that attempts to remove foreigners and their “false” gods. The Fist has been contracted for protection and they have assigned the magical defense of the priest to us. Wizardry and powerful hostile rituals are likely threats. Be on guard. The Perstoi are aggressive and hate our order. Our very presence might be a provocation to them and potentially a lure away from our client.

**Loaded for Bear.** The bear folk of Arir have been raiding the lowlands again. The Fist has been contracted for a significant military expedition by the Durnvokings. Several hundred soldiers have been contracted and at least a dozen

of the Ring adepts are to be attached. The wanax or king of the Arirae is likely to resist the incursion, so a stand up battle with his bear companions and hunters is likely. Prepare for war.

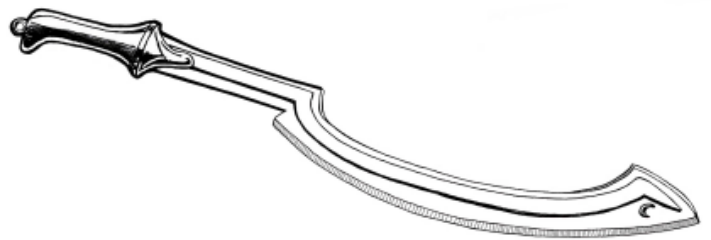
**Against the Dark Men.** The Trolls of Yolp have been sending their dark demons into the lowlands around Seksos in Doblian to terrorize the locals and bring back souls for their hellish rituals. The Ring has long maintained friendly relations with the Seksos School of Magics, who have requested our aid in this matter. Establish your base at Seksos, find the shaman responsible for the sendings, and counter his magics.

**Swimming With The Fishers.** The Doctrinaires have found a potential breach in Doctrine by the Swimmer Fishers League of the Oslir, a small league that fishes for the Association in the marshes of the Joat and Doblian rivers. Rumours persist that they have ties with a Chaotic Crocodile deity called Surrshap, who has long troubled the region and been a source of local piratical worship. Hunt it down. A local hero band or league may have to be sub-contracted to provide the necessary marine support and local knowledge.

### ROBBING THE ROBBERS

The Sapphire Monastery lies on its monastic perch high amid the crags on the eastern slopes of mount Hrandor in the southern Brass Mountains of Carmania. The site was formerly that of a heresy that the Ring rooted out in a Fist contract for the Carmanian Church in its early days after the Selerian Wars. Fortified, dark, and gloomy, it has a small village for the families of the Sorcerers' servants about its gates, and its voluminous libraries deal with many magical places and entities that the Ring has encountered in its numerous campaigns. They must contain dire secrets and not a few horrors. Artifacts and trophies of the Ring's victories, as well as captured entities, are held in secured areas deep inside the mountain, which has been tunneled extensively to provide room for the Ring's expansion. The Ring's fortress is customarily guarded by a detachment of the Fist, usually around thirty strong, although it is the Sockerers themselves who are its best safeguard.

Robbing such a site, though, would guarantee the thief's place in history, and be a serious blow to the Immanent Action Association. For many cultures, whose magical artifacts have ended up trophies in the monastery, this is also a cultural duty, the subject of conspiratorial schemes and collective heroquests. What if, for example, it came to Kallyr's ears that the long-lost staff of Sartar himself was lying unregarded in some dusty corner of the Monastery? Would its retrieval not be a mighty task that she might ask of some true heroes?





# THE SHAVEN-NECKED SODALITY

*"Ah, but that's what they want you to think. Or at least, what they want you to think that they want you to think."*

Some people say that life is less difficult than it seems, that cock-up is more common than conspiracy, that the simplest answer is usually the right one. The members of the Shaven-Necked Sodality know that the opposite is true. They glory in this knowledge, crafting schemes of unimaginable (and, to be honest, often unworkable) complexity to further the goals of the Immanent Action Liberation.

Some thirty years ago, Kerope of Tiffin was a charismatic but controversial scholar at the Imperial Lunar University. His courses on 'The Sinews of Imperial Power' (level 4), 'How Decisions are Made in the Real World' (level 3), and 'Deception and Stratagem in Contemporary Statecraft' (level 2) raised concerns at court and the fustigation of his more conservative and deferential colleagues, but also won him an enthusiastic following among certain students, typically taking the Hearts, Barbarian Affairs, and Exsiders pathways (see *ILH-2*, p. 20). They felt that at last they were being shown how power and politics really worked, even though many more experienced scholars noted not only that Kerope had spent his entire life in the rarified confines of the university, but that this notoriety appeared to be going to his head, encouraging him to ever wilder theories, seeing plots behind his every setback. These students formed a circle that met every week over jugs of spiced Sylilan mead to spy out the real stories behind the news of the moment and put the world to rights. Typically the less fashionable, well-connected, and athletic students, they took to wearing their hair in a short, efficient cut, in contrast with the long, oiled locks then in style with the golden youth of the Empire, earning themselves the name of the 'shaven-necked ones.'

Then Kerope submitted a new level 1 course to the university's Circle of Praelectors: 'The Levers of Political Power and How to Pull Them.' The course was predicated on a view of Imperial politics that was covert, cynical, and conspiratorial: in Kerope's own words, that "the purpose of power is power." When asked to retract any suggestion that Lunar policy did not spring from divine mandate and sheer altruism, Kerope replied: "self-justification is a drug; we are all users."

Kerope was expelled from the faculty, his ceremonial baton broken in two, and his chalk of office ground between lead bricks to the tolling of Old Clangor, the university's Dire Bell. The most passionate of his adherents amongst the students attempted a lie-in protest in the Heptagonal Court, until dispersed by the university's guards, the so-called Dogbolters.

Kerope is long gone, although members of the Shaven-Necked Sodality, the secret society that took up his ideas, still disagree as to which Instrumentality, political faction, deity, or foreign power was behind his death (he choked on an

angelfish bone). However, their commitment to the Keropean school of political science, which sees every action, policy, victory, or reverse as the outcome of secret and complex political subterfuge, continues to have an appeal to a certain kind of Lunar, typically intelligent yet impractical, educated beyond their experience, and convinced that he (or she) is being denied the power and success rightly theirs.

The Sodality has several private patrons, but also receives funds from various Instrumentalities and political factions, above all the Immanent Action Liberation. Its complex schemes are almost always unsuccessful and its convoluted conspiracy theories almost always patently absurd. However, sometimes they can be unexpectedly successful, and even when they fail, they create false leads, rumors, and distractions that help conceal the association's real stratagems. That said, the Sodality, for all its paranoias, is touchingly naïve about the association's real purpose and regards it as a genuine ally and patron.

*Common Names:* The Good Shore Ravenkaaz Society, Tiffinians, Keropeans.

*Form:* A society of plotters and conspiracy theorists.

*Typical Homeland:* Any, though its members are typically (over-)educated.

*Cultural Context:* The Sodality operates behind a front organization (the "Good Shore Ravenkaaz Society"), even though no one is actually fooled by this.

*Association Relationship:* The Immanent Action Liberation periodically funds research reports and 'special projects' by the Sodality, generally through the Scribes League of House Kortillion.

*Ideology:* "Kerope showed us the truth: trust no one, use everyone."

*Look and Feel:* A secretive collection of frustrated policy wonks, political scientists, wild schemers, conspiracy theorists, and sundry delusional paranoiacs.

*Purpose:* To further the interests of the Immanent Action Liberation through their machinations and, in the process, prove that pale and pimply theorists are just as effective as strong-thewed warriors and powerful priests, and thus get the kudos and girls (boys, whatever) they deserve.

*Headquarters:* The shabby offices of the "Good Shore Ravenkaaz Society" are in a former villa in a now-unfashionable part of Good Shore, close to the fish market.

*Reactions:* Most people have never heard of the Sodality. Those who have will tend just to roll their eyes and smirk. Ironically, this can work to the members' advantage, as they are rarely taken seriously.



## RESOURCES

*Leader:* The present First Keropean is Urshanabi the Quiet Alkothi, who fled the Shargashi rites of his house but who is, in his hushed and meditative way, more vicious a servant of death than any of his louder, brawnier brothers.

*Renowned Members:* The Excellent Hostigan, who for ten years has dined out on the tale of how he managed to make the Stamping Obelisk King crush his own army with the use of nine rumors, eight inflatable bladders, and a single trained hummingbird. Tallowheart of Hornflex, who can recount the personal histories of 8,426 movers and shakers of the Imperial court. Magistra Magaera, the retired judex who has devoted her final years to finding out who *really* killed Hwarin Dalthippa. Moras EnoDembla, the fabled cryptographer, now retired from the Entelathosium, and instead determined to crack the code he believes is hidden within Glamour's weather patterns.

*Membership:* There are some 50 members of the Sodality, although there are several hundred who participate vicariously through hearing of their theories and swapping rumors and gossip.

*Other Contacts:* Beyond the Immanent Action Liberation, the Sodality retains strong connections with the Imperial Lunar University, where academics and students who may not want to join nonetheless provide support, information, and guidance. Furthermore, those members who are more active and effective tend to rely heavily on covert means and thus typically number such agents as Vituperatus and the Hoarse Whisperer among their contacts. Thanks to EnoDembla's presence, members are also able sometimes to make use of the Errandite Apostles to send their own messages.

## ORGANIZATION

There is little formal structure: the 9-member 'Keropean Circle' is elected annually through a complex, multi-stage process intended to eliminate scope for ballot-rigging, which as a result takes a whole season to organize. In practice, this is usually doubly meaningless, as there are typically fewer candidates than places available. The Circle elects the First Keropean. Beyond this, their role is largely limited to collecting dues and managing the seasonal 'ExMoots'—gatherings at which all members meet to

share rumor and gossip and vote on the distribution of what few research funds may be available. In most cases, moneys from patrons are linked with a particular project and the patron itself decides who will take it on.

## MEMBERSHIP KEYWORD

*Membership Requirements:* Members of the Sodality must have studied at the university, although most are first- or second-year dropouts. Beyond that, they must swear a bloodcurdling but powerless secrecy oath.

*Skills taught:* Connect Unrelated Events, Ignore Obvious, Know Conspiracy Theory, Plausible Denial.

*Typical Personality Traits:* Imaginative, Suspicious, Over-Ambitious.

*Magic:* None specific, though members often seek out obscure magics that may give them an unexpected edge.



## KEROPE OF TIFFIN:

The Sodality is still protected by Kerope's fading soul.

*Method:* Archetype.

*Form:* His soul does not appear, and its material form is an urn-full of ashes in a vault in Good Shore.

*Communication:* No one is quite sure how Kerope communicates with members, though many are convinced that they see his attempts to pass on important messages in such unexpected forms as an unusual frost pattern on a window, the calls of a flock of seagulls, or especially persistent cramps.

*Guardian Requirements:* None evident so far.

*Functions:*

☞ **Awareness**—Sense Conspiracy 10<sup>W</sup>.

☞ **Blessing**—Remember Odd Facts 5<sup>W</sup>.

☞ **Defense**—Resist Authority 1<sup>W</sup>.

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### THE VII FILES

The Sodality has an insatiable appetite for scarcely-plausible rumors, crackpot speculation and wild plans, but buried within them are often genuine insights, useful ideas, and the seeds of deeper truths. Three of its members—Khorzankathal the Penman, Figora of the Nameless House and Sippi Guden—have devoted themselves to chronicling all they can. Their notes, named the VII Files in homage of the Goddess, are etched in tiny writing on sheets of brass, each kept in its own felt bag, in sealed boxes, in a vault in the basement of Figora's Nameless House.

After all, the so-called 'VII III' know how powerful this information could be in the wrong hands. Somewhere in the files are the answers to so many questions, from the whereabouts of the Lost Idol of Iothaka to the exact composition of Argenteus's favorite cocktail. More to the point, the collected wisdom and tradecraft laid out by Kerope and elaborated upon by his followers could bring down empires and reshape the lozenge. Someday.

### WRITTEN IN THE STARS

Camberdek the Green is an unusual member of the Sodality, in that he is a practical, outdoors type with considerable experience in the real world as a Sylilan soldier, merchant, and freelance tax assessor. Yet he is also a devotee of Moon Gazer, the most enigmatic of the aspects of the Moon Bear. His passionate belief that the stars, comets, and lunar emanations together hold the secrets of the universe, and his attempts to link his observations to political developments, amply qualify him for membership. He recently observed a celestial alignment that he has interpreted as a pair of jaws bracketing a star. Therefore, he believes this to represent the new Temple of the Reaching Moon being built in Dragon Pass. He has thus begun to agitate against its construction, not surprisingly regarding this as a dangerous omen. This has aroused the anger of the influential EelAriash clan, which has thrown its weight behind the plan (and, it is rumored, stands to do very well out of its construction contracts). The EelAriash clan is influential within the Association, not least with the rise of the ambitious TurEel, but with influence and ambition comes suspicion and rivalry.

Camberdek has thus inadvertently stepped into the middle of the dangerous leadership struggles of the Association. Already, agents of the Moon and Sea Covenant seek to question his plausibility, loyalty, and sanity. When that fails, they may try more active measures. However, there are many within the Association who would gladly see TurEel and the EelAriash embarrassed, and they may seek to assist Camberdek in his efforts to campaign against the temple. They will assign or encourage heroes to help him try to obtain audiences with key political figures, or else simply to keep thugs, assassins, and distractions away from him. He is passionate in his campaign, and will resort to every means at his disposal, from trying to lobby the satrap of Sylila to win his support (something for which a connection with the Ebon Middle Togas would be helpful) to street-corner speeches in Glamour. Of course, if anything does happen to that temple, then Camberdek might suddenly find himself in unexpected favor—along with those associated with him.

## MOON GAZER

Moon-Gazer is the cub who watches the night sky for signs and portents with a natural wisdom that is neither taught nor affected. She is as often the heartening presence who assures the community of good harvests and safe returns as the howling prophet of terror and woe. As such, her followers are respected and always protected, but rarely fully accepted into their communities.

*Entry Requirements:* None.

*Mundane Abilities:* Arresting Presence, Bear Lore, Carrying Voice, Initiate or Devotee of Moon Bear, Moon Vision, Mythology of the Moon Bear, Understand Omen.

*Virtues:* Mercurial, Quiet.

*Affinities:*

**Bear** (Bear's Hide, Bear's Strength, Identify Scent, Ignore Pain, Terrify Prey)

**Moon-Gazing** (See at Night, See Far, See What's There)

**Otherworld** (Bite Away Magic, Bite Away Sorcery, Bite Away Spirits, Communicate with Otherworldly Beings, See Otherworld, Sense Otherworldly Presence)

*Secret:* **Signs and Portents** (At the Narrator's discretion, the devotee will receive prophetic visions when gazing at the moon. These may be clear and helpful, but will more often be cryptic, disturbing, ambiguous, or all three.)

*Worshippers:* A growing number of Sylilans from every walk of life follow the Moon Bear, but Moon-Gazer appeals largely to seekers, scholars, and outsiders.

*Other Side:* Moon-Gazer has no fixed home, but is usually close to the Moon Bear herself.

*Holy Days:* Moon-Gazer's holy day is Watch the Skies Night (Lesilday/31 or Gods/Illusion/Freeze), when worshippers watch the moon and stars, seeking omens and enlightenment.

*Other Connections:* Moon-Gazer is part of the Moon Bear pantheon.

*Disadvantages:* Subject to the Lunar Cycle.



# THE TURZAH HOUNDERS

*"We are Takenegi's Dogs!"*

Ultimately, every soldier is one of Takenegi's dogs. But sometimes that needs to be taken literally.

The Empire has always needed soldiers who can take on the jobs that the regular regiments are ill equipped to handle. Guerilla wars, suppression of religious dissent, tracking demonic pillagers, hunting undead infestations and many other nightmares that the vast majority of the population never hears of are searched out and dealt with by these warriors. Upon orders of Takenegi Magnus, these disparate units were formed into the Imperial Hunter Corps and received lavish training and equipment. They are the iron hand within the already mailed fist of the Imperial army.

The Turzah Hounders were recruited into the Corps after the recovery of HonEel's Wane. When Sheng pillaged the Empire without contestation, the Hounders were one of many guerrilla groups in Saird who opposed his dominion. They followed Cwurl Toran, the Hound Hero of Yanafal Tarnils, and hunted the nomads wherever they settled. Their skill in tracking, rapid surprise assaults, and merciless butchery of Imperial foes have earned them a high reputation in the Hunter Corps.

The soldiers are largely recruited from Saird, and their war-brothers are either bred in the unit's kennels or else 'recruited' from the largest, smartest, and most magical of the strays that make their way to them, summoned by their guardian, the Dog Inside. Most tend to be hunting and fighting dogs of considerable size and weight, but there is also room for trackers and scouts. The complement also includes the odd animal with some special ability the regiment can find useful, such as the incongruous, floppy-eared spaniel Lonestretch, who can sniff out followers of Krarsht and other proscribed and murderous chaos cults. There is also the deceptively-dainty Shortsharp, a former toy-sized pet of some spoilt Dara Happan princess, a cute ball of white fur who can nonetheless launch herself at an unexpected target and sever a jugular with a single nip.

*Common Names:* Takenegi's Dogs.

*Form:* K-9 commandoes.

*Typical Homeland:* Lunar Provinces, especially from the Jajaloring people of Saird (Vanch, Holay and Imther).

*Cultural Context:* A blend of Jajaloring dog culture with hard-bitten military ways.

*Association Relationship:* The Hounders are linked to the Association through the Middle Togas, who provide much of the unit's equipment and extra

training through collections from members. This is seen as a civic duty, as well as being a perfect method of bringing the Doctrines of Bergorthus to the Jajagappan community of Saird.

*Ideology:* We are Takenegi's dogs: we hunt, we guard, and we kill at his pleasure.

*Look and Feel:* Tough soldiers, veteran of numerous wars, 'police actions', covert operations, and nightmare missions, who live and die with their dogs.

*Purpose:* As special forces even within the Hunter Corps, the Turzah Hounders are typically charged with the most unusual, dangerous, and sensitive missions.

*Headquarters:* The headquarters of the unit is the Rufus Yard at Ulatel's Leap where the huge breeding kennels of the regiment are also located, as is the largest Tarnils temple to Cwurl Toran in the Empire. The unit is usually in the field and receives recruits as they become available. Several Jajagappan packs provide regular volunteers for the unit and have come to have a close association with the unit and the cult.

*Reactions:* When people see the Turzah Hounders, they know something serious is up: the guilty flee, the fearful are relieved, the hostile update their wills.

## RESOURCES

*Leader:* Packmaster Abbaktes naHoxoummibeg.

Outsiders are surprised to find a Holayan in command of a predominantly Jajagappan force, especially one so quiet in manner and delicate in appearance. The Hounders are fiercely loyal to him, for he is the only man ever successfully to complete the Molossiadic heroquest, biting through the Clanking Chain, leaping the Outermost Stockade, and savaging Mastakos as he tries to bring a message to Orlanth. He now has a dog's shadow.





*Renowned Members:* Under-Packmaster Endovel the Long is a Sairdic Jajagappan through and through, a human wolfhound from his rangy frame to the sleepy expression, which has led many of his enemies to underestimate him—although they only ever do it once. Second Company Packleader Airlex is a Vanchite giant whose crossbreed war-brother, Two-Stripe, is an equally massive beast who hunts wild boar for sport. Mar-Har the Non-Cat is a most unusual (and arguably) Puma Person who has turned his back on his former self and claims not to be a cat; he never transforms into puma shape and wears a cunning-crafted hound's-head mark.

*Membership:* The Hounders usually number around 150 soldiers and some 300 war hounds. The hounds are fully trained in combat and are integrated with the soldiery, fighting alongside them, usually with specially designed armor for hardier opponents.

*Other Contacts:* The Hounds of Penitence and the followers of Durg Throat-Biter are at once allies, followers, and embarrassments. They often operate together at the behest of the Association, but cultists of Cwurl Toran usually despise the notion of humans pretending to be dogs and reject any suggestion that Durg was one of Cwurl's Moonpack.

## ORGANIZATION

The Turzah Hounders is a military unit, although its hierarchy, while understood by its own dogs and men, is less clear to outsiders. This is not a 'spit and polish' force, and while they can turn out in glittering splendor for occasional parades and inspections (with dogs in silver-chased harnesses and men in distinctive black and tan tunics), most of the time they do not stand on ceremony. An officer and a soldier may tussle in a friendly wrestling match or get drunk together in a corner, and may even exchange different opinions in the field. However, this informality does not equate to indiscipline. While the officer may accept and even welcome input from his veteran subordinates in the field, when he gives an order he expects it obeyed at once. Likewise, if a soldier appears to be abusing this informality to challenge an officer's authority, he is expected to deal with it without mercy or hesitation. The one time Airlex even questioned one of naHoxoummibeg's orders, for example, the delicate Holayan physically picked up the Vanchite and threw him into a river. From then on, the Second Company Packleader has obeyed him with blind devotion.

The Hounders are divided into three companies, each of around 50 soldiers and 100 dogs. At times, a fourth is added, but largely as a training exercise to let the "pups" see some action. Each company is headed by a Packleader, who reports to the Packmaster through Under-Packmaster Endovel. As dogs age more quickly than humans, there is also an honorable caste of Greysnouts, dogs too old (or badly hurt) for field service but whose human companions are still in the ranks. They help train and father new dogs,



vet recruits, and perform a number of invaluable ritual roles. This includes administering the Hounders' communications network, known as the "dog and bone." Before the force (or an element of it) is deployed, one of the Greysnouts breaks a carved sacrificial bone in two with one snap of his jaws. Half remains at the Rufus Yard, the other half goes with the force. Every full moon night, that Greysnout and the senior dog in the force can communicate, faintly hearing the other's barking.

## MEMBERSHIP KEYWORD

*Membership Requirements:* Be accepted into the unit.

*Skills Taught:* Communicate with Dogs, Coordinate with Dog in Combat, Tracking.

*Typical Personality Traits:* Brave, Dogged, Loyal, Pack-Minded.

*Magic:* All members are at least ordinates of Cwurl Toran.

### THE DOG INSIDE (GUARDIAN)

The Dog Inside is not a being in its own right so much as a reflection of the canine nature found deep inside those drawn to the Hounders (and the cult of Cwurl Toran). Part of the induction into the regiment is the awakening of this inner self. Some liken this to a form of Sevensing, but this parallel is frowned upon under present Lunar orthodoxy, and the informal slogan "We Are All Dogs" is generally only used amongst themselves. The Dog Inside thus has no independent physical form—it is held within the bodies of all present and former members of the regiment.

