

VOLUME I

# IMPERIAL LUNAR HANDBOOK

THE LUNAR EMPIRE

By Mark Galeotti, Martin Laurie, and Wesley Quadros  
Cover art by Stefano Gaudiano

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HEROQUEST







# HEROQUEST



## IMPERIAL LUNAR HANDBOOK

### Volume 1: The Lunar Empire

By Mark Galeotti, Martin Laurie, and Wesley Quadros.

Based on the works and ideas of Greg Stafford.

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Martin Laurie dedicates this book to his father, Malcolm Laurie, gone but never forgotten.



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***Sedenya delights in the opportunity  
to teach the barbarians the glories of the Empire.  
She blesses who reads this.***

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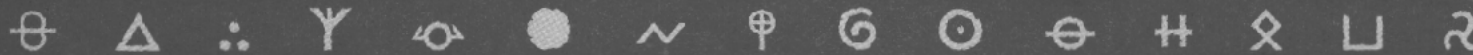
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# WE ARE ALL US

**P**eloria has been a cradle of empire since before the dawn of Time. About 400 years ago the cradle became a queen-sized bed when Sedenya, the Lunar Goddess, was reborn in the body of a human girl. She attained immortality, brought down great powers, and reshaped the ancient and exclusive Dara Happan Empire into a new and inclusive one.

Sedenya is a great goddess, uniquely born within Time, who united within Herself both Cosmos and Chaos. The old gods tried to destroy Her, but were defeated. She clothed Herself in a great piece of earth, leaving the hole called the Crater, and ascended into the heavens as the Red Moon. She left an Empire ruled by Her reincarnating son Take-negi, the Red Emperor.

The Lunar Empire is a study in contradictions. It is Many, yet One. It is new, yet founded on the ancient Dara Happan Empire, with a history stretching back before the dawn of time. A common philosophy unites a wide range of peoples and races: 'We Are All Us.' It believes in peaceful assimilation, and yet has the most powerful, advanced army in Glorantha. It accepts Chaos as a part of existence, but fiercely opposes its destructive aspects.

Just as the Moon is cyclical, so too the Empire. It has suffered terrible defeats but ultimately survived and expanded. Now it has come to Dragon Pass, barbarian land of the rebellious storm god Orlanatus, whose worshippers call him Orlanth. Since the Dawn Age the Empire has been periodically overrun by the Orlanthi, but this time they will be tamed. It is the Hero Wars.

## What is the Imperial Lunar Handbook?

This is the first book of the *Imperial Lunar Handbook* series, which explores the rich and complex lands and peoples of the Empire. It introduces the diverse homelands

of the Empire that future books will explore. Volume 2 details the Lunar religion, including magic keywords for many cults, practices, saintly orders, and wizardry schools of the Lunar Way.

### Homelands

This book contains seven complete homelands from across the Empire: Dara Happa, Rinliddi, Pelanda, Carmania, Darjiin, Sylila, and the Lunar Provinces. Each follows the format used in *HeroQuest*, and provides All You Need to Know to begin playing a hero from that culture, including a homeland keyword, sample abilities for the common magic keyword, and a magic keyword from that culture's specialized religion. Future volumes will expand on these home lands. For example, volume 3 details

the land of Dara Happa, with more information on the culture, history, and religion of that ancient Empire.

### Common Magic

Common magic is the basic form of magic, as detailed in *HeroQuest*. As with other keywords, the hero uses each common magic ability at the keyword rating plus any improvement bought with hero points. Unlike other magic, however, he generally cannot use a common magic ability on its own, only to augment another ability.

During character creation, when the player selects the five common magic talents, feats, charms, and spells his hero knows, he is not limited to those listed in the common magic religions in his keyword. Most heroes have several sources of common magic. For example, a Dara Happa might have several People Talents, a feat and a spell learned from his league, and several charms from Oria and Lodril, the Great Parents. Players can also select talents from the basic list in the "Heroes" chapter of *HeroQuest*, and can specify additional common magic abilities during character creation. All abilities selected are part of his common magic keyword. If the Dara Happa traveled to Oronin and learned a talent from the Mountaintop Magics (see page 38), this would also become part of the keyword.

## *This Book is All You Need to Know*

to begin playing a hero from one of  
seven cultures from across the Empire,  
including a homeland keyword, sample  
abilities for the common magic keyword,  
and a magic keyword from the culture's  
dominant specialized religion.









## All Her Children

*What follows is part of the introduction from 'A Discourse on Ineffable Variety in the Empire of the Moon,' by Cilor Negial, a sage of Irippi Ontor from Dyth in Karasal. By turns racy, waspish, and irreverent, it encapsulates the perspectives and prejudices of an educated Lunar who believes that the people of his Empire should outgrow their old ways. His views also appear elsewhere in this book, to provide entertainment if not education.*

Our Glorious Empire comprises more than seven times seven cultures and peoples. The heart of the Empire is, of course, Glamour. Never was a city more appropriately named, for its mystique, its beauty and, so an unkind soul would say, its ability to hide its flaws from the easily beguiled. Glamour is a city of soaring bastions, glittering temples, and extraordinary sights, from the Monstrous Coliseum where gladiators fight bizarre Chaos beasts (the abusive against the abhorrent), to the silver Bridge of Dreams that arches to Moongate at the lip of the holy Crater. I will even accept the guides' assurances that the sprawling workers' slums are shady and full of character, rather than dark, dirty, and dangerous. But then, suffused as the whole Silver Shadow satrapy is by the glow of Rufelza directly overhead, where dreams come alive, so too must nightmares.

The Dara Happans of the Oslir River Valley believe themselves the truest servants of the Empire. With so many thousands of years of unthinking obedience to unbending rules, I suppose these servants of Yelm, the Sun God feel entitled. Still, there is more to life than being able to recite one's ancestors to ten generations. Traditions are everything here: men take precedence over women, and everyone knows their place.

The Pelorians, who also live along the Oslir, are a simpler and earthier folk, farmers rather than city-dwellers. They love life with a simple gusto. A Pelorian feast-day is a great experience, indeed, but beware their practical japes. Once revelers filled my wine goblet with the ink of the blue river-squid, and I was passing green water for a week.

But I could not hold it against them, for they are as innocent and thoughtless as children, unlike the Darjiini. They worship spirits, not gods, and their debauched celebrations have an edge of darkness and danger to them. They may seem easy-going,

but I would not want to stray too far from the roads and find myself unwittingly blundering into one of their swamp-island fetish-shrines.

The Carmanians, by contrast, are altogether more serious folk. The descendants of invaders from the West, they are part of the Empire but still distinct. Their lordly karmanoi caste (with their wizards) rule them. If I dared, I might suggest that they are a proud and dangerous people, prickly of their honor. But of course I don't.

The Pelandans who live under and to the east of the Carmanians are a fine and friendly folk: artists and dreamers, believers in balance in all things. No wonder the Carmanians lord over them and everyone else patronizes them.

To the east, first you come to the Rinliddi, who worship a whole flock of bird gods with entertainingly grand names, and beyond them you begin to reach the new settler lands of Oraya. It is inspiring to see good Lunar folk turning the wilds into a civilized land. But the rigors of colonization and the constant threat of the horse barbarians of Pent combine to make them a dour and simple folk, strong of heart, arm, and faith, but a little light in education and manners. But it will come, it will come.

South again to Kostaddi, humble peasants labor to keep their arrogant masters, the Sable Rider barbarians of the Hungry Plateau in barbarous leisure. South, further south, half-tamed Sylila, where the locals still wear their trousers under their togas and then the Provinces. Civilization is coming to the Provinces, with its cities, roads, and subtle hypocrisies. Sadly, bath houses come further down the list of priorities, but while upwind it is possible to be impressed by the naïve fervor of their newfound devotion to Sedenya.

### *The Lunar Credo*

I believe in the Red Goddess, Mistress of Life and Death,  
Who descended naked into the darkness,  
Was slain by the Shadow Guardian,  
And resurrected by the secrets of bright Spider Mother.  
She conquered the Bear to rekindle the sky.  
She traversed the land of the dead and overcame the Shadow Guardians,  
And brings us the freedom of our Seventh Soul.  
She is the Mirror and She is the Mask.  
She is the Substance and the Passion.  
Amen.



# A Timeline of the Lunar Empire

*It was 1220 and Peloria was weeping. Brutal Carmanian overlords from the west had enslaved her people and chained the great cities of Dara Happa. Savage nomads to the east raided and plundered. The land was stalked by spies and sell-swords, hunger and hate. But there were whispers in the night, whispers of hope. Whispers that a new goddess would be born to free Her people and bring peace, plenty, and purpose to all Glorantha. Whispers of opportunity, of a new way, in which even the meanest farmer or soldier could rise to the heavens. And in the city of Torang, seven conspirators began the mighty ritual that would bring just such a goddess to Glorantha. It was the dawn of a new age.*

This is a simple outline of the Empire's history since the birth of the Goddess. Dates are given both in Lunar notation and in the widely used Solar reckoning, which counts the number of years since the Dawn.

## The Zero Wane: the Birth Wane

1220 to 1247 S.T.

Birth of the Red Goddess	0/0 (1220)
First Victory Battle; Battle of Eleiu Hararn	0/6 (1226)
(First) Battle of Chaos: Goddess returns riding the Crimson Bat	0/12 (1232)
Covert "Assassins' War" between Lunars and Carmanians	0/13 (1233) to 0/17 (1237)
Tripolis liberated	0/15 (1235)
Four Arrows of Light Battle: Carmanians defeated	0/17 (1237)
Fall of Elz Ast	0/18 (1238)
Goddess defeats Old Gods at the Battle of Castle Blue	0/25 (1245)
Apotheosis of the Goddess, Ascension into the Sky	0/27 (1247)

## The First Wane: Verithurusa's Wane

1248 to 1301 S.T.

Start of the Blood Kings War against the Carmanians again	1/3 (1250)
Jannisor the Rebel wounds the Red Emperor	1/26 (1273)
Jannisor leads assault on Glamour	1/28 (1275)
Twin Stars defeat the rebels	
Skyburn and Elf Hate Won	1/32 (1279)
Alkoth surrenders: Jannisor's Rebellion finally ends	1/38 (1285)
Moonburn destroys Aldryam: Forest of Rist	1/49 (1296)

## The Second Wane: Lesilla's Wane

1302 to 1355 S.T.

End of the Blood Kings War	2/12 (1313)
Bindle and allies invade Empire;	2/25 (1326)
Sylila adopted into Lunar Empire	
Sacrifice of the Council of Queens; coast of Bindle razed	2/31 (1332)
Aronius Jaranthir conquers the Char-Un	2/34 (1335)
Doom of Illisi, Gifts of the Emperor	2/41 (1342)
Conquering Daughter's Campaign: Mirin's Cross seized	2/46 (1347)

## The Third Wane: Gerra's Wane

1356 to 1409 S.T.

Death of Hwarin Dalthippa, the Conquering Daughter	3/3 (1358)
Battle of Falling Hills: Imperial expansion southwards halted	3/7 (1362)
Sheng Seleris leads invasion of the Empire;	3/20 (1375)
First Battle at Yuthuppa	
Fronelan settlements founded	3/29 (1384)
Siege of Glamour: barbarians driven back	3/34 (1389)
Emperor tricks Sheng Seleris into killing him	3/35 (1390)
Yara Aranis defeats Sheng Seleris	3/50 (1405)
Yara Aranis named Goddess of the Reaching Moon	3/54 (1409)

## The Fourth Wane: Rashorana's Wane

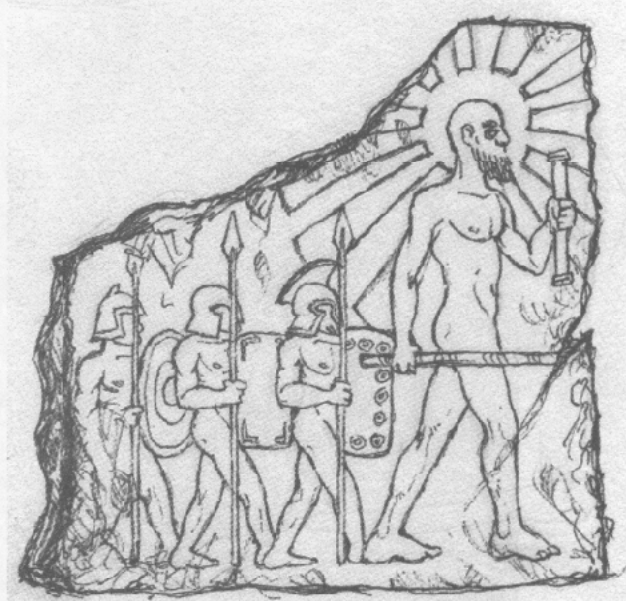
1410 to 1463 S.T.

Sheng Seleris murders the Emperor	4/6 (1419)
Sylila liberates Alkoth	4/14 (1423)
Sheng Seleris steals Kostaddi	4/34 (1443)
The Red Emperor disappears	4/35 (1444)
HonEel born in Doblian	4/36 (1445)
Sable People slaughtered by Sheng Seleris	4/37 (1446)
Red Emperor slain by Mad Sultanate;	4/40 (1449)
Sheng Seleris plunders the Moon	
Sheng Seleris and the Red Emperor meet at Kitor,	4/51 (1460)
Sheng Seleris defeated	
Reign of Takenegi Magnificus,	4/51 (1460) to 5/43 (1506)
the first Mask	
Nomads slaughtered at Yuthuppa	4/54 (1463)

## What is a Wane?

The Goddess is the origin of cycles. Her power waxes and wanes both weekly and on longer cycles. Our historians and chronomancers know that her power takes 54 years to move through a cycle. Each of these cycles is a Wane with Lunar power at its lowest ebb in the middle of the Wane and peaking at the ends. Zero Wane was the time of Living Sedenya, when the Goddess walked the earth. It began in the middle, in the darkest days of oppression, and continued to the Goddess' apotheosis in 0/27 (1247 S.T.).

Lunar years are counted by the Wane and the year within it. Thus, 0/1 is the first full year of the Zero Wane (1221 in Orlanthi Solar Time reckoning, 112,221 in Dara Happa years). The current year is 7/51 (1622 to the barbarians and 112,622 to the Dara Happans).



### The Fifth Wane: Orogeria's Wane

1464 to 1517 S.T.

Nomads defeated, HonEel delivers Doblian to Emperor	5/1 (1464)
HonEel returns with maize	5/7 (1470)
First settlers in Oraya	5/17 (1480)
Blessing of Torang, defeat of Ernalda	5/22 (1485)
Birth of the Yelm Children	5/23 (1486)
HonEel in Tarsh: performs Whole Dance of Spring, marries king of Tarsh	5/27 (1490)
Syndics' Ban clamped on Fronela	5/37 (1500)
Nomad invasion of Oraya	5/40 (1503)
Nights of Horror: nomads routed, but Takenegi and HonEel die	5/43 (1506)
Reign of Takenegi Artifex	3/43 (1506) to 6/5 (1522)

### The Sixth Wane: Natha's Wane

1518 to 1571 S.T.

Reign of Takenegi Voracius	6/5 (1522) to 6/12 (1529)
Reign of Takenegi Venerabilis	6/12 (1529) to 6/29 (1546)
Lunar Tarsh kings driven out by Palashee Longaxe	6/21 (1538)
Reign of Takenegi Robustus	6/30 (1547) to 6/41 (1558)
Phargentes retakes Throne of Tarsh	6/38 (1555)
Reign of Takenegi Celestinus	6/41 (1558) to 7/3 (1574)

### The Seventh Wane: Zaytenera's Wane

1572 to 1625 S.T.

Reign of Takenegi Militaris	7/3 (1574) to 7/15 (1586)
Reign of Takenegi Reclusus	7/15 (1586) to 7/28 (1599)
Talastar bought	7/19 (1590)
Fronela 'Internal Thaw' begins	7/20 (1591)
Reign of Takenegi Ignifer	7/28 (1599) to 7/36 (1607)
Boldhome sacked	7/31 (1602)
Building Wall Battle	7/34 (1605)
Reign of Takenegi Argenteus begins	7/36 (1607)
Pavis conquered	7/39 (1610)
Starbrow's Rebellion in Dragon Pass crushed	7/42 (1613)
Fall of Whitewall to Tatius the Bright;	7/50 (1621)
Extra Full Moon Year	

### The Masks of the Emperor

It is the custom and cheer for the Emperor to change his form to suit the needs of the time and place. This practice began after his first death at the hands of Sheng Seleris. Since then, whenever the Emperor needs to, for the good of the Empire, he allows himself to die. He is then reborn, once more undergoes the Ten Tests of Empire, and returns.

After each return, however, the Emperor has a different appearance and personality. This has misled some people to believe that there has been more than one Emperor since then. Yet none of us who truly know are fooled by outsiders, and we can easily see that the Soul of Takenegi lives on.

**Takenegi** (1/3-3/35, 3/36-4/6, 4/19-4/40), first and truest.

**Magnificus** (4/51-5/43), who destroyed Sheng Seleris and was famous for his beard.

**Artifex** (5/43-6/5), who hunted the Seven Worlds for the souls of loyal subjects.

**Voracius** (6/5-6/12), who loved to eat and drink and so began the Infinite Party of Glamour.

**Venerabilis** (6/12-6/29), who countered the Dragonewts' Dream.

**Robustus** (6/30-6/41), whom the common folk loved and the rich feared.

**Celestinus** (6/41-7/3), who sought order and competition.

**Militaris** (7/3-7/15), who fought wars and fathered daughters.

**Reclusus** (7/15-7/28), who created the Proxies to give him time to study.

**Ignifer** (7/28-7/36), who brought the bureaucracy to heel.

**Argenteus** (7/36-present), who works night and day to bring joy and pleasure.

## Heroes and Other Exceptions

*Cilor Negial on JarEel: "I only wish."*

'We are All Us,' but we are not necessarily all equal. With the exception of the populist demagogues of Rufelza, Lunars do not believe in absolute equality. On the one hand, there are the multitude of slaves whose work substitutes for the traditional rights to peasant labor. They are often treated with respect, provided with small stipends and the hope of manumission, but they are nonetheless slaves. In Kostaddi, for example, any slave not clearly branded and hobbled can be claimed by the first Sable Rider to come across him or her.

At the other end of the scale are the grandees of the Empire, the satraps, the nobles, the imperial heroes. What is important to stress is that, while rank and esteem is often solely or primarily dependent on birth, the Lunar philosophy has a strong egalitarian and meritocratic streak. In Dara Happa, for example, women are expected to defer in all ways to men, so to many the Lunar Way represents freedom and independence for women. Of course, this also means the freedom to pay their own taxes, but at least in this they are the equal of their male counterparts. Similarly, while the sons and daughters of powerful families might get a head start in life, the Imperial government rewards faith and success (and, by ex-

tension, has little tolerance for failure). Thus, 'Beat-Pot' Aelwrin, high priest of the Moonsword Cult, was once a kitchen slave; and Orkeho Munificus, now the High Inspector responsible for taxing all river traffic along the Oslir, was originally a run-away farmhand from Bindle.

The Empire actively seeks to win over, support and promote heroes and hero bands. It is happy to accept outsiders who are prepared to embrace the Lunar Way. It also operates cross-generational programs to breed heroes and rewrite myths. JarEel the Razoress, Fourth Inspiration of Moonson, is the outcome of such a project. Famously described as "friendly and happy, clever and beautiful, holy and deadly," she embodies the Empire's hopes of developing heroes able not just to lead armies but to win by debate and example.

However, it is not just the central authorities who seek heroes and hero bands. The custom of waging covert and not-so-covert wars between rival great families and officials (known as Dart Competitions) ensures a ready demand, as does the growing fashion for raising or supporting groups that will fight the Empire's foes or spread the Lunar message. In every sense, the Empire is preparing for the Hero Wars.

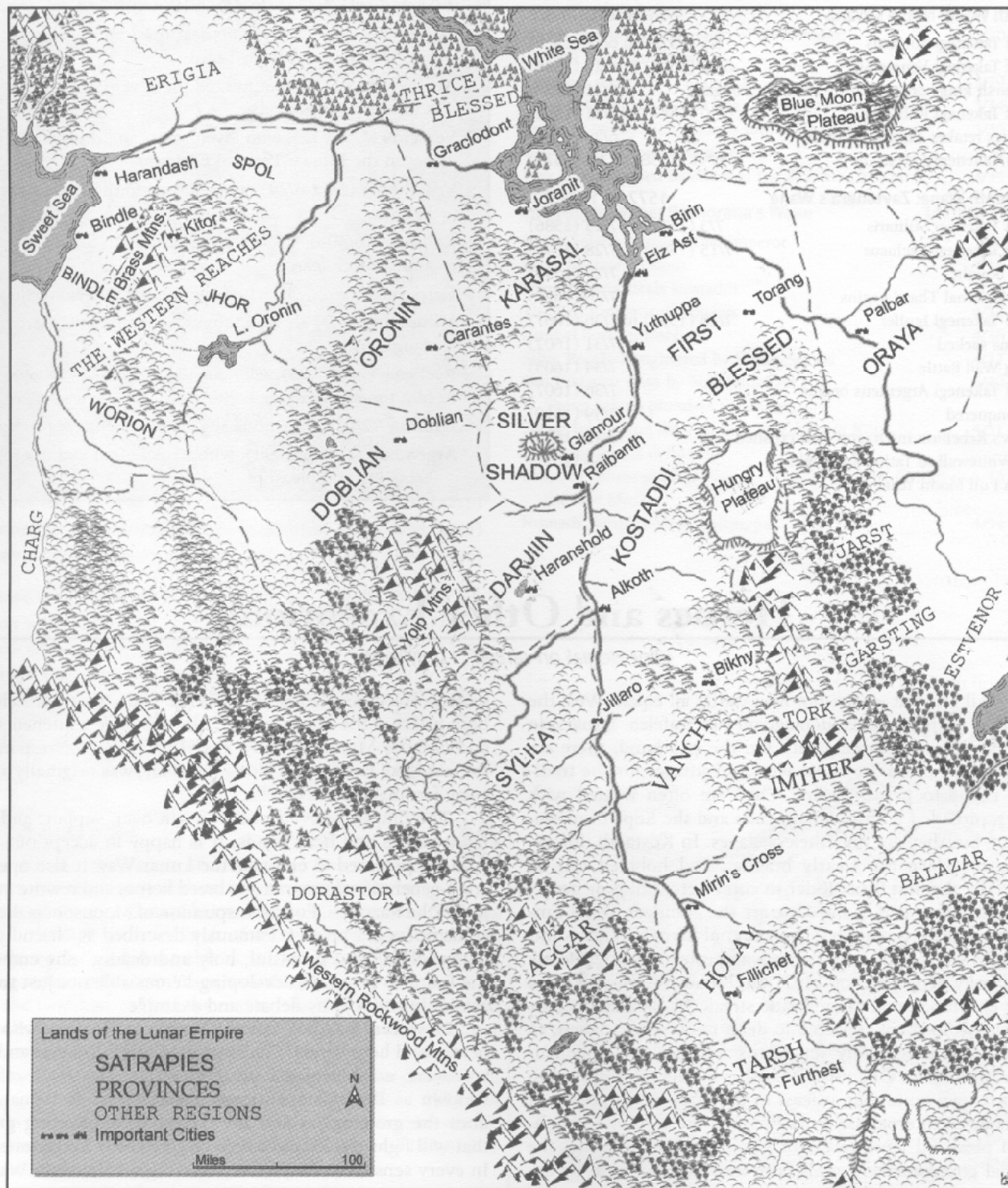


# She Guides Us, He Rules Us

The Lunar Empire is in many ways a continuation of the Solar Dara Happan Empire, but it is much more than just this. In particular, although many things may appear the same—tax collectors are just as rapacious, the local aristocrat can be just as obnoxious, and a soldier's life has always been a soldier's life—the philosophy underlying it is quite different. Whereas the Solar approach is about tradition, obedience, and unity, the Lunar Way is one of progress, change, growth, and embracing differences. The mission of the Goddess is, after all, to unify

and heal the world. She is unique, a goddess of contradictions: immortal yet reborn within Time, born of flesh yet become a deity, a power both of the ordered continuum of nature and also of entropy, the 'outside' force some call Chaos.

Many find it difficult to understand how a credo of tolerance and inclusion can also drive brutal conquest. How can a Goddess committed to creating a new order of peace and plenty sanction the use of the Crimson Bat, an immense Chaos horror that must be fed the souls of captives to survive? Why does



## The Red Moon

The Red Moon, Rufelza, is at once the material form of the Goddess, the source of much Lunar power, and a place, inhabited by a rich mix of gods, heroes, spirits, essences, and daimones. From below, the Moon is visible as an orb whose surface color changes from red to black to red again in a weekly cycle. The red is visible day and night, although viewers can only identify the black half at night by the stars and planets it obscures. The available power on which a worshipper can draw is determined by the perceived phase of the Moon, which varies depending on where he is in Glorantha.

The surface of the Moon itself is a magical realm of palaces and libraries, seas of dreams and mountains of faith. Mortal vision sees a resemblance to a face, with the 'eyes' being the Ruby City and the Self Plateau, and the mighty Os Mountains representing the mouth. Beyond this is the faint gleam of the energy net that cross-crosses the Moon with canals of pulsing energy. Initiates of the Lunar Way see much more, perhaps even Her benevolent and beauteous face looking down, right at them! There are those who say that, as befits the Lunar Way, the Dark Side turned from us is a land of entropy and nightmare. Only truly mighty heroquesters and those blessed by the Goddess know for certain.



Takenegi permit human slavery, then provide annual gifts of support to the Manumission Movement from his personal treasury? The answer is to adopt a suitable perspective, free from sentiment, prejudice, and short-term goals. There must be a balance in all things, and if utopia has to be built using barbaric methods, then so be it. People live and die, but can be reborn. Even Chaos has its place, if healed. Contradictions can test and strengthen a society. The Goddess stands for growth, not stasis—she wants Her children, Her faith, and Her Empire to grow, to develop, to explore, and to make their own choices.

## Governing the Empire

*Cilor Negial on Argenteus: 'Some call him a debauched drunk. But he is Moonson, so he would be the greatest debauched drunk in the Empire.'*

All power (spiritual, temporal, military, and economic) rests in the hands of the Red Emperor. This is his right, as divine son and representative of Sedenya. To the solar peoples of Dara Happa, Takenegi is but the latest Emperor ruling in Yelm's name. To the Carmanians, he is their Padishah and to the Rinliddi, the Paradisal Aviator; to the Provincials he is the King of Kings. To those who follow the Lunar Way, however, he is more than just their ruler: he is Moonson.

Successive Masks have guided the Empire wisely through crises and challenges to its present glory, bringing together their own practical wisdom with the transcendent guidance of the Goddess. As the embodiment of the inclusive powers of Sedenya, Takenegi can uniquely hold together an Empire of some eight and a half million souls from such disparate homelands, not as subjects but as equals. He alone can wield Justice among them all, for he is of pure Lunar origins. Often, Takenegi will create a proxy with some of his power and responsibility to perform tasks for which he has neither time nor inclination. The Gold Proxy in Raibanth, for example, performs the Golden Rites of Yelm while the Emperor conducts his business in Glamour. The present Mask, Takenegi Argenteus, ap-

pears to be a sordid and self-indulgent idler, devoted only to his revels, feasts, and dubious pleasures. Any good citizen realizes that this is a grotesque travesty of the truth. Takenegi must experience all extremes of human behavior in order to develop his own insights.

Moonson is advised by the *Ordanestyum* (the Inner Imperial Council), which comprises the Satraps of the Empire, the Imperial Warlord, the Provincial Overseer, and similar notables. Other, specialized elements of the Empire's government are the Imperial War Forum, the Fiscal Dance (which runs the finances of the Empire under the guidance of the Red Dancer of Power), and the Imperial Church Synod. In practice, the role of the Emperor is largely confined to the highest level of grand strategy and policy. Indeed, the role of the central Imperial government itself in most people's lives is indirect, at best.

## Great Sister

Deneskerva, the Great Sister, is a demigod daughter of the Red Moon. From her fastness at Graciodont, she carries out her Goddess-given task of being the feminine counter-weight to her brother Takenegi in the interests of the Empire. Her task is to serve the people first, then the Empire; whereas Moonson serves the Empire first. She does not usually countermand the Emperor's orders, but can and, when she deems it necessary, does with such vigor and diligence that her brother more often than not simply accedes to her will.

⌘ Want to Discover More? See "Great Sister" on page 48.

## Satraps or Sultans?

The ancient Emperors of Dara Happa organized the Empire into provinces controlled by governors who owed loyalty to the Emperor himself. When the Carmanians invaded, they brought with them their own political lexicon, and called the portions of their empire satrapies. When the storm that was Sheng Seleris and his Pentan nomads broke upon the Empire, he introduced a new term: sultanate. In Pentan, a sultan is a Master of Many Hosts, and this is how Sheng—the Extraordinary Master of Every Host—styled his henchmen and devotees.

Satrapy is still the official term for one of the constituent elements of the Empire, but it is not unknown for Yelmic traditionalists to insist on 'province' or for local usage to retain 'sultanate.' Furthermore, the Carmanian rulers still divide the Western Reaches into satrapies. These are not the same as the constituent satrapies of the Empire, and their satraps do not sit on the *Ordanestyum*.

## Laws of the Lands

Even Rufelza's radiance and Yelm's glorious rays cast a shadow, and the Lunar Way has not yet banished the evil, greed, and anger that lurk in men's hearts. Crime stalks the Empire, the courts are full of litigants and lawyers, and merchants and noblemen alike use the law to protect their interests or further their ends. Yet even in this there is some good, for without crime there would be no context for appreciating the valiant efforts of the law enforcers and the deterrent and rehabilitative effects of Imperial justice.

Laws bind a society together and reflect the values and ideals that the members represent. There are many different legal systems in place across the Empire—each culture has its own, just as there are wide variations between how the laws themselves are applied and to whom. A solar peasant may well feel that "poaching" on his lord's vast estates is legal ("antici-



pating required charity rather than troubling his lord to give it"), while the aristocrat might insist on the bloody crucifixion such a crime technically demands (if he ever deigned to notice it). In short, each region has its own forms of law, its own concepts of justice, and a wise jurist understands many codes, especially now that the Empire has become Lunar.

Within the Yelmic lands of Dara Happa, for example, the harsh Antirius Precepts hold sway. Given that the Solar Empire of Dara Happa is not simply a political entity but a manifestation of the glorious purity of Yelm's laws, crime is not merely anti-social, it is in opposition to Yelm's very order. There can be no justifications for such impiety, and thus the Antirius Precepts are simple and absolute. There are no character witnesses, no extenuating circumstances, not even variation in the precise sentences set out for particular crimes. Death is often the mandatory sentence handed out by the Dara Happan magistrates known as tribunes. In Darjiin, the Three Water Code applies, with the worst felons handed over to the 'sinkers' for ritual drowning. To the Darjiini, why someone committed a crime is more important than what they did, and the Water Weighers assess intent, not outcome. In Carmania, the law allows for a trial by an accused's peers, with the aim being to balance deterrence with restitution. Pelandans apply the Three Codes, dividing crimes into the lowest (such as slander, which is judged in an assembly of the clan), the middle (such as theft, judged by the elders of the city-state), and the highest (such as murder, judged solely by the city-state's leader). The Rinliddi apply the Solemn Code, a slightly less draconian form of the Antirius Precepts, enforced by the White-Winged Justiciers. The Sylilan Broad Code is very similar to the Orlanthi legal customs from which it derives, but it is codified and increasingly recognizes the individual rather than the clan.

Beyond all these legal systems there is now also Lunar Law. Any Imperial Citizen may demand trial under Lunar Law instead of facing the local legal system, usually to their benefit, as Lunar law considers not simply guilt but also circumstances and contrition. Even so, a Lunar judex (magistrate) will show no hesitation in consigning a villain to Deshkorgos' Tree (crucifixion), Natha's Edge (beheading), or Danfive's Mercy (either voluntarily joining the cult of Danfive Xaron or being assigned hard labor in a camp run by the cult) if he or she sees fit.

Policing, insofar as it exists, is the responsibility of local magistrates, their personal retainers, and the levy-men (soldiers from the local garrison). However, many crimes are never reported to the authorities, being instead handled by informally seeking restitution through the local elders or leagues; or directly, through vigilante action. Only in a few places are there specialized law-enforcers, such as the Vigilance of Glamour or the Thief-Takers of Elz Ast.

Cities also have formal courts to which plaintiffs may take suits. Lawyers are a powerful but mistrusted profession (within Dara Happa, jurists are confined to practicing business on one day of the week, after which they must spend a full day in ritual purification). Many only work for the rich and influential, but there are some—perhaps law students, the socially aware, or simply the incompetent—who are cheap enough for commoners to hire to seek redress, especially if they are able to muster the support of their league or church. There may be courts outside the cities, but more often plaintiffs must petition either the local aristocrat or the village elders for justice.

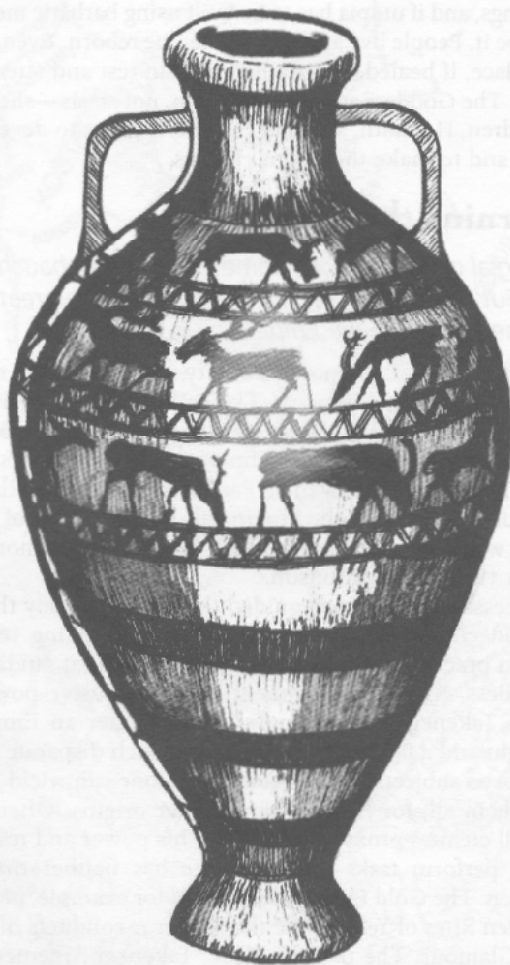
## Temple and State

*Cilor Negial on Rufelza: 'Faith in Rufelza can make the masses do anything—except eat with their mouths closed.'*

Lunar faith is not only at the heart of the policies and philosophy of the Empire, it also has a practical role in its activities and operations. Imperial Citizens account for about a tenth of the Empire's population. However, they hold a disproportionate number of key posts within the Empire, whether as portmasters, army commanders, city administrators, or tax assessors. Citizenship is also a favored way of integrating new subjects. Many are those who were conquered first, then drawn into loyal service after exposure to the Lunar Way.

If anything, after all, the incipient Hero Wars are ushering in an era of renewed popular faith. One manifestation has been the rise of a new phenomenon, the pilgrimage. Loyal worshippers journey from miles around to visit the places that Teelo Estara touched. Perhaps the most popular is the Birth Passage, as the Faithful travel from across the Empire to see and touch the birthplace of Teelo Estara in Torang. The city has many missions to house and care for the pilgrims, and hostels and shelters line the roads leading to the city. Barges come up the Tener River bearing pilgrims from the distant reaches of the Empire. Another favored pilgrimage is the Phase Circuit that takes pilgrims around the Crater.

Many Lunar cults have particular functions within the Empire. Etyries helps develop the trade that binds economies together and brings the grain to feed Glamour's teeming masses.



The cult of Yara Aranis builds and maintains the Temples of the Reaching Moon that keep the Empire bathed in a stable flow of Lunar energy, as well as leading the fight against the horse nomads of the east. Although only some Lunar officers follow Yanafal Tarnils, he teaches them how to lead different kinds of units in battle to best effect.

#### Instrumentalities

As befits such a complex and (seemingly) contradictory political structure, the Empire has many espionage and security agencies, the 'instrumentalities.' The most famous is the Spoken Word, which combats corruption and treason within the Empire. The Entelathosium, technically part of the Imperial Magical University, acts as a military intelligence service. The Bearers of Good News carry out espionage and subversion outside the Empire.

The most numerous and least understood of all are the Instrumentalities of Mandate, the networks and organizations maintained by all kinds of powerful people and groups within the Empire, from the satraps to commercial magnates. The Provincial Overseer, for example, maintains two (the Coders and the Overseer's Hand), and Great Sister has one recruited from nuns of the wandering Broken Sandal Order. Needless to say, all these agencies have a tendency to compete as often as they cooperate, and for every definite fact known about them there are a dozen lurid rumors and exaggerations in circulation. Moreover, this being the Empire, some of those facts are lies and some of the rumors are true.

## A Rich Empire

*Cilor Negial on merchants: 'Those who seek coin rather than wisdom find their prey easier to spot but less nourishing to live on.'*

Commerce is the lifeblood of the Empire. It supports the central government, its armies, and its bureaucrats. It pays for public projects and magnificent works. It contributes to the wellbeing of each citizen and provides the communication and contact between peoples that helps them understand Sedenya's inclusive message in a practical way. Thus merchants are important in the Empire, and the government considers taxation as important as defense and spiritual harmony. Indeed, the upkeep of the emperor's fearsome Tax Demons is one of the first sacrifices made each annual renewal.

The Empire has many taxes. All adults pay an annual poll tax except for Imperial Citizens, who in its place pay a tithe of a seventh of their income directly to the central government, generally through their temple. This due (known as 'the scythe') is generally much higher than the poll tax. Traditional work fees are universal, so people must spend part of their time working for the government. Market taxes take a portion of every sale, and luxury taxes are common, often arbitrarily created, raised, or lowered to suit immediate needs. Hearth taxes, for example, have caused most Darjiini palaces to use "decorative fires" for heat instead of hearth fires. The Viefax Due requires Imperial subjects to contribute to the construction and upkeep of the main highways.

Tax farming is widespread. Magnates and lords bid for the right to levy a particular tax over a region. Important Imperial monopolies (such as silver, salt, paper, and iron) are licensed by the central government. Lately, the practice of tax farming has been extended at the satrapal (regional) and local levels, such as the infamous Mud Tax of Karasal or the Orayan Pig Levy.

Most villages and much of the economy of the satrapies still rely on barter. Despite this, the relative sophistication of the Lunar economy—as well as the demands of its taxes—mean that coinage is widely used. The everyday coins are the copper 'common' and the silver 'imperial.' Only the government, the rich, and the ostentatious largely use gold 'wheels'. Every satrapy mints its own coins, with some cosmetic variations, but all to the patterns and weights set by the Office of Weights and Measures in Glamour.

The *navar* is the 'common' copper coin of the Empire. Mined from the copper reserves of Naveria and Doblian, it is minted using the ancient rites of the Naveria cult. The affluent pottery industry of the region used it to pay for clay, tools, and other goods made in Dara Happa. The nobles of Dara Happa would hoard the coin and pay for expensive Naverian pottery with it, which they valued far more than the trade goods made by their peasants. The silver *imperial* is the primary Lunar coin, worth ten navars. It is so associated with Lunar fiscal policy that many people simply call it the "lunar." The Etyries cult mints imperials, and Imperial policy deliberately values them equal to an average peasant's work or the pay of one average soldier, for one week. The *wheel* minted by the Lokarnos cult is the only native Dara Happa coin. It is worth twenty imperials. No true Dara Happa noble would use anything else, but few people ever see one.

The *daran* is the standard Dara Happa measure of Imperial level wealth. *Daran* means literally 'riches' (Dara Happa means 'Rich Land'), and has been quantified to equal 1000 gold wheels or 20,000 imperials. All measurements of wealth at the satrapy level are in *daran*, but only the richest citizens measure their personal wealth at this level.