*Method:* Emanation

*Communication:* Members hear an inner barking, which conveys the simple urges and warnings of the Dog Inside.

*Guardian Requirements:* Remain loyal to the pack, obeying lawful orders and protecting pack members; wear something made from the skin or bones of a cat.

*Functions:*

☞ **Awareness**—Know Location of Packmates 15 $\mathbb{L}$ .

☞ **Blessing**—Heal Packmate 5 $\mathbb{L}$ .

☞ **Defense**—Bark Away Enemy Magic 5 $\mathbb{L}$ .

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### SAMPLE MISSIONS

As a Hunter Corps unit, the Hounders may be sent on all kinds of special and sensitive missions, of which these are just a sample. They are also specialized in nature and thus limited in some skills, excelling in rough terrain or against dispersed opponents. Depending on the challenge they are facing, the Hounders may need backup of various kinds, usually heavy forces or those with particular expertise, so heroes may find themselves temporarily attached to the unit from elsewhere within the Lunar military or the Immanent Action Liberation.

**Demon Hunting:** Horned demons are destroying the Sairdite cattle crop by infesting them with their offspring. Track down the creatures and the leader who seems to be organizing them and destroy them.

**Hunt for the Red Osculator:** Carmanian-born Rascar Brazenhand earned himself the honorific of the "Red

Osculator" when he was famously kissed by Sedenya Herself, following his extraordinary victory over the Garganaut of Golodoss and his subsequent completion of the Two Steps Forward Three Steps Back heroquest, which at one stroke doubled the maize yield for a year and opened a new road to the Moon. He is a feted hero of the people, a man who has circulated in the very highest circles of the Empire—and a man privy to many of its deepest secrets and responsible for some of its greatest and most secret triumphs. What makes such a man turn his back on the Empire, Sedenya, and all they represent? More to the point, where is he going with his detailed knowledge of the Empire's inner workings? After giving a blistering critique of Emperor Argenteus, Brazenhand left Furthest, eluding immediate pursuit and going to ground. There have been reported sightings throughout the Empire, sending various security forces chasing shadows from Spol to Sartar. The Hounders have been charged with investigating one such sighting: a man was spotted who fit his description, apparently heading towards the besieged barbarian city of Whitewall, at the southern edge of Imperial expansion (see *Dragon Pass*, page 60). Does he mean to help the Moon-denying rebels? He must be taken—alive if possible, dead if necessary—before he gets there. Be warned: he is a dangerous, canny, and unpredictable enemy.

**Bandit Sweep:** The hills of Northern Dikoroa have become home to the Happy Thieves, a sect of Darseni brigands that have caused serious harm to the local economy. The Happy Thieves not only steal but also perform outrageous practical jokes on high ranking members of the government, such as stealing the shadow of the Provincial Overseer or painting the high priestess of Gerra's shrine a mellow green. Find these satirists and destroy them.

**Dragon Pass Duty:** Always a favorite with the Hunter Corps, the unit is assigned to the war zone of Dragon Pass to hunt recalcitrant barbarians. And their cats.

**Scent out the Traitor:** This is a mission being carried out at the request of the Immanent Action Liberation rather than the Hunters Corps as such. The Hall of Red and Black, the repository of much of its finest armor and weapons, has been rocked by systematic embezzlement. Almost a hundred magical (and expensive) iron weapons have disappeared. This is bad. Worst, though, is the news that some have turned up in the hands of chaos fiends in Dorastor. Has the rot penetrated even the heart of the Fist of Doctrine? There are ten suspects: officials of the Hall with access to the arsenals and the opportunity to divert weapons. All are powerful, proud, and respected veterans of the Fist and all have their own personal and political agendas. Can a team of Hounders quickly identify the traitor amidst the suspicion and hostility now tearing the Hall apart? And will they find themselves resented by the Traygoni and Rotalti? If so, they had better watch their backs...

**Track the Orgolut:** The Invisible Orgolut has been sensed in Dara Ni. This Moon creature is a greatly desired display animal, as it glows with scintillating colors during the Full Moon if sprinkled with moon dust. Otherwise, it is invisible. The Satrap of Sylila wants the creature for his menagerie. However, it is difficult to track, because it can hop on wandering moonbeams, as well as being invisible. It must be returned alive and unhurt. Finally, be careful: it is fifty feet long and has very sharp teeth. Casualties are acceptable.



# THE VARZUM PARAGONS

*and now we dance...*

The Kastoki, or Cossacks of the Redlands are the living shield of the Empire against the ravages of the Pentan hordes; they are the colonizing drive to tame the plains. The Varzum Paragons are at the epitome of the Cossack lifestyle, the tip of the spear that serves the association and the Kastoki way of life by living an ideal.

Varzum was a rider from the Vlethil Cossack host that served in the nomad wars after the defeat of Sheng Seleris and the rise to power of Hwarin Dalthippa. Even in his youth, Varzum was noted as a prodigy of the Cossack way of life and drew the attention of the many heroes of the hosts in that time of constant war. Varzum only needed to be shown a dance move or a sword stroke once, he could sing the dancing songs like no one else and ride like Kastokus himself. During the endless wars in Oraya, Varzum fought with distinction. As he matured, a strong band of warriors followed him, men he chose to emulate all the great skills of the Kastoki people. It was this band that he led to its glorious doom at the Battle of the Nights of Horror, where the Cossack hosts wept blood and the sky fell in and the underworld sat atop it. Varzum distinguished himself in that terrible battle by matching sword strokes with the Khan of the Ungarit tribe until the mighty Khan had no arms left. Varzum out-danced the six-legged darkness creatures that sought to bring their pattern of woe into the heart of the imperial phalanx. For all his heroics, the carnage was complete and Varzum was mortally wounded, taken from the field in victory to his camp in Oraya where he died after passing on his will. His band was to go on and emulate his ways, to serve as a beacon for the Kastoki peoples and to those who would join them. With mighty oaths, his Chevaliers gave their lives to that task.

Since his passing into the godworld, the Paragons of Varzum have grown in strength and repute, and their association with the Immanent Action Association gave them financial security to further extol the virtues of Kastoki life and venerate Varzum.

*Common Names:* Saddle Dancers, Brave Armigers, Paladins of Varzum, Iron Chevaliers. In some circles of the Empire, where a troop of Paragons is seen as a quaint curiosity, they are known as the Colourful Wanderers.

*Form:* Peerless warriors, living the heroic life of a Kastoki rider via excelling in the arts of combat, dance, riding, and storytelling.

*Typical Homeland:* Like all Kastoki, the Paragons have no preference to homeland or origin, but typically its members have come from existing Kastoki hosts.

*Cultural Context:* Seen as shining example of what to be by the Redland and Kastoki people as a whole, often seen as quaintly naive or culturally backward by the more jaded and cosmopolitan Lunar urbanite.

*Association Relationship:* This League associates to the Immanent Action Liberation via its continued support for colonization of the Redlands and the escort and recruitment duties it performs to that end. Troops of Paragons also serve as caravan escorts and scouts for Association trade activities in Oraya and the Redlands.

*Ideology:* "Ride well my brothers, for Varzum watches you! Excel in all you do!"

*Look and Feel:* Buoyant chevaliers of a heroic way of life, exemplars of Kastoki virtue, and a living lure to those who would join the Kastoki ranks. Clothing for the Paragons is colourful, their swords are shining and decorated, their horses trained in all the best tricks and groomed immaculately. Everything about them is Kastoki through and through, yet bigger than mundane life.

*Purpose:* To extol the virtues of Varzum, to aid the Association in its colonization efforts in the Redlands, as well as to protect the settlers in their harsh new lands.

*Headquarters:* The Buoyant Camp situated some 20km east of Palbar is built around the shrine to Varzum, celebrating his birthplace and resting place. The Paragons make their regular pilgrimages to the camp, where they train, celebrate, and disseminate news and skills learned in their many travels. The camp usually houses three or four bands and is made up of colourful tents and trophy standards of Paragon victories, as well as the burial mounds of those who fell gloriously. Celebrations occur every night and displays of riding, dancing and war skills happen every day.

*Reactions:* Those outside the Kastoki culture often find the Paragons bewildering, enticing, ebullient, and surprisingly deadly when crossed. The very appearance of a Paragon band stimulates curiosity among many of the less conservative peoples of the Empire, a reaction they cultivate. Some of a more cynical disposition see them as wandering wastrels living up to an impossible ideal, but the Paragons laugh at such dowdy folk and show them a dance to two to lighten their spirits.



## RESOURCES

*Leader:* Targum the Dancer is leader of the Paragons, master of the Nine Dances, superb horseman, deadly swordmaster, and peerless chevalier of Kastoki virtues. Targum dances so fast his boots have been seen to smoke during the more frenetic segments.

*Renowned Members:* Chotan Ironthw demonstrates Kastoki strength when he often carries his pony around the camp. Barsak the Swift is master of the Paragons' peculiar martial arts, which focus on integrating the dance steps and sword techniques into a deadly fighting style that both bewilders and kills those that face it.

*Membership:* The Paragons number some 200 full-time members and many associates in Kastoki society. The full-time Paragons spend much of their time recruiting,

escorting caravans of colonists, or demonstrating their skills. The associates venerate Varzum by living the life of a Paragon among their communities.

*Other Contacts:* Due to their singular place among the Kastoki, a Paragon can call for aid in the name of Varzum. Their performances, skill, training, and presence bless those helping the Paragons. Such incentives mean that few requests for aid among the hosts are turned down.

## ORGANIZATION

The leader of the Paragons is called the Atman Virtuous. Below him are the Chevaliers, each commanding a troop of some 10 to 15 riders. The leader of the Varzum cult is called the Camp Master and usually stays at the Buoyant Camp, where he officiates over Varzum worship ceremonies.



## MEMBERSHIP KEYWORD

Paragons are usually warriors and their cult keyword is Kastokus, with a possible devotion to his subcult of Varzum.

**Membership Requirements:** To be a Paragon, dancing, riding, and swordsmanship skills are required to a minimal level of 10W. The virtues of Honor, Loyalty, and Kastoki Ways are expected to be 5W or higher. Each rider must own a horse and gear, as is common for all Cossacks, but it must be of high quality and present an image fitting with that of the Paragons. An interview and testing is also mandatory unless the applicant is of heroic status. Before acceptance, the Chevaliers check the applicant's knowledge of his history, family, and feats on behalf of the Kastoki people and those they protect.

**Skills taught:** Acrobatics, Competitive Dance, Drink Copiously, Endurance, Trick Riding, Varzumi Fighting Style.

**Typical Personality Traits:** Boastful, Honourable, Idealist, Proud, Reckless.

**Magic:** The Varzum cult is open to all members of the band, though it is not required to be a member; it is required to be a Chevalier. His cult gives one affinity:

**Paragon** (Bladedancer, Captivate Audience, Dance through Anything, Ride Your Heart Out, Step Back for No Man)

## THE EXEMPLAR

The Guardian of the Paragons is called the Exemplar, a demigod of significant power that some say is a sending from Varzum himself, but none are sure of its origin. The Exemplar maintains that it watches over Varzum's people until their heroism opens the door for his return. And through their heroic feats they make his pleasure known and his displeasure doubly so when required. All the Chevaliers of the Paragons hear his voice.

**Method:** Manifestation.

**Form:** When manifest physically, the Exemplar appears as a huge, moustached Cossack warrior with a laugh that shakes walls, dance steps that defy mortal possibility, and fighting skills worthy of the gods. The Exemplar can only manifest when several bands have gathered or a particularly powerful Paragon summons him. Once summoned, he typically stays manifest until his task is done, the last dance is won, and the best beer drunk.

**Communication:** The Exemplar communicates in Kastoki, an old vernacular with a distinct Velthil accent. He also leads by extreme example and helpful cuffs around the ears of those lacking his boisterous enthusiasm for the fray.

**Guardian Requirements:** The Exemplar is no passive summoning or manifestation; he takes an active interest in the Paragons he meets and remembers and knows much about them. If he sees behaviour he deems seriously against Paragon virtues, he will show his exemplary anger and remove the offender from the band if necessary.

**Functions:**

☞ **Awareness:** Sense Pentan 8W

☞ **Blessing:** Chevalier Sword 8W

☞ **Defence:** Stand Against Horror 12W

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### SCENARIO SEEDS

**Ghost Dancers:** The Ghost Dance needs performing. Demonic forces have troubled the lands once more around the site of the Nights of Horror. The local peasants and Cossacks lack the magic to repel such foes and have asked for our aid. The Virtuous has ordered several bands together to find the source of these troubles and, if necessary, manifest the Exemplar to combat them with the Ghost Dance—our greatest magic against demonic foes.

**Ride to war!** The bands of the Paragons gather, and all the Chevaliers have been summoned to form the Polk (regiment) of the Paragons. Varzum would be proud. The Association has gathered a mercenary army formed around its enforcement arm, the Fist, and seeks our aid. For favours past and future, we ride with them to battle the Arcos Riverine Leagues and their army that seeks to win critical trade rights in the Redlands. (This could be a single clash or else the start of a prolonged military campaign, as the each side draws on new allies.)

**Let Honor be Satisfied:** Thanks to our peerless horsemanship and fighting spirit, the Arcos Riverine Leagues are defeated. The Seven Rivers League (see page 34), was originally the Arcos River Society, an offshoot of the Leagues. It is important that both the Stones of Arcos Tumescence, symbols of the river and Leagues alike, are delivered to the Seven Rivers League's chapel in Elz Ast, both to symbolize the end of a long-running schism and to strengthen the Association's magical authority over the Arcos. Because we captured the Stones, it is our honor and duty to take them to Elz Ast, especially as we are delighted to hear that there may be a good fight or two on the way. Not only does Branjan the Boater and his bandits covet them, but representatives of other river cults desire to seize them and thus seize some of the power of the Arcos.

**Ogre Hunt:** The bloody Ogres of Frangar have imperial sanction in their city, but some raiding outlaws have been troubling the stanitsa villages of the Von host. Only the Paragons can perform the Battle Dance with such deadly foes. The ogre leader is Burstuk the Terrible and he swears on six gods that he ate the last band to oppose him. Prove the Paragons supreme!

**Showtime!** Recruiting the reluctant and insular people of the empire takes more than words. For simple folk, a display often wins their hearts. Show the people of Glamour and other heartland cities the skills and glory of the Paragons, but beware those who would restrict the movements of their people. Jealous bureaucrats and iron fisted Dara Happan nobles abound in the heartlands and may oppose our efforts.

**Caravan to the Red Hair Place:** The latest Association trade caravan needs escort. Certain bands of Pentans have been seen raiding on the edges of the Redlands and acknowledging no treaty with the Empire. Guard the caravan and gather intelligence on both Red Hair Place and any new tribal confederations in the steppe.

**Six-Leg-Breaking:** The Cossacks are people of the Redlands, but the Paragons remember the role that six-legged Chaotic Krarsht played in the death of Varzum, and they are sworn to foil her dastardly plots, wherever they may be. A sending from Varzum himself may send one or more Paragons to the far reaches of Glorantha if necessary, whether to uncover the hidden labyrinths of tunnels under Esvular or the equally well-hidden conspiracies of the Krarsht worshippers as they subvert the Soldini Bank to undermine the Safelstran economy. Wherever Krarsht lays her quiet, dark, subtle plots, loud, cheery, unsubtle, and deadly Paragons will foil them!



# WHOLE SPRING DANCERS OF KORDROS ISLAND

*"The Old World is over, join us in the dance that makes the new."*

By murder, seduction, and ritual, the Whole Spring Dancers of Kordros Island have spread the cultivation of maize and the word of the goddess to the Provinces and beyond. King, princes, and priests dance to the steps that they choreograph. The satrap of Sylila gave his favor to the Ebon Middle Togas when his mistress, a Whole Spring Dancer, whispered promises of delights to come if he granted her little whim. The Bright Line Outreach encouraged the new Lunar colonies to grow maize, after the Whole Spring Dancers performed the Dance of New Beginnings for the priesthood of the Provincial Church in Ulatel's Leap.

HonEel was intent upon manifesting herself as an incarnation of the earth-goddess. She was successful, and is worshiped today as the Lunar Earth and Mother of Corn. HonEel then sought to convert Tarsh to the Lunar Earth. At HeruvErnalda Temple on Kordros Island, the centre of worship for the ruling Tarshite earth goddess Ernalda, HonEel performed the Whole Dance of Spring during the most secret of the earth rituals. She succeeded in showing the assembled priestesses of Ernalda that their goddess was "She Who Waits", the Mother of the Red Moon.

HonEel then turned her attentions to conquering the kingdom of Tarsh, a long-time opponent of southern Lunar expansion. Years before, King Yarandros the Charger of Tarsh had made the kingship hereditary. With the blessing of those priestesses who danced the Whole Rites of Spring with her at Heruvernald, HonEel seduced and married the incumbent king, Pyjeemsab. On her wedding night, she conceived Pyjeemsab's child and sacrificed him. HonEel's unborn child became king of Tarsh, and HonEel declared herself regent for her unborn child, asking the Lunar Empire to send troops to support the legitimate heir to the throne. Tarsh was plunged into Civil War. In the years since, the Lunar dynasty of Tarsh has pushed the traditionalists, calling themselves the Exiles, further and further back.

The Whole Spring Dancers are the heirs to the secrets of the Whole Spring Dance of HonEel. They are the defenders and champions of the religion of the Red Earth within the Provinces. By influencing the kings, princes, chieftains, and priestesses of the Provinces and Dragon Pass they hope to spread the influence of the Lunar Empire and the cultivation of maize. Rumor has it that the ruling houses of the Provinces and the generals of the Provincial army all dance to steps choreographed by the Whole Spring Dancers. Although this is certainly an exaggeration Estal Donge, one of the Whole Spring Dancers, is mistress to Temertain, the prince of Sartar.

*Common Names:* The Corn Bringers.

*Form:* A band of courtesans and a religious cult.

*Typical Homeland:* Tarsh, Lunar Provinces.

*Cultural Context:* The Whole Spring Dancers are not recognized by the kingdom of Tarsh, the Provincial Government, or the Provincial Church, but their members have seduced, intrigued, and politicked their way into considerable influence within all three. HonEel is the founder of the ruling dynasty in Tarsh and the Whole Spring Dancers have strong ties with the ruling family, claiming descent from those who danced the first Whole Dance of Spring with HonEel on Kordros Island. The Whole Spring Dancers are still strongly connected with the cult of Ernalda the Red Earth, which HonEel instigated with the identification of Ernalda and She Who Waits.

*Association Relationship:* The Bright Line Outreach, while not very clear about the Dancers' methods and ideals, have sponsored them in recognition of their work in converting Tarsh.

*Ideology:* "Such are the ways the goddess moves to embrace the peoples of the world, not only like Hwarin Dalthippa, by conquest, but also like HonEel, by art."

*Look and Feel:* The Whole Dancers of Spring are Machiavellian schemers who seek to overthrow the Exiles and the Shaker Temple by subversion instead of force of arms. They are beautiful priestesses gifted in the arts of seduction and intrigue. Membership also includes the infatuated warriors, spies, thieves, and even kings who are enthralled by the Dancers charms.

*Purpose:* Spread the Red Earth religion, and unite Tarsh (including the Exiles, Far Point, and Sartar) under HonEel's dynasty. The Whole Spring Dancers also seek to spread worship of the Red Earth into Esrolia.

*Headquarters:* HeruvErnalda temple, Kordros Island.

*Reactions:* Traditionalist Earth cultists such as the Old Earth School Hero Band or the Warm Earth Alliance in Esrolia are enemies. The Exiles are hostile because they blame HonEel—"the whore"—for the Tarshite Civil War. Moirades and the Fazzurites support the Machiavellian strategy employed by this group, but the band has little favor with Tatius the Bright, who prefers a more direct approach over their subterfuge. While the band considers their actions to be in the path of their goddess, many others perceive them as mere scheming whores.



## RESOURCES

*Leader:* Salevra the Alluring, stunningly attractive, she follows her goddess in seducing foreign nobles to the Lunar Way.

*Renowned Members:* Alakora the Enchantress, a Roitina priestess, is Salevra's understudy as Principal Dancer. Estal Donge, a priestess of the Whole Spring Dancers is the mistress of Temertain the puppet prince of the kingdom of Sartar.

*Membership:* The core membership is two-dozen priestesses of HonEel and Ernalda. They repeat HonEel's steps at the Whole Dance of Spring each year at HeruvErnalda. Many of those priestesses mentor understudies who will one day take their place in the Dance, and carry out tasks for the band as they struggle to spread the word of the Red Earth.

*Other Contacts:* Morofdul the Cunning, an Urangar Vorderos worshipper from the Gardint, is the infatuated lover of Salevra and organizes a vorderos bodyguard to the dancers.

## ORGANIZATION

The structure of the band is loose. The only formal meeting is the annual Whole Spring Dance, but the group may discuss their varied plots, designs, and goals for several days after that ritual. Organization follows the role of the dancer in the Whole Spring Dance. Thus Salevra is the Principal Dancer of the troupe, not only leading the troupe in the steps of the goddess at the rites, but also choreographing their actions in the yearly dance of politics and death. Most dancers have at least one understudy. An understudy has no input into deciding what the band's steps will be for the current year, but may be respected for her abilities in carrying out the group's goals.

Over the year, the band operates in small groups, often only a dancer, her understudy, and a vorderos bodyguard. Larger groups represent a significant endeavor.

## MEMBERSHIP KEYWORD

*Membership Requirements:* Membership is only open to women. A woman who joins the band is called an Artess, though she may be either a dancer or an understudy. A new Artess must be sponsored by an existing dancer who is willing to take her on as an understudy and teach her the skills of art, seduction, and death. Men may join groups associated with the band, such as the dancer's Vorderos bodyguard, and many a man, enthralled by the charms of an Artess, has unwittingly helped the band to its goals.

The Artesses train in the arts of seduction and the dance. The band teaches new women how to use these arts to further the spread of the goddess's word and in particular the crop maize. The Principal Dancer leads the Whole Spring Dancers.

*Skills taught:* Art [e.g. Choreograph, Play Harp, Recite, Sing], Convince, Dance, Dodge Attack, Entertaining Conversation, Knife Fighting, Lie, Seduce, Tireless.

*Typical Personality Traits:* Ruthless.

*Magic:* Any woman who is a member of the HonEel cult may join, as may Ernalda worshippers who accept the identification of Ernalda as She Who Waits or followers of the Red Earth common religion.

## VINVALNOY

VinvalNoy was HonEel's choreographer for the sacred dances. She envisioned the Dance of Three Reconstructions, which restored the Empire after Sheng's reign of terror and devised the steps of the Whole Dance of Spring, which allowed HonEel entry into the sacred rituals of the Earth Tribe. She died alongside her mistress at the Nights of Horror. She emphasizes the use of art or skill to overcome the maize mother's enemies and aids in the unity and choreography of the dance.

*Method:* Emanation.

*Form:* Form taken by an emanation or manifestation in the Inner World. An archetype may have a visible form at times, and this can be described here as well.

*Communication:* VinvalNoy is present in the act of dance; it summons her, and makes her abilities available to members.

*Guardian Requirements:* Members must engage in an hour's dance each day, dancing steps from the Dance of Three Reconstructions. Failure means that the member loses contact with the guardian and must add the missed dance session time the next day. This effect is cumulative, so an Artess who missed her dance session for seven days would be out of communication for a week and have to dance for seven hours without break to restore the link.

☞ **Awareness:** Sense Disruption 19.

⚡ **Blessing:** Move in Harmony 5W.

☐ **Defense:** Dance to Safety 3W.

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### DANCERS AS FRIENDS

A player hero, or group of heroes, might wish to join the Whole Spring Dancers. One decision you must make is whether the understudy and her dancer work together or the understudy is sent away on assignment. Even if the dancer is present to guide the hero who is her understudy, her death, incapacitation, or recall may allow the understudy to take on her mentor's mantle. In turn, the new dancer may then take on her own understudy, to guide and mentor. Artess adventures tend to eschew violence in favor of intrigue. Politics and seduction are the order of the day, not swords. If a blade is unsheathed, it is usually for murder or assassination. Local communities will always have those who oppose the Artess's action. Some may object to the Artess's goals, others to her methods. The Artess would do well to discredit and exile her enemies before they can do her harm, or encourage others to do her dirty work for her. This last option dovetails in to how non-Artess heroes might work for the Whole Spring Dancers. Morofdul the Cunning often needs to hire muscle to protect the dancers or to carry out assassinations, beatings, or raids on their behalf.

### DANCERS AS ENEMIES

As an opponent, the Whole Spring Dancers can be a threat to any community that the heroes belong to when a dancer tries to seduce the community leader. How the heroes react depends upon their feelings towards the Lunar Empire and the spread of maize, but even if these do not motivate the heroes, then they may still fall victim of machinations from the Artess as she seeks to discredit them and remove their influence or position of favor.

A satisfying adventure with an Artess is unlikely to involve physical confrontation until the very end. Instead, concentrate on the duel of wits and the struggle for hearts and minds. Community laws may well protect the Artess from direct physical confrontation. Winning community support to oust the Artess's influence from the leaders may form the heart of an adventure that involves the Corn Bringers as opponents. A satisfying conclusion might be one in which the heroes lead an outraged community, wielding pitchforks, to run the Artess out of town. A duel with her bodyguard and infatuated supporters can provide a suitable physical end for those craving a fight. If the Artess can escape, she can make a good long term foe, scheming for revenge, always seeming to be lurking behind the latest threat that the heroes face.

Some groups may relish the challenge of an Artess seducing heroes and have them do her bidding, struggling to free the comrade from her thrall. Other groups dislike this kind of play, fearing that it removes control of the character from the player. Be sure to figure out what kind of group you have. If your group is comfortable with this style of play it works best when the Artess is already an established enemy, as the players will know just who their comrade has fallen into the clutches of.

Perhaps an Artess designs to promote maize among the community over traditional crops. By seduction of the community's leaders, and sharing the secrets of cultivation with the women, she begins to convert the community toward the production of maize. When increased taxation threatens to beggar the community, she hints that the yields of the crop may be increased by the sacrifice of human blood.

#### THE RED EARTH ERNALDA,

##### MOTHER OF THE GODDESS

The Red Earth is the religion of Ernalda the Earth, mother of the Red Goddess, as revealed by HonEel at the Whole Dance of Spring. When HonEel danced at the Rites of Spring at Heruvernald, which celebrate Ernalda's return to life, she was able to show the assembled priestesses new steps that revealed hidden parts of Ernalda. HonEel explained that these parts were She Who Waits—the mother of the goddess. HonEel explained that her new steps completed their spring ritual and that henceforth, dancing the Whole Dance of Spring would give them access to these parts of their goddess.

The Red Earth is the medium through which Ernalda worshippers gain the blessings of the Lunar Earth, particularly for the growing of maize, and to common magics of the Lunar Way. It is

a common religion, and to the traditionalists this is because it is a 'trick', misdirection, and like so much else propagated by this hero band, an illusion and seduction to the Lunar way. Of course, the religion's adherents vehemently refute any such challenges.

*Entry Requirements:* Open to Ernaldans who accept the identification of Ernalda as She Who Waits.

*Homeland:* Tarsh.

*Abilities:* Mythology of Red Earth, Worship Earth.

*Virtues:* Feminine, Naive.

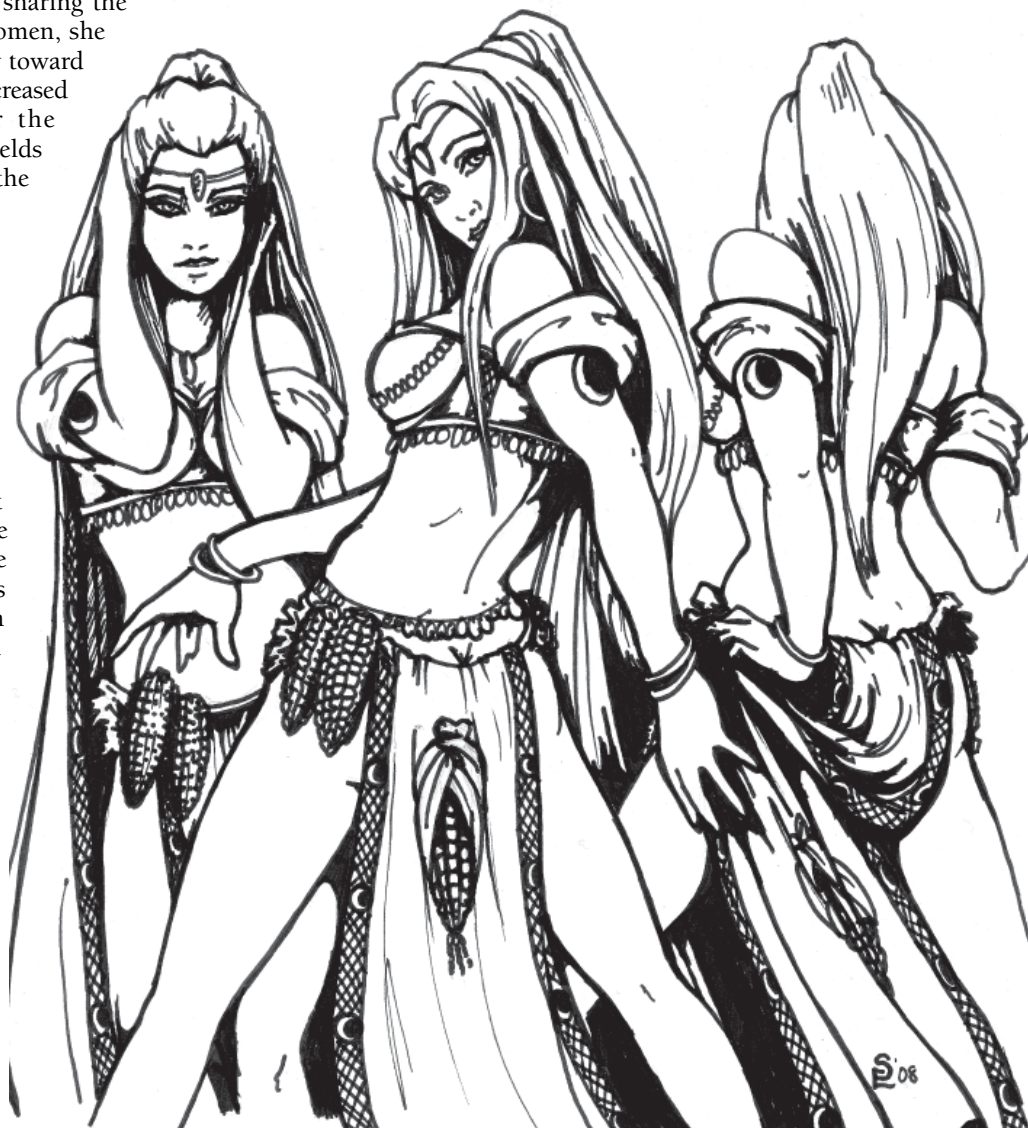
*Common Magic:*

✦ **Feat**—Bless Maize ritual, Bless Fields with Blood ritual, Watertight

✦ **Charm**—Bear Suffering, Clean Water, Repel Dirt

*Other Side:* Worshippers believe in Ernalda's Loom house.

*Disadvantages:* The Red Earth is tied to the Lunar common magic and worshippers are subject to the cyclical magic of the moon.





# HEROES AND ANTI-HEROES

ARIS DARINYAR

*"Do I disturb you, child?"*

Aris DarInyar is an infamous Hierarch of the Suffering Black Moon, Keeper of the White Moon of Peace, and Lunar Illuminate. After mastering the mysteries of Gerra, Aris awakened her Seventh Soul and became an overnight celebrity in her home city of Hariij. Although successful, her Sevensing Journey left Aris horribly disfigured. Her black and white robes cover barely more than a scarred torso. She is attended by SalleriTanno, dark spirits of misery and grief that returned with her from the Other Side. Until recently, Aris was an ally of House Kortillion, the family of her dead husband. Their reaction to her declaration as Keeper of the White Moon has yet to unfold.

## STORY

"My early years were a delightful mélange of soft silk, sweet perfume, delicious food, beautiful art, and inspiring music. My husband was noble and strong, and we were blessed with seven delightful children. I lived as close to paradise as mortals may come, yet within my bliss festered a hidden cancer. I will not burden you with the details of my fall. All that matters is that when I finally surrendered to Gerra's shadowy embrace, there was nothing left to call my own except sorrow.

Within the temple, I learned secrets that transformed my loss into a gift. Once properly directed, sorrow softened my heart and opened my eyes to the suffering of my sisters and brothers. I committed myself to the awakening of my Seventh Soul, so that I could lead others out of the darkness and into Sedenya's radiant light.

While on my Sevensing Journey, Natha showed me the pitiable Hungry Ones hiding among the ruins of Hariij. I witnessed Queen Arisethra sacrifice herself to feed her starving children. The message was clear. Upon Gerra's Descending Pyramid, I denied the Collector of Parts and consumed the sacrificed flesh instead, combining within myself both offering and recipient, mother and child. Thus, I was Awakened."

## AMBITIONS

*Ideology:* "The road to Heaven begins in Hell." Suffering can be profoundly transformative if approached with wisdom and courage.

*Purpose:* Aris works tirelessly to help others awaken their Seventh Soul.

Aris DarInyar is well pleased by the large crowds attending her teachings in Hariij, but all attempts to extend this influence to the empire at large have been blocked by rivals within the Great Moon Radiance. Creatively, Aris DarInyar transformed this setback into an opportunity by declaring herself a Keeper of the White Moon. Aris claims to have received a vision of the future, revealing that the Red Moon will transform into the White after Her people attain enlightenment through a period of profound suffering. She believes that it is her mission to prepare the world for the trials to come, so that they may know the Peace of the White Moon.

## ABILITIES

*Keywords:* Pelandan 10<sup>W</sup>, Imperial Citizen 9<sup>W</sup>, Hierarch of the Great Moon 5<sup>W</sup>2

*Magic:* Ordinate of Gerra 10<sup>W</sup>2

*Affinities and Feats:* **Moon** 5<sup>W</sup> Otherworld Entity, Defend Against Magic, Return to Moon from Otherworld, Enchant Silver Ritual, Recognize Open Way)

*Scripture:* **To Live is to Suffer** 10<sup>W</sup>2 (Be Brave, Make Aware of Suffering, Cope Without Rest, Ignore Pain, Healing Tears, Take On Others' Pain)

*Spirits:* **Grief Spirits** (Charms: Little Hope 16, Heart Breaker 20, Anguish of Loss 4<sup>W</sup>, Inconsolable Grief 13<sup>W</sup>; Fetishes: Anguish of Loss 8<sup>W</sup>, Inconsolable Grief 19<sup>W</sup>, 3<sup>W</sup>2)



*Secret:* **Suffering is Not Life** 20

SalleriTanno (Integrated Fetishes: Shadow Sight 15<sup>W</sup>,  
Hollow Tongue 15<sup>W</sup>, Hand of Darkness 20<sup>W</sup>)

*Main Abilities:* Endure Pain 10<sup>W</sup>, Feel Other's Pain 5<sup>W</sup>,  
Lunar Way of Gerra 5<sup>W</sup>, Retain Dignity 1<sup>W</sup>, Sedenyic  
Philosophy 5<sup>W</sup>2, Seventh Soul 10<sup>W</sup>2, Unsettling  
Appearance 5<sup>W</sup>

*Main Personality Traits:* Compassionate 5<sup>W</sup>,  
Tenacious 10<sup>W</sup>

*Flaws:* Self-Righteous 15<sup>W</sup>

*Important Possessions:* Aris is deeply attached to a  
collection of small mementos of her children, which  
serve as her Gerran amulets. She also wears specially  
tailored robes presented to her as a gift from the Blind  
Ghost Weavers 1<sup>W</sup>2.

## ALLIES AND ENEMIES

*Relationship to the Immanent Action Liberation:* Aris  
was the well regarded wife of Lord Ankarius, an  
influential scion of House Kortillion who fell into  
disgrace and was put to death. When Aris returned  
from her Sevening Quest, she offered reconciliation  
with House Kortillion and was warmly received. The  
House's reaction to her declaration as Keeper of the  
White Moon has yet to be determined.

*Principal Followers:* Morla, Vrina, and Polexis, the  
Three Pains. Each possesses an obvious weakness and  
a hidden strength. Any attempt to reach Aris must  
first pass through them.

*Contacts:* Clan InyarEriesh 5<sup>W</sup>, City of Hariij 10<sup>W</sup>,  
House Kortillion 15, Great Moon Radiance Temple in  
Hariij 8<sup>W</sup>.

*Enemies:* Sisters of the Red Shore, a powerful clique  
within the Great Moon Radiance led by Preceptor-  
Hierarch Erinzora of Keravero

*Home:* The city of Hariij, in the Satrapy of Oronin.

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### NIGHT OF THE SCOURGE - AN OUTLINE SCENARIO

**The Proposal:** When Aris DarInyar achieved  
Illumination, it seemed that she had finally redeemed the stain  
of dishonor her husband brought to House Kortillion. Since  
that time, Hierarch DarInyar has been a good and loyal ally of  
House Kortillion and the Immanent Action Liberation  
association. There was no hint that this reconciliation might  
merely be a deceitful prelude to further attacks on their honor.

Trusted agents report that Aris DarInyar has declared  
herself to be a Keeper of the White Moon. This baffling betrayal  
must be addressed with immediate and decisive action.  
Unfortunately, the Association must not be seen to  
acknowledge this breach of Doctrine, which would force them  
to deal publicly with what should remain a private matter.  
Therefore, House Kortillion must resort to employing the  
player heroes, either as an unaffiliated band or an association  
team known for their subtlety good and judgment.

The first step in the restoration of Doctrine is the gathering  
of information. Has DarInyar become Occluded? If so, then a  
few well placed words should take care of her. Is it a play for  
power within the Great Moon Radiance? If so, then she might  
not be beyond reason. Otherwise, it may be necessary to take  
more drastic measures.

**The Festival:** When the heroes arrive in Hariij, they find  
the city packed with tourists from all across the empire, come  
for the city's famous Winter Festival. [**Contest: Find a Room;**  
*Resistance:* 10<sup>W</sup>] The locals are furiously preparing for the  
night's festivities, and the shops are crowded with patrons  
buying a bewildering array of costumes and grotesque little  
statuettes. At noon, the citizens gather in the city plaza,  
enduring bitter cold and long-winded speeches. A loud cheer  
heralds the start of the celebration, and the crowd pours into  
every available inn, tavern, and public house. The celebrants  
pause only to sample the rich local delicacies and intoxicating  
drinks served from large ornate cups. [**Contest: Stay Sharp;**  
*Resistance* 17] Attempting to get close to Aris DarInyar during  
this time is virtually impossible. The city is brimming with  
revelers and the Great Moon temple is busy honoring other  
Moons. When twilight arrives, wicked Daak, the Stranger,  
enters the Temple of the High Gods and ritually attacks the  
priestess of Dendara. As the sacred bells ring in mock warning,  
the partygoers abandon their cups and flee to their various  
dwellings.

**The Attack:** During a long night of fasting, the citizens  
of Hariij parade through the city in garish costumes intended  
to represent the Hungry Ones or the Demons of the Scourge  
who hunt them. This is the time of Gerra in the Great Moon  
Temple, and Aris DarInyar is leading the rituals and attending  
to her gradually increasing flock of 'Hungry Ones.' As the  
heroes work their way closer to Hierarch DarInyar, a band of  
'Demons' bursts into the temple and launches an attack on  
the Hierarch, wielding the magic of Alanabrilis the Disruptor.  
[*Affinities:* Disorder, Misdirection] If any attackers survive  
the battle, it may be possible to coerce information from them.  
[**Contest: Make 'em Sing;** *Resistance:* 20] They are members  
of the Night Hawks, a criminal syndicate, who have been  
loosing narcotics clients to DarInyar's teachings. While the  
heroes are distracted, the true assassin strikes! She is Ylara  
Moonshadow, Ordinate of Fjordaur and agent of the Red  
Shore, who has miraculously worked her way to within  
choking distance of Aris DarInyar. [*Affinities:* Arms of Death,  
Moon Dancer, Voice of the Deceiver]

**The Audience:** Assuming that the heroes successfully  
defend Hierarch DarInyar, they may be granted an audience  
with Her. First, they must win over her faithful attendants,  
the Three Pains. The first, Morla, judges the heroes' deeds.  
[Marla has the *Scrutinize Action* ability at 5<sup>W</sup>2] The  
second, Vrina, judges the heroes' words. [Vrina has the  
*Expose Truth* ability at 5<sup>W</sup>2] The third is Polexis, who  
judges the heroes' character. [Polexis has the *Find Flaw*  
ability at 5<sup>W</sup>2] Assuming that the heroes pass the Three  
Pains, they may speak with Aris directly. The precise form  
the audience takes is for the narrator and players to decide.  
Aris may be a genuine prophet of doom, a calculating  
politician, or a madwoman. Regardless, she is unlikely to  
relent in her crusade. In light of this fact, the heroes have  
a decision to make. Do they report back to their patron  
and await orders, or strike now? There may never be a  
better opportunity!

**The Departure:** The activity in Hariij gradually  
diminishes until sunrise, when the fast is broken by the  
ceremonial arrival of Lendarsh the Savior and a great  
morning feast. If the heroes leave Aris DarInyar alive, they  
may depart in peace with the gratitude of Hariij. Otherwise,  
they will need to avoid the Imperial and civic investigators  
and angry mobs.

# VITUPERATUS VIPER

*"Hey, diddle, diddle, you stand in your piddle, the fear in your eyes so keen.  
That little dog laughs, to see such sport, as Viper cuts out your spleen!"*

"Beware, Citizen! For not all the cursed wereducks, the durulz of Dragon Pass, were slain or cast into Praxian salt mines in the pogrom of Fazzur the Fowler. For what is this shambling figure that enters our scene, sliding between the *insulae* as a ghost, murderous eyes agleam within his entropic cowl? Vituperatus! Called 'Viper': otherworld assassin of the Immanent Action Liberation... Dissector of Iniquity... harbinger of corpses!"

"See how that White Moon pamphleteer trembles as our protagonist removes his hood, for Vituperatus is a plucked and parboiled vision of vengeance, his featherless, scarred skin as tough as bisonhide. Note how his broken limbs possess a functional strength that belies their twisted form; evident as he wrenches the intestines from the pamphleteer's belly and winds them around his neck. Hear Viper's voice rattle as once-severed and now loosely stitched vocal cords vibrate in exultation at another kill by this billed bravo!"

## STORY

Once a rebel betrayed by his fellows, Viper Bilebill escaped the horrors of the PargAddi torture detachments when his crippled form fell into the cenobitic embrace of Danfive Xaron. Now he is reborn as Vituperatus and repents his crimes. He is a rather disconcerting Lunar agent who rhymes to himself continuously, always referring to himself in the third person (he is convinced that he is descended from vroks, but none care to dispute this somewhat dubious assertion). Vituperatus might be socially and hygienically ignorant, but Death cares little for elocution or perfume. With his vicious vroktalon knives, his Nathic throwing disc, and his proficiency in the Rending Vrok school of martial arts, Viper is the one of the most infamous assassins of Peloria and Dragon Pass. He has personally finished two Dart Wars unaided, but remains a shadowy figure within the Empire, a servant of House Kortillion alone.

## AMBITIONS

Vituperatus seeks nothing more than to atone for his kin's crimes against Her blessed Empire. He despises all durulz and leaves their gutted corpses – eviscerated 'VV' – as the sign of his passing. He is thoroughly ruthless: only the gentle strains of a lost ducklinghood jingle can stir his cold heart.

*Ideology:* "Arga and Xane: on the Godplane to quest for an Association. Arga was slain with a lot of pain; Xane gutted to Viper's delectation."

*Purpose:* To do the Immanent Action Liberation's bidding, and slay all enemies of House Kortillion and the Goddess.

## ABILITIES

*Keywords:* Assassin of the Immanent Action Liberation 3W2, Dart Competitor 1W2, Once-Heartling Durulz 8.

*Magic:* Ordinate of Danfive Xaron 2W2 (Otherworld Combat affinity 7W2, Defend Otherworld Gate secret 10W2)

*Main Abilities:* Ambush 6W2, Endure Pain 1W4, Grating Voice 8W, Lope 20, Nathic Throwing Disc Fighting 7W2, Rending Vrok School Martial Arts 19W, Scowl Menacingly 19W, Stalk Foe 6W2, Terrifying Visage 11W, Twin Knife Fighting 15W2, Twisted Limbs 14W.

*Main Personality Traits:* Dour 18W, Fearless 1W2, Passionless 1W2, Psychotic 12W, Rhyme to Self (in Third Person) 1W3.