## Travel in the Empire

*"The unity of an Empire depends on the quality of its roads."*  
—Emperor Khordavu

With these immortal words, Khordavu established the first permanent state-sponsored shipping house in Dara Happa, the Green Fires Consortium. Khordavu recognized the importance of the rivers to commerce, and took steps to secure their use for the glory of Yelm. This intricate maritime network has expanded, as well as now connecting with a system of sturdy roads that further facilitate the movement of trade and news through the Empire.

## River

The most efficient way of moving goods through the Empire is on the many rivers and canals that entwine the land like the arteries of our great Goddess. Most of the Empire's cities and towns sit on the banks of navigable rivers, and merchant craft make regular journeys along the waterways. They range from one- and two-man coracles and reed boats capable of sailing any creek or marsh, to the mighty cogs that ply the Sweet Sea and Three Rivers carrying grain and other valuable cargoes.

The rivers within the Empire are the calmest waters in Genertela, for the Empire has launched several pogroms against the rebellious spirits, intelligent beings, and blue folk of the major rivers. These campaigns began as reactions to the rivers' support of various invasions and rebellions within the Empire. Consequently, the Lunars tamed, exterminated, or drove most of them from the waterways, leaving the water smooth and friendly.



## Road

Emperor Urvairinus built the first roads in the Empire, which radiated from Raibanth in perfectly straight lines. They linked the cities of Dara Happa to the capital and facilitated the movement of the Emperor's armies and their pack trains. These mythic roads were largely destroyed in the Gods' War, but subsequent emperors have built inferior versions. The quality and extent of the road network waxed and waned with the fortunes of the Empire and it took our noble Takenegi to finally to link every corner of the realm with a comprehensive network.

One long-distance use of the roads is for the Emperor's Post riders. With regular remounts (provided at post stations and garrisons) and the powerful magic of the horse goddess Gamara, a good rider can cover up to 350 miles in a day—and all of the Emperor's couriers are good riders. A rider can reach Glamour from Mirin's Cross in three days.

The military roads are built from stone bricks, cemented with bitumen and flanked by wide drainage ditches. Roads cross the rivers over ferries, fords, or sturdy bridges. They remain useful in all weather and seasons; the satraps maintain them as part of their duties to the Emperor, usually by drafting locals through the labor tax. Danfive Xaron work parties also help to maintain the Imperial highways. Local roads are well-trodden dirt wagon-tracks that meander from village to village to town.




## Moonboat

An increasingly common method of travel is the Emperor's moonboats. The moonboats are flying ships powered by the love of the Goddess and the rays from Her shining face. They vary in size from small coracles to large merchant cogs lumbering through the sky from sky-port to sky-port. Most are privately owned, but the Imperial Moon Craft Association owns all the largest ones.

Passage on moonboats is expensive but quick and safe. Imperial vessels usually carry contingents of Star Marines to protect them from such dangers as winged trolls from the Blue Moon Plateau, wind children from the Rockwood Mountains, flying Pentan raiders, insect-riding trolls from Yolp, and winged Chaos rhings from Dorastor. Other dangers include meteors, stellar storms, air spirits, and, if the tales can be believed, flying Dart Competitors and the boats of rival houses battling in the sky.

The greatest moonboats are large galleons made of crimson moon-reeds, whose sails are v-shaped wings stretched from one large and two smaller masks. The reeds grow only around the Occluded Sea on the Red Moon. The cult of Vargar the Sky-Mariner holds exclusive rights, and the only knowledge, of how to harvest these reeds and prepare them for weaving into the ships. Only a devotee of Vargar using the cult secret can lift and sail a moonboat. Without this power, the boat will not move. The cult is training as many new captains as it can but the going is slow and the slow growth of the fleet reflects this, for worshippers jealously guard their knowledge.

### Rates of Travel

These distances are for traveling citizenry. They assume travel from Yelm-rise to Yelm-set, nights spent comfortably in inns along the way and healthy meals. If the traveler pushes himself he can increase these rates, but it will be hard going. 

- A man can walk 15-20 miles a day on a good road.
- A horse and cart can cover 15-30 miles on a good road depending on the load.
- A man on a horse can cover 25-30 miles on a good road. Remounts will speed the journey.
- A riverboat can cover 70-100 miles in a day, with the current. Half that against the current.
- A moonboat can cover 150-300 miles in a day, more if many worshippers power the magic.

## The Imperial Army

*Cilor Negial on the army: 'Conquest is a fine thing—it sends the soldiers far away.'*

The mighty Imperial Army is the most powerful in all of Glor-antha, not because of its size but because of our philosophy. As befits the army of the Red Emperor it is inclusive, made up of units of every type and from every culture within the Empire. This is a strength, not a weakness, for the officers of Yanafal Tarnils know the ways to ensure that these different forces work together to greatest effect. The Army combines all forms of warfare: the steady advance of hoplites, the nimble ferocity of scouts and skirmishers, the hammer-blow of heavy cavalry, the formidable powers of magician units, and the oft-neglected sciences of logistics, engineering, and military intelligence.

The Imperial Bodyguard brings together elite forces from across the Empire. It includes warrior-priests from martial Lunar cults, indomitable Yelmic hoplites and, increasingly, regional units reflecting the multi-cultural nature of the Empire, from the Carmanian Bashkar Lion Helm Guard to the Longaxe huscarls from the Provinces. The entire Imperial Bodyguard rarely takes to the field en masse. Instead, the part that accompanies Takenegi himself is known as the Praesental Army. The Great Sister also has her own small but devoted Sister's Army.

The Heartland Corps provides the infantry core of our hosts, supported by the Cavalry Corps and the Provincial Army, drawn from our 'younger brothers' of the peripheries. The Garrison Army regiments maintain order at home, putting out fires, crucifying criminals and training for they day when they may have to be ready to repel invaders. Many of these are part-time soldiers and reservists. The College of Magic unites magical power with military discipline. Additional forces range from the personal regiments and warbands of the satraps and other nobility, temple troops, mercenaries engaged for a particular mission, the scouts of the Hunter Corps and the engineers and logistical specialists of the Anirestyu Corps. The Imperial Navy coordinates all maritime activity across the Empire and the Middle Air Navy controls the military Moonboat fleet. Faced with such a bewildering array, confusion could arise, but all are ultimately coordinated by the Imperial Warlord, titled Bellux Maximus; the *Ordenviru* (the general staff of the Empire); and the genius of the Red Emperor himself. It is thus the finest force in Gloranthian history.

Soldiers are generally volunteers. Most join a unit raised locally, signing on for its usual term of service: ten years for Dara Happan regiments, for example, or nine for Darjiini. At the end of this time, they may sign on again or leave with a small stipend and a plot of land—known as the *verro*—whose size is commensurate with years served and rank achieved. These units will follow traditional ways of warfare, from the bristling hoplite phalanxes of Dara Happa to the wild cavalry of the Char-Un from Erigia. Increasingly, however, units are also being raised that are Lunar in their traditions. Soldiers wishing to serve in a Lunar unit join up at the Gate of Heroes in local temples or barracks of Yanafal Tarnils. They may then be assigned to any Lunar unit, anywhere in the Empire. Their terms are for seven years (starting with the so-called 'Full Half Year' and culminating in the 'Full Year'); on retirement, they are also entitled to apply for Imperial Citizenship.

'Regiment' is an overall term used here for the main elements (typically of around 500-1000 soldiers, but perhaps only 50 in the case of some magical detachments) that operate as a unit. In practice, there are many terms for these units, from the phalanx (Dara Happa, specifically hoplites) to the dominion (Rinliddi). Regiments may attach to armies or corps.

The Empire is rich in vastly varied military traditions that the Lunar military system has embraced, as directed by the Yanafal Tarnils cult. There are many different unit styles and ranks. Here are a few of them to give some idea of the complexity and versatility the Imperial Army has to offer.

## Squad

Typically, the smallest tactical unit is the "squad," although the size and application of such a unit varies considerably depending on the culture and type of troops in question. Usually these units are not operational bodies in their own right but are the building blocks of larger organizations. A guard detail or a scout party will often be composed of a single squad and they are the typical tactical unit a player group will encounter.

## Imperial Army: Squads

Homeland	Name	Size	Commander
Carmania	haznak	12	kethuda <i>A kethuda must be of the hazar caste.</i>
Dara Happa	file	10	decimarch <i>Dara Happa soldiers are called elleden.</i>
Darjiin	decurion	10	suvaru ("son of Svar") <i>Suvaru is also the name for hunting party leaders.</i>
Lunar	septoi	7	septon
Pelanda	hopla	8	motarxus <i>The hopla was recently reintroduced as a symbol of local pride.</i>
Rinliddi	clutch	9	vrimon
Sylila	knot	12	orshil ("first axe") <i>The commander is always the "first axe," regardless of the weapon(s) the unit uses.</i>





## Company

This is the standard operational force at the regimental level of war. Companies are strong and versatile enough to fight limited actions on their own. Their commander is usually an officer of limited operational skills and training who typically works best under regimental oversight.

### Imperial Army: Companies

Homeland	Name	Size	Commander
Carmania	century	80-100	centurion
<i>Century and centurion come from Naverian traditions.</i>			
Dara Happa	hundred	100	dedecuron
<i>Various units have other names for this rank based on their ancient histories, such as the syntagmatarch of Kostaddi.</i>			
Darjiin	hoplites	verundish	120
	peltasts	ensivru	81
			hastundum manimat-ensivru ("war-party chief")
Lunar	century	70	centurion
<i>Called a century because it contains 10 squads, which in the original Naverian tradition are of 10 men each.</i>			
Pelanda	tetron	80	tetrarch
Rinliddi	wing	81	vrimarch
Syllia	shieldwall	144	shilkot ("master of axes")
<i>The shilkot's title is the same, regardless of the company's weapons.</i>			

## Battalion or Regiment

The battalion or regiment is the building block of the army, the largest operational body in Gloranthan warfare. Many regiments in the Empire are ancient and hail from exotic origins. Their ranks, organizations, and unit pride reflect those origins.

### Imperial Army: Battalions and Regiments

Homeland	Name	Size	Commander
Carmania	legion	800	karmanak ("lord of war")
Dara Happa	hvy infantry	phalanx	1000
	lt/md infantry	suvarum	1000
	missile troops	zarkosum	1000
	cavalry	regiment	500
<i>The 500 horses are counted with the regiment, thus maintaining its 1000-member perfection.</i>			
Darjiin	hoplites	regiment	1000
	peltasts	suvru	1000
			veruma:hi ("king of battle") manimat-suvru ("war-clan chief")
Lunar	regiment	1000	tribune
Pelanda	legion	800	daxdargos
Rinliddi	dominion	900	vrivimeron
Syllia	battle	700	tvengkot ("master of battles")

## Army

Composed of several regiments or attached units, the army is the potent tool of Imperial power projection. Armies are not of fixed establishment but typically number more than 5000 troops, anything less is typically seen as a vexilla or grouping of detached units under one command. At this level, only Lunar ranks officially exist within the Imperial Army. Various cultures within the Empire have names for such commands, but they are obsolete, yet enduring in the field.

A warlord ("general" in the New Pelorian language) commands a full army. Other ranks exist for army commanders based on cultural origin; although the general's army will often use the native term, all Imperial correspondence uses warlord.

Above the army are the corps and special forces, such as the Imperial Bodyguard, the Hunter Corps, and the Imperial Navy. Full generals command these forces.

## Vexilla

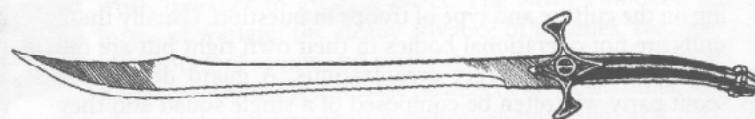
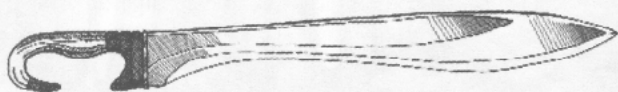
Vexillae are peculiarly Lunar organizational units. The first was commanded by Gidlo of Our Lady's House, who gained fame combating Sheng Seleris. A vexilla is a military hero band, formed originally as a headquarters unit to include component elements from many separate regiments brought together in a single detachment, always commanded by Yanafal Tarnils officers. These vexillae are flexible and generally formed for particular purposes. The rank of the officer limits the troops that it can include. Not even local troops are expected to obey inferior ranking officers of a vexilla.

### Imperial Army: Armies and Vexillae

Homeland	Name	Commander
Carmania	army	armiger
Dara Happa	army	general
Darjiin	veronsumat ("Verondum's tribe")	verondumu ("son of Verondum")
Lunar	army	warlord
	vexilla	fereshori
<i>The fereshori is an officer of the Yanafal Tarnils cult.</i>		
Pelanda	front	warlord
Rinliddi	army	general
<i>This is not a traditional unit of Rinliddi organization, so Dara Happa terms have been adopted.</i>		
Syllia	host	warlord

## Special Ranks

Certain troop types have special ranks, typically those who have affiliations with the military branch of the College of Magic. Magical troops in Dara Happa are commanded by *ird-exmot*, in Darjiin by *dogarz*, in Rinliddi by *kestithax*, and in Carmania the military viziers are called *romanos*. The Lunar specialist in magic is called a *trofani*, with other names common depending on the specific magic college.



# The View from the Moon

*Cilor Negial on Rufelza: "People think that because Rufelza is in the sky, She cannot see what we are doing. They forget that She is not interested so much in what we are doing, as why."*

What greets Rufelza's gaze as it sweeps across Her Empire?

Below Her is the great Crater left when Rufelza rose into the heavens, the very earth gowning Her in Her present form. Around it is the Silver Shadow, a holy region bathed in Her benign energies and watered by the mighty Oslir River, the backbone of Peloria. From distant Tarsh, leagues to the south, it rolls through the fertile plains of Saird and Dara Happa. It draws waters from the wetlands of Darjiin and the slopes of Mount Jernotius, in Pelanda to the west. It gathers its waters and energies from all Her lands and roars through Thunder Delta and into the White Sea to the north, where river daimones and ice spirits meet and fight and mate.

Rufelza's full gaze looks always first northeast to Torang, Her birthplace in First Blessed. The bronze domes of Torang's minarets glitter from amid the satrapy's rolling fields of wheat and maize. This land, anciently known as Rinliddi, is warm and friendly. Rufelza beams at the simple faith and hospitality of its people, whose round villages thickly dot the plain, linked by paths and tracks. Farther away looms the Blue Moon Plateau, shadowed and mysterious land of the trolls who worship the Blue Moon, Rufelza's mystic twin. They are our strangest allies.

As Rufelza looks out to the east, the temperature begins to fall, fields give way to scrubland, and the now-palisaded villages are farther apart. This is Oraya, a new hope for colonists and explorers and also a bastion against the horse nomads of Pent. Implacable foes of civilization, compassion, and concord, the nomads were routed just a century ago. Now there are stirrings to the East, tales of the bloody spear being handed from clan to clan, of savage rituals in the night, of drums along the border. But Rufelza's heart is stirred by the resolution of Her children, their determination to tame this harsh land and hold this frontier against the nomads when they come again.

South of First Blessed lies Kostaddi, rich farmland in the shadow of the Hungry Plateau's cliffs, yet blessed still by the Oslir. The land's people are split in half. Atop the Plateau live the fierce Sable Riders, once barbarians, now staunch defenders of the Moon. The common people of Kostaddi are honest yet timorous, and once even forsook the Lunar Way when the horse nomads screamed into the Heartland. So, the loyal Sable Riders were granted overlordship of Kostaddi, and the smallfolk learn something of humility. Rufelza is compassionate but stern, and knows this oppression will help them learn and grow.

Further south yet, and Her gaze falls upon the Provinces, youngest holdings of the Empire. A cold wind from Dragon Pass chills the air, and the dense mosaic of farms and pastures of the Kostaddi lowlands give way to a more mixed landscape. There are untamed moorlands, the geometrical perfection of slave-tended state farms, new cities utilizing the latest Imperial architecture, and primitive wattle and daub cottages around disused shrines to the old ways. Yet Rufelza smiles down upon the Provinces with tolerant encouragement. She knows that with time, faith, and application, the Provincials will throw off their past and fully embrace the Lunar Way. This will happen even in brutish Sartar. Here, blue-painted barbarians caper on windy hills, fighting and fornicating without restraint or respect. Yet Rufelza knows that this is but the ignorance and wildness of untutored children under the influence of Orlanatus, bluster and insolent god of anarchy. A loving but firm hand will lead the Heortlings to maturity and the Lunar Way.

After all, Rufelza's gaze goes west from the Provinces to survey with contentment hilly Sylila, where barbarian vigor has married Lunar virtue. To look at this satrapy, it might seem much like its Provincial neighbors, a land of wind and rain, of huddled, stone-walled villages and wide pastures for rough-haired sheep and goats. Yet Rufelza can see the marks of civilization, from the moonbeam-straight roads to the temples at the hearts of its cities. Sylila is also a bulwark against the distant Chaos land of Dorastor, where ancient wounds still fester. Some day, even Dorastor will be healed, Chaos purged of its taint and shown simply to be entropy, the other face of existence. But not today.

North of Sylila She sees Darjiin, criss-crossed by rivers, canals, and waterways of every kind. Cyclopean cities hint at ancient, dying glory and bely the apparent simplicity of the people in their reed-built swamp and riverside villages. Rufelza sees spirits as easily as mundane matter, and this land teems with them. Spirits of water, of earth, of fertility, of death, spirits of every kind, moving to the urgent beat of the ' songs and drums, a beat that for a moment resonates in Her thoughts and feelings, for they are Her, too.

Doblian lies north and west of Darjiin, a land worn and warring, a region and peoples divided and ill-used by the black events of history. The people are scattered sparsely across its plains and hills, and Rufelza observes them with compassion and yet also solace. The Empire has brought an unprecedented peace to Doblian, and the results are slowly visible from Her elevated vantage, from the slow spread of the cities and land under the plow to the newly busy roads full now of traders and travelers instead of warbands and brigands.

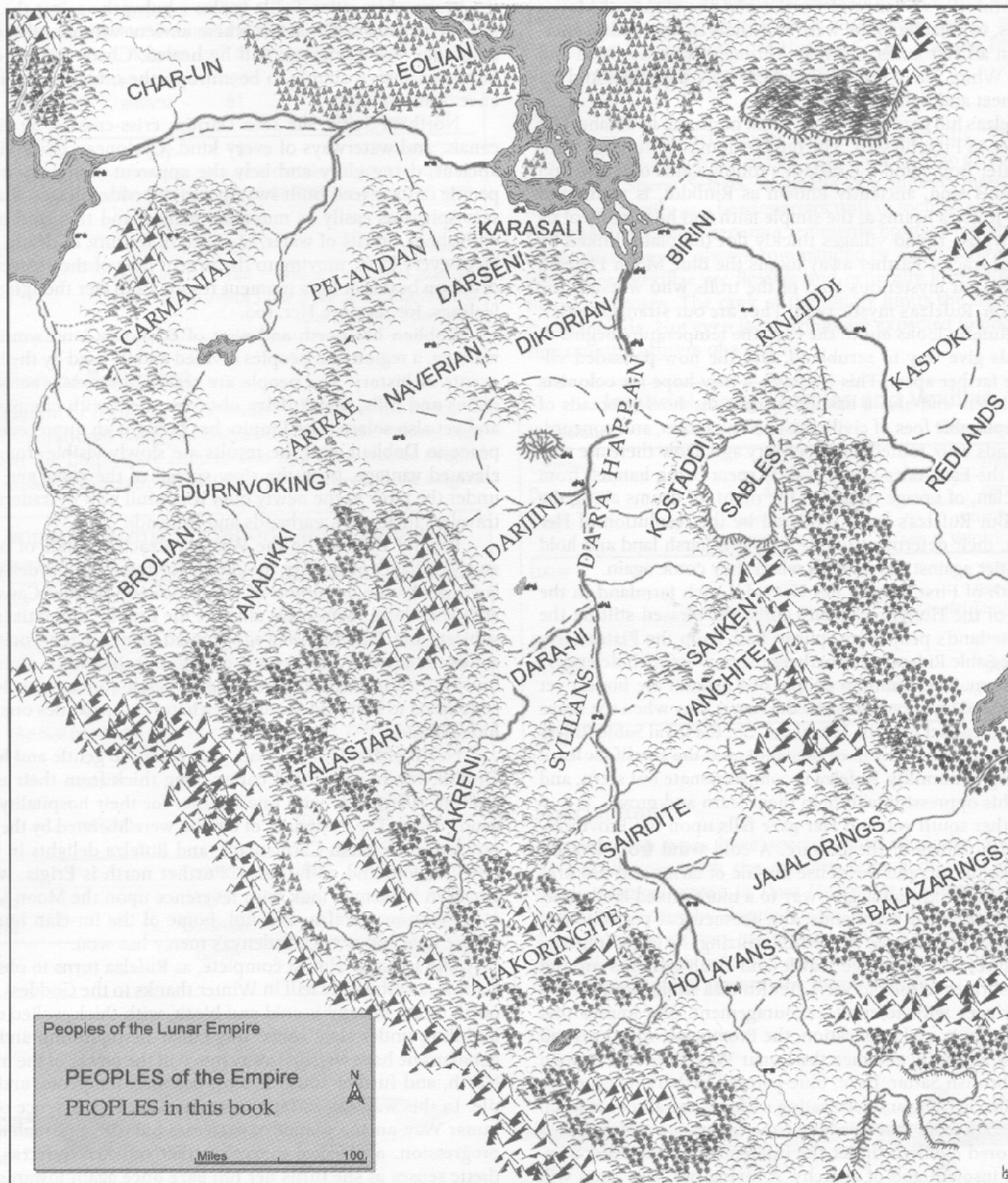
Beyond Doblian lie the Western Reaches, lands of might and vassalage, of mighty mountain fortresses and orderly villages under the dominion of the proud and martial Carmanians. They hold themselves allies of the Empire, not citizens or subjects, but Takenegi long ago granted them Citizen-Foreigner status to reward the loyalty of Aronius Jaranthir. Rufelza's knowing countenance gently mocks such conceits: to know Sedenya is to love and serve Her, whatever formalities one may hide behind.

North of Doblian Rufelza's gaze comes to gentle and fertile Oronin, where maize and barley hang thick from their stems and the villages vie with one another for their hospitality and gaudy decor. The Pelandans of Oronin were liberated by the Empire from the harsh Carmanians, and Rufelza delights in their new freedom and enthusiasm. Further north is Erigia, where Char-Un horsemen look with reverence upon the Moon Mare, as they know Rufelza, and Eol, home of the fur-clan hunters whose love and service Sedenya's mercy has won.

The sweep is almost complete, as Rufelza turns to observe Karasal, a realm only half in Winter thanks to the Goddess. The north of the satrapy is cold and bleak, with thick-walled cities huddling under slate roofs. But Lunar heroquesting and Imperial magic have wrestled away much of the power of the frozen North, and further south it soon becomes temperate and fertile. In this way, the satrapy represents the very essence of the Lunar Way, an acceptance of extremes but also a growth and a progression, a physical metaphor that satisfies Rufelza's aesthetic senses as she turns her full gaze once again towards Her birthplace.



*"We are all us!*  
 You are, too,  
 even if you don't know it yet."



# Homelands

*Cilor Negial: "We are all us, to be sure, but we all come from different places."*

Various **homelands** are included within the regional descriptions of the Empire in this book. Two, however, are special. The first is Imperial Citizen, a special keyword taken in addition to the hero's cultural one. The second is the Dara Happa homeland. These Heartland peoples are the most widely dispersed of all the Emperor's subjects, even far from the Pelorian basin from whence they came, whether as colonists in the barbarian south or administrators in the eastern margins.

## Imperial Citizen

The theocratic Lunar Empire is a government laid over the component nationalities and tribes within its area. Imperial Citizenship is a special status available to any of its member peoples, and so some people are Imperial Citizens as well as (or replacing) their native citizenship. This is a special relationship with additional rights and privileges. For instance, Imperial Citizens accused of crimes can always appeal to and be tried in Imperial courts, can not be executed except by Imperial court, are exempt from some local taxes, and have many additional opportunities for advancement. In return they pay a 'scythe' of a seventh of their income to the State through their local temple, have to obey their Lunar cult leaders, and must periodically report to appointed Imperial leaders for 'voluntary' work services.

In most cases, a hero will take this keyword in addition to a homeland keyword. Most Imperial Citizens in Silver Shadow, for example, come from Dara Happa stock and take that homeland keyword. They may choose whether they are exclusively followers of the Lunar Way or also have a relationship with the Solar religion.

## Imperial Citizen Keyword

**Entry Requirements:** Candidates must worship a Lunar cult, and need a sponsor, who guarantees the quality of their character with his own reputation, fame, position, and money. Upon acceptance, they must swear an oath never to harm the Goddess or Her Empire; tithe from all income to a Lunar cult or directly to the Emperor; attend regular meetings of the citizenry; support the Empire in every way; and in general act as a good citizen.

**Abilities:** Sedenyic Philosophy, Speak New Pelorian.

**Typical Personality:** Dedicated, Inclusive, Open-minded.

**Required Relationships:** Imperial Citizen; to Sponsor.

**Magic:** Any. Lunar magic is tied to the Lunar cycle (see the "Basic Magic" chapter of *HeroQuest* for details).

## The Lunar Way

The Lunar religion's motto is 'We are all Us,' and it operates on a principle of accepting (in theory) everyone, everything, and every possibility of existence. If their magicians can detect the Lunar Power within something, it is part of the Way. Only Oranth has resisted this test so far.

Joining the Lunar Way is a deliberate act that an individual may undertake only voluntarily. Initiation into this new faith supercedes all previous religions. It takes the place of whatever other church, tradition, or pantheon the hero currently worships, replacing its 10% time commitment. Lunar worshippers may choose to remain in their original religion as well as long

as no conflict with the Lunar Way exists. If conflict exists, the hero must leave the original religion or the conversion does not occur.

Several significant effects occur when a person joins the Lunar Way. Sedenya, the Lunar Power, is the great goddess of all Lunar common magic. Anyone subject to her cycles can use any common magic, but they can choose to concentrate magic on the Lunar Way. Doing so requires that they give up non-Lunar common magic, but allows them to treat Lunar common magic as concentrated even though they know different types of magic, such as affinities, spirits, or spells. Thus, this mixed worship takes no penalty in terms of hero point costs, so that Lunars may at once use different kinds of magic without penalty. This is the benefit of worshipping the pinnacle of the Inner World. The other main effect is that all the person's magic is affected by the Lunar cycle. This is the disadvantage of worshipping the pinnacle of the Inner World.





### Name Your League

Leagues generally have three-word titles: a descriptive term (color, appearance, or location), a location (building, geographic feature, body part, etc.), and a third reflecting status. Higher-status leagues tend to use the name of a bird or a celestial body or being, while the lowborn use a word relating to their trade.

*Sample League Names:* Feathered Heavens Half-Addi League (high-status noble family), Sallow Riverbend Mug and Pot League (low-status potters), Thuramic Hand Visible League (middle-status scribes).



### Specialized Religion—Solar Pantheon

The Sky Gods made and rule the world. Deities descended to earth from the sky, materializing and enlivening the world. They made people, organized a perfect society, and ruled in the Golden Age. Then bad gods, Underworld beings, Otherworld entities, and monster non-humans came and destroyed the good. Now the Dara Happans struggle for the Light.

Everyone in Dara Happa worships the Sun or his relatives and servants. Only the highest civil authorities worship the senior celestial bodies; commoners revere the simple and earthy ways of the fallen star called Lodril, Yelm's faithful brother and servant. Most Dara Happans are communal worshippers only; they do not initiate or devote themselves to gods, although they do not frown on those who do.

### Solar Pantheon Keyword

*Abilities:* Know Solar Pantheon Myths, Worship Solar Pantheon.

*Virtues:* Conservative, Honorable, Obedient.

*Magic:* Divine aid.

### Sample Deities of the Solar Pantheon

*Cavalry Soldier:* Kastok the Great General. The general who learned how to beat the nomads by using both lance and bow.

*Affinities—*Commander, Horseman, Mounted Combat.

Want to Discover More? See "Kastok" on page 52.

*Entertainer:* Hyraos the Harper. Yelm's court musician, who followed him to the Underworld.

*Affinities—*Harp, Loyalty.

*Farmer:* Navestos the Harvester. One of Lodril's Ten Sons and Servants, and bears the sickle and the basket.

*Affinities—*Farming, Fertility, Fighting.

Want to Discover More? See "Navestos the Harvester" in *HeroQuest*.

*Foot Soldier:* Urvairinus the Elleden. Emperor and Conqueror, the Divine General who organized the first Dara Happa regiments and armies.

*Affinities—*Combat, Destroy Dara Happa Foes, Light of Action.

*Healer:* Erissa the White Goddess. An entirely pacifistic, non-violent goddess whose worshippers may never fight at the risk of losing their magic.

*Affinities:* Calm Fear, Cure Disease, Heal Wounds.

Want to Discover More? See "Erissa" in *HeroQuest*.

*Merchant:* Lokarnos the Wagon Master. The honest trader, who brings what is needed to Yelm's deserving people.

*Affinities—*Endurance, Gold, Trade.

*Petty Noble:* Antirius the Most Man. The pure part of Yelm, who cleansed the world with a flood and brought law and justice to the Empire.

*Affinities—*Justice, Nobility, Sky.

*Scholar:* Buserian the Celestilogist. The Stargazer, the god of priests and bureaucracy.

*Affinities—*Administration, Celestiology, Scribe.

Want to Discover More? See "Buserian" in *HeroQuest*.

*Thief:* Veskerele the Faceless. Veskerele is the Dara Happa form of Lanbril. As well as the usual Face of Lanbril talents, he also provides some of his own.

*Talents—*Just Another Beggar, Lull Watchman.

Want to Discover More? See "Lanbril" in *HeroQuest*.

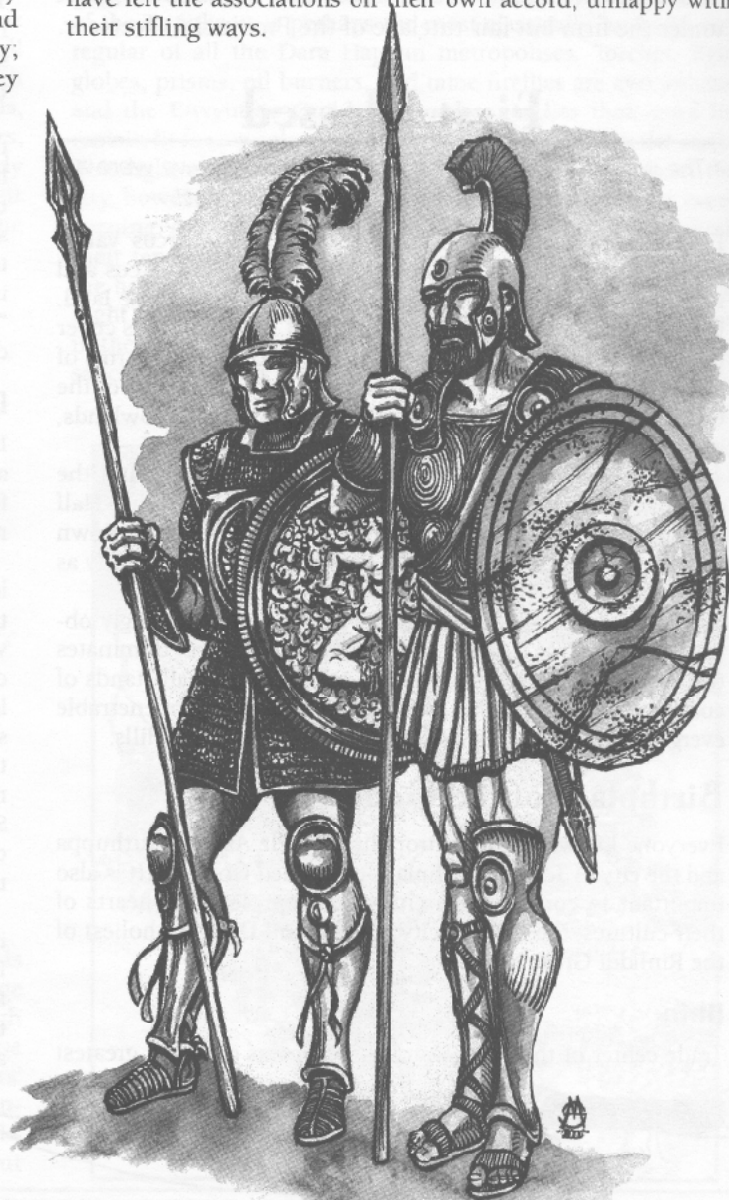
*Warrior:* Shargash the Destroyer. The Bloody God whose berserks are feared by friend and foe alike.

*Affinities—*Berserker, Combat, Destruction.

Want to Discover More? See "Shargash" on page 25.

### Reasons to Have Left Home

Dara Happa chafes in its subsidiary position beneath the insufferable bureaucrats and illusionists of the Red Moon. Some people seek new opportunities for their associations. Others have left the associations on their own accord, unhappy with their stifling ways.







Avarnia's title as Star 18), a rough triangle between the Temple of Kastokus the Horse, Lance, Sword, and Bow (also the headquarters of the Althil Imperial Kostaks); the Six-Tiered Nesting Tree (the Empire's largest temple to Avarnia); and the Open Hall of Polychromatic Plumage (seat of the City Tyrant). Overall, however, as the city walls have risen and fallen so often through its history, Diavizzi has grown around, through, and beyond many stretches of unconnected and varied battlement. Nonetheless, most Diavizzi are cheerful, honest folk of legendary optimism. Get a Diavizzi drunk on the local nut-wine, however, and he might hearken back to the ancient prophecy: "Within six springs an egg will hatch, and from it will come a hurricane."

## Elz Ast

This sprawling, circular metropolis is a thriving commercial center, and although it retains the forms of traditional Solar authority, true power rests in the hands of five great mercantile associations. The people of Elz Ast—known as 'openlanders' after the way the city has long since outgrown its walls—are well known for both their enthusiasm for novelty and their logical approach. This helps explain its new role as a center for science and learning. Its Irippi Ontor Academium is second only to the Imperial University in Glamour in size, and is more than its equal academically. Elz Ast also houses the Particulate Halls of the Alchemists of Eyzaal, and its Fifth Quarter is home to a bewildering array of scholars, wizards, and scribes, as well as two competing Scriptoria of Danvodir the Ibis. Its wealth also makes it a veritable honey pot for all kinds of criminals, hucksters, malcontents, hoax artists, bagmen, cargo snatchers, and open-ears. Appreciating this, the associations fund a body of thief-takers who practice 'scientific apprehensionism' in their struggle against the subtle and powerful Seven Compacts, the main criminal associations of the city.

## New Occupation: Thief-Taker

**Abilities:** Analyze Evidence, Good Memory, Search, Spot Clue.

**Typical Personality:** Honest, Intellectual, Meticulous.

**Typical Relationships:** Enemy of the Seven Compacts, Loyal to Comrades, Member of the Thief-Takers.

**Followers:** Bodyguard, informants, and specialist assistants (such as a forensic alchemist or a Jajagappan tracker).

**Magic:** Almost any, albeit with a bias towards knowledge cults and wizardry. Many also worship the hero cult of their founder, Chernyok the Unrelenting, who provides them with several feats to aid them in their work. These feats, if learned, become part of the thief-taker's common magic keyword.

**Feats:** Sense Guilt, Silence Lie, Spot Anomaly.

**Standard of Living:** Common.

**Typical Equipment:** Miscellaneous investigation tools (magnifying lens, pig-gut evidence bags, etc), note tablet, seal and symbols of office (including a green sash).

## Torang

Holiest of all Imperial cities, the birthplace of the Goddess is the political capital of the Satrapy and the focus for pilgrimage and prophecy. Every day, so many worshippers stream through the simple back room where the Goddess was born that the priests must replace its floor every year. The girdling Bearers' Halt walls around the city are elegant, with their narrow minarets and mile-wide mosaics. However, the city inside is striking in its relative lack of ostentation. Those who know about

## The Avian Return Movement



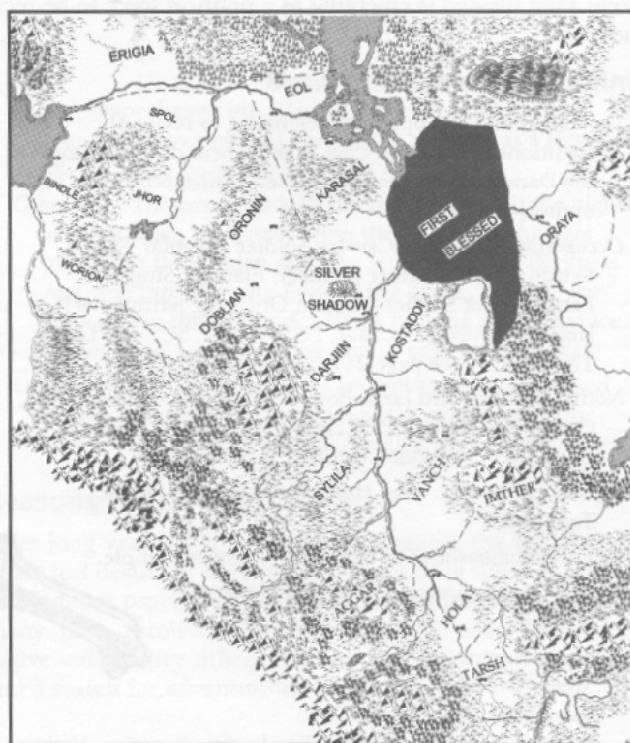
The 'New Birds' who follow the Avian Return Movement are committed to a revival of ancient Rinliddi rites and traditions. This is by no means a monolithic force. Some (imitating Lunar zeal) see it as part of Sedenya's mission to heal old wounds, others follow it out of Rinliddi nationalism, yet others simply because they want to restore a defining identification. Similarly, the Empire has allowed and even encouraged the Movement for reasons ranging from military (to acquire avilry) to the political (the Movement divides the unity of the regions, allowing the Emperor to control the area using the time-honored tactic of divide-and-rule).

The Hero Wars will not only decide the success of the Avian Return Movement, they will define it, and establish if it will ultimately strengthen or fragment the Empire.

such things, however, understand the cost of some of this simplicity. Torang's elite live in 'simple' mansions of flawless marble brought all the way from distant Jord, and wear unadorned robes made by the Blind Ghost Weavers of Pelanda.

## Yuthuppa

Mighty Yuthuppa regards itself as a city second to none. One of the Tripolis, it is perhaps the most classically beautiful and regular of all the Dara Happan metropolises. Torches, light globes, prisms, oil burners, and tame fireflies are everywhere, and the Envyuthic Guild here makes torches that, once lit, remain lit for a week, even if submerged or buried in the earth. This light never manages to outshine the night sky above the city, however. Celestial priests drive off impious clouds every evening, so that the famous Star Seers of Yuthuppa may climb their ten times ten towers and witness Divinity and Order in the heavens. This is a city where humans know their place, at night beneath the stars, by day subject to Emperor Sun and—in the streets—the wandering peacocks, whose lives are sacrosanct. Yuthuppanns are thus renowned for their humble pride.



# Homeland: Rinliddi

The Rinliddi are the descendants of the mighty Bird People, children of Vrimak the High Flyer, the Bird of Yelm, and their land to the east of the Empire has been the egg from which history has hatched. In mythic times they were the mightiest warriors of Yelm's Hosts, avilry mounted on sky-soaring or flightless birds with plumage of gold and glory. During the Great Darkness eastern horse raiders overran Rinliddi and burnt their way into the Empire. Many conquerors have ruled parts of this land. The natives contented themselves with dreams of past grandeur, and most of the secrets of the old ways were lost. Then the Red Goddess arose among them, and the Rinliddi are reviving their ancient traditions and gods. Huge flocks (often of new birds) fill the skies, and the avilry (cavalry mounted on large, flightless birds) has been reformed.