*Important Possessions:* black entropic cowl 16W, blessed Nathic throwing disc +5 (Return to Wielder 18W), scarred skin +2, twin vroktalon knives +10 (Gut Enemy 6W, Rend Flesh 15W, Screech Through Air 18W, Seek Eyes 20).

## ALLIES AND ENEMIES

*Relationship to the Immanent Action Liberation:*

Otherworld assassin, bodyguard and threat.

*Contacts:* Vituperatus reports directly to Sage Kortillion himself; no one is quite sure if he really understands the Sage's phlegmy whispers or simply interprets them to his own whim.

*Enemies:* None currently alive. There are many in the nethermost Lunar Hells.

*Home:* Unknown.



# THE HOARSE WHISPERER

*"Have you heard what he's been up to now? Oh, it's not for pretty little ears such as yours, my dear, oh no, but let's just say that his horse was more accommodating than his wife..."*

The Hoarse Whisperer is a peddler of unwanted truths, plausible lies and everything in between. Despite his disreputable appearance and deeply unhygienic ways, he is nonetheless a 'usually reliable source' welcome at the fringes of polite society. Everyone deprecates his rumor-mongering, grimaces at his odor, and affects to ignore his words, yet he knows how they eagerly feed on what he has to say.

He is a sallow and dirty man of Tarshite stock, tall, scrawny and swathed in a tattered and dirty brown robe whatever the weather, his fingers wrapped in equally filthy bindings. He is forever wiping his long, hooked nose and coughing, his voice a quiet, rasping whisper which nonetheless can cut across a crowded tavern or ballroom when it has something especially damaging to say.

## STORY

For a man so happy to pass on the gossip about others' pasts, the Whisperer is very reticent as to his own origins or even his name. He came originally from the city of Furthest in Tarsh, but has since traveled to Mirin's Cross and thence Glamour. He crops up all over the place now, with the timing and elegance of a festering pimple, always publicly belittled and criticized, yet the effete aristocracy of the Empire love to hear his scandalous rumors about others. What is less widely known, though, is that he is no mere passive recounter of scurrilous tales, but an active creator and embellisher, a mercenary of gossip. Once he realized just how powerful a weapon rumor could be, he not only began honing it, he also put it out for hire. If you want someone's name blackened or, conversely, given an over-glittering reputation, then the Hoarse Whisperer is your man.

Increasingly, he is actually the Immanent Action Liberation's man. Everyone thought the marriage of Peresus Gan of Red Fish to Aralta naKamenox was going to be blessed, until she publicly cried off at the altar, citing his deformed manhood as reason enough. Short of raising his ceremonial toga before Great Sister, how could he rebut, and is thus to this day still known as 'Three Thumbs.' Their parents' leagues, both powerful voices

## ASSASSINS!

Many are the weapons deployed by the Shaven-Necked Sodality (see page 40), and Vituperatus and the Hoarse Whisperer represent two different kinds of assassin: of body and character. After all, from fully-fledged Dart Wars down to the petty day-to-day squabbles over precedence and protocol, victory is all, whether won by force of arms, silver, knives, or rumors.

against further Imperial expansion, fell to bickering, and the increased allocation of funds to the Imperial Army quietly made its way through the Fiscal Dance unhindered.

Likewise, the officers on the ground saw the Elmogren Landgrab, in which over 9,000 soldiers were killed to secure what turned out to be a disease-ridden sandbar off Corflu, as a pointless waste of men and morale. However, entirely spurious but nonetheless stirring tales circulated in Glamour of hidden treasure found, delicately-carved elven princesses rescued, and thousands of howling, green-painted savages killed. These stories ensured that when Elmogren HanOra himself returned to the capital, he was hailed as a conquering hero and appointed as the new Master of Spears of the Fist of Doctrine's Barbari.

The Whisperer is an extremely able political technician in his own way. He understands how to tap people's inner fears, vanities, and ambitions, and how a word here and a suggestion there can make and break politicians, alliances, and armies. He knows that no one likes him, that no one trusts him, but he does not care, because he also knows that they hunger after what he can tell them and do for them. Does he have a deeper, secret agenda of his own? No one knows—and that's one rumor he's not starting.

## AMBITIONS

*Ideology:* "Words are weapons, and malice is more fun than accuracy."

*Purpose:* Simple pleasures: to spread damaging gossip and make a lot of money in the process.

## ABILITIES

*Keywords:* Tarshite 10W, Commoner 10W

*Magic:* He appears to follow no gods, know no magic. If asked, he just taps his nose and says he knows too much about them to believe in them.

*Main Abilities:* Be Where the Story Is 1W2, Hear Latest Gossip 1W4, Know Everybody Who Is Everybody 20W, Know Your Guilty Secret 10W2, Phlegmy Chuckle 20W, Spread Rumors 1W3, Whisper That Carries 19W.

*Main Personality Traits:* Gossip 1W2, Malicious 20W, Nosy 1W2, Thick-Skinned 20W, Unhygienic 12W2.

## ALLIES AND ENEMIES

*Relationship to the Immanent Action Liberation:* Hireling spy and rumormonger.

*Contacts:* The Hoarse Whisperer knows everyone, it seems.

*Enemies:* A lot of people have suffered from his rumors, but for every one who would see his whispers silenced are two who enjoy hearing them (until the day they feature in them) or find him a useful tool.

*Home:* He always lives in cheap lodgings; where does the silver he earns go?



# BELLOK-YAN THE FINDER

*"Careful, you don't want to trigger the trap; you need to ng-ng-ng-ng..."*

Bellok-yan's career has been extraordinary as an archaeologist, scholar, explorer, and adventurer, so why should death bring it to an end?

As an explorer and archeologist, the dapper Bellok-yan knows few peers. Furthermore, his passion is not simply for the recovery of lost treasures for their own sake, but in locating and retrieving items of particular mythical and magical importance and power—a practical form of archaeology that has endeared him to the Immanent Action Liberation. He is still committed to the discovery of ancient and not-so-ancient artifacts such as the Lost Idol of Iothaka, but the side effects of a recent resurrection have left this passionate loner reluctantly dependent on the services of others.

## STORY

Bellok-yan has been everywhere, done most things. His early years were spent serving as a caravan guard and briefly dabbling as a muralist, until he happened to come across a half-broken plate in a Pilinni trademart whose luster and delicacy caught his eye and his imagination. With a little research, he discovered that it was part of a Kralori dinner service dating back to the Vayobic Perfection of Imperfection era. And worth more than the rest of the trademart's wares put together.

Thus was born a passion and a career. At first, he was unadventurous, confining himself to "tackscratching," hunting the nearby Greysand Moor for remains of the One Dragon One Thousand Warrior Fight. Once scoured of the ash and dirt, the delicately carved human weapons and armor always fetched a good price, despite the corrosion and melting. Soon, he had started to mount expeditions to the tombs of the Mamba Kings, and his reputation spread. Bellok-yan never came back empty-handed, and despite one or two mishaps (who needs both eyes, anyway?) no trap, guardian, or rival tomb-robber could thwart him—even when the rival had gained the artifact first.

Increasingly, the Immanent Action Liberation engaged him to uncover magical treasures, both for the glory of Sedenya and assist its own schemes. Bellok-yan embraced the notion of raiding foreigners' catacombs and ruins to weaken their magics and uncover their myths, for a hefty price. Then, his luck finally broke when he tried to steal the Incarnadine Krater from rival Kralori tombrobber Mai Noh Myn. Blasted by her magical energies, pincushioned by the darts of ninja-pygmy henchmen, Bellok-yan was mortally wounded. His friend Argush called in a lifetime of favors: a Hunter Corps moonboat lifted his dying body to safety, and while Bellok-yan died on the way to Harzeel, a local chapter of Erissan healers was offered their own hospital, if they could revive him.

They did, but the rite was long and hard. While alive, at times of stress his legendary fortitude abandons him, and he falls into a stuttering, juddering fit. Thus, the arch-loner has

had to accept the services of henchmen and understudies if he is to continue his work, even though their presence is a constant reminder of his failure and failings.

## AMBITIONS

*Ideology:* "The dead have no need of them, and the living pay well."

*Purpose:* To find excitement discovering Secrets Man Was Not Meant to Know (then selling them).

## ABILITIES

*Keywords:* Pelandan 20, Tomb Robber 1W3.

*Magic:* Initiate of Daak the Stranger 18W (Deception 18W, Theft 20W), Initiate of Kenstrata the Hunter 15W (Discern 15W, Hunter 20, Prey 20).

*Main Abilities:* Archaeologist 5W2, Make Useful Allies 10W, One Step Ahead 10W.

*Main Personality Traits:* Acquisitive 5W, Driven to Succeed 20W, Suavely Superior 8W, Unscrupulous 19W.

*Flaws:* One Eye 20, Stress-Fits at Inconvenient Moments 1W3.

## ALLIES AND ENEMIES

*Relationship to the Immanent Action Liberation:* The Association is a patron both demanding and generous, and indeed also arranged Bellok-yan's resurrection. It expects first pick of his finds and also to be able to charter expeditions, but at the same time is happy to pay well for the privilege. The Sapphire Ring is especially interested in many of his finds, but he has also carried out commissions for the Smith Hall Manufactory (which had wanted him to find the writings of a Second Age herbalist) and a member of the Sage Council of House Kortillion (who wanted evidence of his great-great-great-grandfather's heroquesting).

*Principal Followers:* Bellok-yan now must have followers and aides, but he rarely pays them any attention, or even bothers to remember their names.

*Contacts:* Argush Tentpost, the Hechkothi wanderer, is something of a friend, but mainly his primary 'handler' for the association 20.

*Enemies:* Bellok-yan has many enemies, from rival tomb raiders cheated of their finds, to whole peoples whose treasures he has plundered. Every year, for example, a brave of the Pralori herd is ritually painted with the Signs of the Dead Antler and sets off to seek to kill Bellok-yan for his theft of the Six Herd Rug.

*Home:* Bellok-yan has a richly-appointed manse in Doblian City, which he almost never visits.

## THE LOST IDOL OF IOTHAKA

The Hero Wars awaken many old powers, like proud Erganishal the Paladin, warrior-god of the Solar Empire, his soul now bound to a graven idol. It half-remembers wondrous realms and traitorous lorespeakers; of being brought to these lands a millennium ago, in the hands of fleeing nobleman Enestolos Enestoolu. Its bearer was taken as a lowly thrall by a savage tribe, but took a slave-wife who bore a child with the golden Lionbite birthmark of his family. The thrall died, the child fled, but the idol remained, to pass through many hands until the dragons came. No dragonfire could mar its form, because it was carved from the body of the molten goddess Ervutha by the hands of a demigod emperor himself. Therefore, Erganishal bides its time in some wild marsh or barrow, awaiting discovery. Or perhaps an enemy clan has found this trove already, having been taken from its rest by a humble stickpicker who rose to become Warlord of his people.

*Method:* Archetype.

*Form:* A stolid basalt statue of an *elleded* warrior, carved in the Khordavic style and surmounted by glyphs of the Dara Happan sacred alphabet.

*Communication:* Leader contact. Erganishal calls the leader “Enestoolu,” and speaks Dara Happan words to his heart. Its eyelids open to reveal pools of flame, while cracks in the statue glow molten. Soldiers’ spearshafts warm and their footfalls make the sound of tumbling boulders as they feel its favor. When it encounters scholars or wisemen of sorcerous power, Erganishal hisses “Sokastori!” like the exhalation of volcanic steam.

*Guardian Requirements:* Be proud in one’s martial simplicity! Do not use long words or linguistic trickery, but despise, demean, and defeat all wicked philosophers and toga-men bureaucrats.

*Functions:*

- ☉ **Awareness**—Sense Political Wiles 13W.
- ☿ **Blessing**—Molten Courage 10W2, Shun Words of Wicked Philosophers (Sorcerers) 15W2.
- ☐ **Defense**—Shields As One 15W2, Stoneskin 10W2.

## NARRATOR’S NOTES

### RAIDERS OF THE LOST IDOL

Lord Belindus of Broken Pale, the noted member of the Imperial Antiquarian Society, is at present in the Tarshite city of Bagnot, preparing a new expedition into northern Dragon Pass. While scouring local records for clues, he came across some obscure reports that he believes have revealed the whereabouts of the Lost Idol of Iothaka. He is in a quandary: to recover this martial icon would be a great coup, but the expedition and subsequent transport of the item to Glamour and thence Doblian (what is the point of making such a discovery if not to crow about it in the company of your peers and rivals?) would delay his Tarshite expedition by a year. He has already spent much to hire local guides, guards, and bearers and cannot afford to do it all over again. He has diverted some of his dwindling reserves to hiring Bellok-yan to follow this trail. Given his condition, Bellok-yan must reluctantly recruit aides and protectors, and at this short notice must rely on whatever ‘talent’ he can find and afford—such as the player-heroes.

It is up to the narrator whether or not the idol is really where Belindus thinks it is. Nonetheless, this is an easy way to send the heroes into whichever thicket of action and adventure the narrator wishes. Maybe they will be scratching in the northern Stormwalk Mountains near the New Lunar Temple (*Dragon Pass*, page 40) in time for the Dragonrise, or rumors place it deep in the Upland Marsh or at the bottom of Skyfall Lake, such that trollish divers will need to be engaged to search for it.

And if they do find it, what will Erganishal think of the subtle, tricky Bellok-yan?

“THANK YOU FOR DOING THE WORK.  
NOW, I’LL TAKE THAT ”

Bellok-yan is by no means averse to the hard graft of exploration and tomb raiding, but he sees no reason not to take shortcuts, nor does he have much of a code of honor when it comes to his colleagues. After all, he reasons, they are all tomb robbers, so they can hardly claim any moral high ground.

He makes an entertaining regular foil and rival to players who indulge in unfashionable subterranean delving or otherwise have a tendency to go after ancient treasures. He will typically arrange to be ready and waiting when they emerge, battered and bruised but triumphant, with some suitably impressive force. He does not, after all, want to kill them (not that he will hesitate if he must). He merely wants to loot their loot with a superior smile and a patronizing commiseration, before leaving them to lick their wounds and swear revenge. He doesn’t mind—he knows he’s the better man. And he got what he was after!

Some day, though, that confidence will be the death of him. Again.



# SERGEANT BIRRIKKAL

"All I want is an honest week's pay for an honest day's work."

A Lunar soldier from Vanch, Sergeant Birrikkal is a big-time gambler and confidence trickster. Or that is how he would like to see himself.

Despite his skill at dice and cards, despite his clever tongue and scheming brain, despite even the Blessing he was given at birth, he isn't in that league. But he's good enough to come out ahead of his commander and the other sergeants. The real reason he is a lowly—and often broke—sergeant (septon), rather than a comfortably-off innkeeper, is that he doesn't have to what it takes to be a real con-man. He has a conscience and a soft spot for the needy, especially orphaned children

Birrikkal is entering middle age and well on his way to being completely bald. He doesn't look much like a soldier, although his standard of appearance is just about within regulations.

## STORY

Sergeant Birrikkal is employed by the logistics arm of the Turzah Hounders. His men are grooms and ostlers at Fort Bostok. He is a career soldier who thought that joining up would let him scheme his way into a unit in the rear echelons, which would offer all the advantages of army service with none of the risk. That much of his plan worked. Where it failed was in actually taking advantage of his position to make money: he lacks the nerve to engage in more than the pettiest of embezzlement, and as for his schemes, his ingenuity and inventiveness are balanced by what is sometimes almost comically bad luck.

Quite why his frankly greedy nature also has a space for helping orphans is a mystery even to those very few people who know about it. He is happy to keep it that way, and also to try and ensure that as few people know anything at all. He fondly believes himself to have a reputation as a ruthlessly entrepreneurial fixer and believes that this would undermine his image.

## AMBITIONS

*Ideology:* Get rich quick (but help orphans, too).

*Purpose:* Get enough cash to retire into a nice safe civilian job. Birrikkal really wants to be rich. He'll settle for comfortable. He'd like a few breaks to make his life more pleasant, as long as it involves little real work. But when it comes down to it, he'll give up his gains in the face of real need.



## ABILITIES

*Keywords:* Lunar Provinces (Vanch) 1W; Cavalry Soldier 13; Initiate of Nuralt 3W; Lay Worshipper of the Seven Mothers 13.

*Magic:* Initiate of Nuralt The Hopefinder 3W: Hope 8W (Bright Eyes, Never Despair, Share Hope, Starlight), Masks 3W (Heliakal's Visage, Bearer of Hope, Anonymous Benefactor), Survival 17 (Enduring Swim, Root Out Food, Scale Heights, Silent Walk, Scent of Tunoral, Vicious Defense)

*Main Abilities:* Baffle Brass 10W, Feign Ignorance 5W, Games of Chance 3W, Quick-Witted 6W, Resourceful 10W, The Easy-Come, Easy Go Blessing 20W.

*Main Personality Traits:* Avaricious 5W, Generous to the Truly Needy 5W, Incurable Optimist 20W.

*Flaws:* Avoid Combat 10W, Everything Goes Wrong At the Last Minute 1W2, Keep Generosity to Teelo Norri Orphanage Secret 5W, Lazy 5W.

*Important Possessions:* A "lucky" coin—as if.

## ALLIES AND ENEMIES

*Relationship to the Immanent Action Liberation:*

Employed by the Turzah Hounders. He has no real interest in the association's goals or politics, although he will pick up on who is on their way up or personal rivalries, which may be exploited for his own ends.

*Principal Followers:* "Wolfhound," a short and chubby Jajaloring groom who does not resemble his nickname in the slightest.

*Contacts:* Other non-commissioned officers—especially quartermasters. He can often get necessary supplies by working around the system, something that excuses his many other shortcomings in Packmaster naHoxoummibeg's eyes.

*Home:* Bostok Fort, a fort that once guarded a an important crossing of the Jader River. Now that the border between Vanch and Holay is at peace under the aegis of the Empire, the fort is no longer needed as a defensive outpost. It officially belongs to the Turzah Hounders because it is on the road connecting Bostok—and the Oslir river—to the Hounder's headquarters at Ulatel's Leap. Another frequent destination for travellers is the Reaching Moon Temple at Negial's Triumph. Fort Bostok is also used by the Bright Line Outreach and sometimes by The Long Road (see "The Moon Over the Waters") as an alternative route south. The fort is still a small military base, but the main part is the stables, used to supply messengers and other travelers associated with the Immanent Action Liberation with fresh horses.



## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### THE VANCHITE PEOPLE

With the exception of the Jajaloring dog-people, most Vanchites worship the raccoon-god Tunoral or his consort Negalla. Tunoral was a servant to the Sun-God Heliakal. When Heliakal was slain at the Hill of Gold, Tunoral took up the burden of protecting the people and teaching them how to survive in the terrible times known as the Darkness. Tunoral gained power from wearing masks, some of which are now worshipped as subcults. One of these is Nuralt, the Hopefinder, whom Birrikkal follows.

Tunoral is a crafty survivor, and has been known to take a relaxed attitude to the concept of private property, an attitude sometimes shared by his followers. Vanchites justify helping themselves to other's possessions according to a "need before greed" philosophy. However, outsiders are often considered "fair game" whose needs do not matter. The Lunar Empire is changing this attitude, though. Some Vanchites see themselves as a part of the Empire and are prepared to show other Imperial subjects the same consideration as they would show their fellows—at least so long as they are treated with greater respect than the Dara Happans historically have. Others are influenced by the Lunar Way to help anyone in need, just as Tunoral helped their ancestors, Sergeant Birrikkal may seem a more "traditional" Vanchite, but at heart he is led to the newer, more idealistic ways. That won't stop him taking advantage of player heroes, though, so long as they look like they can afford the loss.

### USING SERGEANT BIRRIKKAL

Birrikkal is mainly useful as a recurring character, rather than the focus of a story. He can be moved to a different "rear echelon" position without significantly affecting the character—even one in a different military organization. If moved to a field position or anywhere on active service, he ought to be scheming to get back to somewhere safer, but he won't turn down a chance for a quick profit.

When Birrikkal turns up, he will usually seek to part the heroes from their hard-earned cash. This is fine so long as the heroes are allowed to win some of the time. After all, Birrikkal is not infallible. Maybe the "worthless" doodad he is trying to palm off on the heroes is really more valuable than he says it is. Remember that Birrikkal always loses most of his gains and is never much better off for long.

### STORY SEEDS

**The Orphanage needs help:** A Teelo Norri orphanage is in urgent need of funds. They have borrowed money from the Vanchite Trading Company and the debt is due to be repaid soon—with interest. Given that the Vanchite Trading Corporation is not just a major financial house and shipping firm, but also a cover for loansharks, leg-breakers, and sundry other criminal types, this is a serious problem. If not paid, the Corporation will take control of the buildings and everything else of value. The nuns beg the heroes to find their mysterious benefactor and beg for his help yet again. But all they know is that the money comes from Bostok Fort. It

could be a good introduction, as well as providing them with leverage over Birrikkal. He really doesn't want people to know how soft he is on orphans... but are the heroes the types to use such information against him?

**That's a nice doodad!** Birrikkal recognizes (or thinks he recognizes) an item carried by a hero as something worth far more than it seems to the right person. While not daring to try outright theft, Birrikkal will seek to get his hands on the item one way or another.

**You owe me.** Making the mistake of getting involved in a gambling game with Birrikkal, one or more characters ends up in his debt. But the debt will be forgiven if they just help in the latest get-rich-quick scheme....

**I knew my luck would change!** At last a game of chance pays off, and Birrikkal wins from a passing Cossack the deeds to a patch of prime farm land in the Redlands. Not that he wants to be a farmer, of course, so he needs a trustworthy person who is willing to travel to the Redlands, take possession of the land, and register Birrikkal's ownership with the local authorities. He then intends to sell it for a profit, from which the agent can take a cut. The joke turns out to be on Birrikkal, of course: the deed is spurious, perhaps to the land on which the shrine to Varzum is built (see page 46).



# DYZANDER OF UTHENEOS

*"There can be no Life without Honor. Beneath the mask of barbarity the Heortlings are a worthy and just people."*

For Dyzander, ambassador and military advisor, it is not through brutish oppression or shaven-headed mysticism that the Lunar Way might best expand in Dragon Pass, but through warriors' ties of honorable comradeship and respect. Casting aside position and glory, he has donned the russet cloak of a wandering Yanafali Seeker, a martial missionary of the Immanent Action Liberation, who by aid and deed proves the benevolence of the Red Goddess. He freely aids those who seek Inclusion and the strength to resist the coming Hurricane.

Dyzander is a refined and dignified soldier-sage, of artistic grace and a heart free of greed or cruelty. Polite and respectful, he chooses his words with care and exults in the gentle works of artisans and poets, but still proves to be a fine warrior—a swordmaster still, despite a pronounced limp born of an old wound, and exacerbated by the damp mizzle of Dragon Pass. Dyzander honors Heortling ceremonial and custom, being deferential to clan and tribal ring, and insisting that all his companions and staff respect the intrinsic value of local ways. As a Pelandan, however, he makes a singular exception in promoting the worship of Doburdun over the Rebellious Storm.

## STORY

Born to artisans of a Thirds house in Utheneos, Dyzander would have shaped the blue porphyries of the Oronin had he not been swayed in childish wonder by the tales of Takenegi Militaris, and joined the Dipylons of the Slate Legion of Leothimus—the shield of JagaNatha. When invalidated out of his regiment by a wound, he wandered the Brass Mountains as a pilgrim, until he heard contradictory catechisms of Natha, plainsung in the cloisters of the Sapphire Monastery. There he first clenched the Fist of Doctrine and thence passed to the Bannardarch Conservatory, acquiring the wisdom of an expert fereshori and master of the vexilla. For years he taught and fought as Leveler of the Traygoni, until he heard the call of the Goddess, and departed to serve Her in Dragon Pass. For two years now he has remained among the Hoar Heron Clan, marshalling their warriors and teaching the Seventeen Adorations of the Moon (see page 12).

## AMBITIONS

**Ideology:** "To a noble people one must show the worth of Sedenya through honor and deed; word-trickery and force will reap only rebellion."

**Purpose:** To defend those in peril and propagate Inclusion, furthering the goals of the Immanent Action Liberation and manifesting Her will.

Some in the Fist of Doctrine fear that the ardor of Pelorian warrior cultures has diminished through years of peace. Yet the proud Heortlings of Sartar have lived a hard life, and if they can be brought over to the Goddess, might prove an able

asset. As an agent of the Fist in Dragon Pass, Dyzander is tasked with assessing this potential, and possibly preparing a new Leveler school and depot in the south. This is arousing considerable anger among the Barbari, who fear that this encroaches upon their privileges.

## ABILITIES

**Keywords:** Antiquarian 10<sup>W</sup>, Foot Soldier 15<sup>W</sup>, Hoplite Commander 1<sup>W</sup>2, Lunar Citizen 6<sup>W</sup>, Pelandan 4<sup>W</sup>.

**Magic:** Ordinate of Fereshor 18<sup>W</sup> (Army Support affinity 1<sup>W</sup>2, Personal Combat affinity 18<sup>W</sup>, Polemarch affinity 20<sup>W</sup>, On the Making of Magical War grimoire 5<sup>W</sup>2, Summon Vexilla Lares ritual 20), Preceptor of Sedenya 19 (Revere Fereshor 1<sup>W</sup>, Revere Sedenya 3<sup>W</sup>, Use Rufus Scripts 20, Worship Sedenya 10<sup>W</sup>).

**Main Abilities:** Appraise Artifact 16<sup>W</sup>, Appraise Terrain 1<sup>W</sup>2, Heortling Customs 8<sup>W</sup>, Heortling Tactics 8<sup>W</sup>, Learned Countenance 1<sup>W</sup>, Oratory 12<sup>W</sup>, Project Calm Demeanor 5<sup>W</sup>, Ride 20, Scimitar Fighting 1<sup>W</sup>2, Sing *ket*-Paeon of Pelanda 6<sup>W</sup>, Speak Sartarite 18, Vexilla Tactics 15<sup>W</sup>2.

**Main Personality Traits:** Appreciate Art 1<sup>W</sup>2, Disciplined 18<sup>W</sup>, Honorable 1<sup>W</sup>3, Patient 13<sup>W</sup>, Polite 5<sup>W</sup>, Respectful of Native Customs 1<sup>W</sup>2.

**Flaws:** Cursed Wound 1<sup>W</sup>2, Shame of Birth 19.

**Important Possessions:** Russet cloak, Silver Ramshorn Bracer (Deflect Blow 12<sup>W</sup>, Gird Sinews 3<sup>W</sup>, Steel Heart 18<sup>W</sup>), Silver Scimitar 15<sup>W</sup>.

## FAIR TRADE, SAVVY?

To the Choreographers of the Fiscal Dance, the economy of the Heortlings is a sorry sight. They sponsor such leagues as the Sartarite Handicrafts Collective, creating markets for 'authentic barbarian goods' in the Heartlands, so as to invigorate the wealth of supplicant tribes and encourage more to adopt the Lunar Way. Subsidized by the Empire, friendly tribes are paid well in coin for torcs, arm-rings, plaid shawls, inlaid woodwork, and potent mead (rustic affectations to a barbaric life are a popular pastime among the young and restless of Glamour). No Rinliddi nest is complete without its genuine, carved Heortling tula boundary-post. A trained alynx is thought to command a barbarian king's wergild, particularly among the more ornithophobic Dara Happan families of Yuthuppa. With his trained eye and elegant discernment, Dyzander is a noted Collector, and at the forefront in promoting such beneficial enterprise.

## ALLIES AND ENEMIES

*Relationship to the Immanent Action Liberation:* As a Bannardarch of the Fist of Doctrine, Dyzander was Leveler of the Traygoni. Now, while helping protect the Bright Line Outreach, he is intolerant of those colonists who offend the local culture, to the occasional consternation of House Kortillion and their association. He deplores the savageries of the Hunter Corps, being particularly cold toward his Immanent Action Liberation 'comrades' in the Turzah Hounders.

*Contacts:* Dyzander possesses great respect for Ohenkash Twice-Maned, with whom he has collaborated in the past (see page 66).

*Home:* Dyzander has adopted the itinerant life of a Yanafali Seeker, but currently makes his home in the chief's stead of the Hoar Heron Clan.

### CONVERSION BY THE SCIMITAR

Yanafal was the greatest Warlord of the Empire, Champion of the Renativity. Yet there was a time when he protected not the Living Goddess, but an orphan-child; led not the armies of the Moon, but the weak and defenseless during the Long Red Night. In remembrance, many ordinates of Yanafal Tarnils, Vestara, and Fereshor embark upon his selfless heropath, frequently in preparation for Sevening. They journey from Warrior Ram to Nurturing Ewe, resigning their commissions, pride and accomplishments to become migrant predicants, using their powers to spread Her gospel and aid the needy.

They have many names, and each path is personal and unique. They are the Seekers, the Wardens of the Unborn, the Harbingers of the Red Dawn, the Pale Moon Drifters; alike alone in their raiment: a dusty russet mantle, diminished from bright crimson and scarlet as is their pride; a silver scimitar, to shine Her way in the darkness; and the left forearm clasped with a ramshorn bracer.

While some travel with comrades, as in the indefatigable Parthenian Band, most are lonely scimitar-shepherds promoting Inclusion. Whether a gentle guardian, reduced to penury while quietly watching over the Nochet beggars of Lack Clack Lane, or a military mystagogue leading some savage tribe against the raiding Tusk Riders, Seekers are usually powerful Lunar heroes, experienced leaders and sword-seers. Most become preceptors of Sedenya, teaching of Her kindness and promoting small congregations in the wilderness, until they hear Her Cry.

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### THE HIDDEN WOUND

Dyzander is a private man, and none know the true reason he left the Slate Legion. He is a demigod born of UirTuros, the Vagrant Phallus that loved his mother. This is an honor in Utheneos, but one that drove his father into the drunken embrace of Bentus and cast a pall of shame over his life. Like all his siblings, he was hated by the Spolites, and a witch slew his favored shield-brother and hair-comber, and wounded his own calf with a cursed Zernite knife. He abandoned his comrades in guilt, and hidden behind the fabled left-greave of the Daxdarian hoplite is no scarred flesh, but *nothing*. The wound grows every year, a festering void eating at his flesh, with seemingly no cure.

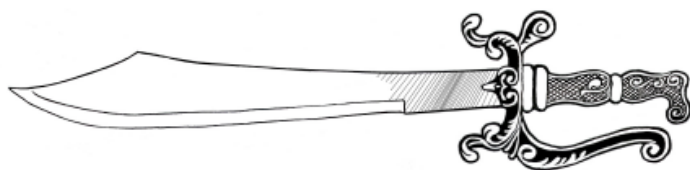
### THE REVERSE OF THE MEDAL

Outwardly, Dyzander is a trusted agent of the Immanent Action Liberation in Dragon Pass, spreading its goals of Nathic justice and Inclusion. Yet his gentle ways are not always in union with those of the Doctrinaires. He may secretly be an agent of the Entelathosium, the Hidden Path of the Bearers of Good News, or even the mysterious Unspoken Word. He is a learned warrior acting for Imperial instrumentalities who are concerned about the influence and agenda of House Kortillion and the Fist of Doctrine, or directed by elements of which this principled captain is as yet unaware...

### SAVE US, O GODDESS, FROM THE FURY OF YOUR DEMAGOGUES!

Every Lunar cycle brings a new sect of missionaries to Dragon Pass. Some proclaim 'We are all Us!' and unite the poor stickpickers against those wealth-hoarding carls, collectivizing steads, hides, and farms. Others teach the paean 'Shine, Rufelza, Shine,' which the General Guide for the Lunar Spirit admitted was second only to Starbrow's Rebellion in its sheer impediment to Inclusion in recent years.

Few are as curious as the Pogonoclasts of Quinquishaven Purity. For these mendicant 'Beard-Breakers,' facial hair is a sin before the Goddess, castigated in their mantric refrain "Unclean haven of lice; fomenter of rebellious vice!" Now, led by their humble demagogue, the Great Misopogon (Demagogue 18W, Preceptor of Sedenya 10W; Branded for Beard-Thievery 19, Command Followers 1W2, Grasp Beard 7W, Holy Apoplexy 1W2, Oratory 3W, Sore Face 11W), they have arrived in Dragon Pass, bloodily to tear out the facial hair of contumacious Orlanthi and burn the false beards of Lhankorite scholars. Their appearance would threaten Dyzander's work, not least if they were supported by soldiers, and directed by the Provincial Overseer or a league of the Immanent Action Liberation itself!





# THE LADY IN RED

*"Please do come in! Can I bring you a cup of tea?  
I know just the thing to calm your worried mind."*

The wise say that the road to hell is paved with good intentions, and Raijel has no shortage of good intentions.

The Oronin Valley is a sharply-divided land. The Pelandans of the eastern Oronin Valley were freed from Carmanian oppression by the Lunar Empire four hundred years ago. Yet while the easterners flourish under the enlightened rule of Moonson, the western Pelandans continue to toil as serfs for their Carmanian masters. Some find this oppression so blatant and cruel as to be intolerable. Still, direct intervention has been forbidden by every Mask of Moonson. When the latest was crowned, Takenegi Argentus, some would-be liberators acted, believing Him to be distracted and weak. They were wrong.

Raijel Agraketa is a tall raven-haired woman in her mid-thirties, quick to dispense a warm smile or sage advice, slow to laugh or share her own troubles. She enjoys listening to quaint stories of small-town life while dispensing home remedies, herbal tea, or a bite to eat. Raijel and her young son travel light, but wherever she sets up shop, interesting items soon begin to arrive. This is due to Raijel's association with the River Folk and Scales Avarin, a traveling merchant and old friend. Despite Avarin's obvious affection, Raijel has never allowed their relationship to become serious.

## STORY

Like all free Pelandans, Raijel was raised on stirring tales of the liberation of her people from Carmanian tyranny and heart-breaking descriptions of the suffering that still occurs west of the Oronin River. Raijel was born to a prominent clan in the Lunar city of Carantes, capital of the Satrapy of Oronin. When a charismatic relative offered Raijel the opportunity to help carry Pelandan liberation westward, Raijel eagerly accepted and employed her considerable talents to persuade others to join the cause.

Unfortunately, the would-be liberators met with a series of increasingly disastrous failures, resulting in Raijel's exile from the Heartlands. This effectively trapped Raijel in the land of her enemies—impoverished, abandoned by her family, and struggling to care for a newborn child. Tenuously shielded by her Lunar religious affiliation, Raijel adapted to adversity and even thrived after a fashion. She abandoned her clan name and adopted the epithet 'Agraketa,' after the Pelandan basket goddess. She now earns a living as a traveling

herbalist and occasional restaurant proprietor. She would prefer to settle down, but ill-fortune follows her like a shadow. No matter how hard she tries, circumstances eventually force her to move on.

## AMBITIONS

Raijel still clings to her dream that the pitiful serfs of the Western Reaches might someday be liberated. Past failures have convinced her that this will not happen quickly, and she is haunted by remorse for the suffering that force of arms and heroquesting wrought upon those she was trying to help. She has now abandoned direct action, and simply tries to give sage advice, spread the Lunar Way, and set a good example for others to follow.

*Ideology:* "You attract more bees with honey."

*Purpose:* The liberation of her fellow Pelandans.

## ABILITIES

*Keywords:* Imperial Citizen (revoked) 20; Merchant (Herbalist) 20; Pelandan 17.

*Magic:* Noviate of Enghorn the Trader 17; Joy of Bentus (Common Magic) 20.

*Affinities:* **Discovery** 17, **Travel** 17, **Trade** 17.

*Talents:* Forget Duty 5 $\mathbb{W}$ , Have Fun, Heighten Sensual Pleasure 5 $\mathbb{W}$ , Overlook Partner's Faults, Resist Killjoy 3 $\mathbb{W}\odot$

*Main Abilities:* Cooking 10 $\mathbb{W}$ , Harmonious Gestures 17, Herbalism 15 $\mathbb{W}$ , Know Customers 5 $\mathbb{W}$ , Make Good First Impression 5 $\mathbb{W}$ , Persuasive 5 $\mathbb{W}$ 2, Sedenyic Philosophy 5 $\mathbb{W}$ .

*Main Personality Traits:* Dedicated 20, Eloquent 20, Lonely 15, Loves Dunares 10 $\mathbb{W}$ , Open Minded 20, Remorseful 5 $\mathbb{W}$ , Resent Carmanians 20.

*Flaws:* Crooked Path 10 $\mathbb{W}$ 2 – The result of a disastrous heroquest, this mysterious force does not directly harm Raijel. Instead, it subtly encourages mischief wherever she goes. Its actions are generally accompanied by a gust of chilly northern wind.

*Important Possessions:* Raijel owns a blessed stone mortar and pestle, which she treats with great reverence.

## ALLIES AND ENEMIES

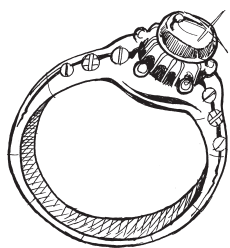
*Relationship to the Immanent Action Liberation:* Raijel's father is a scion of House Kortillion.

*Principal Followers:* Dunares 10 $\mathbb{W}$ , her twelve year old son, whom she calls Arie.

*Contacts:* Scales Avarin 20, River Folk 15.

*Enemies:* Raijel has no specific enemies, but is treated with distrust by most Carmanians.

*Home:* Raijel is originally from Carantes. She has been a wanderer for the last decade.



## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### SLEEPING DOGS

**The Father:** The heroes are hired in Carantes by Lord Vitorus Stern of House Kortillion. He is suffering from a curse inflicted on him by a mortal enemy, and wishes to see his estranged daughter Raijel one last time before he dies. Twelve years ago, she was a minor player in a failed plot to liberate the Pelandan serfs of the Western Reaches. She was exiled from the Heartlands for her part in the crime, and disowned by her family. Lord Vitorus pulled many strings to lift the Order of Exile, so Raijel is now free to return home. He also provides the heroes with a letter of introduction that carries the considerable weight of Vitorus' personal reputation. The only lead he has to his daughter's current location is the name of a former associate—General Arlinos of Peldre.

**The General:** The city of Peldre is the mythical home of Daxdarius, a Pelandan war god with strong connections to Natha. General Arlinos was the brilliant mind behind a failed attempt to incite armed insurrection among the oppressed Pelandan serfs of Spol. The general retired in shame following the scandal, and now lives out his dotage alone in a mansion filled with dusty campaign trophies. The old warlord has information that will lead the heroes closer to their goal, but is in no hurry to tell them. Instead he will drone on for hours about the Good Old Days, and give tantalizing bits of information when he thinks the heroes are about to leave. When this fails, he will propose a game of Ravenkaaz for the information. He is a brilliant player (Play Ravenkaaz 1W2), but suffers from several handicaps (including Arrogance 5W, Forgetfulness 18, and Poor Eyesight 20). If the heroes are successful, they will learn of another member of the old conspiracy: a man named Vengal, who may be found in Kendesos.

**The Killer:** Vengal the Silencer, Ordinate of Fjordaur, was the leader of an ambitious heroquest intended to break the Carmanians' magical hold over the Pelandans. It failed spectacularly. Vengal was driven mad by the experience, captured, and consigned to a terrible fate. Kendesos is home to a famous school of sorcery and law colloquially known as the Ivory Tower. Carmanian philosophy demands that such brilliance be balanced by darkness, and so beneath the Ivory Tower lies the Obsidian Abyss—a notorious dungeon containing the most malignant of prisoners. The heroes must gain access to Vengal and convince him to reveal information leading to Lord Vitorus' daughter. The murderer will appear within a magical circle that connects the interrogation chamber to the portion of Hell in which Vengal is confined. If successful, the heroes will learn how to contact "Scales" Avarin, who may know the current location of Lady Raijel.

**The Mobster:** The heroes contact Avarin, who plies his trade along the Oronin. He claims to be a traveling merchant but is actually a Nighthawk, (a Pelandan gangster). Avarin worships a god called Etoros (affinities: Ego, Greed), whom he describes as the Pelandan God of Self-Interest, another of 'Natha's Children' along with War, Murder, and Suicide. This claim is not recognized by the Doctrine of Bergorthus. Avarin's role in the conspiracy was to establish a criminal network in the Western

Reaches as an instrument of revolution. Instead, it became an instrument of corruption, which attracted the ire of the Padishah's Eye, and thus Moonson. Avarin cleverly escaped prosecution by shifting blame to others. He knows Lady Raijel's current location but must be convinced that taking the heroes to her is in his best interests.

**The Daughter:** Raijel is currently living in a town twenty miles upriver from Minstinus. She has become embroiled in a dispute with the local Sirdar, who is determined to restore the holy Order of Idovanus to his demesne. Raijel has been teaching the Lunar Way to her customers in the form of friendly advice, dispensed along with herbal remedies and tasty meals. Unfortunately, Raijel's curse has enflamed local passions and the simmering unrest has begun to erupt in sporadic violence. Unknown to Raijel, Avarin is performing rituals to reinforce the curse. He profits from the chaos it brings, and often suggests new places for Raijel to settle that maximize his gain. Now Avarin will try deliver to deliver Raijel to Lord Vitorus himself, using the Crooked Path to incite animosity, and hopefully violence, amongst the heroes.

**The End:** If the heroes successfully resist the curse, they must convince Raijel to return home to her father. When they arrive in Carantes, will she receive the loving welcome that she expects, or was it all just a ruse to acquire the one thing that can break her father's curse—the life of his only living daughter?



# MOLIA MOONFLOW & CAE THUNDERMOON

*Bringing the Goddess to the hearts of barbarian men, one tribe at a time.*

These two lunar heroines are dedicated to spreading the word and joy of the Goddess to the skeptical at home and heathen abroad. In the process, they gather goodwill, support, and power for their eventual rise to immortality into the Lunar Pantheon.

Molia is a tall, athletically slim woman in the flower of her youth. Her long hair cascades down her back and changes color to suit her viewer's preference. Her pale skin and sparkling green eyes complement her passionate full lips. Cae Thundermoon is a stocky and generously proportioned woman in the summer of her life. Her rosy cheeks and ruddy complexion complement her down-to-earth look. Peasants everywhere associate her with the figure of the mistress of the hearth. Like Moonflow, she can magically change her appearance to match the expectations of the viewer, but instead of gaudy baubles, she shows her allegiance to the Moon through fiery red hair and a lunar rune on her ample right breast.

## STORY

The daughter of a Darjiini chief in the backwater Blackwater Swamp, Molia Sweetwater lived a pampered life, but her selfish and flirtatious ways angered the clan's shaman. When the swamps started to dry up and become poisonous, he called for Molia to be sacrificed to the Great Heron. However, agents of the Immanent Action Liberation decided to use this as an opportunity to demonstrate the power of the Red Goddess, and awoke the sleeping water spirits. Molia was unchained from the sacrificial rock by the Lunars in front of the scowling shaman, winning the hearts of the clan. Before they left, the Lunars took a divination in the waters of the swamp: amidst good omens for the clan was an even greater destiny for Molia as a Lunar immortal. Shedding tears in the moonlit pool, Molia became an Ordinate of the Lunar Way and changed her name to Moonflow. She left that very night with the missionaries and has been part of the Immanent Action Liberation ever since.

Cae Thunderwell was an Earth Mother of the Istripi clan in rural Tarsh. With the menfolk away at the wars, she was left as matriarch to feed her people in hard times. Alas, the clan was on the losing side and facing dismemberment at the hands of their rivals or lunarization by Immanent Action Liberation missionaries, they chose the latter. Leaving the care of the clan to the younger women, Cae joined the Bright Line Outreach, taking on the name Thundermoon.

Molia and Cae meet each other in their missionary work and decided to work together. Molia will bedazzle the local nobility, while Cae wins over the farmers and peasants. Consider their conversion of the anti-lunar Whitestock clan in Dragon Pass: Molia seduced chief Erikan Stonebear, and became his wife for a year. She was able to influence clan decisions through her new husband

and young Banath Stormspear, representative of the weaponthanes, who was besotted with her. Meanwhile Cae and her cooks fed the starving farmers. She found herself rolling not only in the stall of Janan Beefriend, farmers' representative on the clan ring, but also that of Manath Oakram, leader of the herders. After a year, they left a clan with strong Lunar sympathies and the chief with a red-haired heir.

## AMBITIONS

**Ideology:** Molia: "The Lunar Way is beautiful and persuasive." Cae: "The Lunar way will give you warm, secure homes and full bellies."

**Purpose:** Both are pursuing the path of Lunar immortality. Molia is seeking to become an immortal of bedazzling beauty, worshipped by attractive women of influence everywhere, while Cae seeks to become an immortal of the hearth and good cooking, her worship providing the social glue that holds the empire together.

## ABILITIES

**MOLIA MOONFLOW.**

**Keywords:** Darjiini 10W2, Noble 10W2.

**Magic:** Ordinate of Senthara 10W3 (Make Love 13W3, Seduction 15W3).

**Main Abilities:** Become Center of Attention 15W2, Calm Anger 15W2, Dismiss Crowds 15W2, Wear Fashionable Clothes Well 15W2.