Rinliddi society centers around the nest, which is clan, government, and ritual guardian all at once. Where people live defines their nest, which may unite several villages or the citizens of half a city. Although they lack some of the rigid hierarchies of the Dara Happans, they recognize the importance of having, acquiring and honoring their place in the great Pecking Order. This is especially important now, for as they regain their traditions, so too are they reviving many of the old titles, rights, and honorifics of ancient Rinliddi. Thus, even a humble peasant may find himself able to claim such a mighty title as Great Scratcher, and the new rich of the cities compete to buy the most grandiose and extravagant privileges. The ruling clan is the Taran-il (descendants of several heroes and a reappearing spirit called Flower Poem), which took power about a century ago. Satrap Enzortis Taran-il is seen by many as little more than a mouthpiece for the great associations and the tyrants, who govern the cities of First Blessed. Those who understand the subtleties of Rinliddi politics, however, consider him a shrewd manipulator. His ability to unite solar conservatives, Lunar radicals, Avian Return Movement nationalists and outright political opportunists alike means that once quiescent First Blessed is emerging as a political force to be reckoned with.

## Rinliddi Homeland Keyword

**Look and Feel:** A people just beginning to revive their old traditions and realize what makes them different from the Dara Happans, visible in their bird-motif finery and optimistic ways.

**Occupations Available:** Cavalry Soldier (Regular, Shock, Skirmish), Entertainer (Dancer, Flautist, Singer), Farmer, Foot Soldier (Archer, Ordinary, Skirmisher), Healer, Hunter, Merchant, Petty Noble, Scholar, Thief, Thief-Taker (see page 21).

**Native Abilities:** Bird Lore, Bow Combat or Javelin Combat, Geography of Rinliddi, [Home Nest] Politics, Know Local Area, Rinliddi Customs, Spear Combat.

**Typical Personality:** Fear Horse Nomads, Optimistic, Traditional.

**Typical Relationships:** to Family; to Nest; to Temple.

**Magic:** Common magic, Vrimak Pantheon (theism).

**Common Names:**

**Men**—Dvorelun, Edasul, Evidor, Rascalium, Trethelu, Vesekor.

**Women**—Avarina, Azurina, Basekorina, Ravarina, Verima.

## Rinliddi Cities and Totem Birds

City	Nickname	Totem	Additional Native Ability (+4 if already possessed)
Birin	Pirate City	Cormorant	Boating
Diavizzi	Avarnia's Blessing	Quail	Optimism
Dorid	Horror's Respite	Crow	Carry Burdens
Elz Ast	Outland City	Snow Goose	Logical Thinking
Ganbarri	Dustpeck City	Sparrow	Foraging
Induppa	Highfly City	Falcon	Scan Skies
Torang	Moonbirth City	Moon Dove	Sedentary Philosophy
Yuthuppa	Star City	None	Know Stars

True to their solar culture, the Rinliddi tend to associate themselves with a particular city, although in reality they are referring to its dominant nest. The table above gives information on some of the most important.

## Common Magic—Egg Mysteries

Each nest has its own Egg Mysteries, like the Brown-Banded Arcana of Nenuvus or the High-Hop Glories of Diavizzi, a collection of common magic favored by its members.

**Feats:** Cloud of Feathers, Peck Eye, Scratch Dirt.

**Charms:** Beady Eye, Mating Display, Sky-Soaring.

**Spells:** Bless Egg, Feather Dart, Kill Rodent, Spot Shadow, Toughen Shell.

**Talents:** Defend Egg, Sense Bird.

## Specialized Religion—Vrimak Pantheon

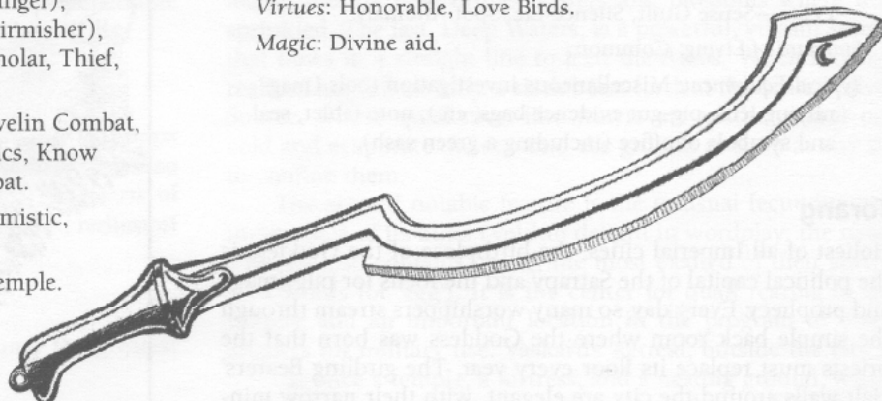
The Vrimak Pantheon is a form of Celestial religion. Vrimak is the Celestial Aviator of the World, and the other gods and goddesses are his kin or servants. Although the Rinliddi solar cults recognize the supremacy of Yelm, they carry out his rites using Vrimak forms, customs, and prayers, such as the Empty Nest Burning funerary service, or the Twelve-Feathered Homing Chant performed every morning. Many Rinliddi initiate or devote themselves to a specific deity; see the listing on the next page for sample deities.

## Vrimak Pantheon Keyword

**Abilities:** Know Vrimak Myths, Worship Vrimak Pantheon.

**Virtues:** Honorable, Love Birds.

**Magic:** Divine aid.





## Sample Deities of the Vimak Pantheon

**Cavalry Soldier:** Vaskaru the Falcon Warrior. The patron of the avilry, a fierce protector of his people.

**Affinities**—Avilry, Hero, Warrior.

**Entertainer:** Whiser the Warbler. The Keeper of Songs, whose music can divert and distract or else summon the avian tribes to council or battle.

**Affinities**—Call Birds, Whistle.

**Farmer:** Basekora the Hen. Plump and cheerful, Basekora tends to her huge family with love and homely wisdom.

**Affinities**—Agriculture, Raise Family.

**Foot Soldier:** Durendalu and Varmanor, Soldier and Officer, Cock and Augner. Good soldiers know their place: Varmanor's military learning and Durendalu's practical skills have taken them from victory to victory.

**Affinities**—Battle, Chain of Command.

**Healer:** Azura the Gentle Mother. Healed representation of Cosmic Motherhood, worshippers may not engage in any act of violence except in defense of their own young.

**Affinities**—Healing, Motherhood.

**Hunter:** The Sparrowhawk of Dusk. Always the outsider, he has sacrificed much for the hunt, even his name.

**Affinities**—Pursuit, Silence, Sudden Strike.

**Merchant:** Danvodir the Ibis. Long-necked scribe and merchant, he keeps the Great Ledgers that tally the world.

**Affinities**—Practical Learning, Record-Keeping, Trade.

**Petty Noble:** Tholm the Descender Hawk. The Snow Hawk brings Vimak's wisdom and justice to the world of man.

**Affinities**—Hunting Bird, Insight, Justice.

☛ Want to Discover More? See "Tholm" below.

**Scholar:** Danvodir the Ibis. Long-necked scribe and merchant, he keeps the Great Ledgers that tally the world.

**Affinities**—Practical Learning, Record-Keeping, Trade.

**Thief:** Tritwiddith the Jackdaw. The thief on an impulse, who seizes whatever catches his eye.

**Affinities**—Escape, Snatch.

## Tholm

### The Descender Hawk

Tholm is the intermediary between great Vimak and humans. Most Rinliddi families can trace their descent to him. He delivers justice, provides magical insight and help, is visible as the rays of the Sun. He is the father of most predatory birds and the patron of falconry, and his priests must bless most Rinliddan ceremonies. In particular, he is the Lord of Snow Hawks and the God of Falconry.



**Entry Requirements:** Must be of Rinliddi descent.

**Abilities:** Breed Bird of Prey, Devotee of Tholm or Initiate of Tholm, Endure Cold, Falconry, Keen Eyes, Mythology of Tholm, Navigate by Stars, Soul Sight, Train Bird of Prey.

**Virtues:** Just, Loyal.

**Affinities and Feats:**

☛ **Hunting Bird** (Command Bird, Speak with Bird, Spot Prey, Swooping Arrow Flight)

☞ **Insight** (Bird's Eye View, Release Inner Fire, Reveal with Sun Ray, Sense Magic)

⚠ **Justice** (Know What is Just, Know What is Legal, Magisterial Authority, Smite Guilty, Spot Sinner)



**Secret:** Shapechange into Hawk (Allows the devotee to transform into a normal-sized hawk, and acts as a Hawk affinity while he has that shape.)

**Other Side:** Tholm's Eyrie is in the constellation in the night sky that bears his name. From the Eyrie, worshippers may fly to the Golden Age, the Storm Age, the Darkness Age, and into Vimak's Eyrie. After death, Tholm's worshippers join the Descender Hawk hunting spirits and ice demons and soaring on the rays of light from the star.

**Disadvantages:** Tholmites must protect their followers and dispense justice to the common folk, which can bring them uncomfortable but unavoidable responsibilities.

## Reasons to Have Left Home

After long years of apathy and subjugation, the Rinliddi suddenly feel destiny is with them. One result of this is that young Rinliddi are proving dynamic and adventurous and, although many have thrown themselves into the restoration of the native culture, for others this has translated into wanderlust and a search for adventure and opportunity.

# Kostaddi

*We are the true and chosen people of Emperor Sun!*

Kostaddi is one of the more heterogeneous satrapies of the Empire. It is home not only to a large Dara Happan population, but also a wide range of other cultures, from the Sable Riders of the Hungry Plateau to the grim inhabitants of the hell-city of Alkoth.

The people of Kostaddi surrendered to Sheng Seleris. As punishment for this treachery, they have been subject to the Khan of Khans of the Sable Nation since 4/27 (1436 S.T.). He collects tribute from the lowlanders in the manner of a nomadic lord, following the rituals of Jenarong and Jaquat. He assigns the tribute gathering to clan khans, in a form of tax farming, and collects his tribute from them. The Khan of Khans holds court in Two Towers, which commands the only route up from the lowlands, when he is not conducting his seasonal journey across the Plateau.

The native Kostaddi are largely farmers and petty townsfolk, and although heavily influenced by the dominant Dara Happan culture, they still cling to their native worship of Gerendetho the Great Billy Goat and his wife Senkana, the Barley Mother. They account for less than a third of the total population, but in many cases even the Dara Happans in Kostaddi have begun adopting some of their ways, from their useful magic to their characteristic broad-brimmed straw hats.

## Potent Lands of the Rich Earth

Kostaddi comprises the eastern portions of the Dara Happan provinces of Vonlath and Henjarl as well as the hill lands of the Kostaddi and the Sankenites. It is a land of contrasts: two thirds of the territory is rich farmland, but the rest is the bleak steppe atop the Hungry Plateau. Kostaddi is the most temperate of the satrapies, shielded from the worst winter storms by Karasal and Silver Shadow, with warm summers and mild winters, and only the high Hungry Plateau ever experiences serious

cold. It has long been associated with its herds of goats, although Dara Happan lands favor cows and pigs.

## Alkoth

One of the three great Dara Happan cities, Alkoth is the home of Shargash, the Dara Happan god of destruction and war. The Girdle of Shargash (a titanic wall of impenetrable green stone) surrounds the ancient city. Its four gates are tunnels under the wall to the outer city, largely made up of docks and the Jaran riverfolk dwellings along the curve of the Oslir River around the city. The wall marks more than just the city limits, for within its confines the Inner World gives way to the Dara Happan Underworld. Inside the city, beneath a starless sky, the grim Alkothi live, love, fight, and raise families like other people. They simply do so alongside the legions of demons and ghosts that are the children, servants, or slaves of Shargash. The people of the lands around the city call it Hellgate, and rightly fear the berserker armies that spill forth from its gates to bring the word and power of the Red King to those who displease Shargash. Alkoth has never fallen to assault, only treachery and the vagaries of politics. As such, it has never been sacked or pillaged, the only city in Dara Happa to claim such an honor. The records and libraries of Alkoth are intact, but private. Yelmgatha, an exceptional hero, came out with a copy of *The Glorious ReAscent of Yelm*, and thus reestablished the ancient Dara Happan religion.

At the Dawn, the city was independent, but joined the Empire under Emperor Khordavu. Alkoth will only follow the true Emperor, just as Shargash would only obey Yelm. Every emperor since Anaxial has visited Alkoth as part of the Eleven Tests and received the Girdle of Strength upon his acceptance.

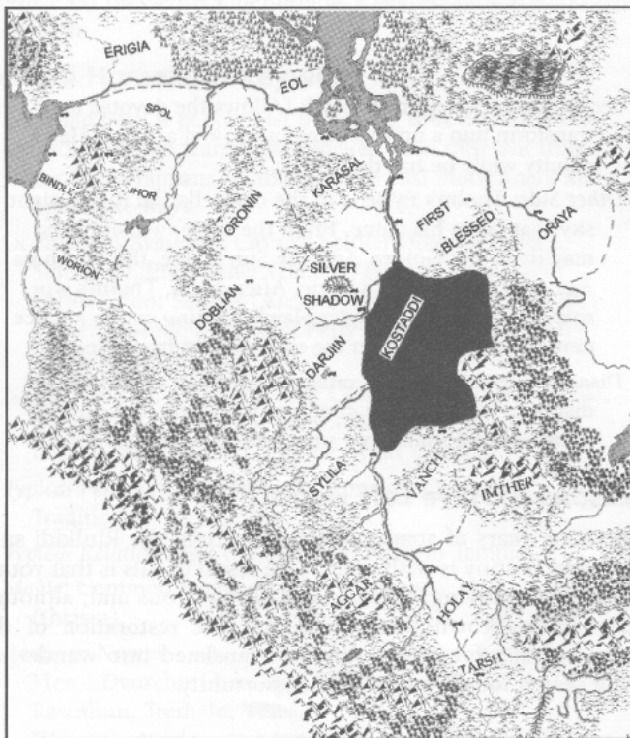
Many warriors of the city serve in the Imperial Army, private vexillae, or the bodyguard details of powerful and envied Yelmic nobles. In return, the city and its people are shunned by most Imperials as a damnable pit. Many bloody cults exist there that daily sacrifice slaves and citizens to Shargash. The streets are covered in the ashes of the dead. The people revel in mob violence and surrender themselves to the ecstatic dance and drums that echo around the city at every holy event and sacrifice.

Three cult officials share rule of the city. The Red King has authority over external city relations (including all aspects of war). He must be a peerless warrior and high priest of Shargash the Destroyer. The Green King rules within the walls and provides fertility to the croplands outside the city. He is the high priest of Alkor the city god, commander of the Elevens, and champion of Shargash the Purifier. Behind the two kings of the Inner World is the Black King, who epitomizes the mystical aspect of Shargash and his power of *rakapas*: disintegration or dissolution. The Black King often walks the streets covered in filth and ash, speaking in the hidden tongue of his god while enraptured citizens listen and hope for a blessing. Death at the hands of the Black King is a great honor to the family of the slain, whose soul serves Shargash as a demon in its next life.

## The Imperial Census

Population: 585,000

Alkothi	16%
Dara Happan	35%
Kostaddi	30%
Lunar	10%
Sable	9%





## The Hungry Plateau

Ten hundred years ago, Sable Riders were recruited from the distant lands of Prax to fight the savage Pentans. The Hungry Plateau Sable Riders are their descendants. Emperor Khordavu granted them the harsh and seemingly uninhabitable Hungry Plateau in 230, but its tough plants and hostile spirits were well suited to the sable folk. Khan Jaquat united their tribes and was the first to raid the lowlands. Unconquerable at the height of their power, they kept a rough independence until the Khan of Khans led his vast horde against the new Lunar Emperor. He sought great wealth in partnership with the Imtherian rebel Jannisor. The army entered Glamour, ascended the tower, and stormed across the Silver Road towards Moongate. There, suspended, the Twin Stars showed them their true destiny with the Goddess and the Empire. They stopped their attack and fell upon Jannisor instead.

Now the Sables are a terrifying cavalry force at Moonson's disposal. For their valor in fighting Sheng (in contrast to the cowardly surrender of the Kostaddi lowlands), they were granted overlordship of the satrapy. The current Khan of Khans, Rhaffa, is no simple barbarian, but a figure as at home on the saddle of a sable as playing the political games of the Imperial court in his role as Satrap of Kostaddi. Although he has given many clans a 'grazing' (a fief generally containing a few towns from which they can collect tribute) in Kostaddi, they still maintain their nomadic lifestyle, herding their animals from pasture to pasture on the Plateau.

The Sables are a loud, boastful people long inured to the hardships of living on the Hungry Plateau. They are also a proud people, who are used to receiving the tribute from the surrounding terrified lowlands and have no compunction about doing whatever it takes to achieve their goals. They hunt the laughing dog, burrowing land-eel, running owl, and gray deer with their javelins and hunting dogs, and herd sables, cattle,

and goats. They worship their founder, Jaquat the Warlord, and his wife, Ergessa the Obedient Wife. Shamans worship the Silver Sable and its spirits.

## Sanken

In Sanken, the bulk of the population follows traditional gods, such as Gerendetho, but are ruled by a substantial class (almost a third) of Yelm worshippers who follow the ways of Sankendavu, their ancient hero. Sankendavu taught that 'We are all Yelm' to those of the pure bloodlines, and his people have followed that creed, even though it often brings them into conflict with the mainstream Yelmic cult in the Oslir valley. Due to their philosophy, Yelmites from Sanken are unconventional, self-responsible, and eager to quest for their powers, as Yelm did in his youth. They believe utterly in *noblesse oblige*, protecting and helping their peasants with a fierce sense of responsibility. Sankenites excel as warriors; they emulate Yelm and his heroes, and those seeking an elite force with unbending honor hire them as bodyguards and hoplites. They are traditionally supportive of new ideas and exploring the many ways of Yelm. As a result, they were foremost in aiding Khordavu in his reform of the Empire in 220 S.T., entering into the resulting Dawn Age mysteries, and accepting the Dragon Sun when he ruled. They aided the last solar Emperor, Yelmgatha, in paving the way for the Red Emperor.

Their capital is Orlentos. Built originally by Sankendavu upon the precipitous slopes of the Vragum Plateau, Orlentos means "place of turbulent strength" in Dara Happan. The Bokosin River shields two sides of the plateau in a triangle, with the third side guarded by a titanic ditch that can be flooded from the river. Atop the plateau, the ancient and ever-increasing walls, towers, and bastions of Orlentos soar. Here stands the temple citadel that holds Sankendavu's preserved body, which is visited by Sankenites seeking inspiration.

## Shargash the Destroyer

### The Fear Striker

Shargash is the God of War, the source of all fighting arts. Yelm's most violent son, Shargash participated in the making of the world, and in the making of Alkoth and its traditions. He was trouble, always ready to turn his violence against any foe. The Golden Age was the Age of Peace, and so always and ever the Golden Emperor held Shargash from action.

When the Emperor was murdered in a cowardly manner and went to the realm of Kazkurtum, the Dead God, Shargash was finally released. At last, he met Death at a place in the Underworld called the Boneyard, beneath clouds of flies and vultures. He forced Kazkurtum to beg for mercy and not only freed Yelm, but awoke within himself the burning Janata, the Killer Bolt. Shargash is still the foremost god of the hell-city and troops of Alkoth. Sensible Dara Happans fear him and his blood-thirsty followers, but even they recognize that violent and dangerous times sometimes call for a violent and dangerous god.

**Entry Requirements:** Must be male.

**Abilities:** Dance, Devotee of Shargash or Initiate of Shargash, Mace and Shield Combat, Mythology of Shargash, Play Drums, Soul Sight.

**Virtues:** Brutal, Violent.

**Affinities and Feats:**

✠ Berserker (Fight while Injured, Howl of Fury, Smash Many at Once, Strength of Shargash)

✠ Combat (Burning Weapon, Crushing Mace Blow, Shield Help, Smash Shield Wall)

✠ Destruction (Crack Earth, Fiery Aura, Strike Foe with Sky Bolt, Violent Wind)

**Secret:** Janata the Killer Bolt (The devotee invokes this magic in a contest by bidding all his AP at once. If he drives his opponent below 0 AP and is victorious in the contest, the opponent dies.)

**Other Side:** Shargash' Palace is on the Bloody Planet in the Solar Realm. After death, his followers go to his Palace, where they practice fighting until he sends them back to the Middle Realm as daimones of death and destruction. Shargash' planet wanders slightly in the sky, always moving closer to any large war so that he can get a better view of the bloodshed. From Shargash' Palace one may charge into the Golden Age, the Storm Age, the Great Darkness, or the Underworld.

**Disadvantages:** The cult is not popular outside of Alkoth except as mercenaries; even then their blood-thirsty excesses are frowned upon. Imperial Citizens find Shargash reactionary, violent, and compulsive, so his worshippers rarely achieve positions of power (at least, not outside of Alkoth).



# Sylila

*Sylila first, Empire second!*

Originally an independent land of Alakoringite Orlanthi, Sylila had a proud and warlike tradition of its own before Ingkot Axe-and-a-Half, mightiest of their chieftains, decided to seek a bride from the growing Empire to the north. He found his match and heartmate in Hwarin Dalthippa, the Conquering Daughter, seed of Takenegi. Their marriage opened the way south for the Empire. Ingkot's charismatic generalship, Dalthippa's magical powers and organizational abilities, and Imperial money and troops helped them subdue all Sylila. They marched on, and by war, diplomacy, and intrigue subjugated the Dara Ni, the Lakrene, and many other tribes and clans. In 2/25 (1326 S.T.), Takenegi accepted Sylila as a satrapy, and Ingkot and Dalthippa turned their energies to construction and governance.

Yet Dalthippa never set aside her sword and war-mask. When her son and then her husband died fighting southerners, she vowed vengeance. Her Daughter's Road Campaigns subjugated first Holay, then Vanch and Imther. Later, when Sheng's invasion shattered the Empire, Sylila was one of the main engines of recovery: a bulwark against the southern barbarians, a storehouse of sacred lore, and a source of invaluable food, wealth, and enthusiasm. The current Satrap, Pardidas, is the latest scion of the ErrioUnit clan that has ruled Sylila since 6/44 (1561 S.T.).

## Axe Lands of the Barbarian Satrapy

Sylila is a land of hills and valleys, with the cold winters, biting winds, and early frosts that pampered Pelorians never face. The western banks of the Oslir and the wide valley of the Erustus and Erinflarth Rivers are agricultural lands, with wheat fields, orchards, and plantations. The livestock of the region is strong and vital: Sylilan horses are much in demand (especially those from Cafol), and Sylilan boars are as prized on the table for their flavor as famed for their truculence in the gladiatorial

arenas of the Empire.

In many ways, the Satrapy is a confederation. To the north are ethnic Darjiini along the Erinflarth. To the southeast are dog-worshipping Jajalorings—indeed, the town of Kerikor has the only legal temple to Jajagappa the Hound in the region, for

this quarter of the satrapy was once part of the land of Saird. The core of Sylila includes Terarir, the lands along the Oslir, and the more turbulent regions of Dara Ni, Rist, and Lakrene.

The capital, Jillaro, is a large city of model Lunar design, built to Dalthippa's personal plans. It is a marvel of efficiency and aesthetics, graced by the works of such famous artists as Iphigios the Sculptor and Orenzo the Muralist. The mighty Temple of the Conquering Daughter, a religious center, school of engineering, and formidable fortress, dominates the broad acropolis, and the awesome heroquest roads cross the Oslir river nearby, stretching into the Provinces. The commoner's parts of the city are full of gargoyles, especially overlooking the Up-and-Down Market. Dogs dominate motifs among the Jajalorings who join the Silver Shields regiment based here.

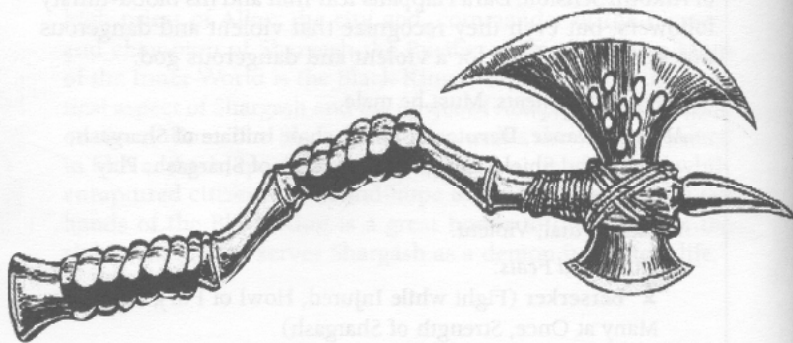
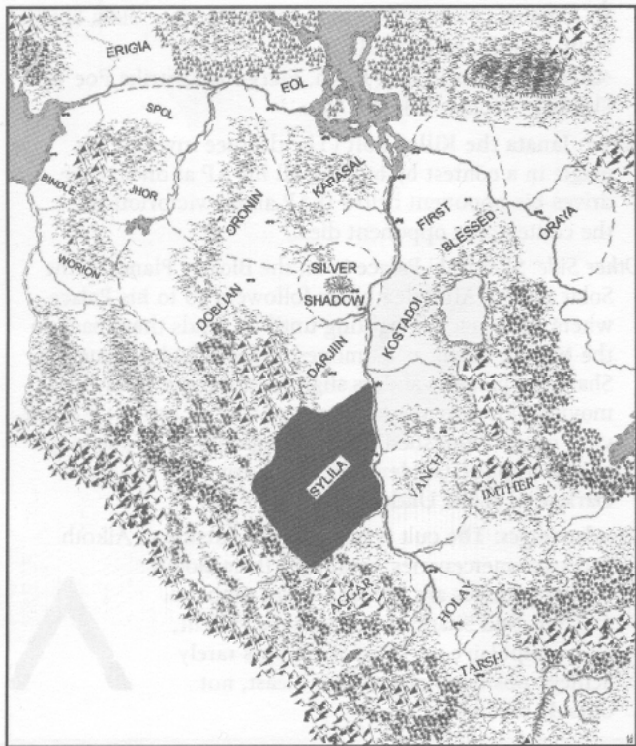
## Dara Ni

The Dara Ni are the rich lands of the Erinflarth valley. The land has a mixed population that speaks of its turbulent history, having been the pawn of the great Pelorian powers since the days of the Jenarong Emperors and the Dawn. Alkoth lays claim to the land, as do Sylila and Darjiin. Each has warred over it, and each remembers ancient rights and privileges there. Currently, Sylila holds it as a reward for its efforts in the Seleric Wars, although border disputes with Darjiin and Kostaddi are common and have occasionally broken into high-level dart wars and low-level military campaigns. Dara Ni once had a king and a crown. Not since the Conquering Daughter has there been anyone to claim it, although a wistful prophecy persists concerning the return of a lost bloodline and independence. The dominant city of Thubana itself, however, is a Dara Happan polis and provides a hereditary senator to the Imperial Senate in Raibanth. Called the City of Spires, Thubana is famed for its tall towers and elegant plazas as well as the largest Dayzatar temple outside Yuthuppa.

## The Imperial Census

Population: 800,000

Dara Happan	16%
Darjiini	15%
Jajaloring	5%
Lunar	11%
Qdayling Alakoringite	36%
Talastari	12%
Other	5%





## Other Lands of Sylila

### Saird

Saird, an ancient kingdom of dragon-slayers, covered lands now claimed by Sylila, Vanch, and Holay. The Sairdites were the greatest worshippers of Jajagappa the Dog Father, known as the Hunter of Souls, Netmaker, Binder of Fate, and Guide of the Dead. Saird fragmented after its men died in the Dragonkill, but for generations rulers have sought to reunite it and thus gain both rich lands and powerful magic. Sylila has the greatest political clout within the Empire. Holay, through its mysteries of the Red Woman, holds the rites of Saird's Land Goddess. Vanch has cunning and a secret known only as the Deeper Dive. So far, none have gained a decisive upper hand, but the Hero Wars are now, and the old certainties are gone...

### Lakrene

The tribal confederation of Lakrene is centered on the Erinflarth valley and the four cities that make up the King's Council that advises the High King (usually the King of Voranel), subject to the Satrap of Sylila. Lakrene is an ancient tribal land and a major exporter of wool and woolen garments to the Empire. The wool trade has made them wealthy but brings them into conflict with their primitive and rebellious subjects, the Bilini. As struggles over hill pastures become bitter, the loss of flocks to raids may mean the fiscal ruin of several important bloodlines in the cities. The Bilini claim to the throne of Lakrene has been disproved many times over the years, usually by force of arms.

### Rist

Rist was an elf forest at the Dawn. The infamous Moonburn of 1/49 (1296 S.T.) cleared it of Aldryami. Hwarin Dalthippa healed the land and settled many of her veterans there as a reward for their services. Since then it has maintained a growing population, although infrequent outbreaks of Aldryami growth still occur when a root from an old tree surfaces and tries to destroy all nearby human life. Rist is still held as an Imperial land charter for retiring veterans, although the available plots of arable land are becoming scarcer.

### Talastar

Talastar is a region, not a country, home to a collection of tribes who have followed the same gods and ways for hundreds of years. Unusually for Orlanthi, there is a healthy mystical practice alive among the Talastari, that of Tarumath, the High Storm. Although its adherents are rare, they are accorded great respect as living reminders of the power the Talastari had long ago under their great god-king, Lokamayadon. Although the Lunar Empire claims tenuous suzerainty over the Talastari, they are in fact independent. The

### The Kingdom of Bilini

This largest non-Imperial kingdom of the Talastari has close ties to the Aggari and Skanthi peoples. Technically, the Bilini are part of Lakrene, although this is an ancient issue only accepted by the Bilini when it suits them (such as when they are laying a claim to the throne of Lakrene).

The Bilini are a hardy folk, toughened by endless war with the horrors of Dorastor. The squirming Chaos would be serious threats in its own right were it not orchestrated and controlled by Ralzakark, King of the Broos and foe of the Bilini. Recently, a "compromise" king was elected at a moot of the Bilini Tribe, Bolthor Brighteye. Bolthor has solidified the kingdom's ties to the Empire by increasing trade and taking a Lunar bride, Monnie the Shriill, a Seven Mothers priestess with a powerful reputation.

lure of Imperial riches has enticed many brave Talastari men to join Imperial service; most are never seen again, but a few come back laden with wealth and tall tales.



# Homeland: Sylila

For Sylila, incorporation into the Empire has been extremely profitable, bringing a massive expansion in size, wealth, and power. Its people joined through alliance rather than conquest. Sylilans are proud that the daughter of the Emperor became their king's wife and taught them that the Star Bear is actually the Moon Bear.

Sylilans know that the Heartlanders mock them for their rough-edged ways, such as the trews their chieftains wear beneath their togas. However, they know that their so-called 'Barbarian Satrapy' is the dominant power in the southern reaches of the Empire—and that their garb is eminently sensible, as anyone who has felt the sharp Axebeak Winds whistle down the Erustus Valley would agree. Indeed, although Satrap Pardidas is reputed to be something of a dandy for his brilliant white clothes and elegantly waxed mustache, he is also a famous hunter, as comfortable sleeping under the stars on an icy hillside as holding court in Jillaro.

Clear divisions remain within Sylilan society, broadly among the city dwellers, the valley farmers, the highland hunters and foresters, and the 'Outliners' who live in the hills to the west, beyond the Glowline. Yet, first and foremost they share a common belief in Sylila's destiny and an appreciation for the Empire's role in their rise.

## Sylila Homeland Keyword

**Look and Feel:** Proud masters of both an ancient, barbaric heritage and a new, civilized future. Although they have adopted many of the trappings of Dara Happa, they still have the rough and egalitarian ways of their past.

**Occupations Available:** Cavalry Soldier (Regular, Skirmish), Entertainer (Hornpiper, Singer), Farmer, Foot Soldier (Archer, Regular, Shock, Skirmisher), Healer, Hunter, Merchant, Petty Noble, Scholar, Thief, Warrior.

**Native Abilities:** Axe and Shield Combat, Geography of Sylila, Know Local Area, Rural Survival Skills, Sylilan Customs.

**Typical Personality:** Fear Dragons, Independent, Proud.

**Typical Relationships:** to Family; to Temple; to Tribe.

**Magic:** Common magic, Moon Bear Religion (theism).

**Common Names:**

**Men**—Ankortil, Bendrek, Gwaeridas, Ingkot, Pardikot.

**Women**—Alurae, Gwaere, Hwarin, Iriphikia.

## Common Magic—Our Own Ways

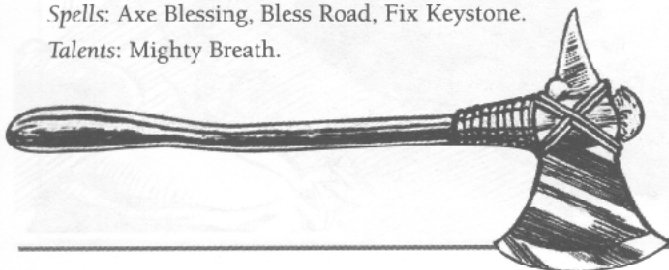
Most Sylilans have not completely adapted to the new ways. Instead, they worship Our Own Ways, which draws on many of the old, often half-remembered Orlanthi ways, as well as admittedly borrowing from the Lunar Way, local mythologies, and even the Moon Bear itself.

**Feats:** Blow Leaves, Shape Stone, Warlike Face.

**Charms:** Autumn Spirit, Matchmaker, Sleepy Spirit.

**Spells:** Axe Blessing, Bless Road, Fix Keystone.

**Talents:** Mighty Breath.



## Sylilan Regions

Home Region	Nickname	Additional Native Ability (+4 if already possessed)
Cities	Togas	Politics
Highlands	Trews	Wilderness Survival Skills
Outside the Glowline	Outliners	Wilderness Survival Skills
Valleys and Lowlands	Kilts	Running

## Specialized Religion—Moon Bear

The Sylilans always favored Odayla the Bear, their god of manhood and hunting, over Orlanth, whom they consider his brother rather than his father. Ringed bears are sacred, and play an important role within the Sylilan pantheon—Odayla himself is one, known as the Star Bear or Sky Bear.

However, Hwarin Dalthippa revealed that, since the Red Goddess rode upon him, he has become the Moon Bear. The Moon Bear cult began slowly, but since its inception has spread throughout the satrapy, largely replacing the worship of Odayla in the last few decades. The Moon Bear's powers are cyclical, as is his nature. He has seven forms, each associated with one of the Lunar phases and the cycles of life in Sylila. These forms share the *Bear* and *Otherworld* affinities, and each has a third relating to its own nature. The seven forms of the Moon Bear are BendraYoo Stand-Up, CandarYoo the Forager, Moon Gazer, Nest-Builder, Red Moon Burning, The Sleeper, and UrruYoo the Hunter.

Many Sylilans initiate or devote themselves to a specific deity; see the listing below for sample deities.

## Moon Bear Religion Keyword

**Abilities:** Know Moon Bear Myths, Worship Moon Bear.

**Virtues:** Ambitious, Fortright, Independent.

**Magic:** Divine aid.

## Sample Sylilan Deities

**Cavalry Soldier:** Cafoldur the Lancer. Proud father of Sylilan cavalry, who never lost a battle or let a horse suffer.

**Affinities**—Cavalry, Combat, Horse Care.

**Entertainer:** Alugwhen of the Carven Pipes. A goddess of music whose girlish form conceals a fiery heart, and who is as comfortable on the hunt as she is in the home.

**Affinities**—Beast Music, Homely Tunes, Passionate Play.

**Farmer:** Barntar, Orlanthi Farming God. The honest father of his family and tiller of his land.

**Affinities**—Agriculture, Domestic Animals, Honest Work  
 Want to Discover More? See "Barntar" in *Storm Tribe*, page 204.

**Farmer:** CandarYoo the Forager (Crescent-Come Moon Bear). The cheerful husband, who shows his worshippers that there is opportunity and sustenance in even the most unusual places.

**Affinities**—Bear, Feed Family, Otherworld.

**Farmer:** Nest-Builder (Empty Half Moon Bear). The caring wife who puts a sheltering roof above her family and protective walls around them.

**Affinities**—Bear, Nest-Builder, Otherworld.



**Foot Soldier:** Ingkot Axe-and-a-Half. The chieftain who became a king and fathered a dynasty, mighty axe-man and cunning warlord.

**Affinities**—Axe, Shieldwall.

**Healer:** The Sleeper (Black Moon Bear). The representation of winter and hibernation, healing and time.

**Affinities**—Bear, Healing Sleep, Otherworld.

**Hunter:** CandarYoo the Forager (Crescent-Come Moon Bear). The cheerful husband, who shows his worshippers that there is opportunity and sustenance in even the most unusual places.

**Affinities**—Bear, Feed Family, Otherworld.

**Hunter:** UrruYoo the Hunter (Dying Moon Bear). The stealthy and deadly hunting bear.

**Affinities**—Bear, Hunter, Otherworld.

Want to Discover More? See "UrruYoo" below.

**Merchant:** Etyries, Lunar Trade Goddess. Trader and traveler, who bears both the word and the wealth of the Goddess.

**Affinities**—Discovery, Trade, Travel.

**Petty Noble:** Red Moon Burning (Full Moon Bear). Red Moon Burning's full powers have only begun to be recognized, for she is a figure of power and mystery, a leader and a knower of secrets.

**Affinities**—Bear, Majestic Radiance, Otherworld.

**Scholar:** Irippi Ontor, Lunar Scribe God. The god of learning and literacy, patron of those who would open their minds to new knowledge.

**Affinities**—Identification, Literacy, Otherworld.

**Scholar:** Moon-Gazer (Crescent-Go Moon Bear). The enigmatic cub who watches the night sky for signs and portents.

**Affinities**—Bear, Moon Gazer, Otherworld.

**Thief:** Desemborth, Orlanhi Thief God. The black-sandaled thief, unseen in the darkness, who slips past his enemies like the very wind in the night.

**Affinities**—Movement, Stealth.

Want to Discover More? See "Desemborth" in *Thunder Rebels*, page 221.

**Warrior:** BendraYoo Stand-Up (Full Half Moon Bear). The fierce defender of his community, who fights with relentless and savage skill.

**Affinities**—Bear, Bearclaw Fighter, Otherworld.

## UrruYoo

### The Hunter



UrruYoo is the hunter, who brings down the reincarnating moon deer and mundane prey alike for his community. He is especially popular among the highland tribes. He uses stealth and speed to get close to his prey for a kill, and knows the secrets of claw-fishing in the cold highland streams and the snarl that robs his prey of the will to flee.

**Entry Requirements:** None special.

**Abilities:** Devotee of UrruYoo or Initiate of UrruYoo, Fishing, Hunting, Mythology of the Moon Bear, Remain Motionless, Soul Sight, Sprint, Stealth.

**Virtues:** Fierce, Patient.

### Affinities and Feats:

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

Ⓢ **Otherworld** (Bite Away Feats, Bite Away Spirits, Bite Away Wizardry, Communicate with Otherworldly Beings, Sense Otherworldly Presence)

⚡ **Hunter** (Attract Prey Animal, Burst of Speed, Endure Cold, Hide Scent, Quick Slash, Stunning Smash)

**Secret: The Great Snarl** (The hunter's bellowing snarl freezes prey animals within earshot with terror. Only trained, magical, or otherwise special animals may resist, and no multiple target penalties apply. The snarl may also affect timorous sentient beings such as trollkin and base cowards, at the narrator's discretion.)

**Other Side:** UrruYoo roams the skies near Rufelza, and burrows within his skyplains lead to her surface.

**Disadvantages:** None special.

## Reasons to Have Left Home

The Sylilans' new confidence and ambition is reflected in their interest in travel and adventure. Additionally, as the lynchpin of the southern reaches of the Empire, Sylilan soldiers, administrators, and colonists can be found almost anywhere.



# Darjiin

*We are the children of SurEnslib, true to our rich, dark, and ancient traditions.*

The Darjiini live along the western bank of the Great Oslir in a warm and fertile land of marshy islands, sheltered streams, hilltop villages, and submerged paddy fields and reed-beds. Although many live in the ancient stone forts of the Manimati princes and others in the squat cities of the plain, all Darjiini see the marshes of their homeland as the hearts and wombs of their culture, the curling, reed-laden rivers its veins, and the fetish-shrine islands its soul. They are an ancient people, who have known sorrow, loss and conquest, but who have retained their pride, their good humor and their intimate bond with the great spirit SurEnslib, the Spirit Heron with whom all life ends and begins.

The Dara Happans conquered the Darjiini almost 1500 years ago. They periodically rise but are always beaten, often in the periodic pogroms launched from Alkoth. It has been this way since Emperor Manarlavus first declared, "I hate Darjiini usurpers." Although always defeated on the battlefield, the Darjiini never surrender their ways, for they know that they are the children of the great spirit SurEnslib.

## The Fertile Land

The most densely populated satrapy in the Empire, Darjiin consists of the western portions of the Dara Happan province of Henjarl and ancient Darjiin, in the western portion of the Oslir Valley. Swamps, marshes, and small lakes cover nearly a tenth of the land, but the people reclaim more land every year for the sprawling rice paddies and fertile fields that stretch to the rolling foothills of the Yolp Mountains. Rice is the most important crop, although wheat, maize, and sugar beats are also grown, and Dezokon truffles are prized throughout the Empire.

## Haranshold

The Darjiini capital is a metropolis of 28,000 souls, famous for its moonboat yards and the Satrap's floating palace, a traditional Verundumi pleasure barge on Lake Kotor. The city sits atop six hills, joined by ridges and valleys. Gurushem Hill provides the best view across Lake Kotor and is favored by the rich for their palaces. Shividru Hill is the closest to the great moonboat yards of the Three Hop Basin and holds the largest temple to Vargar the Sky-Mariner in the Empire. The yards produce scraps and shavings of moon-reeds. Thanks to their combined magical resonance, they rise into the air in a fog of offcuts every Full Moon Day, obscuring the yards and portions of the city. It is rumored that there is a cavern carved deep under Tulandros Hill that hides a temple to DjeDje, the Crocodile. The peasants believe that the djeDje spirits wander the streets below the hill eating the poor.

Yelmic trade houses refuse to reside in such an irregular and filthy city. Instead, they have built a perfectly circular town farther around the shore of Lake Kotor called Irremesh. The people of Haranshold that work or trade there delight in littering its broad streets and white walls with honest swamp mud and marsh detritus.

## Manimati Cities

The Manimati cities are traditional centers, usually fortified hilltop towns behind crude, cyclopean walls. **Dorkath** is the center of the worship of SurEnslib; it annually re-enacts the Great Sex Hunt of Dorkath, a three-day orgy in which the city's foun-

tains spout wine, celebrating the rich fecundity of the Old Bog (which is now in the Spirit World). The city is famous for its splendid bell tower, a soaring edifice that towers over the Frangin

Quarter. The bell only rings to the sound of the Drums of Alkoth, to signal a city-wide evacuation. Recently, several Shargashi from Alkoth tried to remove the clapper, hoping that when the next crusade arrives the Darjiini would still be home.

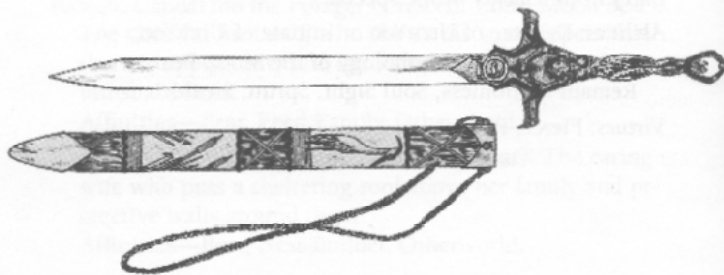
**Ernez** is a maze of buildings and bastions perched atop and burrowed into the mighty UrSardu Rock. It is under the protection of the immovable and indefatigable battle spirit UrSardu, son of Kotor. **Manithi** is one of the oldest Manimati cities, home to many Verondum spirits, who flocked to the area to defend the Darjiini from the Yolp Mountain trolls. Its Wall of Jaws is decorated with troll skulls and jawbones, totems to ward away evil. **Massos** is a small city in two parts: an ancient Manimati hilltop citadel near extensive docks and jetties, off of which many Dara Happans live on assemblages of tethered barges that form 'floating streets,' among which there are bitter rivalries for precedence and prestige. **Rozarz** is the official entry-point for Yolp trolls wanting to trade with Darjiin. The city is a neutral meeting place for the many clans in the mountains, and often hosts peace negotiations and hostage exchanges. The Manimati of Oarz are feuding with the Satrap over the allocation of the Yolp trade, as the preference given Rozarz has led to the collapse of the Oarz market. Smugglers and river pirates thrive here now, seemingly with the city's blessing. **Oricas**, famed for its forges and armories, is the only Darjiini city never plundered by Alkoth. Local farmers complain that the incarnation of so many spirits of industry and production have driven away most of the local fertility and nature spirits, creating a bleak and dying land. Recently, Fiscal Anarchists attempted to stir up trouble by claiming that the reason Alkoth never assailed the city was because Oricas supplies their hauberks. They were tossed into the furnaces for their base lies.

## Solar Cities

Once part of Raibanth, and still connected to it by the massive Golden Emperor's Bridge over the Joat River, **Amoli** now stubbornly asserts its independence. The Overseer of Raibanth has been trying to rebuild the bridge for years despite the fierce opposition of the Darjiini: with the bridge rebuilt, he will be able to enforce his sovereignty over the reunited city. Every time construction has started, however, there has been some natural disaster, including floods, fires, and infestations of biting insects. Originally founded by a conservative Yelmite monk,

### The Imperial Census

Population:	950,000
Darjiini	65%
Dara Happan	27%
Lunar	8%





## Beveletia

### *Highest Priestess of SurEnslib*

Beveletia is the highest priestess of SurEnslib in Darjiin. Indeed, she is the only priestess—although the Great Heron is a great spirit, the Darjiini have come to realize that they need to call their most powerful shaman in the manner of the Dara Happans in order for her to receive the respect she deserves. She wears the Heron Mask crafted from the feathers of SurEnslib herself, which protects her even from Yelm's fiery arrows.

Beveletia is the keeper of SurEnslib's secret powers, and she hides them discreetly behind closed doors, unusual in her land of public rites. She moves between the nineteen holy Egg Halts, places of power and pilgrimage to all Darjiini. When she moves on, which Halt she goes to and how long she stays there is determined by careful observation of the currents on the Ernezt River, as Beveletia follows the Big Slow Dance. When she is in residence, a Halt is closed to all but Manimati and her handmaidens, but the common folk for leagues around come to leave offerings of fruit, lily wine, and reed-knots. At night, they sing her the soft and loving Queen Sleeping Flowing song.

Beveletia is powerful within the Empire for her role in the construction of the moonboats. Yestendos is SurEnslib's lover, and built high-prowed reed boats to save the Darjiini from the Great Flood. A Darjiini hero, Vargar, first discovered the magic

of the moon-reeds of the Occluded Sea, from which the boats are built. Since the secrets of their construction, consecration, and navigation come from Yestendos, Vargar must propitiate SurEnslib, and Beveletia exacts a high price. Each time a new moonboat is required, a lengthy bargaining session begins, with the Empire offering privileges and inducements. The Emperor has attempted to steal these secrets on several occasions, but the plans have been foiled by the protection of SurEnslib. Beveletia, like her predecessors, has so far proved unconquerable.

Perhaps most importantly, Beveletia also knows the Water Marriage Fire secret of how to enthrone a legitimate Emperor. Before they met the Dara Happans, SurEnslib showed her children how to enthrone their own Emperor. This power is now only used when Dara Happa is weak and the Emperor unable to protect his subjects or, alternately, when the Emperor is too strong and Darjiin is oppressed. The Satrap knows that while he could rule with just Glamour's mandate behind him, to do so without Beveletia's blessing would be to ensure that no true Darjiini would follow him for love or respect. As EndukuOor, Satrap MakkritOor's father and predecessor, said, 'Beveletia's bed is softer than a throne built on spears.' Even so, this blessing is a pale shadow of the Water Marriage Fire rite, which has not been enacted for centuries. Some Lunars and Dara Happans fear that, as the Hero Wars put new strains on the Empire, these rites may once again come into play.

Ulifas has maintained its Star Gazer towers and a reputation for chaste, austere, and humorless citizens. Typical Darjiini manners and worship are found in the Verge, a broad swathe of tumble-downs and dens of iniquity along the Osia River, separated from the city proper by the Purity Bastion. Constructed as a Dara Hapan fastness, Yuniertos still bears signs of its role as an occupation stronghold. The central Bastion of Stars is a mighty fortress, studded with watchtowers, balefires, and Buserian star towers.

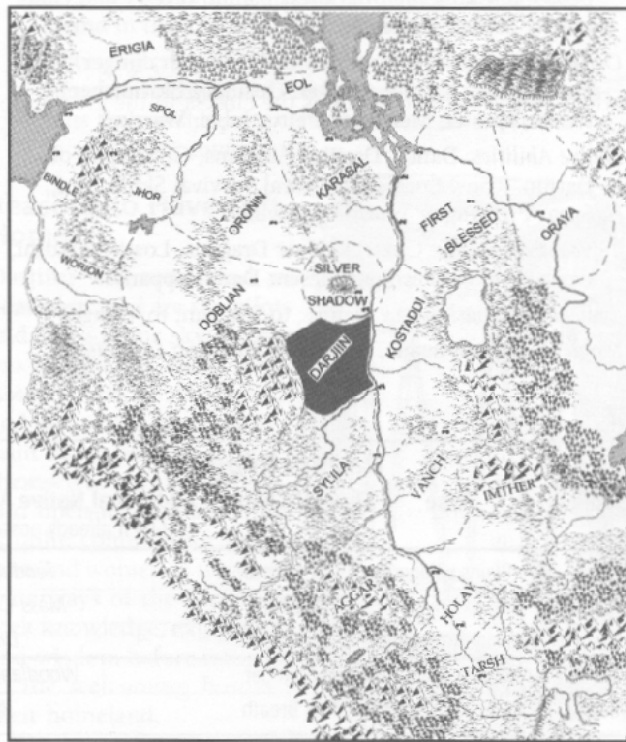
## Woodtwine Cities

Borstaka is not on any major river. Nonetheless, it is a city of water and weed, a sprawling settlement built on wooden stilts and platforms above an unusual bog, home of the spirit family of BorstakUru, most notably the six AraziUru, or Mothers of Sink. The water that bubbles to the surface here is milk from their teats, nourishing their fourteen-fourteen children, from tiny DzedzaUru, the Hiss-Winged Biter, to mighty KotornaUru, the Green-Blue-Green Water Snake. The center of the city, the Hale Pavilions, are built on an interconnected series of great wooden platforms, beneath and between which thread myriad canals and cuts, known as Borstaka's Veins.

Beyond the Pavilions are the ramshackle mazes of the five Weedbed Cities, of tethered house-boats and wood-and-weed stilt huts. Since these are constantly washed away, remodeled, or moved, no map of the Weedbed Cities is accurate for more than a day. Foreigners tend to rely on the services of Kerlor's Children, a huge extended family whose members now pilot the knife-shaped 'dryfoot barges' that take visitors around the city, to the eerie cries of 'kuruu-kurukuu'. The city has no walls or bastions, relying instead on both the natural spirits of the marsh and the shadowy brotherhood of the One-Cut Knife, who follow the Kotori ways of KotornaUru. Life in Borstaka is communal but hard, and even the feasts are often melancholy and edged with resentment. This is one of the reasons why outsiders so rarely visit unless they must, the other being the clouds of dzedza insects that rise from the marsh at dawn. They rarely bother Bostakans, so long as they sing DzedzaUru's Lament every nightfall; even visitors who sing the song are not

spared. Evildoers regarded as too heinous even for the sinkers are staked out at night by DzedzaUru's Meander, and the feasting of DzedzaUru's children is rich.

Yushargos is known as the 'floating city' or 'midge-swarm city'. It is little more than a collection of house-barges and temporary reed and wicker tumble-downs linked by paths of cut logs that have to be replaced every season. Every few years, the waters of the Oslir rush through the marsh in what is known as Oslira's Bore, washing away the accumulated marsh detritus (including fixed buildings) as barges ride the muddy swell. The marsh is home to a rich variety of lethal wildlife and animal spirits, from biting dzedze to Oslir sharks and crocodiles.



# Homeland: Darjiin

Few people are as maligned and misunderstood as the Darjiini. Friendly outsiders tend to think of them as simple and peaceable fishermen, builders of nothing more complex than a reed boat despite the squat splendor of their cities and the fierceness of their warriors. Their foes regard them as dissolute and immoral rustics who engage in wild and primitive orgies, but they are the heirs of an ancient and complex culture.

Darjiini live in clans, defined essentially by birth within six degrees of kinship with the clan Manimati. These clans are organized into associations in the same manner as Dara Happans, but there are nonetheless clear distinctions between them. The Weeders are marsh villagers. Much of the population lives on barges and raised homes in the marshes and innumerable small lakes that dot the land and tend their rice paddies and fish farms. The Walkmen are the woodland hunters, the Dryfeet the farmers of the plains. The Stickmen are Lodrili immigrant farmers, derided by the native Darjiini for the weakness of their spirits and their fondness for potent local rice beer. The Highfists are the townspeople of the hilltop settlements. The Satrap MakkritOor of the WyluaOor Clan rules Darjiin from Haranshold. The WyluaOor have ruled since 6/31 (1548 S.T.), and claim descent from Manimat and Verondum. So long as the taxes are collected and peace reigns, however, the Satrap's hand is very light.

Although most Darjiini are people of the marshes and villages, their towns and cities are crucial as centers of worship and symbols of their ancient history. There are important cultural and political differences among the different cities of the satrapy. The main distinctions among the Darjiini derive from where and how they live.

## Darjiini Homeland Keyword

**Look and Feel:** They seem almost primitive, often singing and dancing, dressed in little more than a loincloth and a string of spirit-charms. But the Darjiini are an ancient people masking their darkness behind revelry and complexity behind simplicity.

**Occupations Available:** Entertainer (Drummer, Singer), Farmer, Foot Soldier (Archer, Ordinary, Skirmisher), Healer, Hunter, Merchant, Petty Noble, Warrior.

**Native Abilities:** Dance, Darjiini Customs, Geography of Darjiin, Know Local Area, Rural Survival Skills, Sing, Spear Fighting or Wrestling, Swim.

**Typical Personality:** Cheerful, Fear Dragons, Loathe Alkothei, Open-Minded, Resilient, Resent Dara Happans.

**Typical Relationships:** to Family; to Shaman; to Village.

**Magic:** Common magic, SurEnslib Tradition (animism).

**Common Names:** A Darjiini's formal name consists of his personal name followed by the root of the clan name: EsesukuEru is thus Eseseku of the SornEru Clan. Since most people in a given settlement generally come from the same clan, nicknames are usually added instead: EsesukuEru is thus usually known as Esesuku Fat-Eel. **Men**—Berkut, Eseseku, Kirvelikur, Losisi, Tarivanit. **Women**—Assuri, Eslurvu, Ohcha, Ussoru.

## Common Magic—'Frog, Fish, and Ferret Fellowships'

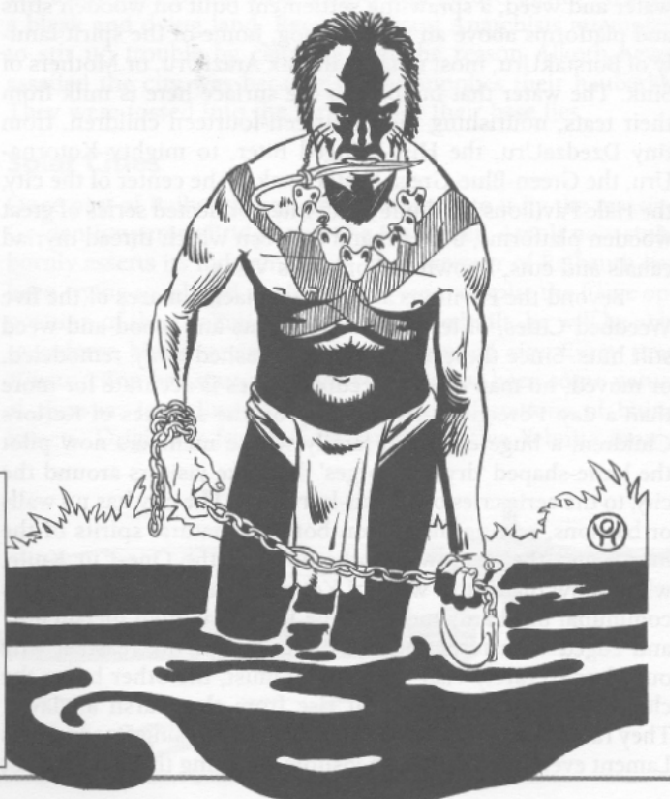
These are a huge range of local petty spirit practices that provide common magic of all types. The Darjiini treat all such abilities as charms, even when an ability is clearly a feat, spell, or talent.

**Sample Common Magic:** Bless Rice, Breathe Underwater, Dance All Day, Dance All Night, Make Love Again, Placate Foreman, Repel Insect, Run On Mud, Sing Sweetly, Sleep Unseen, Snake-Quick.

## Specialized Religion—SurEnslib Tradition

Darjiini worship SurEnslib, the vast and unknowable source that hatched the world and its creatures. Songs and actions are the main ways of worshipping SurEnslib and her children. This is why the generic Darjiini word for a shaman is *eeola*, 'singer.'

The tradition has a wide range of practices, which worshippers see simply as parts of the religion, and join or leave as circumstances and their needs dictate. The rites for awakening a fetch are the responsibility of two different practices. There are specialist shamans who concentrate on individual practices, but many use several or even all of them. Most people worship SurEnslib as spiritists, but some become practitioners of one of the sample practices provided on the next page.



Darjiini Peoples			
People	Type	Typical Charm	Additional Native Ability (+4 if already possessed)
Dryfeet	Plains villagers	Call Animal	Tend Animal
Highfists	Hilltop townsfolk	See Far	Mass Combat
Stickmen	Immigrant Farmers	Light Fire	Drinking
Walkmen	Woodland hunters	Treeclimber	Woodland Lore
Weeders	Marsh villagers	Hold Breath	Boating



## SurEnslib Tradition Keyword

**Abilities:** SurEnslib Tradition Knowledge, Worship SurEnslib.

**Virtues:** Love Darjiin, Nurturing, Subtle, Traditionalist.

**Magic:** Tradition spirits (members usually start with 5 charms).

✕ **Fertility Spirits**—Easy Birther 10 to 20, Fertile Beds 10 to 20, Mating Dancer 10 to 20, Unleash Passion 10 to 5W.

~ **Great Bog Spirits**—Biting Midges 10 to 20, Gripping Reeds 10 to 20, Leaping Frog 10 to 20, Sandbank 10 to 20, Soft Whispering Waters 10 to 20, Wading Heron 10 to 5W.

## Sample Majestic Spirits of the SurEnslib Tradition

**Entertainer:** Perakosus Practice. The spirit of sacred songs, dances, and ceremonies.

**Song Spirits**—Knowledge, Righteous Thoughts, Uplifting Thoughts.

**Farmer:** Shantamar Practice. Patron spirit of the Dryfeet.

**Animal Spirits**—Dog spirit, Pony spirit, Sheep spirit.

**Farmer:** Ugarlodell Practice. Misapplied worship of Lodril, the solar god of the Stickmen's 'village, barley, pig, and chicken culture.' Thus, worshippers gain no benefit from concentrating their magic, and always pay full cost to learn or improve their magical abilities.

**Farm Spirits**—Barley, Chicken, Digging, Pig, Rice.

**Farmer:** Yestendos Practice. Father of the Weeders.

**Boat Spirits**—Boat-Go-Quickly. Don't Sink. Silent Paddle.

**Village Spirits**—Agaro the Rice Spirit, Croaker the Frog.

**Foot Soldier:** Foot soldiers generally follow the appropriate practice of their home region, but may also turn to the Ollan or Kotori practices in time of war, or even the local practices of wherever they may be fighting.

**Healer:** Gissullee the Six-Breasted Mother Practice. The fertile maternal spirit of the Bog, SurEnslib's midwife.

**Mother Spirits**—Healing Kiss, Suck Poison, Wake Gently.

**Hunter:** Verondum Practice (shamanic practice). Verondum hunts the agarzi and other spirits.

**Spirit-Monster Spirits**—Cunning Hunters, Dusk Drummers, Great Eaters, Night Walkers, Renders of Flesh.

✎ Want to Discover More? See "Verondum Practice" below.

**Merchant:** Savasukan Practice. Spirit of traders and wanderers.

**Barter Spirits**—Good As New, Know Your Needs, Lift Goods, Quick Counter.

**Lake and River Spirits**—Each river, rill, and stream has its own special spirit.

**Petty Noble:** Aagsargon Practice. Practice of the Manimati.

**Authority Spirits**—Light of Good Tradition, Light of Sound Headmanship

**Warm Sun Spirits**—Let-the-Crops-Bask, Light-in-Darkness.

**Shaman:** Suvar Practice (shamanic practice). Suvar was a hunter and hero of the Walkmen.

**Wood Spirits**—One With Tree, Run in Wood, Tree-Strong.

**Warrior:** Kotori the Black Death Snake Practice. Kotori is one of SurEnslib's dark defenders, worshipped by executioners, bodyguards, and fell warriors.

**Snake Spirits**—Black Coil, Chilling Hiss, Poison Fang, Snake-in-the-Reeds, Snakedance, Sudden Strike, Twist and Writhe, Unblinking Gaze.

## Verondum Practice

### The Dog-Pole Men



Verondum was a son of Suvar, grandson of Perakosus and Er-Near, Cave Mother. He was wooing SurEnslib, and when he saw her eggs eaten by the vicious race of dog-headed lizards known as agarzi, he took it upon himself to kill them. When their ghosts returned, he chased them away with their own heads on poles. He taught SurEnslib's children this practice to master spirits, both the local agarzi and sereskarto (nature spirits of the woods of Darjiin) and foreign spirits (collectively known as *dakki*). Verondum awakens fetches in his shamans, the *damuski* ('dog-pole men'), who bear a staff topped with an agarzi skull. These 'clawmen' once dominated the whole SurEnslib Tradition, but they resisted foreigners and so are rare now. The Imperial government has occasionally outlawed and persecuted the entire practice, but also supports them when the agarzi demons grow too strong (i.e., once they actually materialize and begin breeding).

**Entry Requirements:** Be accepted as an assistant by a shaman who awakened his fetch in the practice.

**Abilities:** Darjiini History, Follower of Verondum, Open Spirit World, Recognize Alien Spirits, Spirit Face, Verondum Practice Knowledge.

**Virtues:** Fierce, Protective.

**Practice Spirits:**

✎ **Agarzi-el, the Great Eaters** (Bite Through Anything 10 to 20, Keep Eating 12 to 10W).

✎ **Agarzi-pan, the Cunning Hunters** (Ambush 10 to 20, Slink Silently 10 to 5W).

✎ **Agarzi-zu, the Renders of Flesh** (Big Bite 20, Tear Flesh 15 to 10W).

**Fetishes:** Placed in items incorporated into the shaman's pole.

**Secret:** **Dakki Dance** (Allows the shaman to awaken his fetch, as described in *HeroQuest*.)

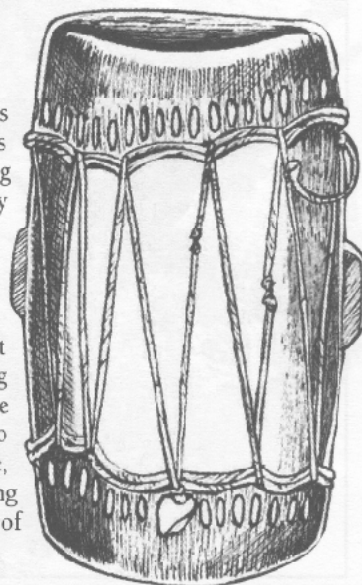
**Shamanic Abilities:** Ally Hostile Spirit, Shamanic Escape, Spirit World Travel.

**Other Side:** Verondum's Trophy Hut is on the Dog-Pole Island in the Old Bog, SurEnslib's demesne.

**Disadvantages:** Membership of this practice may from time to time bring Imperial persecution, and also commits the worshipper to often selfless acts to protect the local Darjiini community.

## Reasons to Have Left Home

Darjiini are renowned as boat-men, and are the pilots and crews of the sky-ranging moonboats. As such, many Associations, noble houses, and mercantile ventures recruit them. But the Darjiini themselves are also restless and open-minded spirits. It is quite common for young men and women to travel the waterways of the Empire to seek knowledge, experience, and wisdom before returning to the welcoming bosom of their homeland.



# Doblian

*We are many and different, but the same Sun and Moon shine upon us all.*

Doblian covers most of the ancient lands of Doblian, Durnvok, Anadikki, and Arir. It is a sparsely populated land, with many hills and rivers that have been warred over again and again. It is now something of a cultural and political backwater, within which many distinct cultures co-exist under the notional overlordship of a Carmanian-dominated Pelandan satrap.

Doblian is home to a bewildering array of different peoples, who have as often intermingled and shared their traditions with their neighbors as they have warred for land and supremacy. The Carmanians who ruled the region before its liberation by HonEel did little to dissuade these internal feuds, happy to see them divide their subjects and cull those of least value.

The core cultures are or are related to the Pelandans. The Arirae have been dominant among the native peoples, and before inclusion within the Lunar Empire this whole region was known as Arir. Now that term is used more accurately for the central lands directly under Arirae control. The other cultures tend towards polarization between civilized urbanites (such as the Naverians) and barbarians (including the storm-worshipping Anadikki and the animalistic Durnvokings).

Carmanians once formally ruled the region, but no longer. Instead, the current satrap is Yan Kor Yan—his clan, the Yanoriao-ilar, seized power after a successful dart competition in 7/4 (1575 S.T.). Although he is Pelandan, he has largely continued the practice of his predecessors, drawing his personal staff disproportionately from among the Carmanians of the satrapy. In part, this is simple snobbery, as the Carmanians are still regarded with some awe as an Imperial people.

## The Patchwork Satrapy

The Satrapy of Doblian covers the upper portions of the Doblian, Oronin, and Selsiva Valleys. The rolling hills of Anadikki, the Yolp foothills, and the rough Doblian Hills divide the satrapy

in two. Major rivers cross it, often running for many leagues between bridges or fords. The lowlands of Doblian are fertile farming areas, with crops of wheat in the east, barley and maize in the west. Farmers herd cattle: great bisosae in the Oronin and Selsiva valleys, smaller holsteins in the east. Hogs, sheep, goats, chickens and more range the hill and forests, which offer plenty of grazing, and yet are also home to such beasts as the great boar, Yolp bear, and mountain lions. This is a sparsely populated land, and thus generally untamed.

Doblian has a mixed climate. The Doblian Hills and Yolp Mountains divide the satrapy and allow ready access to most of it by the ice demons from the mountains. The Doblian valley frequently sees light rains during the year, with a rainy season before winter. The Oronin valley (in the northwest) is the warmest part of the satrapy, but frequent winter storms come roaring down the valleys from the Yolp Mountains, burying the bleak Anadikki hills in snow.

The capital, **Doblian**, is an ancient city known for its square grain towers (from which men are barred) and its round warriors' towers (out of bounds to women). By ancient charter, all the grain gathered on the Doblian River goes to the city for transport downriver to the hungry cities of the Oslir Valley. The city Grain Guild is very powerful, and protects its rights well. Doblian was often a Carmanian stronghold, at other times a Dara Happan center of logistics and armaments. Now, the Imperial Army maintains its Western Headquarters in Doblian. In the final wars between the Lunars and the Carmanians, Emperor Yelmgatha's son Verenesh was slain defending the city from the Carmanians. The tower where he fell to the Fervent Brass Killers maintains a shrine to him and a temple to his father, and is a center of pilgrimage for many pious Dara Happans. The Stars of Sheng Seleris ruled the region from this city until forced away by HonEel the Liberator. The Plaza of Hate is a reminder of their venom, for dozens of the Pentan demons were entombed in rock at the moment their evil lord was defeated. Their furious statues still stand, prepared to ride to battle, yet impotent in the face of the Emperor's Justice.

The other major city, **Meglardirth**, has been rebuilt in Carmanian style. Its dominant karmanoi regularly petition to have

### The Imperial Census

Population: 450,000

Anadikki	10%
Arirae	12%
Carmanian	12%
Durnvoking	5%
Lunar	5%
Naverian	18%
Pelandan	31%
Other	7%



### Doblian Common Religion—Many Many Beast Totems

Given the importance of animal gods, spirits, idols, and ancestors to so many people of the region, common magic usually has some link to a beast, often through the Many Many Beast Totems.

**Feats:** Bear's Roar, Boar's Charge, Bull's Strength, Goose Gander, Lion's Presence.

**Charms:** Goat's Tread, Snuffle Truffle, Wolf's Hunt.

**Spells:** Bless Bull's Seed, Bless Calving, Shatter Bull's Horn.

**R**



it transferred to Jhor (in the Western Reaches), but the satrap refuses to lose such a rich and important city. Nestled among the wharves and storehouses on the waterfront is the Mother House of the Order of Dry Bones, a saintly order of Carmanian viziers who handle burials throughout the land. Their blessings include Rest in Eternity, which prevents the dead from rising. For an appropriate donation, the Order will craft medallions to protect the wearer from the dead.

## The Arirae

Whereas the Pelandans and Dara Happans developed the city-state and urbanized Empire as their expression of political culture, Arir remains a land of powerful clans held together by the bonds of the hunt, the way of the warrior and dynastic bloodlines claiming descent from the gods. In many ways this political structure is that of the Storm Age: a people of tribal warriors and a land where the Daxdarian Epic, The Hunts of Arakang, and The Feats of Kenstrata are a way of life, not tales of the past.

People have occupied their lands since the Provorian Age, when they were born to Arakang and ErtelEnari, the Bear King and Bear Mother, and guided by Kenstrata the Hunter. In the Storm Age, they were conquered by the brutal Andam Horde, but joined Daxdarius in destroying them. They were a Suvarian people and were Dara Happan mercenaries in its many wars. Daxdarius became their war god. He granted them authority over the lowlanders of Durnvok and Doblian and showed the clans the need for unity.

Arir traditions held that only Kenstrata could rule them as a superior, so they created the post of *wanax*, 'first among equals' of the *hegemon*, the warrior nobility of the Arirae. The *wanax* is the Arirae's bravest warlord, fiercest ruler, and most astute politician, but rules only as long as he is respected and feared. His position is sustained by a reputation earned from the many dangerous rituals and feats required of him, and the completion of heroic tasks for the gods of Arir and his own ends. The present *wanax* is Vanaxius Battle-scar, who has risen to the rank

through a host of foes and sea of blood, much of it his own. He rules from Gostolos, although Forrik is the capital of the lowland Doblian Arirae clans. There are also Arirae within Oronin Satrapy, and the border city of Valkenth is home to the Temple of Daxdarius the War Bear.

Many of the city dwellers hold lodges and family in the highland clans and although urbanized, they strongly resist cultural divergence from their rural kin, and the essential structures and attitudes of the highlanders still dominate. Most highland men are *kenstragon*, 'accepted hunters.' Some go on to become warriors (*herentragon*) once they have the wealth to afford and maintain a full panoply of war and have killed a man in one-to-one combat. Those hoping to rise to the rank of *hegemon*, 'hunt leader,' must come from the right bloodlines, show courage and skill and complete a quest for the benefit of the clan. Thus, they follow the ways of Arakang the Sakkar-killer, whose lodge is in the Sky. ErtelEnari Mother Bear, the woman's goddess, teaches the important survival skills of the uplands. She shows how to prepare the correct mating rituals that minimize the risk of battle with the males, who spend their time hunting while the mothers look after the lodge and hearth.

### Arirae Homeland Keyword

**Occupations Available:** Entertainer (Boarhomer, Sword-Dancer), Farmer, Foot Soldier (Regular, Skirmisher), Healer, Hunter, Merchant, Petty Noble, Scholar, Thief, Warrior.

**Native Abilities:** Arirae Customs, Geography of Arir, Know Arirae Myths, Know Local Area, Rural Survival Skills, Spear and Shield Combat, Worship Arirae Religion.

**Personality:** Fierce, Independent, Proud.

**Relationships:** to Clan; to Family.

**Magic:** Common magic, specialized religion (Bear Religion). The highland clans still follow the older ways of Arakang, but the city Arirae draw on the Daxdarian tradition to give shape to their lives (although they too worship Arakang and acknowledge their common heritage).

**Hunter—Kenstrata**

**Affinities:** Discern, Hunter, Prey.

**Noble—Arakang King Bear**

**Affinities:** Bear, Combat, Command.

**Warrior (Female)—Jaga-Natha the Avenger**

**Affinities:** Combat, Otherworld, Vengeance.

**Warrior (Male)—Daxdarius the War Bear**

**Affinities:** Bear, Combat, Hoplite.



## Saint Abbassar

### Founder of the Order of Dry Bones

Shah Carshandar the Peacemaker had the four most beautiful women in Pelanda as his wives. Each represented alliance with a political entity as well as an element. Indisha of the Golden Curve was a Pelandan earth priestess whose first three sons were placed as the shah's noble vassals across his realm. The fourth son, however, seemed destined for an early death. Abbassar was born corpse-white, his breath rasping in his lungs, his skin cold to the touch. Priestesses blessed him and wizards chanted protective spells, but all with foreboding in their hearts.

Yet Abbassar lived. He never grew tall and strong like his brothers, never lost his pallor and his rattling breath. He had from the first a somber wisdom, as one who has not merely been touched by Death, but who lives with it every moment of his life. Carshandar himself said that while he would love him as his own, he felt that Death itself had fathered Abbassar as his price for allowing peace to come to Carmania.

It was never even discussed that Abbassar would be a wizard, not a lord. Eventually, he founded an order that recognized his links with both the Earth and Death. The Order of the Dry Bones is a wizardry school that handles burials throughout the Western Reaches. Although the Order was founded in Meglar-dirth there are local chapters, from the Spolite Glory Glory Houses (which specialize in creating impressive sarcophagi and necropola) to the wandering Gray Cloak Chapter, whose members travel among villages. All members wear gray gloves as a mark of their devotion and wear Dry Bone Medallions, disks of lead and bronze said to protect the wearer from the unquiet

dead. These talismans are available to those of great devotion or who are willing to pay the price demanded by the local chapter.

**Entry Requirements:** Be a member of the vizier caste.

**Abilities:** Calm the Grieving, Give Funeral Oration, Know Abbassar, Know Funeral Customs, Member of the Order of Saint Abbassar, Prepare Corpse for Burial, Rule of Abbassar, Symbolic Sight, Use [Grimoire].

**Virtues:** Philosophical, Quiet.

**Grimoires:**

■ **The Welcoming Earth** (sample spells: Consecrate Grave, Handle Corpse Safely, Preserve Solemnity of Burial Rite, Rest in Eternity, Smite Grave-Robber)

† **The Shroud Texts** (sample spells: Banish Ghost, Create Dry Bone Medallion, Ignore Killing Magics, Sense Death, Sense Undeath)

**Talismans:** All spells are linked to Dry Bone Medallions.

**Other Side:** The Quiet and Permanent Home is Abbassar's node on the Founder's Plane, a dark and restful chamber without hope or fear, passion or sadness.

**Disadvantages:** While respected for their ability to handle the dead without fear of spiritual or material pollution, members of the Order are regarded with disdain by most other wizards, and with discomfort by all. Only in Spol are they treated with the honor due a wizard.

## The Barbarians of the Broken Reach

### The Anadikki

The Anadikki are troublesome hill barbarians who have plagued every Pelorian empire through history until the coming of Our Father. Now, they form a sub-kingdom within the satrapy, and their high karm, or king, sits on the Satrap's Council. These tribesmen worship their own version of the Storm Pantheon, ruled by Tarumath the High Storm, his son Karumath the King, and Brola the Queen. Although storm worshippers, they are not Orlanthi—who hate them—and they are generally loyal to the Empire. The increasing flow of Heartland colonists moving into the valleys is spreading the Lunar Way through the tribes.

The Anadikki live in tribal groups throughout the Urlandi and Ekdek valleys. Centuries of Carmanian rule have left their mark on the people, who have adopted many Carmanian ways and myths. The people are farmers and hunters, but are skilled fighters against the trolls of the nearby Yalp Mountains with their brutal falx-swords and numerous anti-darkness cults.

The town of **High Rock** is the seat of the high karm and site of several markets and fairs. The present high karm, Ulfigmath, delights in public displays of arms. **Arroak** is a proper Lunar city, center of the colony lands and departure point for most missionaries into the highlands.

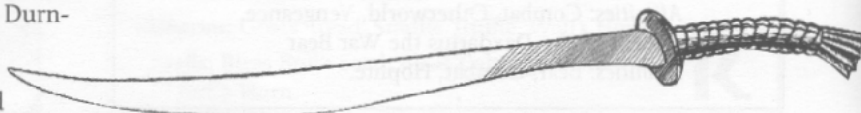
### The Durnvokings

Known to the neighboring Pelandans as 'Broken Pot Country,' Durnvok is largely a flat, rolling plain, scattered with the gnawed bones and rusted swords of a hundred ancient battles. When the Andam Horde marched upon the Arirae, they slew the Durnvoking men as they came, their lion-brother scouts hunting them down for sport. Eventually, the Andams were defeated at the Verunian Fields. Daxdarius released and

armed the slaves and sent them home to hunt down their captors. No Andams survived, but many of their allies did: the bull-people, lion-people, and others. Durnvok was thus repopulated by freed slaves and beast people. The mark of wildness is still upon this land. Since then, ten times ten petty wars have been fought over its barren fields and dusty villages, such that the Pelandans re-gard the Durnvokings as people who would fight one another for as little as a broken pot.

The Durnvokings have six clans, each with its own beast totem. Their king (known as the *kuk* after the ancient Andam warlord) is chosen through trials of strength and cunning. Kor-ged Pigstrangler, the present *kuk*, is a wily veteran of a dozen challenges. **Durnvok** and **Uruanost** are anomalies, hardly representative of the region. Durnvok is an ancient city, created by earth spirits in payment for an ancient debt, but beyond the Carmanian section is largely ruined, its inhabitants little more than squatters. Uruanost, by contrast, is an island of Lunar authority, a market town transformed by the construction of Bright Six-Fold Nexus, a Temple of the Reaching Moon.

Beyond these cities, Durnvok is a land of squalid villages, stony fields, and brooding oak hanging-trees. Although nominally Pelandans, the Durnvokings worship a bewildering array of animal deities and spirits, most of them fierce, vicious, and vengeful. There is a whole family of Bisosae hero cults probably simply transferred from original foreign sources, as well as a number of strange hsunchen families and animalistic spirit practices, from Obasmala the Hunting Lion to Kern the Ordeed.





# Oronin

*We are Pelandans. We are free under the Moon!*

Oronin includes the eastern half of Carmania and the western portions of Naveria and Karasal. To an extent, its creation was intended to provide the downtrodden Pelandans with a home but, as with most satrapies, its borders were also drawn precisely to weaken traditional political units, in this case, Carmania.

The Pelandans occupy the green and fertile lands around Lake Oronin and along the Oronin River, and surrounding territories. Since the Golden Age, Pelanda has been a land of city-states noted for their beauty and civic splendor, with elegant parks and brightly painted buildings. Many famous artists, poets, and fashions have come from Pelanda, but so too have advances in warfare, the sciences, and political organization. Its city-states have made it victim to conquest by foreigners, first the Dara Happans, then the Carmanians, and now the Lunars. Half remain under Carmanian rule. Nonetheless, they find solace in their art and manufacturing: after all, it is widely said that, "Art was invented in Pelanda."

The famous EelAriash Clan has ruled the Satrapy since 6/26 (1543 S.T.). The clan (whose illustrious members included HonEel and now JarEel the Razoress) has been the focus of a generations-long program of selective breeding to produce the strange, the extraordinary, and the heroic. The present satrap, VarEel, is the aging patriarch of his clan, a traditionalist known for his honesty and forthrightness.