**Main Personality Traits:** Elegant 5W, Seductive 5W.

**Flaws:** Vanity 15W

**Important Possessions:** Imela's Ever-Changing Jewelry 10W, Wardrobe of Beautiful Clothes for Every Occasion 5W2.





## CAE THUNDERMOON

**Keywords:** Tarshite 15W2, Cook 10W2.

**Magic:** Ordinate of Davadeezola 10W3 (Build Community Spirit 18W3, Social Command 12W3).

**Main Abilities:** Detect Poison in Food 15W2, Endure Kitchen Heat 13W2, Feed the Tribe 13W2, Gossip With The Women 15W2, One of the Boys 14W2, Organize Feast 15W2, Tidy Homestead 15W2.

**Main Personality Traits:** Down to Earth 5W, Warmhearted 5W.

**Flaws:** Crude 5W, Nag 5W.

**Important Possessions:** The Cauldron of Plenty 5W3, The Pot Of Warm Beverages 1W3.

## ALLIES AND ENEMIES

**Relationship to the Immanent Action Liberation:** While broadly part of the Bright Line Outreach, they work independently. However their successes make them role models for many ordinary members.

**Principal Followers:** They are always attended by a group of ten burly warriors (scurrilous rumor has it that they are paid in sexual favors). Cae is aided in her culinary efforts by a small battalion of cooks, recruited on her travels from all parts of the Empire and Molia is trailed wherever she goes by a crowd of wannabes, who fawn on her every action and help her with her hair, makeup, and wardrobe.

**Contacts:** Halg the Witch, the chief godtalker of Cae's old tribe, was once a High Priestess of Maran Gor, but converted to the Lunar Way 5W; Shazam the Shazar, an eccentric Lunar Sorcerer, is a lover of both Molia and the Cae 1W2.

**Enemies:** Land-Tyrant Devina, a leading light on the Glamour social scene (and famous for her sexual prowess), schemes Molia's downfall. The Mostali Iron Chef relentlessly hunts Cae, believing that she stole a dwarven recipe for a longevity potion, which she now mixes in her soups.

**Home:** Molia and the Cae spend their time on the road.

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### A MOMENT OF DOUBT

The characters are in a Lunar city when they see a beautiful but bedraggled woman. She wears a drab brown dress and her waist-length hair is tangled and uncared-for. If questioned, the locals do not know who she is, except that she is not a beggar and that she first appeared a couple of days ago. She accepts food that the locals give her out of kindness, but otherwise drifts about the square during the day, looking forlornly at a fountain at the center of which is the statue of a young woman. They do not know where she goes at night.

If the heroes examine the statue and pass a test of their Know Myths of the Lunar Way against a resistance of 5W, they will realize that statue in the fountain is an early representation of Sedenya. A critical success will reveal the statue is of Teelo Estara, before she entered the underworld to become a goddess.

If the heroes question the woman, she will reveal nothing about herself, except that she is lost and cannot remember her past. Apart from this, she says she is content and at peace, and she feels as if some burden has been lifted from her. If asked why she is staring at the statue, she will reply that she is looking for something that she has lost.

If the heroes shadow her movements at night, they will find that she goes to a local den of ill repute, where she drinks and makes merry with the rest of the men. In fact, she behaves as if she was one of the men. If asked, she bitterly curses them, saying that she wants to be left alone to be a real person, not a statue for someone else's adoration. There is some form of magic that protects her, and the men react with berserk frenzy if the heroes threaten her in any way.

After the initial sighting of the woman, the heroes could become more involved, as the local Lunar Judex asks them to find out her identity.

The woman is Molia. She has willingly forgotten who she is and her quest for immortality after a recent tragedy. A lover of hers, the stolid Dara Happan Goodlord Korsokhon, killed himself because he was hopelessly in love with Molia and knew that she would never settle down to live as his wife.

This situation is resolved by Molia drinking of the fountain's waters. Even if she has forgotten it, Molia is spiritually linked to it at this point. The heroes could find out who she is by asking the local Lunar community, who have heard rumors of Korsokhon's death and Molia's reaction to it. Complications arise when the agents of Land-Tyrant Devina arrive in the area, aware of the situation and looking to capture Molia in her weakened state. One possibility for a finale is to have the Land-Tyrant force Molia to drink the fountain's water, since she doesn't want to take her revenge on someone who does not remember what she did.

### ULTIMATE POWER

Cae and Molia make their final move towards becoming Lunar Goddesses. The whole of the Association mobilizes behind them, as they prepare the vast resources needed to perform the final heroquest. This effort takes at least a year, and centers around one of Cae and Molia's most successful conversions: the Whitestcoat clan in Sartar. This of course brings the logistical nightmare of transporting the required ritual equipment from the Heartlands to uncivilized Sartar. Forces of the Fist of Doctrine also have to ensure that the surrounding clans are pacified.

To further complicate matters, Molia's and Cae's enemies are aware of the final ritual.

Land-Tyrant Devina's agents sabotage the movement of goods and personnel from the Heartlands. She also sends a stream of spurned lovers into Molia's camp, whose tales of betrayal erode her image as Goddess of Noble Romance.

Holed up in an old hill fort protected by his Mostali warriors, the Iron Chef employs foul magic that makes Cae forget her recipes, which will ultimately undermine her ability to ascend into the Lunar firmament as Goddess of the Hearth.

The heroes could be involved in either the attempts to sabotage the ascendancy or part of the effort to track down the culprits. Either way, the duo presses on with their attempt to become immortal. The success of the ritual will be directly linked to the heroes' efforts. At the climax of the ritual, the duo ascends towards the Red Moon. If the heroes successfully aided them, they will enjoy a pleasant ascent to Lunar paradise, guests of honor at the feast that the new Immortals throw immediately after their successful ascent. If the heroes successfully sabotaged the ritual, the duo fail to ascend properly and end up dumped on the most terrifying part of the Dark Side of the moon. In what terrible form they return from Jakaleel's realm and how they seek to take their vengeance on the heroes is left up to the narrator.

# OHENKASH TWICE-MANED

*"Talk to me. All I can offer is justice, but that is sometimes enough."*

Ohenkash is a Judex, a Lunar magistrate. Although from the Dara Happan heartlands, and still a worshipper of Durbadath the lion-god, he is a sincere convert to the philosophies of the Lunar Way. He has at times been an ally of the Immanent Action Liberation, but increasingly the incorruptible and dedicated judex is a threat, especially as he begins to investigate the source of this new narcotic scourge, blacksap.

He is a man of strong bearing, martial in his lion-faced helm and bronze mail, yet keen intelligence and compassion shine in his eyes. He does not shirk from drawing a blade or ordering villains nailed to Deshkorgos's tree (crucified) when he must, he prefers to use his intellect and intuition to solve crimes rather than subterfuge and torture, unlike many other Imperial magistrates. This does not always sit well with his peers. His justice, wisdom, and pride have won him both friends and enemies within the Imperial government. He is routinely sent to the troubled border regions of the Empire, both out of choice and also thanks to the machinations of his enemies. Surrounded by his personal retinue and some formidable allies, he is now in Dragon Pass, at once a roving agent of Lunar power and a vigilant upholder of its laws.

In many ways, the Good Judge and his hero band can provide—in good Lunar fashion—a degree of balance if used as a recurring nemesis for Orlanthi heroes. While he is their enemy, he will also emerge as wise, just, honest, honourable, and brave. As such, he may make them question their stereotypes of Lunars or simply offer a change of pace from wicked invaders.

## STORY

For all his upright and noble bearing, Ohenkash was born to Dara Happan peasants near Wirrup. When the local lord began ignoring Yelm's sacred precepts, Ohenkash turned to Durbadath's honest ways. He gathered a band of like-minded young men and harried the tyrant until they forced him to summon aid from Wirrup, claiming peasant uprisings. Ohenkash infiltrated the relieving force's camp and confronted their commander with the truth. Yelm's divine light burst onto the evil lord, blinding and blasting him, and on the spot Ohenkash devoted himself to Durbadath the Lawman. For the past two decades, he has been a magistrate first of Solar and then of Lunar law, his unyielding Antirian concepts of right and wrong slowly being tempered with Sedenya's mercy.

## AMBITIONS

**Ideology:** "I am the Law. But the Law must balance justice with mercy, what is written with what is right."

**Purpose:** To bring justice and mercy to those who deserve each.

While Ohenkash is genuine in his enthusiasm for the Lunar Way, this is largely as a philosophy rather than a faith. He has little interest in the detail of Sedenyic theology, and is also increasingly torn between his

dream of what the Lunar Empire *could* be and the realities all around him. Will he settle for doing what he can, or will he lose his passion and become just another time-serving Judex who closes his eyes to the gulf between rhetoric and reality? Will he be forced to choose between his moral code and his oath to Glamour?

## ABILITIES

**Keywords:** Dara Happan 5<sup>W</sup>, Lunar Citizen 5<sup>W</sup>, Lunar Magistrate 1<sup>W</sup>3, Devotee of Durbadath Lawman 10<sup>W</sup>.

**Magic:** Devotee of Durbadath the Lawman 10<sup>W</sup>2 (Combat 10<sup>W</sup>, Justice 10<sup>W</sup>2, Radiance 1<sup>W</sup>2), Adherent of the Lunar Way 17.

**Main Abilities:** Discerning Investigator 1<sup>W</sup>3, Understand Others' Ways 15<sup>W</sup>.

**Main Personality Traits:** Conscience 20<sup>W</sup>, Fearless 10<sup>W</sup>, Honorable 15<sup>W</sup>, Wise 18<sup>W</sup>.



## ALLIES AND ENEMIES

*Relationship to the Immanent Action Liberation:* He has no direct relationship with the Association.

*Principal Followers:* Grim Heresis, the dark-helmed Carmanian swordsman, bearer of the blade Interlocutor and devotee of Humakt, who has learned the magics of the Shadow Dancers, including the Step Through Shadows and how to Cut the Dark. Once, he had no conscience beyond his faith; then he turned to Ohenkash to be his conscience; now he is at last finding his own. Harrulf Rowdrilsson, the loyal but unpredictable Vanchite dog shaman, devoted equally to Ohenkash and to his own notions of simple justice. Ohenkash also uses his stipend and the revenue from lands he holds in Vonlath and Saird to raise his personal force of retainers, the Lion Guard. The 60 Guards are doughty, loyal, and honest men and women.

*Contacts:* Ohenkash is not a member of the Lunar Legal League, but has good relations with many of its members. He also respects those who, like Dyzander of Utheneos (page 60) can cleave to the Lunar Way without becoming intolerant or complaisant.

*Enemies:* He has many enemies, including those in high places. As he begins to close in on the source of blacksap, this may even include the Association.

*Home:* Ohenkash has a small villa on the lands he was granted in Vonlath, but in truth his home is wherever his investigations take him.

### DURBADATH THE LAWMAN

The lion-god Durbadath occupies an interesting place in Dara Happa, for he is at once both a nobleman's god and a commoner's. He has been elevated into the Yelmic aristocracy, yet his roots and his passions are closer to the mud-grubbers—more than once he has been described as the “noble peasant.” Several of his aspects reflect this, including the Upholder (who emerges as righter of wrongs to topple lords who break with Yelmic purity) and the Lawman, who applies a more nuanced notion of justice than the black-and-white version preached by Antirius.

*Abilities:* Ambush, Charismatic Mien, Know Prey Animals, Initiate or Devotee of Durbadath, Mythology of Durbadath, Natural Justice, Sense Lie, Soul Vision, Sprint.

*Virtues:* Fierce, Hate Injustice, Honest.

*Affinities and Feats:*

**Combat** (Conceal Self, Great Pounce, Lion's Bite, Restore Own Vitality, Ripping Blow)

**Justice** (Cut Off Escape, Magisterial Voice, Raise Posse, Run Down Criminal)

**Radiance** (Blind with Flash, Heartening Glow, Illuminate Shadows, Radiate Light, See in Dark)

*Secret:* **Shapechange to Lion** (as per usual shapechange secrets).

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### HOSTILE WITNESS

Ohenkash Twice-Maned had some time on his hands and was wondering about the theft of the personal diary of Gefi Underbeker, a noted EWF herbalist of the Second Age, from his tomb outside the City of 10,000 Magicians. Apparently, nothing else was taken, and the tomb raider managed to avoid a series of biological traps that had spiked, spored, seeded, and squashed several score adventurers before. On encountering the Aldryami sage Amfalapalas the Puce-Blossomed, he mentioned Underbeker and was rewarded with a tirade of abuse (albeit gracefully phrased, in haiku) about Underbeker's particular specialism. This was to take the ‘blood’ of pine trees being reconfigured (killed, Ohenkash presumed) by pouchrot and by a process of distillation turn a sacred exudates into a mere narcotic for soft-skins (humans). Ohenkash at once realizes that the elf is describing blacksap, the terrible drug already rife in Nochet and beginning to spread into the Empire along the north-south trade routes. He has wondered quite where it came from and who is behind it, and at last he has a clue.

In fact, Bellok-yan raided the tomb for the diary, on the personal commission of Henrik Ten-Wheels. Behind the façade of archeological investigation, he was, of course, acting as an agent of his old friends at the Moon Over the Waters, and in particular the Smith Hall Manufactory.

If Ohenkash tries to follow this investigation, he will find himself not just mired in political complications but in personal danger as soon as he tries to tackle Bellok-yan (and, more to the point, the Finder gets to tip off Henrik). This is a highly-controversial issue at every level. Bellok-yan will want to conceal the name of his patron, but may be unable to do so, especially if Ohenkash starts hinting at the less enlightened aspects of Lunar law-enforcement, such as torture and summary execution. Henrik is rich, powerful, and politically well-connected. His first line of defense will be to present Ohenkash with the diary and claim that it has never been out of his personal possession, while at the same time pulling strings in Glamour to get the inconvenient Judex assigned to some pressing case elsewhere. Henrik will do everything he can to prevent any suspicion falling upon the Moon Over the Waters. But what if Ohenkash nevertheless puts II and II together to get IV?

As last resort, the Smith Hall Manufactory may either petition Enteroxy to lift his protection over Ohenkash, or he may dispatch either deniable thugs or Vituperatus to kill him and hope to be able to smooth things over afterwards. On the other hand, there may be those even within the Moon Over the Waters eager to see the Manufactory suffer. It would serve TurEel well, for example, and he is not above slipping the Judex the off clue or rumor. Blacksap is also beginning to become a problem in Tarsh and Sylila, and Satrap Pardidas—and thus the Ebon Middle Togas of the Three-Fold Drape—is becoming concerned; they would not be happy to discover its source. Meanwhile, there is a division within the Fist of Doctrine. There are those happy to endorse the notion that anything that undermines those not yet within the Lunar Way and funds the Association is acceptable. Then there are those regarding this as immoral or, more convincingly, short-signed, as they fear ‘blowback’ including the debilitating addiction of Lunar troops already prone to abuse of the smoked weed hazia and opium. One way or another, the blacksap trade may be about to become common knowledge, and this might open rifts within the very fabric of the Immanent Action Liberation.



# OMKARAXOS THE POLYMATH

"...and these old beams here, O Most Beneficent and Wise Chief, I'm not sure soot and grime is your color. Perhaps lavender-tinged marble vaulting, and a leaf-patterned, slate-tiled roof... thatch? Thatch it is then. Have you considered interior lavatories?"

OmKaraxos is a polymath, as accomplished a Judex as an architect, and a keen student of the poetry and fauna of Dragon Pass. For the Immanent Action Liberation, he is an apostle of the wonders of civilization that Sedenya can bring. He is a proud architect of a New World, whose Seven Mothers' bathhouses, Lune-inhabited columns, and beautiful mansions reaffirm the faith of Her worshippers, and prove as strong a proselytizer as any missionary. He now takes his adze and rule to the barbarian lands, both as an agent of the association and an inquiring mind seeking knowledge.

A tall man, dark-haired and gray-eyed, OmKaraxos affects the finest, Pelandan-tinged New Pelorian accent and gravitas. Yet he cannot hide the rougher Sylilan mannerisms and dialect that creep into his behavior, or the oft-twitching nose and flaring nostrils that lighten his demeanor. His spindly form and loping stride lack the grace of his edifices, but OmKaraxos is nevertheless devoted to physical exercise and the pre-dawn comradeship of the boar hunt—turning from an artistic aesthete to a whooping child as he wields his prized hunting-spear, a gift from Korged Pigstrangler, the kuk (or king) of the Durnvokings. He does not drink, but possesses a voracious appetite that belies his frame.

## STORY

Though of Pelandan birth and family, OmKaraxos was raised in Sylila, where his parents were sculptors to the satrapal Erriounit clan. Living in the shadow of Iphigios the Crafter of Cities' legacy, he was inspired by the master's architectural mysteries. OmKaraxos studied *The Artifice of the All*, learning how to draw the blessed designs and entwine in a structure the Lunes that brought warmth and light to a building. He also learned to lay the mutating mosaics of Orenzo the Muralist, whose ever-changing forms danced across the walls of Sylilan villas.

His reputation grew as he practiced his craft across the Empire, but he only became a cog of the Immanent Action Liberation when a White Moonie sect daubed a crude and grammatically incorrect graffito across his renovated mausoleum of Ingkot. The outraged architect was quickly seized upon by the shadowy forces of the Loyal Jillaro Pamphleteers, who schooled his philosophy and oiled his accession to the Ebon Middle Toga of the Three-Fold Drape.

## AMBITIONS

OmKaraxos is somewhat wary of his foray into Dragon Pass, remembering with some distaste his time in Uruanost, where his beautiful construction's roof was demolished, its murals 'touched-up,' and its atrium inhabited by the kuk's favored porkers (it was from this commission that he gained his spear, and a life-size sculpture of Pigstrangler's manhood—"From one great erector to another"). He plays as hard as he works, exulting in travel, cultural investigation, and coursing. The pinnacle of his career would be to design and build a Temple of the Reaching

Moon, and have his name mentioned in the same breath as Iphigios! The majestic cliffs of Boldhome seem the ideal place...

**Ideology:** "By the rule and the line, between the dividers and the square, let me show you of the craft, O wise chieftain—the craft!"

**Purpose:** To aid the Immanent Action Liberation's mission by Lunarizing the settlements of Dragon Pass with Sedenyic architecture, and watching for the influence of White Moonies.

## ABILITIES

**Keywords:** Artisan (Architect) 1LW2, Bearer of the Ebon Middle Toga 20, Imperial Citizen 5LW, Judex 16LW, Sylilan 8LW.

**Magic:** Ordinate of Iphigios 17LW (spells of *The Harmonious Rule* 20LW; Use *The Artifice of All* 1LW2).

**Main Abilities:** Design Building 15LW2, Dragon Pass Geography 1LW, Evaluate Site 6LW2, Hunt Boar 2LW, Hunting-Spear Fighting 19, Know Lunar Law 1LW2, Know Materials 3LW2, Pontificate on Knowledge 16LW, Recognize Beauty 11LW, Study Heortling Poetry 16.

**Main Personality Traits:** Artistic Pride 5LW, Despise White Moonies 1LW2, Driven to the Hunt 15LW, Eager for Knowledge 6LW, Embrace Exercise 20, Great Appetite 8LW, Inspired Aesthete 20LW, Nervous of Barbarians 4LW.

**Flaws:** Gangly Frame 18, High-Minded Affectation 2LW, Nasal Twitch 7LW, Steer Conversation Onto Tangent 19.

**Important Possessions:** All-too-thin footwear, amulet of Iphigios 15LW, ebon middle-length toga, magnificent Durnvoking hunting-spear +5 (Daxadrak the Old Wolf spirits 8LW2).

## ALLIES AND ENEMIES

**Relationship to the Immanent Action Liberation:**

OmKaraxos is a bearer of the Ebon Middle Toga, but in his role as architect can liaise with all branches of the association.

**Principal Followers:** Rungak Horsetooth, a shrewish and swaggering Durnvoking body-servant and bodyguard. He is insufferably proud to be serving such a distinguished and refined gentleman, and jealously guards OmKaraxos from the adulation and attention of the Heortling barbarians—he's *his* gentleman and no-one else's!

**Contacts:** OmKaraxos frequently calls upon the Stone Poets (see *ILH1*, page 59) to decorate his structures, but his disagreements with their gargoyle guardian, Vogelin Annis, are warm and legion.

**Home:** Formerly resident in Jillaro, OmKaraxos is currently bound for Dragon Pass.

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### IPHIGIOS

A famed Carmanian artist, Iphigios gained immortality through perfection of the rites of his epithet: Crafter of Cities. He designed the glories of Jillaro with its awe-inspiring Temple of the Reaching Moon, and shaped the ivory and gold statue of the Conquering Daughter, unveiled the very day of her murder in 3/3. Iphigios was overcome by grief, and vowed to never craft again. Only in death was he released, as he joined his patron in divinity. In Sylila he is worshipped by architects and aesthetes as a more specialized aide to Hwarin Dalthippa, but in Pelanda and the Western Reaches he is a pre-eminent craft-god in his own right.

**Abilities:** Draught Design, Engineer Construction, Evaluate Ground, Know Materials, Lunar Way of Iphigios, Moon Eye, Novitiate of Iphigios or Ordinate of Iphigios, Survey Area.

**Virtues:** Aloof, Creative, Inspired.

**Formularies and Spells:**

- ▴ **The Harmonious Rule** (Delegate Task, Impress Design Upon Mind of Little Imagination, Overrule Foreman, Polish Material, Raise Cyclopean Block, Smooth Face, Strengthen Edifice)

**Grimoire and Spells:**

- ▴ **The Artifice of the All** (Banish Ganesataric Imperfection, Banish Strange Angles, Enshrine Beauty, Impart Lune, Manifest Perfect Proportion, Synthesize Form and Function, Unity of Artifice)

**Amulets:** These take the form of Iphigios' rune, formed by his dividers, plumb-line, straight rule, and set-square.

**Secret:** **Ritual Architect** (Gives 1/4 of the ability's rating to augment any act of civic construction, providing a permanent bonus to the edifices' use in magical rite and ceremonial).

**High Holy Day:** The Wake and the Wakening (Veriday/12) is a funereal commemoration of Hwarin Dalthippa's death, during which worshippers meditate on the ultimate meaningless of Earthly art, typically before getting thoroughly drunk.

**Other Side:** Iphigios' Bureau of Sublime Artifice lies adjacent to the Palace of Fine Art in the Scarlet City, and links to the Conquering Daughter's Palace of Sculpture.

**Other Connections:** Iphigios' worshippers frequently work with those of Hwarin Dalthippa and Uranafus.

**Radiance:** New Way Mansion.

### THE BOOK OF KHALABNOOR

Martial architects might know and use the mysteries of the grimoire of Khalab, a Western wizard and one of the original Seven of Vistur.

**Spells:** Assiduous Angle, Calculations of the Enemy's Folly, Calibrate Killing Ground for Maximum Effect, Cast Trigonometric Parallels to the Third Siege of Urgazon, Discern Most Beneficial Fields of Fire, Manifest Sublime Septagonal Trace, Maximize Celesto-Geometrical Perfection of Fortification ritual, Test of Countervallatory Excellence.

### SEVEN MOTHERS BATHHOUSES

OmKaraxos is a noted architect (and patron) of Lunar bathhouses. The most famous are those of the Seven Mothers, popular in Heartlands and Provinces alike. They consist of six unisex baths, each dedicated to one of the visible Seven Mothers and favored on a given day. Their sacred waters and mists are inhabited by Lunes, which cleanse the septessence of bathers and provide blessings to the faithful. A central courtyard dedicated to She Who Waits allows patrons to moonbathe in the Goddess' own radiance on Zayday.

Entry is free to any Imperial Citizen (and an accompanying servant or body-slave), though philanthropy is encouraged and the Provincial Church dedicates a portion of its tithes to maintenance. Occasional bathers may partake of the rites, and gain the blessings the Lunes give, which last a single day. Most Lunar worshippers try to indulge in each form of bath once-monthly, usually as an appropriate prelude to a ritual, battle, or ceremony. In morning preparation for the Ascension Day rites or heroquests, it is common for all seven baths to be taken in succession.

For many, however, such bathing is a ritual lifepath of Sedenyic purification. They join the Seven Mothers' Bathhouses as a denomination (often, in the Provinces, in conjunction with the Seven Mothers cult), spending 10% of their time and resources in its rites and gaining an appropriate relationship. For those members who partake in the *Sedenyasha* on Zayday, any blessing gained in the subsequent week lasts a full week, rather than a day. A typically pious bather will thus possess all seven blessings at any given time.

## SEVEN MOTHERS BATHHOUSE RITES

Bath	Phase of the Moon	Form & Bathing Rites	Blessing (15 to 5L)
<i>Tarnilga</i>	Veriday (Full Half)	Cold plunge-pool; vigorous exercise, wrestling and scimitar-shaving	Calm Courage
<i>Ontoriga</i>	Lesilday (Crescent Go)	Warm pool; ritual discussion and debate on learned topics and ideas	Quickened Mind
<i>Xaronga</i>	Gerraday (Dying)	Boiling steam-room; mortification of the flesh	Shrive Wrong
<i>Jakalsha</i>	Rashoday (Black)	Dank, misty pool; invigoration and scouring by ancestral Lunes	Sense Lunes and Spirits
<i>Teeloshia</i>	Ulurday (Crescent Come)	Tepid pool; patrons serve to bathe the local poor and travelers	Generous Heart
<i>Deezolsha</i>	Nathaday (Empty Half)	Massage room; soothing of wounds and aches with scents and oils	Soothe Septessence
<i>Sedenyasha</i>	Zayday (Full)	Courtyard ceremony open to the Moon's radiance	Her Grace

# RUFELZO REDWHEEL

*"You know you can always trust me to be fair. The Great Balance must be maintained."*

Assigned to the wild uplands of Dragon Pass by the Wheel of Balance, Rufelzo Redwheel was part of an ambitious plan to counter the strong Darra Happan and Solar influence in the politics of Alda Chur in northern Dragon Pass. As a traveling merchant, his original brief was to befriend the upland barbarians, ready to act when ordered to do so. But with the passing of long seasons, contact with his superiors has faded to silence, and the Pelorian has found new family and a measure of acceptance among the stormy folk of the Tovtaros. Where do his true loyalties now lie?

Urbane, witty, and mellifluous, Redwheel cuts an unlikely figure among the muddy bustle of the Ironspike market. Indeed, with his short-trimmed beard and hennaed hair, he cuts a sexually ambiguous figure to most Heortlings: a foreign, beguiling degenerate both strange and fascinating. Yet he is now a familiar figure to the local clans and he wears upon his brow the tattooed runes of a Tresdarnii clanfriend, and journeys freely from stead to stead.

His market stall is often an impromptu forum for gossip and ideas. Though courteous and honest in his dealings with all, those who seek to exploit the Pelorian soon discover their mistake. Though he carries no blade, Redwheel has been known to disarm and befriend even cutthroats and bull warriors with his humor, beguiling manner, and judicious use of his trader's staff. Yet he is also moody and unpredictable, with a cutting tongue and a rumored weakness for young women.

## STORY

Rufelzo was born of minor Glamour aristocracy, a trader son of trader priests. His family was ravaged in a dart war instigated by the Vanchite Trading Corporation. He was sheltered by a family patron of House Kortillion, and recruited by the Wheel of Balance. Redwheel was assigned to the Far Place as the Yelmalian Harvar Ironfist rose to become Duke of the Far Place amidst the savagery of the Righteous Wind reprisals. Redwheel's mission was to break the trade monopoly that Darra Happan trading combines had established in Alda Chur through their sponsorship of Ironfist's clan and manipulation of the Yelmalian sun cult. They had subverted the Path of the Goddess for the love of gold, and the temple of a barbarian sun god stood proud over the glass-walled city while the Lunar temple lay unfinished and near-empty.

The young Pelorian found himself in a cautious and unspoken alliance with upland Orlanthi clans centered on Ironspike—clans that continued to resist Harvar and the Yelmalian ascendancy after the savage compromise known as the Peace of Alone. Over time, he found trust, and companionship, and more. He learned to love the Heortlings, their rough-hewn honesty, and simple, open passions. While Orlanth was a farting husk, he saw in the cult of Ernalda the secret strength and wisdom of a vibrant land. He forged a special relationship with the Tresdarnii clan. For his help in stemming chaotic excursions out of Snakepipe and mediating the ever-present tensions between Orlanthi and Yelmalian

bloodlines, he was awarded the special status of Clanfriend, the Far Voice who may address the Ring. Rufelzo accepts this role with gratitude, but is always careful to repay hospitality with an equal gift in return. He now acts as much out of love for his adopted people as to fulfill his original mission.

Redwheel shares the Ironspike lodge, and the bed, of the Tresdarnii clan lawspeaker, Kierston Two Worlds. He is distrusted by certain Far Place clans, especially the Yelmalian ascendants. The Yelmalian king of the Tovtaros, Conla Bright Shield, has publicly cursed the Pelorian merchant in the Pure Flame Moot. Redwheel also has a growing number of enemies amongst the Alda Chur elite, who would happily be rid of this vexatious and unpredictable merchant priest.

## AMBITIONS

*Ideology:* 'We must birth the Balance in all things.'

*Purpose:* Having waited now so long in secrecy,

Redwheel has no idea how he will act if orders come.

Will he protect his newfound kin, or respond to the greater though harsher call of the Goddess?

## ABILITIES

*Keywords:* Citizen of Silver Shadow, traveling merchant, mercantile provocateur and Nathic philosopher.

*Magic:* Ordinate of Etyries (Engborn the Trader) 12W.

Discovery 12W, Travel 9W, Trade 11W; Wheel of Balance 14 (Verbal Trap, Discern Origin of Goods, Hidden Words).

*Main Abilities:* Seek Nathic Balance 5W, Staff Fighting 4W, Devastating Riposte 19, Disingenuous Response 18, Moon Eye 13, Host Fellow Pelorians 18.

*Main Personality Traits:* Urbane 7W, Non Violent 6W, Lingering Touch 2W, Inquisitive 19, Seductive 17, Charming 16, Honest 12, Hide True Feelings 8.

*Flaws:* Cutting Tongue 12W, Despair 18, Hate Vanchite Trading Corporation 14, Dislike Storm Pantheon 9.

*Important Possessions:* Three pack mules, storage byrne in Ironspike, Journey Staff of JagSipra 4W (Crack of Insight, Defend against Attacker, Overcome Fear, Turn Blow).

## ALLIES AND ENEMIES

*Relationship to the Immanent Action Liberation:* An agent 'gone native' after loss of contact with superiors.

*Contacts:* Kierston the Lawspeaker and her bloodline: non-Solar Ironspike merchants. Redwheel is Clanfriend to the Tresdarnii clan Ring.

*Enemies:* Four Coins, Lokarnos merchant, and Eye of Harvar Ironfist; Gasrik One Way, spearthane of Harvar; Vandak Three Visions, High Scaler of Weights and Measures in Alda Chur.

*Home:* Redwheel makes his home with Kierston in a hut within the Tresdarnii clan lodge in Ironspike.



## NARRATOR'S NOTES

### MARKET FORCES

Four Coins is a frighteningly obese Lokarnos merchant, his gigantic frame carried forward upon a tiny donkey. Despite the rumors that link him to every shady deal from Bagnot to Corflu, he seems to act with impunity, fearing neither Harvar's militia nor the dictates of Alda Chur's Golden Octad. When he sets up a stall opposite Redwheel in the Ironspike market and begins undercutting him in every way possible, it soon becomes obvious that a symbolic, deadly, highly public showdown has begun. The entire Hold begins to take sides, partly because it reflects the tension and tragedy of their own lives, but mainly for the entertainment value. When Four Coins begins a powerful new type of market warding ritual that will exclude cattle thieves, the muddy lanes of Ironspike erupt with brawling and bloodshed. Conla Bright Shield, his spearthanes, and Lunar 'advisors' take a close interest in proceedings. What side will the heroes take?

### WHO IS MY KINSMAN?

Kierston Two Worlds is lawspeaker of the Tresdarnii, a peace weaver, a woman of power and a widow with a young son. Her hand in marriage would mean alliance between two clans in time of civil war. Yet the lawspeaker refuses all suit. It is rumored that she shares her bed with a foreign merchant, a sorcerer without kin or clan. Some say he is now an adopted Tresdarnii, but two of the same clan cannot lie together! Others say he uses sorcery to ensnare the woman to his desires, as he does other women. Or perhaps he is an underhusband according to some foreign custom, or of the Esrolian rite?

One of Kierston's potential suitors engages the heroes to discover the truth about Redwheel. He wishes to know as much as possible, especially information that will expose or shame the merchant: his family background, cult, sorcery, history, and true standing. The suitor is particularly interested in the rumors of Redwheel's sexual predations (see below), and in the nature of his relationship with the Tresdarnii. If he is an adopted Far Walker, is he not subject to Far Walker custom and law?

### RICH MAN'S TREASURE

Redwheel is a powerful man who gifts generously when required, yet he has no herds of his own. Where is his treasure hidden? Rumors claim it to be buried beneath the floor of his storage byrne within the Tresdarnii lodge in Ironspike. No golden hoard will be found there, only a mysterious collection of curiously notched wooden staves.

### THE WHO WAITS

The young merchant—an Imperial Tarshite by her dress—lies dead on the Ironspike road. The heroes witness her ambush by bandits, but are unable to intervene in time to protect her. She surrendered her pack mules readily enough when pressed, but gave her life defending a plain leather satchel. Strangely, the pack contains naught but a roughly-carved wooden doll, as would be found amongst the children of Tarsh. Attempting to discover the identity of the young merchant, the heroes learn only that she has been asking after Rufelzo Redwheel, and that she has neither bought nor sold on her long journey. Close examination of the doll reveals finely notched lines carved into the wood. The cipher is obscure and profound, but proper investigation will reveal the following message: *Storm will engulf Cold Flame. The Heart is now weak. Fever in the limbs will strike it down.* What does it mean?

### ONE OF OUR AGENTS IS MISSING

Over the long years, Redwheel has heard less and less from his superiors in the Wheel of Balance. In fact, when TurEel's agents enacted their 'hostile takeover' the Blank Books on which the Wheel's undercover agents were listed were destroyed and his mentor and trainer, the Nathic philosopher Sipress the White Cerisian, was killed. Thus, the Association no longer knows about Rufelzo—and Rufelzo doesn't know what has been happening inside the Association.

Rufelzo's inner isolation and confusion have grown to a barely contained despair. Committed to honesty, his every action is a lie. Is he being tested, a continuation of his Self Voyage? Are his hidden masters still waiting for the moment to use him? Has he been abandoned or—little does he know how true this is—has he been forgotten? And if the secret sign did come, how would he act? To choose is to destroy, to betray. If the sleeper awakens, he must hurt what he loves. Is there perhaps a third way?

Perhaps if he encounters heroes linked with the Association, he will discretely try to uncover the truth. If he realizes that he has indeed been forgotten, will this anger or reassure him? On the other hand, no one can pass through a bureaucracy without leaving some kind of trail, so maybe there are those within the Association who will come to realize that there is an agent 'stranded' somewhere deep within Orlanthi territory. Whether they send rescuers—who might have trouble persuading Rufelzo to be rescued—or Doctrinaires expecting trouble, depends on who it is picking up on this vague trace.





# THRICE-BEFAVORED LARRESH

*"By the Burning Beard of Lodril, I have the Horn this Moon!"*

Great Natha is Balance, and thus She requires that beside the stern philosophies and dogmatic dialectics of the Doctrinaires, there is one such as Thrice-Befavored Larresh: a popular hero of the caprodrome, who in retirement has swapped chariot for caravan, victory for merchant venture. Though by his own admission as "Illuminated as a digijelm brothel," in sheer Immanency, Action and Liberation, Larresh knows few peers.

As Covenanter of the Long Road, Larresh's joyous tones may be heard from Darsen to Nochet, his wanderings spanning the length and breadth of Peloria and Dragon Pass. Though softened by good living, he remains a mighty presence, with still-powerful hairy arms and a proud brow. He wears his twin topknots like legendary Kostaddi heroes, oiled, scented, and crowned with an apple blossom wreath. He is a garrulous teller of tall tales: hark at how he became chief of the Udder Suckers, a Humakti clan of goat-herders that drank milk straight from the teat; or when he urinated so forcefully on the yurt of the Khan of the Sable Riders that the panicked barbarian thought the Poison Waters had come again to drown the world!

## STORY

In his youth, he was known as Ungulatus Victor; the Rampant Horn of Khorisimus whose goat-drawn chariot thrice won the Ebony and Argent Baton of the Celestine Games, and clattered over the arena steps, statues, and walls as happily as the track itself. Dedicated to Gortania, Larresh gained Hercine's Wreath and the affections of the nymphoid Nine Twins of Darjiin.

To the delight of the thronged lunes he raced upon the Moon itself, before Gerendetho called and a great wanderlust took him. Throughout his career, careful and unscrupulous betting had made Larresh rich as well as famous, and in retirement he placed his wealth On the Square, buying into the Moon Over the Waters and seeking new adventure. Now he is a wayward financial agent for the Immanent Action Liberation: the Goddess has brought him favor, and by Gortania he shall repay Her aplenty!

## AMBITIONS

Larresh appears to live life for the moment, but did not become a champion and merchant-prince through idle frivolity. Beneath his personable exterior there is a fiery core, slow to rouse but impossible to extinguish when ignited. He is a Kostaddi patriot, despising those who aid the barbarous Sable Riders in dominating his kin, and sympathetic to the oppressed everywhere. Surely the Immanent Action Liberation must look to the Heartlands first, for where is the beneficence of the Goddess in the ancient land of Gerendethelia? Alas! House Kortillion has little love for the appeasers of Sheng Seleris, and for now Larresh rages in private.

*Ideology:* "May Gortania save us from harm... but not before Gerendetho gets us into it!"

*Purpose:* To spread the prosperity of the Goddess and a little of Gortania's luck, in his own inimitable fashion.

## ABILITIES

*Keywords:* Covenanter of the Long Road 18, Famed Charioteer 1W3, Kostaddi 20, Merchant 8W.

*Magic:* Gerendethelian Common Magic 8W, Initiate of Gerendetho 3W (Exploration affinity 5W, Fighting affinity 3W, Goat affinity 10W), Novitiate of Gortania 1W2 (Charioteer affinity 10W2, Mutatus affinity 1W2).

*Main Abilities:* Bawdy Charisma 1W2, Carouse 9W, Cunning Mind 12W, Drive Chariot 5W3, Drive Hard Bargain 15W, Festive Stamina 20, Folk Ken 6W, Goat Husbandry 19, Hearty 20, Kostaddite Wrestling 16W, Play-Act the Goat 8W, Raucous Boast 16W, Smuggle Goods 5W, Tell Tall Tale 1W2, Vigorously Loined 20, Widely Traveled 17W.

*Main Personality Traits:* Daring 6W, Despise Sable Riders 1W2, Gregarious 13W, Headstrong 20, Love Kostaddi 15W2, Wily 10W.

*Flaws:* Easily Swayed by Plight of the Common Man 12W, Going to Seed 16, Impulsive 20, Venal Appetites 1W.



*Important Possessions:* Apple Blossom Wreath 9W, Ebony and Argent Baton (3 times only this may grant Larresh automatic divine aid from Gortania), Wealth 20W.

## ALLIES AND ENEMIES

*Relationship to the Immanent Action Liberation:*

Larresh is Covenanter of the Long Road, controlling its operations across Peloria and beyond, and varyingly competing and cooperating with his fellow covenanters, including TurEel (see page 74).

*Principal Followers:* On the Long Road, Larresh is typically aided by a posse of gruff-bearded and hard-hoofed Gerendethi bodyguards, loyal and well-trained warriors.

*Contacts:* Akhalamon, once champion of the Arirae Wanax and gladiatorial comrade, now a coarse, hamstrung Leveler of the Barbari. The Fist of Doctrine often aids the Long Road in its task, and the Barbari are useful to the hardy Gerendethi, who do not always take the easiest road. Larresh retains connections with the Ten Sons, a Lodrilite association of Vonlath for whom he once raced.

*Home:* Larresh keeps rustic manors (and wives) in rural Vonlath and Mirin's Cross, though he leads an itinerant life, often accompanying his caravans.

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

BEWARE THE MADNESS!

Larresh's trafficking of blacksap has not gone unnoticed. It is bad business for the Emasculators of Matkondu, the sect of castrated warrior ascetics that nurtures the intoxicating Bile Lotus. They have entered into a savage underworld war with the Immanent Action Liberation in Nochet and elsewhere—much to the consternation of those unaware of blacksap's existence, and also to the surprise of Larresh, who had not thought they would be so quick to identify their new rivals. Bile Lotus Brigands are fearsome foes, hulking warriors with long bronze beards split and curved as the arms of a rearing scorpion. Their whirling flails are rods topped with twin chains and iron orbs, and a butt-spike dripping poison.

These glazed-eyed eunuchs serve Kharana Solf Sha, the Teshnan goddess of iniquity and carnal murder; a perfumed seductress who arouses the polluted embers of Solf in all men. Her Golden-Veiled Daughters are the sensual assassins who command the brigands, more fearsome than the Ball Bandits themselves! These witches steal one's soul with their Lingering Kiss of Emptiness, and have slain a Long Road caravan-master, poor Even-Toed Gargru. A golden veil was left with his body, and his death mask was twisted in the rapturous grin of Bad Sex. These perversions must be stopped!

### BILE LOTUS BRIGAND

*Keywords:* Brigand 12W, Initiate of the Gelding Goddess 8W, Teshnan Eunuch 3W.

*Significant Abilities:* Disconcerting Grin 18, Fanatical 17W, Fierce Ululating Scream 20, Flail Fighting 14W, Handle Scorpions 19, Hide 9W, Intoxicated with Bile Lotus 8W, Mad Charge 20, Mightily Bearded 5W, Oiled 16, Pincer-like Grip 1W, Shadow Foe 11W, Strong 3W, Wily 19, Wrestling 8W.

*Magical Abilities:* Geld for the Goddess! affinity 10W (Emasculatory Trance, Incite Masculine Fear, Manacular Grip, Spaying Strike).

*Weapons and Armour:* Braided hair +1, flail of Juta Khar +5 (the poison has a potency of 10W).

### THE SECRET TRAVELER

As master caravaneers, the Long Road are a favored choice for those traveling discretely. Rumors abound of a convoy of mysterious palanquins traversing the Provinces, bound for the south. Subtle enemies of the Immanent Action Liberation and bloodthirsty Sartarite bandits alike slaver in anticipation. What is its occupant or treasure? Is it forbidden blacksap, Sage Kortillion himself, or the Iron Proxy bound incognito to review his soldiers? Or is it simply a prized stud-goat, becushioned and pampered by virginal handmaidens, on its way to Larresh's great comrade, King Angtyr of the Balkoth?

### THE GOAT DAIMONES AND DEMIGODS OF GERENDETHELIA

These children of Gerendetho are sacred in Kostaddi. They are free to wander where they will, across thresholds or fields, and their passing a sign of great fortune. Kostaddi love them as their children, garnering their horns with garlands and gold, massaging their luxuriant coats in dark beer, fragranced with the sweet mountain flowers of the Jords, and feeding them a nourishing barley porridge laced with finest Oroypsian wine, 'Senkana's Supper.'

They preside over ceremonies of initiation, when young sons shape their first spear and are Given the Horn, and daughters dance the goat-leaping *bibasis* to the refrain of corpulent Ovostan Belly Howlers. They rule over the Ruttings and Buttings of the Ten Firelit Feasts of the Caprinalia, and the Orogoric Ovation, where lads prove their Manhood, and the daughters of Senkana are gifted with the Scything Horn of threshing and Straight Horn of power for when the menfolk are away.

Their lineages are many, from the *veegu*, fighting ibex, truculent offspring of Butt-Drunk Veego, to the *duuru*: hot-hoofed and long-bearded princes much admired for their speed, and eagerly sought by the charioteering heroes of Gerendethelia. The most famous of these racers are the Scorched Earth Charioteering League of Raibanthi House Ytrior. Larresh once raced for their brown and gold colors, and as a youth quested for his six steeds among the heroic wilds. The greatest *duuru* are daimones, but even their demigod children are prized as stud-animals across Peloria and Dragon Pass.

The Sable Riders care nothing for the Three Laws and outrageously demand sacred goats in tribute—sacrifices in honor of Jaquat for their barbaric rites. Bands of otherwise frivolous, fecund folk gather in the wilds to fight a guerilla war against their oppressors, roasting sable meat in rebellious exultation. Many of them are former soldiers of the Wirrup Ridge-Runners, a Gerendethi regiment disbanded at the Satrap's insistence. Who or what is the mysterious Thirteenth Horn of Jolnu that leads them, and what is its relation to Larresh?