## The Oronin Valley

The Oronin Valley is warm and fertile, in which farmers grow abundant harvests of barley and raise cattle and pigs, although slave-labored Lunar maize plantations are an increasingly common sight in the countryside. The Heptagarch Mountains divide the satrapy, with the Pelandan basin to the west and the Darsen and Naverian lands to the east.

When the Lunars stormed the capital, Carantes, the defenders released a hydra upon them. The army ran, but the chaotic monster ate every resident and destroyed much of the city. It was rebuilt after the Lunar conquest, and is now a showcase Pelandan city. It is a graceful and elegant city, notable for its profusion of plazas and galleries and its lack of walls. Such is its desire to present itself as a city of peace that its garrison reg-

iment the Hydras, and the Darseni Nest Thieves live and train in the 'Blind Sixth,' on the very edge of the city. There they can train their martial skills screened from the eyes of the other inhabitants by a sweeping wall painted on the city side with a pleasing vista of golden fields and temple spires.

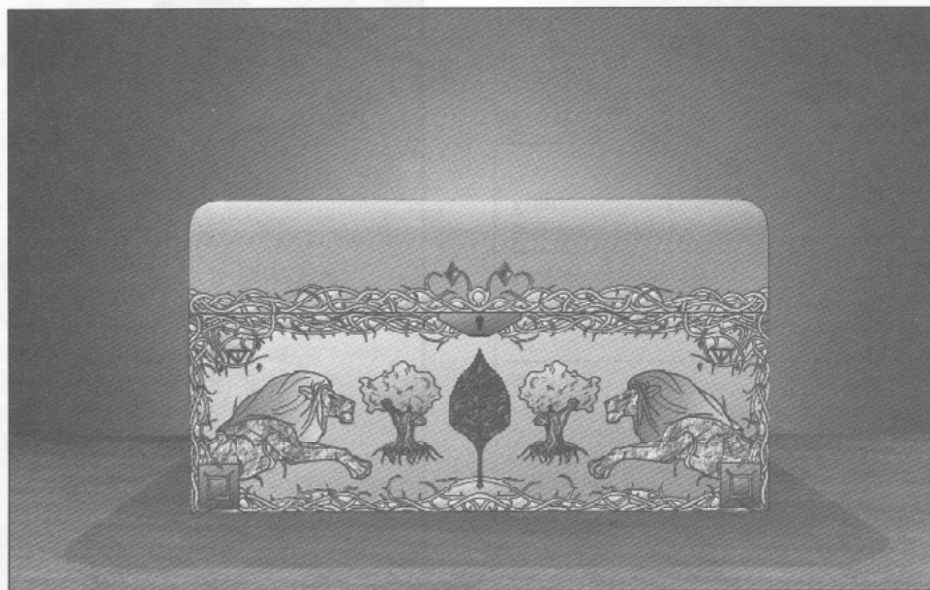
By contrast, the Naverian city of Mesavos is proud to be home of the fabled Marble Phalanx. Behind the sweeping murals, the elegant colonnades, and the breathtaking mosaic that covers the entire western wall, this is obviously a mighty military fortress. Ulawar is the 'Never-Half City,' known for its citizens' whole-hearted enthusiasm, whether they are indulging in the frenzied rites of Uleria (the city boasts the oldest of all the Goddess of Love's temples) or training in the arts of war (Ulawar is home to the Companions, a cavalry unit that rode with Daxdarius himself). On the other hand, Valkenth is primarily an Arirae city (see page 35). Many Arirae warriors make the pilgrimage here to wash their spears in the red waters that flow at the heart of the temple of Daxdarius the War Bear.

The city of Utheneos is best known for its magical UirTuros, the Phallus. On the annual Night of Hope the statue walks the streets seeking out and mating with the city's daughters. Come morning, the statue is found crouched on an eave, standing under a tree, or perhaps sitting in the middle of a street. If pleased, it will be smiling (a favorable omen for the city); if not, it will be frowning. No citizen of Utheneos leaves their homes on the sacred night, and all women sleep alone and blindfolded. The children of UirTuros are born ten weeks after conception and are blessed. Spolites have been banned from the city since "the Cutting," when a Spolite witch severed UirTuros' member with a sickle when he entered her room. The city suffered terrible curses that year.

## The Imperial Census

Population: 500,000

Arirae	5%
Carmanians	9%
Dara Happan	5%
Darseni	11%
Karasali	12%
Lunar	8%
Naverian	10%
Pelandan	34%
Other	6%



# Homeland: Pelanda

The Pelandans have a society with six classes, with all members of a family belonging to the same class. The Firsts were the kings of the cities, positions now held often by Carmanians or Lunars. There are no hereditary Firsts, although Pelandans can once more aspire to rise to this rank from the Seconds, the nobility. Most Pelandans are Thirds: artisans, crafters, and freehold farmers. The Fourths are unmarried laborers and tenant farmers (and may not marry until they qualify to be thirds), the Fifths land-laborers and transients, and the Sixths slaves. Class migration is possible but requires the severance of old clan ties and adoption into a new sponsor clan.

Pelandan life centers on the *ket*, or city-state. Every Pelandan *si* (clan) within the boundaries of the city has the right to speak in its local assembly, a rowdy affair where grievances are raised and settled. With the spread of Dara Happan-style associations, many *kets* have recreated themselves as such organizations. In time-honored Pelandan manner, they are not so much resisting the ways of their masters as adapting in such a way as to preserve their customs.

## Pelandan Homeland Keyword

**Look and Feel:** A gentle and civilized people, prepared to fight when they must, but first and foremost builders of cities, tillers of soil, artists, and artisans of the soul.

**Occupations Available:** Entertainer (Bull-Horner, Puppeteer, Singer), Farmer, Foot Soldier (Archer, Regular, Skirmish), Healer, Hunter, Merchant, Petty Noble, Scholar, Thief, Warrior.

**Native Abilities:** Appreciate Art, [Craft] or [Artistic Skill], Geography of Pelanda, Know Local Area, Pelandan Customs, Urban Survival Skills, Wrestling.

**Typical Personality:** Artistic, Fear Dragons, Resent Carmanians.

**Typical Relationships:** to Family; to Ket; to Temple.

**Magic:** Common magic, Jernotian Way (theism).

**Common Names:**

Men—Haranturvo, Hurfot, Insibiso, Lendarsh, Turomin.

Women—Bustina, Eloina, Orinda.

Pelandans identify themselves by their home city; only outsiders call them Pelandans, after the city of Pelandre, which first united the cities in the Storm Age.

Pelandan Kets		
Ket (City-State)	Nickname	Additional Native Ability (+4 if already possessed)
Carantes	Newcomers	Harmonious Gestures
Hariij	Feasters	Ignore Hunger
Kendesos	Not Blues	Carmanian Law
Kevrinth	Four Fingers	Carve Bone
Mintinus	Bentusians	Carouse
Ulawar	Never-Halvers	Enthusiastic or Zealous
Utheneos	Hopefuls	Hate Spolites

*This table includes the Pelandan kets of Kendesos and Mintinus, which are not actually in Oronin satrapy.*

## Common Religions

### The Joy of Bentus

Bentus is one of the High Gods, the God of Pleasure. He is a god of dissolute indulgence and orgiastic excess, and thus loved by all. However, he is rarely worshipped as a specialized religion. Instead, many Pelandans partake in the Joy of Bentus, a simple but pleasing form of common magic acquired while following the cymbals and brass belles of his bacchanalias.

**Talents:** Find Party, Forget Duty, Have Fun, Heighten Sensual Pleasure, Keep Laughing, Overlook Partner's Faults, Resist Killjoy, Sense Beer, Sing Loudly, Sing Sweetly.

### The Mountaintop Magics

Many people follow the Jernotian Way as a common religion. By just pledging themselves to the Way, they can learn the Mountaintop Magics from wandering bush priests called Balancers.

**Feats:** Know Way Home, Share Artistic Vision.

**Charms:** Awaken Pot Spirit, Sweet Cow's Milk.

**Spells:** Bless Painting, Bless Pottery, Enhance Color.

**Talents:** Awaken Artistic Vision, Repair Pot, Resist Fear.

## Specialized Religion—Jernotian Way

The Pelandans worship the Seven High Gods, so named for their meeting place on the top of Mount Jernotius. Chief among the High Gods is Jernotius the Liberator. The essence of the Jernotian Way is that no deity can always win or always lose; balance maintains cosmic justice. To help those unable to learn the Way through self-discipline, the prophet Idomon showed the people how to worship the other High Gods, such as Turos, the men's god, and his wife Oria.

Many Pelandans initiate or devote themselves to a specific deity; see the listing on the next page for sample deities.





## Jernotian Way Keyword

**Abilities:** Know Jernotian Myths, Understand Jernotian Way.

**Virtues:** Balanced, Cooperative, Creative.

**Magic:** Divine aid.

### Sample Deities of the Jernotian Way

**Entertainer:** DonKivis the Aesthete. The god who brought art and culture to man and thus lifted him above the beasts.

**Affinities—**Aesthetic Joy, Artistic Insight, Beautiful Music.

**Farmer:** Bisos the Bull Father. Simple and sturdy, Bisos is the head of the family and the provider of life.

**Affinities—**Agriculture, Bull, Farming.

**Foot Soldier:** Daxdarius the General. The Hoplite Emperor who taught the arts of war and made himself a god.

**Affinities—**Hoplite, Rulership, Warlord.

**Healer:** Erisa the White Goddess. An entirely pacifistic, non-violent goddess whose initiates may never fight at the risk of losing their magic.

**Affinities—**Calm Fear, Cure Disease, Heal Wounds.

☛ Want to Discover More? See "Erisa" in *HeroQuest*.

**Hunter:** Kenstrata (men) or Orogeria (women). The hunters whose skills brought humanity through the Great Darkness.

**Affinities (Kenstrata)—**Discern, Hunter, Prey.

**Affinities (Orogeria)—**Hunting, Otherworld, Survival.

**Merchant:** KetTuros, Man of the City. With a plump belly, a quick smile, and a keen eye, he makes cities and men rich.

**Affinities—**Make Market, Man of the City.

**Petty Noble:** Gartemirus the Ancestor. The Wise Emperor, who was not too proud to learn and not too humble to teach.

**Affinities—**Authority, Virtue, Wisdom.

**Scholar:** Idomon the Prophet. The God of Order, who revealed the Jernotian Way to mortals.

**Affinities—**Knowledge, Law, Literacy.

**Thief:** Daak the Stranger. The Thief Who Came from Outside, a taker and a killer.

**Affinities—**Deception, Theft.

☛ Want to Discover More? See "Daak the Stranger" below.

**Warrior:** Bisos the Bull. The Great Bull, who leads his people to safety and vanquishes their foes.

**Affinities—**Bull, Combat, Survival.

## Daak

### The Stranger

Daak is the Thief Who Came from Outside, a taker and killer who knows no shame. When Entekos Dendara invited him into her House of Virtue he took what he wanted, destroyed what he did not, and left her broken and abused. Thus she died, and the Sun fell from the heavens.

**Entry Requirements:** Only those with no morals would ever follow Daak.

**Abilities:** Appear Friendly, Clever Tongue, Devotee of Daak or Initiate of Daak, Mythology of Daak, Soul Sight.

**Virtues:** Amoral, Cunning, Opportunistic.

**Affinities and Feats:**

• Deception (Deflect Blame, Evade Identification, Invite Me In, Seem Innocent, Strike Without Warning)

☛ Theft (Enter Home, Hold Plunder, Identify Richest Pickings, Set Fire)

**Secret: Break Rules** (Provides a bonus equal to 1/4 the secret's rating to resist any attempts to control the worshipper's behavior by intimidation, sentiment, or any other form of moral or emotional persuasion.)

**Other Side:** Daak's Black Well is a bottomless brick cylinder, to whose slimed walls cling the shriveled souls of his worshippers, who seek to trick and push the others from their perches and send them screaming into the darkness. Those who know the Secret Smiles can go anywhere they choose through that darkness. Daak himself is rarely there, being too busy abusing the hospitality of others and desecrating their secret and sacred places.

**Disadvantages:** Those who worship Daak are not merely criminals, they are parasites that undermine the unity of Pelandan society. As such, they can expect little mercy.

## Reasons to Have Left Home

Even after generations, many Pelandans still find freedom a heady experience and seek to use it to the full, to see new places, sell their wares in new markets and explore the arts, crafts, songs and cities of new cultures. They are also much in demand as artisans and artists, throughout the Empire.



# The Western Reaches

*Listen! We are the conquerors of empires and the knowers of truths!*

The Carmanians are conquerors, overlords, wizards, and freeholders, the masters of the Western Reaches of the Empire. Once they were the overlords of Peloria, whose cruel rule prompted the Seven Mothers to raise the Goddess. Now they are loyal subjects of the Empire, whose Emperor is their Padishah. Nonetheless, they represent a distinct homeland that bears many of the hallmarks of the feudal West, from whence their ancestors migrated some nine hundred years ago. They rule over the Pelandans who held this land before them, and who are now little more than a caste of peasants and laborers.

## Lands of the Karmanoi

The Western Reaches are rolling flatlands and low, green hills, framing the stark range of the Brass Mountains. The climate naturally tends to extremes, with icy winters and baking summers. However, the proximity of the Glowline (most of the Reaches are outside it) and the Kalikos Expeditions have moderated this tendency. That said, the ice demons of the north still occasionally send winter storms howling into Carmania to split and burst against the Brass Mountains in weeks-long snowstorms. Likewise, cold winds blow in from the Sweet Sea, spending their energies battering the western edge of the Brass Mountains. Nonetheless, this is a fertile land, especially rich in its wildlife, even if much is relatively large and able to defend itself, from the curl-horned Worion cattle to the surprisingly cunning Spolite pig.

## Bindle

The last Carmanian satrapy to join the Empire, Bindle is a proud region of sailors and traders. Most of the population lives in the large cities along the coast of the Sweet Sea or the numerous fishing villages nestled in the cliffs and coves of the rugged coast. The collapse of the Syndics' Ban has revitalized Bindle.



Trade with the Arrolian city-states on the Janube River (in Fronela) and with the barbarians on the coasts of the Sweet Sea has been channeled through Bindle and into the Empire, along the Poralistor River.

The city of **Bindle** itself, which had become depopulated, is again blossoming and being rebuilt, although the Satrap still lives in **Harandash**, in the delta of the Poralistor River. This city stands on a series of islands, defended by sandbars, treacherous tides, and the local river cult. Curving bridges and rowed ferries connect the islands of the city, which are dominated by the Jewel of Governance, the island that holds the armory, the Hall of Houses, and the Satrap's palace.

Satrap Kaufin Destrino recently ordered **Storal** fortified, for he fears the release of **Charg** from the Ban and the possible foes that might be revealed. Work progresses on a double wall with three outwork fortresses on the hills around the city. A ditched wall with a military road behind it is being built along the **Esel** River as far as the border with **Worion**. The Satrap has funded a temple to **Invisible Orlanth** in the city, which supports an increasingly powerful **vexilla** named the **Hazars of Wrath**.

## Jhor

Jhor is the heartland of Carmania, home of the **Lion Hazars** and **Kitor**, the capital city of the Western Reaches. Much of the Satrapy is mountainous or rugged hill and agriculture is minimal in the highlands, although there are rich sources of bronze and silver. Ancient castles and strongholds dot the peaks and valleys and ancient houses maintain a decaying dignity in their isolation. The hunt is important to the karmanoi of Jhor; they have subsumed their martial virtues into the quest for prey and tournament of arms. The mountain lions of the Brass Mountains are protected so that they can serve as an initiation test to enter the Order of the Mane, Satrap Bradhar the Brave's own order and the most powerful grouping of karmanoi.

Enriched by the oldest temple to the Third Eye Blue cult in Peloria and the many mines that tunnel behind the city, Kitor is a great fortress of looming stone atop a spur of Mount Gurdar. Two distinct keeps dominate it, one the Satrap's, the other the Eye of the Padishah's Citadel of the Cockcrow. Here Sheng Seleris' companions met their doom, turned to stone where they stood as the Red Emperor broke their leader and cast him into the Outer Hells. The Statuary of Spite is an eerie field of these petrified warriors, and is avoided by all sensible folk.



## The Imperial Census

Population: 900,000

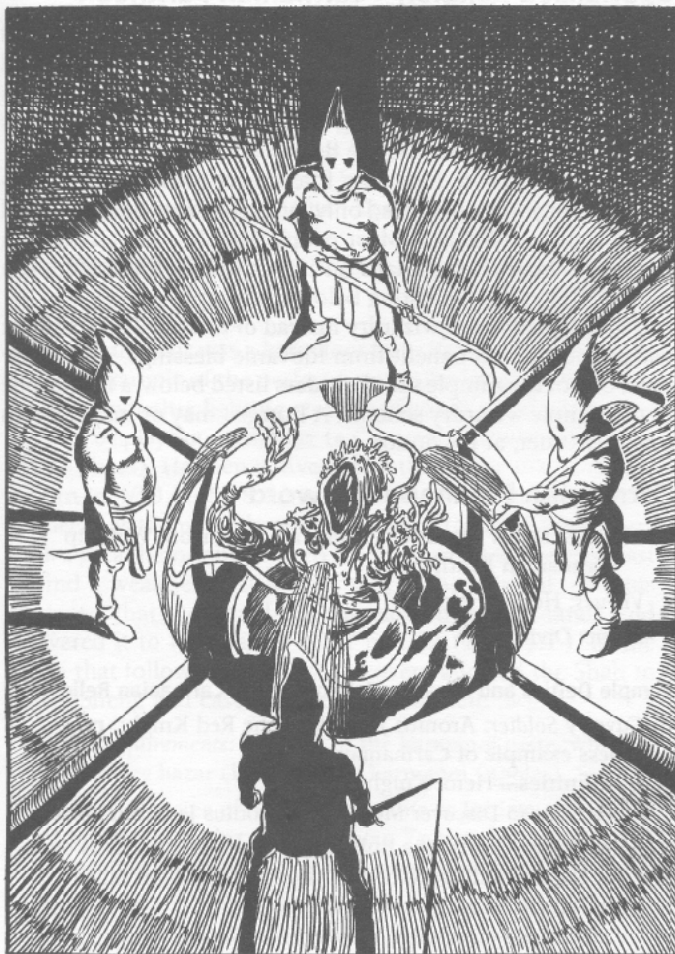
Carmanians	34%
Dara Happan	5%
Lunar	9%
Pelandan	45%
Other	7%



## Spol

This was once the core of the infamous Spolite Empire, a land of dark magic, undead, and insidious evil. Spolites are a dour people, preferring solitude to society. They tend to think deeply before they speak, often taken as rudeness or stupidity by outsiders. Death is a somber matter in Spol; tombs, catacombs, cemeteries, and monuments are everywhere, with solemn civic gatherings at many times of the year to give respect to the mummified dead.

This fascination caused the Spolite heresy of worshipping death for its own sake as a succor and ward against it. Underworld and darkness beings were worshipped, corrupt ideas were popular, and ungodly laws enacted. Karmanos and the first Carmanians wiped them out. Such heresies still exist, although no large outbreaks of "Spolitism" have been reported for decades. This is especially true in the gloomy river port of Zern, the dark-stoned capital of the satrapy, where the Taloned Countess holds court in the Castle of God's Rock. Orderlies of the Carmanian Inquisition search the catacombs of the Great Necropolis, which occupies a third of the area within the city walls, where the Subjects of Gloom reportedly practice their forbidden black arts. The Lunar Way (with its message of renewal, rebirth, and the cycle of life) has gained little sway in conservative, fatalistic Spol. Only Gerra receives brooding respect, not least because her followers re-enact her Great Rite on the blood-drenched sides of the Descending Pyramid in the city of Dezarpovo.



## Worion

Worion is the stronghold of the Bisos cult, and the highland Bisosae are proud and rugged, famed for their violent tempers. They look down on the otherwise richer and more educated Vanstal and Patasi lowlanders. The satrapal seat is Ajaak, built within an enclosure created by two mountain spurs and a wall between them made of immense basalt slabs. It predates the Dawn and has been occupied on and off for 2000 years or more. The mighty tower of the Satrap's Keep fills the only gap in the wall and houses all of Moralatap of the Anger's functionaries and troops. Hazars returning from Dragon Pass comment on how the barbarian, Sartar, must have visited their city to have copied it so closely in design and intent with the diminutive Boldhome wall.

Worion also contains Brinnus, the holiest city of Carmania and a site of pilgrimage. Here it was that Syranthir wed Lady Charmain of the Lake, and here it was that their son, Karmanos the Prophet, strode ashore with his Laws and his Book. All Carmanian Church doctrine comes from Brinnus and its Council of Magi who supervise the vizier caste. Brinnus is a source of tremendous magical energies, for all Carmanians direct their faith there in their daily prayers. All inhabitants of the city serve the church and are defended by representatives of the military orders.

### Other Lands of the Western Reaches

#### Brolia

Brolia is a barbarian land of steep hills and deep ravines that plunge into rivers. The people worship Orlanthi gods and Bisosae goddesses. The natives are poor and live in scattered bands that occasionally collect into regional "tribes." Its chiefs have always paid tribute or taxes to Carmanian overlords, but since the coming of the Goddess have been free of foreign rule. Consequently, they have devolved into their usual state of warring clans and tribes struggling over the scarce resources of their lands; no wonder so many are hired as mercenaries within the Empire. Every so often a powerful warlord among the Brolian warrior caste manages to unify more than a couple of tribes and Carmanian troops quickly foray into the hills and mountains to break up the confederation.

#### Erigia

This is the land of the Char-Un horse nomads, an ally people fiercely devoted to the Goddess. The land was once a dense elf-forest, but a massive ritual—the Skyburn—and several years of hard fighting cleared it. Now, it is a steppe covered in tall grasses and herds of horses. The Char-Un are a hard people, well adapted to their nomadic lifestyle. They worship the spirits of Sky and Steppe, dominated by Kargzant the Sun-Stallion, his mate ma-Tamara the Moon Mare, and their ancestors. Led by their chiefs (called *pans*) and guided by their shamans, they travel across the steppe in clans that belong to loosely organized tribes nominally loyal to the Ur-Pan, the ruler of the Char-Un. In the south there are a few settlements too small to be called cities inhabited by foreign missionaries, diplomats, and traders; by riders cast out by their families; or by the Char-Un's slaves. In the north is the Empire's Cold Line of forts that aid the yearly Kalikos Expeditions. Char-Un cavalry and horse archers serve throughout the Empire in the Cavalry Corps where there are several regiments of them, in private service, or on their own as raiders and freebooters.

# Homeland: Carmania

The Carmanians are a strict and proud people, who follow the White and Black Laws that tell them how they should and should not act, respectively. Central to their society is a caste system. At the bottom are the serfs, descendants of the heretical Pelandans whose lands the Carmanians took for their own. All Carmanian men (and those deemed worthy of admission to their ranks upon acceptance of the Word of Karmanos) are *romanak* (landless Carmanians) or *hazars* (landowners). All were originally knights, but now both classes also include the learned and skilled classes and the landed gentry. Those who show the right talents or the blessing of Idovanus by their birth may become a *karmanoi*, of the lordly caste, or a vizier, a wizard or scholar. Carmanian women are born into the cloistered *caram*, or women's caste, but can now aspire to a male caste through the mysteries of Sedenya (this concept is of course quite shocking to their traditional male counterparts).

Rather than leagues, clans, or families, Carmanians form relationships through personal oaths of fealty: vassalage exchanged for non-hereditary lands or stipends. Networks of these ties form Houses, which are the basic element of Carmanian society. A Great House controls a region known as Satrapy, owing fealty to the Padishah, but there are many lesser ones vying for power or independence within each. The titular head of Carmania is the Eye of the Padishah. He is an Imperial appointee, and wears a mask of a human eye to denote his status as Watcher of the Satraps. The current appointee is Palamtales, a canny, capable, and untrusting administrator. He receives the homage of the four Carmanian satraps in his court at Kitor.

## Carmanian Homeland Keyword

**Look and Feel:** A fierce and unyielding people who fought their way here from distant lands to build an empire. They are direct and forceful in their speech, ways, and gestures, and respect those who stand their own ground.

**Occupations Available:** Cavalry Soldier (Regular, Shock, Skirmish), Entertainer (Bull-Horned, Orator), Farmer, Foot Soldier (Archer, Regular, Shock), Healer, Hunter, Merchant, Petty Noble, Scholar, Thief, Warrior.

**Native Abilities:** Carmanian Customs, Command Social Inferiors, Geography of Carmania, Know Local Area, Sword and Shield Combat, Ride.

**Typical Personality:** Honorable, Look Down on Pelandans, Proud, Uncompromising.

**Typical Relationships:** to House; to Personal Vassals or Liege; to Temple.

**Magic:** Common magic, Carmanian Pantheon (theism).

**Common Names:**

**Men**—Assasacar, Cartavar, Haran, Karmandas, Samandar, Sassan, Tavaras.

**Women**—Charmanda, Erianda, Haranela, Loranda.

Carmanians from each satrapy (or other homeland) have distinct characteristics, as shown in the Carmanian Satrapies table.

## Common Magic—Bull Shahs

Carmanians revere the ancient Bull Shahs, each of whom is the center of one of the Glory Singing Rites, societies that gather to read out the lengthy descriptions of their patron's deeds and provide access to a variety of common magic. Higher-caste Carmanians frown on the use of charms even as common magic,

## Carmanian Satrapies

Satrapy	Nickname	Additional Native Ability (+4 if already possessed)
Bindle	Sweetshoremen	Turbulent
Doblian *	Bullyboys	Haughty Demeanor
Jhor	First In	Proud
Oronin *	River runners	Cosmopolitan
Spol	Gloomsters	Hide Emotion
Worion	Stone Towers	Fierce

\* The Oronin and Doblian satrapies are not part of Carmania, but their western regions include many Carmanians. The nicknames and abilities listed here refer specifically to the Carmanians in those lands.

for they are usually of Pelandan origin, generally clay phalli and primitive statuettes of large-breasted women. In addition, people usually say it is inappropriate for *romanak* to use spells.

**Feats:** Bull's Roar, Bull's Strength, Heal Horse, Light in Dark.

**Charms:** Fix Tool, Make Me Attractive, Nobody Here, Strengthen Drink, Strengthen Tool.

**Spells:** Drive Away Foreigner, Glowing Sword, Lock My Study Door, Snub Lower Caste.

**Talents:** Bolster Pride, Keep On Going.

## Specialized Religion—Carmanian Pantheon

The Great Prophet Karmanos brought the Carmanians the word of God and Dualistic Truth. He revealed how the Maker created two beings to oversee the world of humans. At first, Idovanus the Good God ruled everything except a tiny insect, but he was overcome by Ganesatarus, the Bad God.

Since the Dawn, Idovanus' forces have gained power. Wizardry is dangerous, practiced only by a select few who can avoid its corruptive influence. Most people worship the Carmanian Pantheon. Many Carmanians initiate or devote themselves to a specific deity; see the listing below for sample deities.

A few people use wizardry instead of theism. They may not use divine aid, but benefit from Idovanic blessings. An orderly joins one of the sample saintly orders listed below, a magus one of the sample wizardry schools. A liturgist may or may not join a saintly order, at his option.

## Carmanian Pantheon Keyword

**Abilities:** Know Myths of Carmanian Pantheon, Worship Carmanian Pantheon.

**Virtues:** Honest, Proud.

**Magic:** Divine aid.

## Sample Deities and Wizardry Schools of the Carmanian Religion

**Cavalry Soldier:** Aronius Jaranthir. The Red Knight, peerless example of Carmanian chivalry.

**Affinities**—Hero, Knight, Lord.

⚔ Want to Discover More? See "Aronius Jaranthir" below.

**Entertainer:** Akrolar the Bull-Horn. Whether the day is over or there is still work to do, Akrolar delights in raising the spirits of all good Carmanians.

**Affinities**—Entertain, Raise Spirits, Strong Music.



**Farmer:** Bisos the Freeholder. The hard-working farmer, independent but dutiful.

**Affinities**—Bull, Farming, Fief Management.

**Foot Soldier:** Bisos the Hazar. The strong-hearted and strong-bodied warrior who drives his way through his foes.

**Affinities**—Berserker Combat, Bull, Knight.

**Healer:** Pamel the Soother. She brings comfort to all with her knowledge of herbs and other natural remedies and her ability to purge the body and soul of sin and impurity.

**Affinities**—Healing, Herbal Remedies, Soothing.

**Hunter:** Durbadath, the Lion. Noble hunter, lord of the wilds.

**Affinities**—Hunting, Lion, Radiance.

**Merchant:** KetTuros, Man of the City. The sober and canny man of the courts and counting houses, a steward for his divine liege.

**Affinities**—Make Market, Man of the City.

**Petty Noble:** Karmanos Law-Bringer. Carmanian law, society, and culture all follow the strictures of wise Karmanos.

**Affinities**—Idovanic Light, Law, Suzerainty.

**Scholar:** Malakinus the Learned (wizardry school).

Malakinus is the font of Good Magic, and teaches how to use arcane knowledge in the pursuit of wisdom and enlightenment without being corrupted.

**Grimoires**—*Arcanum Karmanios* "Secrets of White Magic" (contains spells equivalent to those in *The Abiding Book*; see *HeroQuest* for details); *Malakinos Karmanios* "The Book of White Magic" (Extinguish Fire, Float in Water, Resist Pagan God, Turn away Beast, Turn away Spirit); *Seeking the Truth* (Find Reference, Silence Liar, Understand Written Text).

**Thief:** Alanabrilis the Disrupter. Not evil so much as incapable of proper conduct and intolerant of just law, Alanabrilis is the subtle and mischievous enemy of order.

**Affinities**—Disorder, Misdirection.

**Warrior:** Hum'akt. Hum'akt is Death, worshipped by the outsider and the avenger.

**Affinities**—Battle, Combat, Death.

## Aronius Jaranthir

### The Red Knight

Aronius Jaranthir was a karmanoi from Bindle, a sterling example of the perfect Carmanian hazar (knight), whether fighting on the battlefield, wisely ruling his vassals, or playing *ravenkaaz* (a Carmanian board game similar to chess). He then converted to the Lunar Way and was reborn in 4/50 (1459 S.T.) in the time of the Empire's greatest need, as the nomads of Pent ravaged the land. He undertook a great hero-journey into the mists of Sheng Seleris' past to find a weakness that would topple the warlord. Aronius retrieved that weapon from the eastern dragon-lands and delivered it to his Shah at Kitor in 4/52 (1461 S.T.). In the battle that followed, Aronius' discovery allowed the Shah to defeat Sheng and cast him into a Lunar hell.

**Entry Requirements:** Must be of the karmanoi caste, which includes hazar (knights) and karmanoi (nobles).

**Abilities:** Devotee of Aronius Jaranthir or Initiate of Aronius Jaranthir, Know Pentan Tactics, Mythology of Aronius Jaranthir, Play *Ravenkaaz*, Soul Sight.

**Virtues:** Brave, Honorable.



### Affinities and Feats:

¶ **Hero** (Cunning Stratagem, Endure Hardship, Strike Hero, Wise as an Egi).

† **Knight** (Hazar) (Arrow Armor, Charge, Fearless Mount, Fell Sword, Slow Pentan, Steady Lance).

⌚ **Lord** (Karmanoi) (Command Loyalty of Hazar, Command Vizier, Lead Battle, Suppress Peasant).

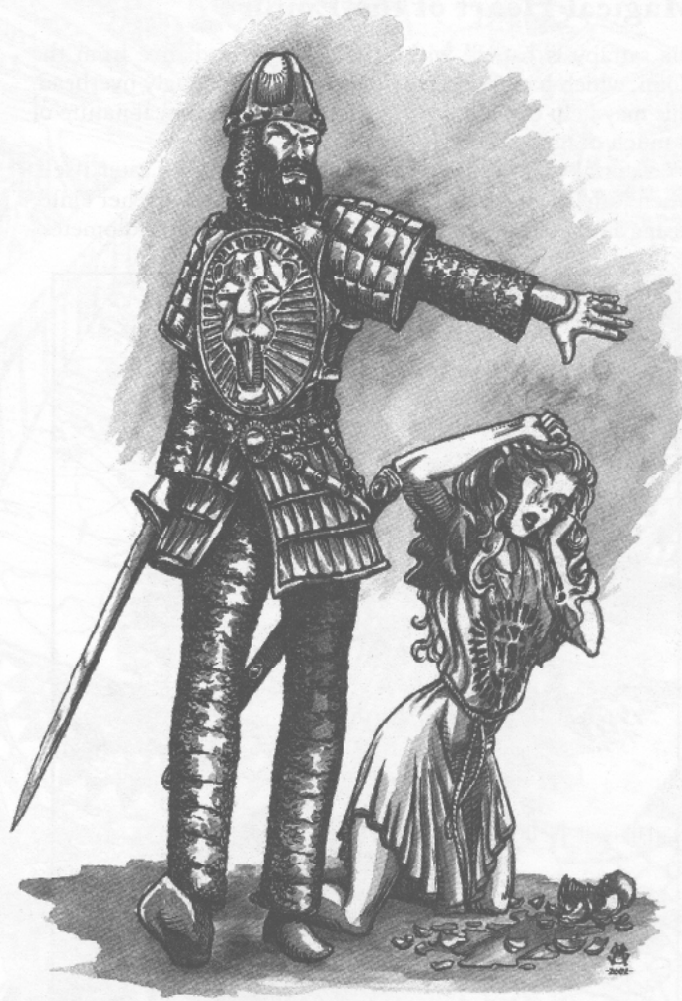
**Secret. Rebirth ritual** (The worshipper can die and be reborn into a newborn baby in his direct line of descent. His soul melds with the baby's. He retains his mundane skills—but not physical characteristics—and magical abilities. He is bound by the limitations of the body he occupies, and must grow to maturity normally.)

**Other Side:** Aronius Jaranthir's Castle of Crimson Pavilions is outside the Ruby City on the Moon, where his followers come to lead a knightly—and noble—life of tournaments, jousting, and feasts. From the Castle, they can pass onto the surface of the Red Moon or to Sed-nya's Throne.

**Disadvantages:** None special.

## Reasons to Have Left Home

Carmanians are prized as warriors and as such often serve in military units and hero bands throughout the Empire. There are those who grow tired of the restrictions of their caste system or the complex obligations of the Houses, however, and instead seek independence elsewhere in the Padishah's realm.



# Silver Shadow

*"Tread softly here, for this is the holiest of lands, and the love and majesty, terror and mystery of the Goddess hangs in the air around us. Be welcome, and be amazed."*

Silver Shadow is the holiest and most magical of the satrapies, centered upon the Crater left when the Goddess danced Her last dream and shared Her final secrets with Her highest disciples. She drew up the earth on which She danced and wrapped it around Herself like a cloak, then ascended into the Middle Air as Rufelza, the Red Moon. Where She danced, there now gapes a great Crater. Upon the shoulder of this Crater Takenegi made his First Inspiration, the city of Glamour, to be his capital and to guard the way to the Moon.

Silver Shadow is the focus of Lunar spirituality and Imperial rule and wealth. In addition to the region's native population, it is home to a bewildering array of officials, mystics, mountebanks, opportunists, pilgrims, power-brokers, and travelers. Many are worshippers and Imperial Citizens, but the population includes members of almost every ethnic and cultural group found within the Empire.

Uniquely, Silver Shadow is a satrapy without a satrap, ruled directly by Moonson. He is, of course, too busy with matters of Imperial rather than local significance, divesting this duty to the Silver Proxy, a vessel of some of Takenegi's power and nature. Because the Silver Proxy has become increasingly erratic and reclusive, however, day-to-day administration of Silver Shadow has fallen into the hands of his bureaucrats and retainers.

## Magical Heart of the Empire

The satrapy is bathed with a faint silvery radiance from the Moon, which hangs unchangingly and comfortingly overhead. This may help explain the unusual and even magical nature of so much of its landscape.

Central and most striking is, of course, the Crater itself. When Rufelza ascended, the earth reached vainly for her child, raising a ring of unnaturally steep, sharp mountains kilometers

into the air. These mountains form the impenetrable wall of the Crater. No one knows what lies within the Crater; nothing grows on its slopes, and the only point of entry is through Glamour. As well as Glamour, the rim of the Crater cradles the six Phase Cities, each hosting a Phase Temple celebrating one of the aspects of the Moon. The Phase Circuit is a favored Lunar pilgrimage, as the faithful can journey around the Crater in a week, stopping at each Phase Temple to worship as they pass. Many undertake the pilgrimage as a lifetime journey, stopping at each temple for several years, studying and understanding that aspect of the Goddess before moving to the next temple.

Within Silver Shadow, the very elements genuflect to the Goddess. The Oslir River flows swift and calm, red and silver gleamfish leaping from its waters in their perpetual bid to get closer to the Moon. The maize fields along the Yosel and Oslir Rivers beam with Her light. The hills to the northwest of the satrapy roll in gentle and pleasing crescents, thick with crimson berries and moondew.

## Broken Wall

During Sheng's siege of Glamour, the resolution of the citizens of High Wall led to the city's rapine and devastation at the hands of nomad warriors and a slaving demon of the steppes. Not one in twelve citizens survived, and many of them became slaves, laborers, and concubines. Dark magic also left its mark on Kerumu, the city's daimon. Some suggest it went mad, others that it just got even. Seleric raiders began to sicken and die, and they fled. Over the years since, the city has been rebuilt and is now a thriving market town, but it has not healed. Every attempt to build new, unbroken walls has failed: cracks open at the place where the original walls were breached, and neither stone nor brick nor wood will hold it. Although Kerumu is now quiescent, its troubled soul is still present. Every year the people of the city now called Broken Wall enact a savage ritual to appease him, a time of unrestrained and orgiastic excess, of fighting and copulating in the streets.

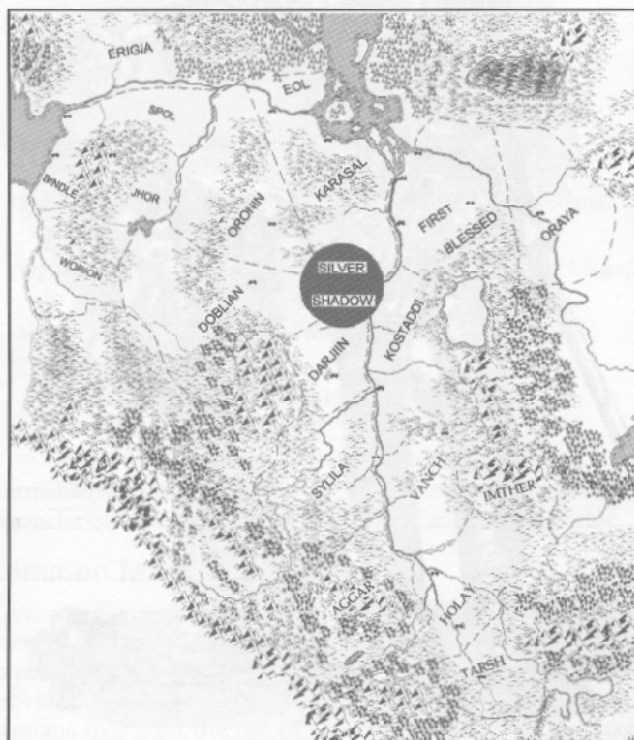
## Glamour

The Imperial capital is, of course, the finest of all cities anywhere. It sits on the east side of the Crater, in Rufelza's beneficent gaze, and is as much a symbol and metaphor of Lunar inclusion as a center of political and spiritual power. This metropolis of half a million inhabitants is surrounded by sprawling suburbs whose only order is imposed by the wide roads that radiate from Glamour. Some of these are the poor but well-maintained apartment block insulae of the devout citizens. Others are the teeming and dangerous slums of the migrant workers and the unemployed, the desperate, the rootless, the angry and the hungry. Here the wardens of the Vigilance and levy-men from the local garrisons patrol in platoons, scimitars and staves in their hands. They are ever watch-

### The Imperial Census

Population: 675,000

Carmanians	4%
Dara Happan	21%
Darjiini	3%
Darseni	8%
Lunar	46%
Naverians	12%
Silver Sables	3%
Other	3%





ful for riots, as the volatile mob rises today at the urging of some crazed charismatic, tomorrow in protest because the Corn Dole is late.

A huge wall, topped by engines and monster guardians, surrounds the Outer City. People say that once through the Gates of Four Beasts you can find anything in those streets. The needs of governance and the symbols of the Lunar Way dominate the city. Within the city of Glamour, 343 shrines commemorate deeds performed by the Goddess. This is also the base for many of the most feared and respected units of the Imperial Army, such as the Bloodspillers, the three Household Foot regiments, and the Wyvern Riders. Nonetheless, this is also a city of recreations, homes, and markets, with the townhouses of the middle classes—known universally and unsympathetically as the 'Want Mores'—and the fine manses of the aristocracy.

At the center of the city is the Citadel of Halfway. Here the highest Lunar authorities meet with foreigners, the closest most outsiders will ever get to the Moon. From a tall tower in the center of Halfway, the Silver Road (a gleaming band of arched metal) leads to Moon-gate and the City of Dreams. This gate, perched on the edge of the Crater, can only be entered by the sacred and the privileged; from its Plaza of Ascension magical routes lead to the surface of the Moon itself.

## Good Shore

Founded by the Emperor to combat invading nomads, this city is the birthplace of Yara Aranis, the Goddess of the Reaching Moon. It is also the site of her most famous temple, where the tortured souls of captured foes are displayed each Sacred Week. The city is the main port for the Glamour grain fleets, and guards access to the Glamour Great Canal (which leads to the Oslir River). On either flank of the canal, all the way to Glamour itself, stand the Arterial Walls: some ten miles long, wide enough for two chariots to pass along them at once. They serve as roads and barriers, and are blessed and warded, and are also guarded by numerous gargoyles of Yara Aranis along their length. Good Shore also sports many fine golden beaches on the river coasts around the city, which have become increasingly attractive to the masses of the teeming capital. The people of Good Shore have not been slow to respond to this potential, and the shoreline contains many wandering vendors and colorful kiosks offering delicacies, clothing, chairs, and pleasurable company.

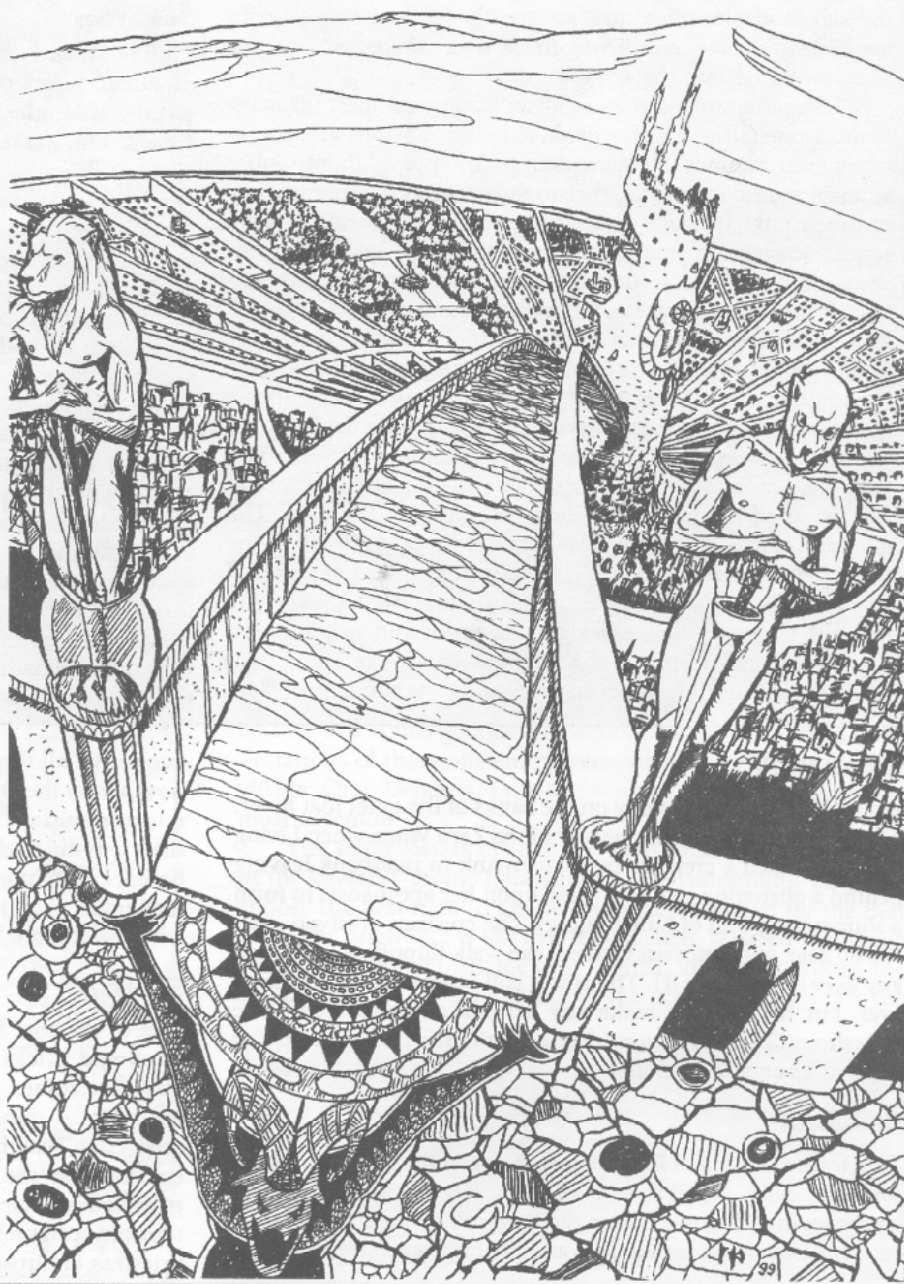
## Kalvostos

Kalvostos is a Dara Happan city very secure in its traditions and its considerable walls. Kalvostos has seen a sixth quarter added in the last two decades as the Overseer, Theresh the Ziggurat, ceaselessly promotes immigration. This policy of the Overseer and his family for generations before him has made Kalvostos one of the fastest growing cities in the Empire. Cynics claim that he seeks im-

migrants so he can record 10,000 people for ten censuses in a row. This would make the city an official polis of Dara Happa, thereby giving him (and his heirs) a personal seat on the Imperial Senate. The result is a thriving and dynamic city, to which citizens from Dikoria, Darsen, Naveria, and beyond have brought their cultures, traditions, and lifestyles.

## Lothaka

This small city is best known for the barrow fields that separate it from the Vosel River. Once famed for their ability to bring rest to troubled souls, they now offer no more peace to the dead. The ancient families that once dug the layered barrows instead use their ancient lore to seek buried treasures. Usually, they send others to seek it for them, for they know that the barrows are now home to the restless and grudging dead.



## Otherworlds in Shadow

The benediction of Rufelza's presence overhead, the constant whisper of worshippers' prayers to Sedenya, the entropic energy of the Temple of the Reaching Moon at the heart of Good Shore, and the comforting resonance from the Phase Temples around the Crater, all play their part in blessing the magical landscape and Otherworldly ecology of Silver Shadow satrapy.

Daimones have migrated to the earth from the Moon or else have mated with those of the local landscape. As a result, the daimones of Silver Shadow are unusually powerful and willful. They are generally friendly, but have sworn the Nevermore Compact, vowing to raise the very bones of the earth to bar the land to any new nomad invasion, at whatever cost.

While only controlled, never tamed, even the Oslir is not her usual willful self here. Instead, she rushes through at speed, unwilling to be reminded of the powerful oaths and element-wrenching heroquests by which the Empire has her bound. On her way, she is tended, flattered and watched by the Forty-Seven Ruby Currents, Lunar water daimones. It is they, not the Oslir, that gently guide the grain barges to Good Shore and tend the shoals of gleamfish, just as it is they, not the Oslir, who mercilessly seduce and drown those river pirates who incautiously venture into the satrapy.

The spirits and essences of Silver Shadow also bear the mark of the Moon, although this tends to be less obvious and sometimes even more problematic. While Sedenya is able to unite all magics into one whole, theism does appear dominant within the satrapy. In many cases, Lunar influence seems to have sapped some of the power from local essences. Spirits, by contrast, often struggle against any transformation. Some appear to have been turned mad by this pointless and destructive resistance; of course, madness is often simply another word for Lunar inspiration. Others are changed in strange and perhaps disquieting ways. There are those who talk of chaotic spirits lurking in the darker corners of the region, but what is Chaos but a misunderstanding of the forces of entropy? Even when seemingly at peace and gladly serving the Great Spirit Moon, the spirits of the landscape sometimes appear troubled. The guardian spirits of the orchards that dot the north bank of the Yosel joyfully tend their trees, grow plump round apples and let them fall gently when the time is right and the pickers are to hand. However, the apples are often sour and soft, more fit for the great cider presses of Kalvostos than for eating.

Glamour itself is a special case, as one would expect from

the First Inspiration of Moonson. Lunar saints walk the streets, their footprints glowing with benign radiance, while Lunar spirits inhabit the very cobbles of the city. However, there are also hazards. The density of magic in the city and its environs can have unexpected and unpredictable side effects. When Glamour was created on top of an older city, many spirits who had been displaced by the destruction of their homes moved into the new city. From their anger and impotent fury Derthorum was born. While all right-minded souls worship Glamour, the Lady of the City, for her gifts of peace, prosperity, love, and order, Derthorum is Glamour's Other, a focus for the poor, the angry, the sick, the dispossessed, and the unwanted. Hunted and shunned, his shamans nonetheless teach ways to rouse the mob to anger, bring unclean spirits bubbling up from the sewers, and unleash the power of the underways.

In due course, however, even Derthorum will come to realize that he is Us too, that his city was not destroyed so much as allowed to fulfil its destiny as Glamour's foundations. Thus, the Moon will bring healing even to the underdark, where her light does not yet penetrate.

### Unlike Ways

'Unlike Ways' is one of the approved euphemisms for aspects of Lunar belief that are problematic or controversial. Most usually, this refers to the Empire's tolerance and even use of Chaos. The Alchemists of Eyzaal harness the energies of raw Chaos—described as 'entropy'—and use them to power the entropic engines at the heart of the Temples of the Reaching Moon. The Crimson Bat is a huge, demonic entity that can devour armies and crush cities, and which must feed on living souls. There are also the persistent if far-fetched rumors of secret regiments of broos or squads of vampire assassins.

There are other Unlike Ways, such as the strange and secretive Blue Moon faith and the increasingly vocal White Moon movement. The White Moon teaching is a recent phenomenon that has spread with surprising speed. It teaches that once the light of the Goddess has spread across Glorantha, the Moon will change again, not to Zaytenara but to the New White Moon. There is no one creed within the movement, just a bewildering array of sects, charismatics, and conspiracies, from activists like the Fiscal Anarchists of Raibanth—who foment tax revolts—to passive mystics like the Whitefaces of Jillaro. However, their disquieting message—and their opposition to the existing forms of rule—make them an irritant to the Empire at best, a domestic threat at worst.

## Moon Wall

Moon Wall is a growing city on the banks of the quiet Joat River. The city was formed near the end of the Zero Wane when Living Rufelza walked a crescent from riverbank to riverbank leaving behind a glistening trail that grew upon her apotheosis to form a shimmering wall of Lunar energy. The crescent of silvery wall has no gate: only Imperial Citizens can walk through it (although any flyer can go over it). The city is still open to the river, however, but the citizens make any serious effort to fortify the waterfront. The city is considered a retirement community for affluent Lunars from Glamour.

## Raibanth

This former capital of Dara Happa is one of the Tripolis, noted for its worship of Raiba, a son of Yelm. His statue is the largest sculpture in all Peloria. Before the Lunar War, the city had three sections, separated by the Joat and Oslir Rivers. Great bridges

connected all three, but only the Bridge of Seven Saints stands now, across the Oslir. Amoli, on the other side of the Joat, resists reincorporation. The people of Raibanth pride themselves on their lengthy traditions and inflexible, even bloody-minded adherence to Yelmic ways. This causes tension with local Lunars, Raibanth's neighbors, and the passing travelers and merchants who use the mighty Lukarian Basin river docks on the Oslir.

## Santhar

One of the core Naverian cities, Santhar is famous for its clay work and bricks. The hills north of Santhar are quarried for clay that comes in differing varieties depending on the earth layer that is mined. The Clay Bringers worship Oroshe, Naveria's Clay Daughter, and can bend the earth so that deep layers come to the surface. Although this can take decades of ritual effort, the results are often priceless. The Red King is typically a figurehead; the effective ruler of the city is the high priestess of Oroshe.



# Karasal

*Karasali? I am not Karasali...*

The Satrapy of Karasal is a sparsely populated province whose people are concentrated on the northern and eastern plains. It encompasses a variety of peoples and lands including Dara Happans, Darseni, Dikorians, Eolians, and Karasali. Each stubbornly holds onto their own customs and resists integration into any collective satrapal identity. Each asserts rights to most of the others' lands and despises the simple wrong-headedness of the others' beliefs.

The Satrap is glad to divide and rule from his palace in Joranit and takes the offerings and outright bribes from these conflicts to spend on his own machinations in Glamour. He rules with the Joran Rites of the ancient kings of Karasal. As an added complication for the Satrap, the Emperor's Great Sister (an immortal demigoddess; see the next page for more information) has made her home in the city of Gracodont.

Dara Happans live along the banks of the Oslir River and are spreading across the plains of Esvuthil. They see themselves as superior to all and destined to rule. The Dara Happan nobles say that the Satrap should acknowledge their suzerainty of the lands and adopt the Antirian Rites of Rule. They are especially vocal against any proposals that come from Darsen, the Land of Women.

The Darseni of the hills that bisect the satrapy claim to be the most ancient culture and wisest arbiters of law. The Darseni Crones say that the Satrap should be one of them and rule in the Addic Way. They also claim Dikoria as part of Darsen, and say that while the Goddess rules, Brightface (as they call Yelm) should return to his proper place: serving the Grandmothers.

The lowlands along the Dikor River are the home of the Dikorians. They claim to be the natural successors of the Darseni and the true holders of the heritage of the region. They say the Satrap should adopt the Brightface Rites and rule as their god did in the Golden Age—putting the Crones in their place.

The wind-swept northern plain is the home to the Karasali,

inheritors of the Dawn Age Lenshi traditions. The Karasali are sailors, whalers, and cattle herders. They are constantly feuding with the trader princes of Birin, and grow wealthy off the White Sea trade. Some resent the annual Kalikos Expeditions, as the lack of strong winters is affecting several of their annual rituals; as many others are more than happy not to battle the ship-killing storms now known only to history.

Garun of the Rastari House rules the Satrapy. The Rastari seized power from the Varsedi, who were decimated during the Nights of Horror in 5/43 (1506 S.T.).

## The Imperial Census

Population: 300,000

Dara Happan	34%
Darseni	13%
Dikorian	9%
Eolian	5%
Karasali	22%
Lunar	9%
Other	8%

## The Divided Satrapy

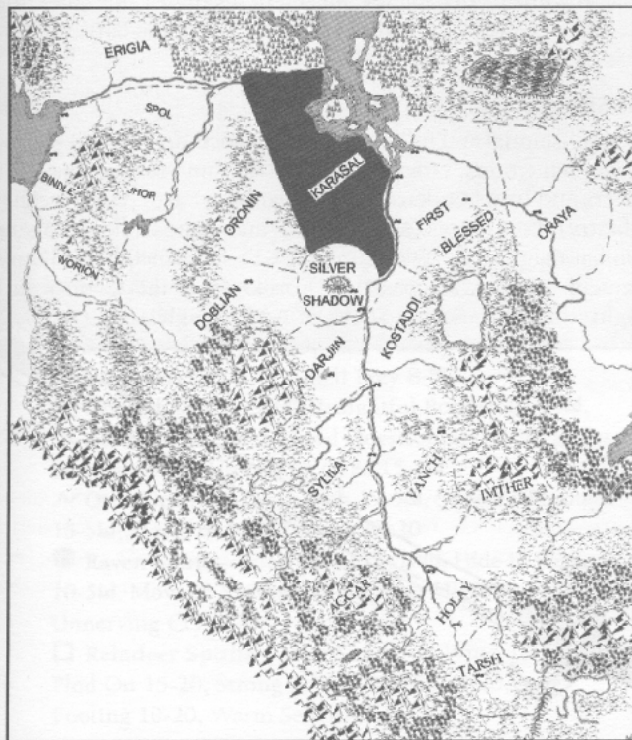
The land of Karasal is as varied as its people. Most of the satrapy is broken by the rugged Darsen Hills, but the coastal plains of Joranit and the lands of Esvuthil are rich farming country that grow wheat and rice respectively. The Karasali tend huge herds of cattle, a legacy of their Lenshi heritage. To the north are the dark Eolian forests and the storm-swept waters of the White Sea. Joranit is the capital of the satrapy, although the time the Satrap spends in Gracodont haggling with Great Sister makes many wonder if it truly is any longer.

## Darsen: The Land of Women

Darsen is a broken land, covered in sharp crags, coarse bushes, and skittish sheep. The people live and worship much as they did in prehistoric times, and revere the Hundred Goddesses. Darseni are the antithesis of the overbearing Dara Happans. Where the Dara Happans believe in the Dominion of the Sun and subservience of the Earth, the Darseni know that the Earth created the Sun and all other good things.

The Darseni are matriarchal. Towns and villages are guided by the Inner Council, the Five Elder Sisters: the Hearth, the Green, the Plentiful, the Speaker, and the Mother. Throughout history, several of the Hundred Goddesses have held these positions. The actual goddesses worshipped are the modern manifestations of those ancient powers, which vary from village to village; Oria, Dendara, Entekos, Naveria, and Orogeria are the most common.

The Elder Sisters choose the wisest among the women to be the koveria ("crone"), the leader of the community. They also choose the best man to be the Brightface—named for the Best God. The Brightface is the Crone's assistant, selected to provide a good role model for men, to control any strife within the community, and to bring peace to the people. Women rule the



## The Deneron Council

Every 47 years the Council of Sisters meets in ancient Vendarkti (modern Thardenero) to enact great rituals and to seek ways of returning to the Green Age. The Council is composed of the Deneronae, the Hundred Ancient Goddesses (although there are rarely a hundred of them, and modern goddesses have replaced many of the ancient ones).

## Great Sister

### *Daughter of Sedenya*

When Sedenya ascended into the Sky to become the Red Moon, she left behind her earthly humanity. Some was used to create her son, the Red Emperor, and the rest, her femininity, became Deneskerva, the Great Sister. She is one of the very few beings in the Empire that owes allegiance not to the Emperor, but to the Goddess herself.

Deneskerva's task is to balance the Emperor: to be strong when he is weak, compassionate when he is uncaring, gentle when he is harsh. Like the Emperor, time cannot harm her, although she can be killed. Upon her death a new body forms on the Moon and returns to the world of people, in a similar manner to the way the Emperor returns when he is slain.

When the Emperor was slain by the Mad Sultan and did not return, the Lunar Empire ceased to exist. Great Sister became leader of the last free Pelorians in the West. She knew that Sheng Seleris would soon march against the former Empire and that nothing could stop him from killing everyone. Great Sister was determined that the Lunar Way should not vanish from the world. She made great efforts to teach the words of the Goddess to all listeners, so that when Sheng killed her (as she knew he would) the Lunar Way would survive. The Lunar Way was not as easy then as it is now, for people in those days did not fully understand its promises.

Great Sister preached in the towns, cities, and fortresses. Many heard her words, but few listened. Faced by their intransigence, she went into the fields and preached to the peasants. In a small village she saw a glyph over the door of a ramshackle temple and tried to win the worshippers' trust by demonstrating her knowledge of their sacred glyphs. The peasants laughed at her and mocked her supposed learning. Great Sister was hurt and surprised, but she held her tongue while the peasants instructed her about what the glyphs truly meant. She realized that the peasants had preserved the language of the Old Pelorians in their glyphs.

When Sedenya said that 'We are All Us,' she spoke of the Oneness of the Green Age. This Oneness had been lost to the world by the presence of Death, leading to such evils as war, famine, and murder. The Goddess herself showed people how to reach the Oneness as part of her Path of Liberation. After her apotheosis, however, their understanding was limited by their own ignorance, and their mastery of her Truths was sadly flawed. The newly rediscovered Old Pelorian language survived from the Green Age, and Great Sister knew that speaking it would help people understand the Lunar Truths.

With Great Sister's guidance, an aged grammarian named JeSeven revitalized the language. He devised new words to describe concepts that did not exist in the Green Age, and mod-

ified the grammar to incorporate the revelations of Sedenya. New Pelorian was born. At first, to many it sounds much like any other Pelorian language, but its refined cadences, subtle nuances, and elegant syntax come together to produce a most remarkable enlightenment in its ablest speakers.

Great Sister again went out to preach the Lunar Way, this time speaking New Pelorian. The listeners were amazed. "How can this be?" they said, "Her speech touches all of us, although we are many and she is only one." Some were transformed but, being unsure of themselves, went to Great Sister for guidance. She explained the enlightenment that had descended upon them and sent them out to preach the Words of the Goddess to others.

In this manner, the Lunar Way waxed and multiplied. The commoners, to whom Sedenya had previously just been another planet, began to offer prayers to her. So great was the earthly enlightenment that the Moon itself waxed and shone brighter than it had before Sheng Seleris came. Even Takenegi, in hiding for many years, now had the courage to admit to himself that he was the Emperor.

Sheng Seleris beheld all this from atop his stellar palace and knew that the Impossible had occurred. He mustered a great horde to crush the new moon, just as he had ruined the old moon. To make doubly sure of this, he led it in person.

Great Sister was ready for him at Kitor. With her preaching she raised a vast body of Lunar peasants singing paeans of praise to Sedenya. Through their newfound illumination they feared nothing, not even oblivion. Sheng attacked the Sister's army from dusk 'til dawn, sending against them wave after wave of his murderous Zolathi, twisted magician warriors with empty mystic souls. But the Sister's army stood firm. Some Zolathi were driven mad by the singing, others found themselves powerless. A few simply ceased to exist, so potent were the songs. When the last of the Zolathi had been killed or driven off, Great Sister let her brother the Emperor finish off Sheng Seleris himself. Powerless and without companions or supporters, the warlord was hauled off to the Pits of Perdition.

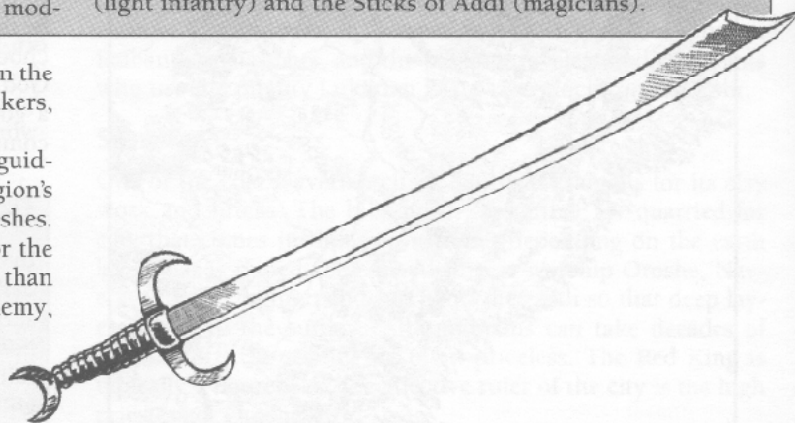
Because of the indolent nature of the current Mask of the Emperor, Great Sister looks after those in need of Imperial protection while he debauches himself in his orgies. She rules from the city of Gracodont, where the veterans of the Battle of Kitor pass on their wisdom.

### **The Sister's Army**

This substantial and independent force includes seven regiments of women troops. Gracodont itself is home to five: the Battle Sisters and Iron Maidens (heavy infantry), Earth Axes (medium infantry), Bow Wives (skirmishers), and Rune Ladies (mounted combat magicians). Two more, raised and trained in traditional Darseni manner, are based at Korola Ator: the Copper Girls (light infantry) and the Sticks of Addi (magicians).

land, but men are equal to them and have their own place in the Great Dance. Where women are Mothers the men are Makers, and the Dance cannot go on without both of them.

Many Darseni look to Great Sister in Gracodont for guidance and protection, but the city of Korola Ator is the region's political and spiritual center and is famous for its arrow bushes. Another city of the region is Katchari, a major armory for the Empire. It is famous more for the quantity of its output than for the quality. The major exception is the Katchari Academy, which trains legendary swordsmen and swordsmiths.





## Dikoria

Men dominate this section of Darsen with Solar traditionalism. In part, this reflects the importance Dara Happa placed upon the Dikoria River floodplain, which is a fertile source of wheat "as golden and pure as the Sun's own rays." The spread of maize plantations has become a source of irritation among its more conservative aristocrats.

Three cities dominate the region. **Red Fish** is often called the Satrapy's 'summer capital,' reflecting the presence of the fine Orchard Bridge Palace (which looks out over the fish farms), whose crimson angelfish give the city its name. Less hardy satraps forsake Joranit during its harsh winters and retire to this more comfortable clime. **Yukorvikoth** is the regional capital, a city clearly built to ape the great Tripolis cities but increasingly rundown, as it is marginalized by Red Fish. **Perkos** is the headquarters of the Standfast Regiment, mounted infantry that live up to their motto, "Ride Hard, Stand Fast."

## Gracodont

Gracodont is the second largest city in Karasal, built where the MerEstal River joins the Poralistor. The city is famous for its many temples to the river goddesses of Darsen: MerEstal, Koro-Estal, ThardEstal, and others. Over the centuries, Great Sister has steadily worked to reorder and rebuild Gracodont according to a plan she has yet fully to divulge to others. The plan seems to change with the vicissitudes of the Empire, so the city is in a constant state of reconstruction. Consequently, builders, masons, carpenters, and architects flock to Gracodont, in the hope of finding work and learning the latest arts of construction. To some, this reflects deep-seated instabilities, to others the city is guiding or guarding the whole Empire. Dikorian chauvinists contemptuously contrast this constant transformation with the unchanging order of their Dara Happan cities, but the Darseni delight in the way a plaza might become a block of *insulae* next season, then a trader's market the season after that.

### Eolian Homeland Keyword

**Occupations Available:** Entertainer (Drum dancer), Hunter, Warrior.

**Native Abilities:** Children of Life Tradition Knowledge, Endure Cold, Eolian Customs, Geography of Thrice Blessed, Know Local Area, Run for Hours, Ski, Sling Combat, Taiga Survival Skills, Worship Children of Life Tradition.

**Typical Personality:** Hardy, Taciturn.

**Typical Relationships:** to Clan; to Shaman; to Totem.

**Magic:** Tradition spirits.

☉ **Fox Spirits**—Fiery Touch 8-20, Find Prey 10-5L, Infuse with Energy 10-20, Run Quietly 10-5L, See Invisible Tracks 10-20, Smell Prey 8-5L.

🦉 **Horned Owl Spirits**—Insightful Ponder 10-10L, Quiet Flight 15-5L, Shrewd Questioning 10-20, Silent Passage 10-20, Unsettling Gaze 15-5L.

🐟 **Otter Spirits**—Catch Fish 15-5L, Squeeze Through 15-5L, Stay Dry 10-20, Swim 10-20.

🦋 **Raven Spirits**—Find Secret 15-10L, Hide in Shadow 10-5L, Move in Shadow 10-20, Soar High 15-10L, Unnerving Cry 8-20.

🦌 **Reindeer Spirits**—Hear Sound on Wind 10-5L, Plod On 15-20, Strong as You Can Be 15-20, Sure Footing 10-20, Warm Self 10-5L.

## Joranit

Joranit is the capital of the satrapy and is the largest city in the province. This fortress is the Empire's only deep-water port and has a thriving market supplied by merchants from the east, west, north, and south, giving it a cosmopolitan mixture rivaled only by Glamour itself. Carmanian house traders haggle with Ezarcos kastoki; Dara Happan merchants barter with Karasali slavers; and Darjiini factors trade for Eolian furs. Most of the citizens are boisterous Karasali sailors and traders, but the Pelandans, Dara Happans, Carmanians, and Lunars all have their own neighborhoods within the walls.

The city is the home base for several Imperial regiments, the White Sea Fleet, the Cold Line, and the Satrap's Customs and Coast Guard ships. Large temple complexes serve the people, including a Temple of the Reaching Moon and the Order of Makabaeus' largest chapter house.

## Thrice Blessed Eol

Thrice Blessed is a harsh and infertile taiga occupied by the Eolians, a simple but hardy people. With the coming of the Goddess the people of Twice Blessed—as it was then known—eagerly joined Her new Empire but were then ruthlessly exploited and ravaged. When Takenegi personally freed them from the murderous exploitation of the local Lunar general, Parg Illisi, they renamed their land Thrice Blessed because of the many gifts given to them by Takenegi. Part of the grant from the Red Emperor includes total freedom from Imperial taxes.

The Eolians are a semi-nomadic people found on both sides of the Thunder Delta and on some of its larger islands. The land they inhabit is a cold, forbidding place of rolling pine forests and bogs. The Eolians follow the migrating reindeer and take their sustenance from their herds and the plants of the forests. Eolians do not build in stone for they chafe at any obstacle between them and the elements that they worship. Most of them also shun caves and most dwellings constructed by Outsiders. The religion of the Eolians is as simple as their life; they worship the spirits and the elements. Once a season the clans gather at ancient stone monuments scattered across the land and the Queens lead them in traditional worship of the spirits and elements. On these nights, the forests of Thrice Blessed are strange places, for the boundary between the Spirit and Natural Worlds weakens and allows beings to pass freely across in both directions.

Eolians follow the Children of Life Tradition. They pay homage to the spirits of the five elements and nature that surround them. They speak with the spirits of air, darkness, earth, fire, and water. They sing with the spirits of the pine, juniper, fireflower, and heather. They dance with the five main majestics: Fox, Raven, Otter, Reindeer, and Horned Owl, one of whom most take as their personal totem. Fox is known for its energy and stealth. The fusion of Fire and Life, Fox shows the Eolians how to hunt. The fusion of Darkness with Life, ill-omened Raven is known for the mantle of shadows it wears and for its ability to foretell coming troubles. Otter is the fusion of Water with Life and shows the Eolians how to fish and how to stay dry in the harshest of climes. Strong, stoic Reindeer is the fusion of Earth and Life. The Horned Owl, fusion of Air and Life, is respected for its quiet passage and deep thought. The tradition also includes the Thunder Flint spirits, fire spirits that practitioners coax into sling stones. These spirits cause the stones to explode after they are hurled through the air.

⚡ Want to Discover More? See "Thunder Delta Slingers" in *Barbarian Adventures*, page 27.

# Oraya

*By the grace of the Liberating Moon, this is my land, and here my luck has changed!*

Historically, Oraya is not so much a part of the Pelorian empires as it is a war zone between the settled folk of Rinliddi and the Pentan hordes of the Redlands. As such, it had never been highly populated nor built up a significant urban culture, even though it has superb farmland and runs along the mighty Arcos River. Annexed for the Empire by HonEel at the instigation of Emperor Magnus, it is now a dynamic focus for Imperial expansion. Kastoks have occupied the region for most of its history, warring or allying with the Pentans as circumstances dictated. Over a hundred years ago, after the Nights of Horror, the region opened for settlement. The local Kastoki had a long tradition of accommodating anyone who could fight in their ceaseless struggle to survive, and so accepted the colonists readily.

Due to the diverse nature of the settlements in the area there is no central culture or society underpinning the satrapy, and Orayans may take a variety of homeland keywords, as shown in The Imperial Census nearby. Although this promotes acceptance of new ideas and ways and has brought unprecedented economic development, it also causes troubles with order and governance. Rinliddi call Oraya the "brigand satrapy." Travel here is dangerous, for it is a border region with frontier law and a distinct lack of concern for human life. A significant slave caste exists that is self-perpetuating, forming a major part of the economy, especially in the maize fields where the HonEel cult plays an important role in controlling them. Minor slave revolts are common, but are usually crushed quickly by the Satrap's Kastoks or house troops.

PenelariSor, the present Satrap, is from the MolariSor Clan, which gained control in 6/10 (1527 S.T.) after the original ruling OyeraDan family (descendants of HonEel) stepped down in a deal that left them retaining control of the HonEel cult. He rules through force and fear, extorting arbitrary tributes from his people. Much of this revenue he has devoted to building an

army of slave troops to match or exceed the Emperor's (for what purpose is unclear). Many slaves hope that their children will be accepted into this force, as it offers an escape from drudgery and a chance to become a free Imperial Citizen.

The greatest source of wealth for the Satrap is the trade from Kralorela through the Pentan caravans. The revenue generated in duties on silks, spices, pottery, and art have funded a series of city improvement programs that have changed the shape of the satrapy, most notably the extensive fortification of the major cities. The rich lands available, the excellent river network and the presence of metals in the Von Mountains have made Oraya the fastest growing satrapy in the Empire.

## The Imperial Census

Population: 400,000

Carmanian	6%
Dara Happan	7%
Kastoksi	31%
Lunar	11%
Pelander	21%
Rinliddi	14%
Other	10%

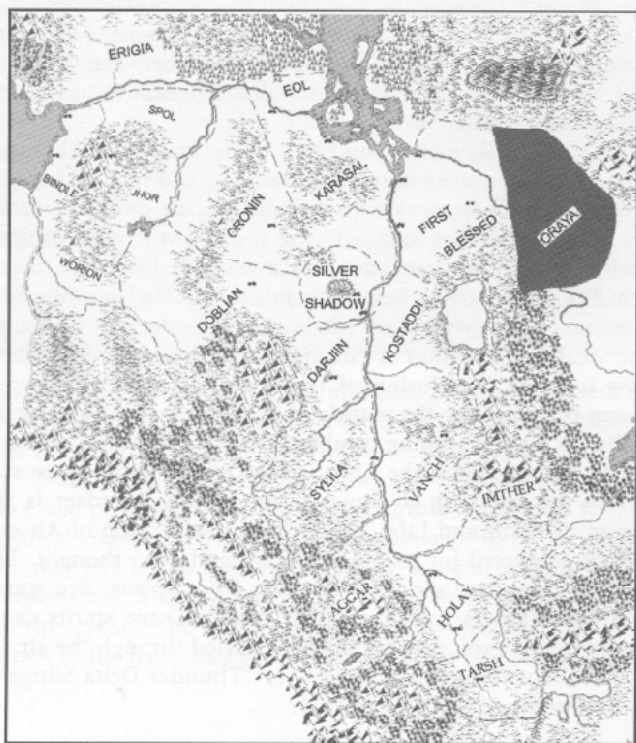
## Kastoks of the East Empire and Beyond

Kastoks—more correctly *kastoki*—are frontier settlers and colonists who serve the Emperor personally as auxiliary cavalry and infantry, defending the plains of the east, from Oraya to the Redlands. Often they appear similar in dress and fighting style to many of the western Pentan tribes or even the Char-Un, but they are peoples of quite different origins and purpose.

The Kastoks descend from volunteers, exiles, and fugitives, and organize themselves on principles of political and social equality. Each community elects an *ataman* as its head, and the assembly of all Kastoks in a region or regiment (*polk*) chooses a *hetman*. Kastoks still shelter refugees fleeing serfdom, debt, political oppression, and hardship, have freely accepted Carmanians, Pentans, Kralori, and even non-humans. New Kastoks must take a new name and identity, and receive a land grant from the ataman on a non-hereditary basis.

By the start of the Seventh Wane, the Kastoks within the Empire had lost most of their autonomy. They became a privileged military class, integrated with the Imperial Army and often used to quell social unrest and other disturbances. The Kastok Hosts have now spread from Rinliddi across the Redlands to the edge of Pent itself. New Hosts are still forming from bands of adventurers and outlaws who roam the steppes outside Imperial law. The Imperial government is taking steps to subordinate the Redland Kastoks, reorganizing and resettling Hosts by Imperial decree, gradually tying the Kastoks to the land and law they had fled in the first place.

Every Kastok male in the Empire is liable for military service, for which he must provide his own horse, clothing, saber, lance, and other equipment. Kastoks are a border guard and territorial militia, the "living wall" of the Empire. In exchange, they have a number of social, religious and economic privileges. For four centuries, the Empire has relied on free Kastok warriors to defend and expand its eastern frontiers. Life on the frontier is turbulent and unpredictable but the Kastoks excel in such conditions. After the Nights of Horror, their role, numbers, and remit have grown. They have become an Imperial institution, yet are fiercely independent of the state bureaucracy and its restrictive ways. Kastoks within the Empire acknowledge Our Father, Takenegi, for they are obliged by the Imperial Kastok Charter to give worship and respect to him. However, that same





Charter obliges Moonson to respect and defend their freedoms and rights.

The Kastoks are often at odds with the very people that they protect, for their autonomy stirs envy in the hearts of those under bondage and in the bureaucrats who work ceaselessly to curtail such freedoms. Kastoks worship Kastok, Tamer of Pent, and all his subcults and hero cults. He has been their deity since his death, and is the epitome of skill, courage, and determination. The temple to Kastok (at the Hall of His Holy Lance) and the headquarters of the Imperial Kastoks dominate the fortress city of Haarzeel. The city is divided into individual fortified zones called camps, each belonging to a host.

## The Edge of Empire

Most of Oraya is rolling grassland, under the constant cold dry wind from the northwest known as Old Man Thirsty. Homesteads and towns are scattered across the landscape, from the orderly settlements of associations' colonial ventures to the ramshackle huts of individual migrants. Sometimes these settlements are united by a common purpose, such as the Great Hope String that links a score of steads and villages along the Kashiran River, which in turn contribute funds to maintain a defensive patrol boat. However, some settlers move to Oraya as much to avoid the ties of Imperial life as from a desire to spread it. Thus, colonies of devoted Lunars may find themselves living next door to deported rebels, disgruntled individualists, or crackpot individualists, a situation that can lead to tension and feuds. However, Orayans will unite against any nomad threat, then descend into renewed bickering once the danger is past.

The influence of HonEel is evident throughout her satrapy. The great temple to HonEel is in the capital, **Palbar**. Palbar was built atop the ruins of an older city of unknown origins, from whose stones the people constructed the Temple of Unknown Predecessors, next to the Visitor's Gate. Rich maize crops surround the city along the Arcos valley in vast slave plantations. Recent construction includes the trivareg, the triple walls that

protect the land side of the city and have barracks and stores for ten regiments built into them. There are also lesser temples in other cities: the thriving market-city **Dorid**, high-walled **Haarzeel**, and **Frangar** (where it is said that ogres walk the streets).

## The Redlands

Since the defeat of the nomads, a strong colonization drive from, or in fear of, the Empire has dotted the wide steppes of the Redlands with settlements, some voluntary, some forced, all determined to survive. Over 100,000 colonists have settled in the last 100 years. Some are Kastoks, especially in the sparsely settled east, but most are farmers now living in small towns made of wood and mud brick. These communities are often dominated by local strongmen or wandering warlords, but Imperial authority is never far away: great caravans, constant patrols by Imperial forces, and the Kastoks (who extort as much as they protect). Oraya is a place of opportunity for anyone with the courage to move and take the lands they require for pasturage. Yet those who have lived on the steppe for any length of time are acutely aware of the great strength of their nomad neighbors to the east. Conflict seems inevitable, and the wise whisper that the nomads await only the right man to lead them for the Redlands to earn their name once more and be bathed in blood.

### The Red Hair Tribe

The Red Hair Tribe is loyal to the Goddess but fully Pentan in its ways, extracting tribute from many Redlands farmers in return for protection and providing guards and auxiliaries for caravans and Imperial scouts. Every year, the Empire collects the Red Hair Tribute from the diminishing number of Pentan tribes that still pay it. The best of these slaves go to Glamour to join the MaMluk slave regiments or the Imperial household, and the Red Hair Tribe receives the remainder to raise as their own. This has increased their numbers quickly since the Nights of Horror. Other Pentans and Redlander Kastoks call them the "Cast-offs Tribe" in mockery of the institution.