### DUURU (DEMIGOD)

*Typical Abilities:* Agile 5W, Butt 8W, Capricious 18, Climb Slope 11W, Dodge 4W, Scamper Fast 10W, Sense Foe 15, Strong 1W, Wily 6W.

*Magical Abilities:* Burning Hoof Celerity 18W, Heroic Hardiness 9W, Mountaintop Leap 5W.

*Weapons and Armour:* Blessed Coat +2, Caustic Urine +1, Spiraled Horns +3.



# TURILADEVNO VENETYRIES EELARIASH

*From the Palaces of Carantes to the shores of the Benaran and beyond!*

Turiladevno VenEtyries EelAriash, often shortened to just TurEel, is a lover, administrator, noble, and slaver. He leads the Moon and Sea covenant as they exploit current trading opportunities within the Empire and develop new links overseas to bring back the wealth of Glorantha for the benefit of the Immanent Action Liberation and the glory of the Goddess.

Turiladevno's noble stature is unmistakable. His flowing blond locks, striking features, and imposing presence often makes many a woman swoon. The magical nature of the selective breeding of the EelAriash clan is evident in his eyes—one dazzling green, one bright blue, both with crimson red irises—and in his muscular physique and towering stance.

## STORY

Turiladevno was born in Carantes on World Fair Day 7/27, second son of VarEel, Satrap of Oronin. His noble birth as one of the Firsts allowed Turiladevno to study arts, poetry, literature, magic, and foreign lands without the pressure of expectation placed upon the shoulders of his older brother, SorEel.

When he came of age, his father imposed upon him the administration of the satrapy, nominally to honor Etyries, but really to keep him occupied and out of trouble after an 'unfortunate incident' with the daughter of the Satrap of Karasal after the Dancing Walrus Feast. Turiladevno yearned to enter the Imperial Navy. Instead, he was occupied with bookkeeping, topographical resources studies, and petty trade negotiations. He soon learned to use this position to his own advantage, organizing his own trade deals.

When the Navy embraced the secrets of the Opening, TurEel eagerly volunteered for Tana Surene's Silk-Sailed Expedition to the East. His father was overjoyed, salivating at the prospects of treasures that his son would accrue for Oronin and clan EelAriash. He returned to great acclaim with many exotic riches.

After this, he was free to disregard his father's wishes that he return to Carantes. He took up residence in Nochet, wooed a prestigious lover, and with her help, rapidly acquired more power and wealth. He then turned his desires to a most precious cargo, slaves. With the accumulated riches from this human trade, TurEel bought the Moon and Sea Covenant from its former owner, Tig-Dhu Cherin, who subsequently left for a new life in Fonrit. Only his closest and most trusted friends know that TurEel actually drugged Tig-Dhu Cherin, and handed him over to the clutches of the foul slaver Zehava. He then launched his brutal take-over of the Wheel of Balance (see page 7).

## AMBITIONS

**Ideology:** "We are all equal in the eyes of the Goddess, it's just that some of us are more equal than others."

**Purpose:** To lead the covenant as it serves the Immanent Action Liberation and the Goddess. He also openly admits that he wishes to further the prospects of the Oronin Satrapy and his own EelAriash clan in the workings of the Empire. Secretly, he wishes to become head of the whole Moon Over the Waters League.

## ABILITIES

**Keywords:** Darseni 6L, Administrator 15L, Imperial Citizen 19, Ship's Officer 5L2, Slaver 14L.

**Magic:** Ordinate of Etyries 15L (Discovery 5L2, Travel 15L) Ordinate of Engborn the Trader 12L (Trade 5L2, Travel 15L). Novitiate of Etyries Communicator 10L. (Communication 15L).

**Main Abilities:** Assess Slaves 18L, Association Intrigue 15L2, Command Underling 1L3, Construct and Understand Charts and Maps 18L2, Cutlass Fighting 10L2, Efficient Administrator 10L2, Exert Authority 10L, Haggle 5L, Handsome 19, Inspiring Leadership 10L, Protocol 17L, Seamanship 3L2, Ship Management 5L2, Speak Tradetalk 5L2, Spot Trivial Error 19L, Strong 15L, Swim 5L2, Tall 5L, Well Educated 10L2.

**Main Personality Traits:** Adventurous 10L, Charming 15L, Deceitful 15L, Scheming 20L.

**Flaws:** Arrogant 15L.

**Important Possessions:** A substantial fleet of cogs, galleys, and riverine grain barges. In addition, he has a few powerful and distinctive items, gained from his many lovers and his overseas travels, including *Distance Makes Your Love Grow Stronger* (a Scrying Mirror gifted to him by The Red Earth Queen of Nochet; See Events in Nochet 15L); *The Twisted Blade Cutlass* (made for him by Master Onogata of Lur Nop; Shatter Opponent's Blade 19); *The Rod of Umhadram* (Short Staff +1; Inflict Pain 2L); *The Glistening Crimson Acanthus Shirt* (a very light, thin, but extremely tough magical shirt +5).

## ALLIES AND ENEMIES

**Relationship to the Immanent Action Liberation:** Owner of the Moon and Sea Covenant.

**Principal Followers:** Davavargar, a retired moonboat marine commander and TurEel's personal bodyguard; Captain Yoritasus of the *Scarlet Wave*, TurEel's merchant fleet flagship, who also looks after his villa and business interests in Nochet; Wise Daerius, the leading bureaucrat of the Moon and Sea Covenant, awaiting with baited breath to enact the wishes of the one he so admires; Dreaming Felkenna, the beautifully enticing ordinate of Merasedenya.

**Contacts:** VarEel, the Satrap of Oronin 3L2; AggaTarnils, Head of the Darseni Nest Thieves 15L; the Queen of the Red Earth Faction in Nochet 5L2; Zehava the Cruel, Captain of the *Chained Deliverer* 1L.

**Enemies:** The other three Covenant leaders in the Moon over the Waters League, his brother SorEel, and anyone from Rinliddi.

**Home:** A substantial private estate on the outskirts of Glamour and a palatial villa in the richest area of Nochet.

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

Turiladevno is working for the day when he will assume what he believes to be his rightful place as Satrap of Oronin. After his destruction of the Wheel of Balance, he has been actively undermining the Bell Haven House, the Long Road, and the Smith Hall Manufactory. The Moon and Sea Covenant has, under Turiladevno's guidance, risen in prominence within the Immanent Action Liberation and he now personally has the ear of Enteroy Ruby-Minded.

Turiladevno has secured lucrative trading concessions and specialist magics after seducing the Queen of the Red Earth Faction in Nochet, undermining the Bell Haven House. He has circuitously hired barbarian bandits to attack Long Road caravans, then lobbied to allow Moon and Sea caravans to hire more guards, which became a safer and more reliable (and hence profitable) way of transporting goods from Nochet to the Empire. TurEel is especially pleased with the way he managed to foment an underworld war between the Long Road and the Emasculators of Matkondu, although he is worried about the consequences if the hot-headed Larresh (see page 72) discovers who tipped off the Bile Lotus Bandits to his operations.

He is extremely jealous of his older brother, whom he sees as a spoilt wastrel. Turiladevno was glad when SorEel was posted to distant Pavis, but not surprised when he made a complete mess of his governorship. Things got even worse when SorEel returned to the heartlands. He was somehow allowed to sit in the Senate and VarEel continues to dote over him. Although he despises him, Turiladevno is not averse to using SorEel's position, contacts, and privileges to build his own position within the constellation of the Red Emperor.

TurEel finds loyal and admiring support in AggaTarnils, head of the Darseni Nest Thieves. If he or his agents need help in Esrolia, TurEel can call upon his 'royal' lover, the Queen of the Red Earth Faction. When seeking new or unusual cargoes of slaves or opening slave trading in new overseas arenas, Turiladevno can always call on the zealous aid of Zehava the Cruel, the infamous Fonritan slaver. TurEel has close contacts with the Red Admiral and many of his fleet captains, as well as contacts in the Senate to whom he has sold many erotic and exotic slaves over the past few years.

### STORY SEEDS

- “ **The heroes are sent to Dragon Pass** to hire bandits and co-ordinate attacks against the trade caravans of the Long Road. Perhaps they get caught up in the events of Kallyr's Rebellion and end up being hunted by Lunar forces, unable to seek succor from hostile locals?
- “ **The heroes are dispatched to Nochet** after a report of unusual activity in the city. Before long, they become embroiled in the disputes between the warring Esrolian earth factions and have to fight to protect TurEel's lover.
- “ **Some loyal and brave heroes are needed** to smuggle blacksap from Nochet back to Glamour without the knowledge of the authorities or the Smith Hall Manufactory. The heroes are told they are working for the Long Road, but TurEel is actually trying to prove that the Moon and Sea could handle the trade more efficiently and quietly.

- “ **Rumors abound** that the Bell Haven House is sending explorers on a trade mission to Balazar. TurEel is determined to send his own advocates, discover what his rivals are up to, and secure any trade deals for the Moon and Sea Covenant.
- “ **The time has come** to eliminate TurEel's rival covenant leaders so that he may acquire the sole rights to the Moon Over the Waters League. The heroes are assigned to take care of this delicate matter without escalating it into a Dart Competition.
- “ **VarEel lies gravely ill** in Carantes, close to death. Perhaps this is the time to remind those in power that SorEel should be given another chance for a distant posting, perhaps in Dragon Pass? Then TurEel can usurp the Satrapy of Oronin. Or perhaps the heroes have to prevent the agents of TurEel from achieving these ends and making sure the inheritance goes smoothly?
- “ **The heroes are seconded** to a special trade mission to Pamaltela. TurEel is trusting them to bring back trade deals and riches beyond his wildest dreams. The heroes then take a long sea journey to the south before being exposed to the exotic realm of Fonrit.



# YSGRIN THE SOUTHERNER

*"Never seen one of these before, eh? Want to buy one?"*

Who is to say the Immanent Action Liberation will not embrace barbarians, foreigners, and others not blessed by birth under Rufelza's ruddy smile? So long as they are useful.

Soldiers, spies, and merchants all serve the Immanent Action Liberation's long-term agenda. Ysgrin's knowledge of the lands beyond the Empire has allowed the League to extend its operations far beyond Dragon Pass to the forests and hills of Maniria beyond. In exchange, this exiled Trader Prince has become far more wealthy and influential than he ever dared hope.

Short and stocky, Ysgrin remains paunchy despite his active life. His attempts to curry favour are to little avail, as the lords of the Rich Lands know him to be a mere foreigner, so he spends more time dealing with the more open-minded Lunar and Pelandan officials. He frequently wears a mixture of local garb and some outlandish attire, such as a properly draped Imperial toga with a high felt hat. He will exploit those who underestimate him as a result mercilessly.

## STORY

Ysgrin remains a foreigner. Coming from distant and exotic Wenelia, "The Southerner" has made himself a home traveling across the Rich Land. Born to one of the Trader Prince Houses, he expected to grow into wealth and power. Unfortunately, Ysgrin of House Termar had a taste for other men's wives, something that resulted in his being discovered in the bed of one of the warlord Graymane's. His own House exiled him lest the enraged warlord pull their castle down around their ears. He fled Maniria with a price on his head, and savages howling to collect a handful of mere cattle for his precious hide.

## AMBITIONS

*Ideology:* Nothing is ever free. How much do you want to owe?

*Purpose:* To get it *all* back—and more!

The burden of exile weighs heavy. He craves the respect and authority due all Trader Princes and the contempt the Dara Happans and Carmanians show for his foreign ways fills him with quiet rage. In retaliation, he extracts every favor and silver piece for his services that he can. No matter how often he tells himself "never again," Ysgrin still cannot resist the lure of a pretty wife neglected by her husband. Such habits are dangerous among the Dara Happans. He dares not go to Jillaro or Raibanth, where powerful men ache to see him flayed alive.

Despite these minor setbacks, Ysgrin remains ever-hopeful of a return home to reclaim his heritage. Until then, there are new lands to visit, shining cities to see, and new deals to broker. Each day brings new opportunities and new faces. Far from home, he still exemplifies the way of his patron, Saint Caselain the Traveler.

## ABILITIES

*Keywords:* Wenelian Trader Prince Noble 8W, Church of Ashara 18.

*Magic:* Orderly of Saint Caselain the Traveler 4W (Formulary - *Caselain's Travelogue (Being an account of My Perilous Journey to the East)*, Scripture - *Book of Ashara with commentary and marginalia by Sanuel Caselain*).

*Main Abilities:* Casual Authority 6W2, Duel with Rapier 3W2, Evaluate Manirian Goods 13W2, Know Foreign Customs 18W, Mocking Smile 8W, Negotiate 11W2, Political Infighting 6W2, Seduce Highborn Women 17W, See Opportunity 13W, Smooth Talker 13W2, Traveler's Tales 11W2, Walk and Grumble Tirelessly 13W.

*Main Personality Traits:* Bitter 2W, Hopeful 4W, Horizon Fever 6W, Lusty 11W, Tolerant 1W2.

*Flaws:* Curse of Exile 7W2, Graymane's Enmity 2W, Hunted by Cuckolded Husbands 15W.

*Important Possessions:* House Termar Sigil (the real one!) 8W, Numerous Fascinating Gewgaws And Knickknacks 17W, Something You Want 19W.

## ALLIES AND ENEMIES

*Relationship to the Immanent Action Liberation:* Ysgrin has worked with several branches of the Association. He hopes to parlay this into assistance and allies for his return home. His knowledge allowed the Bright Line Outreach to infiltrate missionaries far beyond the borders of the Lunar Provinces. The Moon Over Waters established several trading outposts among the Western Barbarians with his assistance. It was through him that the League was able to outbid the Vanchite Trading Company and secure the Truffle Monopoly from the Provincial Overseer.

*Principal Followers:* A small band of loyal retainers and friends accompanied Ysgrin when he fled: Kasgrin Thrice-Warded of Kaxtorplose, a taciturn liturgist; the capable and canny Jakata Half-Blue, who runs Ysgrin's caravan with whip and faith in Saint Gilles; and Grim Jhak, both confidant and bodyguard, exiled from Esrolia for a dueling murder.

*Contacts:* Ysgrin has innumerable casual acquaintances throughout the Empire and Maniria, but few are allies, and he must trade favor for favor.

*Enemies:* Graymane is a distant foe. However, Ysgrin has managed to irritate more than a few Imperial merchants and bureaucrats with his schemes and romances, notably Etrigius Savantaras. Cuckolded by the trader some years ago, he has good reason to hate the "polluted foreigner" who seems to come and go from Good Shore with impunity. If this bureaucrat could somehow sever the merchant from the protection of the Immanent Action Liberation, he



could revenge himself at last. As the head of the city's Excusers and Scrutineers Guild, he is sure he can find evidence, even if he has to manufacture it himself!

*Home:* Ysgrin maintains several modest residences throughout the Empire, but his true home is afoot, walking towards the beckoning horizon and the next town.

## NARRATOR'S NOTES

Ysgrin can be found almost anywhere in the Empire or the surrounding lands, always on the prowl for a new opportunity or a pretty wife. Story opportunities include:

- ✦ **More than a few nobles** want this outrageous foreigner hunted down and disposed of. However, he has powerful protectors and allies, too. Fortunately, he frequently travels between cities, and they will pay well to those willing to hunt him down.
- ✦ **Once again, Ysgrin's smile** has gotten him into trouble. Currently holed up in the local sewers, he will pay handsomely if the heroes can smuggle him out of the city—with something the heroes *need*. If they can get him past the thugs, bounty hunters, thief-takers, and hunting beasts that the Shining Raptor of Intransigent Glory has set upon Ysgrin's trail, they must still escape the Hungry Shadow spirits that the Rinliddi noble has unleashed as well.
- ✦ **Ysgrin is always in need of help**, long-term or short. When he plans an expedition, he offers top wages for those who know the territory. He ponders an expedition to Talastar and possibly over the Mislari mountains to Ralios and Safelester beyond. What prizes and treasures might the heroes gain if they travel with him?
- ✦ **Any heroes contemplating a trip** to savage Wenelia would do well to consult his advice. While he is somewhat biased where Graymane is concerned, he knows much of the workings of the Trader Prince Houses and the barbarian tribes they rule. With his help, explorers and missionaries might succeed where others have failed. Of course, he only wants a few small favors in return...

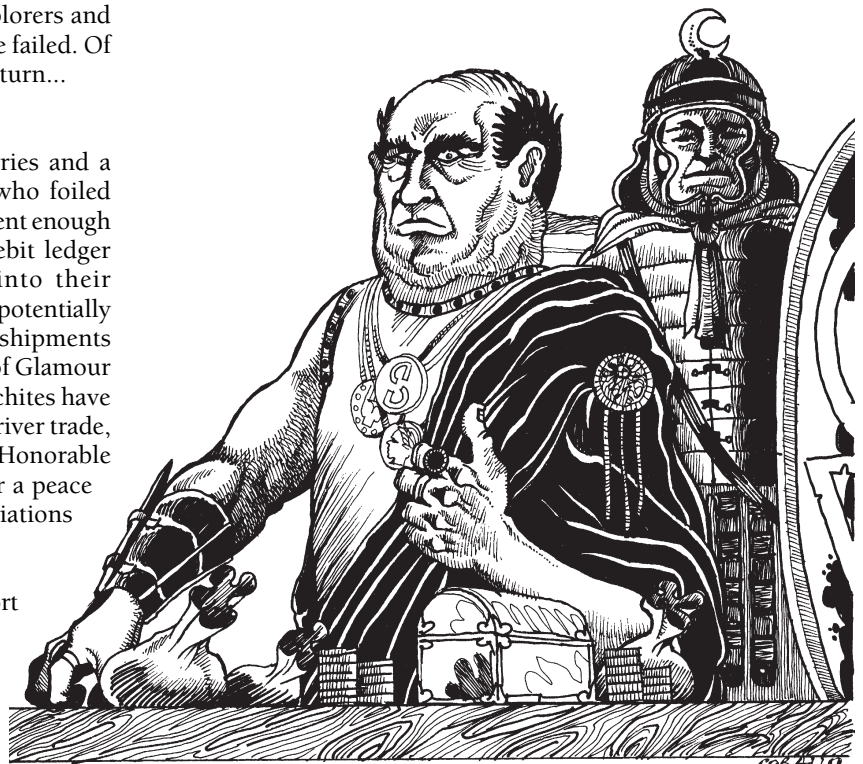
### "BUSINESS IS BUSINESS"

The Vanchite Trading Company has long memories and a famous lack of humor when it comes to those who foiled their schemes. Ysgrin has not yet become inconvenient enough to them to merit a visit from their notorious "debit ledger accountants" but he knows not to venture into their heartlands. However, Ysgrin has an inside line on a potentially lucrative commercial opportunity: trading grain shipments from the Provinces intended for the hungry mobs of Glamour and Raibanth. Ysgrin quickly realized that the Vanchites have a virtual stranglehold on many aspects of the Oslir river trade, including the Bargees Benevolent League and the Honorable Union of Ropers and Tuggers. He needs to broker a peace with the Vanchites, but dare not handle the negotiations directly. He is looking for some representatives.

- ✦ First, they will have to travel to the Vanchite port city of Penkrathos to establish contact with Envito, the shadowy Vanchite "great-nuncle" dominating much of the Oslir trade. Envito is officially "retired for reasons of ill health"

and arranging an audience with him will require political skill, substantial gifts or overt threats. If the heroes plan to get away with threatening the Company on its home turf, they had better be extraordinarily tough or lucky.

- ✦ Envito, a spry and wily man who rules the city's legal and illegal businesses alike with a kind word and a rod of iron, will accept that "business is business." However, the heroes will then have to strike a good deal with criminal entrepreneurs who themselves know a thing or two about making offers that can't be refused.
- ✦ Envito is asking for more than Ysgrin has authorized the heroes to offer, but makes complex counter-proposals involving commodity swaps, debt write-offs, and similar arcane commercial matters. They must return to Ysgrin to seek new instructions.
- ✦ He is off traveling, so the heroes will have to track him down. Depending on whether or not the narrator wants to develop this element, this could be resolved in a brief description or several sessions play. It is also an opportunity to expose the heroes to new places.
- ✦ The heroes are being surreptitiously followed by one of Envito's more ambitious lieutenants, Genovitus. His plan is to use them to locate Ysgrin and kill him, thus demonstrating his own skill while discrediting Envito's willingness to negotiate. He hopes this will help sway the younger, fiery Vanchites to his cause and allow him to make Envito's retirement real and permanent. The heroes may notice them on the way, or else the scene may be set for a fight to protect Ysgrin when the ambush is sprung.
- ✦ The Vanchites will be a tough challenge, not least given their practical habit of collecting skills, magics, and ideas from wherever they find them. However, if victorious—should they realize what has happened—the heroes can use the potential embarrassment to leverage Envito to accept a more reasonable deal. They may even get the sense that the sly "great-nuncle" may even have engineered the situation to rid himself of a troubling "nephew."



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# Champions of the Reaching Moon

## Lunar Herobands, Heroes, and Anti-heroes

The Lunar Empire is a vibrant and dynamic empire of numerous different peoples, leagues, associations and gatherings, and its heroes are shaped by their social interactions, from the intrigue and debauchery of Moonson's Court to the day-to-day jokes and negotiations of the bazaar.

This book is built around the Immanent Action Liberation, a mighty political alliance committed to spreading the Lunar Way abroad and strengthening its political role and religious voice at home. The leagues and organizations within this alliance range from conspiratorial cabals of schemers to rough-edged military units, from canny merchants to open-handed missionaries. Thirteen of these organizations are detailed here, including the sword-dancing Cossacks of the Varzum Paragons, the dog-soldiers of the Turzah Hounders and the Lorelords of Ershkintu, with their dwarf-forged underground scoutship. Each is fully detailed, and comes with its own story seeds, adventure outlines and background information to allow it to be integrated into games set anywhere in Glorantha.

The book also contains fourteen narrator-characters working for, with or sometimes against the Association. They range from an honorable judge whose investigations may uncover the Association's darkest secret, to a three-quarters mad duck assassin and a trading magnate with murderous ambitions. Each is fully detailed and again twinned with narrator's advice and information to maximize their use to any game.

These organizations and individuals can be allies, enemies or patrons of the player-heroes. They also each illustrate something about the complexity of Imperial life and be used as they are or simply for inspiration as part of the backdrop for games in the Empire.

**Champions of the Reaching Moon** is intended for both players and narrators.

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