**Red Hair City** is their capital and the hub of cross-Pent trade with Kralorela. The Etyries cult has a major temple here, as do several other Lunar cults. Trade has turned what was essentially a large camp into a small city, with wooden and stone buildings and a newly-built wall and citadel. This citadel is the seat of the Crimson Braid Khan and his warband, as well as home to the Imperial ambassador and his bodyguard of MaMluk cavalry (who also oversees the Red Hair Tribute on the Plinth of Judgement). Many Pentan tribes trade here and take away tales of the wealth of the city as well as a new appreciation of how wealthy and ripe for plunder the great cities of the Empire itself must be.

## The Upper Arcos

Once a rough steppe fought over or settled by nomads and Kastoks, the Aldryami of the Elder Wilds have partially reforested the area. They and their human allies, the Estvenori, now lay claim to all of Garsting and Selkow. The Aldryami have provided the Estvenori heavy cavalry with bronze-hard wooden scale armor, as well as elven archers, allowing them to dominate the region. The Estvenori capital, **Estven**, is a small city, built around an impressive citadel built in the Empire of the Wyrms Friends era, with a good stone port through which rare lumber, kumiss, and Arcos valley wine flows to the Empire.

The Estvenori (of Kastoks stock) dominate the local non-nomadic population, the Zarkosians. Famed as slingers and light infantry, the Zarkosians have long been a source of mercenaries for Dara Happa, Kastoks, and Pentans.

### Kastoks Homeland Keyword

**Occupations Available:** Cavalry Soldier (Regular, Skirmish), Entertainer (Nose Flutter, Saber Dancer), Farmer, Foot Soldier (Regular, Skirmisher), Healer, Hunter, Merchant, Petty Noble, Warrior.

**Native Abilities:** Care for Horse, Geography of Oraya, Kastok Customs, Know Kastok Myths, Know Local Area, Ride, Rural Survival Skills, Saber Combat or Spear and Shield Combat, Worship Kastok Religion.

**Typical Personality:** Brave, Hot-Headed, Independent.

**Typical Relationships:** to Clan; to Host; to Kastok Religion.

**Magic:** Divine aid; specialized magic chosen from among the sample deities provided below.

**Ataman** (noble)—Kastok Hetman of Hosts (*Affinities:* Command Host, Hoozar!, Kastokus Combat).

**Colonist** (farmer or townsman)—Keremmeth the Unbowed (*Affinities:* Astute, Domesticate Animals, Endurance).

**Hoozar** (cavalry soldier)—Darfax the Killer (*Affinities:* Hoozar!, Kastokus Combat, Protector).

**Kastokan** (priest)—Kastok Hostmaker (*Affinities:* Command Host, Community, Kastokus Combat).

**Plastun** (infantry, house soldier)—Jurgash Horde-breaker (*Affinities:* Fearless, Shieldwall, Steppe Watch).

## Kastok

### Cavalry General



Kastok is the greatest cavalry general that ever lived. He took war to the steppes of Pent and beat the Pentan nomads there at their own game. He was a superb leader and tactical innovator who trained soldiers to fight both mounted and dismounted, and with bows or lances. He looked after his men at all times and made them brave. He was a great personal combatant too. He took the Lance of Dhorban from Ruthanzant, a demigod summoned from the Sky to defeat him.

Kastok was only defeated by a foul emperor's assassination. He was worshipped immediately as a god, and now many units are of the Kastokus tradition, able to fight in a variety of ways against enemies of every kind. Because they must be highly skilled to join, and their membership is dependent on virtue, they are an elite unit within the Cavalry Corps.

**Entry Requirements:** Prove virtue and demonstrate ability at riding, lance, and bow.

**Abilities:** Boot-to-Boot Charge, Bow Combat, Devotee of Kastok or Initiate of Kastok, Kastokus Tactics, Lance Combat, Mythology of Kastok, Soul Sight.

**Virtues:** Disciplined, Incisive, Solar Virtues, Stalwart.

**Affinities and Feats:**

▣ **Command Host** (Bolster Morale, Find Campsite, Intimidate Nomad)

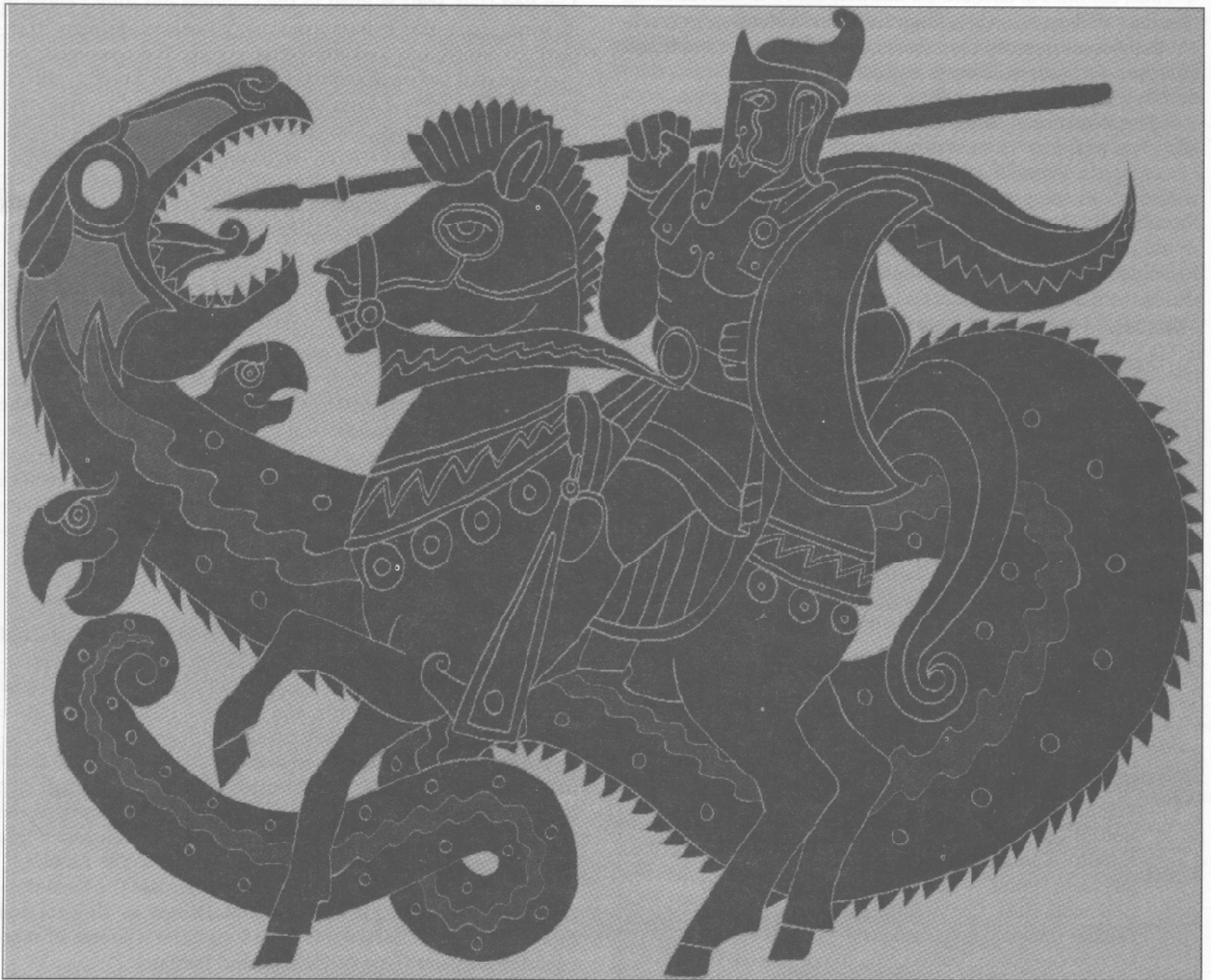
▼ **Hoozar!** (Firm Seat, Fronan Stamina, Kastok's Hobble, Speed of Vuanso)

† **Kastokus Combat** (Pierce Spirit, Sagittus Shot, Shattering Charge, Steady Spear, Turn Arrow ritual)

**Secret: Inspire Loyalty** (Gives a bonus of 1/4 of the ability rating to any test of leadership, oration, loyalty, or similar abilities.)

**Other Side:** Kastok's War Camp is a star overlooking the Kargzant Road. After death his followers join their general there, and prepare to ambush the enemy god as he passes by. From the War Camp, worshipers can exit to Polaris' Fort in the Sky World.

**Disadvantages:** Kastok's worshippers are often distrusted by their superiors for the unwavering loyalty that they garner from their troopers.





# The Lunar Provinces

*We are the truest Imperials, the warriors, explorers, missionaries, and traders at the front-line of Empire!*

Beyond the settled and comfortable Heartland lie the rougher but arguably more vibrant Provinces: Tarsh, Aggar, Holay, Vanch, and Imther, as well as the newly-conquered if not yet pacified lands of Dragon Pass. Although there are settlers and colonists all around our mighty Empire, mostly they are found to the south, as Sedenya's glory is brought to the benighted by word, witness, wit and weapons.

The standard Provincial Homeland (on pages 56-57) can be used for any Provincial, with minor variations to reflect the applicable region. Additionally, a specifically Tarsh homeland is provided in *HeroQuest*. The Provinces are also home to many colonists, travelers, and opportunists from the Heartland, for whom other homeland keywords are appropriate. For example, the fortified town and customs post of Verdar in Holay at the strategic confluence of the Oslir and Zalador Rivers, was essentially created by the Imperial authorities. They settled the city with ex-soldiers from the Heartland, and most of its inhabitants are of Dara Happan origin.

## The Wild South

The Provinces are located in the region of rough hilly ground of southern Peloria where it meets the Rockwood Mountains and Dragon Pass. The land is cut by several rivers, especially the Oslir, and is rich with forests and wild animals. The farther south a traveler goes, the farther he is from the fiery blessings of Yelm and the rituals and magic of the Kalikos Expeditions (which fight back the snow and ice demons of the northern glaciers), and the closer he gets to the realms claimed—for the moment—by the tempestuous and unruly rebel-god Orlanatus, whom some call Orlanth. Although the river valleys of the Provinces enjoy warm summers, overall they are colder than the Heartland and, above all, are subject to greater variations in climate. Winters are cold and wet in a way that disconcerts pampered sons of Dara Happa; snow is a novelty to Heartlanders but a fact of life for Provincials. Similarly, the Provinces are wilder than the Heartland. Forests are dark and wild, hills bleak or thick with bramble and bracken. Some of the cities aspire to Heartland standards of cosmopolitan debauchery and architectural glory, but they are generally primitive imitations. The rippling maize of the Oslir Valley's slave-labored fields soon gives way to unclaimed common land, upland pastures, and family steads.

### Common Magic—One Keel Kith

The mighty Oslir River flows through the Provinces. It is at once a source of wealth and worry. The great grain barges move up it into the Heartland, just as fleets of troop carriers bringing invading armies have come south. Its waters irrigate the broad and fertile floodplain, just as they sometimes burst forth to drown whole peoples and wash away cities. One Keel Kith is a common religion practiced by those who live on, by, and thanks to the Oslir, marked as much by its many folk ways and superstitions (such as never wearing blue while on the river or throwing a handful of rice into it for luck) as its magic.

**Feats:** Avoid Notice of River Shark, Float, Leap Out of River, Sniff Change in Current.

**Talents:** Hold Water, Recognize Bargee, Swim, Wrestle Rudder.



## The Provincial Overseer

The Provincial Overseer asserts Imperial authority over the tributary lands. The monarchs of the Provincial nations are still by and large chosen and enthroned according

to their own ancient practices, but all swear fealty to Moonson and pay annual tributes to the Provincial Overseer. Most of the revenue provided goes to funding the Provincial Government's military forces and religious and civil programs. Many lesser tribes also obey the Overseer under simpler arrangements. Several other barbarian lands are also subject nations (such as Sartar), but not official Provinces.

Directly responsible to the Emperor, Appius Luxius has held the post of Provincial Overseer for thirty-five years, and has a reputation for honesty and diplomacy. Three important officials serve under him: Quinscion the Patient, General of Procurements and Disbursements, is responsible for collecting taxes; Tatus the Bright, General of the Provincial Army; and Icilius Overholy, General Guide for the Lunar Spirit, who is responsible for all matters spiritual. Icilius is also in charge of the Provincial Church, which works to bring the first light of the Goddess to the heathen. Rather than confuse outsiders with the full variety of Lunar theology, it offers a simple introduction through worship of the Seven Mothers.

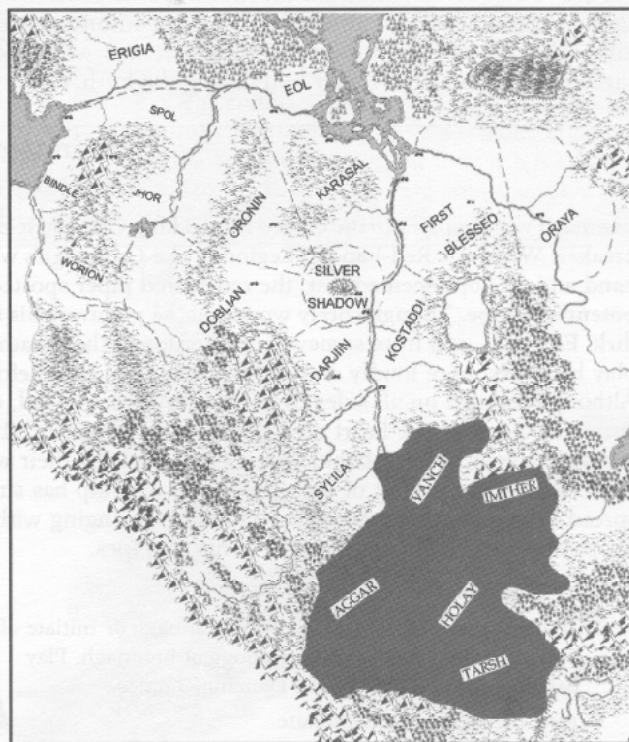
## Aggar

Aggar is a turbulent kingdom of several distinct religious leanings, ruled by old king Rascius One Eyed. His capital, Eneal, is a stronghold of the Provincial Church, but Aggar is best known

### The Imperial Census

Population: 870,000

Aggar	140,000
Holay	150,000
Imther	70,000
Tarsh	360,000
Vanch	150,000



for the City of 10,000 Magicians, so named because it "would last until ten thousand magicians had entered its gates." Magic is strong here, but wise scholars fear the demise of the city, and have closed it to outsiders, even though there is little agreement as to who exactly constitutes a "magician." The source of destruction is also unknown, although most believe it is also the source of the strong magic that permeates the area. The city was built during the height of the Empire of the Wyrm's Friends, and many fear that it rests atop the head of a true dragon.

There have been uprisings by the Tarkaling tribes living around Angry Lake as Brandig, self-proclaimed Bandit King of the Autumn Mountains, fights a guerrilla war in the name of Orlanth. Even where the ban on Orlanth worship is obeyed, storm deities like Brannagh Skirlingdrone (see below) remain popular. Meanwhile, the Telmori in the Billiz Hills are tolerated because they hunt the hydras, but also for their occasional wars against raiders from Ormsgone Valley.

The Kingdom's four Sun Dome Temples are in a state of disarray because of religious schisms. The southern temples follow the Monro Doctrine, but the northern temples have resurrected the teachings of Daysenerus, the mystic High Sun worshipped in the First Age.

## Holay

The Holayan queendom is a patient and settled land. Its Alakoringite heritage is still strong, but here the women have a far stronger role, with most of the rites of authority being in the hands of Ernalda Earthmother and the Red Woman, whom some call Vinga. Holay first paid tribute to the Empire in 2/29 (1330 S.T.), but then mustered an alliance of barbarians led by Gwythar Longwise to harry Sylila. When Hwarin Dalthippa lost her son and then her husband in this struggle, she donned the Red Mask of War and launched her Daughter's Road Campaigns. At Mirin's Cross, she fought a four-day magical battle with the barbarians. After the battle ended, a great crystal bridge stood over the Black Eel River, cutting into the courtyard of the great citadel. The Conquering Daughter continued to Filichet where she accepted the submission of the barbarian chiefs in 2/45 (1346 S.T.). Holay fell from effective Imperial control during the Seleric invasion, but its experiences of autonomy were marked largely by Tarshite invasions, and it was with some relief that it rejoined the Lunar fold during the Fifth Wane.

Holay is a powerful nation within the Provinces. Mirin's Cross is the seat of the Provincial Government. It was built as a display of Imperial might, with soaring Dara Happan sun-watch towers, the sprawling Grand Basilica of the Provincial Church, and the Overseer's red marble Fortress of Seven Seals. The Holayan capital, Filichet, is more traditional but almost as grand. Queen Phirgia rules through consensus and cooperation when she can, and with an iron fist when she must. After all, with the exception of the Zaladori woodsmen and the Enjaga (a new tribe formed from conquered Imtherians of the Dog Plains), the twelve tribes of Holay are governed by chieftainesses and thus equally pragmatic and reasonable.

## Imther

Unlike the other Provinces (which were conquered), the mountain kingdom of Imther joined the Empire voluntarily, in 2/46 (1347 S.T.). On the surface, it is a land of rustic tranquility, where growing worship of the Red Moon goes hand in hand with respect for the traditional gods and customs of their people. It is a land of orchards and cheese-makers, whose unique relationship with the Mostali of the Imther Mountains explains why the kingdom is the Empire's main source of bronze.

The kingdom was torn by civil war in 7/41 (1612 S.T.), during which Vanch seized much of western Imther (including the city of New Lolon) and Holay wrested the Dog Plains from it (including the city of Hortugarth). The present *kharec* (king) is Margor IV, an ailing and increasingly embittered man, who seized power during the civil war but has no heir. His death is likely to precipitate a new civil war. This may even lead to the dissolution of Imther as an autonomous state, torn between Vanch and Holay.

## Tarsh

Tarsh is a country of contradictions. It is at the farthest reach of the Empire, a cold and often rough land whose Alakoringite people are fierce warriors with a proud history of independence. It is also a rich Province, full of opportunity. Although the hill people often resent Imperial rule, nobles and farmers alike in the lowlands value the wealth and stability the Empire has brought.

Tarsh held back the Empire to the north and Grazer horse-nomads to the south for a century and a half, before eventual-

## Brannagh Skirlingdrone

*The Red-Haired Piper of Aggar*

Brannagh was bagpiper to the cursed Aggari king Crunnagh Leg-breaker. When the Red-handed Legion broke Crunnagh's war-band and all hope seemed lost, the red-haired piper spotted a potential escape. Though sorely wounded, he put away his fell dirk, Eniskuill, and from somewhere summoned the breath to play his pipes more loudly and passionately than ever before. Although assailed on all sides by the hungry recent dead, the surviving Aggari took heart at his stirring rendition of Mac-Nevin's Lament, formed behind their piper, and cut their way to freedom and the light of day. Brannagh's worship has since spread beyond Aggar to the other Provinces, bringing with it his passion and the unearthly wail of his bagpipes.

**Entry Requirements:** None.

**Abilities:** Dagger Fighting, Devotee of Brannagh or Initiate of Brannagh, Mighty Lungs, Mythology of Brannagh, Play Bagpipes, Soul Sight, Sword-Dancing, Tactics.

**Virtues:** Fierce, Loud, Passionate.

### Affinities and Feats:

- 🌀 **Bag of Winds** (Bind Sylph, Fly on Bag of Winds, Summon Wind from Bag, Trap Wind in Bag)
- 📢 **Call to Battle** (Alert Comrades, Funeral Dirge, Gather Round, Inspire Warrior, Shame Coward)
- 🔊 **Fearsome Din** (Disturbing Drone, Ear-Shattering Noise, Even Louder)

**Secret:** **Pipe the Battle** (The devotee ignores Multiple Target penalties when using Brannagh's magic to aid his allies in battle. All persons affected must be able to hear him play.)

**Other Side:** Brannagh's Halt is on the side of Wind Mountain, hard to see but easy to find by the sound of his pipes, which wail and drone even when not played. A winding path leads up to the Wind Peak or down into the Storm Age.

**Disadvantages:** None special.





ly joining the Empire not as a conquered subject but a favored ally. In 5/27 (1490 S.T.), HonEel intruded into the rites of the Ernaldan sisterhood at Heruvernald. She danced the Whole Dance of Spring, making her claim that Ernald was nothing less than the enigmatic "She Who Waits," one of the Seven Mothers. She married King Pyjeemsab and gave birth to Phoronestes, the new king (for Pyjeemsab tragically died during their wedding night). Apart from the temporary interregnum of the usurper Palashee Longaxe, Tarsh has been a Lunar ally since, and the present ruler, Moirades, is a philosopher-king steeped in Lunar Mysteries.

Tarsh is a land with a long history, and is rich in ruins, old earth shrines, surviving storm-rune menhirs atop windswept hills, and other traces of elder ages. The lowlands are dominated by the wheat and maize fields that are the source of the kingdom's wealth. The Oslir and other rivers take barge-loads of this 'Tarsh gold' to the hungry Heartland. In return comes money, influence in Glamour, and a flood of colonists and opportunists. Lunar deities have replaced many of the old hill gods (and the others have been tamed), and the Tarshite capital of Furthest is now a gleaming new Lunar-style city.

## Vanch

The people of Vanch are widely considered thieves, a people who will eagerly take whatever is of use to them without concern for their own traditions and others' rights, whether a god, a city, or a treasure. The Vanchites themselves know better—survival and a ready adoption of new ideas are actually central to their tradition, taught by their wily raccoon god. Many gods and peoples have conquered them, but they have always survived and come through the experience somehow richer. The result is a unique culture made up of such a mix of others' that it has gone beyond imitation and created something new.

Since its conquest in 2/16 (1317 S.T.), Vanch has embraced the new opportunities offered by the Empire. This is even visible in the settlements of Vanch. The ancient capital of Bikhys dates back to before the time of the Empire of the Wyrm Friends. Vanch was ruled by Dara Happans, who built the city over a ziggurat raised in honor of the Sun. Ulatel's Leap has marble water-troughs for its dogs and three bare hills upon which storm-worshippers used to sacrifice to Orlanth. Bostok, by contrast, is a small town that has become a city thanks to its new role as a major river port on the Oslir. Beyond the vestigial Old Town (now largely an attraction for curious travelers) it is a model Lunar city, with elegant squares, temples to Sedenya, a huge Provincial Church, and orderly rows of four-story insulae.

Each Vanchite king adopts a formal mask to wear in public, reflecting his character and ambitions. King Gormoral has chosen The Gatherer, and in this role has managed to exploit the Imtherian civil war both for territorial gain and to gather to Vanch even greater prosperity. The Vanchite Trading Company is a major player in the legal and (some say) illegal trade up and down the Oslir. Vanchite financial houses (which have been significant within the Empire since the days of Emperor Elmexdros) have become powerful bankers and lenders throughout Dara Happa and the south.

## Other Lands of the Lunar Provinces

### Balazar

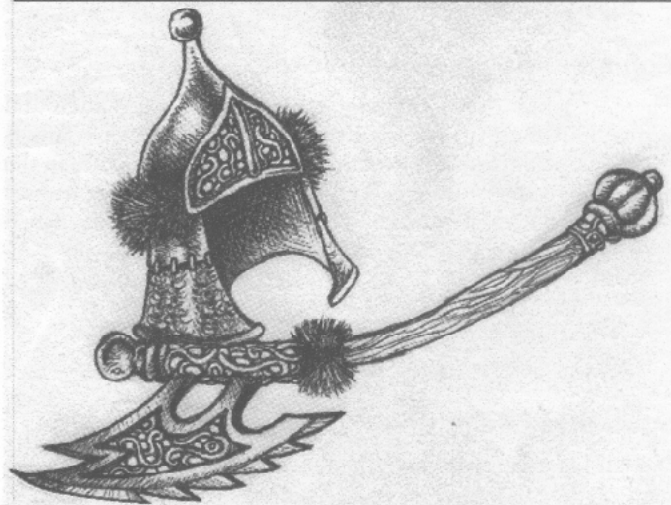
Balazar is a coarse and inhospitable land inhabited by coarse and inhospitable primitives. It is dominated by the descendants of the hero Balazar, who colonized the area over five hundred years ago. They survive by pig farming in and around three squalid citadels. The simple Votanki hunter-gatherers are the indigenous people of Balazar, a favored source of slaves for Tarsh and, in past ages, Dara Happa. One of the citadels, Elkoi, is now under Holayan (and thus Imperial) control, but Orlanthi refugees and trouble-makers have been trickling into Balazar from Dragon Pass for years, bringing a new complexity to the region's politics.

### Sartar

Dragon Pass and, more specifically, the Orlanthi of the Principality of Sartar, are the most recent beneficiaries of the Lunar Way. Tenacious in their loyalty to Orlanth (however futile and self-destructive this may be), the people of Dragon Pass have been brought peace but are not yet pacified. They are wild and primitive cattle raisers and cattle raiders. Their land has but two cities meriting such a designation: Boldhome (a wind-scoured settlement halfway up a mountain) and Alda-chur (a more civilized city under the rule of a staunch Imperial ally). The Emperor installed a subject prince in Boldhome, but the area is still under military occupation, directly administered by the commander of the Army of Sartar and the Provincial Overseer.

### Tork

Tork is the Mad Sultanate, cut off from the world by magical barriers. Its natives were driven insane by the sight of the Crimson Bat, a Chaos monster controlled by the Red Goddess. Imprisoned here for generations behind powerful magical wards, most of the time they prey on and mate with each other, descending further into bestial anarchy. At times their energies focus on one insane endeavor or another. Sometimes this focus is inward, such as the attempt to create a human pyramid to reach and kill the Sun or the construction of the Thirteen Ring Circus, whose pillars still stand close to the mouth of the Bokosin River. At other times, they break free of their confines and ravage the surrounding lands. The last time this happened was during Sheng Seleris' invasion, when the Mad Sultan himself led forth a horde of madmen who killed the Emperor before entering the Chaos land of Dorastor, where they presumably remain to this day.



# Homeland: Lunar Provinces

Although inhabitants of the Lunar Heartland tend to lump them together as barbarian southerners, there are huge differences among the different Provincial states and peoples. Wild Aggar is a land of stubborn farmer-soldiers, fierce highlanders, and fiercer liquors. Holay is a queendom, heir to most of the ancient land of Saird. From the fortress-city of Mirin's Cross, the Provincial Overseer marshals his efforts to expand Lunar power. Vanch occupies the remaining lands, gleefully accepting new ideas and adding them to its complex and dynamic culture. Vanch, Holay, and Sylila compete with each other to assert their claim to the region's grand legacy. Vanch and Holay are also eyeing small, peaceful Imther, a mountainous land of ore-miners and cheese-makers with close links to the local dwarves. Tarsh, farther south still, is technically an ally rather than a Province. It is a rich, proud land that resisted Imperial rule for many years but is now at the forefront of efforts to bring the blessings of the Empire to Dragon Pass.

## Provincial Homeland Keyword

**Look and Feel:** 'Younger brothers' of the Empire, only just beginning to understand the advantages of Empire, but still relatively barbarous in their manners, speech, and dress. Some may be rebels still seeking independence, others the most zealous believers in the Lunar Way

**Occupations Available:** Cavalry Soldier (Regular, Skirmisher), Entertainer (Bagpiper, Harpist, Hornpiper, Skald), Farmer, Foot Soldier (Archer, Regular, Skirmish), Healer, Hunter, Merchant, Petty Noble, Scholar, Thief, Warrior.

**Native Abilities:** Axe and Shield Combat or Spear and Shield Combat, Geography of [Province], Know Local Area, [Province] Customs, Rural Survival Skills.

**Typical Personality:** Independent, Optimistic, Resent Dara Happans.

**Typical Relationships:** to Clan or Tribe; to Family; to Temple.

**Magic:** Common magic, Provincial Religions (theism).

**Common Names:**

**Men**—Bran, Dhugal (Aggar); Menelistes, Parsee (Holay); Harval, Menelon, (Imther); Hengis, Orlev (Tarsh); Ratukal, Ulatel (Vanch).

**Women**—Eghleen, Morrig (Aggar); Ohiterea, Xanthippe (Holay); Jocesta, Piahtin (Imther); Leika, Vertenbora (Tarsh); Isskura, Vritin (Vanch).

## Common Magic—Seven Sisters Society

There are many local common religions, but one constant found throughout the Provinces is the Seven Sisters Society. This is the lay association of the Provincial Church, which takes in the homeless, feeds the hungry, and listens to the babbling masses of lonely, rejected, and needy people. It teaches the five Seven Hero Magics as common magic.

**Feats:** Fight Back, Heal Self.

**Charms:** Calmness, Heal Madness.

**Spells:** Make Page Speak.

## Specialized Religion—Provincial Religions

It is hard to generalize about the Provincial Religions, as they are many and varied. The cults listed here are those worshipped in

### The Lunar Provinces

Province	Nickname	Additional Native Ability (+4 if already possessed)
Aggar	The Beards	Wilderness Survival Skills
Holay	Daughters Own	Proud
Imther	Cheesemakers	Dwarf Lore
Tarsh	Grain Kings	Wealth
Vanch	Thieves	Cunning

Tarsh, presented here as an example. Broadly speaking, the peoples of Tarsh, Holay, and Aggar worship a version of the Orlanth Pantheon (albeit without Orlanth), revering Alakoring Dragon-breaker above all other heroes. Lunar deities are increasingly replacing weakened storm deities. Imther and Vanch have their own faiths and gods, although here too worship of the Provincial Church and other Lunar deities is spreading. Many Provincials initiate or devote themselves to a specific deity; see the listing below for sample deities.

## Provincial Religions Keyword

**Abilities:** Know [Provincial Religion] Myths, Worship [Provincial Religion].

**Virtues:** Accept Lunar Way, Adaptable, Nationalist.

**Magic:** Divine aid.

## Sample Deities of the Provincial Religions

**Cavalry Soldier:** Yarandros the Great Horseman. The warlord who built Tarsh and beat the Grazers at their own game.  
**Affinities**—Cavalry Combat, Horsemanship.

**Entertainer:** Brannagh Skirlingdrone. The red-bearded bagpiper, whose music stirs the heart and scatters the fearful.  
**Affinities**—Bag of Winds, Call to Battle, Fearsome Din.  
Want to Discover More? See "Brannagh Skirlingdrone" on page 54.

**Farmer:** Barntar the Plowman. God of the honest farmer.  
**Affinities**—Agriculture, Domestic Animals, Honest Work.  
Want to Discover More? See "Barntar" in *Storm Tribe*, page 204.

**Foot Soldier:** Yanafal Tarnils, Lunar War God. Upright and deadly, the Mother whom even Death could not defeat.  
**Affinities**—Combat, Soldier, Warlord.

**Healer:** Deezola, Lunar Healer. The Binder Within, the queen who was a healer.  
**Affinities**—Heal Body, Heal Mind, Heal Soul.

**Hunter:** Odayla the Bear. The bear who is also the hunter.  
**Affinities**—Bear Powers, Hide, Hunt.  
Want to Discover More? See "Odayla" in *Storm Tribe*, page 139.

**Merchant:** Etyries, Trade Goddess. Trader and traveler, who bears both the word and the wealth of the Goddess.  
**Affinities**—Discovery, Trade, Travel.

**Petty Noble:** The Seven Mothers. Recreators of the Red Goddess, worshipped in the Provincial Church (see below).

**Scholar:** Irippi Ontor, Scribe. God of learning and literacy, patron of those who open their minds to new knowledge.  
**Affinities**—Identification, Literacy, Otherworld.



**Thief:** Desemborth, Orlanthi Thief God. The black-sandaled rebel and thief, unseen in the darkness, who slips past his enemies like the very wind in the night.

**Affinities:** Movement, Stealth.

✠ **Want to Discover More?** See "Desemborth" in *Thunder Rebels*, page 221.

**Warrior:** Phargentes Kingslayer. Great King of Tarsh, slayer of six enemy kings, master strategist, and fell warrior.

**Affinities:** Cunning, Indefatigable, Warrior.

## The Seven Mothers

### The Provincial Church

The Red Goddess that hangs in the sky was reborn only four centuries ago. The Lunar Goddess had been lost even to her own children, who always, by nature, looked to the world first. Four conspirators joined in Torang to recreate an ancient goddess who had been dismembered during the Gods' War: Deezola the healing queen, Irippi Ontor the scholar, Jakaleel the Witch, and the warrior Yanafal Tarnils. The bandit chieftain Danfive Xaron was pressed into service in the ritual, and the innocent child Teelo Norri was chosen to house the Goddess. (The seventh Mother is known only as "She Who Waits," a mysterious figure who led the Mothers through the Underworld.) In 1220, the Mothers brought back the Goddess to incarnate in her new body. In 1247, Sedenya regained her immortality and rose into the sky as the Red Moon.

Those seven became gods and are called the Seven Mothers, even though three of them are men. Their followers teach Her Way, continuing to give birth to Her power in the world. Some dedicate themselves to one of the Mothers within a specialized religion, but most worship them collectively, especially in the Provinces. They are worshipped in the Provincial Church, a religion they themselves founded to bring the word of the Goddess to the barbarians, to spread hope and inspiration without unnecessary complication and ambiguity.

The Provincial Church works to bring the first light of the Goddess to the heathen. Rather than confuse potential converts with the full variety of Lunar theology, it offers a simplified version for Provincials, barbarians, and recent converts. Both as a reflection of Sedenya's ability to unite every kind of magic and to ease converts' transition into the Lunar Way, the Provincial Church actively encourages the mixing of magic, and thus provides a variety of magical abilities.

**Entry Requirements:** Open your heart and mind to the Lunar Way.

**Mundane Abilities:** Mythology of the Seven Mothers, Sedenyic Philosophy, Worship Seven Mothers.

**Virtues:** Dedicated, Inclusive, Open-Minded.

**Magic:**

☾ **Danfive Xaron**—Endure Pain and Humiliation talent (it does not make them go away, just helps you bear them).

III **Deezola**—Heal Hurt (common worshippers use it as a talent, concentrated worshippers as a feat).

Y **Irippi Ontor**—Read Anything (common worshippers use it as a talent, concentrated worshippers as a feat).

✠ **Jakaleel**—Charms (Drive Temporarily Insane, Expose Prejudice, Resist Fear, See in Dark, Understand the Mad)

☾ **Teelo Norri**—Selflessness (common worshippers use it as a talent, concentrated worshippers as a spell). This is actually a chant of "I am not that," repeated all the time while working, which helps to place another's health and happiness over one's own.

✠ **Yanafal Tarnils**—Combat Attack (common worshippers use it as a talent, concentrated worshippers as a feat to launch a magical attack in hand-to-hand combat).

**Secret:** None. (As the Provincial Church is essentially a simplified version of the true worship of the Seven Mothers, its secret is to send the worshipper to a temple of their favored entity in the core religion.)

**Other Side:** Each of the Seven Mothers has his or her own domain. Most are on the Moon, but Danfive Xaron's Gate Keep is on Destix (the so-called Moon of the Moon), and Jakaleel's demesne is in the Twenty-three Delayed Realm in the Spirit World.

**Disadvantages:** Subject to the Lunar cycle. Heartlanders tend to patronize members of the Provincial Church, who are often considered traitors by traditionalists in newly conquered border regions.

## Reasons to Have Left Home

Many Provincials are excited by and eagerly experience the breadth of opportunities and cultures within the Empire. Others travel to the Heartland to escape the relative backwardness of their home regions or to make their fame and fortune on the frontier.





# HERO BANDS

**T**he Lunar Empire is home to a bewildering array of hero bands, reflecting its diversity of peoples, cultures, and perspectives. In an inclusive society where individuals are encouraged to develop their own ways and ideas, forming or joining a hero band is one way to combine individualism with the comfort of a collective identity.

## Part of Something Greater

Lunars and Solars alike agree that everyone, from the humblest goatherd to Takenegi himself, belongs to something greater. To the Dara Happans, of course, this usually means a league and association. The Lunars, however, allow you to choose your identities, your loyalties. Most people have multiple, overlapping and sometimes even contradictory relationships and allegiances. Of course, this affects Lunar politics, which revel in variety. Each satrapy is governed in a different manner, each regiment of the Imperial Army has its own uniform and traditions; each politician is a member of a dozen different cabals, factions, and conspiracies. From this confusion comes energy.

Many political factions are rooted in the politics of Glamour and the Imperial elite. There is a score of factions within the *Ordanestyum*, from the personal favorites of the present Mask to Great Sister's mysterious Two Moons Silent movement. Some are essentially regional, others based within elements of the political system. The Provincial Overseer's office, for example, is a stronghold for the Iron Cycle, dedicated defenders of stability that work to prevent other factions from attaining ascendancy. Many are philosophical. The Music of Swords, so influential within the Imperial War Forum, is a militaristic faction that sees struggle and conflict as essential, as they bring out what they think of as the best of the Lunar Way. They support military expansion abroad and, implicitly, Dart Competitions at home. The Stone Poets (see page 59) use sculpture as their means of artistic and political expression.

Many portions of the Empire also have factions working to shape, strengthen, or subvert their own region. The Sun-in-Moon, for example, are Lunarized Dara Happans who want to lead more of their countrymen to the Lunar Way. The Blood Warders, on the other hand, have devoted themselves to the defense of Oraya. They regard themselves as the true pioneers of the Lunar Way, and are increasingly scornful of the debauchery and intrigue of Glamour. More subversive yet are the Upright Men, Kostaddi revolutionaries fighting for freedom from their

Sable overlords yet claiming to be doing so in the name of the Lunar Way. Other factions derive from economic interest. The Seeing Eyes of the Etyries Cult is engaged in a quiet struggle for new routes and markets with the Seventeen Wagons of Lokarnos. Meanwhile, the Vanchite Trading Company (which manages much of the essential river traffic along the Oslir) has been characterized by its critics as little more than a gang of crooks, smugglers, and profiteers. Yet to date it has also proven a firm supporter of the Empire, not least because its peace and order has been good for business. Some bands just offer a home to the lost, desperate, or unlucky, such as the Seventh Chance File (see page 60). Many more such factions and movements exist within the Empire. Not all of these organizations are hero

bands, but those that are not usually sponsor them, whether overtly or covertly, and this is the level at which most heroes will encounter them. The Empire is home to a bewildering array, reflecting its diversity of peoples, homelands, and perspectives. Future books will detail these and other bands specifically rooted within local homelands, and will show how they become important as the Empire enters the Hero Wars.

*Hero bands are the way*  
for even beginning heroes to have an  
impact on great events. Everyone is  
"part of something greater," and hero  
bands have an opportunity to interact  
with leaders and associations.

In an inclusive society, where individuals are encouraged to develop their own ideas, forming or joining a hero band is one way to combine this individualism with the comfort of a collective identity. There are stern warbands and pacifist healers; Imperial apologists and anarchic tricksters; swashbuckling bandits and ascetic thinkers; self-sacrificing missionaries and bizarre cultists. Groups of heroes who do not join or form a hero band will come under increasing social, legal, economic and political pressure to do so. It is what is expected, and those who remain individuals risk being regarded as mavericks at best, subversives or conspirators at worst.

Every homeland has its own ways of finding, shaping, and binding a guardian being (see *HeroQuest*), whether the Frog-Spirit-Hop-Dance of the Darjiini or the Minor Intercession used by many Dara Happans, in which they petition the Solar Bureaucracy for a guardian daimon. Hero bands that are predominantly or entirely Lunar may instead choose distinctively Lunar ways of acquiring such an Otherworld ally, carried out by a patron temple. Known as a *lare*, this operates under the same rules as other guardians: it takes one of the three forms and carries out the usual three functions, while demanding that appropriate requirements be observed. Its magic is tied to the Lunar cycle; this gives the hero band specific privileges and duties, which are explored in *Imperial Lunar Handbook 2*.



# The Stone Poets

*"There is a new world of wonders to see and immortalize!"*

The Stone Poets are traveling artists who seek out extraordinary sights and people to become the models for their creations, typically statues, mosaics, and murals, but also sometimes stained glass and paintings. They have to sell their works and cultivate patrons to live and support their travels, but otherwise they are strikingly non-commercial and, indeed, positively unworldly. It is not unknown for one to wander into the middle of a war—blithely assuming that no one would harm him—while looking for a particularly fine vista, much to the bemusement of the combatants and the horror of his guides.

**Form:** Pelandan artistic band.

**Cultural Context:** Wandering artists.

**Ideology:** "Let us see the wonders of the world and show them to others."

**Look and Feel:** Naïve, apolitical artists and their cronies.

**Purpose:** Art. What more could there be?

**Headquarters:** Vogelin (the guardian being) still owns the abandoned estate of his creator, Intrufelin, in the hills overlooking Karresh. At any one time, it is now home to about a quarter of the Stone Poets. The buildings and grounds are crowded with unfinished statues, paintings, and the like, as well as completed but unsold works.

**Reactions:** The Stone Poets perplex many people with their unworldly and open-minded enthusiasm. As such, they are often the subject of amusement, but tend to be treated as neutrals, even outside the Empire.

## Resources

**Leader:** Oktegonos Six-Chisel, the renowned marble sculptor (although many feel that Vogelin actually leads the band). He is a canny negotiator, and can usually find patrons willing to fund expeditions to new places.

**Renowned Members:** Gonvencula of Darleep, who can lay a mosaic perfectly in an hour when sufficiently drunk. Ingurae, the 'Hard Naverian,' who sculpts in black marble using only her hands. Merry Finavuidh, an artist of no talent but a keen buyer and seller of the Stone Poets' works.

**Membership:** There are over fifty artists in the band, as well as twice as many followers, apprentices, admirers, and retainers. About half are Pelandan, the others come from across the Empire.

**Other Contacts:** The Poets are close to the cult of Selven Hara (see *HeroQuest*)—not only do they often hire their guides, but their artworks are frequently used in Ibex Moon publicity campaigns. Additionally, individuals or small groups of Poets have connections with powerful groups in almost every satrapy, gaining patronage in exchange for providing artwork to the nobles. Thus, in First Blessed, the Stone Poets have an agreement with the Senvarano League to provide artwork for the satrap and his closest advisors in exchange for protected passage through the satrapy.

## Organization

The Stone Poets hold an Iconic Festival every year to show off their works (in the hope of sales), to court patrons, and to carry out whatever other business needs to be done. Oktegonos chairs a small trustees board, with Vogelin as the Ex-Officio Honorary Secretary.

## Stone Poets Membership Keyword

Members must be artists, although this is interpreted broadly to include those who wish to learn—this is the usual fiction used to admit friends and followers of existing artists and to hire guides and administrators.

**Membership Requirements:** Be an active or aspiring artist and receive approval at the next Iconic Festival. Once accepted, members must share the ideals of the Stone Poets and tithe 10% of any art sales and commissions to the band.

**Mundane Abilities taught:** Artistic Appreciation, Cultivate Patron, Speak New Pelorian.

**Typical Personality:** Artistic, Naïve, Optimistic.

**Magic:** None taught, although members usually worship some god of art or sculpture, such as the craft god Iphigios.

## Vogelin Annis (Guardian)

Vogelin Annis is a most peculiar gargoyle: intelligent, cultured, artistic, and sensitive. Originally a creation of the famous mad sculptor of Karresh, Intrufelin Annis, the artistry of his creation was so great that the gods of craft and creativity quickened the little statue. Having been adopted by Intrufelin as his son and business manager, he has since been set free to explore the wonders of the world. Vogelin travels with the Stone Poets, encouraging, marveling, exhorting, and advising.

**Method:** Manifestation.

**Form:** A finely-carved gargoyle only two hand-spans' tall.

**Communication:** Vogelin has a squeaky but carrying voice, and speaks in Pelandan, New Pelorian, or Tradetalk.

**Guardian Being Requirements:** Vogelin puts no formal requirements upon the Poets, but would be disinclined to help anyone who failed to live up to the band's ideals (or who disagreed with his own artistic judgements).

**Three Functions:**

☉ Awareness: Know Vogelin's Opinion 1W.

♠ Blessing: Remember What You See 5W.

☐ Defense: Protect Work of Art 10W.



# The Seventh Chance File

*"In the new world, you get one last chance, a seventh chance."*

The Imperial Army consists of a wide array of different kinds of units, drawn from many nations. While individual units tend to be relatively homogenous, it is not unusual for vexillae to include members from a variety of cultures. Sometimes this reflects the needs of a particular founder, sometimes a common belief or philosophy. In the case of the Seventh Chance File, it is because of a common experience: failure. Furthermore, not commonplace, run-of-the-mill, happens-every-day failure, but immense, personal blunders and shortcomings.

The File consists of soldiers who feel they can no longer remain in their parent unit, or who have been cashiered. Unwilling to accept this failure, they sought a chance to recover themselves—and found it in the Seventh Chance File. This is a private vexilla, founded by an eccentric retired Syllan soldier named Jorganolt of Erdantolt, who was pardoned by Takenegi himself for the terrible blunder that led to the Ghost Gors massacre of 7/36 (1607 S.T.), and who later went on to defeat the Little Black Horde in the Redlands. He believes others should have the same last chance (in New Pelorian slang, "seventh chance" means "last chance") and thus retains this force. He plunges the File into the thick of every conflict, offering members the chance to reclaim their honor through glorious victory or purge their guilt through glorious death.

**Form:** Lunar vexilla.

**Cultural Context:** Extremely mixed force of Lunar warriors.

**Ideology:** "We have a new chance to prove ourselves—we will do so or die trying!"

**Look and Feel:** Reckless, inventive, and enthusiastic Lunar auxiliaries.

**Purpose:** To win personal success and redemption while furthering the Lunar cause.

**Headquarters:** Jorganolt sold his estate to fund the File, and his headquarters is now a large wagon that houses his collection of swords and stock of maps.

**Reactions:** The File is generally welcomed by other Imperial forces, not least because their zeal means they are often first into battle, softening up the enemy for the regulars.

## Resources

**Leader:** Jorganolt is now an old man, but is still vigorous. He wears an ancient, embroidered toga over his military trousers and tunic, and affects a silver swagger-stick and oiled white mustachio.

**Renowned Members:** Grim Egor, a somber Tarshite who never discusses his past, and acts for Jorganolt as the field commander of the vexilla. Surea naKallistos is a Holayan combat priestess, whose love for another woman doomed an army and destroyed a city. Inkesh the Meek served in the Steel Sword Legion, until the day he let pride cloud his judgement, a mistake the tall and mighty warrior has vowed not to repeat. Jampal No-Clan was driven from the Lasadag Lions when he became a vegetarian.

**Membership:** The File has over 200 members, including a wide range of ex-soldiers, military mages, and even one troll from the Monster Men regiment.

**Other Contacts:** The File develops few formal ties, but is supported by the Yanafal Tarnils temple in Jillam.

## Organization

The File is divided into demi-files of 21 warriors. Jorganolt assigns these with what often appears little rhyme or reason. Generally, similar kinds of warriors are grouped together (skirmishers with other skirmishers, for example). However, as the picture on page 130 of *Thunder Rebels* shows, a priestess could as easily be placed with a heavy infantryman and a former Lasadag Lion! Each demi-file is commanded by a captain, who reports directly to Grim Egor.

## Seventh Chance File Membership Keyword

Members can come from any type of Imperial unit, and thus will have their own styles of dress, behavior, and war.

**Membership Requirements:** Must have left or been expelled from the Imperial Army for some great mistake. Must obey New Friend's strictures (see below).

**Mundane Abilities taught:** Know Imperial Military Trivia, Speak New Pelorian.

**Typical Personality:** Daring, Remorseful, Zealous.

**Magic:** None taught. New Friend's powers generally allow them to retain the magic from their old regimental deity or hero, if appropriate.

## New Friend (Guardian)

New Friend is the soul of some long-dead hero who supports Jorganolt's venture; only he knows New Friend's real name. He advises Jorganolt on recruitment and tactics and helps the Seventh Chancers in their struggle for atonement.

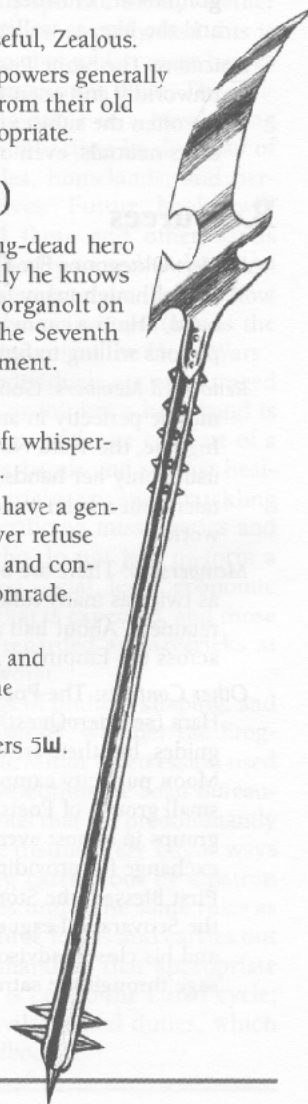
**Method:** Archetype.

**Communication:** Members hear a soft whispering in their ear, in New Pelorian.

**Guardian Being Requirements:** Must have a genuine desire to make amends; never refuse an opportunity to show courage and contrition; never leave an injured comrade.

**Three Functions:**

- ☉ Awareness—Know Direction and Distance of Nearest Temple of the Reaching Moon 10W.
- ⚡ Blessing—Comprehend Orders 5W.
- ☐ Defense—Stay True 5W.





# ASSOCIATIONS

The association is the traditional higher-order organization of Solar society. As with so many other aspects of the Empire, the Lunars have adopted—albeit often in modified form—and spread this structure. The Seeburn Association illustrates how they operate. It is a powerful organization that can be a patron or enemy of the heroes, or one that simply defines the political environment in which they must live.

Lunar associations may center on particular territories, as the Seeburn does, or may define themselves by political ideology and alliances. They tend to be less hidebound and conservative than their exclusively Yelmite counterparts. However, these are huge structures, and thus many will contain elements (such as the FansaDros League and Seeburn Torch Temple) that are almost entirely Solar in their attitudes. Those wishing to play the game of Lunar politics will have to learn how to deal with a rich and varied mix of different cultures, ideas, peoples, and attitudes. As the scale of these associations shows, however, the rewards for success can be extraordinary. After all, the Lunar Way is about opportunity, change, mobility, and growth—and a whole world is there for the taking.

The efforts and energies of each association are abstractly divided among ten numbered elements (relationships, objectives, interests, or the like), all of which use a standard format. After the name and a description, six sections describe the element and its relationship with the association:

*Player Hero Opportunity:* Provides guidelines showing how a typical player hero might operate within the association.

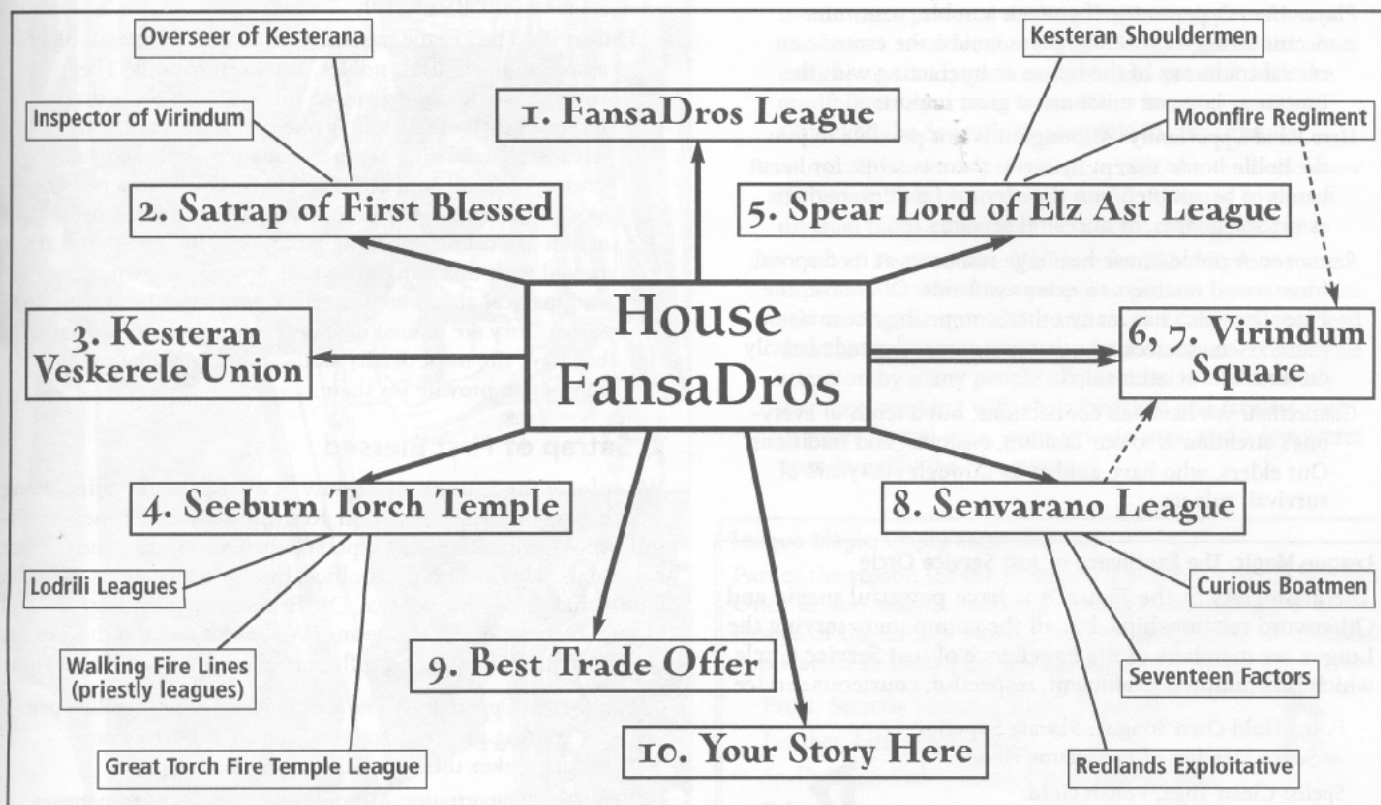
*Hero Band Opportunity:* Provides guidelines showing how a typical player hero band might find employment with the association.

*Resources:* Resources the element can provide to player heroes and hero bands.

*Connection:* The nature of the links and connections between the association and this element or goal.

*Components:* The individual groups or parts of the element. Often, a connection will be to a league, and this section will then list the league's member organizations.

*Adventure Hooks:* Gives suggestions as to what employed heroes or hero bands might find themselves called on to do for the association.



Organizational structure of The Seeburn Association, a traditional, territorial association based around House FansaDros, an ancient Dara Happan noble house.

# The Seeburn Association

*"We are the children of the Great Torch, a mighty union of great leagues."*

We are the Seeburn, a mighty union of several leagues, children of the Great Torch that guides us to see truth, know value, and make fire. Our latest fire showed us Teelo Estara, and we have worshipped Her since the first moment we heard Her. We are an established noble house now, devout followers of the Lunar Way, without renouncing our ancient Solar traditions. Here are some of the many names by which others know us:

The FansaDros League, named after our oldest ancestor, a son of Emperor Dismexdros

House of the Great Torch, for our greatest claim to god-head is to be responsible for this sacred power, which renews the world every year.

Sons of Fifty, a nickname because our ancestor Dismexdros was the fiftieth Emperor of Dara Happa. (The current ruler, the Red Emperor, is number 77.)

The Kesterana Bright Eyes, reflecting our control of this part of First Blessed and the purgative fires of the Seeburn.

Spear Lords of Elz Ast. We dominate this Lunar regiment, and our ancestors are its war gods.

## 1. The FansaDros League

We are noble blood descendants of Yelm, Emperor of Emperors. We are one of several noble houses of Virindum. FansaDros is our ancestor, root of our bloodline. We are but one line of his descendants, and not even the most historic or mythic. Nonetheless, we are survivors of that line; fate has proved that we were destined to have this honor and heavy responsibility.

**Player Hero Opportunity:** If you are a noble, your internecine struggles will take place amidst the esoteric ancestral traditions of the house or interacting with the Empire at large on missions of great import.

**Hero Band Opportunity:** Although it is not possible to join the noble house except by birth, there is scope for hero bands to be adopted into the servitor families, perhaps as priests, guards, or ancestral servants.

**Resources:** A noble house has huge resources at its disposal, from armed retainers to extensive lands. Of course, the FansaDros also has many other, competing demands on those assets, so access to these resources depends heavily on birth and relationships.

**Connection:** We have ten connections, but a tenth of everyone's attention is to our families, customs, and traditions. Our elders, who have guided us through 700 years of survival, rule us.

### League Magic: The Excellence of Just Service Circle

The aristocrats of the FansaDros have powerful magic and Otherword relationships, but all the commoners serving the League are members of the Excellence of Just Service Circle, which is committed to efficient, respectful, courteous service.

**Feats:** Hold Own Tongue, Placate Superior, Sense Member of FansaDros House.

**Spells:** Clean Toga, Polish Gold.

**Talents:** Anticipate Summons.

R

## Components

We are a Dara Happa noble family and the ten noble servant families appointed to help us: one each of scribes, entertainers, craftsmen, house servants, house soldiers, groundsmen, emissaries, ancestral servants, upholders of protocol, and household priests.

## Adventure Hooks

**Ancestral Servants:** Dara Happa ancestors are powerful and revered, but often demanding. Many, before (or even after) their deaths, left behind detailed rituals and duties they expected their descendants to perform. If their descendants fail, they express their disappointment. Ancestral servants thus often find themselves carrying out all sorts of strange, dangerous, or degrading tasks, such as taking an annual friendship gift to a Sable Ilkhan on Hungry Plateau.

**Upholders of Protocol:** A noble family of Dara Happa is both empowered and constrained by the Precepts of Nobility, as proscribed by Antirius and his prophets. Enemies of the house (or those simply barbaric or ignorant) can attack or undermine the protocols and rituals that define a noble family. This desecration can have disastrous consequences on the fortunes of the family in politics, war, trade, and agriculture. The Upholders are tasked with making sure this does not happen. They do this by screening those who would interact with the nobles of the League, defending the chambers of the family from attack or impurity, and scouting all areas the family might go for a potential threat.

**Emissaries:** The League has many links with numerous other associations, houses, nobles, and even nations. They usually use the Emissaries to interact with these diverse groups. Mostly their role is one of political or fiscal advantage, requiring sharp negotiating skills and suave presentation, all couched with impeccable manners. Occasionally, however, the League may want to take covert action against an opposing group, and the Emissaries are tasked with that dangerous role. Spying, assassination, and magical attack are the secret weapons of the Emissaries. They are trained to appear innocuous or ineffective, but have the most deadly skills and magic the League can pay to provide for them.

## 2. Satrap of First Blessed

We enforce the Satrap's suzerainty in the Kesteran Valley, along which barges bring ores from Kesium to the smithies of Virindum. We collect his taxes, persecute his enemies, and enforce his rituals. This is a political office, but for generations the same family has held the post of Oh Beauteous Buntling, Eyes of Light, Overseer of the Kesterana. We have a voice at the Satrap's court because of the great influence we have over this region.

**Player Hero Opportunity:** The jobs here are not generally open for starting player characters, and their bureaucratic nature makes them unsuitable for starting play.

**Hero Band Opportunity:** Although the bureaucracy manages much of the day-to-day administration, it is common for



particular functions to be subcontracted. Individuals within the administration frequently turn to outsiders to carry out specific tasks, whether because of the need for particular skills or specifically to avoid calling on other members of the Association.

**Resources:** These are your family's inside government contacts. They are most valuable as information or other help. Always remember that even though someone is family or an associate, he may also resist vehemently.

**Connection:** The Satrap, our liege. We fulfill our duties through all means at our disposal, and in return have considerable local power and privileges.

### Components

We have family members working in local government offices, and some appointed to tasks at the Satrap's Court. One is Overseer of Kesterana (the greater Kesteran River region), the highest government post for the area. Another post we try to keep is Inspector of Virindum. These positions are temporary and can be taken away by the Satrap. Our membership in this group depends entirely upon the attention we pay to it and the Satrap's good will. Some sample offices are: Regional Taxator, Lord of the Census Scrolls, Observant of Erudition, Garrison Army Polemarch, and Eradicator of Crimes.



### Adventure Hooks

**Going Visiting:** A noble wants to visit some of his relatives: it's a great excuse to go to visit some big city. Yuthuppa is nearby, or Torang. He may even be of especially devout nature and plan a pilgrimage to the Phase Temples around the Crater.

**Tax Farming:** An impoverished bureaucrat is unable to meet a debt in coin and instead arranges for the heroes to be granted a one year license to collect the seasonal Nugget Tax from the recalcitrant freehold prospectors of Kesium. Everything they collect over the Satrap's requirements they can keep.

**Picking on Miners:** The Eradicator of Crimes has been trying to keep the news of a serious insurrection among the free miners from spreading to his superiors. He plans to contain the so-called Warriors of the Pick, and so has cordoned off the region. Their employers want to know what the Eradicator is up to. Should the players investigate, they will find that the Eradicator has illegally taxed the Warriors of the Pick four times this year.

### 3. Kesteran Veskerele Union

We provide political leadership for a dozen agricultural associations, largely riverine or irrigated farmers and associates along the Kesteran River. These are primarily the "old inhabitants" (before we came, that is): some Naverian colonists, Everinan rice growers, and even some Weeder Leagues. Their own leadership comes from the House of the Empty Masks, a sacred leadership group, with whom we deal

**Player Hero Opportunity:** These are one mass of local commoners, and only suitable for heroes who have come from the lower levels of society or have the wit, strength or charisma to rise within the Masked Ones.

**Hero Band Opportunity:** Good Dara Happan aristocrats seek to minimize personal dealings with rough commoners, and have a need for those who can take instruction from their betters with good manners and yet deal with the mudfolk on their own terms. They have on occasion employed the Seventh Chance File in this capacity.

**Resources:** If forced or persuaded to talk, the mudfolk know the gossip and ways of their world, from the source of unusual foods of the area to movements on the river.

**Connection:** Food source. We have formal obligations and expectations with these people to protect them, trade for and among them, mediate and resolve disputes, and lead them in worship. They are unruly, and require considerable attention by many people all the time. We have family members working with their "masked and faceless men" in many formal rites, some private rites, and a few secret ones (notably the Fire-passing).

#### League Magic: Empty Mask Cunning

Part of the reason for the continuing authority of the Masked Ones is the magic provided through the folkways of the House of the Empty Masks, which has all sorts of practical application in life along the Kesteran.

**Feats:** Secretly Ridicule Social Superior.

**Fetishes:** Little Rice Spirit.

**Spells:** Bless Paddy Field, Patch Hole in Boat.

**Talents:** Mask True Feelings, Whallop Thief.

**R**

## Components

Our "Luxury Branch." Although these peasants are troublesome, disrespectful, and malodorous, thanks to our links with them our family is famous as a source of rare bluespot rice and tarindi riverweed cakes.

## Adventure Hooks

*Flying the Flag:* The omens suggest that something or someone will threaten the Everinan Rice Throwing Festival on its holy day. The mudfolk are worried and the Association, eager to assert its authority and head off unrest, plans to provide some extra protection.

*Keeping the Peace:* The Masked Ones have been rougher than usual and there have been robberies in several places. They have done this often before, and they need to be swiftly hunted down or otherwise quieted before word of their activities gets back to the Satrap.

*Get It Back:* Something was stolen, and it is clear that it was the Masked Ones again. This time it is something important, and you must get it back.

## 4. Seeburn Torch Temple

The Virindum Enverinus Temple was famous before us. Enverinus burned the soil at the center of the city, and it has never gone out. Worship here and the fire will purify you through your eyes. From here comes the new sacred fire each Enverinus Day, to relight all the hearths of the regions of Erunvirinda and Kesterana. FansaDros established our right to oversee this great holy place when he performed the Secret Fire and drove out the pretenders. It provides much of our identity, and our obligation to it has helped to keep us alive through dragons, Sheng Seleris, and Carmanian terror.

The great temple employs several hundred priests and several thousand supporters, helpers, and associates. Membership of the entire Enverinus community includes all commoners in Erunvirinda and Kesterana, around 20,000 people in all.

*Player Hero Opportunity:* Player heroes can come from this league. The great temple is so large that its senior figures and priests are administrators of considerable rank and power. However, your hero will most likely be among the holy farmers and crafters who support the priests.

*Hero Band Opportunity:* Any business for the temple might be hired out, but it is more likely that the temple will use its own specialty warrior and magical hero bands to do its most sacred and powerful work.

*Resources:* The temple and its members is a great resource, if you know who to ask, or have inside connections. The temple and its administration dominates the area. Their presence in the city is notable and priests even stand in on many Lunar rites.

*Connection:* Our bloodline holds this right, and we supply the key participants for the critical annual worship rites. We hold all key ruling offices in the temple, and have many members working at the temple in official and unofficial positions as both priests and administrators.

## Components

"Our spiritual base, and primary source of power." Worship of Enverinus is too pure and ennobling to be polluted with common magic. Even the lay staff is expected to abjure these 'soil magics' (although many still retain them, even if they are not members of one of the component leagues).

*Great Torch Fire:* A Temple League that oversees the mighty Seeburn Temple in Virindum.

*Walking Fire Lines:* These are minor priestly leagues that web the countryside to oversee at all Lodril and Orian sacrifices (and collect collateral worship). (For more information on Lodril and Oria, see "Homeland: Dara Happa" and "Lodril" in *HeroQuest*.)

*Lodril Leagues:* These maintain the food supplies of the area, managing temple-owned holdings in the countryside.

## Adventure Hooks

*Keeping the Flame:* Someone has been attacking the Walking Fire Lines and stealing the holy burn-fires. Who are they, and what do they plan to do with them?

*Audit Time:* Several Lodril League plantations are producing poor yields, even though the harvests elsewhere have been good. It would be better if any embezzlement were uncovered quickly and quietly, before the Association's enemies start raising questions at the Satrap's court.

## 5. Spear Lord of Elz Ast League

Bengalis the Vankamant Spear Lord was an heroic fighter in the army of Elmexdros the Conqueror. He received the right to found and oversee "a military recruitment center in the manner of our Vankamant traditions, to protect the Empire and House FansaDros, based in the city of Elz Ast." Several new leagues supply soldiers, who are joined by volunteers accepted from various categories ("our family, foreigners, the inhuman"). This heroic unit survived dragons and Sheng Seleris. When Teelo Estara came to Elz Ast, our Moon Ancestor Urlestrus entertained her. Urlestrus had heard about the goddess of the east, and was as skeptical as anyone. Nonetheless, he and his household eventually converted to the Lunar Way, and House General Jerenthus led his regiment, army, and conscience to leave Vankamant and instead follow Yanafal Tarnils through victory and death.

*Player Hero Opportunity:* Military families or their league members are a great source for warrior characters suitable for the impending Hero Wars.

*Hero Band Opportunity:* As a house unit, the Shouldermen expand and contract as funds, whim, and needs dictate. It is quite common for new hero bands to be attached to the force for a mission, a season or a year.

*Resources:* Arms, back up, and official gossip are all possible if you know someone here.

*Connection:* The Spear Lords of Elz Ast is an infantry regiment of the Imperial Army organized in the manner of a Vankamant hoplite phalanx. The regiment is dedicated to Yanafal Tarnils and Jerenthus, its heroes and many lares are linked with our Association.

### League Magic: Spearhead Canon

Jerenthus of the Seven Spearheads, the regimental god of the Spear Lords, provides his soldier-worshippers with the affinity **Spear Lord**. However, he is also the source of related common magic, known as the Spearhead Canon, which is learned by some of his soldiers and other members of the league who are not able or willing to commit themselves fully to his worship.

*Feats:* Piercing Spear.

*Spells:* Polish Spearhead.

*Talents:* Charge Into Battle, Move With Comrades.

R



## Components

The home headquarters of the Spear Lords is manned and controlled by our family. Our family has contributed members and commanders to this regiment since it became Lunar. Some people even call it the Seeburn Regiment.

We also dominate several other units that are closer to hand. One quarter of the widely scattered Moonfire Regiment serves as Virindum's garrison unit. It purports to be an Elmex dros Line Regiment, although most of its members are essentially reservists and city watchmen, and it has spearmen but few trained archers. Its first Hundred, however, consists of good troops, used for ceremonial purposes but also when we need reliable men. Members of our Association hold all key positions in this company. We also fund the part-time Kesteran Shouldermen, officially part of the House FansaDros troops. We recruit members from our lands in the valley. In practice, they police Kesium and the river valley, patrolling the region as bandit-spikers and, when necessary, pacifying unruly peasants and ensuring they fix roads and build walls when necessary.

## Adventure Hooks

Hero bands working for the military have the chance to participate in all sorts of fighting adventures. House troops, on the other hand, may have more varied opportunities.

**Bandit-Spiking:** The Masked Ones have gone too far and must now be treated as bandits—find them and nail them up along the Kesteran, to teach the mudfolk a lesson.

**Eel Hunt:** The mudfolk talk of a great black god-eel in the river, and are too frightened to gather tarindi riverweed. If it is there, kill it and parade its carcass along the river as proof. If it is not there...well, use your initiative.

**Road Maintenance:** Every time the mudfolk from one village repair a particular stretch of road, by next morning it is pitted and cracked as if a hundred heavy wagons and a thousand iron-booted soldiers had passed along it. What is going on?

## 6. Virindum Square

Senvarano was an early convert to the ways of Etyries. When Imperial mercantile rights were distributed by Etyries the first time, Senvarano was a recipient. "Of Virindum, the temple, its peripheral markets and their products; all sacred markets; peddlers if you can find them," says the charter. In particular, we dominate the metal market, which brings buyers from across First Blessed and neighboring satrapies.

**Player Hero Opportunity:** Merchants come from this group, or those whose skills and interests suit them to working in a mercantile setting.

**Hero Band Opportunity:** The traders are largely settled market-dealers and administrators, but their authority extends to village markets and wandering peddlers, so they often hire others to assert their authority further. They engage in quiet competition with the local Lokarnos Wheel Fraternity, which sometimes requires outside assistance.

**Resources:** Virindum Square is an important market, especially for metals and produce of the river. Our Association is close in this, and as long as you operate within the family much discount comes your way, as well as the gossip (and information) that is rife in such a setting.

**Connection:** We have many family members working in the Etyries market. They collect fees, record transactions, and generally facilitate the interests of the cult and our House.

## Components

The Etyries Temple League oversees the great market and the Etyries temple at Virindum Square.

## Adventure Hooks

**Recovery:** Your hero band is needed to find a missing merchant scout. He might be in trouble, might have been snatched by some rival group, or might even have simply come across some new opportunity he wants to exploit himself. Bring him back: willing or bound, dead or alive.

**Unfair Practices:** The Lokarnos merchants are spreading rumors about the Etyries traders, their honesty, and the quality of their wares. They need to be taught a lesson, but without overt violence or anything else that would tarnish the cult's or our House's reputation.

**Thief, Thief!** You get pick-pocketed in the Holy Market! If you catch this fellow you will discover that a magical thief cult is around, able to pull off such stunts. It is the revived cult of Chivgini: long ago it was a local trickster cult that poked fun at the powerful and redistributed some of the wealth of the rich, using magic of stealth and misdirection. Almost forgotten through the centuries, his cult has been revived as a form of resistance from the poor and the dispossessed. Most of the thefts are petty, intended to embarrass and mock the pretensions of the powerful. If not curbed, however, someday a daring Chivgini will carry out some theft—such as stealing the sacral Key of the Market—that will cause major political embarrassment and even have implications for the Association's ritual authority. Take care of them.

## 7. Best Imperial Offer

We keep part of our efforts and influence open to get the best job available at the time from the Imperial bureaucracy. This is the commitment we make to get ahead in Imperial institutions. At present, we are concentrating on supporting the Virindum Square market and Etyries Temple, but that could change if a new opportunity arises.

## 8. Senvarano League

The Senvarano League is an experimental and exploratory mercantile venture that is looking for new products, new markets, and trade contacts in distant places.

**Player Hero Opportunity:** Trader heroes who seek a more exciting life than the steady profit of Virindum Square may find the entrepreneurial adventures of the Senvarano League to their taste. The League also needs specialists of all types, from warriors to guard their expeditions to scholars to understand and assess new leads.

### League Magic: Senvarano's Purse

Senvarano was a notorious hoarder and famous scattergood. For all his dedication to Etyries, he never closed his eyes to other useful magic, which he gladly offers to those who follow him and service his market

**Charms:** Sniff Out Stolen Wares.

**Feats:** Hear Secret Laughter.

**Spells:** Bless Booth, Identify Metal.

**Talents:** Outsmart Conman.

R

**Hero Band Opportunity:** The Etyries traders who run the League travel to strange and dangerous places, and therefore often need specialists, heroes, and rogues, such as the Seventh Chance File (see page 67).

**Resources:** Profits the Senvarano League does not pass to the Association are plowed into new ventures. Individual members tend to have private fortunes from side deals as well as a wealth of knowledge and contacts that they will provide, for a price or a favor.

**Connection:** Senvarano was one of us. Since he started this, we have kept our people in key positions in this league.

### Components

**The Entrepreneur Branch.** These carriers of goods link the many local markets and routes that eventually bring goods to the temple and great market in Virindum Square. It also has some important exploratory offices in Rinliddi, Oraya and the Redlands, Saird, and even some links to Dragon Pass. Most of the membership are individual entrepreneurs of groups, but there are also three more substantive elements:

**The Curious Boatmen:** Based in the river port at Virindum, the Boatmen supply the marine element of the League with half a dozen small to medium galleys and barges. They are a tough group, hardened wanderers and river warriors. They love to explore the Empire's many waterways, and are experienced in the vagaries of the rivers and dealing with the rapacious river pirates.

**The Seventeen Factors:** These factors in First Blessed and Oraya are trying to develop new caravan routes across the region. In particular, they are keen to identify and exploit new trade opportunities to the east. Their dream is to acquire mercantile concessions with Kralorela. For the moment, however, they are concentrating on the Redlands, supporting and supplying the Redlands Exploitative while also trading metal horseshoes, tools, and trinkets in exchange for furs, Woralan river diamonds, and the occasional novelty slave.

**The Redlands Exploitative:** A colonization and deep investment venture in the distant Redlands, beyond direct Imperial control. Individuals within Association areas

that are in breach of the laws of crime, property, or religious observance are purchased by the Exploitative and resettled in the Redlands. There they work in the colony; some may be enrolled with the Kastoks who defend the region, others may become farmers or craftsmen. All gain a living from their labors, although the Exploitative recovers some of its costs from a tithe on their produce. The Exploitative main goal at this stage is not to become wealthy, but to actually create an entirely new market, one beyond the laws and taxes of the Empire.

### Adventure Hooks

**Dealing with Darkness:** The word is going around of a great troll caravan heading from the Yolp Mountains to the Blue Moon Plateau. What strange and wonderful goods might they be carrying?

**Showtime!** Next season, the Satrap plans to tour the markets of First Blessed to buy gifts before his next trip to the Emperor's court. This is an opportunity to catch his eye by assembling some truly extraordinary and exotic items.

**Show Me the Cheese:** A senior figure within the League is convinced that Imtherian cheeses will be the next big thing in noble circles. All the heroes have to do is travel down to Imther and bring back not just cheeses, but the finest cheese-maker of that Province.

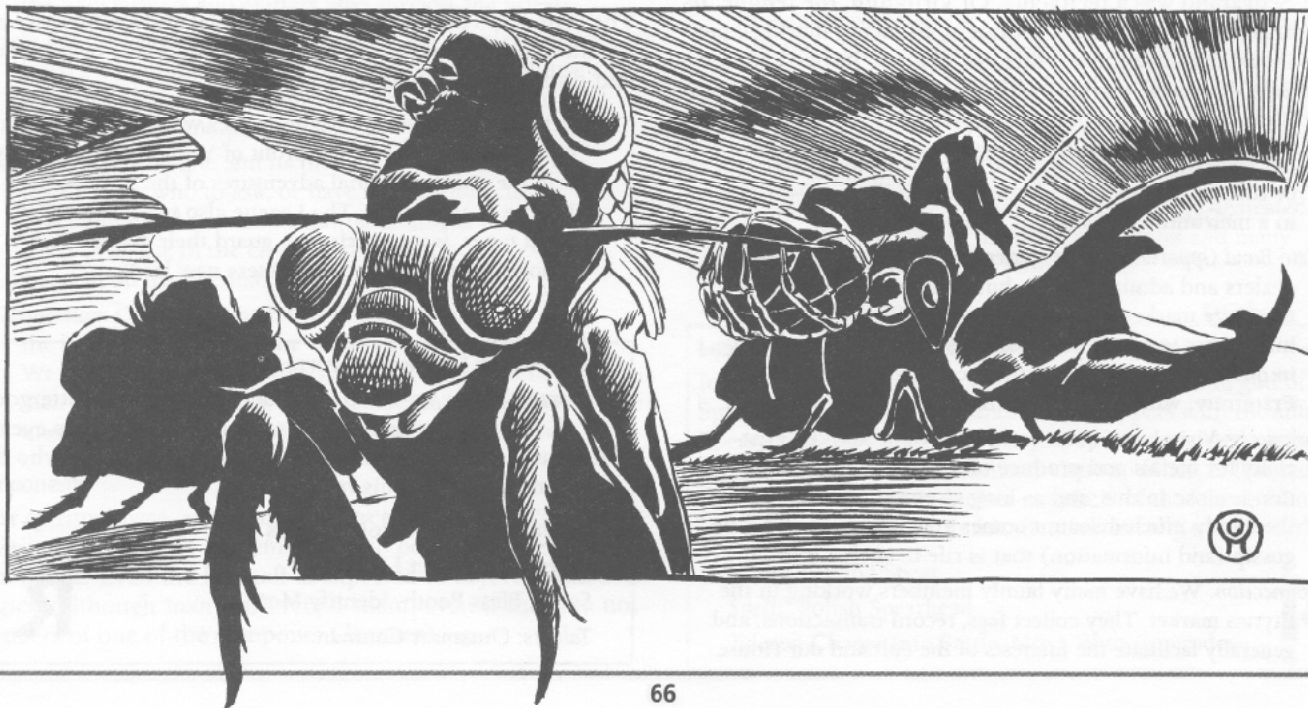
**Caravan Duty:** A trade caravan is escorting goods and new colonists to the Redlands. Guards are required, for many in the group are captured rebels and may seek escape or have outside aid from brigands along the route.

## 9. Best Trade Offer

As matter of course our family always keeps part of our attention and resources open. This allows us to take advantage of new opportunities without endangering our basic interests.

## 10. Your Story Here

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







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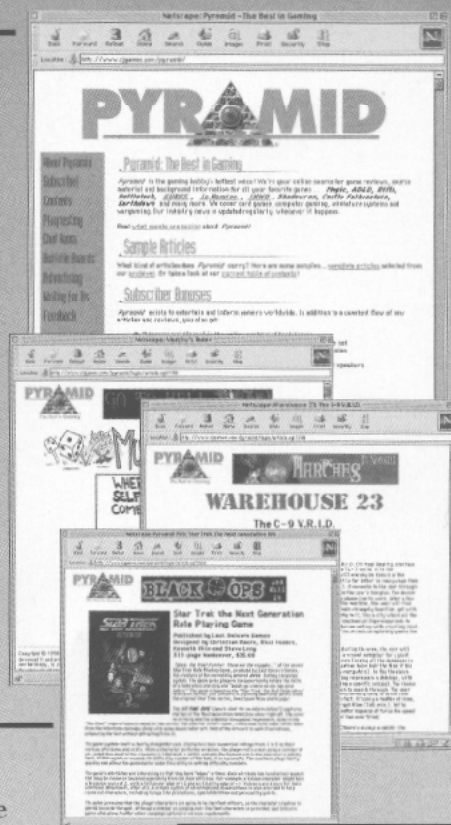
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